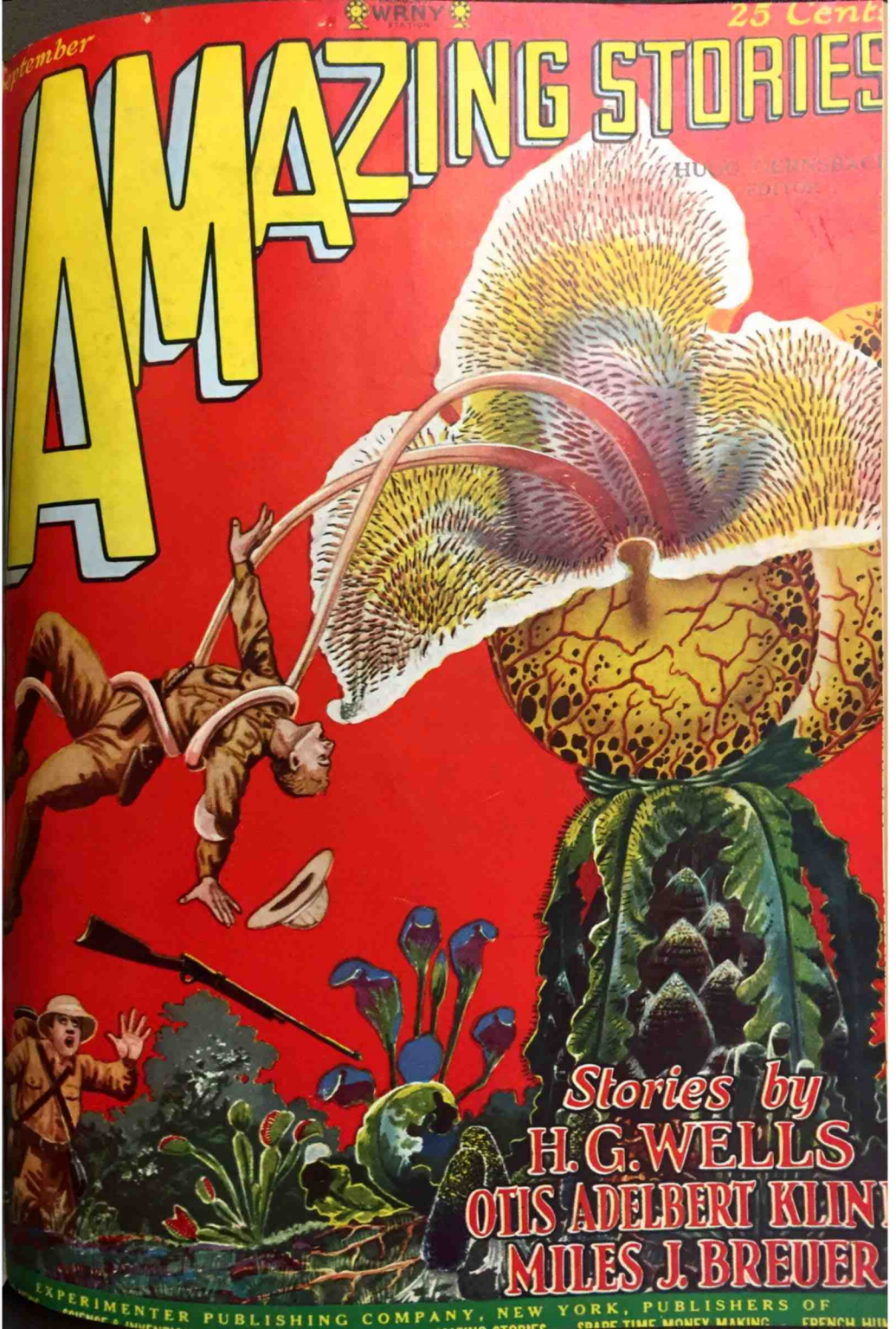
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AMAZING STORIES

Vol. 2 No. 6

September, 1927

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Owners of Broadcast Station WRNY

Contents for September

Our Cover

this month depicts a scene from "The Malignant Flower," in which the evil, gigantic flower has caught Sir William Armstrong with its sucking arms, lifting him by the shoulder, higher and higher, preparatory to drawing him within its calyx, and closing its petals.

In Our Next Issue:

AROUND THE UNIVERSE, by Ray Cummings. If you love interplanetarian stories—and who doesn't—here is a story that will do your heart good. It is written in an entirely different vein, and yet contains excellent science all the way through. Incidentally, the astronomy contained therein is most excellent as well as correct, and gives you an insight into the wonders of the universe that perhaps few other "space" stories can boast. We know you will greatly enjoy this story. It is a classic.

TREASURES OF TANTALUS, by Garret Smith (A Serial in 2 Parts). Here is one of the most daring and exciting stories which we have ever read. Now that we have television, the idea of the author's *Telephonoscope*, by which it is possible to spy upon people and see what is happening right in their own homes and offices is of tremendous interest. How one man succeeded in practically controlling the entire world thereby, is told in inimitable style by this famous and well-known author, who has also written "After A Million Years"—"On The Brink of 2,000," and other famous scientifiction tales.

THE WINGED DOOM, by Kenneth Gilbert. Now that aviation has come to the fore again, through the exploits of our American flyers, this story gives you a peep into the future, and you see what may happen when a powerful nation is about to invade this country. Here we have aviation to the *nth* degree, and yet, as you read on, you will become convinced of the possibilities contained in the story.

HICKS' INVENTIONS WITH A KICK (The Hicks' Hydraulic Bank Protector), by Henry Hugh Simmons. Being a true inventive genius, Mr. Hicks, despite his luckless demonstrations, bobs up once more with a more marvellous invention than ever. This time it is a contrivance for the absolute protection of banks against any and all robbers. High water pressure plays an effective part here—too effective in this demonstration, in fact.

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VOLUME 2

AMAZING STORIES

THE MAGAZINE OF SCIENTIFICTION

September, 1927
No. 6

HUGO GERNSBACK, *Editor*
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Editorial and General Offices: 230 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Extravagant Fiction Today - - - - - - - - Cold Fact Tomorrow

THE MYSTERY OF TIME

By HUGO GERNSBACK

A CANADIAN correspondent, Mr. C. G. Portsmouth, of Vancouver, takes us to task about "The Lost Continent." Says he:

"I am a constant reader of your magazine, and am taking the liberty of writing you in regard to the story, 'The Lost Continent,' in your July issue. Your foreword states that this tale contains the best science of all the prize-winning stories submitted. "Now, in a scientifiction story, I quite understand, and appreciate, that wealth of imagination, such as inventions, new powers, discoveries of new chemical, physical and psychic laws, and their adaptations, is wholly creditable to the authors, because, indeed, as you state, 'extravagant fiction today—cold fact tomorrow.'

"Now, to come to my point—it is not, however, good science to cause a scientific impossibility, a logical impossibility, a direct contradiction, to appear in a story. And this is just what I beg to show has been perpetrated in this story, 'The Lost Continent.'

"Here goes: The people in this yarn have been carried back in time fourteen thousand years, and are beholding the lost continent of Atlantis as it was then, 'a thriving and populous country'. They see the inhabitants of those early days, moving about and in general living their lives again as they once did. Very good, all's well, but now enters the scientific impossibility. Those inhabitants look up and take notice of the ship and its cargo of time-travelers!

"May I quote: 'The only sign of emotion of the group on the cliff was shown by a..man who..gazed in our direction with a look of admiration on his face'. Again and again on page 344 and 345 of this story it is stated that the lost people of Atlantis observed those who had come back in time to them from our present to their present, and this, Mr. Editor, is a scientific and logical impossibility. "It is scientifically possible for 1926 to go back in time and observe the doings, etc, of 14,000 years ago (theoretically, I mean, of course), but it was not theoretically possible for that race of 14,000 years ago to sense in any way those who watched them from, shall we say, 1926 A. D.?

"At the risk of being over precise, let me put the case in a concrete form. Take the 'tall, kingly-looking man' who gazed at and in various ways sensed the presence of those who observed him from the ship. Call him A for short. Now A lived his life, thousands of years ago, and died. All right, now let us pass on in time 14,000 years. Now, back we come in time to where A is again living his life. Lo and behold, this time A sees before he dies a strange phenomenon in his sky! He sees the shipload of people observing him. And yet these people are necessarily observing him during his one and only lifetime, wherein he certainly did not, could not, have observed them.

"The same case applies to all the other people of Atlantis. They necessarily all lived and died thousands of years ago, and yet when their scene is brought back again they are made to observe and act in a manner they could not even theoretically have done.

"May I suggest, Mr. Editor, that a truly scientific handling of the element in time when our travelers looked down on Atlantis would have been to have the inhabitants of Atlantis totally unaware of the explorers' presence in their midst? The writer of the tale had a chance there of propounding an interesting bit of science by having one of the people on the ship asking how it was that none of the throngs of Atlantis below seemed to notice them in any way, and then having it explained to them, as far as the people of Atlantis were concerned, the ship, the sphere and the explorers in time simply did not exist—could not exist, because these people had already lived through this moment of time once when there was no ship, no sphere, and no travelers-in-time, and were now simply reliving that same moment of time again."

Offhand, the logic contained in Mr. Portsmouth's letter seems perfect, but is it? Many things that sound perfectly illogical today may be perfectly logical tomorrow, in the light of more and better knowledge. If you had told some one, 75 years ago, that a black iron disc inside of a telephone receiver could faithfully reproduce practically every known sound, and, indeed, reproduce a whole orchestra at one time, you would have been laughed at. How can the self-same diaphragm reproduce twenty different instruments all at the same time? Logic, at that time, would have dictated that it was impossible. Yet we know from our everyday experience that it is now quite commonplace.

Likewise, when we delve into the mystery of time, we should be most careful, because we are venturing on an uncharted sea, of which but little is known. An interesting sidelight on Mr. Portsmouth's contention is answered in the article, "Explorations in the World of Dreams," by H. G. Wells, published in the New York Times Magazine of July 10th, 1927, from which we quote the following:

"The point of interest is that our mind can be considered as existing in the past and in the future, as extending, so to speak, both ways beyond what we consider to be the actual moment.

"I hope that does not strike the reader as too crazy a proposition. Most of us have given very little thought to what we mean by the actual moment. What do we mean by 'now?' How much time is it? Behind 'now' stretches the past, ahead is the future, but is it itself an infinitesimal instant? Do we merely exist as a flash, as a series of flashes, so to speak, of no duration at all, between a past gone by and a future still to come, or does 'now' bulge into both past and future?

"This will be a novel and amusing question to most people and a profoundly irritating one to certain types. They will be so accustomed to speak of past and future as though they were in actual contact at the present, that the assertion will be astonishing and difficult, and yet as they think it over, it will acquire an insinuating and troublesome plausibility, that 'now'."

Here is a profound thinker who seriously argues a point that seems, offhand, to be impossible. It may not be so.

Furthermore, if we contemplate a *nova* in the skies, that is, a star that suddenly flares up in the heavens, our astronomers quickly tell us that this event took place perhaps four or five thousand years ago. A recent star burst out into flame while Rome was being built, yet we only lately saw the effect of it. The reason is that it took several thousand years for the light to reach the earth.

On the other hand, according to Einstein, time, which is a dimension, curves back on itself, and will come back after a certain cycle. If this is true, the situation as described in the story under discussion, "The Lost Continent," would not be quite so impossible.

If you think of time as a ribbon which will come back to its starting point, you can readily see that you will reach a point where two events, although at widely different dates, will run past each other in time.

I do however agree with Mr. Portsmouth, that the inhabitants of Atlantis would probably not have seen the later travelers in time.

Mr. Hugo Gernsback speaks every Tuesday at 9 P. M. from WRNY on various scientific and radio subjects.

The MALIGNANT FLOWER

By Anthos

....John Bannister hastened to the flower with giant paces...and tried to destroy the tough tentacles of the plant, closely clinging to each other. ...He seized the axe and accurately and carefully delivered blow after blow, which swelled up to a sort of clangor, as if a bell were cracking.

THIS story, which has just come to us from Germany, is not only a little literary masterpiece, but is a scientific gem as well. Of course, stories of man-eating plants are nothing new in literature, but we believe that this one is so unusual, and so excellent, that it deserves your particular attention. And lest you think that a man-eating plant is an impossibility, your attention is called to the illustrations which we are printing elsewhere, being actual photographs of flowers as tall as, and taller than, human beings. The story of man-eating plants has persisted for many years and there is no good reason why such a plant should not, or could not, exist. Flesh-eating plants are well known to science. There are many flowers and plants that catch not only flies and other insects, but small mammals as well. There is, therefore, no reason to doubt the existence of such plants. It is quite possible that even if no such plants are in existence today—which is a possibility—there might have been many of them in the remote ages.

BALA Daulat Ras had finished his story. For a while he stood there, stiff and straight as a statue in front of the Englishman who was immersed in deep thought. He measured him with a glance in which the mysticism of ancient wisdom of his native home and enigmatic cruelty were mingled. Then he left slowly with measured steps.

Sir George William Armstrong started up from his dreaming and gulped down a glass of whiskey. It was perfect lunacy what the Hindoo had told him, and yet, and yet one had to believe him word for word, for Baulat Ras was a Yoghi, and a Yoghi never lies. But he wanted to, and had to settle for himself whether occult powers abided in these strange men, who hate the European and very seldom bring to light the "nature secrets" of their land. Sir George was well off and without any ties. No sport was strange to him. He could certainly start the undertaking, but he needed a reliable as well as taciturn companion. The native servant familiar with the ways of the land, to whom he disclosed his plan, said he would sooner be thrown alive to a tiger or be buried in an ant-hill. So he had to turn to his faithful old John Bannister.

In the long full years of their connection, he had become more than a mere valet. Indeed, he was a sort of confidential friend. True and watchful as a dog, tenacious and indefatigable in hardships, courageous in danger. His skin was like parchment, no red blood seemed to flow beneath it, but in spite of his 65 years he was muscular and had a constitution like iron and steel. And Sir George took him into his confidence. But this it was which Baulat Ras had related:

Some ten days journey from here, in an accurately-dedicated little valley of the Himalayas, which is about 200 yards long, there is a curious little bit of earth, a ravine hedged in by three high perpendicular walls. The only access is on one of the four sides, over a sort of quagmire or pond, out of which poisonous vapors rise. You had to row closely along the edge of it in a boat in order to avoid the poisonous gases. The ravine itself, completely overgrown with flowers, is the home for demons, mischievous satanic forms, mixtures of man and woman, against whom all the weapons of civilization are useless. In spring and in fall they reveal their mysterious power. Woe to him who treads upon their reservation. Death and misery is his fate. If he escapes the destruction above, he remains dead,—as far as earthly love is concerned. Mark this,—death for all earthly love.

John Bannister smiled sneeringly. His master stood immersed in deep thought. He thought of the blonde fiancée, whom in this very month he was to take to her future home. Near Calcutta, in a picturesque suburb, is a charming bungalow, which was even then being erected in feverish haste according to his directions. Then he would be at an end, once for all, as a restless globe-trotter and adventurer. But till then, Harriet Richards was to suspect nothing of the goal of the journey, was not to be given one second of worry or of anxiety. He would pretend a business trip. And he laid out his plan. The railroad went part of the way. He would buy reliable maps of the country, would get provisions and a little row-boat, would use porters until he would get to the entrance of the ravine. In the bright mid-day he would enter it, while this last bit of the journey, he and his valued John Bannister should conquer alone. John rubbed his hands in satisfaction. He was satisfied with the party.....

THE Hindoo had spoken the truth. The ravine was there. Behind dusky black marshlands was a bright tropical carpet of flowers in the most gorgeous colors of the young autumn. The goal was reached. The porters pushed the boat into the swamp and lay down trembling in a little hollow. Three hours of waiting was assigned them, enough time for the adventurers to go all over the little valley which was to be explored.

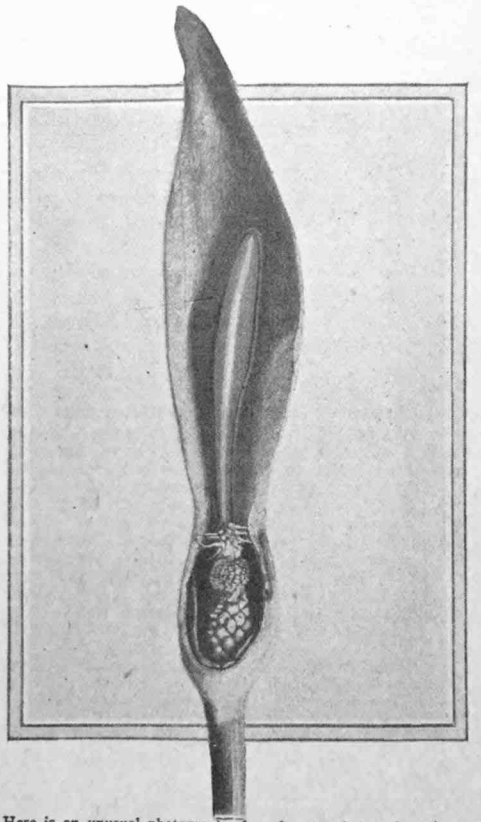
Countless little bubbles rose. The air was filled with strong biting vapors as the two discoverers glided along the edge of the turbid and scum-covered river. On each side the bare cliffs were in curious contrast to the blooming flora which awaited them in the valley. A quantity of withered thorn bushes, with dried and crooked branches, rose on the edge of the stream, which thickened steadily. The sun poured down obliquely. No wind stirred in this silent afternoon siesta of nature. As they got out of the boat, a heavy veil of vapor stretched over the upper valley. The atmosphere seemed to brew sultry over all and purple lightning jerked over the landscape. A hedgehog sprang up before them. Fearless and confident, he sized up the unusual visitors, trotted alongside of them for a while, then sat upon his hind legs and nibbled at an artichoke. Their shadows fell before them, dumb, trembling companions, while the adventurers, between bare cliffs, dropped down into the valley of the flowers, which stood in their second most exquisite bloom. Sir George forged ahead, carefully watching every step. Directly be-

hind him came his companion, and both were armed to the teeth.

A wonder garden spread before their enraptured gaze. Flower after flower, each of inimitable brilliancy of color, pictures of never glimpsed dimensions, ever thicker, ever higher, rather trees than flowers. A whole forest through which it was only with difficulty that one could make his way. Orchids of the most varied kinds were here on the frontier of the highest giant cliffs of the world! Wary, dreamlike, gigantic flowers, with heat-trembling calyxes, covered the whole ravine, cutting off all vision beyond it. Brusquely and undeterred, Sir George forced his way forward and onward, and his companion had more than once to warn him to look out for unknown dangers. What would rise up from behind or between this colored scenery? What kind of beings lurked behind it all, waiting for them?

There was nothing to be seen but flowers and more flowers. In feverish excitement they observed the size of the strange forest with its great plant growths as high as men, whose flowers in silent and majestic quiet were throned upon their stems. Nothing moved. Once only a Himalayan fox moved past them like a streak of lightning, and again there was the silence of a graveyard. Only the overcoming perfume of these myriads of blooms increased, and further progress seemed to oppress the very senses, and the two wanderers were overcome by a fantastic dreamlike mood. These flowers, these giant butterflies, or magnificent dazzling color, fluttering around them—were they not all satanically beautiful beings, which resembled reasoning creatures, benumbing the senses with a whirl, while they simulated the human organs—ear, eyes, lips, and tongue? Sir George gave free reign to his imagination. These ruthless beings which emitted this perfume out of their great languishing calyxes, at once seeming to have unsatisfied longing and dreaming, were they not half-flower, half-animal? Like slender white giant candelabra, their bodies rose upward. What kind of a secret did they hide?

And he began energetically and impatiently to forge ahead. Already he was easily ten yeards ahead of his companion, half of the length of the valley through which they were walking was well behind him. The black, bare, steeply-rising cliff, which might have been poured from sealing wax, and which closed the valley, seemed to vibrate far in the distance. John Bannister started to run in order to catch up with his master, but his progress was ever retarded by creeping plants or round rock boulders, and now a sudden thicket rising from the ground cut off his steps and his view ahead. He forced his way through laboriously and found himself in an open glade, nearly at the end of the ravine. And the sight that met his gaze..... "But such a thing is impossible!" thought John Bannister to himself, as he rubbed his hand over his eyes. The unheard-of wonder did not vanish, but stood in a monumental quiet. In the middle of the glade a colossal flower rose up to a height of nearly 10 feet, the stem nearly a foot thick, looking like an immense hemlock cone. From the top five or six great leaves, resembling leather, reached down to the ground. From the blooms there dropped a fluid of overcoming strength of scent. And he saw Sir George William Armstrong, sunk in wonder, standing close by this queen of the valley. John Bannister involuntarily stood still. Something had moved. The pair of blooms of this great flower which hitherto had hung down, stiffened themselves visibly, —the piercing sweet perfume streamed out of them overpoweringly, and the three-fold thorny lips with their colored pattern trembled in the atmosphere back and forth, while the Doric column of the stem, dark yellow and sprinkled with black spots, seemed to curve upwards, showing a labyrinthian net of blood red veins. What was this frightful spotted viperlike body, whose spots swelled up to thick berrylike eruptions?



Here is an unusual photograph of an insect-eating or insectivorous flower in cross section. The small spider is caught at the constriction in the plant. The claim is made that the plant itself derives nourishment from feeding upon all sorts of insects and arachnids which are unfortunate enough to travel down to imbibe of the sweet nectar.

Whatever it was, it meant danger. And John Bannister screamed out with the full strength of his lungs, "Sir George, take care, for Heaven's sake!"

But even then the awful thing came to pass. The flower slowly opened, and something bright and flesh-colored shot out of it. What darted so suddenly? Was it the sucking arms of an octopus? Was it the soft arms of a woman? From Sir George there came a scream that cut to the very marrow, and

John Bannister, frozen stiff with fright, saw his master lifted by his shoulders, up, higher and higher, saw him hanging for a couple of seconds in uncertain balance, and finally disappearing slowly into the calyx of the atrocious, malignant flower, whose petals once more drew themselves together with a start. In this way Sir George celebrated a symbolic marriage with nature, a festival more overcoming, but also more horrible than that for which he had prepared himself. Over the whole scene horror seemed to sweep on dark bat's wings.

There was the fraction of a second only, and John Bannister had regained his senses. He hastened to the flower with giant paces, drew his knife and tried to destroy the tough tentacles of the plant, closely clinging to each other. The knife went to pieces like glass in his grip, then he seized the axe, and accurately and carefully delivered blow after blow, which swelled up to a sort of clangor, as if a bell were cracking. After ten minutes of strenuous work, he had freed his master from his dangerous position, literally peeled out of a sheath.

Pale as death he lay before him on the grass, a grim and frozen smile as if half of supernatural pleasure, half of the fear of death was on his rigid features. But he breathed, lived, appeared uninjured, and allowed himself to be dragged away as if lifeless.

The return journey was silent and oppressive, first going back to the waiting porters, then the whole party returned to civilization. Nothing could induce Sir Armstrong to open his lips. He stared before him as if his mind had completely left him.

Later when Harriet Richards came to his bed in the hospital, he at first failed to recognize her. Then, while foam appeared at the corners of his lips, he rose up in his bed and with a frightful, piercing yell, he pushed her away....

And Sir George has not led Harriet Richards to the altar. Fourteen days after the catastrophe his hair became white as snow. A broken man for the rest of his life, he was taken to the City Insane Asylum, lingered there a year and a half until death set him free.

RETURNING from the burial, John Bannister suddenly saw Daulat Ras, the Yoghi, who seemed to have risen from the ground as by magic. "You had your warning," said he, and an undefinable expression played about his lips. "But how was it," cried out the other, "that Sir George rushed to his fate and to destruction, while I was spared?" On the features of the Asiatic lay the impenetrable mask of the Sphynx. With his forefinger he touched the parchment white face of the old servant. "Blood," said he, meaningly,

(*Continued on next page*)

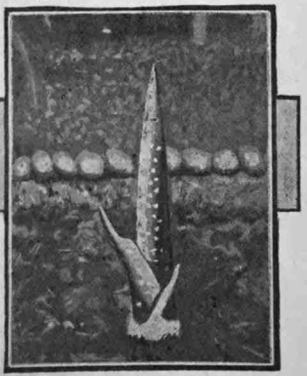
The Largest Flower in the World

We reprint this article and pictures from SCIENCE & INVENTION, to prove once more the possibility of seemingly impossible things. Here and on the previous page are photographs of actual flowers which exist today. Who knows but that some bold explorer might venture into still unknown lands and discover a flower even more nearly approximating the description of "The Malignant Flower?"

ON the Island of Sumatra, in the Dutch East Indies, some of the most exotic and curious plants are to be found growing wild. It is here that we must look for the largest flower in the world. On the 17th of March, 1925, a scientist planted a large bud of the Giant Amorphophalle. Twenty-two days later it was 22 inches high. It continued to grow and in June 24th at midday, the point of the spathe began to unroll itself, and four hours later the flower, which then had a height about 6 feet 6 inches, appeared in all its beauty. M. Dakkus, the scientist conducting the experiment, fortunately took the trouble to photograph the Amorphophalle in its whole expansive bloom, so as to preserve for us the fragile beauty of this rare and transient flower.

In March, 1926, the Amorphophalle presented the appearance of a small tree about 10 feet tall. The plant blooms but once in its life-time.

The Giant Amorphophalle blooming in a Java garden, June 24, 1925. The stick is 2 meters long and the flower 6 feet 6 inches in height.



Thirty-two days after planting, the Giant Amorphophalle presented the appearance of a spire 34 inches in height, as in the photograph above.

—then he glided back and disappeared in the crowd of mourners.

THREE years passed. Harriet Richards moved to Liverpool, and managed the household for her brother Jack, the ship-owner. Life resumed its usual way and even in her memory, the frightfulness of the events gradually paled. One evening, as Harriet sat in the confortably-heated sitting room opposite her brother, the winter storm howling over the Atlantic, her glance rested on a column in the "Daily Telegraph."

Instinctively she took it up and read: "The Life Memoirs of the recently deceased Professor Dr. de Palfi, known as a botanist and explorer will soon appear. The professor's greenhouses, with their orchid cultures, situated in Vienna, his adopted home city, have enjoyed great European fame for the last ten years. In his memoirs, the professor tells in an impressive way of his extended explorations which took him into the most distant regions of all the continents. With the permission of the publisher we can quote from its contents today the sensational information that de Palfi on his last journey in which he reached the interior of Madagascar, actually came upon the much-debated 'Man Eating Plant.' It is supposed to be a very rare variety of *Cypripedia gigantea* belonging to the class of the giant orchids, and is the largest flower on earth. These plants, growing in certain remote valleys, have ascribed to them the power to seize small and also larger animals, and even men, who come within their reach. In the spring and fall, always according to de Palfi's observation, the pericarp, or seed-container, forms a sort of natural trap. It thrusts out a quantity of sharp claw-like points, which, as they sink into the flesh, are strong enough to hold the large animals prisoners. Within, the plant is covered all over with suction caps, containing a sort of resinous gum that acts like birdlime in a bird trap. By virtue of a certain plant stimulus, a reflex motion back and forth sets up, enabling the enormous orchid to draw into itself even the body of a full-grown man. The plant, it is understood, is a pure flesh-eater. It feeds itself principally on large animals and men. Sometimes the victims can be freed from the embraces of the flower after the murderous attack of the plant. Otherwise the captured individual is completely absorbed and fourteen days later the bare skeleton is cast out."

