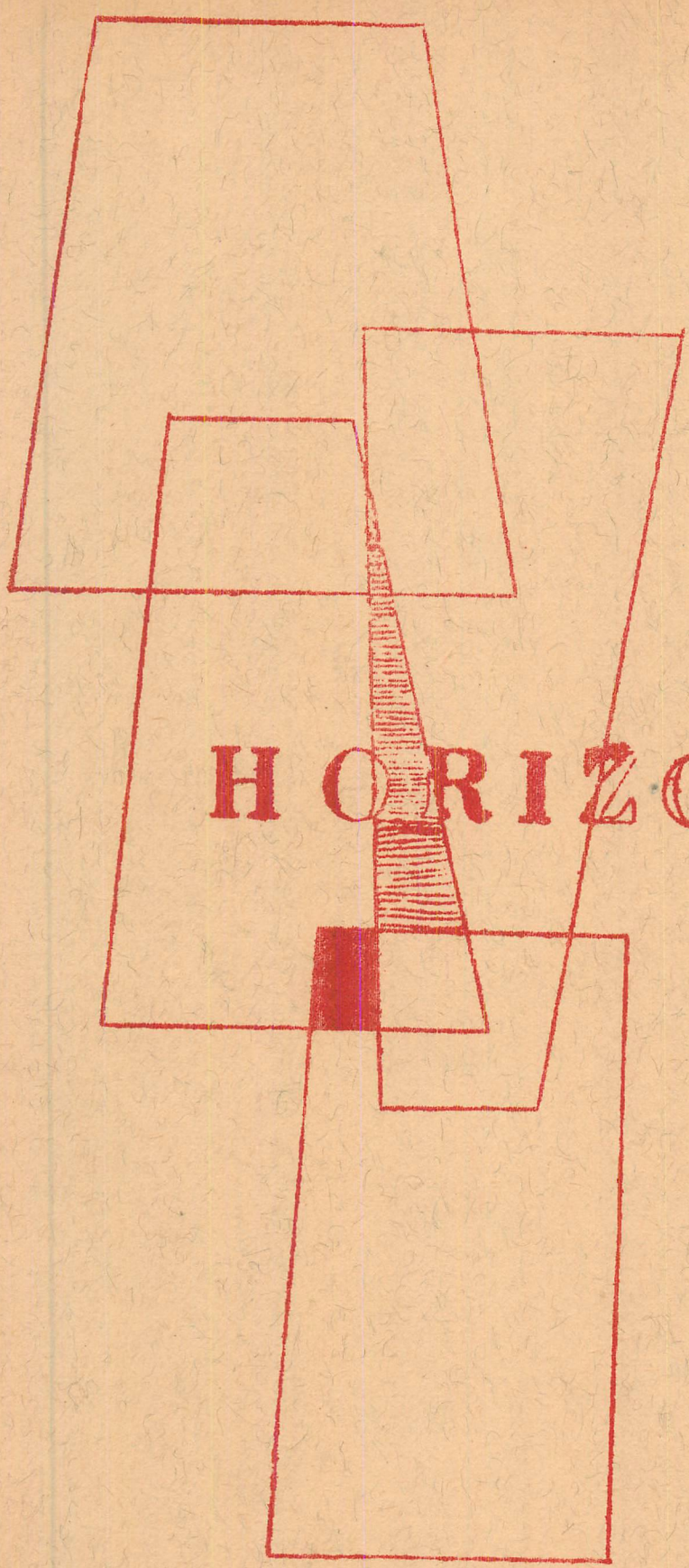


SPRING



# HORIZONS

1961







A slightly battered Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland, is stenciling in a frightening hurry this issue of Horizons, which will be mimeoed by Dick Eney to give me time to get this foot out of the grave. It is volume 22, number 3, whole number 86, and FAPA number 80, and the spring, 1961, issue. For the third straight issue, I announce that the cover is by Jean Young, and if I'm wrong again, I give up.

### In the Beginning

The Fantasy Amateur: Wouldn't it simplify things to stop accepting advances on dues? It's the cause of extra bookkeeping and could result in more confusion if the dues rate should get altered again from time to time. " Now that waiting listers are forced to do so many things to retain their places, we should turn attention to the membership roster. I would like to see a system that required every member to acknowledge receipt of the mailing, if he is not represented by a contribution to that mailing. A member who failed to do anything about two consecutive mailings, through either activity or acknowledgment, would be dropped. This would get rid quickly of those who lose interest but hang on a long while as deadwood without resigning. It would not tend to increase the size of the bundles, a situation which most of us hate to think about. Consider: My membership year begins with this mailing. This issue of Horizons completes my activity requirements for my new membership year. I could get seven more FAPA mailings without activity of any type except for paying my dues next spring, if I suddenly got lazy. If I had to write a letter every three or six months, I might either resume publishing or resign to end the nuisance. The Psychopath: Lee can't get credit for activity from letters, you know. The Barean: I am saddened by the decision to change title. It means just one more title to try to squeeze into my jampacked memory banks. Limbo: I have the best possible excuse for not accompanying that peace walk to Moscow. But I don't think I would have cared to indulge in my love of walking on this project, even if I hadn't fallen. Isn't it likely that an odd project like a cross-country hike will make people consider the participants screwballs by nature, and do much harm to the purpose behind the hike? " The best way to gain respect for the words of an opera is to try to think of a regular non-musical stage play first produced in the same decade and nation as the opera in question which doesn't seem qually silly and incompetent today. Drama standards change faster than those of any other art. No plays more than a half-century old can hold the stage in this country today, with a handful of exceptions like Shakespeare, Ibsen and an occasional Greek drama revival. It is a tribute to the quality of opera librettos that the works can still be produced today. " Why does anyone think that musical comedy is an original American art form? And here again, time makes the works unbearable. "My Fair Lady" will be as forgotten in 2000 as "The Girl Beyond the Counter" is today. Secret Mythos: The declining foreign car market is something I predicted a couple of years ago. It isn't American competition, but rather the fact that enough people have purchased the little things in recent years to cause the vanguard-lovers to lose interest and look around for some other way in which to attract attention. " Electrola is a German record firm. It's apparently linked with



EMI in England and Angel-Capitol in this country. '' I've wondered too about the informality of the oath when you enter the army. During one of my draft examinations, I sat in a rejected group close to a bunch of accepted men while they were taking a mass oath. If I'd raised my right hand and spoken in unison with them, would I be a veteran today? Vandy: Why do you use those impossibly bad human figures drawn by Prosser when there's a really capable artist in the household? '' The passage cited from "Friar Tuck" sounds like a passage in Parker's "Mona" which appeared about the same time. Nial tells how Gwynn's soul has just left the body and hovers waiting over them, and refers in another place or two to various colors produced by angry people. '' The Pennsylvania Railroad has stirred up a wasps' nest in an effort to discontinue the last passenger train serving Hagerstown. Even the railroaders are angry with the company. I am told that losses cited by the companies on passenger service are usually paper losses, caused by ascribing operating costs of terminals and such facilities to passenger trains in outrageous proportions. I'' If you omit the apostrophe from aint because it's a separate word, I hope you won't forget to be consistent. '' A new tourist trap at Antietam National Battlefield near here releases gunpowder fumes while the battle is being described. '' I'm no fundamentalist, but I feel cooler in hot weather if I'm pretty well covered with thin clothing than I do when I'm going around wearing only the necessities. Salud: The Biblical truth about sins affecting future generations is quite in line with the nature of the volume: it describes things as they are quite correctly, for the most part, even if many of its readers insist on believing that it is explaining the reason behind these things. '' Wasn't Oedipus club-footed? '' One of my correspondents pointed out a peculiarity of "Lady Chatterly's Lover" that I haven't seen mentioned elsewhere. The passages about sex and intercourse are almost entirely written from the female's viewpoint. It is odd that a man should emphasize the things that Lawrence did, and this might account for some of the hostility that men have displayed toward the novel. Celephais: Almost thou convincest me that I should go to the Seacon, just for the sake of a train ride. It has been a long while since I have enjoyed so much a description of travel as this. I'm sorry to admit that I've not ridden a train for more than a decade. In fact, I've never been on the main line of the B&O which slices through the southern tip of this county. I agree that public transportation is best for long trips. Car rental is so easily available today that you can use a train and still make those side trips in autos. '' I'm dead set against any retention of 12-signature leeway for defaulting members. The organization almost always have a half-dozen members who will sign a petition for anybody, because there's such goodhearted souls, so the petitioner needs to find only a few other pals to get away with it. I think I've just proved that it's possible to be active in FAPA while severely handicapped, as long as other members will help with the cranking. '' If Helen Wesson would act as purchasing agent, I'd also be glad to order some of those Japanese discs. '' I remember vividly the Forgotten Man sequence, although I must have been only about ten. The set contained only a lamp post and shadowy tenement house, as I recall. It was a color movie, I can't remember the title, but I have a sneaking suspi-



