This begins the ninth year of publication for Horizons, and represents volume 9, number 1, FAPA number 26, whole number 32, and VAPA number 6. The editor and publisher is Harry Warner, Jr., 1947, 303 Bryan Place, Hagerstown, Maryland, and Horizons is produced on the Doubledoubletoilandtrouble Mimeographmat. Macbeth still does the stenciling.

In the Beginning

This issue of Horizons will not contain reviews of FAPA publications, the first time such a thing has happened in the memory of the oldest inhabitant. The delay in producing the mailing that was due in July, promised in August, and not yet received in September is responsible, and I'm growing a little tired of this habit of promising that mailings will be on time, then failing to produce. The lateness isn't nearly as annoying as the necessity for me to rush around producing Horizons in the fear that the promise will be kept. I plan to mail this issue individually to the members of the FAPA, if the muddle isn't straightened up within another month or six weeks. " The election seems to be a mess, and I'm in the middle of it as official teller. The whole story may or may not be cleared up by the time this issue of Horizons hits the mails. In case it isn't, the official ballot insists that it should be in my hands by August 25. By that date, I had received just three ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ ballots properly filled out, and two or three more have since arrived. All of them are from Los Angeles, and that indicates that the mailings have not yet left that city. (This stencil is being cut on September 1, right in the middle of the Philcon, but several hundred miles away from said event.) Rothman has failed to reply to my query about what new deadline I should observe. Since none of the offices are contested this time, it wouldn't seem to matter particularly--but there's the rub: it does, for the number of write-in votes on the ballots so far received from Los Angeles is extremely high. Out of the trenches by Christmas, boys.

Recentest Trends in Science Fiction

During the month of August, I procured copies of the latest issues of most of the prozines, the first time I have done such a thing via the newsstands in three or four years. In recent years, I've relied pretty exclusively on the local second-hand store to supply me with back issues that weren't too old, and ignored the current issues. The second-hand store, however, closed down some months ago when its proprietor decided it really wasn't necessary any longer as a front for certain other questionable enterprises which really show a profit. However, I hadn't been reading those back issues that I obtained in this manner for several years, so it didn't matter too much in the long run. I've maintained a subscription to Astounding and have read a copy of that upon occasion, and bought Famous Fantastic Mysteries when the lead novel interested me, which was not too often. To all intents and purposes, I've been completely divorced from the other science fiction magazines since 1943 or 1944.

The pleasantest surprise lies in Thrilling Wonder Stories and Startling Stories. I had paid little attention to fanzine indications that the former was improving--similar claims for Planet Stories had fooled me into reading an issue of thatpublication a couple of years ago, to my regret. But this time, it is not a case of crying wolf. TWS, on the basis of this one issue, has shown a phenomenal improvement in recent years, and it now comes very close to fulfilling the function that some people used to insist Amazing Stories was doing: serving as a stepping stone between juvenile science fiction and that published in Astounding.

In this latest issue, the lead "novel"--actually the size of an average-length novelette—is strictly from hack, and two of the short stories read like fanzine fiction. The remainder of the contents, however, is top-notch. None of the stories aims as high as those in Astounding, but several are superior to the

Astounding level in entertainment value. The magazine has a very imposing line-up of names, including Robert A. Heinlein, Leslie Charteris, Henry Kuttner, and Manly Wade Wellman, in this one issue, and all four of them come through with excellent stuff.

As far as trends go, the most noticeable probably is a veering away from straight science-fiction. None of the yarns is a gadget story, and only the "novel" is anything resembling a space opera. Two of them are tinged with fantasy. Kuttner's yarn is a rather amusing effort about a family that became mutants a number of centuries ago when exposed to radioactive elements while working in Britain's tin mines, but I seriously doubt whether radioactivity even in Caesar's day would "mutate" men to the extent of permitting them to fly about or become invisible at will. The story is decent entertainment in the style of the 1935 Wonder Stories, and the incongruities aren't serious. "The Darker Drink", Charteris' fantasy about The Saint, has very little to do with science-fiction, and turns out to be a delightful burlesque on all adventure fiction. The Saint meets a gentleman who is actually the dream projection of a man who is always having adventures in these dreams; the result is a very amusing inversion of hack pulp fiction. Wellman bites off a little more than he can chew with "The Tongue Cannot Tell." I'm inclined to think that Ray Bradbury could have told it very effectively--"it" is the story of a man who comes back from the moon, totally unable to put into words the alien things he has seen and done there. Heinlein, of course, is excellent. Oddly enough, the editor hints that Heinlein wasn't snatched away from Campbell, but came to TWS of his own free will. The story in this issue is not epic, and seems to deviate seriously from the History of the Future, but "Jerry Is a Man" has its points. It deals with the effort to gain recognition of the rights of the individual for animals whose intelligence has been stepped up by the science of the future. The yarn is noteworthy for a quite realistic approach to the world of big business and to the people who dwell therein.