THE END

What Do You Know?

READERS of AMAZING STORIES have frequently commented upon the fact that there is more actual knowledge to be gained through reading its pages than from many a textbook. Moreover, most of the stories are written in a popular vein, making it possible for any one to grasp important facts.

The questions which we give below are all answered on the pages as listed at the end of the questions. Please see if you can answer the questions first without looking for the answer, and see how well you check up on your general knowledge.

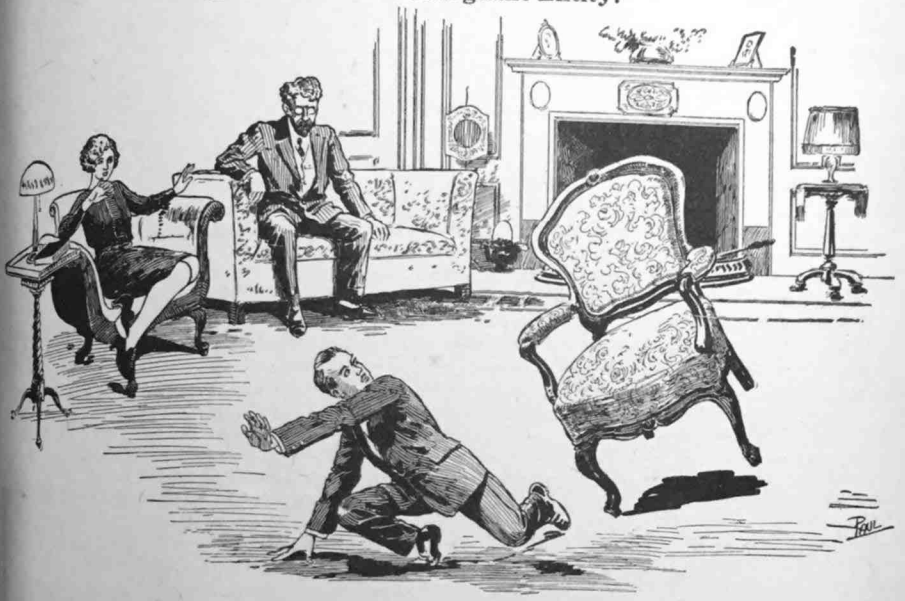
If you wish to see a questionnaire of this kind every month, do not fail to mark your reply on the voting coupon which you will find elsewhere. If there is sufficient demand for the questionnaire we will publish one every month.

1. What is one of the absolute and definite characteristics of the Hindu yoghi? (See page 527).
2. What is the structure of one of the famous insect-eating plants? (See page 528).
3. Is there a flower larger than a man? (See page 529).
4. What flower blooms but once in its lifetime? (See page 529).
5. What is the name of the man-eating plant in Madagascar? (See page 530).
6. What was the unexplained phenomenon incident to the performances of the discredited medium Eusapia Palladino? (See page 532).
7. If bitten by a dog suspected of hydrophobia, what emergency treatment could you apply? (See page 537).
8. How could you determine the position of a radio broadcasting station by surveying or triangulating with radio? (See page 539).
9. Do you know frozen carbon dioxide and what it does? (You can get it in some drug stores now by asking for dry ice) (See page 541).
10. What did the Roman gladiators say as they passed the Emperor? (See page 548).
11. What happens to a British engine driver during a collision? (See page 569).
12. If the Thames which leads to the port of London were obstructed so that no vessel could enter, how could Londoners best embark to leave the country in case of war? (See page 575).
13. What dominant feature of almost all human devices is neglected by nature? What is the device? (See page 582).
14. What would be the probable psychology of the human mind if the race were on the verge of extermination? (See page 592).
15. Why are our systems immune to so many bacteria which cause putrefaction in dead bodies? (See page 594).
16. Where do we find Widmanstatten figures in nature? (See page 559).

The RADIO GHOST

By Otis Adelbert Kline

Author of "The Malignant Entity."



"....As I bent over to examine the spot, I heard a cry of warning from the girl and a quick movement behind me. I turned, but could not move in time to avoid the heavy chair which was rushing toward me. It knocked me over and came back, apparently bent on my destruction."

THIS remarkable story, made so principally by the fact that radio enters into it, is one of the most ingenious we have ever read. The best part about the story, however, is that the radio principles throughout the story are quite accurate. There is nothing fantastic about it, and the thing can be duplicated by any good radio man today.

Here, then, is a scientifiction story, thrilling, mysterious, and breath-taking, that we know you will enjoy.

DR. Dorp looked up in annoyance when Mrs. Bream came into the room. As was my weekly custom, I had dropped into his study for a short Saturday afternoon's visit, and the talk had turned to our mutual hobby, psychic phenomena. The learned doctor's look of vexation had followed the unobstrusive entrance of his housekeeper during a somewhat heated discussion of that physically elusive but psychologically evident substance which has come to be known as ectoplasm.

"What is it, Mrs. Bream?" he asked, petulantly.

"Sorry to interrupt you, sir, but there's a young lady to see you."

"What is she selling?"

"I believe she wants to consult you professionally, sir."

"Like the book agent who called Wednesday, I suppose. Wanted my opinion of the twelve volumes he was peddling. Well, show her in. We'll soon see."

I rose to leave the room, but the doctor raised his hand.

"Keep your seat, Evans," he said. "I don't expect this interview to be either important or protracted."

I resumed my seat, but rose again immediately as a neatly dressed girl entered the room. She was small, golden haired, and quite pretty. For a moment she glanced at both of us, standing beside our chairs —then evidently decided in favor of the doctor's grizzled Van Dyke.

"I am Greta Van Loan, doctor," she said, addressing him as if sure she had spoken to the right man.

"You recognize me, then?" he asked, drawing a chair forward for her.

She sat down lightly, and with exquisite grace.

"To be sure. I have seen your picture in the papers ever so many times, usually in connection with your investigations of spiritistic phenomena."

The doctor did not appear to feel flattered. In fact, his look was rather one of boredom, as if he expected something unpleasant to grow out of this subtle blandishment. His voice, however, was quite pleasant as he replied.

"Indeed. Will you tell me how I may be of service to you?"

She looked at me, and I developed a most unnecessary feeling. I rose once more, this time firmly resolved to take my leave, but again the doctor detained me.

"Miss Van Loan," he said, "allow me to present Mr. Evans, my friend and colleague. Like me, he is an investigator of the supernormal in psychic phenomena."

Her acknowledgement of the introduction was accompanied by a charming smile that immediately put me at my ease.

"I have heard of your work in connection with that of Dr. Dorp," she said. "How fortunate that I find you two together—especially as my reason for coming to see the doctor has a direct bearing on the very subject that seems to be of interest to both of you. Won't you stay?"

I relapsed once more into my chair.

The doctor, I observed, had pricked up his ears like a hound on a hot trail. He leaned forward in his chair and pressed the tips of his fingers together —an attitude he always assumed when absorbed in a problem that was of intense interest to him.

"Miss Van Loan," he began, "you are not by any chance a relative of my old friend and fellow worker, Gordon Van Loan?"

"I am his niece."

"Indeed. I begin to understand your interest in spiritistic phenomena. Dense of me not to have thought of it before."

"But, doctor, I *am* not interested in spiritistic phenomena."

"Eh? Not interested? I'm afraid I don't—"

"I have always feared and detested the very thought of meeting or communicating with the disembodied spirits."

"Really, Miss Van Loan, you surprise me," said the doctor. "Your uncle, up to the very time of his death, was an ardent supporter of the spiritistic hypothesis. I have had many a private debate with him on the subject."

"I am aware of that. I, too, have argued the subject with him when it was forced on me. Until three days ago I was as firm an unbeliever as you. But now—I don't know what to think. It seems that my uncle, even in death, has resolved to force his belief upon me."

"You mean that he has appeared to you?"

"I'm not sure, but strange things—terrible, enervating things have happened since I began to carry out the provisions of my uncle's will."

"He left his entire fortune to you, did he not?"

"Yes, but with a provision which I am afraid I won't be able to carry out. He stipulated that I must live in his old home in Highland Park continuously for one year, and that if I should fail to do so everything would revert to my cousin, Ernest Hegel, or in the event of his failure to carry out the provision, to the Society for Psychical Research."

"Your uncle was reputed to be quite wealthy."

"He left something over half a million, most of which was in first mortgage real estate bonds, in addition to the home and estate, which is estimated to be worth at least a hundred thousand."

"Quite a sizeable bequest, and, it seems to me, an ample recompense for the condition imposed with it."

"So I thought too, until I spent a night in that awful house. It was then that I began to realize the full import of his explanation of the reasons for his unusual provision."

"Just what was his explanation?"

"I can give you his exact words. In the last three days they have burned themselves into my very soul. He said: "—for when I return to prove the reality of life after death it is not unreasonable to ask the person who benefits so materially by this will to be on hand to greet me, and to receive and transmit my message of hope and good cheer to the misguided scoffers, who, by their very attitude, prevent their departed loved ones from communicating with them."

"Hem. And have you received the message, or something purporting to be the message?"

"Not exactly, but there have been indications of a strange and terrible presence in that house — an elusive, disembodied entity that, while not a creature of flesh and blood, exercises an uncanny power over material objects as well as living creatures."

"I see. And the manifestations?"

"Ghostly raps, shuffling footsteps in rooms that are untenanted, overturned furniture and broken china, strange sickening odors suggestive of the dank mustiness of the tomb, lights darkened and suddenly lighted again with no evidence of switches or of fuses having been tampered with, the touch of cold hands in the dark, doors opening and closing in the dead of night, the icy breath—"

"The icy breath? What is that?"

"It is the most convincing evidence of my uncle's presence in the house. Although the last three days and nights have been exceptionally warm, even for August, I have felt it, and the servants have felt it—a moving current of air with a dank, charnel odor, as cold as a wind from the ice-bound Arctic circle. As you are no doubt aware, my uncle was an ardent admirer of the famous Italian medium, Eusapia Palladino. One of the most baffling manifestations which she is said to have produced time and again in the presence of investigating scientists, was the icy breath — a cold breeze that appeared to come from her forehead when she was in a trance. Many scoffed, but none could explain this remarkable phenomenon. My uncle often referred to it in his lectures. He has written several papers regarding it for spiritistic publications."

"And living creatures, you say, have been affected?"

"Yes, Sandy, my Airedale terrier, has not been himself since he entered the house. He has bristled and growled repeatedly, for no apparent reason. Although he has always been a most friendly and playful pet, he now slinks about the house like some vicious creature of the jungle, or mopes in corners, avoiding all human companionship and barely tasting

food and water. This morning he snapped at my hand when I attempted to pat his head—something he has never done before. The servants, too, have seen, heard and felt the things that have affected me, but being spiritualists, they glory in them rather than fear them. Man and wife they have worked for my uncle for the past ten years, the man acting as gardener, chauffeur and butler, the woman as cook and housekeeper."

"And your cousin, Ernest Hegel. Is he, too, stopping with you at present?"

"No. Cousin Ernest sailed for Germany last Saturday. He is American representative for a Berlin dye and chemical manufacturer, and was sent for by his concern."

"Then he is a German citizen?"

"His father was German, but he was born in America, hence he is an American citizen. His mother, like my father and Uncle Gordon, was American, of Holland Dutch descent. Part of his education was received at Heidelberg, and he took a post graduate course in chemistry and bacteriology in Vienna. When the war broke out, his sympathy for the land of his father was what turned my uncle against him."

"And consequently made you the preferred heir?"

"I think that has something to do with it, although I disagreed as thoroughly with Uncle Gordon in his pet hobby, spiritism, as Ernest did on questions of our international relations."

"Do any of the manifestations you speak of occur in the daytime?"

"None, except the queer behavior of my dog."

"Hem. You have stated a very interesting case, Miss Van Loan. I, for one, will be very glad to investigate the phenomena which have been troubling you."

"And I will be glad to go, too, if you want me," I said.

The young lady seemed pleased.

"I hope that I may have the help of both of you—and soon," she said earnestly.

The doctor turned to me.

"How about going this evening?" he asked.

"Suits me."

"Good. We can drive out easily in an hour. You may expect us about dusk, Miss Loan."

"You know the address?"

"I have visited your uncle several times, and he has also been my guest here."

"To be sure. I have heard uncle Gordon speak of you. Goodby, until dusk—and thank you, much."...

OUR drive, that evening, through the red-gold light of the waning afternoon, was both pleasant and uneventful. After a sultry day in the loop, it was refreshing to ride through the cool, tree-shaded north shore suburbs. Dr. Dorp, as was his wont when on the trail of a new mystery, was in the best of spirit—laughing and chatting gaily.

We arrived in Highland Park just at dusk, and presently turned into a narrow driveway which circled through a heavily wooded estate. At first no house was visible, but presently, as we wound through the thickest and gloomiest copse we had yet encountered, it came unexpectedly into view — an ancient brick homestead of the Dutch Colonial type, with gables that drooped despondently, and chimneys surmounted by double tiles that stood out against the background of gray sky like headless torsos with arms upraised to heaven.

As we drew up before the entrance, the noise of the doctor's motor ceased, and from just beyond the background of trees, there came a throbbing, pulsating murmur which had not previously been audible to us, announcing the proximity of Lake Michigan.

Scarcely had we set foot on the porch, when the door opened silently and a gray haired, white jacketed man with burning gray eyes that looked out from hollow recesses in a pale, wrinkled, and cadaverous countenance, stood aside, hand on latch, for us to enter. So loathesome in appearance was this death-like creature that I had a feeling of repugnance even at the thought of permitting him to take my hat in his bony, clawlike hands.

After disposing of our hats, he conducted us to a commodious living room, tastily furnished, where we were greeted by our charming hostess. Then he silently withdrew, closing the door after him.

Although she maintained a brave, calm demeanor, I noticed that the hand of Miss Van Loan was trembling as I took it in mine. The doctor, also, must have noticed this, for he quickly transferred his long, slim fingers to her pulse.

"Has anything happened?" he asked consulting his watch.

"Nothing yet, but I have been oppressed by a horrible feeling which I cannot explain. I have worried. too, for fear something might prevent your coming."

"You are a very brave young woman," he said, pocketing his watch and releasing her wrist, "but you have been under exceptionally severe nervous strain. Just now you are beginning to feel the reaction. Your heart, however, is good, and I believe another night of it can do you no permanent injury. Were this not the case, I should advise you to immediately leave this house, despite the tremendous financial stake involved."

"But, doctor, do you think the—the presence, can be driven out in one night?"

"That is my hope. I have a theory—"

His speech was suddenly interrupted by a noisy rattling of the door knob—the very door which the servant had silently closed a few minutes before.

"It is coming!" said the girl breathlessly, a note of terror in her voice.

The three of us watched the door silently—intently. It opened, revealing the dimly lighted hallway, in which no living creature was visible. For a moment it remained open as if someone were standing there with a hand on the knob. Then it closed with a bang.

I felt a prickly sensation in my scalp, then started from my tracks at the sound of a throaty rumble behind me.

"That is Sandy, my Airedale," explained the girl, "hiding in the corner behind the davenport. He always growls when it comes."

"I believe he scared me worse than *it*," I said with a nervous laugh, sinking back on the davenport, relieved by the realization that the noise, at least, had been earthly.

"It is now in the room," said the girl. "Don't you feel a strange presence?"

"Not yet," said the doctor gravely.

We waited breathlessly for the next manifestation. For several minutes the only sounds I could hear were those which drifted through the two open windows, one on each side of the fireplace—the clatter of frogs, the piping of nocturnal insects, the incessant muffled roar of the surf on the beach, and the occasional call of a night bird. Then a heavy poker, which had been leaning against the fireplace, clattered to the tiles, slid across them, and progressed with a queer jerky motion across the rug to the center of the room. It remained there for a moment, then twirled around and came straight toward me, still with the same jerky motion. When it seemed about to strike my feet I drew them up, half expecting the thing to leap at me.

Despite this singular and, to me, inexplicable phenomenon, Dr. Dorp maintained, unruffled, his look of complete absorption. The girl, however, was manifestly alarmed.

"Be careful, Mr. Evans," she said tensely. "I'm afraid it may hurt you."

Somehow I did not want to appear cowardly in the eyes of this girl. The heavy poker which had performed such amazing antics now lay quiescent, and apparently quite harmless, at my feet.

Simulating a calmness which I was far from feeling, I bent over and picked the thing up. I was examining it minutely, half expecting to find some mechanical attachment which would prove the whole thing a hoax, when it was suddenly and forcibly jerked from my grasp. It thumped to the floor, then spun half around and traveled jerkily back to the fireplace.

"What made you drop it?" asked the doctor. "Wasn't hot, was it?"

When I told him that it had been jerked from my hands, he seemed surprised.

"Are you sure you didn't just drop it from—ah—nervousness?"

"Positive."

"Hem. Strange."

We sat for several minutes without incident. Then I noticed that the lights were growing dim. I concentrated my gaze on the filaments of the reading lamp beside me. Slowly, almost imperceptibly, they were losing their incandescence.

Presently the room was in darkness, save for the dim twilight which came through the two windows. I could barely discern the figures of my two companions, blending with the shadowy outlines of the chairs in which they sat. A strange, musty odor assailed my nostrils. I felt a cold touch on the back of my hand, and automatically jerked it away. Then a breeze, icy cold, chilled me to the marrow. The dog growled ominously.

A light thud, as if some object had fallen, attracted my attention to the center of the room. Scarcely crediting the evidence of my senses, I saw a pale, luminous figure rising from the floor. The thing was irregular in outline, and swayed this way and that as if wafted by eddying air currents. Taller and taller it grew, until, when it had reached a height of nearly six feet, it bore some resemblance to a human figure shrouded in a white, filmy material.

Although my flesh crept and chills chased each other up and down my spine, I remembered that I was here to investigate this thing, and rising, forced myself to walk stealthily toward the center of the room. As I approached the grim wraith it grew taller, towering menacingly above me, and a queer, sickening odor became momentarily stronger—an odor which might have been produced by a combination of the fumes of brimstone with the offensive effluvium of putrefying flesh.

By the time I was within two feet of the thing I was nearly strangled by its horrible stench, but I had made up my mind to test its solidity at last, and stretched out my hand to touch it. The hand encountered no resistance. Moving it horizontally, I passed my hand *clear through it* from side to side. By this time my eyes were watering so badly from the effect of the acrid fumes that I was scarcely able to see. Then the lights flashed on, completely blinding me for a moment with their brilliance. A moment later I was able to see clearly.

A cry from Dr. Dorp aroused me.

"Quick, Evans," he said," the girl has fainted. We must get her into the open air."

He was endeavoring to lift her himself, but found her weight too much for him. Being his junior by some thirty-five years, and of a rather more substantial build, I found her slight form no burden whatever.

"Open the doors, doctor," I said. "I'll do the rest."

I had lifted the girl from the chair, and was turning toward the door, the doctor meanwhile advancing to open it. Before he could do so, however, the latch rattled, and the door swung open by itself. Quick as a flash, the doctor sprang out into the hall, peering this way and that.

"Nobody here," he said. "Come on."

I followed him down the hallway, this time close at his heels, with the girl still lying limply in my arms. He extended his hand, about to open the door which led to the front porch, when the knob turned, and this second door was opened as if by some invisible presence. Once more the doctor sprang forward, only to find the porch untenanted.

I laid the still unconscious girl in the porch swing, at the behest of the doctor, who informed me that she would regain consciousness more quickly in a reclining position.

"Now fan her with this magazine, Evans," he instructed, handing me a copy of "*Science and Invention*" which he had taken from the porch table. He felt her pulse for a moment. "She'll be all right in a few minutes. I'm going back to that room and have a look around. Keep fanning until she is fully revived."

Interested as I was in the phenomena which were taking place, I was glad of this brief respite and a chance to inhale some fresh air. The girl, unconscious, was free from the sway of fear for the time being.

and I knew from the reassuring manner of the doctor that she was in no danger. While I continued to ply the improvised fan I could hear the doctor, or someone, moving about the house.

Presently the girl's eyelids fluttered, and she began talking—her words disconnected and broken like those of one in a dream.

"Saw it—saw—spirit—Uncle Gordon. Must be—be his—ghost. Saw—put arm—through it."

Lightly I placed my hand on the smooth, cool forehead. Then she opened her eyes and looked earnestly into mine.

"What—what was I saying?" she asked, apparently quite bewildered.

"You fainted," I replied. "Don't worry. Everything is all right."

"But where is Dr. Dorp?"

"Just went in the house to look around. He'll be out in a few minutes, no doubt."

We waited a full twenty minutes, but still the doctor did not appear. Miss Van Loan had taken one of the wicker porch chairs, assuring me that she had fully recovered. I was sitting in another. All sounds in the house had ceased, and I began to feel some apprehension for the doctor's safety.

"Do you mind staying alone for a few minutes?" I asked. "I should like to go and see if my friend is all right."

"I'll go with you," she replied, rising.

"Are you sure you are strong enough?"

"Of course. Oh, I do hope nothing happened to him. I should never forgive myself."

We met the pale house man in the hall.

"Where is the doctor, Riggs?" she asked.

"I don't know, ma'am. I heard someone goin' up the stairs a while ago. Might have been him."

"You haven't seen him?"

"No ma'am. I come in just now to ask if you would be a-needin' of me any more this evenin'. I feel sort of tired like, after—"

"I know, Riggs. You haven't had much rest for the last three nights. You may go."

"Thank you, ma'am."

We ascended the stairs, the steps of which creaked weirdly under our weight. I could readily understand why Riggs had been able to hear them from the service quarters.

At the top was a long hallway with a door at one end, a window at the other, and two doors on either side.

Miss Van Loan opened the first door at our right, and we entered a bedroom daintily furnished in cane and ivory, with light blue hangings and spreads.

"This is my room," she informed me. "We have four bedrooms, each with a private bath and clothes closet."

I looked into the bath and clothes closet, but both were untenanted. Then we passed to the next room. This was furnished in burled walnut, with light green the prevailing color. No sign of the doctor here. The next room, which was just across the hall, was furnished in massive oak, with a taupe and maroon color scheme. Somehow it seemed thoroughly a man's room.

"This belonged to Uncle Gordon," said the girl. "It was in that bed that he died."

I looked at the bed and somehow the gray and maroon of the bolster and spread reminded me of blood trickling over a sacrificial slab of granite. With this thought came an inexplicable feeling of horror which I could not shake off.

"IT is back!" said the girl, suddenly, a note of terror in her voice.

She must have had the same feeling as I, at the same time, although nothing startling had happened—at least nothing that either of us could perceive with the aid of our five senses. The bath-room was empty, and I had started for the door of the closet, when the lights suddenly went out. Once more I was conscious of the peculiar, dusty odor I had detected in the room below. The girl shrieked. Then as if in answer to her cry, I heard a hollow groan and five distinct raps, apparently coming from the direction of the bed.

The door of the closet which I had not searched was not more than a foot from the head of the bed. I could still see it, though indistinctly, by the dim, gray light which came in through the window. Although I am not superstitious, a nameless dread assailed me at the thought of approaching nearer to that bed in which the former owner of the house had breathed his last. I hesitated, berating myself for a coward and weakling—then forced myself toward the door.

As I did so, I heard more raps, not quite so pronounced as formerly, then another moan, and sounds like those of a person gasping for breath. On reaching the door, I turned the knob, but found it locked. Then my fingers touched a key just below it. I turned this with difficulty. It seemed that either the lock was stuck, or something was resisting my efforts. Releasing the key, I once more attempted to open the door. Before I could turn the knob, however, the door again locked itself. From somewhere nearby, I heard a sound which plainly resembled the death rattle!

Once more I succeeded in unlocking the door, although the key was bent in the process. Then, holding the key with my left hand, I turned the knob with my right, and applied my shoulder to the door. Someone, or some thing, was pushing against it on the other side. At first I only succeeded in moving it a fraction of an inch. Gathering my strength for a supreme effort, I forced it wide open. As I did so, a rush of icy cold air enveloped me from head to foot. Hot and perspiring from my exertions as I was, it chilled me to the marrow. My teeth chattered, and I shivered as if I had suddenly been immersed in ice water.

Within the closet, all was black, as no light reached it from the window. Holding one foot against the door, which was still resisting my efforts, I lighted a match. It went out almost as soon as I struck it, but I had seen enough. Beneath a mound of clothing,

evidently snatched from the hooks on the wall, lay a human figure.

Stooping, I succeeded in grasping a foot and ankle. Then I dragged the body with its accompanying mound of clothing, from the closet. By this time my fingers were so numbed with cold that I could scarcely use them. I took my foot from the door, and it closed with a vicious bang.

Miss Van Loan had apparently recovered, in some measure, from her fit of terror, for she came up beside me.

"What is it? What did you find in the closet?" she whispered, peering at the shapeless thing which lay there in the dim, gray light.

Without taking time to reply, I hastily removed the pile of miscellaneous clothing from the body. Then my hand touched a cold forehead—a hairy face.

"Open the door, quickly!" I ordered. "My God, I'm afraid we have come too late."

She promptly did as she was bidden, while I gathered the cold, still form of Dr. Dorp in my arms. Then I staggered out of the room, across the hall, down the creaking stairway, and out upon the porch, the girl following. As I laid the doctor in the swing where I had deposited the mistress of the house less than an hour before, the lights flashed on once more.

"Rouse the servants," I said. "Telephone for a doctor. Then bring hot water, towels, blankets, hot water bottles—and some brandy."

While she was gone, I alternately slapped, kneaded and rubbed the cold flesh of my friend. She returned in a few minutes that seemed like hours, with two hot water bottles and an armful of towels. Behind her toddled a stout, round-faced woman in a red kimono, with a steaming kettle of water in one hand and a bottle and glass in the other.

We applied the various articles with better will than skill, and a moment later Riggs appeared in bathrobe and slippers carrying four thick woolen blankets. Another ten minutes elapsed before we succeeded in even warming the flesh of our patient.

"We haven't any brandy, so I brought a bottle of Uncle Gordon's whiskey," said the girl. "Do you think we had better give him some?"

"Not yet," I replied. "It might strangle him if he has enough life left in him to strangle."

The rumble of a motor sounded in the driveway, and two bright headlights flashed on the porch. A coupé pulled up with shrieking brakes and a young man, carrying a small satchel, got out and dashed up the steps.

"This way, Dr. Graves," called the girl, beckoning him to the swing where my friend lay.

"Why, it's Dr. Dorp!" said the young physician, taking the pulse of my friend. "What happened to him?"

"Asphyxiation," I replied, "and exposure to extreme cold."

Dr. Graves took a stethoscope from his case and used it for a few moments.

"The doctor has sustained quite a severe shock," he said, "but he is doing nicely now. There is nothing I can give him or do for him at this stage which will help matters. Fresh air and warmth are our best allies now."

MY friend regained consciousness five minutes later. He immediately recognized Dr. Graves, who had attended a number of his lectures before members of the medical fraternity, and had entered into discussions with him.

While the two were talking, the housekeeper went in for some hot water, lemon and sugar for a toddy. She had only been absent for a few minutes when we were all alarmed by the sound of barking and snarling within the house, punctuated by piercing screams.

