

V2 #2

PENN DULUM



MARCH 1953

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presents...

PENDULUM

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PENDULUM is published (nominally) quarterly or (actually) whenever the editors feel like it by the PENDULUM PRESS, a subsidiary of FAN-VARIETY ENTERPRISES, at 610 Park Place, Pittsburgh 9, Pennsylvania. Subscription rates: 15¢ a copy, 2 issues for 25¢, 4 for 50¢ (1 year) and 8 for \$1.00 (2 years). Advertising rates: full page interior---\$1.50; half page, \$.80, quarter page \$.50. Short ads 50 words 10¢---Bacover (½ page ad) \$1.50. Unsolicited contributions will probably be published in some FVE zine if not in this one, 'less SASE encl.

THIS IS A FLIPPANT-DESTRUCTIVE PUBLICATION



JABBER

NEW PROJECTS coming off the FANVARIETY ENTERPRISES presses in the next month or so will be a STYLEBOOK for editors (patterned somewhat after Boggs' GAFIA PRESS STYLEBOOK), which will be available to all present and prospective fanzine editors; the STYLEBOOK is definitely not intended to limit the editor's style, but to list, for his reference, generally preferred and used fannish expressions and usages. Orders from Bob Peatrowsky, the price will be 10¢ a copy. Also an up-to-date FANZINE CHECKLIST, compiled by the combined listings of all 16 FVE members and covering only zines at present being published; Orv Mosher's FANCLUB CHECKLIST, the most up-to-date and complete reference work of fanclubs available, and of course the convention report book, TASFIC IN RETROSPECT.

Incidentally, new members in FVE are Joel Nydahl (VEGA), Lynn Hickman (STF TRENDS), and Jack Harness and Phil Castora (STF AND NONSENSE).

JUST CROSSED OUR DESK: the latest issue of AUTHENTIC SCIENCE FICTION, featuring a full-length novel by Charles L. Harness titled THE ROSE, as well as a short story by E.E. Evans and another part of a serial, FRONTIER LEGION, by S.J. Bounds. There are seven features if you include the bacover, which is a still from a movie supplied by 4Sj Ackerman. The front cover is by Richards, and is rather striking. This is, by the way, AUTHENTIC's third issue with their new policy and format; they converted from a one-novel monthly to a much more varied and rounded-out s-fzine three months ago, and the improvement has been striking. We wish 'em luck.

And while we're at it, we should mention that HOLIDAY Magazine sent us a review copy of their March issue which contains a very excellent article on space travel by Arthur C. Clarke, entitled A JOURNEY TO MARS, illustrated by Rodney Clarke with a painting used by permission of the Franklin Institute of Philadelphia. The article itself is chatty, informative, and interesting and it's worth your while to pick up a copy of this issue of Holiday if you can still get hold of one. We rec'd the complimentary copy accompanied by a letter from a gentleman who signed himself "Caskie Stinnet," who apologises for the article being "fanciful in its approach," but justifies this by its containing "a good deal of actual scientific information on what interplanetary travel would be like." If you saw so, Caskie.

Maybe to even things up we should offer to trade reviews with Holiday. We hate to see a one-sided transaction.

A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO we paid a visit to our chum Harlan Ellison, boy-publisher of Cleveland. Harlan's mother was vacationing in Sunny Florida, and so we shared the intimacy of Apt. 616 unopposed and without striction. Upon arrival, Harlan met us at the station and announced that he had planned for us all to rent a car and go visit Lynn Hickman down in Napoleon. However, the car rental agency

refused to rent Harlan a car, and washed up our plans. We spent Saturday loafing around Harlan's apartment until 3 in the afternoon, when we caught a bus and paid a call on Honey Wood. Honey had a bottle of champagne on hand for the occasion, and we drank and played blackjack until Honey's husband, Don, came home, when we all enjoyed a very fine dinner; Honey is sure a good cook. Unfortunately Bill was coming down with flu, and went to bed with a fever as soon as we arrived back at Harlan's abode. He spent the next day in bed except for a few hours, while Don read his way through the choicest books in Harlan's collection and argued at times about various fannish topics with Harlan (who was catching the flu from Bill, but got off with a considerably milder attack than your co-editor suffered.)

We should mention the meeting of The TERRANS, Cleveland's s-f society, which was held Friday night at Harlan's apartment. They are a swell bunch of people, and we were glad to meet such a tremendous group of fans (the fans, not the group).

Contrary to his advertisement in ASF, Frank Schmid is not the sole U.S. agent for NEBULA, by the by. We know of at least one other out on the west coast, a chap named Anderson.

We believe in altruism sometimes, but in the case of Rondeo Rentz' book club, supposedly non-profit, we find it hard to understand why his prices are higher than some dealers who openly admit to making a profit. High overhead, maybe?

And for those who have been arguing pro and con (or pro and fan) ---the Doubleday Science Fiction Book Club is not selling first editions, and in some cases the dust wrappers aren't even the same.

NEXT ISSUE of PENDULUM will feature another astrogation article by Gibson, entitled CELESTIAL BLUES (viz. the MARS label Woody Herman recording.) NEWS FLASHES will be around as usual, and IN THE LIMELIGHT will feature Astounding Science Fiction. We will also have an article by P. Schuyler Miller, book reviewer for ASF...and we plan to retain the NEW BOOKS feature if the readers like it.

The cover is by Hunter, and is a real beauty...the best, we think, we've gotten hold of so far. The second part of SPLATTERED IN SPACE will also appear, so you can find out what happens to Julius Jerque's precarious fortunes.

Around the middle of 1953 the first issue of the PIT will appear, edited by Donald Susan with Bill Venable serving as office boy and janitor. It will feature an article by Betsy Curtis, and may even be worth the 25¢ it'll cost you. This includes the cost of features such as a litho cover and interior linoleum cut illos, as well as color mimeography.