Now, the interesting thing about this all is that most of the stories in the issue fail to meet the traditional pulp standards. Only three of the seven yarns have anything resembling a young heroine, and one of these three, the Charteris story, has a heroine who is no more real than Lady Dulcinea. Civilization is at stake in only two of the stories, and only two of them contain thud and blunder action--again, one of these is the Charteris effort, wherein the action is the funniest thing about the yarn. The Wellman and Heinlein stories contain plot variants that strike me as being really original. There is no catering to the morons or the people who read in hopes of getting their baser passions stimulated, and there is nothing in the issue that would be unfit for quotation in Sunday school. The issue's illustrations are pretty decent, too, although Virgil Finlay no longer seems as careful in the fine detail of his pictures.

Startling Stories, as always, rises or falls on the strength of its novel, and this holds doubly true in the latest issue, because the two original shorts are poor. The novel, "Lord of the Storm," is allegedly the work of Keith Hammond. Resemblances to "Fury" make it seem quite probable that both stories are the work of Henry Kuttner. More about "Fury" later; I bring it into play here simply in order to state that this Startling Stories novel could have been quite as good as "Fury". Kuttner has apparently lost the skill which he had in the days of Marvel Science Stories, that permitted him to write stories which bore no trace of literary merit whatsoever. "Lord of the Storm" sounds as if it were dashed off at top speed, and it contains a plot at least three times too big for the size of the story. In itself, it isn't too good a yarn; for what it might have been, it's tremendous. The basic framework is at least as large as that of "Fury". It concerns a future in which mankind is ruled in a semi-benevolent dictatorship by the "Leaders", although the identity of the highest government personalities remains a mystery until the story's very end. The Freemen represent the underground movement, an almost hopeless one because the infants who show the greatest potentialities at birth are selected for the hierarchy of the

Leaders. One of the Freemen, at the story's start, is killed as he successfully attempts to rescue his newly born son from this choice. The boy grows up among the ~~Freeman~~ Freemen, but fails to become the personality that had been hoped for him. In this story, the complex character that dominated "Fury" is split up between two persons—this youth, who becomes a sort of futuristic Studs Lonigan, and La Boucherie, a Freeman who is both guardian and enemy to the youth. The Freemen's plans go awry, their white hope is captured by the Leaders and forced to undergo the "purge", a systematic erasure of undesirable memories. From this point, however, the story settles down into the more accepted plot channels and reaches its sweetness and light conclusion. Idea after idea is mentioned only casually. The world of the future is sketched in only briefly, and plot episodes that could have become important are passed with only casual mention. The second marriage of the central character's mother; the position that women occupy in this future world; the Salvation Army-like work to induce men to undergo the Purge; and a dozen other points could have been developed at length. Those that were selected for important roles in the plot--the men who guide thedestinies of the weather, and the eventual revelation of the true ruler of the destinies of mankind--are not too impressive.

Weinbaum's least appreciated great story, "The Circle of Zero," makes the issue worth buying. This story impresses me very nearly as much as it did ten years ago, when I knew much less than I do now about good writing and when I thought it was one of the greatest of all fantasy stories. The other two shorts in this issue are unfortunate accidents, however. "Lodana" by Carl Jacobi sounds straight from Planet Stories, and "Up and Atom," a Ray Cummings Tubby story, is like all the other Tubby stories since the beginning of time.

The readers' sections in both TWS and SS have gained appreciably since the exodussof Sgt. Saturn. They are much too long--the letter section in Startling Stories takes up about 15% of the non-advertising content of the entire magazine --but the comments of the editor are interesting enough to compensate for the dismal attempts at humor from the readers. These editorial comments are unusually frank. He wonders out loud what happened to Finlay while drawing some below-standard pictures, admits that the top brass won't allow mention of pompetitors' magazines, and expresses opinions on all sorts of things that have little to do with his two magazines. I liked this one in particular, since it fits my own opinions: "Poe, actually, was a primitive exploring a little-known field of literature (actually he explored several). As a primitive he deserves full credit. But as a creator of classics--heaven forfend. This tendency to confuse primitives which accomplish great purposes in their followers and classics which can stand eternally on their own literary legs is a common one, especially among pedants and those who cease reading after deriving their culture from pedants in school." A few of the readers' letters are entertaining, particularly the one from the fellow who measured the proportions of one of Bergey's cover girls, then measured his wife's proportions, and found that Bergey underestimates the size of the female head, overestimates the size of the female thigh. It might be mentioned in passing that neither magazine's cover this issue shows a woman menaced by a monster, and that the cover for Startling contains no woman at all.