Dr. Graves was the first to reach the door, where he paused. I attempted to force my way past him, but he stayed me with his arm.

"Get back, woman!" he shouted to someone within. "Get back and close the door. The creature is mad."

At the far end of the hall, I saw the stout wife of the house man apparently rooted to the floor by horror. Just in front of her, the Airedale, growling and snarling savagely, was rapidly demolishing the upholstering of a beautiful antique settee. The hairy jaws of the creature were flecked with white foam, and the eyes were bloodshot and unnaturally luminescent from extreme dilation of the pupils.

Seeing the peril in which the poor woman was placed, I caught up one of the porch chairs and rushed past the doctor. The dog took no notice of me until I swung at it with the chair. Then it dodged with surprising dexterity and leaped for my throat, just as two of the chair legs were shattered against the floor. I managed to elude it by quickly crouching behind the chair back, so that it passed clear over my head.

It was up again in an instant, however, and I had all I could do to protect myself from its leaps by fencing with the remains of the chair. Almost before I was aware of it, the beast had backed me into the living room. Then, to my horror, the door closed, and the lights winked out.

I shall never forget the battle I fought in that dark room. That which had been a shaggy creature of flesh and bone in the light, had become a pair of burning orbs, set in a shadowy form, that leaped, snapped, and snarled in a manner which was twice as terrifying as its former attacks had been when each move was completely visible. Now I was guided only by the movements of the luminous eyes, whereas I had previously been able to forecast each hostile move or leap by the crouch or muscular tension which preceded it.

Using the chair as a shield, I eventually managed to circle back to the door. With one hand I attempted to turn the knob, while I manipulated the chair with the other. The door was locked. I immediately felt below for the key, recalling that it had been there earlier in the evening. It was gone!

My canine adversary made a determined leap that forced me to one side. Then some one pounded on the door, and I heard the voice of Dr. Graves.

"Unlock the door, Mr. Evans. I have a gun and electric torch."

"There is no key on this side," I replied. Then I caught a glimpse of a light flashing through the keyhole and wondered what had become of the key.

"It must have fallen to the floor on that side," said the young doctor. "I cannot find it in the hall."

I again succeeded in maneuvering to a position in front of the door. Then I tramped about in front of it until my shoe struck a hard object. Stooping, I picked it up, and rejoiced to find that the doctor had been right. Again using one hand to manipulate the chair, I inserted the key in the lock and managed to turn it, though with considerable difficulty.

"Turn the knob," I shouted, "and push."

The knob turned, and the door opened behind me. A beam of light shot past me, for a moment illuminating the hairy face and dripping fangs of the brute. Then a shot rang out, the light faded from the luminous eyes, and the beast sank slowly to the floor, blood gushing from its mouth and nostrils.

"Good shot, doctor," I said, turning and releasing my hold on the battered chair. To my surprise I saw Miss Van Loan holding the flash light in one hand and a smoking pistol in the other, while great tears trickled down her cheeks.

"You!" I cried.

"I was holding these while the doctor went for a ladder," she said. "He was going to try to help you by climbing up to the window. Then I heard you call. Poor Sandy."

"Too bad you had to kill your pet," I replied, closing the door and relieving her of gun and torch.

"W--wasn't it horrible?" she sobbed. "B--but I had to do it. He might have k-killed you."

I was about to thank her for having saved my life when the young doctor suddenly came up from the basement, dragging a stepladder. Seeing us standing there in the hall, he laid it down and joined us.

"You have been rescued, I see," he said.

"Most bravely," I replied.

"Did the beast bite or scratch you?"

"No."

"Are you sure? Sometimes a wound goes unnoticed in the heat of combat. Perhaps I had better look you over. I am reasonably sure the dog had hydrophobia."

He forthwith examined me with the aid of the flashlight. I had not known it before, but my left coat sleeve was torn, and my arm was bleeding where the sharp fangs had raked it.

"Infected," he said, "and of course I have no serum with me. Come out on the porch."

On the porch, he made a ligature with a towel and a pair of long scissors. Then he took a bottle and some cotton from his case and drenched the wounds with silver nitrate.

"Better come to the hospital with me at once for serum treatment," he advised. "It may save your life."

"But I can't leave my friends——" I began.

"Nonsense," interrupted Dr. Dorp, who was sitting up, although still muffled in a blanket. "Miss Van Loan and I will be all right here on the porch until you get back."

"Of course," said the girl. "You have put your life in sufficient jeopardy as it is, Mr. Evans."

Thus admonished, I got into the coupé with the young doctor, and we set out for the hospital.

"Queer thing the way that door shut and locked itself," he said, when we emerged on the smooth paving of Sheridan Road. "The key must have been half turned in the lock when the wind blew it shut. The jar locked it and shook out the key."

Although I did not feel that his explanation of the phenomenon was a true one, I decided not to debate the matter with him, as it was evident that Miss Van Loan did not want it known among her acquaintances that there were strange goings on in her home.

"It was odd," I agreed.

"Too bad that the lights had to go out just when they did, too," he went on. "A most unfortunate coincidence."

"It was," I said, with mental reservations.

AN hour later at the hospital, my wound was dressed, and a considerable quantity of serum injected into my blood stream. Then I called a cab which got me back to my friends shortly after midnight.

I found Dr. Dorp dozing in one of the porch chairs with a blanket around him, and Miss Van Loan, completely exhausted, asleep in the swing.

"Better try to get some rest in one of these chairs," said the doctor. "There is nothing further we can do until morning."

I was not loath to follow his suggestion, and soon drifted into a fitful, dream-haunted slumber from which I did not thoroughly awaken until the slanting rays of the morning sun struck me full in the face.

For a moment I sat there, blinking in the bright light, trying to remember where I was. Then the sound of a low cough from the doorway caused me to turn. I beheld the cadaverous face and angular form of Riggs.

"Good morning, sir," he said.

"Good morning, Riggs."

"Will you have your bath hot or cold, Sir?"

"The colder the better."

"Thank you, sir."

A few moments later I was shaving with a razor which Riggs informed me had belonged to his late master, while a sizable column of cold water roared into the tub. While I bathed and dressed, the houseman repaired the rent in my sleeve. A half hour afterward, feeling greatly rested and refreshed, I went down to breakfast. Miss Van Loan met me in the dining room where places had been laid for two.

"Dr. Dorp left early this morning for the city," she informed me. "He asked me to have you wait here until his return this afternoon."

"He could not have set me a more pleasant task," I replied, receiving my cup of coffee from the hand of my charming hostess. "Did he mention what urgent business took him to the city?"

"Something about some investigations he wished to make, and some paraphernalia he would need for

tonight," she said. "He was in a great hurry. Wouldn't even stop for a bite of breakfast."

"That is his way," I replied, "when engrossed in a particularly interesting investigation. He will probably neither eat nor drink until the mystery has been solved."

"And will that be soon?"

"I believe it will."

"Just what is your opinion, Mr. Evans, of the things you saw last night?"

"I'm afraid," I replied, "that my opinion at this time is not of much value. Frankly, I have been mystified. I have theories, of course, but they are, after all, only theories."

"Do you believe it was the ghost of Uncle Gordon that we saw in the living room last night?"

"I don't believe in ghosts."

"Then what was it? What could have caused it? What could have caused doors to lock and unlock, to open and close without the touch of human hands? What could have caused the intense cold—the poker to creep across the floor as if it were alive? What drove my dog mad with fear?"

"The dog," I replied, "showed symptoms of hydrophobia."

"That is what Dr. Dorp thought, although he was not sure. He took the carcass with him, wrapped in a sheet, for examination."

"Then his opinion confirms that of Dr. Graves."

"I don't see how poor Sandy could have gotten it," she said. "He hasn't been near any other animal, and I understand he would have to be scratched or bitten by one to become infected."

"The examination will show whether or not he had hydrophobia, and I hope he hadn't," I replied, "for a very personal reason. Just how he contracted it, of course, may never be known."

"For your sake, I too hope that he didn't have it. You are in grave danger, are you not, from that bite?"

"Not so bad as all that. A comparatively short time ago it was the equivalent of a death warrant to be bitten by a rabid animal. Modern science, however, has made death from hydrophobia a rarity when treatment is administered in time."

THE remainder of the day was spent quite pleasantly, strolling about the grounds and on the white, foam-edged beach, or lolling on the large, comfortable porch.

We had dinner at six, and I was enjoying a cigar in the swing shortly thereafter, when I heard the throb of a motor in the driveway and the big car of Dr. Dorp came into view.

He drove up to the curb, and I saw that he had four men with him. Each was carrying a large package covered with khaki. The packages were placed on the porch, and the doctor presented his four companions, as Mr. Easton, civil engineer, Mr. Brandon, electrical engineer, and Messrs. Hogan and Rafferty, detectives. At a sign from the doctor, the two detectives immediately strolled out into the shrubbery.

"We're going to make a few preparations for the show this evening," he said, addressing me. "Want to come along?"

"Of course."

"All right. Each man grab a bundle. We haven't much time before dark."

I took up one of the khaki wrapped packages, which was far from light, and each other man did likewise. The doctor led the way around the house, and down to the beach.

Directly behind the house we unwrapped two of the packages. One proved to be a set of surveyor's instruments which the civil engineer quickly assembled. The other looked very much like a radio set with its loop aerials and dials, although there was no speaker or head phone with it. The radio set was placed on a small folding table, and Mr. Easton sighted from that point, while I acted as roadman and Mr. Brandon as chainman. We measured off a distance of two thousand feet in a straight line along the beach, the doctor following with the other package. At that point, the other radio-like machine was assembled and placed on a folding table. We left Mr. Brandon with this machine, and went back to the first one.

"Now, Evans," said my friend. "You and Mr. Easton go back to the house and keep Miss Van Loan company. As soon as it begins to get dark go into the living room and occupy the same positions as last night. Mr. Easton has a false beard with him, and will be disguised to look like me. Caution Miss Van Loan, *when she is inside the house*, to address Mr. Easton by my name. Do not, under any circumstances, tell her this *while you are in the house*. When you hear my motor racing outside, come out. Mr. Easton will remain. Rafferty will then go in to take your place. Is everything clear?"

"Perfectly."

We found Miss Van Loan on the porch, and I whispered our plans to her while Easton adjusted his whiskers. He was about the same build and height as the doctor, and thus disguised, bore considerable resemblance to him.

We chatted on the porch until dusk, then went into the living room and took our seats. Presently the door opened and closed as on the night before. Then the lights went out. Hearing a rustling sound near the door, I looked, and saw the gleaming print of a human foot forming on the carpet. In a moment another had formed in front of it while the rustling sound continued. The first footprint disappeared and a third formed in front of the second. It was as if some invisible entity were walking toward the center of the room, leaving luminous tracks which disappeared each time a foot was lifted.

The footprints stopped, and drew together, side by side, in the center of the room. Then there was a slight thump, and a wispy form, similar to the one we had seen the night before, began to materialize while the two footprints slowly faded. The thing reached a height of more than six feet, wabbling this way and that as if scarcely able to support its own weight, while the horrible odor we had noticed the night before permeated the room.

Suddenly the lights flashed on, and the apparition disappeared. Noticing that there was something glistening on the floor where the thing had stood, I went over to investigate. There was a small pool of clear, oily smelling liquid rapidly soaking into the rug. As I bent over to examine it I heard a cry of warning from the girl and a quick movement behind me. I turned, but could not move in time to avoid the heavy chair which was rushing toward me. It knocked me flat, fell over me, righted itself, and came back, apparently bent on my destruction. I managed to roll out of its way and get to my feet, but it promptly chased me to the davenport, behind which I took shelter.

"Holy mackerel!" exclaimed the pseudo Dr. Dorp. The chair, apparently realizing that it was baffled, swung about and quickly returned to its place in the corner.

The phenomena, thus far, including the materialization of the spectre, had taken a little more than half an hour. I heard the sound for which I had been listening—the roar of the doctor's motor.

"A remarkable chair, doctor," I said. "The thing rather fagged me. I think I'll step out on the porch for a breath of cool air."

The door obligingly opened for me when I left the room. The front door, however, was already open. Rafferty was standing on the porch.

"Go on down to the car," he whispered. "The doctor's waitin' for you."

I went, and climbed into the front seat beside the doctor. Detective Hogan was in the back seat. We whirled away with moaning gears.

The doctor handed me a folded map.

"Open this, will you, Evans?" he requested. "Hold it beneath the dash light. I don't want to miss the road."

I opened it, and found it was a detailed map of Lake County. A large triangle had been traced on the paper, its smallest angle resting on a spot marked with an X, apparently some eight miles due west of our present location.

"Does X mark the spot where the body was found?" I asked, as we spun around onto Sheridan Road on two wheels.

"It marks the spot where I expect to find the source of Miss Van Loan's troubles," replied the doctor. "It isn't far, as the crow flies, but there is no through road to it. We have a roundabout trip of about six-teen miles ahead of us."

WE continued north on Sheridan Road for nearly four miles. Then we swung west at Highwood, continuing in this direction for about eight miles. Turning south on the Milwaukee road at Halfday, we covered another three miles of road before the doctor slowed his terrific pace.

"Take the wheel now, will you?" he requested, "and drive slowly."

We changed places, and I started off at a speed of about ten miles an hour. The doctor lifted a small portable radio set from behind the back seat, adjusted the tuning dials, and slowly moved the loop aerial back and forth until there was an angry buzz from inside the machine. He then continued to slowly turn the loop aerial as we moved along, apparently with the purpose of keeping it in a position where the machine would buzz the loudest.

I noticed that, at first, the direction of the loop only made a very slight deviation from the direction in which we were going. Gradually, however, the deviation grew greater until the loop stood at right angles to our course. We were, at the moment, passing the entrance to a lane, which led to a farm house set back about half a mile from the road. As we continued past the lane the aerial gradually straightened out toward our course.

About a thousand feet beyond the entrance to the lane was a brightly lighted filling station. We stopped there, left the car in charge of the service man, and started across the fields. When we had gone a short distance, the doctor handed me an automatic pistol.

"I hope we won't have to do any shooting," he said, "but it's safer to be prepared."

It took us all of ten minutes to reach the farm house. It was in darkness, except for one of the rear rooms, which was dimly lighted. Admonishing us to tread carefully, the doctor led the way around the house. As we rounded the rear porch, I saw that a four-wire aerial had been stretched between the gable of the house and the barn. A wire connected to the aerial, led down into the dimly lighted rear room.

Instructing us to stay where we were, the doctor crept stealthily up on the porch and peered through the window. For five minutes at least he stood there, looking into that room while we waited below. Then he turned and beckoned to us. Neither Hogan nor I lost any time in getting up to the window. I'm sure he was as curious as I to learn what was going on in that room.

Seated on a long bench before an instrument board which contained a bewildering array of dials, buttons and levers, was a short, bull-necked man. He wore a close cropped, bristling pompadour, a thin, fiercely upturned moustache, and an immense pair of thick lensed, horn rimmed spectacles. A set of headphones covered his ears, and his pudgy hands worked incessantly with the levers, dials and buttons on the board before him. The only light in the room came from a panel of frosted glass which was just above the instrument board. On the panel, which the operator constantly watched, was a very clear shadow picture of the living room I had quitted only a short time before, in the home of Miss Van Loan.

From where I stood I could see Miss Van Loan and the pseudo Dr. Dorp seated just as I had left them, while Rafferty, who was impersonating me, was staging a quite lively wrestling match in the center of the room with the chair which had proven so hostile toward me earlier in the evening.

At a sign from Dr. Dorp, we drew our weapons and tiptoed to the door. It was locked, and the key was in place, but Hogan opened it quickly and silently with a small tool which he carried for the purpose. Before he was aware of our presence we had the op-

erator surrounded and covered. The doctor jerked the phones from his head, and said:

"Hands up, Mr. Hegel. You are under arrest."

His look of surprise and alarm was quickly followed by a sullen frown as he thrust his pudgy hands aloft.

"Arrest? For what?" he demanded belligerently.

"Nivver mind for what, my old buckaroo," said Hogan, snapping the handcuffs on his wrists. "I've a warrant in me pocket that covers ivverything from interferin' wid the radio reception on the north shore down to attempted murder. Come away wid yez now, and don't try no shenanigans, or be the lord Harry, I'll quiet yez wid this gun butt."....

SOME two hours later, having left Hegel in the care of the proper authorities, we were gathered in the living room of the Van Loan home—the girl, the two engineers, the two detectives, Dr. Dorp, and I. All were seated but the doctor, who stood before the fireplace. He cleared his throat and looked around with his well known lecture-room air.

"Now that the author of the strange phenomena which have confronted us in this house has been apprehended," he said, "explanations, and such further investigations as are needed to completely clear up the mystery, are in order.

"You are all aware that the manifestations we have witnessed were under the control of an operator established in an old farm house eight miles west of here, and that the mechanism he used was a powerful and complicated radio set. In order that you may thoroughly understand how Ernest Hegel was able to make inanimate objects react to our movements as if they were endowed with minds, let me explain that he could both see and hear what was going on in this house as well as if he had been here in person. Planted in this very room in such a clever manner as to escape notice except by the most careful scrutiny, are powerful lenses which acted as his eyes, and microphones which served as his distance ears. If Miss Van Loan does not mind a slight mutilation of her walls in the interests of our investigation, I will disclose one of each."

"I should like to see them, doctor," said Miss Van Loan.

The doctor took out his pocket knife and opened it. Then he walked to the wall opposite us and scrutinized it very carefully. Presently he held the point of the knife to a small spot which resembled thousands of other spots on the mottled pattern of the wall paper, and said:

"Can you see this opening?"

We all replied that we could not, and crowded around him. As we drew close to it a small hole about the diameter of a lead pencil became visible by concentration on the spot touched by the knife. Unless we had been deliberately searching for it, it is probable that it would have gone entirely unnoticed, due to its location on one of the dark spots in the pattern of the paper itself.

"This," said the doctor, "is one of Hegel's eyes." He lightly tapped inside the hole with the point of his knife and we heard it click against some hard substance. Then he cut a square of paper and plaster ing from around it, disclosing a black box which bore a close resemblance to a small camera with a tiny lens in front. Taking a small screw driver from his pocket, he removed the front of the box, the back of which was covered with row on row of small, circular affairs which he described as photo-electric cells.

"Each cell," he said, "responds, according to the strength of light or shade which strikes it through the lens, with a different wave length. These various wave lengths are combined and transmitted from a common antenna. At the receiving station, the process is reversed, and this image is built up on ground glass by various vibrating light beams. For a thorough description of this process, which I will not go into here, I refer you to the book, "Radio for All." There are four "eyes" like this one in this room alone. Every other room in this house is as thoroughly equipped.

"And now for the ears."

He examined the wall until he found another hole, into which he thrust the knife blade. Then he removed another square of wall paper and plaster, revealing one of those instruments with which we were all familiar—the microphone.

"As this instrument needs no explanation," he said, "I will now show you how our friend Hegel managed to lock, unlock, open and close doors from a distance of eight miles."

He walked to the door and opened it.

"This door," he said, "shows no signs of having been tampered with in any way, yet I am convinced that there are at least two electric wires connecting it with the current which Hegel tapped somewhere in front of the meter—I have not yet discovered where."

With his screw driver, he removed the bottom hinge, while we crowded around him. Then he started to remove the top hinge, but found that the first screw he tried would not turn. Abandoning it, he removed all the other screws, then inserted the screw driver beneath the hinge, and pried. The hinge came loose, but revealed the fact that the screw had been soldered to the metal back, and to a heavy wire which now protruded from the wall. The whole thing had been insulated with electricians' tape, and the block of wood in which it was fastened had been cut out, surrounded with sealing wax, and replaced. He next removed the other side of the hinge from the door, and found it similarly connected and insulated, the wire leading to the interior of the door.

Having cut the wire with a pair of pliers, the doctor laid the door on its side and removed the lock and latch. Both were controlled by an ingenious arrangement of electro-magnets. The return current, he found, was through roundheaded, insulated contact screws, one on the door, and one on the door jamb against which it fitted.

He next turned his attention to the bottom of the door. It was evident at a glance, that a long strip of wood had been removed, replaced with glue, sanded and varnished. Using his screw driver as a chisel, he

pried up the strip of wood, and removed from the cavity behind it a heavy bar of iron.

"Now," he said, "if you will follow me to the basement I will show you the mechanism which acted on this bar of iron, causing the door to open or close."

WE filed down into the basement behind him, and he led the way to a point directly beneath the living room door. The ceiling was covered with plasterboard, a block of which he removed. Fastened to the floor in a semicircle was a string of large electro-magnets.

"All of these magnets," he said, " were caused to act in their turns by impulses of varying wave lengths which closed and opened their circuits. Naturally they pulled the bar of iron although separated by two heavy layers of wood, as there is no insulation which will stop magnetic waves, thus closing or opening the door at the will of the operator. The poker and the heavy overstuffed chair were caused to travel about the room in the same manner, the latter probably having iron bars inserted in the legs, by utilizing other electro-magnets fastened beneath the floor and concealed by this plasterboard.

"While we are here we may as well clear up the mystery of the luminous footprints, for I see the removal of this square of ceiling has already disclosed a part of the mechanism. You will observe here, a glass tube, above which there are two lead plates. The top plate is movable, and is connected with an electro-magnetic device for moving it. In the bottom plate is cut in miniature, the shape of a human footprint. The glass tube is what is known as a Crookes Tube, and the rays which emanate from it when an electric connection is established are known as X-rays. Although these rays are, in themselves, invisible, some of them have the property of making certain substances phosphorescent. The rays which have this property can be cut off by a lead screen of of the correct thickness. One of the substances which can be rendered luminous is sulfid of zinc, and is probably the one used, although I have not yet had an opportunity to verify this. The substance, whatever it may be, has probably been ground into exceedingly minute particles and rubbed into the rug above our heads. A luminous footprint can thus be made to appear on the rug by the simple expedient of turning on the current in the Crookes Tube and sliding back the upper plate in such a manner that the toe prints will first be visible, then the ball of the foot, and finally the heel. I'm sure that if we remove more squares of plasterboard we will find a row of these contrivances about two feet apart, leading to a point beneath the center of the room, where two of them will be found side by side. For the present, however, we will go upstairs to continue our investigation in other directions."

When we were once more in the living room, the doctor asked for a step ladder, and Riggs was sent to bring one. When he brought it, the doctor placed it in the center of the room and climbed up to where the central lighting fixture projected from the wall. "In this fixture," he said, "are concealed one of the sources of the icy breath, and also the source of the ghastly and foul smelling spectre which rose from the center of the floor on two succeeding evenings. You will observe that the entire fixture, central hemisphere and surrounding collar, appears to be made from frosted glass. The central hemisphere from which the light emanates is glass, but the surrounding collar is of metal covered with a white substance. That white substance is common frost."

So saying, he scraped off a quantity of the frost and handed it down to us for our inspection.

"Please take special notice of the designs on this collar," he said, "for they are particularly well suited for the purposes for which our friend Hegel intended them—a series of circles, each about an inch from the other, reaching entirely around the collar. I will now do by force what the builder of this device previously did by mechanical means, controlled by radio."

He took the screw driver and, reaching up, inserted the end and pried at one of the circles. It came open, revealing the fact that it was a small hinged trap door. What surprised us the most, however, was the fact that a small white globe fell out of it and broke on the rug.

"Switch off the lights for a moment," he said.

Someone pressed the light switch, and all of us saw the now familiar vision of a spectre materializing from the floor.

"Turn them on," he ordered.

They were turned on once more.

"The ghost," he said, "is nothing more than a mixture of foul smelling gases, one of which is slightly phosphorescent. This mixture, as you will observe, is visible in the dark but invisible in the light. The gas is imprisoned in small thin globes of ice which shatter when they strike the rug, and melt in a few seconds, leaving no trace other than a few drops of water which quickly evaporate or are absorbed by the rug fibres. These globes are kept in a small refrigeration plant which is just above my head, and which is probably quite thoroughly insulated against heat. The intense cold in this plant is produced by a substance which is not new to science, but the use of which for this particular purpose is quite new. The substance is frozen CO_2 or carbon dioxide, and when expanded into a gas it is identical with the substance that gives zest to soda water and bottled beverages. It has a temperature of 114° below zero, Fahrenheit, and evaporates to a dry gas without going through the intermediate liquid state with which we are familiar in most substances.

"The cold air and gas from this refrigerating chamber, when propelled into the room by small, noiseless fans through others of these hinged openings which do not contain the gas balls, creates the phenomenon of the icy breath. It can also create the illusion of a light touch from a cold hand, as I have proved experimentally. The slight breeze moving the small hairs on one's hand or arm gives the sensation of one having been lightly touched while the coldness of the breeze makes it appear that one has been touched by something cold. The closet, in which

I came so near being asphyxiated and frozen to death, is equipped with a similar refrigeration plant, and it it probable that we shall find more of them which have not been used, in other rooms.

"THE matter of the lights going out and again being turned on will be settled as soon as we can find the radio controlled rheostat and switch which operates them. Is everything clear?"

"You have not explained what it was which drove my dog mad," Miss Van Loan reminded him.

"Your dog," he said, "had hydrophobia. As I found a bottle of the virus which produces this disease in the house occupied by Mr. Hegel, I don't think it at all remarkable that the dog was infected. No doubt it was acquainted with and friendly toward your cousin, who found an opportunity to inoculate it when it was ranging on your estate. The queer behaviour of the dog, thereafter, is common to all animals that contract the disease. In my opinion the dog was inoculated three or four days ago. It would certainly have died within a few hours, had you not shot it when you did."

"What I cannot understand," said Mr. Brandon, the electrical engineer, "is how Mr. Hegel found the time or opportunity to install this complicated array of electrical equipment. Mr. Van Loan, I understand, had only been dead a little more than a month."

"I made a few investigations today which cleared up that point," replied the doctor. "It is a matter of common knowledge that Gordon Van Loan died from cancer of the stomach. Mr. Van Loan was not aware that he had this disease, although both his niece and nephew had been apprised of the fact nearly a year before his death by the family physician. They had also been informed that an operation would be fruitless and fatal, and were told almost to the day just how long their uncle would live.

"Last winter, in the vain hope that he might better his condition, Gordon Van Loan went to Florida for a three months' stay, taking his two servants with him. Some time before, the nephew had left in a huff after Mr. Van Loan, in a fit of anger, had disclosed to him the contents of the will he had made. Being in possession both of the knowledge of the will and the probable length of time his uncle would live, Hegel laid his plans for winning the estate. Just before Mr. Van Loan left for Florida, he visited him, saying that he was out of a job and penniless, and asking that he might be given something to do in order that he might earn some money. The house was badly in need of cleaning and decorating, and, as he had good taste in this line, he was permitted to oversee the work of papering, painting, and varnishing while his uncle was away, asking in return only a very small salary and the privilege of rooming in the house. His uncle turned over the keys of the house to him, paid him his salary in advance, and established credit with a firm of decorators.

"Hegel's supposed trip to Europe was, of course, only a blind to hide his recent operations here. Are there any more questions?"