cion that Winnie Lightner starred. Someone else sang the song: "Remember my forgotten man. / You put a rifle in his hand, / You sent him far away, / You hollered hip hooray, / But look at him today!" At this point, memory faileth. '' You're so right about translations failing to catch the original's stress patterns. It goes even deeper than this. French is such a lightly stressed language that the composer can set unimportant words on the accented musical measure without creating false declamation. The big tenor aria from "Carmen" starts out this way. Then there was Verdi's favorite system of whipping up the excitement by a pounding triple rhythm in which the voice puts an accent on the second beat through the poetic pattern; "Di Quella Pira" and "La Donna è Mobile" are extremely familiar examples. You can't convert this into English. Too many unimportant English words are impossible to sing on an accented beat like "the" and "of". Sercon's Bane: Maybe you're comparing Seattle's traffic death rate with the national average. The rate for cities alone is lower than the national rate, because vehicles go much faster in rural areas. '' The reference to Arthur J. Burks gives me a needed opportunity to say that the old boy is now touring the church lecture circuit, giving inspirational talks. He comes to Hagerstown about twice each year, but I've never had a chance to hear or meet him. Null-F: Rewriting the Willis material would have helped the campaign more than this reprint. Those who saw these stencils before are not likely to have reread them. Of course I support heartily the Willis importation project. Epimetheus: I must learn Greek so I can identify Speer publications by title rather than leviews heading. '' Why should by-the-word payment for medieval scribes have encouraged the use of longer words? '' Typewriters have a good arrangement of letters and it's possible to make better speed on this keyboard than on the supposedly more scientific linotype keyboard. The only really bad typer feature is the awkwardness of the frequent ec and ce combination. Some good typists train themselves to hit the c with the index finger in this circumstance. '' My executors will have a hard time publishing my complete correspondence in that effort to determine what made me tick. The few letters I wrote during hospitalization were done without benefit of carbon copies. '' You're getting forgetful, Juffus. Ted E. White was a Canadian fan in the early 1940's, not today's TEW. Sure, you remember now. '' Religious lectures and magazines always remind me of mailing comments when they start to refer to this or that chapter and verse, leaving you unsure of the exact reference unless you dig up the matters commented on. Science Fiction Age: It's nice to see after all this time a copy of the Moskowitz eruption. I'm surprised that Sam imagines that I'm attempting to conceal memories of my membership in organizations that contained pinkish elements. Surely he must have read my article in Peals a year or two ago in which I pointed out that fans today face precisely this situation, with the penetration of fandom into European countries. In that article, I made perfectly clear my determination to associate with whatever fans and fan groups I please, and my confidence in my ability to resist conversion to communist or fascist doctrines in the process. There are only three other things to be said about this article: (1) In one personal gettogether and much correspondence between Metcalf and me, payment for my fan history project has not been mentioned, I wasn't aware that New Frontiers offers payment for ma-



terial, I haven't taken a penny out of fandom since selling the last issue of Spaceways in 1942, and I don't intend to accept a cent for this fan history. (2) It's senselessly vindictive and potentially hard on innocent wives and children for Sam to keep pounding away at temporary communist leanings that his old enemies possessed a generation ago. (3) I'm still curious to know why Sam reacted so violently to my article and ignored much more cruel things that were written about "The Immortal Storm" soon after it appeared. '' Amazing Stories is buying no new fiction and is raising its price by 40% for its 35th anniversary issue? How generous and altruistic can publishers get? Phantasy Press: There's a very simple way to avoid those last-hour rushes to beat the FAPA mailing deadline. Just get neurotic enough to have a severe anxiety complex. You won't be able to sleep until you have your publication out six weeks before the deadline, when you're the fortunate possessor of this treasure. '' If we do something special for the 100th FAPA mailing, I'd be inclined to favor an anthology, either the finest stuff from the first 99 mailings or the best new work of today's FAPAns. An index or other research project would interest a dozen of us oldtimers and a few collectors in the organization. But it wouldn't be worth the hard work to perhaps two-thirds of the membership. We'd better decide pretty quick if we intend to produce something. There is a curse on fan photo projects, incidentally. They almost never reach completion. '' The Hornblower novels were serialized in Argosy around the start of World War Two. At least three of them appeared there. '' Why shouldn't Taurasi believe the sf. magazines' circulation figures? They've been published in the Ayers directory year after year. '' I hope that Polly is better by now and that she now feels as I do about small cars: they lose when they tangle with big ones. Tau Ceti Reprints: This is new to me and fascinating for the thoughts it inspires about the present value and scarcity of most of the items it lists. Probably you couldn't collect more than half of this stuff today by advertising for it on the open market, no matter what prices you wanted to pay. And what ever happened to those discussions about a listing of approximate values for rare stuff, similar to the Scott postage stamp catalog? A Propos de Rien: The whole nation would benefit from government subsidized symphony orchestras. It is possible for these establishments to travel from city to city and to make phonograph records, you know. The nation pays the salaries for countless thousands of musicians in military services, and there's no reason why some of this cash shouldn't go to provide a better grade of music. '' I suspect that New Orleans' position in the 19th century as a home of opera performances and other forms of music had more to do with establishment of the art which led to jazz than the brothels. The latter existed in every American city. Logarithmic: I long for the days when mailing comments didn't predominate, too. I've always kept them down to less than half the contents of Horizons. Creation of IPSO, which officially frowns on mailing comments, might be a sign that their popularity is waning. Fzot Laws of Perversity: For me, several laws were amended during 1960. I'd rephrase them this way: Anything that could go wrong has already gone wrong. Things that can't possibly go wrong are in the process of going wrong. A BCD Fanzine Primer: Please, please, let's not have any more mention of these things for the next ten years in FAPA. The topic wasn't



very interesting at the start and grew duller rapidly. Horizons: Dick Eney provided the cover, not Jean Young as the interior would cause you to believe. ' ' Just in case "In Glass Houses" produces some comments in this mailing, I had better explain that I hardly cheated at all. Lewis Carroll's amateur magazines were not duplicated publications but one-copy handwritten efforts, a circumstance which I kept silent about. The titles are correct, except for The Rosebud, which I couldn't help citing as Rosebud. I suppose that I used in the conversations a few words that were not utilized in such senses in England of the 1860's. Otherwise, it's all out of the biographies and memoirs. Ice Age: Apparently I wasn't the only person who had an exciting Christmas Eve. ' ' Robert J. Shea's article stands as a beautiful example of how many persons will suffer untold trouble, simply because they can't realize that there is nothing sacred about an organization. This fraternity and the NFFF are in essentially the same position as most PTA's. ' ' Science hasn't perfected anesthetics, by any means. A spinal is uncomfortable to take and your head blows up if you raise it for two or three days. The stuff that is squirted into your vein nauseates most persons severely. No general anesthetic is really safe for a confirmed diabetic. Descant: Welcome to the club of unacknowledged humorists. I'll never forget the reaction when I wondered whether people in South America can get used to warm weather for Christmas. ' ' The Presidential Hour may not wait until 1984 to arrive. Television networks in this country are as bad as Russia's airwaves, the way they dramatize and repeat the most unimportant Kennedy announcements and news conferences. Lighthouse: It is ridiculous for me to take up for Sam Moskowitz just now. But I should point out that his messy manuscripts and his hiring a typist are at least partially the result of very poor vision. Of course, Mark Twain said that a man who always spells a word the same way displays a lack of imagination. ' ' The first few issues of Horizons were sold generally, didn't circulate in FAPA, and consisted almost entirely of fiction. I started the magazine because I didn't have the heart to reject a couple of very long, inferior stories by a nice middle-aged housewife who was so proud of them. ' ' I think that prison industries and farms generally are confined to producing things that the state can use, and mustn't sell to the general public to prevent conflict with private enterprise. The reformatory just outside Hagerstown raises food for all Maryland penal institutions, rebinds books for county libraries, crushes stone for road projects, and manufactures auto license tags. ' ' Women probably have that age secrecy because the female's ability to bear children ends sooner and more abruptly than the male's potency. ' ' I don't know any policemen who have a position of power over other people. Cops are so restricted by influential citizens, corrupt politicians, slick lawyers and lack of manpower that their lot is not a happy one. No conscientious policeman wants to spend his time tagging autos and putting kids to bed, but he's inhibited from doing the things that really need to be done. Day\*Star: Year's End is the finest poem in FAPA for many years. I have some doubts about the risk of that last rhyme, but can't find any other flaw or commonplace in the entire sonnet. Winter Quarters: You seem to equate castrato and countertenor. There's quite a difference, physically and audibly. ' ' I would think Britain to be the logical site for Norma. Rebellion