The July issue of Astounding is remarkable in that every story saves civilization or extinguishes it, either on earth or throughout the universe. This doesn't prevent the magazine from containing stories that are not as good as their more violent admirers claim but nevertheless far and above anything else that appears between pulp magazine covers today. The magazine this time contains only three complete stories, because the final instalment of "Fury" takes up almost two-fifths of the entire issue. None of these three stories contains a really new idea. Jack Williamson's yarn is simply the old story of machines that take over for humanity; it's saved from mediocrity by his trick of making it happen with the best of intentions on the part of the machines and by some fascinating glimpses of how far robots might develop. Paul Anderson's "Logic" is another in the endless series of mutant yarns, and less convincing than most,

on account of very clumsy conversation. The revolution is beginning, the town is a scene of violence and disorder, its inhabitants are being rounded up in the square, and one of them makes an observation like: "'Once we're completely rounded up, the discipline will break but the ruthlessness stay in such an orgy of looting and drinking, burning and rape and murder, as has always followed barbarian conquests.'"! Little need be said of Edward Grendon's "The Figure," although the science contained is surprisingly sketchy for Astounding, and like the other stories in the issue it fails to follow the Campbell dictum, that his stories should simply be those that might be written in the future, for the future's contemporary readers. "Fury" comes the closest, and it also builds up the most thorough picture of a future world since Heinlein was writing for Astounding. From the literary standpoint it isn't a great story, but it is infinitely to be preferred to the cosmic attempts of Van Vogt which always get tangled up in a 'big machine' of a plot and somewhere around the middle depart from all humane treatment of the reader. "Fury" comes close to the ridiculous in its love scenes, but they are the only really weak point. The final line is the perfect example of a fine punch line that isn't simply a jolting surprise ending.

I approached the Ziff-Davis magazines with trepidation, but can find little to rave and rant against in Fantastic Adventures, aside from the lack of literary merit in its stories. The pictures are nice, and none of the stories are devoted to torture of naked women or attempts to prove that all science is mistaken in its ideas. Unfortunately, these qualitges don't begin to make up for the abysmally poor ideas behind the stories and the even worse way in which the stories are written. Three of the stories, out of the seven in the issue, contain pure fantasy or supernatural elements in a science fiction setting, a mixture that has not been effective in any story I have ever encountered. Two of the stories, "The Hesitant Angel" and "Whenever the Sun Shines," sound almost religious in tone and are so much the worse for it. Two others, "Mr. Beller and the Winged Horse" and "High Ears" are readable; without reaching any point of excellence, they do what they attempt to do pretty well and are convincingly told. "Witch of the Andes" provides entertainment in another way: about halfway finished, it becomes funny, it's so terrible. The author is our old friend Richard S. Shaver, and it apparently is independent from his main stream of philosophical thought. I was reminded strangely of Ray Cummings' stories, probably because of the utmost respect in which Shaver holds his heroine and his constant use of the adjective "little".

"A Knotted String" shows the flaws of the Fantastic Adventures stories most obviously. It opens with the hero making a great decision: he will henceforth not allow others to rule his life for him, simply because he happens to be the richest man in the world. He promptly meets a stranger, who gives him a piece of string with a tendency to knot up and straighten out without provocation. These knots are symbolic of the problems of life, we are told, although the stranger promptly vanishes and the string plays no more part in the plot. Next our hero is found walking down the street of a city and entering a tavern. We must take the author's word for it that "The tiny circle that had been his life" is broken by this daring stroll. He meets some drinkers who introduce him to the extreme example of all absent-minded professors. This professor seems to have isolated "The sputum of the universe..... The life force, the soul, all that makes man master." It also seems that he is being subsidized by a company that is competitor to the company which has made our hero's fortune, although we never learn what business these companies are engaged in--this vagueness about motives and background is the most typical thing about the magazine's fiction. The professor then reveals that he has used this sputum to create a manufactured human (whom he promptly begins to calla mutant, for no discernible reason). With a masterstroke of symbolism, the author (Berkeley Livingston) next demonstrates that this manufactured man has no heart. Moreover, it seems that "there are an infinity of uncreated humans waiting to be brought to life." Fortunately, at this point the [illegible] story suddenly starts to move along standard plotto lines,

and the good conquers the evil without too much difficulty. The sputum-mutant-manufactured human is turned into a piece of cardboard, for some undetermined reason.

Comments on Amazing Stories cannot be complete at this time, for the simple reason that I haven't completed the issue. On the basis of what I've read--four stories out of the six that are published--I'd say that this is the magazine against which the wrath of sensible people should be directed. There are story situations that sound like excerpts from the legendary "Spicy Science Fiction", and the whole magazine is pervaded by a thin overtone of religious fanatisism, although Shaver is completely missing from its pages.

One of the stories is not particularly objectional, except in that it is escapism of the worst possible source. "Voice from a Star," this story by W. P. McIvern, has nothing whatsoever to do with science fiction. The struggling young author imagines that he hears a popular cinema actress giving him words of encouragement when he looks at her picture on magazine covers, and by gosh, it turns out that he writes a successful book and then learns that there was a psychic bond of some sort between them. "The Kettle in the Pit" is Don Wilcox' contribution to the issue. It is laid on another planet, but there all resemblance to science fiction ends. It is never quite clear what the earth people are doing on this planet, but a woman gets captured by a barbarian who wants her for his mate. ("There was once a hungry lion who was so intent upon his search for a dried carcass that when, by some fortune, he came upon the choicest viands of a king's feast, he behaved as if his find were a dried carcass." The heroine in her modesty finds time to philosophize thus as she is being dragged away by the barbarian; this passage is also remarkable because it's the only normal-length sentence in the entire story. Wilcox shows a pathological fear of writing A setence of more than a line's length. Typical of his style is this paragraph: "Her voice was weak. The winds were too strong. Hot sandsblew against her cheeks. Herfeet seemed weighted. She must not get too far from the plane.") The heroine's virtue, in peril throughout the story, is preserved because this ferocious barbarian is always thwarted by a marraige ceremony which something always interrupts. This "something" is usually the ghost of his mother or father, inasmuch as his race turns into ghosts of flame upon death. Eventually, the hero enters the picture, stark mad for some reason that is never explained, eventually is restored to sanity--or what passes for that in Amazing Stories--and the reader is presumably left happy.