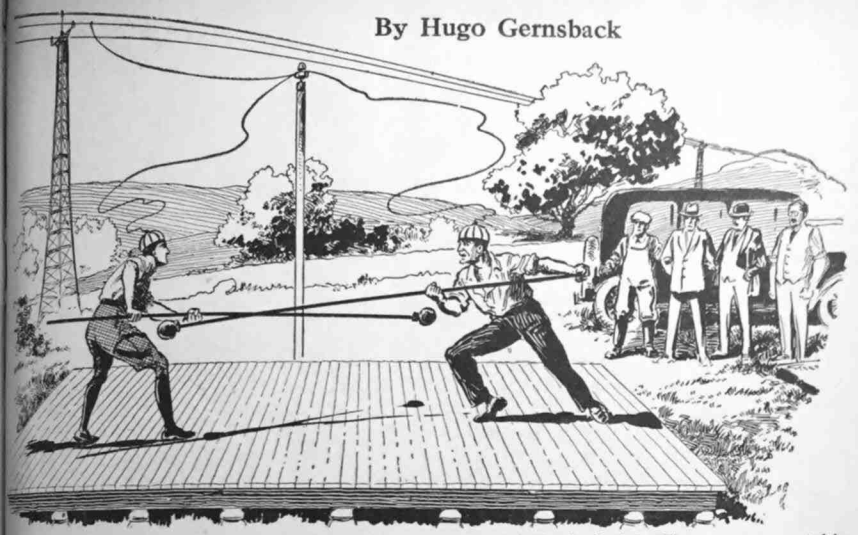
"Yes," said Mr. Easton. "Now that Hegel has been apprehended, what can the law do with him? What charges can be placed against him?"

"He will be charged with robbery, resisting an officer, and attempted murder. You see he robbed a radio and camera shop after stealing a small truck, in order to get equipment for this elaborate installation, which his slender means would not permit him to buy. A police officer on night duty saw him just as he was leaving the shop, but Hegel wounded him with a revolver shot, and escaped. As he left finger prints, and the stolen articles will be easy to identify, there is no possible way for him to escape final and certain conviction."

THE END

The Electric Duel

By Hugo Gernsback



The duelists are provided with a hood or skull cap, analogous to the connection used in the electric chair. These caps are connected by wires to a high potential electric line. The same line is grounded. With long poles they attempt to push each other off an insulated platform. Whoever touches the ground will be killed.

A NEWS item from Milan, Italy, reports the strangest duel, probably, that ever was fought between two men. It was supposed to be a contest to the death—the first electric duel in history. The story has it that two young Italians employed in one of Milan's great industrial electric works, became enamored of the Superintendent's daughter and fought many fistic battles over the titian haired, comely young woman, reported to be one of the belles of Milan. She could not make up her mind whether she would be the future Mrs. Alessandro Fabiano or Mrs. Benedetto Luigi.

Finally the two suitors reached an agreement wherein they were to settle the issue with a fight to the death. This was immediately decided on after a terrific fistic encounter between the two young men.

Both being graduates of the University of Padua in Electrical Engineering, they chose electricity as a new form of duelling.

The place of the encounter was chosen some thirty miles from the outskirts of Milan at a spot where a high tension line carrying over twenty thousand volts passed through the open country. One of the wires was connected as shown in the illustration so as to be grounded and another wire was attached to one of the leaders which came down to an insulator attached to a pole nearby. A wooden platform which had been used in building a bridge not far away was utilized for insulating means. The two duelists had brought with them from their factory large insulators upon which the platform rested. The wires were then led to the hoods as shown in our illustration. Three witnesses as well as a doctor, who had been sworn to secrecy, were also on hand to witness the strange spectacle that was to take place.

The idea was simple in itself. Each of the two was equipped with a pole and buffer as shown in our illustration. The idea was that one combatant was to push the other off the platform. The one remaining on the platform would be the winner. The unfortunate one who first touched the ground would naturally be electrocuted the instant his body came in contact with the earth.

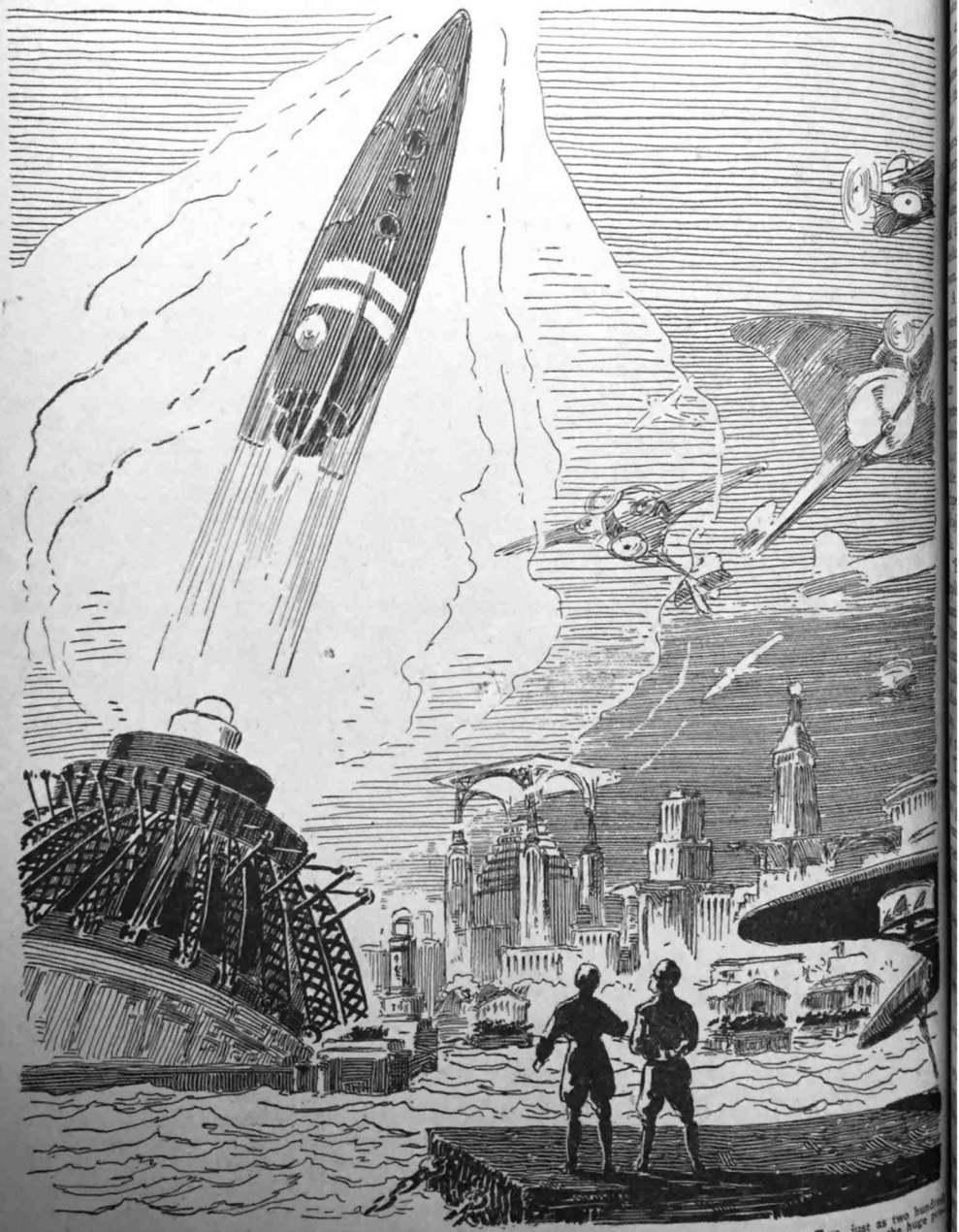
The moment arrived when the two combatants at the shot of a pistol started the battle. The two rivals were wary of each other for the first fifteen minutes, and not much headway was made in the dangerous business. First Benedetto, then Alessandro was nearly pushed over the edge of the board only to recover by a supreme effort. At one time when Benedetto was almost on the brink of going over he grabbed hold of the pole of his antagonist and managed to pull himself forward to the other side again. After awhile the men began to fight hard and furious, till finally a most extraordinary thing happened, which neither of them had foreseen. They were rushing at each other, savagely, diagonally across the platform and both caught each other squarely in the stomach at the same instant. The impact was so terrific and so violent that both keeled over the side, one landing on the ground on one side and the other on the opposite side, practically at the same instant. There was a bright flash, and the bodies of the poor unfortunates became enveloped in a dense cloud of smoke and were burned by the lightning-like discharge of the tremendous voltage.

The frightfulness of the situation was so great that I myself woke up and promised myself never again to eat a Welsh rarebit before going to bed.

The TIDE PROJECTILE TRANSPORTATION Co.

By Will H. Gray

Author of "The Star of Dead Love"



Even in this age of wonders, people still turned aside, or came out of their houses to witness the start of Number Two, just as two hundred years before, people had looked up whenever an airplane buzzed overhead.... With a tremendous jar and shriek of parted air, the huge projectile was hurled nearly on the vertical into the blue sky...

THE gigantic spring of the air gun that hurled the passenger and mail projectiles from the Pacific to the Atlantic had not been compressed so tight since its construction seven years before. A combination of the highest tide of the year, and a big westerly gale had raised the mile long pontoon many feet above high water spring tide mark. The fifty-six great, steel levers or arms that resembled bridge spans ground and murmured as the unaccustomed bearing surfaces came into play; and no wonder, for this tide was higher than anything the engineers of two hundred years ago had figured upon, when they constructed the piers and wharves where in days gone by the ocean liners of a slow and tedious age had tied up after their ten day journey from the Orient. To-day the water was lapping over these piers long since deserted in favor of Lake Washington, where the huge helicopters came and went in a never ending procession.

A light, two seater machine that looked as simply constructed as a birch bark canoe buzzed slowly down from over the city, and hovered above the pontoon.

"How about looking over the bearings first?" suggested Max Norman, the more youthful of the two men who rejoiced in the title of District Assistant Superintendent of the Tide Projectile Transportation Co.

"Perhaps we'd better," replied Fowler, the senior man on the Pacific Coast, "then I want to take a look around to see how much rubbish and stuff have gone adrift. If it isn't cleared up, it may be fouling some of the small tide motors up and down the harbor."

The little machine, lifted by two propellers, and navigated by two more, buzzed along from girder to girder like a humming bird, while the engineers leaned out, and examined the twenty-four inch diameter pins on which the great levers pivoted. The propellers made no more noise than an electric fan, so that conversation in ordinary tones could be carried on in the open, boat-shaped hull.

"I hope the pilot of Number Two takes more than a casual glance at the tension gauge this morning," remarked the chief turning to his assistant.

"If he doesn't, he'll find himself dropping half way across the Atlantic. Then there'll be trouble."

"I should think one air blast from the rear end would almost take him all the way this morning. If he lets off the second, goodness knows where it'll take him."

"Personally, I think those projectiles are so proficient that the pilots are inclined to become criminally negligent. Surely the barometrically operated, automatic air blast from the nose for land descents together with the shallow diving vanes, ought to be sufficient. With these new radio earth reflection and vibration releases, you might as well dispense with the pilot entirely."

"I think we shall be able to do so in a year or two," said Fowler thoughtfully. "The new springs that they are trying out at Schenectady are almost unaffected by heat or cold; that leaves only wind and atmospheric pressure to be conquered after making allowances for the tides." He paused to think, and then continued:

"The human element is holding us up more every day; the people of the last couple of centuries applied their science to everything but themselves. Everything was thought except— There's the whistle Settle down on the pontoon; I don't like to be buffeted about in the air pockets when Number Two leaves."

The little, varnished, boat-shaped affair with the two light masts surmounted by humming, lifting wheels, settled as gracefully as a piece of thistle-down on the flat surface of the pontoon. The two men stepped out, and strolled along eastward. The sky was full of machines, big and little, clumsy freighters, and swift official machines. Two minutes after the whistle, a rocket shot into the clear sky, and broke into a large puff of bright smoke. This was the final warning to all, that the Atlantic projectile was about to be launched. It was noticeable now, that the incoming and outgoing machines steered to right and left of the enormous steel cylinder whose piston was dragged down against that mighty spring by those fifty-six lattice-girder levers. The cylinder was at the base of the great air gun which gave the projectile an initial velocity of sixteen thousand five hundred feet per second.

HOW would you like to fly from San Francisco to New York in about 17 minutes? Impossible! you will doubtless say, but the thing is not half as impossible as it sounds. There is no question but that our tranportation means will increase in speed as time goes on. If you had told your great-grandfather that some one would fly from New York to Paris in 33 hours, you probably would have been called a lunatic, or worse. Yet Lindbergh flew only at the rate of about 110 miles an hour, whereas airplanes have raced as fast as 266 miles per hour. Thus, in the present story, you will find a really excellent amount of science in such superabundance as is seldom found even in the best of scientifiction stories. New ideas seem to tumble all over each other at such a fast rate that it leaves you, at times, bewildered. We have asked Mr. Gray to write a sequel to it, which we hope to publish soon.

EVEN in this age of wonders, people still turned aside, or came out of their houses to witness the start of Number Two, just as two hundred years before, people had looked up whenever an airplane buzzed over head, and before that again, the daily train was the occasion for everyone in the small town to congregate at the depot.

"Five seconds more," murmured Max Norman, and both came to a standstill.

With a tremendous jar and shriek of parted air, the huge projectile was hurled nearly on the vertical into the blue sky, where it disappeared almost at once. The pontoon on which the two men were standing slowly rose two feet, with the relaxing of the enormous spring when the air had left the cylinder.

"She went quite fast," remarked the chief, watching the air ships being buffeted about in the disturbed atmosphere.

"Faster than ever I 've seen," Max assured his chief. "I hope the pilot isn't asleep," he continued, "for there was to be five pounds of radium aboard, going east, and there 'll be a fuss if it goes astray."

"Just call headquarters, will you please?" exclaimed Fowler, "and find out who is piloting Number Two."

The junior engineer took from his pocket a little, square case about the size of a match box. He turned a small dial and pressed several buttons before making the inquiry in an ordinary tone of voice. Out of the instrument came the reply at once.

"So it's the lady pilot," mused the chief. "We are up against the human element again. I 've had the thought-recording machine on her twice now,and each time I got a negative graph. It just means that she is thought resistant to these old type recorders. Several times I 've asked the directors for one of the newest machines. But you know how hard it is to persuade the heads of these big companies to keep abreast of the times. In fact they said that any one who had sufficient intelligence to resist the old machine, either didn't need watching, or was too good for the job, and should be promoted. They forget that it was a thought-resister who put Number Three in the bog, out of which it took us seven days to get it. It was a partial thought resister who lost Number Four six years ago."

"Funny it has never been found."

"Well, I was only a student at the time, but I always had the idea that they should have looked further afield. You see, they just assumed that it fell somewhere between here and New York, within fifty miles or so on either side of the direct course."

"It couldn't very well happen again," exclaimed Max Norman. "With the new recorders, we know to half a mile where they are at any time."

"Yes, but it's a nuisance digging them out of holes, and fishing them out of the sea, and there's always a chance that some one may get hurt, and then of course there's an inquiry and a lot of fool questions and still more foolish suggestions for the future by old fogies who have never in their lives travelled faster than five hundred miles an hour.

"I feel sorry for this girl pilot, because she is of abnormal intelligence. She ranks in the eighty-seven zone, and when you remember that there are only seven hundred people on the earth who have reached the ninetieth, you see how she is wasting her talents piloting for us."

"Well, why is she doing it, when she might be doing much better work?"

"That 's just the trouble. Unfortunately for her, she is of the matrimonial type, and wants to have children. A century ago when eugenics were first brought into use, we tried to breed infant prodigies and mathematical marvels, but through our mitakes, we got instead a crop of lunatics; now we limit the combined intelligence to one hundred and ten, and get splendid results. Therefore the poor girl must choose a man of the twenty-third degree of intelligence or less—corresponding to the clever men of nineteen-ten to nineteen-twenty. Can you blame her for not wanting to tie up with such a man? He would be "too slow to catch cold"—an expression used in those far-off days.

"It seems a pity that our brainiest people should be denied a family if they desire one, but people of such intelligence should be far too busy to even think of such things."

"Did you hear the whistle announcing the safe landing of Number Two? That whistle is only a survival of the times when projectile travelling was considered an extra risk, and we had actually to insure the passengers specially."

"No, I didn't hear it. Just call the head office again, please, and ask if they arrived safely."

Again Max Norman took out the little instrument and called the office. Both men stiffened up, and looked serious as the spoken words came rather haltingly from the tiny loud speaker. "No, Number Two has not landed in New York."

"What does the recording chart say?" shouted Fowler impatiently.

"Well, Sir, the chart—the chart ran out of ink as the projectile passed Chicago."

THE movements of the chief were incredibly swift. His first outburst of language was also incredible. The people in that office responsible for the instrument's running out of ink got the same old blowing-up, only a hundred times more cutting, more sarcastic, as the people who made stupid mistakes two centuries before. From his pocket, Fowler took a larger, more complicated instrument and called every large city over which the projectile had travelled and many of the air liners under its high path through the rarefied air, where the meteor dust whirls endlessly around the earth.

There was just a slight clue, and it carried an ominous message. When approaching New York, the projectile pilot had asked for position, stating their finder had been jarred out of order. Here was the wretched, double contingency that was always upsetting things. Two minutes and forty seconds later, the projectile had sent an S. O. S. call that was never finished. Now where was the projectile? When they were given position they were at a very great height, and they still had velocity to carry them a thousand miles. The pilot had the means of steering anywhere—even doubling back on her course, if need be. They also had the means to communicate from the air, from under water, from two hundred feet deep in the earth. There was a dead silence from the projectile. The reserve spring, kept compressed for emergencies, hurled the two engineers to New York in a shade over seventeen minutes. Even during the trip, they had engaged the very best brains of the world to help in the search.

When Miss Henrietta Morgan—to give her her simple name devoid of letters and numbers denoting her qualifications—entered the pilot house of Number Two projectile, she was not thinking of high tides, or gauges, or meters, or complicated direction finders or the dozens of other intricate instruments that line the little steel compartment. She was thinking how

nice it would be to have a little home of her own, in the country, with a garden and happy children around her. But the husband? That was the sticking point. She could not reconcile herself to the idea of a husband with a mentality of only twenty-three out of a possible hundred units of intelligence. Her beauty was most striking in spite of the severity of dress demanded by the strenuous, mechanical age, and many men had looked at her and regretted the barriers.

She pressed the button that showed that she was all ready, and immediately the starter, below in his office, pulled the trigger. A slight jar was the only effect of that gigantic air blast, so well did the shock absorbers and antigravitators do their work. These shock absorbers depended on the wonderful resilient qualities of rubber foam, a substance similar to, but many times lighter than, rubber sponge. The inner casing of the projectile rested on many layers of this aerated material; each succeeding layer taking up the pressure when the preceding ones had been pressed almost flat. Thus the action really resembled that of a man jumping off a very high building into a succession of blankets, each absorbing its share of the shock before letting him go through into the next. Besides these appliances there were cushions several feet deep in which the occupants sank completely out of sight when the gun was fired, and then came slowly up again.

Henrietta Morgan had not bothered to look at the tension gauge before entering the projectile; nor was she aware of any difference, as the great shell hurtled up into the blue sky, leaving the world many miles beneath, a dull, blue surface, with no clear detail visible.

The first and second air blasts from the rear end to increase the velocity, went off at their appointed times before she realized that conditions were abnormal. Suddenly she noticed that the hands of the velocity gauge were jammed against the end of the scale. Her first thought was that it was broken, but a glance at the altitude and temperature gauges convinced her that they were far higher up than usual. She switched on the position indicator, only to find that it was out of order. Glancing back into the passenger compartment, she saw that she had two women and three men in her charge, besides the registered mail. Bending again to her switchboard, she turned the miniature wheels that, by remote control, actuated the resistance rings that projected through slots in the shell out into the cold, rarefied air. Pressing some little buttons, she called New York and Chicago, and asked for position; the answer astonished her.

She was already over New York, three minutes ahead of time.

Viciously she shot out two inches of resistance rings, all round. A whirring shriek was followed by a grinding tear as the vanes were carried away. There were emergency vanes of course, and she turned the spare dial. There was no response; the emergency vanes were stiff from neglect. The human element again! They could still be turned out by a hand wheel in the passenger compartment: "Please turn that wheel quickly." Alas for her peremptory intonation! Human nature was much the same, after two hundred years.

"Young lady, if you are in such a hurry, come and turn it yourself." She had disturbed the man just at the climax of a good yarn, when no man likes to be interrupted. Jumping into the saloon, she twisted the big wheel with might and main. Glancing out through the forward port hole of quartz glass, she was horrified to see water where blue sky should have been. The projectile was heading earthward with frightful velocity. The broken vane had done it. Springing back with lightning agility, she hit two buttons simultaneously. One operated the forward air blast to check the speed, the other an S. O. S call. A fraction of a second later, they struck the water with an ear-splitting crash, and dived to the bottom, where they glanced sideways off a great rust and weed encrusted object, and continued their journey a hundred feet into the mud of the Atlantic bottom.

THE big, rusty object rolled slowly, first to port and then to starboard. The writhing coil of an ancient telegraph cable fell away from its propellor, where it had held it fast so many years. A few bubbles rose; and slowly at first, but with increasing speed, the great object came to the surface.

A ray of sunshine shone through a heavy, glass porthole that had been kept clean for two hundred years by the little sea snails industriously licking the slime off the glass. The light flickered on the gray face of a man in uniform, who had lain there for two centuries in a state of suspended animation. His friends had known him as Roger Wells, back in the year nineteen seventeen when the Great War was in full swing.

He opened his eyes, sat up, and jumped to his feet. As he did so his clothes fell off him in rags. His features twitched with pain. Damn his old enemy, the rheumatism! Twenty-five out of forty years at sea had put lines of care about those clean cut features. The Great War culminating in his swift dive to the bottom to avoid being rammed, had ended his career, so far as that age of strife was concerned.

How he and his imprisoned crew had worked to free the submarine from that all-embracing, telegraph cable wound tightly around the propeller and over the conning tower! It was only after several days that he had swallowed the deadly narcotic given to him by a doctor friend in reserve for such a time. The doctor had never tried the effect of hydrogen on this new drug. The escaping fumes from the battery of the submarine mingled with the gas in the man's lungs formed a new substance akin to that isolated in the bodies of tiny rotifers by a scientist of nineteen seventy five. These little wheel animalcules had long puzzled the world by their power of remaining dormant in a dried up state for years, and blossoming into full, active life when placed in a drop of water under the microscope.

Lieutenant Commander Roger Wells put his hand to his brow and looked puzzled. He sat down, and surveyed the pile of rags that had been his clothes. He picked up a handful of the crumbly material of

which the gold lace alone remained intact. He was fully awake and conscious now. Groping his way to the conning tower, he saw, in the dim light, the chart protected by a sheet of glass that he had kept marked up to the very last, and the final resting place where he had written "finish" in small letters. He remembered now how he had looked up at the picture of one of the world's powerful rulers, and saluted, uttering the famous words of the gladiators of ancient Rome when they greeted Caesar in the arena before fighting it out to the death for his amusement. "Ave, Caesar! morituri te salutamus," "Hail, Caesar, we who are about to die, salute you." Then he had gone to his cabin, and taken the drug. Now he was alive, and the submarine was heaving up and down gently on the surface of a calm, late autumn sea.

He could not understand the dreadful corrosion and decay. He touched a gauge; it fell to pieces a mass of rust and verdigris. He tried to open the manhole leading out on deck; it was rusted fast. Getting a sledge hammer, he knocked off the fastenings, and the fresh tang of the sea air greeted him in his dungeon, and put the color back into his gray cheeks.

Coming out he looked around in utter astonishment. "We must have been down there nearly a year, by the look of things," he muttered, walking along the slippery deck among the weeds where strange sea monsters stuck out their heads at him, and wriggled back under cover.

Towards the stern was a great dent in the hull, and the metal plates were clean and bright.

"Looks as if we'd been in collision lately," he remarked to himself, "I must see about it."

Groping his way inside again, he felt all around the indentation until a spurt of water confirmed his fears.

"Well I'm glad I'm on the surface where I have a run for my money," he mused. "I never did like being sealed up like a sardine in a can."

He thought of the canvass folding boat, but it, too, had crumbled to dust, and the life belts were in the same condition.

"I can swim for two hours or more if the sharks don't get me, and this old craft is good for quite a while yet.

His eyes were getting accustomed to the strong light, and suddenly his gaze became fixed on something in the heavens.

"Looks like a zeppelin, but the shape isn't quite the same; however they've probably improved them while I've been down below in this tin fish. I wonder if the old war is still on, and who's winning."

Presently he went below again, and spent an hour in the dark, trying to plug the leak with the remains of his clothing. When he came up again there was a small pleasure yacht, of a design he had never seen before, within half a mile. He waved, and the people aboard saw him. He scrambled for the chart house, where he wildly searched for something to wear.

Now he stood on the sinking submarine, clothed in a chart.

"Did you see anything of Number Two projectile from the Pacific?" called out a short stout man in yachting costume, who appeared to be the owner of the yacht.

"I'm afraid I didn't, but can you lend me some clothes?" was his reply.

THE people on the yacht were astonished at his story, accustomed as they were to strange happenings. He learned that it was a common practice to suspend animation in criminals who could not be reformed, and leave them to be judged and dealt with by a future and less prejudiced generation. To him, his present situation seemed absolutely incredible. Two hundred years; Impossible! They must surely be movie actors on this ship, covered with inventions and innovations of which he, a leader in his own age, knew nothing. The things that he now saw were just a beginning, for in less than an hour, in answer to the ship's broadcast, they were surrounded by airships of every type. No one seemed to bother about Roger Wells, the old world man, except a medical health officer who tested his mentality, and inoculated him against every known disease. A little later, while he stood leaning over the rail of the yacht, a great projectile hurtled down with a roar like a thunderbolt not a hundred yards away, and pulled itself up so that it only went about twenty feet under water. It bore an eminent engineer direct from Italy.

The dent in the rusty submarine had been noticed by those on the yacht, from a distance, and they had unerringly come to the right conclusion. The chart helped them considerably, for with so many wrecks scattered about the ocean floor, it meant time wasted to examine each, for their instruments only indicated a mass of metal and not its shape or size with any degree of accuracy.

"Tell me about this projectile, and how it works?" inquired the ancient young man of his host, as they stood watching the preparations for what promised to be a stupendous task.

"It's really very simple. These projectiles are hurled up into the rarefied air by an air gun, the spring of which is compressed by the tide, or other means, to the required tension; then a couple of air blasts from the rear end will take it almost anywhere. They are only partly automatic, so far, and each one must have a pilot to steer it, and stop it, and communicate with the outside world in case of trouble."

"To my old fashioned notions it seems a far riskier job than the one from which I had been so miraculously saved. How often do they go wrong and get lost like this one?"

"Bless you! It hasn't happened for several years. You see the pilot of this one is a lady, and it appears she must have let her mind wander a bit, because her recorded course as far as Chicago indicates that she had done nothing up to then to retard the projectile, although travelling over three miles per second, and far higher than usual."

"SURELY you cannot pilot the course of a projectile through the air like you can a ship at sea?"