against Rome would be more probable in the far-distant land than just across the mountains. Revoltin' Development: That must be an expensive hobby, if each Packard requires registration and tags and the operative ones get insured each year. ' ' I'd guess that not more than one-fifth the FAPA roster are interested in shooting guns. Just a case of lots of noise from the ones who do possess this hobby. Lark: School kids aren't pampered with free bus service around here. The buses mustn't pick up any child who lives within a mile of the school in rural areas, or within the city limits in Hagerstown. This means a hike of more than two miles for some city kids in high school. ' ' I have the Auvergne disc and treasure it very much. ' ' Even the factory-sealed records usually need some cleaning when opened, because of bits of lint or dust stuck tight by static electricity. Chesterfield opens them, cleans them, and neutralizes the charge. ' ' Parts of Pennsylvania still retain local blue laws against Sunday movies, including Antrim Township just north of Hagerstown where one of the biggest drive-in theaters in the state is being strangled by this restriction and a tremendous annual license fee. The management fought the law in the courts for two years and lost. The Honeymooners: This was educational to me. I didn't know that the Moskowitzes were mad at Ricky Slavin, too. Phlotsam: Didn't you mean that the radium was supposed to have withered, not whenced, to your thyroid? ' ' I'll bet those bargain films are chopped up mercilessly by television stations that first edited them to fit a specified length of time, then amputated more two-minute hunks for commercials. ' ' I've never thought it funny to lie to visitors with evangelistic purposes or to poie fun at them. I answer their questions truthfully and they go away soon. Egoboo for You: It's nice to know that I was able to do pretty well without spending any more to buy votes with than last year. Retention of the new point system might be advisable, just in case this new feature was the cause of the record participation. If we adopt the SAPS restriction on the maximum number of votes to any individual, there wouldn't be much opportunity to reward outstanding performance in any category and the result would be quite similar to the old order-of-excellence system. Instead I would like to see us copy SAPS by consolidation into one category of this confusing trinity, editor, layout and makeup, and publication. Three-Chambered Heart Record prices get run up because of the cuts that go to the artists, transportation, jobbers, retailers, and promotion. ' ' All Our Yesterdays wouldn't really fit the fan history. The title is suitable for a series on defunct fanzines and other projects. Fandom will still be alive after I'm done chronicling, I hope. My accident has delayed research by some six months. Fandom must not get impatient about this. Look how long the Roman empire was forced to wait on Gibbon. Melange: That odd typescript becomes very easy to read with a little practice. I don't think it looks right if used on the same stencil with another style of type. ' ' I saw fragments from The Black Pirate on Silents Please last night. It was apparently projected too fast, the faces had washed out almost completely somewhere between the original and the television screen, and this basically good program idea has been all but ruined by lack of time, now that there are both commercials and explanations between clips. The added sound effects are another nuisance. The program should be long enough to accommo-



date features, or it should stick to complete short subjects. '' The internal revenue people no longer are easy with waitresses about tips. There is a schedule of average tip income which must be used by girls who fail to keep track of gratuities. Stefantasy: A vigorous second to the remarks on incautious use of the back covers of fanzines. I wouldn't mind a scrap with postal inspectors if I ordered something that they considered unfit to go through the mails, but I certainly can't see the point in stirring up trouble just for the sake of a witticism. '' I suppose it is coincidence that the item in The Feather Bed about people who put incomplete instructions on their mail appeared in the mailing where Marion Bradley forgot to put the name of her town on the Fantasy Amateur's return address. Directory of 1960 S.F. Fandom: The usual hearty though inadequate cheers for this valuable product. I seem to detect a bit more space for scribbling in corrections this year, which is very good. I'm still equipped with all three speeds for tape recorder correspondence, although the symbols somehow got dropped after my address this year. Helen's Fantasia: I've been mightily irritated at times by Perdue's subterfuges to retain his FAPA membership. But it still isn't right to say that he has never carried his load in FAPA. He turned in a couple of years of efficient and hard work as official editor, most of the time without any help because he was isolated in Wyoming, he took part in a blitz that kept FAPA alive at a moment when it was uttering death rattles, and his activity output in the late '30's and early '40's was quite imposing. Kteic Magazine: I suppose that I'm spoiled. I miss the all-out frankness of the carbon-copied Kteics. '' Those guys who were starting a new syndiaate must be birds in the newspaper woods. Newspapers pay for comics at a graduate rate, depending on circulation. But they pay a weekly rate, not a daily rate, and if they're aiming at small newspapers, their proposed prices are fantastically high. The local morning paper with a circulation in the neighborhood of 10,000 copies can get the very best comics for \$2.50 or \$3 per week, and wouldn't be expected to pay anything approaching that sum for a new, unknown strip. Newspapers can even get comics free, by agreeing to run some small advertisements in trade. '' Here's another back cover that is unnecessarily risky. Anybody in the post office who noticed the references on it to naked women and sextet movies might cause the truce between Bill Rotsler and the Post Office Department to be broken. Bandwagon: An Age of Kings is one of the few things I've watched on television during convalescence. I appreciate the chance to see some Shakespeare, but it is disappointing in many ways. The sound is very poor, some lines are fumbled badly and not corrected even though the series is taped, and the plays are cut mercilessly. This cutting has taken away most of the characterization and left behind only the politics. However, Terry Scully is really magnificent as ~~Aspen~~ Henry VI. '' I wonder if your mailing got lost because the label came off the envelope. The label on mine was just attached by one corner upon arrival. It might be safer to write the address directly onto the jiffybag. '' Adventure stories with futuristic props might be most conveniently referred to as future fiction. Science fiction would be reserved for stories which could not easily be transferred to the Sahara or Oklahoma Territory by simple substitution of implements and settings. Le Moindre: So United States residents aren't allowed to own gold?



Women are certainly brazen, the way they go around flaunting their contraband wedding rings. '' What makes you think that most FAPA members are uninterested in the theater? I can think of at least a dozen members who have been active in amateur dramatics, a dozen more who comment from time to time on professional productions, and nobody who has expressed disinterest in the topic. Bjottings: It has been an exciting winter for quite a few of us. This was a most pleasant way to catch up on what has been happening to the Trimble's. The Lurking Shadow: I've always been leery of these efforts to find confirmation by outside evidence for Biblical events. The astronomical explanation of the wise men's star doesn't explain why this unusual phenomenon failed to impress anyone else in the civilized world of the time, just as there is no other description of the earthquake and darkening of the sun that allegedly occurred at the crucifixion. And is it really possible that the Romans required their subjects to travel for days and days to be counted in this census? Certainly the census was taken then in about the same manner as today, with individuals supplying the information at their place of current residence. Idle Hands: I strongly doubt that Germany would have been whipped by the Allies, if the Allies had joined that nation first in a war against Russia. The type of totalitarianism that Germany possessed would have fitted quite well into the monopolistic desires of many American bigshots and I think that we would have ended up as a nation with approximately the same form of government as Germany and Italy, getting along quite well with them. Russia is hated and feared much more than Germany ever was, simply because the wealth really gets redistributed where communism takes control. '' Strange how a fanzine hall of fame has occurred to so many writers almost simultaneously. If something is to be done about it, first we should decide the basis for inclusion: fame or quality? The Science Fiction Fan was a famous fanzine that had very poor quality throughout its history, and The Ghost was a remarkably good fanzine that almost nobody remembers. '' You should read through a complete catalog of Sibelius' published works some time. At least two-thirds of them are absolute trash, almost never performed in this country. They are salon pieces, the Finnish equivalent to The Last Hope and Salut d'Amour. '' I saw once in The Postal Bulletin the leeway given employees for getting mail out of the post offices. I think that it was three days for first class mail, a week for other classes. Newspapers and big-circulation magazines get special treatment, of course. Pariah: If you want to see the awesome possibilities in the memory-jogging of a taste remembered from childhood, read Remembrance of Things Past. '' Letting the convicted person choose between life imprisonment or convenient and painless suicide seems like a sensible solution of the problem. Spinnaker Reach: I hope that someone takes over the shadow mailing formalities. The increased waiting list standards should perk up the project. '' It seems to me that it was Russell Chauvenet himself who invented many years ago the way to improvise certain accent marks on typewriters with underprivileged keyboards. You combine the letter with the right parenthesis, like & or &. '' Apologies to anyone whose magazine I may have overlooked. FAPA publications lived a perilous life in the Washington County Hospital. So did all fanzines, for that matter. I almost didn't get a couple of issues of Void; nurses mistook it for a medical item.