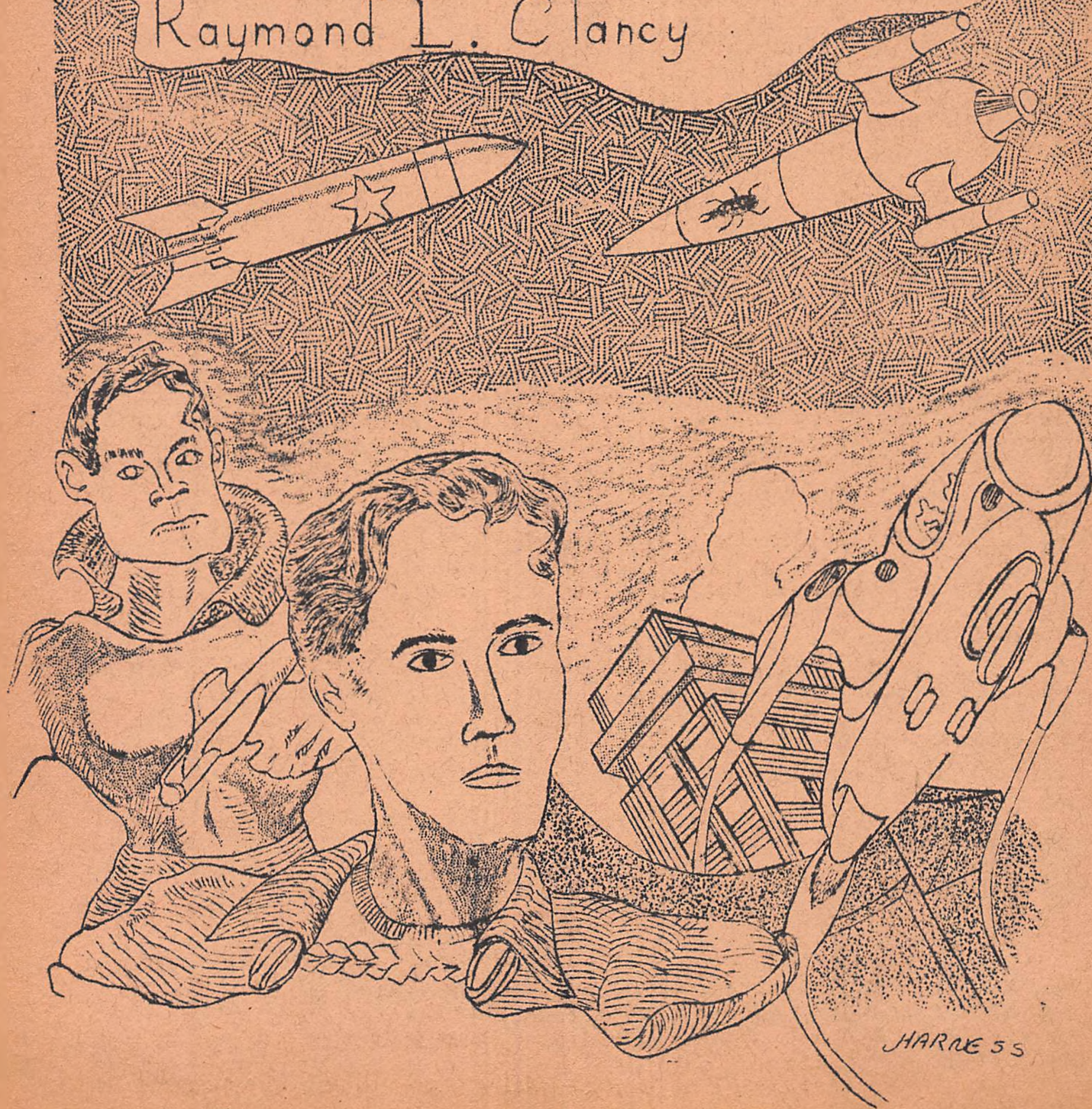
Incidentally, we hope you noticed the new and different paper PENDULUM is using. We're now ordering it in bulk from a large mimeo-materials company, which makes the cost per ream cheaper to us. We think the quality is even better than before, what say you?

The flood of manuscripts that had inundated us the previous year has dwindled down to a trickle, which allows us to use up some of our backlog, but opens PENDULUM's market for mss again. If you're inspired, contributions are invited.

---BILL VENABLE & DON SUSAN

SPLATTERED IN SPACE

by
Raymond L. Clancy



BROMM! BROMM! went the motors of the Black Beetle. Brzoom!! Brzoom! went her mighty engines as she beat a path through a belt of asteroids halfway to the Srxnian System.

All lookouts kept a sharp eye out for the telltale streaks of the great cruiser of the interstellar police.

The prize at stake was too great to risk failure, as they had all been forcefully reminded by Julius Jerque himself.

With their hands still shaking from the ordeal of the reminder, the crew went about their duties, their minds on the wonderful rewards in store when they succeeded, their eyes roving about to see their evil commander on his rounds before he saw them.

Jerque himself was in the commander's cabin, empty jugs of Xeno strewn around him, bellowing out a chanty which was old when the first men ventured out into space.

"Blow the man down!" he droned, "Blow the man down!"

And the steel walls of the cabin bent outward under the vibrations of the voice of Julius, Brutal Bum of the Cosmic Clouds.

Well known was he to the people who thronged the curved ways of interplanetary and interstellar space.

IN FACT, at that moment, the commander of the Interstellar Police Cruiser was reading his dossier as forwarded by the Interplanetary Patrol.

"Ferocious Fiend of the Farthest Fields," he read, and looked over his great horn-rimmed glasses at his second in command. "Brutal Bum, Malicious Marauder---."

"Quite a man, Jeex," he murmured to the second, "If one can call him a man. It appears that few do back where he comes from."

The second in command smiled diplomatically. "We have a fix on his ship, the Black Beetle, sir," he reported. "The cruiser is en route to intercept it. Should make contact near planet Seven."

While this conference was taking place, the Black Beetle, travelling at tremendous speed, had glided across the surface of Planet Seven.

The great motors braked her momentum and she settled to the ground in the midst of the Green Goose Mountains.

The crew trooped out, armed to the teeth, for this range was the haunt of the Green Goose and---the prey they sought---an adult egzazabo.

Jerque had phenagled a swift deal with some Martian entrepreneurs. "Bring us back," they said, "the egg of the egzazabo. One egg will make sufficient essence to brew, distill, and otherwise produce, six billion gallons of Imperial Perfume. The profits will be tremendous, and you'll get your cut, kid---pardon---Bum."

Now the great day had dawned, here on an alien world in a strange sun's system.

"Bang! Bang! Boom! Boom!," went the ray guns and rockets, and feathery splinters flew from the rocky sides of the Green Goose Mountains.

No rock was missed for thousands of yards as the wild crewmen of the Black Beetle fired at anything which resembled an egzazabo.

Truth to tell, none had ever seen an egzazabo out of all the motley crew, and not even the Malicious Marauder himself was sure of what it looked like.

But they fired away, hoping to start some game, preferably not the dreaded Green Goose.

At last the masterful plan (if it could be called a plan) of Julius Jerque was rewarded.

An egzazabo ran squawking away from it's rocky nest. The pirate crew gave a lusty cheer and missed it completely with several thousand rounds.

The echoes of the bombardment were still ringing from the surrounding cliffs when Jerque dropped to his knees on the stony soil and cradled lovingly in his arms the egg of the egzazabo.

There was only one, a rich green in color splotched with purple. But its price in gold would fill the coffers of the Black Beetle.

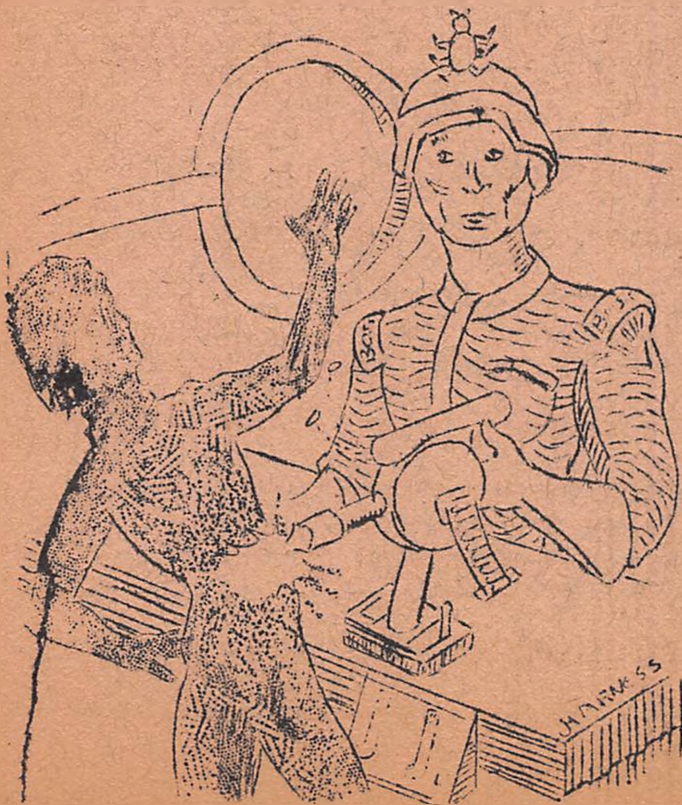
The first battle had been won. The pirates trooped back to the spaceship with all speed.