"The Third Bolt" by Frances M. Deegan is just plain bad fiction, but hardly important enough to grow upset over. On the other hand, "The Despoilers" by Rog Phillips is almost a good yarn, spoiled principally by the current of religion and mysticism that mixes disastrously with the science fiction elements. It contains very little actual story, and is devoted principally to theorizing on the mysterious creatures who have taken over the rule of earth and killed off most of mankind. For a while, it does an excellent job os depicting the tremendous difficulty that humanity might have in grasping the mental concepts of a completely alien race--a race which cannot grasp our concept of the number series, one, two and three, for example. Phillips has one idea that is completely new, to my knowledge: four-dimensional creatures whose fourth dimension is a "size" in time. This size is not the life-span, but rather a size in minutes, and that proves the stumbling block against their comprehension by three-dimensional critters. Unfortunately, the theorizing in the story inevitably stumbles somewhere along the line into unconvincing reasoning by analogy or mathematical mumbo-jumbo that looks unconvincing even to my unmathematical mind, and the attempt to tie in the aliens with Christ and the Holy Trinity becomes sickening after a time.

Illiteracy is never far from the Ziff-Davis magazines' pages, incidentally. One story misspells consistently the word "judgment," and almost all the authors resort to italics and upper case letters every hundred words or so to emphasize their points. In Amazing's editorial, Palmer takes credit for the flying discs, which he terms "much like a huge doughnut," although I saw no newspaper account that attributed such a shape to any of them.

The Sincerest Form of Flattery

First lines of "The Dunwich Horror" by H. P. Lovecraft: When a traveller in north central Massachusetts takes the wrong fork at the junction of the Aylesbury pike just beyond Dean's Corners he comes upon a lonely and curious country. The ground gets higher, and the brier-bordered stone walls press closer and closer against the ruts of the dusty, curving road. The trees of the frequent forest belts seem too large, and the wild weeds, brambles, and grasses attain a luxuriance not often found in settled regions. At the same time the planted fields appear singularly few and barren; while the sparsely scattered houses wear a surprisingly uniform aspect of age, squalor, and dilapidation. Without knowing why, one hesitates to ask directions from the gnarled, solitary figures spied now and then on crumbling doorsteps or on the sloping, rock-strewn meadows..... When the road dips again there are stretches of marshland that one instinctively dislikes, and indeed almostfears at evening when unseen whippoorwills chatter and the fireflies come out in abnormal profusion.....

First lines of "The Dweller in Darkness" by August Derleth: Until recently, if a traveler in north central Wisconsin took the left fork at the junction of the Brule River highway and the Chequamegon pike on the way to Bashepaho, he would find himself in country so primitive that it would seem remote from all human contact. If he drove on along the little used road, he might in time pass a few tumbledown shacks where presumably people had once lived and which have long ago been taken back by the encroaching forest; it is not desolate country, but an area thick with growth, and over all its expanse there persists an intangible aura of the sinister, a kind of ominous oppression of the spirit quickly manifest to even the most casual traveler, for the road he has taken becomes ever more and more difficult to travel, and is eventually lost just short of a deserted lodge built on the edge of a clear blue lake around which century-old trees brood eternally, a country where the only sounds are the cries of the owls, the whippoorwills, and the eerie loons at night.....

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Through VAPA with Gun and Camera

Vanguard Amateur: I'm inclined to doubt that I'll hit the September mailing, if it comes out when Jim says it will come out; but I've made five straight appearance in VAPA envelopes, so I could be forgiven this one time. Besides, I might finish this issue up in time, especially if that deadline gives way by a week. Discontinued: You've violated most of the rules of puzzle-making, Seedy, and I didn't have the heart to try to work it out. About book reviews: I'm inclined to think that they should contain a brief synopsis, if the reviewer believes that the greater part of his audience has not read the volume in question and does not know the outline of its plot by hearsay or reputation. In the case of "The Fountainhead", I should have known more about the book than I do, probably most of the VAPA members had a pretty good notion of what the volume concerned when the essays were published, and I shouldn't have implied criticism of the synopsis omission in that particular case. Let us not get up in Aristotelian definitions, but I am referring to a book review that is intended to be primarily a book review. An essay which is produced as the result of a book the writer of the essay has read is an entirely different matter. Icky: Received, noted, and filed in the pious hope that more and larger publications may be forthcoming from stevenson, whoever he, she, or it may be. Explication: See remarks last issue. Horizons: For once, I see no ridiculous typerrors on a quick scanning, but they're probably there nonetheless. Agenbite of Inwit: I agree that the artist's condition today is a mess, but I don't think it has been