## Der Fall Warner

In olden days, cataclysmic events involving emperors and nations were always accompanied by portents and omens. Eclipses must have occurred on a fortnightly schedule in the days when the Greeks and the Romans were at their height, judging by the monotonous and unimaginative way in which an assassination or birth came at the time of a solar or lunar blackout. Since I am not a great man, I was supplied with only a few second-rate omens late in 1960. These consisted mostly of some conversations with fan friends in letters and on tapes about what I would do in case of complete incapacitation and a pulled hamstring muscle in the right leg that was mentioned in the last Horizons. There were a few prophecies from fellow workers at the newspaper office about the fate that awaited me, late last fall, but they don't really count. They wouldn't have been oracled if I hadn't caused them. Other reporters warned that someone up there might shove me back at Hallowe'en, when I was observed in a lunchroom eating pumpkin pie. When asked what I was doing, I gave a reply that seemed to me to repay the senselessness of the question: I said that I was having eucharist with the Great Pumpkin.

So some people weren't as surprised as I was, at the event that occurred at twilight on Christmas Eve. As far as I can remember, it was just about at this point in Advent that Scrooge saw the first evidence that something of the spirit of Marley was mingling with the Christmas spirit. But I can conscientiously claim that I hadn't said humbug even once on Christmas Eve, I had not turned out into the cold anyone requesting money for charity (and had not in fact been asked by anyone to give money for charity) and I had succumbed sufficiently to the yuletide traditions to have walked halfway across town, delivering and picking up Christmas presents to and from relatives. It was dusk, I was crossing the icy street at the corner a half-block from my home, when I broke my hip and settled one question that had been worrying me all day: where would I eat Christmas dinner on the first yuletide that found me living alone?

Three months after my fall, I can't be sure what happened. I don't remember falling. I ascribed this to the mental short-circuit effect that often affects persons involved in automobile crashes, wiping out the recollection of the few seconds before the impact. I usually cross Summit Avenue directly opposite my home, because jaywalking at this point avoids the danger of getting hit by a car turning in from the side street. But there was a foot of snow on the ground, I was wearing overshoes rather than galoshes, and to cross at the house would have meant getting wet feet from the depth of snow in the little grassy strips between sidewalk and curb on both sides of the street. My first awareness of the fall occurred when I found myself lying flat on the white Christmas, looking up into the violet sky and trying to get my breath.

I suppose that I simply slipped on the ice of the street. But just a week or two ago, it occurred to me that I might have fainted without warning, halfway across the street. That would account for the loss of memory, for the fact that I got hurt this time after suffering nothing worse than bruises in numerous previous falls on the ice, and for my apparent failure to break the tumble with my hands. I must have made a one-point landing, because there wasn't any sign of a bruise or abrasion anywhere on



the body, except on the left hip. I have a habit of fainting unexpectedly and inexplicably once every eight or ten years. But in the past, these swoons had always come with a moment of nausea or giddiness as a warning. That hamstring muscle is another possible culprit. It might have given up when I took that fatal step. Nobody is ever likely to know exactly what happened.

Days later, I realized how fortunate I was in certain ways. I fell directly into the path of traffic on a fairly busy street, on a slight slope, wearing a dark overcoat, on a night when many drivers had been drinking. I could easily have been squashed by an oncoming vehicle that was unable to stop in time on the icy surface, even if the driver had seen me lying there. Or the fall could have occurred on my way home from work around 1 a.m., a time of night when foot and vehicular use of Summit Avenue is so skimpy that I might have lain helpless in subfreezing temperature for an hour or so before help came. And if I hadn't fallen at all, I might have suffered a heart attack shoveling the interminable series of blizzards that hit this part of the nation during the first weeks of 1961.

Fulfilling the role of Christmas Present was a total stranger, whose name I learned later to be Gerald Nicodemus. By a plot twist that no self-respecting writer would dare to use in a story, Gerald was a few hundred feet away because he had been unable to purchase a Christmas tree at the place he had visited in the near vicinity, and he was hunting another vendor in the neighborhood. He got to me seconds after I fell, before traffic could arrive. And to compound the implausibility of the situation, Gerald is an orderly at Western Maryland State Hospital just outside Hagerstown. This is an institution that specializes in care of long-term injuries like broken hips. I was imitating a partially squashed bug in unsuccessful efforts to get up, when Gerald reached me. He got me to my feet in a manner calculated to avoid worsening any injury that I might have sustained, he believed me when I announced after two trials that I couldn't walk, and with the help of another by-passer he carried me into the corner drugstore without compounding the fracture.

At this moment, I began to experience a strange duality of mental processes. The pain was imposingly fierce, I was moaning in the most disconcerting manner, it was impossible to find a comfortable position on the bench where I had been deposited, the heat and noise in the store inspired a strong desire to puke, and I was more frightened than I can express by the danger that I might have to undergo permanent lameness or an endless period of incapacitation. But simultaneously with these animal-like reactions, I was experiencing a quite coherent and almost impersonal kind of mental activity that had nothing to do with these primitive reactions. I can remember clearly my relief at realizing that no aunt or cousin would be angry because I had indulged in Christmas dinner at the home of another relative. I wondered abstractedly whether there was anything breakable in the shopping bag filled with Christmas gifts which I had been carrying when I fell. There was a pang of embarrassment when I remembered that I had decided that very moment to wear for one last time an undershirt that contained an enormous hole on the right side. I wondered abstractedly whether I would catch pneumonia promptly and die within a few days, and for the first time in my life, I comprehended the enormity of what occurs when an individual dies: the manner in which he sends



into irretrievable oblivion a set of memories that is unique in the universe, the billions of humans whose lives are suddenly removed from all possibility of influence on his part, the fact that he will not see the next evening the light from a nebula that began its journey toward his eyes a frightening number of lightcenturies ago.

This dual sort of consciousness lasted for the next couple of days, to some extent, although occasionally the coherent or the involuntary process would get the ascendancy over the other for an hour or two. But meanwhile, back at the drugstore, I was lucky. The ambulance came within five minutes, the crew was a good one that got me onto a stretcher without excessive motion, and the driver restrained his impulse to be dramatic by driving at a sensible rate of speed to avoid too much jostling on the bumpy frozen surface of the streets.

Miriam Carr has described the stupidities that she encountered at a hospital's emergency room, after she bumped her head badly. I expected even worse, because years of newspaper work have left me with no illusions about the fallibility of hospital workers. But once again, the rates seemed to have the Christmas spirit and displayed goodwill to me. An X-ray technician was ready for me as soon as we reached the hospital, my doctor arrived two or three minutes later, and a surgeon showed up just an instant later. It's nice to live in a town where the ambulance service has radio communication with headquarters, so that the right medical men can be notified instantly.

"It's broken," I sighed to the technician as they hoisted me onto his table. "The last man who said that walked out of here a halfhour later," he said. "You want to bet?" Unfortunately, he didn't; I could have used the money. A quarter-hour later, the doctors confirmed my diagnosis. "You'll be here a couple of months," they told me. I regret to say that my immediate reaction was a silly one: anger at myself for failure to purchase a good transistor radio at which I had been looking in a local store, earlier in the day. I had been considering the purchase of an AM-FM set as a Christmas gift for myself, had taken enough money along with me, but the clerk in that department was busy with someone else, and I didn't wait. I realized now how useful such a radio would be to me, a realization that must have recurred to my mind ten thousand times in each of the ten weeks that followed. In the future, I yield to impulses, even if it takes a little time.

Meanwhile, I had discovered one important fact: I got along a little better if I kept my eyes closed. An injection even before the doctors had read the X-rays had eased my pains a trifle, but I suddenly got a premonition that something spectacular was beginning. I peeked for an instant and yelled for help. My right leg, the one that had the bad hamstring muscle but hadn't suffered from the fall, had suddenly come to life. This life seemed to be ruled by a demon with a poltergeistish tendency, because the leg was beginning to twitch and jerk uncontrollably. It took a nurse and a male attendant to hold it down until the muscle spasm had run its course.

This was the first time that I had been a patient in a hospital since my birth. It also represented the first physical difficulty serious enough to keep me in bed for 17 years, the first broken bone in my life, and the first disability in my ex-



perience which had not given me enough advance warning to prepare mentally for the siege ahead. Even so, I got some sleep that night with the aid of morphine.