Jerque gave them permission to sing, and the disgusting brutes bellowed their favorite song--- "Kill 'em all! Kill 'em all!--- The long, the short, and the tall!"

The thin air of Planet Seven resounded with the hellish tune for half an hour. Then all were at their battle stations inside the Black Beetle.

The air-ports closed, the bells rang, and the fuses blew. Eventually, the Beetle rose slowly on a towering shaft of flame and headed out into space.

It had scarcely cleared the atmosphere by a hundred thousand miles when the Chief Officer of the Beetle barged into Jerque's cabin.



"Commander," he began excitedly, "We ain't going anywhere!"

"Not we---but you!" Julius said coldly, and he atomized the forgetful subordinate with eight bolts from the ray gun mounted on the ash tray on top of his desk.

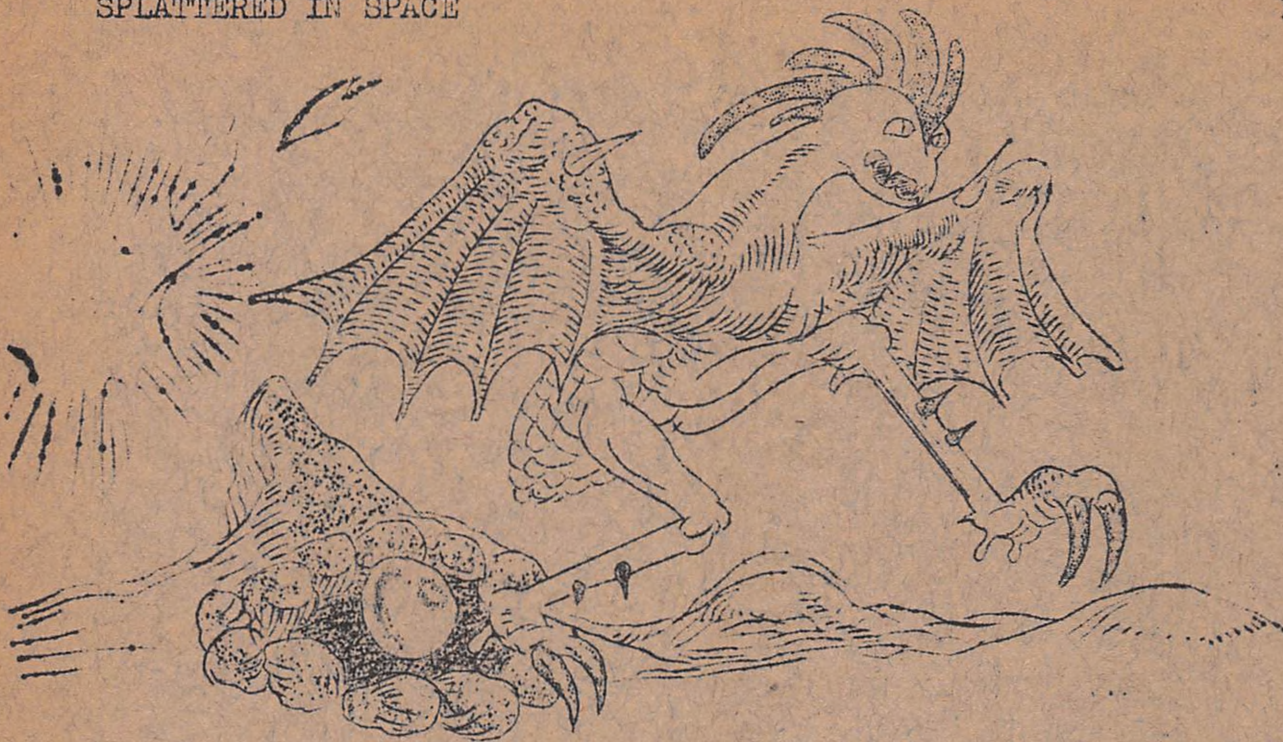
When the Assistant to the Chief Officer knocked on the door, Julius was still brushing the atoms off desk and wall.

"Come in!" invited the Brutal Bum of the Cosmic Clouds.

"Commander," said the white-faced assistant, "We aren't moving ---somebody's got a beam on us--- holding us still in space. Shall we try to communicate with them or play dumb?"

Julius Jerque gripped his desk top with steely fingers.

"I am a patient man," he murmured piously, "but Lord give me more patience."



"Look here, you," he addressed the assistant, "None of my officers has to play dumb. Anyone who lets himself get caught with a beam like that is dumb. By all means communicate with the bounders--probably the police. By the way, you're the new Chief Officer."

The unexpected promotion whitened again the space-bronzed cheeks of the ex-assistant. His teeth chattered. But he remembered to render a snappy salute and backed out the door.

"The blow has fallen!" he thought with a sick feeling as he sped down the steel corridor.

No one liked the murderous proximity of the ship's commander, and what good was a larger share of the loot if you weren't alive to spend it?

When you got right down to it, could any man of the crew remember when the Black Beetle had finished a voyage with its Chief Officer still alive?

But away with idle fears!

The new Chief barks his orders to the communications room.

"Brrrrrrzzzz! Bzzmmm! Pling! Speaking from the Black Beetle---- the Black Beeetle!"

The awful challenge reverberated through space.

Many a man had trembled to hear it in years gone by, many a brave ship had slowed to a stop at the dread words, waiting patiently for its fate.

As far as the present moment was concerned, those days were gone forever.

"Ahoy, the Black Beetle!" roared the loudspeakers in the comm room. "Ahoy, you swabs! Stop your engines, you bums, and prepare to be boarded! This is the Interstellar Police. Stow your gab! Tremble and obey! Or we'll run a rocket over your hull that'll open you like a can of sardines! Over! "

For a moment there was quiet confusion in the comm room of the Beetle.

Then the bull roar of Julius brought everyone to attention.

"Prepare to be boarded!" he commanded. "Cut us off the air!"

"Sir, no air out there," offered a communications man feebly.

Julius ripped the switchboard out by its roots and bashed him neatly and efficiently.

The ex-crew member lay there, wires dangling all over him, the broken switchboard hiding his face.

The ghastly sight shocked everyone into strained alertness. That was the way Julius liked to have 'em at a time like this.

"Now that we're off the air," he said, looking fiercely about him, "We shall proceed to carry out Plan XB15. We've done it before and we can do it again. To your new posts---and remember your duties. I guarantee you they'll be the last things you'll ever forget."

No longer was there quiet confusion. Men ran about the wrecked communications room, screaming, calling, running into and striking one another. Some ran out the doors, some hid behind them. And everybody was shouting swift commands at everyone else.

Now there was noisy confusion. And Julius Jerque at this crossroads of his career felt some comfort as he calmly surveyed his handiwork.

"You Jerque?" asked the tall, quiet-eyed man in the doorway.

"At your service, Sir," replied Julius, bowing to the senior Lieutenant of the Interstellar police.

"I'll have to ask you to accompany me about your ship," the Lieutenant informed him. "We have seized it in accordance with Interstellar law."

"At your service, Lieutenant," Julius Jerque bowed in his own inimitable courtly style again.