any better in the past--at least, not since the days when art was used in fertility rites and music purely as accompaniment for the dance. Kurt Lizt sounds like the typical frustrated composer who spends more time trying to get his music performed and writing about his compositions than in composing. I object particularly to his disparaging remarks about "packaged concert series from the agencies." I live in a small town, and I have seen attempts at promoting musical events without the backing of one of these agencies. It cannot be done, and it is not the fault of the agencies nor of the local sponsors--it is simply that there aren't enough all-out music lovers in the smaller centers to make concerts financially possible without the publicity campaign and promotional knowhow that only a big organization can supply. The local "musical season" now consists of four to six recitals, each year, one or two of which is always a real top-notcher like Rubinstein or Peerce or Leonard Warren, a couple of others popular but mediocre artists, and the remainder young artists who have not yet made a name for themselves. By dint of herculean efforts by missionaries from the New York agency and the local sponsors, a weeklong campaign in the spring produces enough "memberships" to permit an even break on finances as far as Hagerstown is concerned. The audience at these events consists of 20% real music lovers, 40% people who go in order to make other people think they appreciate the finer things in life, and 40% those who are dragged into attending by some of the other 60%. You'd have an audience not more than 50% that size under purely local backing; I know, for I've seen it happen. From the artistic standpoint, Lizt exaggerates the programming situation. Most of the soloists submit in advance two or three alternate programs, and present the one requested by the local officials. I see no other way of working things. The experience with the local symphony orchestra and the programs of local piano teachers convince me that the programs would be infinitely worse if entirely made up by the local folks. And, I submit, "tired, over-played classics and musical trash" cannot be applied when Mischa Elman plays here a concert that includes the A major sonata of Handel, the D minor sonata of Brahms, the A minor concerto of Glazoumov, Chausson's "Poeme," and a bunch of smaller stuff; or when Alexander Uninsky plays the Paganini variations of Brahms, the E flat major sonata of Beethoven, and important smaller works by Debussy and Chopin. The great defect of local concerts is one that Lizt fails to mention: they give sloppy performances in a town the size of Hagerstown. I'm unequipped to judge with precision matters like tonal quality, since I know their best efforts only through radio and recorded performances, but I can detect without difficulty when really good musicians are guilty of flaws in Hagerstown that electronics can't cover up--slipping off pitch and faulty phrasing, for instance. One other final statement: (which really belongs with the comments on) Gnark: I don't think it at all essential or even desirable that the composer make a living from the compositions he pens. I would like Doc to name for me three composers of serious music whom either he or the consensus of opinion today rates among the great ones, who supported themselves in this manner in any century, for any sustained periods of time. Then contemplate piously on the vast thousands upon thousands of composers of the past and present who were enabled to devote as much time as they wished to composing, because of rich parents or the patronage of a nobleman or the popularity of their compositions. Some of them were men of real talent, like Mendelssohn and Sir Arthur Sullivan and George Gershwin, but I don't think you'll find them well represented in Doc's record library. Real genius is going to show itself, though the composer can spend only two or three hours a day at composing, and is quite apt to be hindered rather than helped by the sort of patronage and slavery that Doc mistakes for the composer's lot in this Gyrowetz' day. (I submit that it makes a great deal of difference that Gyrowetz is unknown today, and I further point out that a good proportion of Bela Bartok's music has been for many years available from the publishers, and that some of it has been put onto records in the past; its obscurity is the fault of the music lovers who did not buy enough copies to encourage the publishers to put it into cheaper editions and the recording companies to wax more of the compositions.)