Christmas Day is a weird mixture of memories for me. Part of the time I was out cold from injections. Once I woke to find Santa at my bedside, trying to stuff a candy bar into my mouth. A nurse got rid of this dispenser of holiday cheer, I dozed off for another moment, and powie, a dozen girls with exceptional lungs began to parade up and down the corridors of the floor, singing Christmas carols. My Christmas dinner consisted of one-half of a block of icecream, which settled the dispute that had been raging in me all day over whether or not I wanted to throw up. The outcome was so impressive that I got a couple of bottles of intervenous solution, a treatment that frightened me more than anything else that occurred during the entire hospital stay. In mid-afternoon, Dr. Sprecher removed the temporary splint and rigged me up in traction. The operating room was closed because of the holiday, the eighth floor where I was bedded down was nearly empty of patients because only the very sick had been kept in the hospital over Christmas, so he borrowed two of the eighth floor nurses to help him. This was pretty hard on the nurses, who were inured to sickness and death but weren't accustomed to take part in bone-drilling activities. One of them was so shaken that her hands weren't steady enough to adjust my feeding apparatus. Fortunately, novacaine in my leg, generous use of my eyelids, and general exhaustion combined to make this hour-long procedure quite easy for me. I didn't like some of the noises, and I never did figure out what the surgeon was doing with the forceps which he kept requesting, but I'm pretty sure that I didn't feel any real pain. In fact, I didn't know what he had done until it was all over. Instead of pinning the hip at the point of the fracture, he had simply fastened me into traction with a pin through my leg just below the knee. Pin is the official term for the device, although there were the times in following weeks when I decided that it must be an overgrown telephone pole. Three relatives were in the room talking with me during this operation. A week later, they told me that I had been cheerful and coherent, but I have no memory of their presence.

On Christmas evening, I waited for the ego to win temporary victory over the id, and in an inspired hour I accomplished a feat which I still can't believe possible, considering my condition. I borrowed a pencil from the desk, got my notebook, and filled four or five pages with instructions on things that had to be done, concerning my house, my job, and fandom. This was the momentary type of inspiration that in other men has resulted in the invention of the wheel or creation of a great poem. Remember, I was so dazed and weak that I didn't even realize that pen and pencil were in my coat pocket at the side of my bed. Yet I included in those scribbled lines accurate and complete information on everything that really counted. I didn't have to supplement the instructions in the days that followed, and they were clear enough to the aunt who took charge to enable her to find keys, notify people, and carry out other necessary functions without further consultation with me.

By another apparent premonition, I had completed the proof-reading and corrections on the stencils for the winter Horizons just 48 hours before my fall. During that hour of lucidity, I re-



called with certainty the full address of just one fan, Dick Eney. I scrawled a note to him, asking him to help me locate a means of getting the stencils run off in time for the February mailing. I certainly didn't want my string of consecutive deadlines met to be broken by a little thing like a broken hip. Dick immediately provided the first in a long series of kindnesses and good deeds for me by volunteering to run off and assemble Horizons himself. There will be more about Dick's nobility and service later on; for the time being, please allow me to break a Warner tradition of neutrality in TAFF races by announcing that the least I can do to express my gratitude for his services rendered is to proclaim:

DICK ENEY FOR TAFF!

I have always suspected that some of the preparations that are being made today for space flight are useless rituals designed solely to spend money or to make the public believe that things are being accomplished during periods of failure. The conditioning program for future astronauts in progress in this country had always looked particularly suspicious to me. My own stay in traction and the things that I observed in the hospital confirmed the suppositions. We are being led to believe that it is necessary for men to practice long hours or days of lack of motion, crowded or cramped surroundings, and mental strain, so that they may later possess the ability to withstand the rigors of long trips through space. I am now convinced that this is utter hogwash, a sort of featherbedding to give the taxpayers an apparent return on the dollars that are going into the space program. Please understand, I don't pretend to be a real martyr; the eight weeks that I spent in traction were a mild penance, compared with the cross that some invalids bear for year after year. But I am particularly unfit for this kind of existence. I can't stand idleness, am accustomed to have my own way in the little things in life, and had no time to prepare for what lay ahead. Yet I adjusted without any real mental or physical strain to eight weeks in which my motion was limited to about two inches in any direction on the bed, my environment was restricted to the four walls of the room and part of a city skyline out the window, and the only familiar objects were the contents of my pockets and my wristwatch. And I was lucky; quite ordinary individuals who have not been handpicked with great publicity for their ability to stand the terrors of isolation and confinement have remained cheerful and alert after years of the kind of imprisonment that paralysis can create.

However, it is true that there are certain ways in which a long period of confinement may be made easier on the nerves and spirits. Looking over the FAPA roster, I would estimate that at least half of my readers are in no particular danger with respect to this, because they are married or living at home with immediate relatives who know them well enough to anticipate needs and problems. But for those in my audience who are in situations somewhat like mine, partially or wholly alone in the world, I would urgently advise certain preparations right now, while you are healthy, to smooth the path of convalescence in case trouble should arrive. I don't mean that you should save your money for a rainy day, because you can always wangle some kind of credit or free care for yourself, but you should attend now to things like these:

Get that transistorized radio, unless you plan to get sick in a metropolitan area where wallsocket sets will pick up plenty



of local stations. Hospitals contain too many fluorescent lights and large machines to permit AM reception of distant stations, and FM reception in Hagerstown is difficult without a good antenna. Two roommates brought tube-type battery radios to the hospital and suffered exhausted batteries before they were discharged. I suffered more acutely from inability to hear good music and sports on the radio than from any other non-physical trouble.

Buy several dozen four-cent stamps and save them for use in the hospital. Ten friends will bring you stationery as soon as you enter the institution but nobody will bring stamps and everyone to whom you give money to buy stamps will fail to remember them for two or three weeks. Maybe some hospitals sell stamps in vending machines, but you'd better not take a chance. Put with the stamps the names and addresses of persons you'll want to contact if you're laid up, and those who should be notified if you're unable to write them.

With the radio, stamps and addresses, put three or four long books that you've wanted to read but never found time to tackle. I got plenty of reading matter while in the hospital, but most of it consisted of books and magazines wildly unsuited for a person of my age and interests. It was three weeks before I managed to steer a relative to the right piles of books in my house, so she could bring what I wanted to the hospital.

Another useful accessory to put with this doomsday assortment is something I didn't realize I needed until it was time to come home. This consists of one of the little blindfolds that covers your eyes and hook onto your ears. At first you think that you aren't going to sleep during the day in the hospital, so you'll be able to sleep soundly at night, but after a few weeks you begin to understand that you've scored a victory over time whenever you have slept, be it day or night, and something to shut out window-light is useful. Besides, you might get one of those roommates who keep turning on the light repeatedly during the night to see what time it is.

Finally, make your will, unless your family situation is such that there would be no legal doubt about the identity of your heir. I'm not rich, but I have some money in bank and my father's estate hasn't been settled yet and it's dreadful to think of the mess that the courts would have had, to try to figure out how my stuff should be divided among aunts, uncles, cousins, and grandmother.

The eighth floor of the Washington County Hospital contains 25 rooms, most of them designed for two or more patients. Only eight patients inhabited the floor on Christmas Day, and I had a semi-private room all to myself during the first four days of hospitalization. But the operations and observations began in quantity pretty soon, and after that I was never alone for as long as 24 consecutive hours. There were seven roommates, altogether. In a way, I was lucky, because none of them had repulsive habits or was critically ill. But they taught me several valuable lessons. Most important, perhaps, was the realization that I am not the world's champion worrier over things, after all. Two of my roommates achieved wonders of concern with their condition far beyond my own powers. One 20-year-old, in fact, actually suffered a relapse on the morning when he was scheduled to be discharged, because he convinced himself that to obtain the discharge he would need to undergo all the tests and examinations again that he had



already received during a week's hospitalization. Less important but even more flattering was the discovery that I look younger than I am. None of the seven roommates believed me when I insisted that I'm 38, claiming that I was five to ten years younger. It was less pleasant to see the depressingly low level of mental activity possessed by average Americans. This was the first time that I had even been thrown into intimate and constant contact with people on a completely random basis, with no control over my companionship. I don't pretend to be a brilliant conversationalist, and I certainly emit enough platitudes and cliches when chatting to satisfy almost anyone. But most of these seven roommates indulged in chitterchatter whose nature was utterly new to me. One of them, for instance, would strike up a conversation several times each hour like this: "Well, it's ten minutes after ten." I quickly found that there were only three or four replies that were acceptable to him, such as "It's a slow morning" or "Y ep, time's going fast" or "Not too much longer till we eat". If I said anything remotely original as a reply, he thought that I was being impertinent. If I remained silent or just grunted in assent, I was being unsociable and churlish. One 14-year-old boy might have come out of "No Tie for Sergeants". He stopped eating a meal because when he asked me about the half-sphere on his salad, I told him it was part of a mothball and he believed me. He didn't know the meaning of the word "exhausted". One man was totally unable to pronounce and remember any word that he didn't use regularly. I had to explain to a dozen of his visitors daily the fact that he was suffering from phlebitis.