And so they made the rounds as is common in such affairs. Jerque shivered with impatience, hardly able to keep his hands from the throat of his inquisitor.

"And now, Commander, I regret that your answers have not satisfied me," the Lieutenant informed Jerque. "You will have to proceed under our instructions to the nearest court of the Interstellar Police. To guarantee your arrival, it will be necessary to leave a detail of police aboard your ship. And it will be necessary also to lock your interstellar drive. Where is it, please?"

"Oh," the Lieutenant exclaimed as he caught sight of a long red column, "There it is, eh? Sergeant, lock that drive!"

A burly sergeant of the Interstellar Police snapped a padlock on the red column.

At which an evil twinkle appeared in the depths of Julius Jerque's evil eyes.

"Lieutenant," he announced grandly, "a great mistake has been made. But you may depend upon my complete cooperation. Bosun, pipe the Lieutenant out the spaceport with all honors due to his rank."

The Lieutenant retreated, charmed with the graciousness of the Malicious Marauder.

"We could be wrong about this guy," he muttered to himself as he embarked on the small spacecraft that waited to shoot him back to his ship.

Jerque waited until the great door swung shut. Then he winked at his nearest officer.

"XB15," he murmured. "Let's not forget."

▷ The

NEWS

Perdulum

FELASHES

LONDON CONVENTION SLATED WHITSUNTIDE

BRITISH REPRINTS GALAXY & SPACE

by Derek Pickles

Second issue of NEBULA published, a great improvement over first issue, good cover by Alan Hunter, lead novel by Kayer, quite good, a short story by Brunner with a very neat twist end. An excellent story by Ted Tubb, the most original story I have read for years, and a short story by Ackerman completes the lineup. Usual features as for first issue. The improvement of Number 2 over Number 1 makes me eagerly await future issues to see if the improvement is maintained, for format is good as is appearance, bulky 120 pages of NEW WORLDS format. Interior illustrations are by Hunter and Price--- the latter a discovery of the Fantasy Art Society.

Corgi Books, pocket book publishers, have announced among their February titles SPACE ON MY HANDS by Fredric Brown, first publication in Great Britain, sells at 2/-, complete reprint with extremely good cover.

British complete reprint editions of GALAXY and SPACE SF appeared January, both very well received. SPACE was completely sold out within four days of publication. Both these magazines are to appear monthly. The SPACE reprint has renumbered, calling this January ish No. 1., while the Galaxy is a reprint of the Dec. '51 cover with different interior stories.

The London SF Convention will be held over Whitsun weekend (the Almanac we have on hand infers that this is the 2nd weekend in June; at least, in 1943 Whit Monday fell on June 14---Ed.) at the Bonnington Hotel, Bloomsbury, London. Organisation is already afoot and to hand, and various special efforts are promised.

And that does it until next issue.

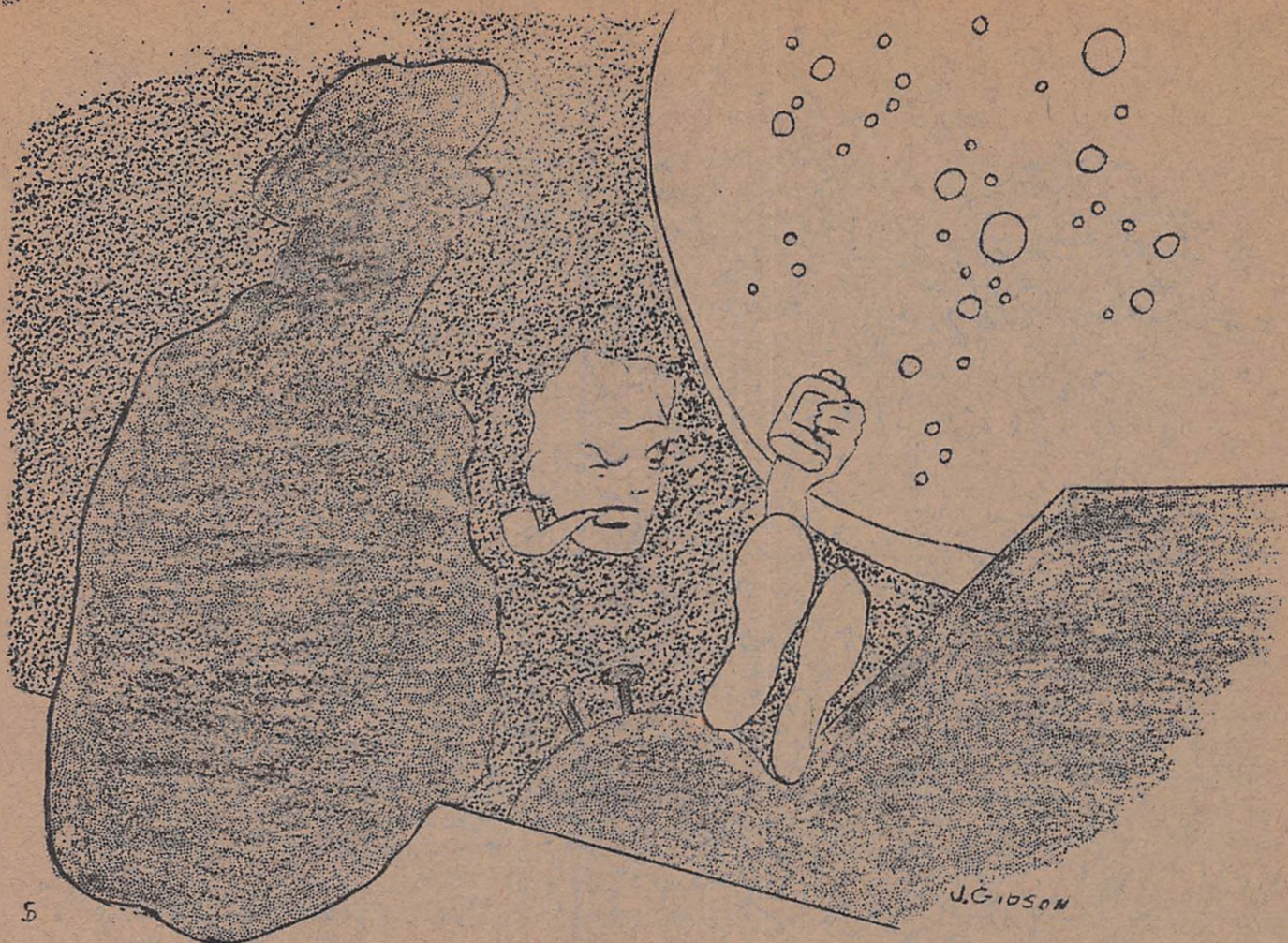
---DEREK PICKLES

the national fantasy fan federation

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GET OUT THE SCOTCH, WILLIAM, WE'RE LOST AGAIN

by JOE GIBSON

illustrated by Joe Gibson

The PENDULUM was gleefully howling her way off toward Mira, boring through the something-else of hyperspace with the ease and casualness of a needle sifting its way down through a loose haystack. I was snugly established in the astrogation dome topside, having proved to the skipper, the venerable Mr. William, that I could chart the Ridge up, down, and sideways. This was most important to an astrogator---and to the skipper of a ship of the state of fandom---as the Ridge is that group of stars in which one finds Sol, and the Solar System, and Earth. It was nice to know which star group to aim for when one wished to go home.