"Of course we can, only more accurately. I believe wireless direction finders were beginning in your time. Is it not natural that we should have improved upon it? We use two recording charts, one for the vertical, and the other for the horizontal course. The triangulation is automatic, and makes a dot on the chart that indicates the position every half mile. In this particular case, the chart indicates a smooth, regular curve with two humps where the air blasts were let off, just as it would in the case of an unguided projectile. At Chicago, as you know, the double pen-inker ran dry, and that ends the record. Usually these charts show slight ups and downs, so that even the characteristics of the individual pilot can be recognized, just as the flight of a certain pilot could be told on your day."

"All this is clear enough now that you explain it, but I cannot conceive anyone quick enough to turn on the air blast that shoots out of the nose of your projectiles at the exact instant that will check it as it touches the ground."

"Intelligence and practice, nothing else. If you hadn't the intelligence you couldn't do it; after that practice is all that is necessary. Why, man! In your day they had jugglers who could do feats of conjuring so quickly for the eye to follow. But besides all that, there are automatic controls that turn on the front air-blast at the exact time required to counteract the velocity. I am told that the pilots do not consider it good form to use the automatic controls except in emergencies."

"What went wrong with this projectile?"

"Ah well, you see a woman is still an unknown quantity. I'll admit they are much more brainy, but for dependability and consideration, I prefer the man. This woman pilot has missed her vocation, because she is too clever. In this age very clever people are seldom matrimonially inclined. Miss Morgan is no exception. She wants to marry and have a family."

"Then why doesn't she do it?"

"Because she is too intelligent."

"What in the name of heaven has that to do with it?"

"I'm afraid you do not understand these matters as yet, but if she married a man of her own intelligence, the chances are her children would be fools or abnormal in some way."

"Well, then what's to stop her marrying a man of her own intelligence?"

"She ranks in the eighty seventh division, and as the maximum for husband and wife is one hundred and ten, you see she would have to marry a man of twenty-three units or less. How could you expect a young, highspirited, clever girl to be willing to do that?"

"Twenty-three? That visiting doctor of yours tested my brain with all sorts of contrivances and tests, and finally put me down at twenty-one."

"Oh, I never thought. I beg your pardon! But you belong to a different age, and the standards are not the same. In most ways you should be at least fifty units; I'm forty eight myself. Naturally enough they can't quite place you yet, but probably they will regrade you when they see how you respond to modern ways of life. If in your day, for instance, some of those Egyptologists had discovered a Pharaoh still alive under a pyramid, where would they have placed him in your society? He might have wanted to kill every one he didn't like, or take somebody's wife, or do a hundred things that weren't done in your day. Many changes have been effected since your time, so you musn't mind being regarded with suspicion until you are better known."

Roger Wells was secretly much amused at his host's confusion. He thought it a great joke that he should be regarded as a sort of savage resurrected from the middle ages.

"I don't mind it at all, so long as they don't put me in the zoo or exhibit me on the stage, or dissect me in the medical school," he laughingly replied.

The old world man relapsed into silence and deep thought as to what he was to do in this strange new world, where he had no friends or equals and so very little in common with this new, intellectual race.

"A general broadcast news bulletin," exclaimed his host, taking out the little communicator and adjusting the dial until an orange spot appeared. Presently the voice of the announcer came clear and sharp from the miniature instrument:

"Number Two projectile from the Pacific is at last in communication with the outside world. It appears that the glancing blow when it struck the sunken submarine caused a sideway shock that was not wholly taken up by the shock absorbers, consequently several of the instruments were smashed, including the communicator. Miss Morgan, the pilot, being an exceptionally clever young woman, at once set to work rebuilding the broken equipment. Considering her tools and lack of spare parts, her skill in repairing the sending set is considered a very clever piece of work. The projectile contains oxygen for five days and food tablets for a month, beside the chemical in the medicine chest for suspending animation in case of necessity. The noted engineers now assembled have calculated that three days will be sufficient to complete the rescue."

MISS Henrietta Morgan had been told all about the old world man and his survival in the long lost submarine. Since she had been the unconscious cause of his deliverance, she expressed a desire to speak to him. To his surprise and delight, he was conducted to a small dark room on the yacht, hung with black velvet curtains. Here he not alone heard her, but he saw her projected in the air from a series of lenses arranged in semicircle. At first, he thought he had really been transferred to the projectile in some extraordinary way. But when he stood up to shake hands with her, he realized that it was only reflected light in perfect perspective. He knew that she could not see him, for she was looking directly at her transmitter as she talked. She was very beauti-

ful, and there was a softness about her features that reminded him of girls he once had known. To him she seemed a link to the past.

They found they had several things in common. Like many sailors, his ultimate desire was a home, a garden in the country, to say nothing of a wife as well. He gave her a sketch of his career, and she told him quite frankly of her thwarted ambitions. He was just a little surprised, until he learned that this was an age of plain speaking, which left no room for mock modesty or simpering coyness. He thought it would be wise, however, to withhold from her his intelligence-rating. If she knew, she would be looking for signs of imbecility, he thought.

Soon an enormous pontoon was constructed of small, boat-like units that fitted together into the shape of a huge doughnut nearly a mile in outside circumference. Tons and tons of pipe were laid down by freight airships, and men and machinery assembled the pipe in the enclosed lake in the centre of the pontoon. These pipes were in a ring almost touching, and reached to the bottom of the ocean. More pipes formed an inner ring. Now a hundred refrigerating ships lit down on the pontoon, and coupled up with the pipes. After several hours, there was a wall of ice fifty feet thick enclosing a circular space of three hundred feet and extending right to the bottom. Was the space in the middle pumped out? No, two beams of electrical energy were directed into it from the sky, and the water left the great ice tube in huge columns of vapour. Machines hovering above fanned away the steam, so that it would not fall in a drenching, tropical rain on the operators.

All this time Roger Wells, the ancient man, watched and observed and grew accustomed to all these strange, new wonders.

His host in the pleasure yacht was very kind. He even sent to the New York zoo, and had some animal flesh sent out for his guest to eat. However Roger decided to turn vegetarian when he noticed the horror of his host's children when they saw him eat 'dead animal,' as they put it.

He was able to grasp his true position when he tried to match his wits with these children of eight, ten, and twelve. After showing the youngest how to play chess with an improvised set, he was able to beat him twice, but never again. The doctor had rated him at twenty-one units of intelligence; now he wondered if that was not too high.

Spectators had come from all over the world to witness the rescue of Number Two projectile. The work was well in hand, and since twenty-four hours had not yet passed since the disaster, there was no alarm felt for the safety of the prisoners.

All that night the sky was bright as day with searchlights. Toward morning the men in charge became anxious, for a great storm was brewing over the north pole, and in spite of the fact that a fleet of airships were trying to head it off by every known method, it continued to swirl southward. Hence the feverish activity to complete the work before the storm broke.

By noon the next day the storm raged while these super-men stood by, helpless.

The greatest shock of all came when Miss Morgan sent out a message informing them, that, for some reason, the medicine chest was not aboard, and therefore they were without the chemicals that would suspend animation when the oxygen supply was gone.

The last chance had failed. They could not possibly be rescued in the remaining time before the oxygen was exhausted.

Now, for once, the old-world man saw consternation on the faces of these modern marvels. Death from accident was more or less common, but the thought of a lingering death from suffocation was something that seemed to upset them completely.

UP to the present he had simply watched, and tried to absorb all that he saw. In this overwhelming emergency his brain began to function costructively again, for quick thinking is second nature to a submarine officer.

His thoughts ran along many lines. Why could they not run a pipe down to supply air? Not with such a sea running, and even if they could, the boring and joining to the chilled steel projectile would be almost impossible under such pressure. Then he thought of the air blast. Surely the blast of air capable of stopping the projectile would be able to blow it backwards until it reached the water, and floated to the surface. All in vain. The compressed air had all been used in a final effort to stop the projectile on its fatal plunge.

All this time the little pleasure yacht had been suspended in mid air by a powerful air tug which had picked her up at the first signs of bad weather. This seemed a very unnautical proceeding to the old world man, in fact, as unnautical as steam to his grandfather who had commanded a frigate in sailing days.

"Surely," he thought, "there must be some way out with the marvellous inventions and equipment available. Could it not be blasted out with one of his rusty old torpedoes?" No, reason told him that it would blow the people in the projectile to pieces, if it reached them at all.

He called Miss Morgan from the little room where he could see and talk to her as privately as if they were really alone together. She spoke with regret that she would never meet him in the flesh, or even see his picture, for the projectile was not fitted for receptive vision. Then they talked long and earnestly of the might-have-beens of life, always working around to the house and garden in the country where happy children laughed and played. "Goodbye," he said at last, "we have missed happiness in this world by a hair's breadth, perhaps we shall gain it in the next world."

Down on the storm-tossed ocean, the engineers still fought the elements with dogged perseverance. Tons and tons of oil had been poured on the troubled waters, more ice barriers had been frozen, but time was slipping by, and they were making little headway.

After he switched off from talking to Miss Morgan the ancient man sat with his head in his hands thinking of the lottery of life: one day up, the next down. One day free as air, the next confined in the deepest

dungeon. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." yes, that was it, "In the midst of life we are in death." "Like a flower in the field—" What was that fleeting thought that seemed to break in on his reverie?

Radium! Radium! why had he not thought of it before? Were there not five pounds of it aboard the projectile? Would not five pounds of radium let loose, disintegrate enough water into gas to blow the projectile to the surface, or to kingdom come?

"Miss Morgan! Miss Morgan!" he called frantically into the little transmitter. "Can't you get some of that radium into your air blast compression chamber and some water along with it? There ought soon to be enough pressure to blow yourself out backwards?"

"I never thought of it," she exclaimed. "I'll just call up the Radium Institute, and ask them the best way to use it."

Within an hour Miss Morgan had let off the first blast, which shot the projectile fourteen feet backwards and that much nearer freedom. Breathlessly the world waited for the result of the next blast.

A wave of rejoicing spread over the earth when the next shot indicated twenty seven feet nearer liberty.

All eyes were fixed on the little patch of comparatively calm water in the centre of the great raft. Those standing on its heaving surface could feel the dull thuds as blast after blast was fired in the depths beneath. It was fortunate, indeed, that this projectile was shuttle shaped and rounded at the rear end, otherwise it might not have kept its direction, and it is very doubtful if Miss Morgan could have done anything in the way of steering, as the vanes would almost certainly have been torn off by its pressure through the mud and shale of the sea bottom.

At last the projectile shot to the surface with a mighty rush, and leaped fifty feet into the air. As it did so Miss Morgan left off a final blast that shot it up backwards several miles. Then, to the astonishment of all the watchers, and most of all the old world man, the great projectile came swooping down in a graceful curve, and turned up again as if to skim over the yacht suspended from the great air tug above. Would it actually go between the supporting cables? It did. The pilot lit on the deck of the yacht with her great weight of tempered steel without even displacing a deck chair. The yacht and air tug sank two hundred feet before the pilot speeded up his lifting propellors sufficiently to counteract the extra weight.

Real emotion now broke loose. Brilliant rockets were fired off in thousands, and countless, coloured balloons of every shape and size were thrown from machines doing the most extraordinary gyrations in the air. They were able to act together in perfect unity just as trained armies do after several years of drill and practice. A hundred machines acting together represented a great wheel rolling slowly across the sky. Others would rush into the sky in a group, and then suddenly spread out like a bursting rocket.

All this was performed above a roaring, tumbling sea that in the old days would have driven everything to shelter, if it could be reached, save the largest ocean liners.

WHEN Miss Morgan swung open the balanced steel door and stepped out, the old world man was the first to grasp her by the hand. In the flesh, she was even more beautiful than her projected picture showed her to be. It was a case of love at first sight. Later, she explained many puzzling things to him. The transmission of power—mostly tide and water power—could be directed through space by means of a sort of beam wave concentrated on the receptive point and kept there by a whole series of delicate relays. Of course, storage of electricity had greatly improved, liquid electrolyte having long been displaced by a heavy gas impregnated with radium salts; the grids were of the finest metal gauze. Every airship had not one but several sources of reserve power, so that they could travel for days independently of the central station. There was still another source of reserve power in everyday use that astonished the old-world man by its simplicity—just the ordinary coil spring that drove the watches and clocks and phonographs, and pressed up the street car trolley poles when they slipped off the wire. Even the children of this new age had little clockwork helicopters that when wound up at a free winding-station would carry them a couple of miles. They seemed to be perfectly safe, for when the spring ran down, they came slowly to the ground.

It was evening, the storm had died away, and the yacht was again floating on the slightly heaving surface of the ocean. The owner and his family had retired, and the ship was heading leisurely south for Bermuda. In the moonlight Miss Morgan and Roger Wells slowly paced the deck. They were not talking very much, but they were thinking a great deal. He was wondering if men proposed and got married in this age as they had in the beginning of the twentieth century. She was feeling the old rebellious feeling against the powers that made the laws. Here was a man whom she could really like, but she supposed he was rated at least in the fortieth division or higher.

At last she turned to him and said: "Have you been rated by the doctor yet?"

His face fell, for he felt that his answer would mean the end of their friendship. The words of his host came forcefully back to him, "How do you expect a clever, high spirited girl to marry a man rated below 23?" And he was rated only twenty-one units of intelligence out of a possible hundred. And she had eighty-seven!

She saw the look of misery cross his face, and felt glad. "He must like me," she thought, "for he is sad that our combined intelligence stands between us."

At last he replied with a deep sigh: "Twenty-one units."

She gazed at him in bewildered astonishment, and then—: "In that case there is nothing to stop us getting married at once," she replied.

"Nothing," he agreed, "if you can stand a husband of such low mentality."

She laughed joyously, "Intelligence tests and rating may be necessary in this age, but they have very little to do with real love. However we must hurry, for I feel sure that they will realize that a mistake has been

made; then they will send another doctor, or appoint a commission to go into your case thoroughly. If they give you a much higher rating all our lovely plans will be destroyed.

"I have an idea," she exclaimed a few minutes later. "As you know, we will be in Bermuda in a couple of days, and there will be a great reception. I have yet to give my official account of the accident; then there will be many people to see you, and," she laughed, "you will be lucky if they don't put you in the museum!"

"I don't care so long as they mount you on the next pedestal." he smilingly replied.

"You must be serious," she exclaimed, "while I explain, for we cannot risk our happiness now; I could not live without you."

"Nor I without you," he vowed, holding her closely.

"My plan is to leave at once for the mainland, and get married quietly at some little place. Once married they cannot separate us without our consent."

"How can we leave the yacht?" he questioned; "we could not row to land."

"Take one of the flying life boats" she explained. "We won't be missed until morning."

"I hardly like to do it," he explained, "our host has been so kind and considerate, I am even wearing some of his clothes at the present moment."

"I will leave a note explaining it all to him, and he'll understand. We might even return to the yacht after we are married, and proceed to Bermuda."

"That would be splendid," he exclaimed.

WITH the greatest caution they undid the fastenings of the little lifeboat. A glance into the pilot house where gyrocompass, depth indicators, fog warnings, and many other instruments made it quite unnecessary to have an officer on constant duty, assured them that they could slip away unseen and unheard.

With just a faint humming they shot off into the darkness, and headed due west. She taught him how to manage the little craft, and then lay down to sleep while he remained at the controls. Presently the sun came up out of the sea behind them bathing the distant land ahead of them with rosy light. It seemed a glorious prospect for the crowning event in the lives of these two who had been kept apart by centuries and by land and water, and still had to use all their ingenuity to accomplish their purpose.

Gently he woke her, and she navigated the little craft to a perfect landing near a small town. Here he saw many of the wonderful things he had been told about. The registrar was not yet in his office, so they repaired to a restaurant for breakfast.

"How do we pay?" he asked feeling awkward because he had no money.

"We just give our numbers," she said, "and the State settles our food account, for everyone is entitled to three meals a day. Other things that we buy are charged to our accounts which can be verified almost instantly. The luxuries that we enjoy are in proportion to the service we perform for the good of the public. We will just inquire how you stand."

Using her pocket communicator she was soon in touch with the right department, and was informed that Roger Wells, late lieutenant commander of the submarine U5 had been duly registered as a world citizen, and credited with one thousand units pending his entry into a suitable vocation. As a further token of appreciation for his suggestion for recovering Number Two projectile the Government would present him with any airplane or flying machine he chose up to five thousand horse power.

"How splendid," she exclaimed, "just the thing for our honeymoon."

"Will it cost much to run?" he asked anxiously.

"Oh, no! You are allowed a reasonable amount of power free. I think it will be half a million miles a year for a five thousand horse machine."

"It sounds too good to be true," he rejoiced.

A few minutes later they stood before the registrar.

"So you wish to be married at once?" he inquired.

"Yes, at once," They both answered him.

"I'll just call up the chief registry department, and verify these particulars."

They waited a little nervously for the result.

"I think it would be better to postpone your marriage," he said at last. "Your rating, Miss Morgan, is very high, and the authorities tell me that Roger Wells will probably be rerated very shortly. His new rating added to yours might bring your combined rating above the allowable maximum."

"You have the particulars before you, and you have verified them; we insist on being married at once."

"It is your right, if you insist," he agreed.

"We do insist," exclaimed both together.

In a few minutes the simple ceremony was over, and they were pronounced man and wife, "for as long as you both desire it," following the custom that marriage is an earthly arrangement and useless when it becomes repugnant to the parties concerned.

Their very first act was to call up the yacht, and tell the astonished owner what they had done. He had only just missed them, and had been wondering what he should do. Their return would make everything right, and they could continue to Bermuda just as everything had been planned. Soon they were on their return journey, and Roger Wells expressed the utmost astonishment when his bride of an hour switched on the automatic recording chart which not alone marked their course, but that of the yacht, so that to have missed them would have been impossible.

Great was the rejoicing on board that evening when they returned. News of their marriage was broadcast.

Later a message came from the Government saying that Roger Wells had been appointed to assist the Historical experts of the National Library in going over the records of his period.

Now, as he faced this new world, he did not feel lonely any more, for all the dreams of his life were coming true, and his beautiful and gifted wife was radiant with joy.

THE END

The STONE CAT

By Miles J. Breuer, M.D.

Author of "The Man with the Strange Head."

....In some way the doctor had gained an advantage, and was pushing Richard behind the curtain. Again a cry broke from Richard's throat, something between a gulp and a shout of "help!"

INVESTIGATION showed that I was the last person to see young Brian before his sudden and mysterious disappearance. I saw him on the day that my remarkable friend, Doctor Fleckinger showed the two of us the stone cat. We found the doctor working in his laboratory, a big, airy room with the sunlight gleaming brightly on the myriad things of glass and polished metal. As usual, Miss Lila was there, busy at some of the doctor's scientific tasks.

Brian had eyes only for the demure young lady in the white apron and rolled-up sleeves. As we came in, she looked up and saw him, and nodded her head to him with a smile in her deep, dark eyes. Brian walked the doctor good morning, and then went over to where she sat cutting sections on a microtome, handling the gossamer-like paraffin ribbons with a consummately delicate touch. I walked over to the other side of the room where the doctor was working with some Petri dishes and a microscope, and exchanged greetings with him.

Dr. Fleckinger went on with his work, and such was his concentration that in a few moments he had forgotten about me. He was pouring a black liquid on some lumps of flesh in the Petri dishes and watching them blacken and crinkle; and then he teased out pieces to examine under the microscope. For a while he gazed abstractedly at his notebook. Then came the uncouth thing that makes me shiver when I think of it. Suddenly he jerked up his cuff and bared his arm, and poured some of the greenish-black stuff on one spot. The effect was hideous. The flesh blackened and shriveled, and his arm shuddered. He regarded it for a while; then, seizing a scalpel, he pass-

HAVE you ever seen a petrified forest? If you have, you must have wondered by what process this came about. The processes that make petrifaction possible are not any too well understood by science today, but it is thought quite probable that it is within the scope of scientists to create similar conditions. We all know the biblical story of Lot's wife, when she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt. Evidently we have to do with petrifaction in this instance as well. You will enjoy this unusual and interesting story by the author of "The Man With the Strange Head."

ed it quickly through a flame, and with one sweep cut off the blackened skin and flesh. He put on a compress-dressing to stop the bleeding, and went on unconcernedly with his work, totally oblivious of me standing there and shuddering.

That was the kind of man he was. , I was afraid of him. The friendship that I continued with him was one of those things that we do against the protests of our better judgment. I envied him his comfortable wealth, his astonishing intellect, and his beautiful daughter; for I had to work hard for a living with just a mediocre equipment of brains, and all I had to love and worry about was a nephew who could take better care of himself than I could. I enjoyed Dr. Fleckinger's society during his amiable intervals, and delighted in his wonderful private collection of marble and bronze statuary. But, at other times I was uncomfortable in his society. Though I was his oldest and best friend, I had a feeling that he would cut me in pieces did the conditions of an experiment demand it, with the same unfeeling precision with which he had whirled guinea-pigs in a centrifuge during our college days, to determine the effect on the circulation.

Miss Lila and Brian were so interested in some mutual matter that they had not noticed the uncanny performance. In a quarter of an hour the doctor seemed to have come to a stopping place in his work, for he put it aside and entertained me so pleasantly that I forgot and forgave his previous abstraction. It was when Brian and I were taking our departure that he showed us the stone cat. It was on a low pillar, in a room with a lot of small sculptured figures. I did not look at it much, yet it stuck in my memory, and sticks there yet, haunting me when I try to think of pleasanter things. It was natural size, of some black stone, and was no doubt an admirable piece of sculptural art, with its arched back, straight tail, and angry appearance.

But I didn't like it. Brian hardly noticed it, but Miss Lila stood on the stairs and shuddered. The three year old girl of Dr. Fleckinger's housekeeper was toddling around the room after her mother who was dusting the statuary; and seeing us looking at the cat, came over to join us in her small, sociable way. Spying the cat, she stopped suddenly, looked at it a moment, and let out a wail of lamentation. She continued to weep piteously until she was carried out, crying something about her "kitty." As I went out, I wondered why the stone figure of a cat should make me feel so creepy and cause Miss Lila to shudder, and the child to cry.

Brian and I parted at the corner of the block, and that was the last time anybody saw him. He was missed from his office and his rooms, and the places he usually frequented. His affairs hung in suspense; a case which he was to try the following day had to be put off, and in the evening an opera party with whom he and Miss Lila had engaged a box, waited for him in vain. The newspapers blazed out in big headlines about the utter and untraceable disappearance of the prominent young lawyer.

I had never taken any particular interest in him. That was to come now, for the responsibility of investigating his case would devolve on my department. One thing about him, perhaps held my attention, and that of many others: he was the successful suitor of Dr. Fleckinger's daughter, Lila. The list of young men who had unsuccessfully aspired for this honor was large, and my own nephew, Richard, was among them. It was pretty generally known that it was the doctor himself who stood in the way; he made it so uncomfortable for the young fellows who tried to get acquainted with the girl that they desisted. Richard, who was pretty hard hit, and spent a good many despondent months after his defeat, told me that the "selfish old devil cared less about his daughter's future than he did about his own whims." So, when young Brian, by his persistence and his gracious ways, continued not only in the favor of the young lady, but also in the good graces of her eccentric father, there was a good deal of speculation as to why he, particularly, had been selected.

My nephew, Richard, who is a sergeant in my department of the detective bureau, came to me and asked me to assign him specially to the investigation of Brian's disappearance. I did so gladly, for I had to admit that he was clever, even if most of the time it was difficult for me to believe that the golden-haired lad was really grown up.

"I am looking up Brian's contacts," he reported. "His own record is an easy job; his life is an open book. Miss Fleckinger I know pretty well myself. But, her father seems to be a sort of mystery. You know him intimately. Tell me about him." His brows were dark with angry suspicion.

"Well," I mused; "he and I went to school together. We were drawn together and apart from others by a common streak of intellect, a sort of analytical and investigative faculty that would give us no rest. Out of me, it made a detective, out of him a research scientist. He inherited enough money to make that possible. He keeps to himself, and does not even publish the results of very much of his work. What he is working on, is as profound a riddle to the rest of the scientific world as the secret of the Sphinx. However, I can make my surmises, if he does things like those he used to do. I remember once that he blew a steam whistle for ten days close to a rabbit's ear, and then killed it and made microscopic sections to see the effects on the nerves of hearing."

Richard shut his teeth with a click and said nothing.

"I saw the doctor this afternoon," I continued. "He takes a queer attitude toward this affair. His daughter is all broken up about it, but he acts as though he were relieved. He remarked something to the effect that he was glad that he wouldn't lose his daughter after all. Then he had the nerve to ask me if I wouldn't come in to see a new statue which had just arrived. He was all enthused about the statue, and I left in disgust."

"He's a smooth brute," Richard said.

HE worked hard on the case. I saw him seldom, but when I did, I noted that he was losing weight and growing haggard. He was taking it seriously, be-

...he had not lost his old affection for Miss Lila, ...was so intimately connected with the case. Per... his motive was to make her happy, even though ...knew he had to give her up to his rival if he ever ...ceeded in finding Brian; or perhaps some deeper ...uestion drove him on through those long, discourag... ...weeks. A number of other good men on the force ...a great deal of effort in going over the problem; ...no light was shed on Brian's disappearance. Then one day a young Frenchman was admitted to ...office.

"I would wish that you speak French," he said ...timely.

"I'm sorry," I said. "What can I do for you?"

"You desire to know where is the Monsieur Brian?" ...asked, speaking slowly, and finding each word ...with evident effort.

"There's a big reward out, and it's yours if you ...us," I said shortly.

"I have hopes, uncle, old dear," he said, with an ...tonishing change in voice and manner, breaking ...to into Richard's well known grin. With a hat on ...d a change in expression, it was really Richard.

"You old rascal!" I shouted. "You certainly fool... ...me!"

"It wasn't easy, uncle, I dye the hair and mustache ...ce a week, and practice French all night. But, ...this fooled all my friends. Well, I need it. I am ...Fleckinger's laboratory assistant now, and we ...k French most of the time. You can see that I've ...rned something about him, because you all thought ...was German. Now I am cataloguing his collection ...sculptures, too."

"You're actually in that house?" I demanded in ...rm. Some nameless fear for the boy's safety pos... ...me. Yet, my reason could not tell me what I ...ared.

"I'm learning all the time," he replied jocularly. ...en he gritted his teeth and his face took on a grim ...k. "Uncle, someone's got to take Lila out of that ...'s clutches. Of course he's her father, but—"

"What's the matter?"

"She's wasting away unde. my very eyes. Every ...e she is thinner. She goes about and trembles at ...y shadow; and every now and then bursts into a ...of weeping without any provocation. Something ...ering her distracted, and I can see the terrible ...rt she makes to conceal it. It isn't sorrow that ...e in her face; it's horror!"

"What has that to do with Brian's disappearance?"

"I don't know. In order to find out, I've been try... ...to learn from Lila and the servants what his ...ive is for refusing to let her have suitors. Appar... ...there is no real reason for it; it is rather a mono... ...a form of insanity on his part."

"You would think you suspected him of having ...away with Brian," I hinted.

"Only to conjecture, hard to prove," he answered ...ntentionally. "But if you want to see the wind-up, ...until I run a couple of errands, and I'll take you ...with me. I think I've figured the thing out."

...could have knocked me over with a feather. ...was a man's job worked out by this boy who still seemed a child to me. He came for me at seven o'clock, carrying some packages. Unwrapping them, he slipped a photograph into an inside pocket, and a couple of live frogs into the pocket of his coat. I stared in astonishment.