When We Were Very Young

Digging up the mailing that went out five years ago this fall gave me quite a jolt. One of the first things to come to my attention was a publication that, I have been convinced for the last half-decade, was omitted from my mailing. The item in question is the only issue of Bobliquep, which claimed to be the first blueprinted fanzine. Its proportions are not exactly large, and I may quite conceivably have failed to see it altogether when the mailing was new. Or I may have received the wrong impression in some other method. Maybe that's where my repressions in connection with the name of Edgar Allan Martin originated. '' It really wasn't a very big mailing. The Fantasy Amateur's laureate report can serve as an example of the talent we've lost in five years, too. Top honors went to Koenig, Widner, Speer, Chauvenet, Thompson, Lowndes, Youd, and Tom Wright; three of them are gone completely from activity, and most of the others are present on a vastly reduced scale. '' Horizons appeared in mimeographed form for the first time. '' I always liked the Ashleys' definition of a fan, although it never made the Fancyclopedia or any other place of distinction: "A fan is one who not only understands the Einstein theory--he reads between the lines!" This issue of En Garde also contained a simple-looking mathematical puzzle that was the granddaddy of the monstrous things Fan-Tods publishes. '' Russell Hodgkins distributed a publication that warned everyone what would happen if Technocracy weren't adopted by the nation immediately. "America must realize that in this age of technology the methods and practices of history cherished by the upholders of the Price System are incompetent to operate a Continent under the demands of total war. The facilities of yesterday's success have suddenly become the futilities of today and the defeat of tomorrow..... '' Today's crisis necessitates that America call upon the ability and statesmanship capable of installing the technological and social mobilization required for victory. '' Technocracy makes the unequivocal statement that such ability and statesmanship do not exist amongst the party politicans and business leaders of America." '' I rejected Speer's additions to the Spoon River Anthology because they violated Spaceways' taboos, so he printed them in Sustaining Program, and I can revive the one for John B. Michel: "I was one who loved beauty And therefore wrote about ugliness. I hated the filth and grime of the city And loved it for its being decayed. An idealist who loathed all ideals he encountered, Science and learning I followed And despised, and flesh was my joy. I hated war but would have joined the army Had I not died Of osteomyelitis." '' Widner put a lovely cover on Yhos, showing a mermaid looking at a vaguely Grecian building. Inside was part of the great war controversy by someone whose name wasn't revealed. Sounded like Campbell to me, and I could be made very happy if you'd reveal it at this late date, Art. '' And that's about all there was to the mailing, but I stuck a couple of separately posted things into the envelope. Ackerman, for instance, sent out a two-pager that represents one of the few times he has published anything which sounds completely natural. It was a fairly satisfactory defense of the mude-publishing stage in whichhe was then immersed: did any psychologist ever figure out what caused it to start and stop so suddenly? '' Ed Connor's Stf Echo discussed a now-forgotten wild idea: "The gist of it is this, if you are not already aware of it: Compile a Handbook of Science Fiction, containing 'an accepted order of terminology and geography which in the future would govern all science-fiction. That is describe and list the number of imaginative cities on the various planets and give to each an accepted name.' It would give a general list of life on these planets, and number the various governmental positions, etc, found in the solar system. '' When thepublication is entirely completed and accepted by fandom, it would then be sent to the editors of all Promags and their writers with the underhanded warning that any publication which failed to accept it would be boycotted. Jacobi further states that he thinks such a book would be welcomed by all same editors with open arms."

FISHER, VARDIS
The Golden Rooms

The Vanguard Press, New York. Copyright, 1944. 324 pp.

The prehistoric type of science fiction could easily qualify as the problem child of the whole fantasy field. Prehistoric man (he can't be called caveman any longer, on account of Shaver) actually existed, very probably individuals of his species did just the things that the authors attribute to early man, and the books on this subject differ from historical fiction only in a quantitative sense, not a quantitative one. Worse yet, there appears to be a definite limit to the amount of inventiveness and originality an author can show in a story of this type. Primitive man wasn't much more interesting than modern animals, for what he did, and writing about him is even more difficult than writing nature stories in which the animals are the primary characters, because of the sketchy nature of our knowledge about our barbarian ancestors. '' In this volume, Vardis Fisher has written the best book about primitive man that I have yet encountered. It has several serious faults, but it stands to most stories of its type as John Steinbeck stands to Gene Stratton-Porter. '' If the author of a story about early man desires to have as his hero an intelligent individual, he is immediately faced with the problem of keeping the book moving: he cannot easily make one discovery--fire, or the wheel, or any other basic invention--last out the whole volume, and he will turn his character into a superman if he makes him invent one thing after another. Fisher solves this difficulty by telling the story of two sets of characters in this book, and in so doing creates its weakest point. By bringing both a very primitive group of characters and the more advanced Cro-Magnons, Fisher manages to get that sense of progress. But the reader has a dreadful time, shifting his viewpoint abruptly halfway through the volume. '' Of plot, there is little in the book. The first half tells the story of Harg, far in advance of his fellows because he discovers the use of fire. In the second half, we are transported among the Cro-Magnons, who live nearby; like Harg, the hero of this part, Gode, is better than his contemporaries, and has gotten along so far that he draws pictures, almost turns a wolf into a dog, and leads a highly introspective existence. Near the end, the Cro-Magnons slaughter the characters from the first part of the book. '' Fisher's realism is his strongest and weakest point. He leaves the reader with no illusions about the sanitary habits of the early men; he shows how microscopically small was the sense of family and kinship; he gives the men sexual interests that differ little from those of animals; he is particularly skillful in the "conversation" of men who have not yet reached the point of putting together the few words they know into sentences. Occasionally he goes a little too far. After the spectacular and complicated feast on the dead mammoth, the orgies of eating that follow throughout the volume are superfluous and a little nauseous. I'm inclined to think that Fisher exaggerates the personal filth of his characters, living so much in the open, they would be bound to get caught in a cleansing shower pretty often. '' The book strikes me as a very learned one: Fisher gives the impression of knowing much more about artifacts, sympathetic magic, and such things than he brings into the volume. And it does what no other book about early man that I have ever encountered does: it reaches a big and successful climax. Gode, the thinker, at the end of this book becomes the first man to acquire a conscience, the first to conceive of the possibility of a deity, the first to fear a life after death, the first to see the shapes that the clouds form. The realization of the murders that he has committed overwhelm him as completely as Macbeth was overwhelmed, and the mystery of dreams, treated so casually by H. G. Wells in "A Story of the Stone Age," becomes a tremendously powerful dramatic device here. '' The title, incidentally, has reference to the light-filled spaces that fire creates in the dark, and symbolically to the flickers of intelligence here and there in the stupid early world.