Anyway, the PENDULUM was loafing along, and I was puffing a calm pipeful at the scanner screens, and the days were flitting by on my Lee Hoffman calendar, when up from the bridge comes William. "Gibson," he says, "I have a hunch there is a Degler ship around

here. We may have to high-tail it for the tall timber. As you know, I detest feuds."

Izzat so? I says. And he says yes, and perches himself on top of my astrogation table. And then comes the blow: "We may," he says, "find ourselves in another part of the galaxy!"

And bless me, Chu, he sits there and asks me how we find our way back!!!!

Now, plotting any sort of cruise around inside our galaxy, the Milky Way, involves a few small problems. For one thing, there is some 15 billion suns in this galaxy, forming a spiral some 100,000 lightyears in diameter and 10,000 lightyears thick. All these stars are scattered around most haphazardly, in all kinds of strings and groups and clusters, and the deeper you go toward the center the more of 'em there are. Besides which there are immense clouds of gas and dust which either glow, if you're on the side where messes of stars throw radiation on 'em, or become huge, black shapes blotting out the stars, if you're on the other side. And some are in deep space where you can't see 'em at all, but they still blot out stars behind 'em, and you can't see those stars either. Which could prove ticklish if you needed some one star-group to navigate by.

But navigating (pardon--astrogating) by star-groups isn't feasible, anyway. Not over galactic distances. On interstellar trips to neighboring star-groups, it's fine. That's where the Ridge, with its nine 1st magnitude stars, can help a ship "zero in" on Sol. But when you start meandering across the whole, blasted galaxy, the picture rapidly changes. Fifteen billion stars make up one gawdawful lot of star-groups. Chances are, there are a number of "ridges"-----throughout the galaxy----which could hardly be told apart from the Ridge which includes Sol! Getting home from that kind of a jaunt could be complicated.

Of course, there are conditions. Sol is located near the edge of the galaxy, out on one of the limbs of the big curving spiral. A "Ridge" of stars anywhere else just wouldn't be the Ridge. Also, the Milky Way itself has a definite shape; in some instances, you could determine what part of the galaxy you were in just by looking.

But under most circumstances, you probably couldn't pick out any definite star-groups more than a thousand lightyears from your ship. All the other stars would simply blaze out there and you couldn't tell which one was near and which was farther away---you'd have to measure the distance to every one of them, and, in short, rechart the whole blasted galaxy from each new position, every time your ship moved! As for picking out star-groups off on the other side of the galaxy---pass me the elixir, Sam, this'll take a little time. The whole trouble is, you just can't tell distance in a galaxy by looking---which is why Earthbound astronomers charted stars as "constellations", which was merely the way they appeared in Earth's sky.

So how y'gonna astrogate? Suppose your scanners fizz out and you jump off hyper-drive not knowing which side of the galaxy you're on, and none of the surrounding star-groups you can see match anything on your charts---how y'gonna get home, huh? How?

Easy. Besides all them stars in groups and strings and clusters, which you can't pick out since they all look tangled together, there are other things out in the deep nowhere. Other galaxies, to be exact. The Magellanic Clouds are the two nearest, about 80,000

lightyears out beyond the other side of our galaxy. Among more distant galaxies, which have the distinctive appearance of spiral nebulae, there's M31 about 750,000 lightyears off to one side, and down at another angle is a cluster of several hundred galaxies some seven million lightyears away. Lotta galaxies out there, in all directions. And triangulating a "fix" on any three of 'em should give you your general position in our galaxy. From that, you could plot a loose trajectory across the Milky Way, then use a star-group (charted) to guide you in on any one, particular sun and planet.

Nothing to it, really.

"Well I'll be damned!" quoth the venerable Mr. William.

No doubt, sez I. And he could kindly get the hell off my astro table and fetch another bottle, sez I, lest we somehow end up in the Coal Sack.

Which is another small problem we astrologers have licked.

—JOE GIBSON

- GROWING PAINS

Like any healthy young'un, FVE is growing faster than we calculated. Seems here we left the same size ad-space as before to tell you that the following ten (count 'em, ten) fanzines represent the best of their type or prototype in fan publishing. You try 'em!

FAN

VARIETY

ENTERPRISES

A
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ASSOCIATION

STF TRENDS
Lynn A. Hickman
Box 184
Napoleon, Ohio

TYRANN
Norbert Hirschhorn
853 Riverside Dr.
New York 32, N.Y.

STF & NONSENSE
Jack Harness
299 Church St.
Meadville, Pa.

SCIENCE-FANTASY BULLETIN
Harlan Ellison
12701 Shaker Blvd, #616
Cleveland 20, Ohio

CHIGGER PATCH OF FANDOM
Nan Gerding
Box 484
Roseville, Ill.

COSMAG
Ian T. Macauley
57 East Park Lane, N.E.
Atlanta 5, Ga.

VEGA
Joel Nydahl
119 S. Front St.
Marquette, Mich.

THE PIT
Donald Susan
706 Grant St.
McKeesport, Pa.

FANTASIAS
David English
63 W. 2nd St.
Dunkirk, N.Y.

MOTE
Bob Peatrowsky
Box 634
Norfolk, Nebr.

The

ALAMBICA

-a distillate of letters from our readers-

Lots of comment on the third ish of PENDULUM, but we've laid incoming letters all over the place, so we'll see what we can make of the mess on hand. Comments were widely varied, especially on the matters of the cover and Gibson's article, which was mentioned in passing by Gem Carr's GEM TONES: "...articles of the kind that require star maps as illos..."---and about the cover: "...an extrapolation of the physiognomy of Bill Venable." [WHAT!?!?!---Ed]

NORBERT HIRSCHHORN says: "The cover is a beautiful one. Is that brown mimeography? # I think THE RIDGE was a mediocre article saved only by the valuable and interesting charts. # JABBER did just that. # PROJECT PANCLUB and BRITISH S-F were interesting enough. The letters from RonDee were the best sort of info. Mosher had an extensive article in TYRANN (Plug! Plug!) when his project was still in the planning stage..."

HAL SHAPIRO: "I didn't care for the cover, although it was excellently drawn. Maybe it was the mimeoing. Or was it mimeod? [It was---Ed] # Gibson's article was interesting and, with my layman's knowledge of astronomy, I could almost understand the thing. # Look, as far as I know there is no one in fandom who doesn't know what PFC is and the work it's doing. I'm sure you could have found then something more interesting to put in those three pages. # Derek Pickles column of British news is very interesting. I'm always interested to learn what goes on in other countries. Is this to be a permanent feature, I hope? [Yep, it is, and it has been---Ed.] # In his review of BRITISH SCIENCE FICTION, Campbell says that his prozine AUTHENTIC SCIENCE FICTION, "is the longest-lived British s-f magazine." I need only quote his statements about Carnell's NEW WORLDS which was established in 1946 and, as far as I know, is still going. There was also TALES OF WONDER which, although now folded, lasted longer than AUTHENTIC. Or was that a typo? Outside of this slip however, his story was highly fascinating. # Ellison's review of F&SF was also highly interesting. Gads, is that all I can say? Anyway would like to see more of these reviews, which I undoubtedly shall, with the exception that I'd prefer it muchly if the checklists were left out. With the exception of outstanding yarns, who gives a damn what was pubbed in back issues of various prozines?"

STEVE METCHETTE: "On my part, a personal antipathy to a few things clouded the issue; people who organize fandom, and some of the people in fandom. Ellison's report on Boucher-F&SF was fair, but every so often I got reminded he was writing it, and I began to dislike him the more I read. # Positively, the cover was nice. Susan is a craftsman in his work. # Joe Gibson---excellent, the type of fan article I really like."