"Take your thirty-two automatic along," he suggested. I patted the pocket where it reposed.

We drove to Fleckinger's house in a car with three officers from the station, and stopped at some distance from the house. We walked separately into the yard, and Richard signalled to the officers to wait outside. I was surprised to see him pull out a latchkey and open the door, until I remembered that he was a member of the household.

On the stair-landing in the lower hall stood a statue. Richard pointed to it.

"The one you were invited to see and refused," he commented. "Oh, he's a cool customer!"

He switched on the light in front of it, and asked me to regard it closely. It was of some dull, black, rough material, and represented a young man, almost nude, seated, with his chin leaning against one hand in deep meditation. The face was suggestive of profound concentration like that of a hypnotized man. The statue looked a little larger than life-size. It was set back in a niche so that the light fell on it obliquely, heightening the furrowed effect of the face. There was something about the appearance of it that I did not like, as it stood there with the shadows of the balusters falling on it. It gave me the same sort of creeps that the stone cat had imparted.

"It is really exactly life-size," Richard informed me. "I have measured it."

I gave him an impatient glare, for I did not see what that had to do with Brian's disappearance.

"Then," he continued, "look at the features closely!" And he jerked the photograph out of his pocket and held it before me. It was a portrait of Brian, done very dark by the photographer; a duplicate of which I had at the office.

I looked from the picture to the face of the statue and back again, and an icy chill shot through me. But, Richard started suddenly, for the bobbing figure of Doctor Fleckinger appeared at the head of the stairs above us. Obviously that was not on the program.

"Put it away," he whispered. Then he went on slowly and loudly: "He is in the laboratoire. I am certain it will make him much pleasure if you come above——ah, there is Monsieur the doctor now."

Doctor Fleckinger came down and greeted me pleasantly, and shook my hand. My head hummed and whirled; I could scarcely gather my senses enough to answer the platitudes addressed to me as we walked upstairs at the doctor's invitation to the laboratory, where he usually received me.

UP in the laboratory we began a rather lame conversation, and the incongruity of the situation jarred my nerves. The doctor knew that something suspicious was up, and did not trust me. I knew that his cordiality was feigned, and yet I was cordial in response. If I had known Richard's plans, I might

(*Continued on page* 608)

The COLOUR OUT OF SPACE

By H.P. Lovecraft

....and in the fearsome instant of deeper darkness, the watchers saw wriggling at that treetop height, a thousand tiny points of faint unhallowed radiance, tipping each bough like the fire of St. Elmo....and all the while the shaft of phosphorescence from the well was getting brighter and brighter and bringing to the minds of the huddled men, a sense of doom and abnormality... It was no longer shining out; it was pouring out; and as the shapeless stream of unplaceable colour left the well, it seemed to flow directly into the sky

WEST of Arkham the hills rise wild, and there are valleys with deep woods that no axe has ever cut. There are dark narrow glens where the trees slope fantastically, and where thin brooklets trickle without ever having caught the glint of sunlight. On the gentler slopes there are farms, ancient and rocky, with squat, moss-coated cottages brooding eternally over old New England secrets in the lee of great ledges; but these are all vacant now, the wide chimneys crumbling and the shingled sides bulging perilously beneath low gambrel roofs.

The old folk have gone away, and foreigners do not like to live there. French-Canadians have tried it, Italians have tried it, and the Poles have come and departed. It is not because of anything that can be seen or heard or handled, but because of something that is imagined. The place is not good for imagination, and does not bring restful dreams at night. It must be this which keeps the foreigners away, for old Ammi Pierce has never told them of anything he recalls from the strange days. Ammi, whose head has been a little queer for years, is the only one who still remains, or who ever talks of the strange days; and he dares to do this because his house is so near the open fields and the travelled roads around Arkham.

There was once a road over the hills and through the valleys, that ran straight where the blasted heath is now; but people ceased to use it and a new road was laid curving far toward the south. Traces of the old one can still be found amidst the weeds of a returning wilderness, and some of them will doubtless linger even when half the hollows are flooded for the new reservoir. Then the dark woods will be cut down and the blasted heath will slumber far below blue waters whose surface will mirror the sky and ripple in the sun. And the secrets of the strange days will be one with the deep's secrets; one with the hidden lore of old ocean, and all the mystery of primal earth.

When I went into the hills and vales to survey for the new reservoir they told me the place was evil. They told me this in Arkham, and because that is a very old town full of witch legends I thought the evil must be something which grandmas had whispered to children through centuries. The name "blasted heath" seemed to me very odd and theatrical, and I wondered how it had come into the folklore of a Puritan people. Then I saw that dark westward tangle of glens and slopes for myself, and ceased to wonder at anything besides its own elder mystery. It was morning when I saw it, but shadow lurked always there. The trees grew too thickly, and their trunks were too big for any healthy New England wood. There was too much silence in the dim alleys between them, and the floor was too soft with the dank moss and mattings of infinite years of decay.

In the open spaces, mostly along the line of the old road, there were little hillside farms; sometimes with all the buildings standing, sometimes with only one or two, and sometimes with only a lone chimney or fast-filling cellar. Weeds and briers reigned, and furtive wild things rustled in the undergrowth. Upon everything was a haze of restlessness and oppression; a touch of the unreal and the grotesque, as if some vital element of perspective or chiaroscuro were awry. I did not wonder that the foreigners would not stay, for this was no region to sleep in. It was too much like a landscape of Salvator Rosa; too much like some forbidden woodcut in a tale of terror.

But even all this was not so bad as the blasted heath. I knew it the moment I came upon it at the bottom of a spacious valley; for no other name could fit such thing, or any other thing fit such a name. It was as if the poet had coined the phrase from having seen this one particular region. It must, I thought as I viewed it, be the outcome of a fire; but why had nothing new ever grown over those five acres of grey desolation that sprawled open to the sky like a great spot eaten by acid in the woods and fields? It lay largely to the north of the ancient road line, but encroached a little on the other side. I felt an odd reluctance about approaching, and did so at last only because my business took me through and past it. There was no vegetation of any kind on that broad expanse, but only a fine grey dust or ash which no wind seemed ever to blow about. The trees near it were sickly and stunted, and many dead trunks stood or lay rotting at the rim. As I walked hurriedly by I saw the tumbled bricks and stones of an old chimney and cellar on my right, and the yawning black maw of an abandoned well whose stagnant vapours played strange tricks with the hues of the sunlight. Even the long, dark woodland climb beyond seemed welcome in contrast, and I marvelled no more at the frightened whispers of Arkham people. There had been no house or ruin near; even in the old days the place must have been lonely and remote. And at twilight, dreading to repass that ominous spot, I walked circuitously back to the town by the curving road on the south. I vaguely wished some clouds would gather, for an odd timidity about the deep skyey voids above had crept into my soul.

In the evening I asked old people in Arkham about the blasted heath, and what was meant by that phrase "strange days" which so many evasively muttered. I could not, however, get any good answers, except that all the mystery was much more recent than I had dreamed. It was not a matter of old legendry at all, but something within the lifetime of those who spoke. It had happened in the 'eighties, and a family had disappeared or was killed. Speakers would not be exact; and because they all told me to pay no attention to old Ammi Pierce's crazy tales, I sought him out the next morning, having heard that he lived alone in the ancient tottering cottage where the trees first begin to get very thick. It was a fearsomely

HERE is a totally different story that we can highly recommend to you. We could wax rhapsodical in our praise, as the story is one of the finest pieces of literature it has been our good fortune to read. The theme is original, and yet fantastic enough to make it rise head and shoulders above many contemporary scientifiction stories. You will not regret having read this marvellous tale.

ancient place, and had begun to exude the faint miasmal odour which clings about houses that have stood too long. Only with persistent knocking could I rouse the aged man, and when he shuffled timidly to the door I could tell he was not glad to see me. He was not so feeble as I had expected; but his eyes drooped in a curious way, and his unkempt clothing and white beard made him seem very worn and dismal.

Not knowing just how he could best be launched on his tales, I feigned a matter of business; told him of my surveying, and asked vague questions about the district. He was far brighter and more educated than I had been led to think, and before I knew it had grasped quite as much of the subject as any man I had talked with in Arkham. He was not like other rustics I had known in the sections where reservoirs were to be. From him there were no protests at the miles of old wood and farmland to be blotted out, though perhaps there would have been had not his home lain outside the bounds of the future lake. Relief was all that he showed; relief at the doom of the dark ancient valleys through which he had roamed all his life. They were better under water now—better under water since the strange days. And with this opening his husky voice sank low, while his body leaned forward and his right forefinger began to point shakily and impressively.

IT was then that I heard the story, and as the rambling voice scraped and whispered on I shivered again and again despite the summer day. Often I had to recall the speaker from ramblings, piece out scientific points which he knew only by a fading parrot memory of professors' talk, or bridge over gaps, where his sense of logic and continuity broke down. When he was done I did not wonder that his mind had snapped a trifle, or that the folk of Arkham would not speak much of the blasted heath. I hurried back before sunset to my hotel, unwilling to have the stars come out above me in the open; and the next day returned to Boston to give up my position. I could not go into that dim chaos of old forest and slope again, or face another time that grey blasted heath where the black well yawned deep beside the tumbled bricks and stones. The reservoir will soon be built now, and all those elder secrets will lie safe forever under watery fathoms. But even then I do not believe I would like to visit that country by night—at least not when the sinister stars are out; and nothing could bribe me to drink the new city water of Arkham.

It all began, old Ammi said, with the meteorite. Before that time there had been no wild legends at all since the witch trials, and even then these western woods were not feared half so much as the small island in the Miskatonic where the devil held court beside a curious stone altar older than the Indians. These were not haunted woods, and their fantastic dusk was never terrible till the strange days. Then there had come that white noontide cloud, that string of explosions in the air, and that pillar of smoke from the valley far in the wood. And by night all Arkham had heard of the great rock that fell out of the sky and bedded itself in the ground beside the well at the Nahum Gardner place. That was the house which had stood where the blasted heath was to come—the trim white Nahum Gardner house amidst its fertile gardens and orchards.

Nahum had come to town to tell people about the stone, and had dropped in at Ammi Pierce's on the way. Ammi was forty then, and all the queer things were fixed very strongly in his mind. He and his wife had gone with the three professors from Miskatonic University who hastened out the next morning to see the weird visitor from unknown stellar space, and had wondered why Nahum had called it so large the day before. It had shrunk, Nahum said as he pointed out the big brownish mound above the ripped earth and charred grass near the archaic well-sweep in his front yard; but the wise men answered that stones do not shrink. Its heat lingered persistently, and Nahum declared it had glowed faintly in the night. The professors tried it with a geologist's hammer and found it was oddly soft. It was, in truth, so soft as to be almost plastic; and they gouged rather than chipped a specimen to take back to the college for testing. They took it in an old pail borrowed from Nahum's kitchen, for even the small piece refused to grow cool. On the trip back they stopped at Ammi's to rest, and seemed thoughtful when Mrs. Pierce remarked that the fragment was growing smaller and burning the bottom of the pail. Truly, it was not large, but perhaps they had taken less than they thought.

The day after that—all this was in June of '82—the professors had trooped out again in a great excitement. As they passed Ammi's they told him what queer things the specimen had done, and how it had faded wholly away when they put it in a glass beaker. The beaker had gone, too, and the wise men talked of the strange stone's affinity for silicon. It had acted quite unbelievably in that well-ordered laboratory; doing nothing at all and showing no occluded gases when heated on charcoal, being wholly negative in the borax bead, and soon proving itself absolutely non-volatile at any producible temperature, including that of the oxy-hydrogen blowpipe. On an anvil it appeared highly malleable, and in the dark its luminosity was very marked. Stubbornly refusing to grow cool, it soon had the college in a state of real excitement; and when upon heating before the spectroscope it displayed shining bands unlike any known colours of the normal spectrum there was much breathless talk of new elements, bizarre optical properties, and other things which puzzled men of science are wont to say when faced by the unknown.

Hot as it was, they tested it in a crucible with all the proper reagents. Water did nothing. Hydrochloric acid was the same. Nitric acid and even aqua regia merely hissed and spattered against its torrid invulnerability. Ammi had difficulty in recalling all these things, but recognized some solvents as I mentioned them in the usual order of use. There were ammonia and caustic soda, alcohol and ether, nauseous carbon disulphide and a dozen others, but

Although the weight grew steadily less as time passed, and the fragment seemed to be slightly cooling, there was no change in the solvents to show that they had attacked the substance at all. It was a metal, though, beyond a doubt. It was magnetic, for one thing; and after its immersion in the acid solvents there seemed to be faint traces of the Widmänstätten figures found on meteoric iron. When the cooling had grown very considerable, the testing was carried on in glass; and it was in a glass beaker that they left all the chips made of the original fragment during the work. The next morning both chips and beaker were gone without trace, and only a charred spot marked the place on the wooden shelf where they had been.

All this the professors told Ammi as they paused at his door, and once more he went with them to see the stony messenger from the stars, though this time his wife did not accompany him. It had now most certainly shrunk, and even the sober professors could not doubt the truth of what they saw. All around the dwindling brown lump near the well was a vacant space, except where the earth had caved in; and whereas it had been a good seven feet across the day before, it was now scarcely five. It was still hot, and the sages studied its surface curiously as they detached another and larger piece with hammer and chisel. They gouged deeply this time, and as they pried away the smaller mass they saw that the core of the thing was not quite homogeneous.

THEY had uncovered what seemed to be the side of a large coloured globule embedded in the substance. The colour, which resembled some of the bands in the meteor's strange spectrum, was almost impossible to describe; and it was only by analogy that they called it colour at all. Its texture was glossy, and upon tapping it appeared to promise both brittleness and hollowness. One of the professors gave it a smart blow with a hammer, and it burst with a nervous little pop. Nothing was emitted, and all trace of the thing vanished with the puncturing. It left behind a hollow spherical space about three inches across, and all thought it probable that others would be discovered as the enclosing substance wasted away.

Conjecture was vain; so after a futile attempt to find additional globules by drilling, the seekers left again with their new specimen—which proved, however, as baffling in the laboratory as its predecessor. Aside from being almost plastic, having heat, magnetism, and slight luminosity, cooling slightly in powerful acids, possessing an unknown spectrum, wasting away in air, and attacking silicon compounds with mutual destruction as a result, it presented no identifying features whatsoever; and at the end of the tests the college scientists were forced to own that they could not place it. It was nothing of this earth, but a piece of the great outside; and as such dowered with outside properties and obedient to outside laws.

That night there was a thunderstorm, and when the professors went out to Nahum's the next day they met with a bitter disappointment. The stone, magnetic as it had been, must have had some peculiar electrical property; for it had "drawn the lightning," as Nahum said, with a singular persistence. Six times within an hour the farmer saw the lightning strike the furrow in the front yard, and when the storm was over nothing remained but a ragged pit by the ancient well-sweep, half-chocked with caved-in earth. Digging had borne no fruit, and the scientists verified the fact of the utter vanishment. The failure was total; so that nothing was left to do but go back to the laboratory and test again the disappearing fragment left carefully cased in lead. That fragment lasted a week, at the end of which nothing of value had been learned of it. When it had gone, no residue was left behind, and in time the professors felt scarcely sure they had indeed seen with waking eyes that cryptic vestige of the fathomless gulfs outside; that lone, weird message from other universes and other realms of matter, force, and entity.

As was natural, the Arkham papers made much of the incident with its collegiate sponsoring, and sent reporters to talk with Nahum Gardner and his family. At least one Boston daily also sent a scribe, and Nahum quickly became a kind of local celebrity. He was a lean, genial person of about fifty, living with his wife and three sons on the pleasant farmstead in the valley. He and Ammi exchanged visits frequently, as did their wives; and Ammi had nothing but praise for him after all these years. He seemed slightly proud of the notice his place had attracted, and talked often of the meteorite in the succeeding weeks. That July and August were hot; and Nahum worked hard at his haying in the ten-acre pasture across Chapman's Brook; his rattling wain wearing deep ruts in the shadowy lanes between. The labour tired him more than it had in other years, and he felt that age was beginning to tell on him.

Then fell the time of fruit and harvest. The pears and apples slowly ripened, and Nahum vowed that his orchards were prospering as never before. The fruit was growing to phenomenal size and unwonted gloss, and in such abundance that extra barrels were ordered to handle the future crop. But with the ripening came sore disappointment, for of all that gorgeous array of specious lusciousness not one single jot was fit to eat. Into the fine flavour of the pears and apples had crept a stealthy bitterness and sickishness, so that even the smallest of bites induced a lasting disgust. It was the same with the melons and tomatoes, and Nahum sadly saw that his entire crop was lost. Quick to connect events, he declared that the meteorite had poisoned the soil, and thanked Heaven that most of the other crops were in the upland lot along the road.

WINTER came early, and was very cold. Ammi saw Nahum less often than usual, and observed that he had begun to look worried. The rest of his family too, seemed to have grown taciturn; and were far from steady in their churchgoing or their attendance at the various social events of the countryside. For this reserve or melancholy no cause could be found, though all the household confessed now and then to poorer health and a feeling of vague disquiet.

Nahum himself gave the most definite statement of anyone when he said he was disturbed about certain footprints in the snow. They were the usual winter prints of red squirrels, white rabbits, and foxes, but the brooding farmer professed to see something not quite right about their nature and arrangement. He was never specific, but appeared to think that they were not as characteristic of the anatomy and habits of squirrels and rabbits and foxes as they ought to be. Ammi listened without interest to this talk until one night when he drove past Nahum's house in his sleigh on the way back from Clark's Corners. There had been a moon, and a rabbit had run across the road; and the leaps of that rabbit were longer than either Ammi or his horse liked. The latter, indeed, had almost run away when brought up by a firm rein. Thereafter Ammi gave Nahum's tales more respect, and wondered why the Gardner dogs seemed so cowed and quivering every morning. They had, it developed, nearly lost the spirit to bark.

In February the McGregor boys from Meadow Hill were out shooting woodchucks, and not far from the Gardner place bagged a very peculiar specimen. The proportions of its body seemed slightly altered in a queer way impossible to describe, while its face had taken on an expression which no one ever saw in a woodchuck before. The boys were genuinely frightened, and threw the thing away at once, so that only their grotesque tales of it ever reached the people of the countryside. But the shying of horses near Nahum's house had now become an acknowledged thing, and all the basis for a cycle of whispered legend was fast taking form.

People vowed that the snow melted faster around Nahum's than it did anywhere else, and early in March there was an awed discussion in Potter's general store at Clark's Corners. Stephen Rice had driven past Gardner's in the morning, and had noticed the skunk-cabbages coming up through the mud by the woods across the road. Never were things of such size seen before, and they held strange colours that could not be put into any words. Their shapes were monstrous, and the horse had snorted at an odour which struck Stephen as wholly unprecedented. That afternoon several persons drove past to see the abnormal growth, and all agreed that plants of that kind ought never to sprout in a healthy world. The bad fruit of the fall before was freely mentioned, and it went from mouth to mouth that there was poison in Nahum's ground. Of course it was the meteorite; and remembering how strange the men from the college had found that stone to be, several farmers spoke about the matter to them.

One day they paid Nahum a visit; but having no love of wild tales and folklore were very conservative in what they inferred. The plants were certainly odd, but all skunk-cabbags are more or less odd in shape and hue. Perhaps some mineral element from the stone had entered the soil, but it would soon be washed away. And as for the footprints and frightened horses—of course this was mere country talk which such a phenomenon as the aerolite would be certain to start. There was really nothing for serious men to do in cases of wild gossip, for superstitious rustics will say and believe anything. And so all through the strange days the professors stayed away in contempt. Only one of them, when given two phials of dust for analysis in a police job over a year and a half later, recalled that the queer colour of that skunk-cabbage had been very like one of the anomalous bands of light shown by the meteor fragment in the college spectroscope, and like the brittle globule found imbedded in the stone from the abyss. The samples in this analysis case gave the same odd bands at first, though later they lost the property.

The trees budded prematurely around Nahum's, and at night they swayed ominously in the wind. Nahum's second son Thaddeus, a lad of fifteen, swore that they swayed also when there was no wind; but even the gossips would not credit this. Certainly, however, restlessness was in the air. The entire Gardner family developed the habit of stealthy listening, though not for any sound which they could consciously name. The listening was, indeed, rather a product of moments when consciousness seemed half to slip away. Unfortunately such moments increased week by week, till it became common speech that "something was wrong with all Nahum's folks." When the early saxifrage came out it had another strange colour; not quite like that of the skunk-cabbage, but plainly related and equally unknown to anyone who saw it. Nahum took some blossoms to Arkhem and showed them to the editor of the *Gazette*, but that dignitary did no more than write a humorous article about them, in which the dark fears of rustics were held up to polite ridicule. It was a mistake of Nahum's to tell a stolid city man about the way the great, overgrown mourning-cloak butterflies behaved in connection with these saxifrages.

April brought a kind of madness to the country folk, and began that disuse of the road past Nahum's which led to its ultimate abandonment. It was next the vegetation. All the orchard trees blossomed forth in strange colours, and through the stony soil of the yard and adjacent pasturage there sprang up a bizarre growth which only a botanist could connect with the proper flora of the region. No sane wholesome colours were anywhere to be seen except in the green grass and leafage; but everywhere were those hectic and prismatic variants of some diseased, underlying primary tone without a place among the known tints of earth. The "Dutchman's breeches" became a thing of sinister menace, and the bloodroots grew insolent in their chromatic perversion. Ammi and the Gardners thought that most of the colours had a sort of haunting familiarity, and decided that they reminded one of the brittle globule in the meteor. Nahum ploughed and sowed the ten-acre pasture and the upland lot, but did nothing with the land around the house. He knew it would be of no use, and hoped that the summer's strange growths would draw all the poison from the soil. He was prepared for almost anything now, and had grown used to the sense of something near him waiting to be heard. The shunning of his house by neighbours told on him, of course; but it told on his wife more. The boys were better off, being

school each day; but they could not help being frightened by the gossip. Thaddeus, an especially sensitive youth, suffered the most.

IN May the insects came, and Nahum's place became a nightmare of buzzing and crawling. Most of the creatures seemed not quite usual in their aspects and motions, and their nocturnal habits contradicted all former experience. The Gardners took to watching at night—watching in all directions at random for something they could not tell what. It was then that they all owned that Thaddeus had been right about the trees. Mrs. Gardner was the next to see it from the window as she watched the swollen boughs of a maple against a moonlit sky. The boughs surely moved, and there was no wind. It must be the sap. Strangeness had come into everything growing now. Yet it was none of Nahum's family at all who made the next discovery. Familiarity had dulled them, and what they could not see was glimpsed by a timid windmill salesman from Bolton who drove by one night in ignorance of the country legends. What he told in Arkham was given a short paragraph in the *Gazette*; and it was there that all the farmers, Nahum included, saw it first. The night had been dark and the buggy-lamps faint, but around a farm in the valley which everyone knew from the account must be Nahum's, the darkness had been less thick. A dim though distinct luminosity seemed to inhere in all the vegetation, grass, leaves, and blossoms alike, while at one moment a detached piece of the phosphorescence appeared to stir furtively in the yard near the barn.

The grass had so far seemed untouched, and the cows were freely pastured in the lot near the house, but toward the end of May the milk began to be bad. Then Nahum had the cows driven to the uplands, after which this trouble ceased. Not long after this the change in grass and leaves became apparent to the eye. All the verdure was going grey, and was developing a highly singular quality of brittleness. Ammi was now the only person who ever visited the place, and his visits were becoming fewer and fewer. When school closed the Gardners were virtually cut off from the world, and sometimes let Ammi do their errands in town. They were failing curiously both physically and mentally, and no one was surprised when the news of Mrs. Gardner's madness stole around.

It happened in June, about the anniversary of the meteor's fall, and the poor woman screamed about things in the air which she could not describe. In her raving there was not a single specific noun, but only verbs and pronouns. Things moved and changed and fluttered, and ears tingled to impulses which were not wholly sounds. Something was taken away—she was being drained of something—something was fastening itself on her that ought not to be—someone must make a keep off—nothing was ever still in the night—the walls and windows shifted. Nahum did not send her to the county asylum, but let her wander about the house as long as she was harmless to herself and others. Even when her expression changed he did nothing. But when the boys grew afraid of her, and Thaddeus nearly fainted at the way she made faces at him, he decided to keep her locked in the attic. By July she had ceased to speak and crawled on all fours, and before that month was over Nahum got the mad notion that she was slightly luminous in the dark, as he now clearly saw was the case with the nearby vegetation.

It was a little before this that the horses had stampeded. Something had aroused them in the night, and their neighing and kicking in their stalls had been terrible. There seemed virtually nothing to do to calm them, and when Nahum opened the stable door they all bolted out like frightened woodland deer. It took a week to track all four, and when found they were seen to be quite useless and unmanageable. Something had snapped in their brains, and each one had to be shot for its own good. Nahum borrowed a horse from Ammi for his haying, but found it would not approach the barn. It shied, balked, and whinnied, and in the end he could do nothing but drive it into the yard while the men used their own strength to get the heavy wagon near enough the hayloft for convenient pitching. And all the while the vegetation was turning grey and brittle. Even the flowers whose hues had been so strange were graying now, and the fruit was coming out grey and dwarfed and tasteless. The asters and goldenrod bloomed grey and distorted, and the roses and zinneas and hollyhocks in the front yard were such blasphemous-looking things that Nahum's oldest boy Zenas cut them down. The strangely puffed insects died about that time, even the bees that had left their hives and taken to the woods.

By September all the vegetation was fast crumbling to a greyish powder, and Nahum feared that the trees would die before the poison was out of the soil. His wife now had spells of terrific screaming, and he and the boys were in a constant state of nervous tension. They shunned people now, and when school opened the boys did not go. But it was Ammi, on one of his rare visits, who first realized that the well water was no longer good. It had an evil taste that was not exactly fetid nor exactly salty, and Ammi advised his friend to dig another well on higher ground to use till the soil was good again. Nahum, however, ignored the warning, for he had by that time become calloused to strange and unpleasant things. He and the boys continued to use the tainted supply, drinking it as listlessly and mechanically as they ate their meagre and ill-cooked meals and did their thankless and monotonous chores through the aimless days. There was something of stolid resignation about them all, as if they walked half in another world between lines of nameless guards to a certain and familiar doom.

Thaddeus went mad in September after a visit to the well. He had gone with a pail and had come back empty-handed, shrieking and waving his arms,, and sometimes lapsing into an inane titter or a whisper about "the moving colours down there." Two in one family was pretty bad, but Nahum was very brave about it. He let the boy run about for a week until he began stumbling and hurting himself , and then he shut him in an attic room across the hall from his mother's. The way they screamed at each other from be-

hind their locked doors was very terrible, especially to little Merwin, who fancied they talked in some terrible language that was not of earth. Merwin was getting frightfully imaginative, and his restlessness was worse after the shutting away of the brother who had been his greatest playmate.