Exposition

The abundance of space in this issue of Horizons, caused by the absence of FAPA reviews, is embarrassing. Some kind words that were said about the tiny character sketches last issue, and the more important fact that I don't know what else to write about, encourage me to set down here a few autobiographical remarks and subsidiary thoughts about music, although they have nothing to do with fantasy or fandom.

It was just about ten years ago that I acquired almost simultaneously real interest in the unrelated fields of fandom and music. It's hard to say why such interests spring up at all, and why they occur at the particular time in a person's life that they do. In my case, there is no reason why I should have suddenly become fond of serious music when I did. I had been studying the piano in a very haphazard way for a couple of years, but was playing nothing more important than the saccharine little pieces that are published in The Etude Musical Magazine. I liked popular music enough to buy a sheet every month or two, as my complicated financial difficulties permitted. Then it happened one Friday afternoon. I had nothing else to do, and happened to tune in the old Music Appreciation Hour of Walter Damrosch. I was converted, as surely as any sinner ever was brought to his senses by a fiery evangelist.

In the years that have intervened, I've come to realize that Damrosch was a pedestrian conductor, a hopelessly derivative composer, and important mainly because he helped promote some very important European orchestral music with this country's symphony orchestras. I've also become dead set against "music appreciation," most of which seems designed on purpose to teach misconceptions about bad serious music in the dullest possible way. Nevertheless, the Damrosch broadcast struck home that day. He worked on the first half of Beethoven's fifth symphony. I remember that he described the all-pervading rhythm of the first movement as a storm-tossed sailor, and likened the second movement to a quiet stroll through a garden during which the stroller occasionally encountered a clearing that contained the statue of a great hero.

There wasn't as much good music on theradio in those days, I owned almost none, and phonograph records were out of the question. However, I managed to do quite a bit of listening over weekends. It was a couple of years later that I discovered a pretty good collection ofmusic hidden away at the local library and found that WQXR was audible in Hagerstown during the late evening hours. However, things were pretty tough for a while. I read through a couple of Sigmund Spaeth's books before I realized what a hopelessly distorted viewpoint he adopts and foists onto the reader. Unfortunately, one of those books contained words which he had written to the principal themes ofmost of the classical symphonies. I read and studied these before realizing the error, and some of the infernal ditties still are awakened in my memory every time I hear the compositions. "In the days of the Georges, the costumes, they were gorgeous...." is inescapably tied up with a certain Haydn minuet, and the opening of Beethoven's eighth symphony always recalls to me the perfectly obvious fact that "Beethoven still is great, In the symphony he numbers eight...." Maybe I'll forget them in another ten years.

Most music lovers of my acquaintance first began to like the early compositions and expanded their interests forward, chronologically, or vice versa. But I was different. A very narrow range of composers, in time and space, were my primary interests during those first years--none of them earlier than Beethoven, none of them later than Wagner. I thought modern music was ear-splitting and considered the Pre-Beethoven composers to be a very dull and primitive bunch. To make matters worse, I began to be obsessed with interest in certain aspects of music. First of all came a passion for *form*. I judged the worth of a composition by the completeness with which I could divide it off into neatly labeled sections and figure out the derivation and development of the themes. Naturally, this left people like Debussy and Chopin outside the pale. It was several years

before I came to realize that music which has been cast into one of the traditional forms is neither better nor worse than that which hasn't, all other things being equal. However, I did manage to learn quite a bit about how symphonic music is built up during this period, and I pride myself on recognizing the perfectly obvious fact that you won't find in any of the "music appreciation" books or in most of the histories of music: that you can't find a composition in the repertoire today that conforms to all the rules about form. Counterpoint, incidentally, still eluded me. This was because I had never encountered the true explanation of how contrapuntal associates are built up and the facts of life about such things as episodes in fugues. I had the impression that every note in a fugue must be derived from the subject and its answer, and thought it was my own stupidity when I couldn't trace a passage back to this germ. Wagner's music remained in my favor during this time, despite its lack of formal pattern, by the fascinating way in which I could always find some new use or alteration of a leitmotif. More about Wagner a little later, though.

After deciding that form wasn't the sine qua non of music after all, I grew interested in the close details of compositions, and wanted to learn how ensemble numbers were put together. I dug up enough money to buy several of the Harcourt Brace miniature orchestral score volumes, and all of the Longman Green editions of chamber music omnibuses. The next couple of years I spent in following the score of all music which I heard that was contained in these volumes. I also managed to lay my hands on the vocal scores of a few operas. Eventually a great light broke once again: to follow a piece of music by its score can actually be a distracting process, it isn't a necessary one, and is really valuable only during an intermediate period between the first hearings of a piece of music and complete familiarity with it. At least it all taught me something about orchestration and how to lead the voices when writing for strings.

Then there was the winter that I played oboe and English horn in the symphony orchestra, before the war forced it to disband. It was a valuable and entertaining time. Eight or ten evenings of rehearsals for each of the programs made it possible for me to learn the stuff we played almost by heart, and to realize that no one can make brass instruments sound as loud as Sibelius does. It is, incidentally, quite remarkable how differently a composition sounds when you are sitting right in the middle of the orchestra that is playing it. I didn't meet up with Beethoven's "Prometheus" overture until we programmed it, and I don't feel that I've heard the real thing since; the version that you hear on records is so infinitely different from the version you hear from its midst.