It didn't take long to discover that most hospital employees fall into the same category as waitresses: people who do very necessary but hard and nasty work, and don't get paid enough for it. You can get some idea of Hagerstown's present job situation by the fact that nurses' aides are paid \$34 per week and there are always three or four applicants for every vacancy on the staff. The local hospital suffers chronically from a shortage of orderlies, who have a phenomenal ability for getting sick themselves, and are drunk half the time they are healthy. On several occasions during those ten weeks in the hospital, there was only one orderly on duty for the entire eight-floor, 350-room building. Pay for orderlies varies depending on length of service but it's very low. One fellow was quitting about the time of my discharge because he couldn't support himself, a wife and baby on \$84 paid twice monthly. The nurses are a little better off. Registered nurses on the floor get \$14 for an eight-hour day, and those who prefer more money but less certain schedules draw down \$16 as private duty nurses. Another consolation to me was the discovery that the news staff of the local newspapers is a model of consistent scheduling and regularity in reporting for duty, compared with the hospital. Hospital employees work a five-day week, but a stark, raving idiot somewhere in the bowels of the building draws up this schedule, so that no employe can be sure whether he will work seven or three days in the following week; the offdays get skipped and pile up, but always reach the correct total over a three-month period. Office politics and feuding is another category in which the newspaper office recedes into insignificance, compared with that eighth floor of the hospital. The only reason for regret at getting discharged was my inability to follow the progress of a sizzling vendetta among the nurses on the



floor. It began mildly enough one morning when Dr. Novenstein was unable to find a cake of soap at the nurses' station. By the time I left, the aftermath had expanded to suck in visiting preachers, cleaning women, several patients, and the nearby school or nursing. It was terrifying to see the nurses who had been spitting and clawing at one another all day long suddenly pack themselves into a compact mass in the small elevator at the stroke of 3. Nobody could ever be sure that the shift-ending truce would survive the 30-second ride to the bottom, or what might be found when the door opened the first time tempers flared in there.

Fortunately, not all of the eighth floor personnel were total strangers. The aide on the night shift is my aunt's husband's sister. The wife of one of the composing room workers at the newspaper is a nurse on the day shift, and won the honor of cutting my toenails. Another nurse, Mrs. McGinniss, was vaguely familiar because I'd taken pictures of her sons in various scouting functions. She was famous throughout the floor for the way in which her pet remark could be analyzed to learn just how ill a person was. If she said to you "Don't worry about it" in a normal, conversational tone, you could be certain that your latest ache or premonition was a trifle that could be safely forgotten. If "Don't worry about it" was spoken in a somewhat strained, higher pitch, you knew that something had really gone wrong, but you were in good hands and could follow her advice. Once or twice a week, we would hear Mrs. McGinniss shouting from some part of the floor to a patient at the top of her lungs: "Don't worry about it!" We would roll over and try to go to sleep, and then the next morning we would look at the obituary column of the newspaper, and sure enough, another patient on the floor had just died.

An entire essay could be written on hospital humor. There are the inevitable bright remarks. At least a dozen times a day I was the subject of bright quips by visitors, patients or staff members about how I'd have to pick out a pretty nurse and get married while I was out here. This advice was complicated by the fact that every nurse on duty on the floor is married and most of them have at least five children. The only liaison that helpful people could try to promote for me was with an aide named Elouise. She is 24, has had a quite adventurous life that includes residence in almost every corner of the United States, and used to work for Western Union. She is also famous for cold hands, a decided handicap at backrubbing time. However, about halfway through my convalescence Elouise went to the cafeteria during her lunch time, fell over at the door, and immediately became a hospital patient herself. They kept her under sedatives for almost a week making tests, then sent her to her home in Virginia and that's the last anyone heard of her. It put a damper on those plans for me. Then I got myself into a real mess by telling a few things that the wall said to the ceiling. Apparently this form of humor was new to the hospital. The standard gags were very successful, like "See you at the corner" and "Let's get plastered". So I found myself expected to produce a brand new one every morning. I soon ran out of the ones I knew, and it got to be a real strain to satisfy my public with newly invented ones like "Don't fall off the roof" or "You're really on the beam" or "Why don't we try a new angle".



Meanwhile, I was convalescing pretty much on schedule. I developed only one bedsore, about which I do not plan to go into detail, except to assure the feminine members of FAPA that they won't need to worry about getting one there, should they be so unfortunate enough as to break a hip. The only other complication occurred about two weeks later, in the form of an impacted bowel. I had an uncomfortable four hours, but after the doctor and two orderlies were finished with me, I felt sorryer for Dr. Sprecher than for myself. He kept wandering around in a Hamlet-like attitude of self-reproach, scolding himself over and over: "I should have stuck a finger up there days ago, I know I should have." At the end of eight weeks, Dr. Sprecher towed into my room an enormous cart of wicked-looking instruments and liquids and one small nurse. He announced that he was going to take me out of traction. I lapsed into my escapist syndrome, which consisted of wedging one arm over my eyes to avoid any danger of seeing something and stiffening every muscle to the rigidity of steel. The agony of waiting bested me after a quarter-hour, I begged him to start as soon as possible, and with a chuckle he told me that he was finished. That thing had been yanked out of my leg so slickly that I didn't feel a thing and the traction apparatus was gone. (I had never trusted that traction mechanism since about one week after my fall. A cleaning woman brushed against a weight, the shock loosened a screw, and suddenly pulleys began to whine, weights crashed down, and guywires whipped loose. Providentially, the only thing that held firm was the rope that maintained my leg in orbit, so the damage was confined to my nerves.) The next day, I was measured for crutches, and the day after that I was presented with a pair that might have been about right for Goliath. "They always measure patients wrong," Dr. Sprecher consoled me, asking for a pair of half that height. I took my first steps of the year in the new pair, getting halfway across the room and back, and immediately got permission to sit up in a wheelchair. This brought about the oddest experience of my hospital stay. They wheeled me to the nurses' station, representing the first time in two months I had been outside that room. I felt as if I had just landed on Mars, because all around me where medicine cabinets, oxygen tanks, doors leading to other rooms, a laundry chute, flashing lights, and assorted nurses and aides. I had known in theory that I was in a hospital, all during the past two months, but I hadn't seen any real evidence of that fact except my room until this moment. I began to feel more and more excited and confused at the activity around me. A nurse saw me turning green and hustled me back to my room in the nick of time, before I passed out. The next day, I felt just fine out in the wide world beyond my door. I practised on crutches twice a day, with an orderly as escort, and soon was able to trudge all the way down the corridor and back.

By this time, I was certain of one thing. I would never be able to say thankyou or write notes to all the people who were kind to me during those long weeks. I made one feeble effort to acknowledge all kindnesses, saw that I'd never be able to keep up, and felt unspeakably low and vicious at my decision to limit thankyou notes to persons who had spent at least five bucks on me in gifts or services. Getwell cards cascaded into my room in awe-inspiring quantities. Fans with whom I'd never had any contact took the time and trouble to send me cards or write me notes.



Local persons whom I regarded as the most casual business acquaintances metamorphosed into angels of mercy in various ways, paying weekly visits to my room or insisting on running all sorts of time-consuming errands. Particularly astonishing was the way in which I was remembered by organizations to which I've never belonged. Flowers came from such diverse groups as the Hagerstown Playground Committee and the local forest of the Tall Cedars of Lebanon. The Teamsters Union sent three quite expensive books. The man from South Bend now in charge of the local newspapers, who hadn't spoken a dozen sentences to me since coming to Hagerstown, made me four lengthy visits, each time by some mischance arriving while I was on the bedpan. I'd be a wealthy man right now, if I'd accepted all the money-lending offers from relatives and friends who thought I'd have to work my way out of the hospital. Dick Eney, as already mentioned, unearthed somewhere enough time from a schedule crowded with work, study and fanaticism to run off the last Horizons, has promised to do this one, made a long distance telephone inquiry into the situation as soon as he heard the news, drove over the newly formed Potomac River Valley Glacier to visit my bed of pain one Sunday evening, and made it possible for me to read the complete winter SAPS mailing, among other assorted favors. Les Gerber telephoned twice, provided me with much interesting reading matter, and wrote voluminous letters. Too many fans to mention here offered to help out with the production of Horizons. Two brave souls even were reckless enough to offer to stencil it from my scribbled manuscript, if I couldn't get to a typewriter. Then there are the fanzine editors who kept me on the mailing list while I failed to comment on issue after issue.