Almost at the same time the mortality among the livestock commenced. Poultry turned greyish and died very quickly, their meat being found dry and noisome upon cutting. Hogs grew inordinately fat, then suddenly began to undergo loathsome changes which no one could explain. Their meat was of course useless, and Nahum was at his wit's end. No rural veterinary would approach his place, and the city veterinary from Arkham was openly baffled. The swine began growing grey and brittle and falling to pieces before they died, and their eyes and muzzles developed singular alterations. It was very inexplicable, for they had never been fed from the tainted vegetation. Then something struck the cows. Certain areas or sometimes the whole body would be uncannily shrivelled or compressed, and atrocious collapses or disintegrations were common. In the last stages—and death was always the result—there would be a greying and turning brittle like that which beset the hogs. There could be no question of poison, for all the cases occurred in a locked and undisturbed barn. No bites of prowling things could have brought the virus, for what live beast of earth can pass through solid obstacles? It must be only natural disease—yet what disease could wreak such results was beyond any mind's guessing. When the harvest came there was not an animal surviving on the place, for the stock and poultry were dead and the dogs had run away. These dogs, three in number, had all vanished one night and were never heard of again. The five cats had left some time before, but their going was scarcely noticed since there now seemed to be no mice, and only Mrs. Gardner had made pets of the graceful felines.

ON the nineteenth of October Nahum staggered into Ammi's house with hideous news. The death had come to poor Thaddeus in his attic room, and it had come in a way which could not be told. Nahum had dug a grave in the railed family plot behind the farm, and had put therein what he found. There could have been nothing from outside, for the small barred window and locked door were intact; but it was much as it had been in the barn. Ammi and his wife consoled the stricken man as best they could, but shuddered as they did so. Stark terror seemed to cling round the Gardners and all they touched, and the very presence of one in the house was a breath from regions unnamed and unnamable. Ammi accompanied Nahum home with the greatest reluctance, and did what he might to calm the hysterical sobbing of little Merwin. Zenas needed no calming. He had come of late to do nothing but stare into space and obey what his father told him; and Ammi thought that his fate was very merciful. Now and then Merwin's screams were answered faintly from the attic, and in response to an inquiring look Nahum said that his wife was getting very feeble. When night approached, Ammi managed to get away; for not even friendship could make him stay in that spot when the faint glow of the vegetation began and the trees may or may not have swayed without wind. It was really lucky for Ammi that he was not more imaginative. Even as things were, his mind was bent ever so slightly; but had he been able to connect and reflect upon all the portents around him he must inevitably have turned a total maniac. In the twilight he hastened home, the screams of the mad woman and the nervous child ringing horrible in his ears.

Three days later Nahum burst into Ammi's kitchen in the early morning, and in the absence of his host stammered out a desperate tale once more, while Mrs. Pierce listened in a clutching fright. It was little Merwin this time. He was gone. He had gone out late at night with a lantern and pail for water, and had never come back. He'd been going to pieces for days, and hardly knew what he was about. Screamed at everything. There had been a frantic shriek from the yard then, but before the father could get to the door the boy was gone. There was no glow from the lantern he had taken, and of the child himself no trace. At the time Nahum thought the lantern and pail were gone too; but when dawn came, and the man had plodded back from his all-night search of the woods and fields, he had found some very curious things near the well. There was a crushed and apparently somewhat melted mass of iron which had certainly been the lantern; while a bent pail and twisted iron hoops beside it, both half-fused, seemed to hint at the remnants of the pail. That was all. Nahum was past imagining, Mrs. Pierce was blank, and Ammi, when he had reached home and heard the tale, could give no guess. Merwin was gone, and there would be no use in telling the people around, who shunned all Gardners now. No use, either, in telling the city people at Arkham who laughed at everything. Thad was gone, and now Merwin was gone. Something was creeping and creeping and waiting to be seen and heard. Nahum would go soon, and he wanted Ammi to look after his wife and Zenas if they survived him. It must all be a judgment of some sort; though he could not fancy what for, since he had always walked uprightly in the Lord's ways so far as he knew.

For over two weeks Ammi saw nothing of Nahum; and then, worried about what might have happened, he overcame his fears and paid the Gardner place a visit. There was no smoke from the great chimney, and for a moment the visitor was apprehensive of the worst. The aspect of the whole farm was shocking —greyish withered grass and leaves on the ground, vines falling in brittle wreckage from archaic walls and gables, and great bare trees clawing up at the grey November sky with a studied malevolence which Ammi could not but feel had come from some subtle change in the tilt of the branches. But Nahum was alive, after all. He was weak, and lying in a couch in the low-ceiled kitchen, but perfectly conscious and able to give simple orders to Zenas. The room was deadly cold; and as Ammi visibly shivered, the host

shouted huskily to Zenas for more wood. Wood, indeed, was sorely needed; since the cavernous fireplace was unlit and empty, with a cloud of soot blowing about in the chill wind that came down the chimney. Presently Nahum asked him if the extra wood had made him any more confortable, and then Ammi saw what had happened. The stoutest cord had broken at last, and the hapless farmer's mind was proof against more sorrow.

Questioning tactfully, Ammi could get no clear data at all about the missing Zenas. "In the well—he lives in the well—" was all that the clouded father would say. Then there flashed across the visitor's mind a sudden thought of the mad wife, and he changed his line of inquiry. "Nabby? Why, here she is!" was the surprised response of poor Nahum, and Ammi soon saw that he must search for himself. Leaving the harmless babbler on the couch, he took the keys from their nail beside the door and climbed the creaking stairs to the attic. It was very close and noisome up there, and no sound could be heard from any direction. Of the four doors in sight, only one was locked, and on this he tried various keys on the ring he had taken. The third key proved the right one, and after some fumbling Ammi threw open the low white door.

It was quite dark inside, for the window was small and half-obscured by the crude wooden bars; and Ammi could see nothing at all on the wide-planked floor. The stench was beyond enduring, and before proceeding further he had to retreat to another room and return with his lungs filled with breathable air. When he did enter he saw something dark in the corner, and upon seeing it more clearly he screamed outright. While he screamed he thought a momentary cloud eclipsed the window, and a second later he felt himself brushed as if by some hateful current of vapour. Strange colours danced before his eyes; and had not a present horror numbed him he would have thought of the globule in the meteor that the geologist's hammer had shattered, and of the morbid vegetation that had sprouted in the spring. As it was he thought only of the blasphemous monstrosity which confronted him, and which all too clearly had shared the nameless fate of young Thaddeus and the livestock. But the terrible thing about the horror was that it very slowly and perceptibly moved as it continued to crumble.

AMMI would give me no added particulars of this scene, but the shape in the corners does not reappear in his tale as a moving object. There are things which cannot be mentioned, and what is done in common humanity is sometimes cruelly judged by the law. I gathered that no moving thing was left in that attic room, and that to leave anything capable of motion there would have been a deed so monstrous as to damn any accountable being to eternal torment. Anyone but a stolid farmer would have fainted or gone mad, but Ammi walked conscious through that low doorway and locked the accursed secret behind him. There would be Nahum to deal with now; he must be fed and tended, and removed to some place where he could be cared for.

Commencing his descent of the dark stairs, Ammi heard a thud below him. He even thought a scream had been suddenly choked off, and recalled nervously the clammy vapour which had brushed by him in that frightful room above. What presence had his cry and entry started up? Halted by some vague fear, he heard still further sounds below. Indubitably there was a sort of heavy dragging, and a most detestably sticky noise as of some fiendish and unclean species of suction. With an associative sense goaded to feverish heights, he thought unaccountably of what he had seen upstairs. Good God! What eldritch dream-world was this into which he had blundered? He dared move neither backward nor forward, but stood there trembling at the black curve of the boxed-in staircase. Every trifle of the scene burned itself into his brain. The sounds, the sense of dread expectancy, the darkness, the steepness of the narrow steps—and merciful Heaven!—the faint but unmistakable luminosity of all the woodwork in sight; steps, sides, exposed laths, and beams alike.

Then there burst forth a frantic whinny from Ammi's horse outside, followed at once by a clatter which told of a frenzied runaway. In another moment horse and buggy had gone beyond earshot, leaving the frightened man on the dark stairs to guess what had sent them. But that was not all. There had been another sound out there. A sort of liquid splash—water—it must have been the well. He had left Hero untied near it, and a buggy-wheel must have brushed the coping and knocked in a stone. And still the pale phosphorescense glowed in that detestably ancient woodwork. God! how old the house was! Most of it built before 1700.

A feeble scratching on the floor downstairs now sounded distinctly, and Ammi's grip tightened on a heavy stick he had picked up in the attic for some purpose. Slowly nerving himself, he finished his descent and walked boldly toward the kitchen. But he did not complete the walk, because what he sought was no longer there. It had come to meet him, and it was still alive after a fashion. Whether it had crawled or whether it had been dragged by any external forces, Ammi could not say; but the death had been at it. Everything had happened in the last half-hour, but collapse, greying, and disintegration were already far advanced. There was a horrible brittleness, and dry fragments were scaling off. Ammi could not touch it, but looked horrifiedly into the distorted parody that had been a face. "What was it, Nahum—what was it?" He whispered, and the cleft, bulging lips were just able to crackle out a final answer.

"Nothin'.....nothin'.....the colour.....it burns .....cold an' wet, but it burns.....it lived in the well.....I seen it.....a kind o' smoke.....jest like the flowers last spring.....the well shone at night .....Thad an' Merwin an' Zenas.....everything alive.....suckin' the life out of everything.....in that stone.....it must o' come in that stone.....

pizened the whole place.....dun't know what it wants.....that round thing them men from the college dug outen the stone.....they smashed it..... it was that same colour.....jest the same, like the flowers an' plants.....must a' ben more of 'em..... seeds.....seeds.....they growed.....I seen it the fust time this week.....must a' got strong on Zenas .....he was a big boy, full o'life.....it beats down your mind an' then gits ye.....burns ye up.....in the well water.....you was right about that..... evil water.....Zenas never come back from the well .....can't git away.....draws ye.....ye know summ'at's comin', but 'tain't no use.....I seen it time an' agin Zenas was took.....whar's Nabby, Ammi? .....my head's no good.....dun't know how long sence I fed her.....it'll git her ef we ain't keerful .....jest a colour.....her face is gittin' to hev that colour sometimes towards night.....an' it burns an' sucks.....it come from some place whar things ain't as they is here.....one o' them professors said so ...he was right.....look out, Ammi, it'll do suthin' more.....sucks the life out....."

But that was all. That which spoke could speak no more because it had completely caved in. Ammi laid a red checked tablecloth over what was left and reeled out the back door into the fields. He climbed the slope to the ten-acre pasture and stumbled home by the north road and the woods. He could not pass that well from which his horses had run away. He had looked at it through the window, and had seen that no stone was missing from the rim. Then the lurching buggy had not dislodged anything after all —the splash had been something else—something which went into the well after it had done with poor Nahum.....

When Ammi reached his house the horses and buggy had arrived before him and thrown his wife into fits of anxiety. Reassuring her without explanations, he set out at once for Arkham and notified the authorities that the Gardner family was no more. He indulged in no details, but merely told of the deaths of Nahum and Nabby, that of Thaddeus being already known, and mentioned that the cause seemed to be the same strange ailment which had killed the livestock. He also stated that Merwin and Zenas had dissappeared. There was considerable questioning at the police station, and in the end Ammi was compelled to take three officers to the Gardner farm, together with the coroner, the medical examiner, and the veterinary who had treated the diseased animals. He went much against his will, for the afternoon was advancing and he feared the fall of night over that accursed place, but it was some comfort to have so many people with him.

The six men drove out in a democrat-wagon, following Ammi's buggy, and arrived at the pest-ridden farmhouse about four o'clock. Used as the officers were to gruesome experiences, not one remained unmoved at what was found in the attic and under the red checked tablecloth on the floor below. The whole aspect of the farm with its grey desolation was terrible enough, but those two crumbling objects were beyond all bounds. No one could look long at them, and even the medical examiner admitted that there was very little to examine. Specimens could be analysed, of course, so he busied himself in obtaining them—and here it develops that a very puzzling aftermath occurred at the college laboratory where the two phials of dust were finally taken. Under the spectroscope both samples gave off an unknown spectrum, in which many of the baffling bands were precisely like those which the strange meteor had yielded in the previous year. The property of emitting this spectrum vanished in a month, the dust thereafter consisting mainly of alkaline phosphates and carbonates.

AMMI would not have told the men about the well if he had thought they meant to do anything then and there. It was getting toward sunset, and he was anxious to be away. But he could not help glancing nervously at the stony curb by the great sweep, and when a detective questioned him he admitted that Nahum had feared something down there—so much so that he had never even thought of searching it for Merwin or Zenas. After that nothing would do but that they empty and explore the well immediately, so Ammi had to wait trembling while pail after pail of rank water was hauled up and splashed on the soaking ground outside. The men sniffed in disgust at the fluid, and toward the last held their noses against the foetor they were uncovering. It was not so long a job as they had feared it would be, since the water was phenomenally low. There is no need to speak too exactly of what they found. Merwin and Zenas were both there, in part, though the vestiges were mainly skeletal. There were also a small deer and a large dog in about the same state, and a number of bones of smaller animals. The ooze and slime at the bottom seemed inexplicably porous and bubbling, and a man who descended on hand-holds with a long pole found that he could sink the wooden shaft to any depth in the mud of the floor without meeting any solid obstruction.

Twilight had now fallen, and lanterns were brought from the house. Then, when it was seen that nothing further could be gained from the well, everyone went indoors and conferred in the ancient sitting-room while the intermittent light of a spectral half-moon played wanly on the grey desolation outside. The men were frankly nonplussed by the entire case, and could find no convincing common element to link the strange vegetable conditions, the unknown disease of livestock and humans, and the unaccountable deaths of Merwin and Zenas in the tainted well. They had heard the common country talk, it is true; but could not believe that anything contrary to natural law had occurred. No doubt the meteor had poisoned the soil, but the illness of person and animals who had eaten nothing grown in that soil was another matter. Was it the well water? Very possibly. It might be a good idea to analyse it. But what peculiar madness could have made both boys jump into the well? Their deeds were so similar—and the fragments showed that they had both suffered from the grey brittle death. Why was everything so grey and brittle?

It was the coroner, seated near a window overlooking the yard, who first noticed the glow about the well. Night had fully set in, and all the abhorrent grounds seemed faintly luminous with more than the fitful moonbeams; but this new glow was something definite and distinct, and appeared to shoot up from the black pit like a softened ray from a searchlight, giving dull reflections in the little ground pools where the water had been emptied. It had a very queer colour, and as all the men clustered round the window Ammi gave a violent start. For this strange beam of ghastly miasma was to him of no unfamiliar hue. He had seen that colour before, and feared to think what it might mean. He had seen it in the nasty brittle globule in that aerolite two summers ago, had seen it in the crazy vegetation of the springtime, and had thought he had seen it for an instant that very morning against the small barred window of that terrible attic room where nameless things had happened. It had flashed there a second, and a clammy and hateful current of vapour had brushed past him—and then poor Nahum had been taken by something of that colour. He had said so at the last—said it was like the globule and the plants. After that had come the runaway in the yard and the splash in the well—and now that well was belching forth to the night a pale insidious beam of the same demoniac tint.

It does credit to the alertness of Ammi's mind that he puzzled even at that tense moment over a point which was essentially scientific. He could not but wonder at his gleaning of the same impression from a vapour glimpsed in the daytime, against a window opening in the morning sky, and from a nocturnal exhalation seen as a phosphorescent mist against the black and blasted landscape. It wasn't right—it was against Nature—and he thought of those terrible last words of his stricken friend, "It come from some place whar things ain't as they is here.....one o' them professors said so....."

All three horses outside, tied to a pair of shrivelled saplings by the road, were now neighing and pawing frantically. The wagon driver started for the door to do something, but Ammi laid a shaky hand on his shoulder. "Dun't go out thar," he whispered. "They's more to this nor what we know. Nahum said somethin' lived in the well that sucks your life out. He said it must be some'at growed from a round ball like one we all seen in the meteor stone that fell a year ago June. Sucks an' burns, he said, an' is jest a cloud of colour like that light out thar now, that ye can hardly see an' can't tell what it is. Nahum thought it feeds on everything livin' an' gits stronger all the time. He said he seen it this last week. It must be somethin' from away off in the sky like the men from the college last year says the meteor stone was. The way it's made an' the way it works ain't like no way o' God's world. It's some'at from beyond."

So the men paused indecisively as the light from the well grew stronger and the hitched horses pawed and whinnied in increasing frenzy. It was truly an awful moment; with terror in that ancient and accursed house itself, four monstrous sets of fragments —two from the house and two from the well—in the woodshed behind, and that shaft of unknown and unholy iridescence from the slimy depths in front. Ammi had restrained the driver on impulse, forgetting how uninjured he himself was after the clammy brushing of that coloured vapour in the attic room, but perhaps it is just as well that he acted as he did. No one will ever know what was abroad that night; and though the blasphemy from beyond had not so far hurt any human of unweakened mind, there is no telling what it might not have done at that last moment, and with its seemingly increased strength and the special signs of purpose it was soon to display beneath the half-clouded moonlit sky.

ALL at once one of the detectives at the window gave a short, sharp gasp. The others looked at him, and then quickly followed his own gaze upward to the point at which its idle straying had been suddenly arrested. There was no need for words. What had been disputed in country gossip was disputable no longer, and it is because of the thing which every man of that party agreed in whispering later on, that strange days are never talked about in Arkham. It is necessary to premise that there was no wind at that hour of the evening. One did arise not long afterward, but there was absolutely none then. Even the dry tips of the lingering hedge-mustard, grey and blighted, and the fringe on the roof of the standing democrat-wagon were unstirred. And yet amid that tense, godless calm the high bare boughs of all the trees in the yard were moving. They were twitching morbidly and spasmodically, clawing in convulsive and epileptic madness at the moonlit clouds; scratching impotently in the noxious air as if jerked by some allied and bodiless line of linkage with subterrene horrors writhing and struggling below the black roots.

Not a man breathed for several seconds. Then a cloud of darker depth passed over the moon, and the silhouette of clutching branches faded out momentarily. At this there was a general cry; muffled with awe, but husky and almost identical from every throat. For the terror had not faded with the silhouette, and in a fearsome instant of deeper darkness the watchers saw wriggling at the treetop height a thousand tiny points of faint and unhalloed radiance, tipping each bough like the fire of St. Elmo or the flames that come down on the apostles' heads at Pentecost. It was a monstrous constellation of unnatural light, like a glutted swarm of corpse-fed fireflies dancing hellish sarabands over an accursed marsh; and its colour was that same nameless intrusion which Ammi had come to recognise and dread. All the while the shaft of phosphorescence from the well was getting brighter and brighter, bringing to the minds of the huddled men, a sense of doom and abnormality which far outraced any image their conscious minds could form. It was no longer *shining* out; it was *pouring* out; and as the shapeless stream of unplaceable colour left the well it seemed to flow directly into the sky.

The veterinary shivered, and walked to the front door to drop the heavy extra bar across it. Ammi shook no less, and had to tug and point for lack of a controllable voice when he wished to draw notice to the growing luminosity of the trees. The neighing and stamping of the horses had become utterly frightful, but not a soul of that group in the old house would have ventured forth for any earthly reward. With the moments the shining of the trees increased, while their restless branches seemed to strain more and more toward verticality. The wood of the well-sweep was shining now, and presently a policeman dumbly pointed to some wooden sheds and beehives near the stone wall on the west. They were commencing to shine, too, though the tethered vehicles of the visitors seemed so far unaffected. Then there was a wild commotion and clopping in the road, and as Ammi quenched the lamp for better seeing they realized that the span of frantic grays had broken their sapling and run off with the democrat-wagon.

The shock served to loosen several tongues, and embarrassed whispers were exchanged. "It spreads on everything organic that's been around here." muttered the medical examiner. No one replied, but the man who had been in the well gave a hint that his long pole must have stirred up something intangible. "It was awful," he added. "There was no bottom at all. Just ooze and bubbles and the feeling of something lurking under there." Ammi's horse still pawed and screamed deafeningly in the road outside, and nearly drowned its owner's faint quaver as he mumbled his formless reflections. "It come from that stone—it growed down thar—it got everything livin'—it fed itself on 'em, mind and body—Thad an' Merwin, Zenas an' Nabby—Nahum was the last—they all drunk the water—it got strong on 'em—it come from beyond, whar things ain't like they be here—now it's goin' home—"

At this point, as the column of unknown colour flared suddenly stronger and began to weave itself into fantastic suggestions of shape which each spectator later described differently, there came from poor tethered Hero such a sound as no man before or since ever heard from a horse. Every person in that low-pitched sitting room stopped his ears, and Ammi turned away from the window in horror and nausea. Words could not convey it—when Ammi looked out again the hapless beast lay huddled inert on the moonlit ground between the splintered shafts of the buggy. That was the last of Hero till they buried him next day. But the present was no time to mourn, for almost at this instant a detective silently called attention to something terrible in the very room with them. In the absence of the lamplight it was clear that a faint phosphorescence had begun to pervade the entire apartment. It glowed on the broad-planked floor where the rag carpet left it bare, and shimmered over the sashes of the small-paned windows. It ran up and down the exposed corner-posts, coruscated about the shelf and mantel, and infected the very doors and furniture. Each minute saw it strengthen, and at last it was very plain that healthy living things must leave that house.

Ammi showed them the back door and the path up through the fields to the ten-acre pasture. They walked and stumbled as in a dream, and did not dare look back till they were far away on the high ground. They were glad of the path, for they could not have gone the front way, by that well. It was bad enough passing the glowing barn and sheds, and those shining orchard trees with their gnarled, fiendish contours; but thank Heaven the branches did their worst twisting high up. The moon went under some very black clouds as they crossed the rustic bridge over Chapman's Brook, and it was blind groping from there to the open meadows.

WHEN they looked back toward the valley and the distant Gardner place at the bottom they saw a fearsome sight. All the farm was shining with the hideous unknown blend of colour; trees, buildings, and even such grass and herbage as had not been wholly changed to lethal grey brittleness. The boughs were all straining skyward, tipped with tongues of foul flame, and lambent tricklings of the same monstrous fire were creeping about the ridgepoles of the house, barn and sheds. It was a scene from a vision of Fuseli, and over all the rest reigned that riot of luminous amorphousness, that alien and undimensioned rainbow of cryptic poison from the well—seething, feeling, lapping, reaching, scintillating, straining, and malignly bubbling in its cosmic and unrecognizable chromaticism.

Then without warning the hideous thing shot vertically up toward the sky like a rocket or meteor, leaving behind no trail and disappearing through a round and curiously regular hole in the clouds before any man could gasp or cry out. No watcher can ever forget that sight, and Ammi stared blankly at the stars of Cyngus, Deneb twinkling above the others, where the unknown colour had melted into the Milky Way. But his gaze was the next moment called swiftly to earth by the crackling in the valley. It was just that. Only a wooden ripping and crackling, and not an explosion, as so many others of the party vowed. Yet the outcome was the same, for in one feverish kaleidoscopic instant there burst up from that doomed and accursed farm a gleamingly eruptive cataclysm of unnatural sparks and substance; blurring the glance of the few who saw it, and sending forth to the zenith a bombarding cloudburst of such coloured and fantastic fragments as our universe must needs disown. Through quickly re-closing vapours they followed the great morbidity that had vanished, and in another second they had vanished too. Behind and below was only a darkness to which the men dared not return, and all about was a mounting wind which seemed to sweep down in black, frore gusts from interstellar space. It shrieked and howled, and lashed the fields and distorted woods in a mad cosmic frenzy, till soon the trembling party realized it would be no use waiting for the moon to show what was left down there at Nahum's.

Too awed even to hint theories, the seven shaking men trudged back toward Arkham by the north road. Ammi was worse than his fellows, and begged them

to see him inside his own kitchen, instead of keeping straight on to town. He did not wish to cross the blighted, wind-whipped woods alone to his home on the main road. For he had had an added shock that the others were spared, and was crushed for ever with a brooding fear he dared not even mention for many years to come. As the rest of the watchers on that tempestuous hill had stolidly set their faces toward the road, Ammi had looked back an instant at the shadowed valley of desolation so lately sheltering his ill-starred friend. And from that stricken, far-away spot he had seen something feebly rise, only to sink down again upon the place from which the great shapeless horror had shot into the sky. It was just a colour—but not any colour of our earth or heavens. And because Ammi recognized that colour, and knew that this last faint remnant must still lurk down there in the well, he has never been quite right since.

Ammi would never go near the place again. It is forty-four years now since the horror happened, but he has never been there, and will be glad when the new reservoir blots it out. I shall be glad, too, for I do not like the way the sunlight changed colour around the mouth of that abandoned well I passed. I hope the water will always be very deep—but even so, I shall never drink it. I do not think I shall visit the Arkham country hereafter. Three of the men who had been with Ammi returned the next morning to see the ruins by daylight, but there were not any real ruins. Only the bricks of the chimney, the stones of the cellar, some mineral and metallic litter here and there, and the rim of that nefandous well. Save for Ammi's dead horse, which they towed away and buried, and the buggy which they shortly returned to him, everything that had ever been living had gone. Five eldritch acres of dusty grey desert remained, nor has anything ever grown there since. To this day it sprawls open to the sky like a great spot eaten by acid in the woods and fields, and the few who have ever dared glimpse it in spite of the rural tales have named it "the blasted heath."

THE rural tales are queer. They might be even queerer if city men and college chemists could be interested enough to analyze the water from that disused well, or the grey dust that no wind seems ever to disperse. Botanists, too, ought to study the stunted flora on the borders of that spot, for they might shed light on the country notion that the blight is spreading—little by little, perhaps an inch a year. People say the colour of the neighboring herbage is not quite right in the spring, and that wild things leave queer prints in the light winter snow. Snow never seems quite so heavy on the blasted heath as it is elsewhere. Horses—the few that are left in this motor age—grow skittish in the silent valley; and hunters cannot depend on their dogs too near the splotch of greyish dust.

They say the mental influences are very bad, too; numbers went queer in the years after Nahum's taking, and always they lacked the power to get away. Then the stronger-minded folk all left the region, and only the foreigners tried to live in the crumbling old homesteads. They could not stay, though; and one sometimes wonders what insight beyond ours their wild, weird stories of whispered magic have given them. Their dreams at night, they protest, are very horrible in that grotesque country; and surely the very look of the dark realm is enough to stir a morbid fancy. No traveler has ever escaped a sense of strangeness in those deep ravines, and artists shiver as they paint thick woods whose mystery is as much of the spirits as of the eye. I myself am curious about the sensation I derived from my one lone walk before Ammi told me his tale. When twilight came I had vaguely wished some clouds would gather, for odd timidity about the deep skyey voids above had crept into my soul.

Do not ask me for my opinion. I do not know—that is all. There was no one but Ammi to question; for Arkham people will not talk about the strange days, and all three professors who saw the aerolite and its coloured globule are dead. There were other globules—depend upon that. One must have fed itself and escaped, and probably there was another which was too late. No doubt it is still down the well—I know there was something wrong with the sunlight I saw above that miasmal brink. The rustics say the blight creeps an inch a year, so perhaps there is a kind of growth or nourishment even now. But whatever demon hatchling is there, it must be tethered to something or else it would quickly spread. Is it fastened to the roots of those trees that claw the air? One of the current Arkham tales is about fat oaks that shine and move as they ought not to do at night.