Now to a couple letters from across the pond:

(over)

ALAN HUNTER: "Many thanks for the Sept. PENDULUM. It was a really striking issue. # Please congratulate Donald Susan for me on his excellent cover...I thought it was most striking. The idea was good, and the stencil drawing even better. # For a serious, constructive fanzine the contents would take some beating (there are positively no innuendos in this remark). I found everything interesting and excellent. # A little humour would have been welcome. But if, to get hold of any, you have to throw your doors open to the slush that appears in some of the fanzines, then I am all for you keeping PENDULUM as it is. # Congratulations on another good issue of PENDULUM (and certainly your best cover to date)."

DEREK PICKLES: "COVER - quite good, duplication excellent. # F&SF - excellent. Remainder, quite good, except NE'S FLASHES, hopelessly out of date."

RICH BURGERON: "Was rather sorry to see my abstract thought in the letter column. Your readers must think I'm unbearably conceited if they don't know it already. # Haven't read THE RIDGE yet but it looks fascinating. # Clarkson's piece had a fine snapending. Well played up suspense. Can you get more fiction from him? # Seriously tho, on the Clarkson item, all this free advertising is beginning to get me down. I'll bet yours won't be the last piece tho. Clarkson is the only fan that I know of who became a WKF by just acting as a publicity manager. Must be a racket! # Ellison stuff was nice. # Wish you and Bill would keep your meanderings separate. You could take the front one issue and Bill the back the same issue and then reverse it for the following issue. You should ramble more. I like the Shelvy type of editorial best."

Which about completes the commentary that we're able to locate re the last issue. However, we're playing around with new sorts of systems for filing our various correspondence, so don't be discouraged about sending in your letters---and even if they don't get published, it's the commentary for our own reference that is most important.

"I've figured it out! Willy Ley is a seismograph!"

ASIDES

"You---you little _____!!---you read fantasy!!"

Randy Garret, quoted by Harlan Ellison

"Fandom is a notion in the neurons of Redd Boggs."

Art Rapp in FAPA

"Fandom evolved from slime, and must eventually return to Ghu!"

Jack Harness at Wild Hair Session

"I am so afraid...that I may become unstrung; in that case, wire me at once."

Barclay Johnson in FOO VIEW

"I wanna produce your play over the radio in St. Louis."

Dave Tucker at the Chicon

JOIN the national fantasy fan federation

AMAZING STORIES IN THE LIMELIGHT ! Harlan Ellison

#3: Browne's Folly or The Aristocrat of Science Slop

NOTE: due to the emergence, this week (February 15, 1953) of a new and important magazine in the science fantasy field, your author is foregoing his usual questionnaire-with-headings type column, and replacing it with an essay style. It is hoped that this revision, temporary only, will meet with favor and convey the impressions of the author upon reading the first issue of the new Ziff-Davis publication---AMAZING STORIES, digest-size.

-----Harlan Ellison

Approximately twenty-five years ago, the venerable and redoubtable Hugo Gernsback (not to be confused with Grego Banshuck) started the magazine which was to be renowned the world over as the first all science fiction publication. That magazine has had so many phases, mien, ups-and-downs, and just plain confusing aspects, that it would be sheer folly to attempt a coverage. However, just in passing, for a definitive resumé of the twenty-five years of AMAZING STORIES which precede this article, may I refer you to Edward Wood's excellent study "An Amazing Quarter Century" (The Journal of Science Fiction; volume 1, number 2).

Said publication announced, two and a half years ago (August 1950) that they were going to change the format of the, till then, pulp-sized magazine, and issue a striking new AMAZING STORIES complete with Heinlein, Bradbury, slick paper, colored illustrations, and a lead article by no less than William Lindsay Gresham, author of "Nightmare Alley".

But...months went by and hide nor logo of this new AMAZING showed on the newsstands of America, the science fiction reader being placated (if that term may be applied) with the usual run of swill that AS had been dishing out to the eagerly-watering mouths of our country's pap-minded pueriles.

Finally, the new FANTASTIC came forth, bearing with it the blessing, dubious at best, of Mickey Spillane and assorted non-science fantasy reading matter. Close upon its heels came that new AMAZING we had been promised.

It's sitting before your author now. I have just completed 1 6 2

pages of reading matter that bares an entirely new field of critical analysis. The new AMAZING STORIES (to be referred to henceforth as nAS) is undoubtedly one of the most promising magazines on the market today. A conservative estimate induces me to believe it will be circulation leader in the stfantasy line within a year. Its potential, ~~however~~, is not the actuality. The nAS combines all the features of the old AS, a copy of the NY Daily Mirror, ESQUIRE, and GALAXY. A walking paradox? I venture to remark that the nAS will be even more of a paradox as the months go by.

But let's cease the conjecture and start to analyse the issue.

Beginning with the front cover, which is an excellent painting by the well-known book illustrator Barye Phillips, the tone of nAS is laid bare. The cover contains more printing, and superfluous at that, than any of the old AS' which were remarkable for how much type they could squeeze onto the front of any given issue. But Howard Browne, following the time-honoured, but no less idiotic, policy of splashing sex and as much reading matter as possible on the frontispiece, has once again taken the path directly opposite what good taste would demand.

His cover, though strikingly beautiful, is the harbor of a nearly-naked female. When a situation demands a nearly naked female, then it would appear prudent to put the femme in such a position; but when the illustration would serve exactly the same purpose without that flesh, it appears obvious that Browne is just pushing for the sales value of sex on his showpiece. Which is exactly the point trying to be put across. The mere fact of a naked woman on his cover is inconsequential, but as a most graphic presentation of Browne's leanings, it is perfect. That cover is the outward symbol of all the blatant sales-selling Howard is wont to indulge in. He will sacrifice nAS for the amount of money he can rake in without a thought to either the effect upon the science fiction field, or the magazine.

Point in substantiation of the aforestated assertion number one: MARS CONFIDENTIAL by Jack Lait and Lee Mortimer, which is without a shadow's doubt the most asinine, most childish, most scientifically corrupted and ludicrous, most pointless, most cheaply sensational piece of worthless tripe to ever be foisted off on the poor unsuspecting heads of the readers of science fiction. Typical excerpts from MARS CONFIDENTIAL: (page 8) "Zorkle is a Martian medicinal distillation, made from the milk of the schznoogle...", (page 10) "There are four separate nations (on Mars) ...known as the East Side, West Side, North Side and Gas House gangs.", (page 11) "Gold, platinum, diamonds, and other precious stuff are as plentiful on Mars as hayfever is on Earth in August.", (page 13) "It is a dogma that Mars has no oxygen...we know...better...", and so on, etc. and etcetera, ad pass-the-bucketium. This 16½ pages of sheer, unadulterated imbecility is just a sample of what we may be led to expect from the flaccid editing mind of Howard Browne, whose leaning off one end of the science fiction realm is as distasteful, if not more so, as Hugo Gernsback's off the other. The accompanying illustrations (and I make that designation with a not-so-modulated chucle up my sleeve) are the last-minute, slap-dash affairs so familiar to readers of the old AMAZING as being the insipid work of Leo Summers, who should retire himself and leave the illustrating to artists...not doodlers!

In point of fact, the drawings for MARS CONFIDENTIAL would be relegated the wastebasket of any self-respecting fanzine editor, their one redeeming facet being that they were done in two colors.