Theoretically, I had a lot of spare time during my convalescence. In practice, I wasted a lot of perfectly good time, and it was not the fault of anyone in particular. For several weeks, I suffered headache agonies. They stopped only after I discovered the cause: reading with my glasses on. I didn't have the strength to hold the books and magazines in the normal position, squinted down through the lower part of the lenses, and it resulted in eye-strain and pain that cut sharply into reading time. Soon after I ended this squandering of time, something else came up: mental disability. It snuck up so gradually that I didn't realize for a while that I was reading at only one-half or one-third my usual pace and barely comprehending the subject matter. When I began to forget names and events, I got scared, yelled about it to the doctor, and he decided that he was stuffing too much phenobarbital into me. He cut back the dosage by 75%, I began to feel better almost at once, but it has been only in the past two or three weeks that I've been thinking normally again. Yet I understand that some people take this stuff voluntarily and wilfully. Three hours each day went to visitors, and there was usually someone at my side during the entire time. The morning routine of washing, breakfasting, bedpan and bedclothes changing used up another two or three hours per day. Strangely, almost the entire duration of the hospitalization produced the presence of a close friend as a patient on the same floor: first an aunt who underwent a serious ulcer operation, later my boss who had plumbing troubles, and finally the mother of the newspaper's society editor who has fungus on the lungs. Visiting between patients is permitted at any time, and this meant more time devoted to talk. Lights must be put out before 10 p.m. Without a scientific study, I'd estimate that I



had less real spare time in the hospital than I normally do when I'm well and working. Remember that some of this time was sacred to skimming at least through reading matter in which I was not particularly interested, so that I could discuss it later with the donor, that ministers were likely to pop in and tell funny stories at any hour of the day or night (I know most of them by virtue of my job and some of them scented a possible conversion of spectacular proportions), that nurses and aides were endlessly interrupting me with pills and thermometers, and you'll understand why I didn't accomplish wonders of learning from the printed page. Letter-writing was even more difficult than reading. I could barely see my pen while I was writing in traction, and the result was both tiring to the author and indistinct to the reader.

When I entered the hospital, one person after another came up to me and said in hushed, reverent tones that in a way, this was a good thing because a long convalescence gives a person lots of time to think about things and to readjust any aims or ideals that may require such attention. I regret to say that nothing of the sort that was predicted had any effect on me. I left the hospital with just the same vague sort of philosophy of life that I had the day I entered it. The only way in which I feel a desire to change my habits consists of a plan to acquire better disability insurance even if it costs a lot more, then spend all of the rest of my money as fast as I earn it, instead of saving for rainy days. For one thing, it didn't rain until I'd been in the hospital for seven weeks, because of extremely low temperatures; For another, one big investment which I had felt built about, the conversion of my furnace from coal to oil, proved to be a lifesaver instead of an extravagance as I'd assumed when I spent the money last fall, and I could have used other extravagances like that transistor radio and a really reliable tape recorder.

In fact, the things that are clearest in my mind about the two months in the hospital are the little things of less intrinsic importance. I thought more about the windowsill beside me than about my chances of walking again. That windowsill served as storage spot for mail, flowers, candy, surplus food, and newspapers. Nurses from other floors heard about it and came up to look at it, my roommates kept urging me to clean it off so they could see whether it was dark or light outside, and I didn't have any other place to put the stuff. The day I went home, I paid five bucks to a couple of men with a light delivery truck, who spent two hours lugging the stuff into their vehicle to bring it to my home. There was the patient in the next room who woke at 3 a.m. on the dot daily for a while and bawled out at length the night shift nurse because his New Year's Day mashed potatoes had been cold on arrival. I grew drunk with power the morning I woke and found that I could again wiggle the toes on my left foot. I treasure the memory of some of the things that roommates said while coming up from the depths of anesthesia. One young man was really in trouble, because a blood vessel had ruptured after a routine rectal operation; while he was out from the second, emergency operation and his wife was frantic with worry, he said something that even made an orderly look embarrassed, no small achievement, and his wife threw back her head and stalked out of the room and went home. I've thought and thought and have been un-



able to think of anything that could be more insulting for a man to say in the presence of his wife. There was the old lady from my neighborhood who paid me a two-hour visit one afternoon, refused to sit down, and hovered at my side, jolting dangerously the urinal on the stand with her elbow, and then misinterpreting my anxious looks as well as its contents and suddenly insisting that I should relieve my thirst with a drink. I refuse to admit how many hours I devoted to looking out the west window after I got into a wheelchair, but I learned more about light and color in that way than I had discerned in 38 years of staring at my environment.

Dr. Sprecher had refused to estimate how long I'd be in the hospital. He raised my hopes on February 25 by asking me for a demonstration of my poise and agility on crutches, made an insulting remark when I lost my balance and almost crashed and burned, then the next morning proclaimed that I could go home as soon as I figured out how I could keep from starving to death at that location. I scoured a three-county area in an effort to find someone on short notice who would cook for me, make the bed and run errands on such short notice. When all other possibilities had proved unsatisfactory for some reason, I located the woman I want. She lives nextdoor to me. And on March 3, I went home, defying superstition in order to save some money. A local undertaker friend had offered the services of his workmen for transportation without charge.

I do not recommend living alone to a person who still has a broken hip, but it can be done. Since getting home, I've heard about another local man who achieved it without any type of aid, even cooking his own meals on a hotplate. There are difficulties, of course. I can't reach down to pick up something I've dropped. But a single sheet of paper can be retrieved by moistening the ball of the big toe on the good foot, pressing it firmly onto the paper for a moment, then raising foot and paper carefully. Larger objects may be picked up by using crutches in chopstick style. Two reels of recording tape held together with rubberbands are just the right weight for exercising muscles of the bad leg, when wrapped around the foot. Washing is possible by standing on the good leg and leaning the bad side against the sink.

I am stenciling this chronicle at the end of March, so the current situation will be outdated by weeks when the mailing deadline arrives. But it now seems almost certain that I shall not be eligible to use Tiny Tim's crutch next Christmas Eve. On March 20, I was permitted to put weight on the bad leg for the first time while walking. It gives no pain and feels strong enough for me to be confident that I shall not be lame, even if it should leave me with a limp. On April 3, I am supposed to be dividing the weight equally between the bad leg and the crutches, and more X-rays that day should show how soon I can return to work. By the time this mailing arrives, I should be caught up with letter writing and fanzine commenting. If you haven't heard from me, the silence may not be my fault. I know some mail addressed to me was lost during those hectic first days and I don't know what fannish missives may have been included in this disaster.

And Rick Sneary, what was that you said once about the manner in which nothing in particular ever happens to me?



### Whither Wollheim?

During that hospital stay, I consumed more science fiction than I had read in the past year or two put together. Some of it reached me for review purposes from publishers. Other items came as gifts from friends who knew the sort of reading matter that I occasionally prefer. Herewith some thoughts on this reading, and apologies if I mislead anyone by the title into expecting the unrelated ramblings that usually get that title. It just seemed a little more appropriate this time, because a couple of the books actually did come from DAW.

The fifth annual edition of "The Year's Best S-F" taught me several valuable lessons. It was my first extended encounter with Judith Merrill as an anthologist, and I understand now why she has been the topic of so many nasty remarks in fanzines. This book reads as if she had chosen the contents by the method sometimes utilized to get advice from the Bible: open the volume at random and read whatever your eye happens to light upon. It is also a curious thing that nowhere in this Dell edition is there a specific statement about what year's output is included. The copyright dates are mixed indiscriminately among 1958, 1959 and 1960. The introduction is dated May, 1960, but the book's publication date is January, 1961. About half of the book contains science fiction stories. The rest, despite the claim in the title, is devoted to fact articles, fantasy and weird fiction. However, it was good to get a chance to read "Flowers for Algernon", which is a good story although hardly heavyweight enough to deserve a Hugo and the hard work that someone put into a recent parody. Several stories in this collection are perfect examples of how the start of a story is frequently published today under the disguise of a story.

"Make a Prison" is a perfect example. It tells how the captors put a bem in an apparently inescapable prison, and lose the prisoner when he flies away. The ending is intended to surprise the reader, I imagine, but it merely perplexed me. This might have made a good first chapter to a story, which went on to tell why the captors did not recognize the function of wings. But a short story should be the last chapter in a longer work, not its beginning. Miss Merrill's perceptiveness as a reader is demonstrated most clearly in the note that she wrote to introduce "The Sound Sweep". This is a very funny satire, which mixes up some of the oldest chestnuts of 19th century fiction like the opera singer who won't admit she's no longer able to sing and the dumb but faithful servant who finds his ability to speak at the moment of crisis. But the solemnity of the introduction shows that the anthologist took it quite seriously, and describes it as "emotional intensification performed on a (literal) future stage-set of the past". In fact, it would be a fine game to copy off all these introductions, then persuade someone to read the stories without reading the Merrill remarks, and finally see if this person could match any introduction with the story. In most cases, I could find no relationship of any type.