Well, after ten years there are remarkably few changes in my musical preferences and prejudices. My interests have broadened out, of course, to the point where I am an addict to the music of all the composers who are generally considered great, with the exception of Palestrina and Chopin. Lack of opportunity to hear the former's greatest works probably is the cause of defection in his case; with Chopin it's different. I've tried strenuously to enjoy him, have studied his piano music, have dissected his harmonies, have attempted to put myself into a poetic and soul-stirred mood while listening, all to no avail. My gods remain Beethoven, Schubert, and Wagner, but rapidly pushing their way up into the ranks of the lesser deities are several composers of the Italian operatic school of the 19th century. Eight years ago, I thought that Verdi was just a tune-hack; four years ago, I thought he wrote good operas; today I think he's deserving of a place among the half-dozen greatest composers the world has ever known; give me a few more years, and he may land at the very top. The more I hear of him, the more I'm convinced that his genius was every bit as great as Beethoven. The difference in the quality of their output, aside from the mediums in which they worked, boils down only to Verdi's refusal to break away from symmetrical phrases and periods. Even in "Otello", "Falstaff", the "Requiem", and the superb string quartet, where the harmonies, melodies, and other aspects of rhythms are as advanced as any other great music of the time, Verdi can't seem to break away from the neat little packaged of musical sentences in which Germont and Violetta

had their argument. And in the last couple of years I've discovered Bellini, and have come to realize why Wagner revered him. Bellini's early death may have been an even greater tragedy than Schubert's; after hearing "Norma" two or three times in its complete form, I'm convinced that few musicians have understood the human voice so well or been able to create such superb melodies for it.

Over and above them all, however, stands Wagner. I've not seen or heard anything to cause me to doubt my conviction that he was quite possibly the finest creative artist in any branch of the arts. Weirdly enough, the very things for which he is best known are those that put him in his worst light: the "excerpts" and "syntheses" from the music dramas that appear on symphony concerts or are sung in aria-style by vocalists in the course of a recital. Like all truly great art, Wagner's operas are distinguished by the fact that the effect of a whole is infinitely more than the sum of all its parts. But what do we have of Wagner's music in this country? No performances of the seven great music dramas outside of New York, and only one or two broadcasts of them in complete form each year. We have a couple of dozen concert pieces that are taken from the operas, only three or four of which have any artistry standing alone, snatched from the surroundings, deprived of the voices of the singers, beginning nowhere and ending at the same approximate point. Of the seven Wagnerian operas after Lohengrin, the only things that survive excerpting without too much damage are the Meistersinger prelude, the Parsifal prelude if permitted to end on the dominant seventh "question", possibly the prelude to the third act of Tristan. But these troubles fade into insignificance beside the blasphemy of Stokowski and his "syntheses". If anything is definite about the Wagnerian style, it is that it is too immense to fit the symphonic style, and Stokowski's method is precisely that which would result from a 30-minute composition which contained, one after another, every principal theme from each of the movements of the nine Beethoven symphonies. Queerly enough, the solution to the dilemma of how to present Wagner's music outside the opera house without butchering it never seems to present itself to the orchestral authorities. It is childishly simple: a single act from any of the great operas, complete with the vocal parts, has almost as much unity as the complete opera, and would fit neatly into a symphonic program.

"Every age has its own central criterion of art; and each later age sees how its predecessor's criterion was misleading. In the 19th century our central criterion was correctness. We are emerging from an age in which the central criterion is originality, a much less fruitful concept. Correctness may be wrongly defined and wrongly valued; but it will always refer to ascertainable things, and the mistakes in its use will be witnesses available for cross-examination as to the truth. Originality is a concept which everybody can apply without control, while nobody can judge of it unless he knows every possible antecedent of the music he is criticising. After a century it becomes unrecognizable; unless the power of extended composition is shown, there is not an expert living who can tell Handel from Buononcini by ear..... Permanent values depend on more ascertainable things than the question, who told the truth first. The artist's conviction of the truth is not to be weakened by such a question; the poet can call the sky blue, or even rhyme 'dove' with 'love', if these details are the right things in the right place. The quality of the style line by line, and the power to organize the work as a whole, these things will remain..... Meanwhile it is extremely doubtful whether any valuable criticism, or any artistic principle whatever, has been pronounced by people who take originality for their criterion. They do not even make significant mistakes; they fail to touch permanent values at any point; and their judgments will be merely unintelligible a generation hence." Thus spoke Mowey, my favorite writer on things musical, and thus go my feelings toward those who are bored by contemporary music that was composed three years ago because something even more contemporary has turned up in the meantime. I shall be very much surprised if the folks in 2047 know today's composers as well as we know Spohr, Spontini, Raff, and Hummel. Excepting living fossils like Sibelius, Strauss, and Stravinsky, I'd guess that only Ralph Vaughan Williams has a chance to survive, in the concert halls of tomorrow.