Thank the benevolent lord for saving his suffering children, though, for he placed directly after this bit of literary rutabaga one of the finest and most off-trail pieces of true stf to be seen since The Mas-

ter, Robert Heinlein penned UNIVERSE. He saw fit to run PROJECT NIGHTMARE by Heinlein directly after Lait and Mortimer's inane attempt at a humorous sci-fic article. However, Heinlein succeeds in his attempts at conveying tight-lipped drama, whereas Lait and Mortimer do a ginger-peachy pratt fall.

Heinlein's tale of the espers who save America from sneak bombing, by the simple expedient of damping the concealed A-bombs with their own unusual mental powers, is one of the most intriguing and fascinating of this year's yarns. The question of whether Browne held the yarn over, instead of running it in the old AS (wheeew!) or whether it was comparatively recent in the writing, is insignificant. That the story stands up well is what counts. In fact, living in Cleveland, and having one of Heinlein's bombs go off in our town, left me quite cold, so real and of poignant content was it. A fine story, showing, on the other hand, that Browne seeks his sales-building also through the use of good material.

And why not at the rates he's paying...?

...oh yes, just as a note of interest, the "appendix" to MARS CONFIDENTIAL (in all its simpering idiocy) contains portions of an editorial of last year by Howie Browne, and whether Browne stole a portion of this for his ed, or Lait-Mortimer swiped the ed from Browne, or whether Browne added the "appendix" without L & M's knowledge, the thing is as bad one way as another. When they start explaining what a BEM is, and telling us by way of explanation that (quote) S.F.: (is) An abbreviation for science fiction. (unquote), then I am about ready to not only throw up my hands in disgust...but my lunch in the same manner.

H.L. Gold's NO CHARGE FOR ALTERATIONS seems adequate enough, and innocuous enough, but doesn't appear to be anything to match up with his hilarious THE TROUBLE WITH WATER or even his not-so-hot-as-billed-up THE OLD DIE RICH. His yarn, a childishly simple proposition combined with a not overly outstanding writing style come out as the type of tale one reads and then says, "So what?" C'est ça.

It might be noted, just to further substantiate that Browne is on a sales jag (which is why he's kept on at Ziff-Davis, not by any prevalence of talent, surely), that one of the illos for Gold's story, by the resuscitated Henry Enoch Sharp from the old AS features a nice but naked girl. All in all, there are seven pictures in NAS featuring women in various stages of undress NOT ONE OF WHICH IS NECESSARY, or even at times discernible. In one story it even goes against what the plot dictated.

Ted Sturgeon, whose stories have pleased this author more than any other author's presents a small tale entitled THE WAY HOME which is of interest (it's by Sturgeon, isn't it?) but, unfortunately, isn't science fiction---neither is it fantasy. In fact, as far as this author can tell, it is a rather nice little story of a boy who wants to run away.

Where its place in NAS lies, I have no inkling.

TURNOVER POINT by Alfred Coppel is the type of thing that Monsieur Gernsback might publish, for it is a weak plot strung over a simple and basic science fact. Other than that the story does nothing but serve as a vehicle for an excellent Emsh illustration which is be-riddled by the errors. In fact, the illustration differs from the story in over four places.

Ivar Jorgensen, who has been making an amazing (sorry) show of talent recently, and crashing the higher-paying markets with better stuff than he penned previously, comes through with a neat little story of an invasion of the future and of a dogface-of-the-future fighting the invading armies who gets caught in a very cute little situation. Though the illustration is enjoyable, it is again off-color and pertains not in the least to the story and is there purposely to nip the unsuspecting of

the sex-starved reading public who might happen to thumb through the magazine. The story, BELLY LAUGH, is an old-hat tale, with a partially original twist, and as such is worth reading, but again, nothing to do flips over.

Probably the most revolting thing in this issue is the under-handed mutilation of Ray Bradbury's beautiful and powerful story HERE THERE BE TYGERS. Through the lack of knowledge that the story had been previously published as an original in the Henry Holt edition of NEW TALES OF SPACE AND TIME last year, Browne was forced to run the story as one of his ridiculous "Classic Reprints", a category which HERE THERE BE TYGERS should not be relegated for numerous reasons, chief among which, to be blunt, is the fact that it is not a classic albeit a tremendous, enjoyable, and typical Bradburyian yarn. The ending from the original, in which all but one of the stranded spacemen leaves the planet, only to see that they are forever banned from it by its changed nature which is to them alien, has been manipulated to encompass all the spacemen, and thereby placing HERE THERE BE TYGERS in the phylum of stories-we-wish-had-not-ended-happily.

Trust to Browne to pull a completely microcephalic stunt like that one simply because he had put Bradbury's name on the front cover and he didn't feel like removing it. And his erudite statement in the story's introduction that, "More than likely you haven't read this one anyway," leaves us not only cold, but cataleptic. For the Holt edition was one of that company's best-sellers last year, and to boot the book was released in Pocket Book form last month. Oh no, not many of us have read it, only perhaps 12, 000,000 of us.

Richard Matheson's THE LAST DAY disgusted us and put a great rift in the foundation of our confidence in Matheson. Such works as CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN, BORN OF MAN AND WOMAN, SHIPSHAPE HOME and a multitude of others, to be followed by this...this...bit of scientificational sentimentalism cum pornography. It's...unnerving. The story is the usual rehash of the world about to end and everyone going to hell and gone in a dixie cup, with no redeeming factors such as an off-trail angle or an unusually fine characterization. The characters are stock, the plot of only tepid interest, and the illustration a stupidly scribbled bit of crap by Summers. Hmmm, him again?

And probably the biggest disappointment in the whole issue is THE INVADERS by Murray Leinster. Unlike Leinster's usual master-craftsman-like job, neatly-plotted, singularly-fashioned, and brilliantly-executed, this thing is the most hackneyed thing I've read in months and would have been rejected immediately if written by an amateur writer. Ostensibly this tale was written on request of Browne, knocked out in a hurry by Leinster, and left to simmer in its own slop. The inconsistencies of the story are many, and outrageous. That it was written to beat a deadline is evident by the fact that the hero stumbled upon a man who has slipped out of his skin, or looks that way at least, and immediately, without a thought to any other more logical solution, he pops out with the answer that they are, "Invaders from outer space!" Come now, Mr. Leinster, don't tell me that the average American would immediately assume we were being invaded from space if he saw that. It goes against human nature. And the superficiality of the characters, the utter stupidity of the hero and the (supposedly) brave heroine falling in love and being married within the period of a few days, with no build-up to indicate they are at all interested in each other, and the very triteness of the theme, leave your author exasperated and confused as to why Leinster would allow himself to become so rushed that he would have to pound out slop like this, which, if it had not been for his years of writing, would have fallen into the category of schoolboy science fict-

ion. A most disappointing introduction to Leinster's work in nAS, and if another indication of Browne's $\frac{1}{2}$ -fanny'ed policies in getting requests for material to the authors at such a late date that they are to be forced into slapping out the first thing that comes to mind, then may I suggest Ziff-Davis find another, more conscientious editor, and not one who will make immature remarks at the conventions, and immature decisions in reference to his magazines.

The cartoons, unlike the ones by Mendoza featured in FANTASTIC, are oppressively inarticulate and at times downright insensate.

The back cover is a small masterpiece by Jack Coggins which would, at worst, do credit to Bonestell. It shows none of the diddling doodling effects Coggins has used so many times, and employs a straight, neat and clean presentation. However, the blurb accompanying it, masquerading its childishness under the title "Will This Steel Umbrella Stop Russia?", is another example of Browne's complete disregard for anything halfway innovating, and a simpering ineptness of thought. Oh well...