"Rogue Moon" has received much fanzine attention, and it deserves it. It contains real people, an ingredient that you find in science fiction stories possibly twice a year. Their actions are not predictable but are understandable, the best test I know to determine whether the characters really possess the semblance of life. In addition, the trick of leaving the science fiction



element enshrouded in most of its mystery when the story ends is an effective one. I don't believe it has been used very often since Weinbaum proved how effective it can be. The only thing that damaged for me the effectiveness of this novel is not Budrys' fault, but rather must be blamed on the current craze for parodies in fandom. When reading a story, I find myself figuring out how these events and situations will be turned into fannish equivalents when a parody is created by this or that fan. I regret to say that this type of observation led me instantly to the realization of how much my attic and the mysterious object on the moon have in common.

Something went wrong at the bindery and my copy of Dell's Six Great Short Science Fiction Novels is incomplete. So I was spared the final ten thousand words of Project Nursemaid. To that point it seemed to contain enough material for a good ten-page story. Despite my dislike for Merrill the writer and the anthologist, I think that Dell should get much credit: it seems to be publishing the highest average quality of fiction in this country today, among the paperback producers, and this firm gives you an imposing amount of wordage for your 35¢ or 50¢. This particular collection is noteworthy for its inclusion of Rule Golden, one of Damon Knight's most thoughtful stories. When you have this book in your pocket, you're really carrying a concealed weapon in this tale.

Through the kindness of Les Gerber, I've read two of Sturgeon's latest. Much has been said about "Venus Plus X" but I have seen mention nowhere of its similarity to the much-ridiculed type of science fiction that predominated in the prozines up to 1933 or thereabouts. Except for the interludes in which today's families talk, it consists essentially of a long and detailed description for the reader's benefit of what this mysterious new environment and its people are like. About four-fifths of the way through the book, the story starts. It was lucky that I read it in the hospital, because it fitted in neatly with the closeup look I was getting at how men react toward women while under strain. Out of my seven roommates, I am positive that five believe that all women are inferior from the racial, mental and ethical standpoint. Two or three of these men seemed more at ease with a total stranger, me, than with wife or sister. "Some of Your Blood" has received a bad press in the fanzines up to now. I wonder if this reaction doesn't derive from impatience with the form in which the story is cast rather than with the slightly outrageous character who forms its central figure. Stories in which the narrative unfolds with the help of a psychiatrist should join certain famous musical compositions in the embargo which Redd Boggs has suggested for the next 50 years or so. I don't think that the complaints about the vocabulary of Bela-George are valid. He is a quite intelligent although ignorant individual, capable of creating complex traps, and the large vocabulary is explained on page 92, when the narrator speaks of "George's partial alexia--the inability to use the spoken word while he could write with such facility".

The Ace edition devoted to Fritz Leiber provided me with several sudden realizations. For one thing, I hadn't read enough Leiber in recent years to realize that some of his stories derive from the same general concept of a Change War. This is not a particularly promising basis for a series of stories, but Leiber has derived from it some of the finest and most distinctive adventure fiction since de Camp was writing pseudo-historical novels for Un-



known. Another sort of realization arrived quite suddenly. I had the oddest sensation while reading "The Big Time", as if I were being gently rocked too and fro. About halfway through the section in question, Kaby's narrative, I realized what was happening. It's all in blank verse, although printed as prose. Seabury Quinn did something of the sort in Weird Tales many years ago, but this is the first instance that I've encountered since. There is one break in the scansion, where apparently someone applied editorial shears or a typographical error occurred. And finally, it seems to me that Leiber might qualify as the most underrated or underpublicized prozine writer active today. I know that this got a Hugo, and that the author is lionized in Los Angeles fan circles on occasion. But you rarely see his name near the top in polls of favorite authors and he doesn't receive starring posts when the speakers are invited for the world conventions and his works are rarely dissected in fanzine articles. Maybe it's the fault of too long an acquaintance and too sustained a standard of excellence; it must be 20 years now that he has been writing good prozine fiction without turning out anything to attract notoriety like "Starship Soldier".

A story that should have received much more attention than it won is Brian W. Aldiss' "Houhouse" in the February F&SF. As far as I can remember, this is the first time in ten years that a brandnew story has reawakened in me the peculiar curiosity-awe-gaping-fascination-visualization complex that used to come to life with almost every other story back in the 1930's, when prozine writers weren't toosophisticated and when I hadn't been soured by the long years of Palmer-influence hackwork. This isn't particularly great writing, but it is great inventiveness, and I am sure that there has not been so carefully detailed and different a future world and civilization in several years of prozine publishing. The other important thing about this issue is the now famous denunciation by Alfred Bester of most of today's prozine writers. I don't know enough of them to pass judgment on part of his blast, the charge that the writers are inadequates and neurotics who take refuge in science fiction. But it's apparent from any prozine that Bester is right when he says that most of the authors know nothing about life, are lazy, empty, and have no adult comment to make about life. The only thing that needs to be added to Bester's little essay is a paragraph of puzzlement over the manner in which a few of the exceptions, the first-rate writers of science fiction, seem to be stuck tight in this field of writing. Heinlein and Blish are the principal examples of men who could write first-rate literature, judging by what they have achieved under the limitations imposed by the science fiction field. But they seem afraid or unwilling to venture out of the future. I wonder if it wouldn't be wiser to pronounce an embargo on efforts to determine what makes fans tick, and instead try to locate the source of the quirk that makes peopoo write science fiction.

Incidentally, I notice an advertisement in this F&SF from the Werewolf Bookshop of Verona, Pa. I am positive that this establishment has been advertising a going-out-of-business sale for the past fifteen years at least, and now I am alarmed to find no mention of such intentions. I hate proprietors of businesses who can't make up their minds.

Ted Carnell was kind enough to send along the 100th issue of New Worlds, giving me my first opportunity to see this publication



in too many years. On the basis of my skimpy recent prozine experience, I would estimate that it is publishing the best science fiction today if the quality of everything is considered, rather than specially fine individual stories. But I would like to know whether British prozines are always as mystical and deity-conscious as this issue would indicate. Half of its contents center around or end up with matters generally monopolized by religion. Brian Aldiss' "Old Hundredth" has the hymn with that nickname as a keynote, John Wyndham writes about a man who believes that he has lost his soul, E. C. Tubb's "Greater Than Infinity" is based on a theological paradox, and John Brunner in "Prerogative" introduces God himself as the *deus ex machina*.

It was shocking to discover how Galaxy has deteriorated in the year or two since I last read an issue. But instead of getting rhetorical at the expense of the fiction, I think I'll content myself with tsking at Willy Ley, whom I have always felt to be as overrated as Leiber is underrated. Some day I must dig out the wartime edition of his book about rocketry, to show how he was the next to the worst prophet of the day. (The worst was John Gunther. In "Inside Europe", he devoted quite a bit of space to explaining how when the Axis was defeated, Mussolini would be man enough to commit suicide while Hitler wouldn't have the guts to take his own life before capture.) Ley makes such obvious errors of logic that the proofreader would normally be expected to query their fitness for publication. In the February Galaxy, he answers a question about the probability of meteorites hitting the moon. His answer is based on the fact that the observable surface of the moon is so much smaller than the total surface of earth. But he just brushes aside in the last paragraph a mention of the matter on which his reasoning falls apart: the fact that Earth is mostly covered with water into which large meteorites undoubtedly fall frequently far from any human knowledge, and nearly half of its non-water surface consists of areas that are too sparsely populated for a fallen meteor to be found, like the Arctic, Antarctic, Greenland, and many large desert areas. The moon's surface is all there for the benefit of observers, and I am confident that the failure of new meteor craters to be observed on the moon is strong indication that something is wrong with present assumptions about the nature of its surface or its alleged lack of atmosphere.

Not exactly a prozine but much more entertaining is "Hey! B.C." This is the first book devoted to the fairly new comic strip. Reading it was one of the two times in the hospital when I really laughed long and loud. (The other time was when I turned over the greeting card that came with the Christmas Shaggy and saw the tiny advertisement: "When in doubt...send a squirrel.") Naturally, I was particularly enthralled with the sections devoted to the discovery of baseball and football, but I am certain that this strip is having an effect on me in other respects. I note that somewhere in this issue of Horizons I wrote *bypasser* instead of *passerby*, obviously because B.C.'s world contains an eater. I imagine that all fandom will be plagued by people who play with fier pretty soon, for the same reason. There is no essential difference in type of humor or drawing ability between this strip and some of the things that fans have produced, and I hope that Rotsler, Reiss and their friends soon become as famous as Johnny Hart has done.