There it sits in front of me. 162 pages of reading matter, much of which I would have been none the worse for if I had completely ignored! There it sits. 162 pages showing a layout-man's dream magazine, and an opportunity for an editor to stun the world with the classiness of science fiction.

Instead, what do we have?

We have lewd, inarticulate, slap-dash, stupid, puerile, writing as the norm, and a most clever, original piece of fiction hiding down among the sheltering slop, to paraphrase an old-time tune.

Your author knows not what the future of the new AMAZING STORIES is to be. That future must be determined by the concerted acceptance or revulsion of the public, and not to a great extent to the science fiction fans. It must come from the amount of copies Browne can sell. It looks from here as though we will have to wade through the slop, though a higher grade slop than fed us in the old AS, each issue, to reach one lone gem such as Heinlein's PROJECT NIGHTMARE.

In short, Browne has brought AMAZING STORIES full-circle from last month's copy to this month's copy. He has raised his quality, but lowered it at the same time. He has obtained stories by the best writers, available in the science fantasy field, but he has, for the most part, procured their most imbecilic writings.

By the time this is in front of you, and you have digested my opinions, for that is all that this article is, no other claim is made in relation to it, there will have been another issue of nAS brought forth and the value of my predictions may be decided. But this will be evident:

- 1) Browne will have some crazy sensational gimmick like Lait-Mortimer or Mickey Spillane to ballyhoo the issue.
- 2) He will have semi-pornographic artwork, with much of it in the cartoon-scribbling style of Summers, who won't take his sketching pencil-clutching fingers out of the pie.
- 3) The new AMAZING STORIES will enjoy more success than the already out-of-proportion accepted FANTASTIC.

nAS will be an enigma, but not as much a one as you might think. You can spot Browne's moves a block away...and Ghod help the field when he starts twitching (page 11--nAS)!

NEW BOOKS

Compiled by Sam De Piero

Already out:

GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN, by Ray Bradbury, Doubleday, \$3.00---CLARKE, Arthur C.: AGAINST THE FALL OF NIGHT, Gnome, #2.75---ICEWORLD, by Hal Clement, Gnome, \$2.50---CONKLIN, Groff, ed. SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURES IN DIMENSION, Vanguard, \$2.95---SPACE PLATFORM in two editions, by Murray Leinster, once from Shasta (\$2.50) and one from Pocket Books (\$.25)---other doubleton for March is STAR SCIENCE FICTION STORIES, by Frederick Pohl, Houghton (\$1.50), Ballantine (\$.35)---RING AROUND THE SUN, by Clifford Simak, Simon & Schuster, \$2.75---TENN, Willim, Ed., CHILDREN OF WONDER, Simon & Schuster, \$3.00

Forthcoming:

Groff & Lucy Conklin, eds.: SUPERNATURAL READER
Lippincott...April 22 \$2.95

Kendell Foster Crossen: ONCE UPON A STAR
Henry Holt...April 13 \$2.95

Lowndes, Robert W. MYSTERY OF THE THIRD MINE (s?)
Winston...April 10 \$2.00

Clifford D. Simak: FIRST HE DIED
Dell...April \$.25

Sohl, Jerry: THE TRANSCENDANT MAN
Rinehart...April 16 \$2.50
(Eerie beings from another planet wreak havoc in the Southwest desert. By author of THE HAPLOIDS)

Olaf Stapledon: TO THE END OF TIME
Funk & Wagnall's...May \$5.00

Van Lhin, Erik: BATTLE ON MERCURY
Winston...April 10 \$2.00

John Collier: FANCIES AND GOODNIGHTS
Bantam Books...May 6 \$.25
...This one is a MUST.

That's it for now...but next issue we'll try to pass on some more information on NEW BOOKS.

---SAN DEPIERO

YNGVI IS NOT A LOVER YNGVI



...In retrospect

THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY SCIENCE-FICTION CONVENTION...

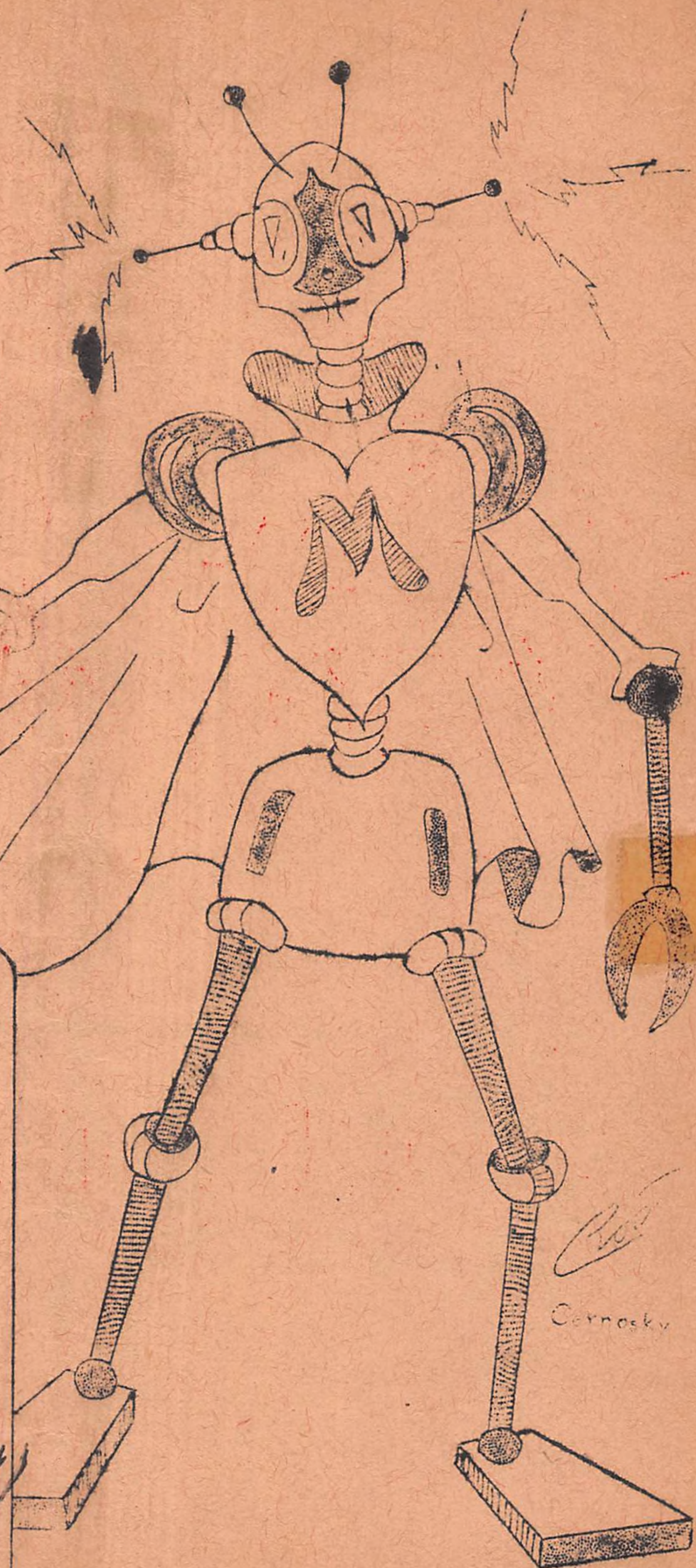
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