What it is, only God knows. In terms of matter I suppose the thing Ammi described would be called a gas, but this gas obeyed laws that are not of our cosmos. This was no fruit of such worlds and suns as shine on the telescopes and photographic plates of our observatories. This was no breath from the skies whose motions and dimensions our astronomers measure or deem too vast to measure. It was just a colour out of space—a frightful messenger from unformed realms of infinity beyond all Nature as we know it; from realms whose mere existence stuns the brain and numbs us with the black extra-cosmic gulfs it throws open before our frenzied eyes.

I doubt very much if Ammi consciously lied to me, and I do not think his tale was all a freak of madness as the townsfolk had forewarned. Something terrible came to the hills and valleys on that meteor, and something terrible—though I know not in what proportion—still remains. I shall be glad to see the water come. Meanwhile I hope nothing will happen to Ammi. He saw so much of the thing—and its influence was so insiduous. Why has he never been able to move away? How clearly he recalled those dying words of Nahum's—"can't git away—draws ye—ye know summ'at's comin', but 'tain't no use—" Ammi is such a good old man—when the reservoir gang gets to work I must write the chief engineer to keep a sharp watch on him. I would hate to think of him as the grey, twisted, brittle monstrosity which persists more and more in troubling my sleep.

THE END

The WAR of the WORLDS

By H. G. Wells

Author of "Under the Knife," "The Time Machine," etc.

A mighty space it was, with gigantic machines here and there within it, huge mounds of material and strange shelter places. And, scattered about, some in their over-turned war-machines, some in the now rigid Handling Machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and laid in a row, were the Martians—*dead!*

What Went Before

In his travels, the planet Mars gets within thirty-five millions of miles of the Earth—a very minute celestial distance—and the inhabitants of the little planet undertake to invade the earth. The astronomers were greatly interested in observing some strange phenomena occurring on this nearby planet, if we may so call it; a strange light and peculiar markings are seen and presently, as Mars gets nearer and nearer in his travels, there is a huge outbreak of incandescent gas upon the planet. And presently it turns out that Mars is bombarding the earth, and a great cylinder lands, burying itself half-way or more in the soil, near London. Naturally, the people come out to look at the strange visitor and while they are watching it, the top begins to move, as if unscrewing. It comes off and a terrible form with oily brown skin and long tentacles and something unspeakably terrible in its movements, emerges, almost helpless, from the cylinder and falls into the pit. Others come out of the cylinder, all provided with destructive mechanisms.

The Martians (for that is what these horrible creatures turn out to be), stalk over the land, wreaking destruction everywhere and the Earth Men start a futile volley of cannon fire. A very appalling account of the devastation wrought over the whole area, follows.

With a wonderful death-dealing Heat-Ray and by generating black smoke, the Martians begin systematically to ruin all things made by man—houses, villages, and even London itself. The people flee in panic fear and despair from the invaded country, but few escape. Everything that they hold dear in life gone, they still struggle to prolong their existence and we are left with the whole world threatened by these strange beings. In the next installment, the riddle is solved in the most dramatic as well as totally unexpected and unforeseen manner.

The War of the Worlds

By H. G. Wells

Part II.

CHAPTER XVI

The Exodus From London

SO you understand the roaring wave of fear that swept through the greatest city in the world just as Monday was dawning—the stream of life rising swiftly to a torrent, lashing in a foaming tumult round the railway stations, banked up into a horrible struggle about the shipping in the Thames, and hurrying by every available channel northward and eastward. By ten o'clock the police organization, and by mid-day even the railway organizations, were losing coherency, losing shape and efficiency, guttering, softening, running at last in that swift liquefaction of the social body.

All the railway lines north of the Thames and the South-Eastern people at Cannon Street had been warned by midnight on Sunday, and trains were being filled, people were fighting savagely for standing-room in the carriages, even at two o'clock. By three, people were being trampled and crushed even in Bishopsgate Street; a couple of hundred yards or more from Liverpool Street Station revolvers were fired, people stabbed, and the policemen who had been sent to direct the traffic, exhausted and infuriated, were breaking the heads of the people they were called out to protect.

And as the day advanced and the engine-drivers and stokers refused to return to London, the pressure of the fight drove the people in an ever-thickening multitude away from the stations and along the northward-running roads. By mid-day a Martian had been seen at Barnes, and a cloud of slowly-sinking black vapour drove along the Thames and across the flats of Lambeth, cutting off all escape over the bridges in its sluggish advance. Another bank drove over Ealing, and surrounded a little island of survivors on Castle Hill, alive, but unable to escape.

After a fruitless struggle to get aboard a North-Western train at Chalk Farm—the engines of the trains that had loaded in the goods yard there *ploughed* through shrieking people, and a dozen stalwart men fought to keep the crowd from crushing the driver against his furnace — my brother emerged upon the Chalk Farm Road, dodged across through a hurrying swarm of vehicles, and had the luck to be foremost in the sack of a cycle shop. The front tire of the machine

HAVE you ever watched what happens when a small boy thrusts a stick into an ant hill, ruthlessly destroying their highly organized world—how they run and how they scuttle about in panic, and how, after it is all over, they come back and try to undo the damage that has been wrought?

Similar must have been the emotions of the human race when the Martians, in their ruthlessness, destroyed everything within reach in their war upon the earth. The human beings were just as helpless against the Martians as were the ants against the small boy and the stick, in our parallel. All the human beings could do was to flee and make the best of their hideous circumstances; that is, those who stayed alive and did not succumb to the superiority of the Martians.

The earth is now under foot of the ruthless invaders, and there is not even a sign of compromise between the Earthians and Martians. Would the boy with the stick have laughed if the ants had appealed to him for mercy? Of course not, because he simply would not know that the ants were appealing to him. So with the Martians. The waving white flags of the humans were probably just as effective as an ant waving a piece of grass at the small boy.

he got was punctured in dragging it through the window, but he got up and off, notwithstanding, with no further injury than a cut wrist. The steep foot of Haverstock Hill was impassable owing to several overturned horses, and my brother struck into Belsize Road.

So he got out in the fury of the panic, and, skirting the Edgware Road, reached Edgware about seven, fasting and wearied, but well ahead of the crowd. Along the road people were standing in the roadway curious, wondering. He was passed by a number of cyclists, some horsemen, and two motor-cars. A mile from Edgware the rim of the wheel broke, and the machine became unrideable. He left it by the roadside and trudged through the village. There were shops half opened in the main street of the place, and people crowded on the pavement and in the doorways and windows, staring astonished at this extraordinary procession of fugitives that was beginning. He succeeded in getting some food at an inn.

For a time he remained in Edgware, not knowing what next to do. The flying people increased in number. Many of them, like my brother, seemed inclined to stop in the place. There was no fresh news of the invaders from Mars.

At that time the road was crowded, but as yet far from congested. Most of the fugitives at that hour were mounted on cycles, but there were soon motor-cars, hansom cabs, and carriages hurrying along, and the dust hung in heavy clouds along the road to St. Albans.

It was perhaps a vague idea of making his way to Chelmsford, where some friends of his lived, that at last induced my brother to strike into a quiet lane running eastward. Presently he came upon a stile, and, crossing it, followed a footpath north-eastward. He passed near several farm-houses and some little places whose names he did not learn. He saw few fugitives until, in a grass lane towards High Barnet, he happened upon the two ladies who became his fellow-travellers. He came upon them just in time to save them.

He heard their screams, and, hurrying round the corner, saw a couple of men struggling to drag them out of the little pony-chaise in which they had been driving, while a third with difficulty held the frightened pony's head. One of the ladies, a short woman dressed in white, was simply screaming; the other, a dark, slender figure, slashed at the man who gripped her arm with a whip she held in her disengaged hand.

My brother immediately grasped the situation, shouted, and hurried towards the struggle. One of the men desisted and turned towards him, and my brother, realizing from his antagonist's face that a fight was unavoidable, and being an expert boxer, went into him forthwith, and sent him down against the wheel of the chaise.

It was no time for pugilistic chivalry, and my brother laid him quiet with a kick, and gripped the collar of the man who pulled at the slender lady's arm. He heard the clatter of hoofs, the whip stung across his face, a third antagonist struck him between the eyes, and the man he held wrenched himself free and made off down the lane in the direction from which he had come.

Partly stunned, he found himself facing the man who had held the horse's head, and became aware of the chaise receding from him down the lane, swaying from side to side and with the women in it looking back. The man before him, a burly rough, tried to close, and he stopped him with a blow in the face. Then, realizing that he was deserted, he dodged round and made off down the lane after the chaise, with the sturdy man close behind him, and the fugitive, who had turned now, following remotely.

Suddenly he stumbled and fell; his immediate pursuer went headlong, and he rose to his feet to find himself with a couple of antagonists again. He would have had little chance against them had not the slender lady very pluckily pulled up and returned to his help. It seems she had had a revolver all this time, but it had been under the seat when she and her companion were attacked. She fired at six yards' distance, narrowly missing my brother. The less courageous of the robbers made off, and his companion followed him, cursing his cowardice. They both stopped in sight down the lane, where the third man lay insensible.

"Take this!" said the slender lady, and gave my brother her revolver.

"Go back to the chaise," said my brother, wiping the blood from his split lip.

She turned without a word—they were both panting—and they went back to where the lady in white struggled to hold back the frightened pony.

The robbers had evidently had enough of it. When my brother looked again they were retreating.

"I'll sit here," said my brother, "if I may;" and he got up on the empty front seat. The lady looked over her shoulder.

"Give me the reins," she said, and laid the whip along the pony's side. In another moment a bend in the road hid the three men from my brother's eyes.

So, quite unexpectedly, my brother found himself, panting, with a cut mouth, a bruised jaw and blood-stained knuckles, driving along an unknown lane with these two women.

He learned they were the wife and the younger sister of a surgeon living at Stanmore, who had come in the small hours from a dangerous case at Pinner, and heard at some railway-station on his way of the Martian advance. He had hurried home, roused the women—their servant had left them two days before—packed some provisions, put his revolver under the seat—luckily for my brother—and told them to drive on to Edgware, with the idea of getting a train there. He stopped behind to tell the neighbours. He would overtake them, he said, at about half-past four in the morning, and now it was nearly nine and they had seen nothing of him since. They could not stop in Edgware because of the growing traffic through the place, and so they had come into this side-lane.

THAT was the story they told my brother in fragments when presently they stopped again, nearer to New Barnet. He promised to stay with them at least until they could determine what to do, or until the missing man arrived, and professed to be an expert shot with the revolver—a weapon strange to him—in order to give them confidence.

They made a sort of encampment by the wayside, and the pony became happy in the hedge. He told them of his own escape out of London, and all that he knew of these Martians and their ways. The sun crept higher in the sky, and after a time their talk died out and gave place to an uneasy state of anticipation. Several wayfarers came along the lane, and of these my brother gathered such news as he could. Every broken answer he had deepened his impression of the great disaster that had come to humanity, deepened his persuasion of the immediate necessity for prosecuting this flight. He urged the matter upon them.

"We have money," said the slender woman, and hesitated.

Her eyes met my brother's and her hesitation ended.

"So have I," said my brother.

She explained that they had as much as thirty pounds in gold besides a five-pound note, and suggested that with that they might get upon a train at St. Albans or New Barnet. My brother thought that was hopeless, seeing the fury of the Londoners to crowd upon the trains, and broached his own idea of striking across Essex towards Harwich and thence escaping from the country altogether.

Mrs Elphinstone—that was the name of the woman in white—would listen to no reasoning, and kept calling upon "George"; but her sister-in-law was astonishingly quiet and deliberate, and at last agreed to my brother's suggestion. So they went on towards Barnet, designing to cross the Great North Road, my brother leading the pony to save it as much as possible.

As the sun crept up the sky the day became excessively hot, and under foot a thick whitish sand grew burning and blinding, so that they travelled only very slowly. The hedges were gray with dust. And as they advanced towards Barnet, a tumultuous murmuring grew stronger.

They began to meet more people. For the most part these were staring before them, murmuring indistinct questions, jaded, haggard, unclean. One man in evening dress passed them on foot, his eyes on the ground. They heard his voice, and, looking back at him, saw one hand clutched in his hair and the other beating invisible things. His paroxysm of rage over, he went on his way without once looking back.

As my brother's party went on towards the cross-roads to the south of Barnet, they saw a woman approaching the road across some fields on their left, carrying a child and with two other children, and then a man in dirty black, with a thick stick in one hand and a small portmanteau in the other, passed. Then round the corner of the lane, from between the villas that guarded it at its confluence with the high-road, came a little cart drawn by a sweating black pony and driven by a sallow youth in a bowler hat, gray with dust. There were three girls like East End factory girls, and a couple of little children, crowded in the cart.

"This'll tike us rahnd Edgware?" asked the driver, wild-eyed, white-faced; and when my brother told him it would if he turned to the left, he whipped up at once without the formality of thanks.

My brother noticed a pale gray smoke or haze rising among the houses in front of them, and veiling the white façade of a terrace beyond the road that appeared between the backs of the villas. Mrs. Elphinstone suddenly cried out at a number of tongues of smoky red flame leaping up above the houses in front of them against the hot blue sky. The tumultuous noise resolved itself now into the disorderly mingling of many voices, the gride of many wheels, the creaking of waggons, and the staccato hoofs. The lane came round sharply not fifty yards from the cross-roads.

"Good-heavens!" cried Mrs. Elphinstone. "What is this you are driving us into?"

My brother stopped.

For the main road was a boiling stream of people, a torrent of human beings rushing northward, one pressing on another. A great bank of dust, white and luminous in the blaze of the sun, made everything within twenty feet of the ground gray and indistinct, and was perpetually renewed by the hurrying feet of a dense crowd of horses and men and women on foot, and by the wheels of vehicles of every description.

"Way!" my brother heard voices crying. "Make way!"

It was like riding into the smoke of a fire to approach the meeting-point of the lane and road; the crowd roared like a fire, and the dust was hot and pungent. And, indeed, a little way up the road a villa was burning and sending rolling masses of black smoke across the road to add to the confusion.

Two men came past them. Then a dirty woman carrying a heavy bundle and weeping. A lost retriever dog with hanging tongue circled dubiously round them, scared and wretched, and fled at my brother's threat.

So much as they could see of the road Londonward between the houses to the right, was a tumultuous stream of dirty, hurrying people pent in between the villas on either side; the black heads, the crowded forms, grew into distinctness as they rushed towards the corner, hurried past, and merged their individuality again in a receding multitude that was swallowed up at last in a cloud of dust.

"Go on! Go on!" cried the voices. "Way! Way!"

One man's hands pressed on the back of another. My brother stood at the pony's head. Irresistibly attracted, he advanced slowly, pace by pace, down the lane.

Edgware had been a scene of confusion, Chalk Farm a riotous tumult, but this was a whole popu-

lation in movement. It is hard to imagine that host. It had no character of its own. The figures poured out past the corner, and receded with their backs to the group in the lane. Along the margin came those who were on foot, threatened by the wheels, stumbling in the ditches, blundering into one another.

The carts and carriages crowded close upon one another, making little way for those swifter and more impatient vehicles that darted forward every now and then when an opportunity showed itself of doing so, sending the people scattering against the fences and gates of the villas.

"Push on!" was the cry. "Push on! they are coming!"

In one cart stood a blind man in the uniform of the Salvation Army, gesticulating with his crooked fingers and bawling, "Eternity, eternity!" His voice was hoarse and very loud, so that my brother could hear him long after he was lost to sight in the southward dust. Some of the people who crowded in the carts whipped stupidly at their horses and quarreled with other drivers; some sat motionless, staring at nothing with miserable eyes; some gnawed their hands with thirst or lay prostrate in the bottoms of the conveyances. The horses' bits were covered with foam, their eyes bloodshot.

There were cabs, carriages, shop-carts, waggons, beyond counting; a mail-cart, a road-cleaner's cart marked "Vestry of St. Pancras," a huge timber waggon crowded with roughs. A brewer's dray rumbled by with its two near wheels splashed with recent blood.

"Clear the way!" cried the voices. "Clear the way!"

"Eter-nity! eter-nity!" came echoing up the road.

There were sad, haggard women tramping by, well dressed, with children that cried and stumbled, their dainty clothes smothered in dust, their weary faces smeared with tears. With many of these came men, sometimes helpful, sometimes lowering and savage. Fighting side by side with them pushed some weary street outcast in faded black rags, wide-eyed, loud-voiced, and foul-mouthed. There were sturdy workmen thrusting their way along, wretched unkempt men clothed like clerks or shopmen, struggling spasmodically, a wounded soldier my brother noticed, men dressed in the clothes of railway porters, one wretched creature in a night-shirt with a coat thrown over it.

BUT, varied as its composition was, certain things all that host had in common. There was fear and pain on their faces, and fear behind them. A tumult up the road, a quarrel for a place in a waggon, sent the whole host of them quickening their pace; even a man so scared and broken that his knees bent under him was galvanized for a moment into renewed activity. The heat and dust had already been at work upon this multitude. Their skins were dry, their lips black and cracked. They were all thirsty, weary, and footsore. And amid the various cries one heard disputes, reproaches, groans of weariness and fatigue; the voices of most of them were hoarse and weak. Through it all ran a refrain:

"Way! way! The Martians are coming!"

Few stopped and came aside from that flood. The lane opened slantingly into the main road with a narrow opening, and had a delusive appearance of coming from the direction of London. Yet a kind of eddy of people drove into its mouth; weaklings elbowed out of the stream, who for the most part rested but a moment before plunging into it again. A little way down the lane, with two friends bending over him, lay a man with a bare leg, wrapped about with bloody rags. He was a lucky man to have friends.

A little old man, with a gray military moustache and a filthy black frock-coat, limped out and sat down beside the trap, removed his boot—his sock was blood-stained—shook out a pebble, and hobbled on again; and then a little girl of eight or nine, all alone, threw herself under the hedge close by my brother, weeping.

"I can't go on! I can't go on!"

My brother woke from his torpor of astonishment, and lifted her up, speaking gently to her, and carried her to Miss Elphinstone. So soon as my brother touched her she became quite still, as if frightened.

"Ellen!" shrieked a woman in the crowd, with tears in her voice. "Ellen!" And the child suddenly darted away from my brother, crying: "Mother!"

"They are coming," said a man on horseback, riding past along the lane.

"Out of the way, there!" bawled a coachman, towering high; and my brother saw a closed carriage turning into the lane.

The people crushed back on one another to avoid the horse. My brother pushed the pony and chaise back into the hedge, and the man drove by and stopped at the turn of the way. It was a carriage, with a pole for a pair of horses, but only one was in the traces.

My brother saw dimly through the dust that two men lifted out something on a white stretcher, and put this gently on the grass beneath the privet hedge.

One of the men came running to my brother.

"Where is there any water?" he said. "He is dying fast, and very thirsty. It is Lord Garrick."

"Lord Garrick!" said my brother, "the Chief Justice?"

"The water?" he said.

"There may be a tap," said my brother, "in some of the houses. We have no water. I dare not leave my people."

The man pushed against the crowd towards the gate of the corner house.

"Go on!" said the people, thrusting at him. "They are coming! Go on!"

Then my brother's attention was distracted by a bearded, eagle-faced man lugging a small hand-bag which split even as my brother's eyes rested on it, and disgorged a mass of sovereigns that seemed to break up into separate coins as it struck the ground. They rolled hither and thither among the struggling feet of men and horses. The man stopped, and looked

stupidly at the heap, and the shaft of a cab struck his shoulder and sent him reeling. He gave a shriek and dodged back, and a cartwheel shaved him narrowly.

"Way!" cried the men all about him. "Make way!"

So soon as the cab had passed, he flung himself, with both hands open, upon the heap of coins, and began clutching handfuls in his pockets. A horse rose close upon him, and in another moment he had half risen, and had been borne down under the horse's hoofs.

"Stop!" screamed my brother, and, pushing a woman out of his way, tried to clutch the bit of the horse.

Before he could get to it, he heard a scream under the wheels, and saw through the dust the rim passing over the poor wretch's back. The driver of the cart slashed his whip at my brother, who ran round behind the cart. The multitudinous shouting confused his ears. The man was writhing in the dust among his scattered money, unable to rise, for the wheel had broken his back, and his lower limbs lay limp and dead. My brother stood up and yelled at the next driver, and a man on a black horse came to his assistance.

"Get him out of the road," said he; and, clutching the man's collar with his free hand, my brother lugged him sideways. But he still clutched after his money, and regarded my brother fiercely, hammering at his arm with a handful of gold. "Go on! Go on!" shouted angry voices behind. "Way! Way!"

There was a smash as the pole of a carriage crashed into the cart that the man on horseback stopped. My brother looked up, and the man with the gold twisted his head round and bit the wrist that held his collar. There was a concussion, and the black horse came staggering sideways, and the cart-horse pushed beside it. A hoof missed my brother's foot by a hair's breadth. He released his grip on the fallen man and jumped back. He saw anger change to terror on the face of the poor wretch on the ground, and in a moment he was hidden and my brother was borne backward and carried past the entrance of the lane, and had to fight hard in the torrent to recover it.

He saw Miss Elphinstone covering her eyes, and a little child, with all a child's want of sympathetic imagination, staring with dilated eyes at a dusty something that lay black and still, ground and crushed under the rolling wheels. "Let us go back!" he shouted, and began turning the pony round. "We cannot cross this—hell," he said; and they went back a hundred yards the way they had come, until the fighting crowd was hidden. As they passed the bend in the lane, my brother saw the face of the dying man in the ditch under the privet, deadly white and drawn, and shining with perspiration. The two women sat silent, crouching in their seats and shivering.

Then beyond the bend my brother stopped again. Miss Elphinstone was white and pale, and her sister-in-law sat weeping, too wretched even to call upon "George." My brother was horrified and perplexed. So soon as they had retreated, he realized how urgent and unavoidable it was to attempt this crossing. He turned to Miss Elphinstone suddenly, resolute.

"We must go that way," he said, and led the pony round again.

For the second time that day this girl proved her quality. To force their way into the torrent of people, my brother plunged into the traffic and held back a cab-horse, while she drove the pony across its head. A waggon locked wheels for a moment, and ripped a long splinter from the chaise. In another moment they were caught and swept forward by the stream. My brother, with the cabman's whip-marks red across his face and hands, scrambled into the chaise, and took the reins from her.

"Point the revolver at the man behind," he said, giving it to her, "if he presses us too hard. No!—point it at his horse."

Then he began to look out for a chance of edging to the right across the road. But once in the stream, he seemed to lose volition, to become a part of that dusty rout. They swept through Chipping Barnet with the torrent; they were nearly a mile beyond the centre of the town before they had fought across to the opposite side of the way. It was din and confusion indescribable; but in and beyond the town the road forks repeatedly, and this to some extent relieved the stress.

They struck eastward through Hadley, and there on either side of the road, and at another place further on, they came upon a great multitude of people drinking at the stream, some fighting to come at the water. And further on, from a hill near East Barnet, they saw two trains running slowly one after the other without signal or order—trains swarming with people, with men even among the coals behind the engines—going northward along the Great Northern Railway. My brother supposes they must have filled outside London, for at that time the furious terror of the people had rendered the central termini impossible.

Near this place they halted for the rest of the afternoon, for the violence of the day had already utterly exhausted all three of them. They began to suffer the beginnings of hunger, the night was cold, and none of them dared to sleep. And in the evening many people came hurrying along the road near by their stopping-place, fleeing from unknown dangers before them and going in the direction from which my brother had come.

CHAPTER XVII

The "Thunder Child"

HAD the Martians aimed only at destruction, they might on Monday have annihilated the entire population of London, as it spread itself slowly through the home counties. Not only along the road through Barnet, but also through Edgware and Waltham Abbey, and along the roads eastward to Southend and Shoeburyness, and south

of the Thames to Deal and Broadstairs, poured the same frantic rout. If one could have hung, that June morning, in a balloon in the blazing blue above London, every northward and eastward road running out of the infinite tangle of streets would have seemed stippled black with the streaming fugitives, each dot a human agony of terror and physical distress. I have set forth at length in the last chapter my brother's account of the road through Chipping Barnet, in order that my readers may realize how that swarming of black dots appeared to one of those concerned. Never before in the history of the world had such a mass of human beings moved and suffered together. The legendary hosts of Goths and Huns, the hugest armies Asia has ever seen, would have been but a drop in that current. And this was no disciplined march; it was a stampede—a stampede gigantic and terrible—without order and without a goal, six million people, unarmed and unprovisioned, driving headlong. It was the beginning of the rout of civilization, of the massacre of mankind.

Directly below him the balloonist would have seen the network of streets far and wide, houses, churches, squares, crescents, gardens—already derelict—spread out like a huge map, and in the southward *blotted*. Over Ealing, Richmond, Wimbledon, it would have seemed as if some monstrous pen had flung ink upon the chart. Steadily, incessantly, each black splash grew and spread, shooting out ramifications this way and that, now banking itself against rising ground, now pouring swiftly over a crest into a new-found valley, exactly as a gout of ink would spread itself upon blotting-paper.

And beyond, over the blue hills that rise southward of the river, the glittering Martians went to and fro, calmly and methodically spreading their poison-cloud over this patch of country, and then over that, laying it again with their steam-jets when it had served its purpose and taking possession of the conquered country. They do not seem to have aimed at extermination so much as at complete demoralization and the destruction of any opposition. They exploded any stores of powder they came upon, cut every telegraph, and wrecked the railways here and there. They were hamstringing mankind. They seemed in no hurry to extend the field of their operations, and did not come beyond the central part of London all that day. It is possible that a very considerable number of people in London stuck to their houses through Monday morning. Certain it is that many died at home, suffocated by the Black Smoke.

Until about mid-day, the Pool of London was an astonishing scene. Steamboats and shipping of all sorts lay there, tempted by the enormous sums of money offered by fugitives, and it is said that many who swam out to these vessels were thrust off with boathooks and drowned. About one o'clock in the afternoon the thinning remnant of a cloud of the black vapour appeared between the arches of Blackfriars Bridge. At that the Pool became a scene of mad confusion, fighting and collision, and for some time a multitude of boats and barges jammed in the northern arch of the Tower Bridge, and the sailors and lightermen had to fight savagely against the people who swarmed upon them from the river front. People were actually clambering down the piers of the bridge from above . . . .

When, an hour later, a Martian appeared beyond the Clock Tower and waded down the river, nothing but wreckage floated above Limehouse.

Of the falling of the fifth cylinder I have presently to tell. The sixth star fell at Wimbledon. My brother, keeping watch beside the women sleeping in the chaise in a meadow, saw the green flash of it far beyond the hills. On Tuesday the little party, still set upon getting across the sea, made its way through the swarming country towards Colchester. The news that the Martians were now in possession of the whole of London was confirmed. They had been seen at Highgate, and even, it was said, at Neasdon. But they did not come into my brother's view until the morrow.

That day the scattered multitudes began to realize the urgent need of provisions. As they grew hungry the rights of property ceased to be regarded. Farmers were out to defend their cattle-sheds, granaries, and ripening root crops with arms in their hands. A number of people now, like my brother, had their faces eastward, and there were some desperate souls even going back towards London to get food. These were chiefly people from the northern suburbs, whose knowledge of the Black Smoke came by hearsay. He heard that about half the members of the Government had gathered at Birmingham, and that enormous quantities of high explosives were being prepared to be used in automatic mines across the Midland counties.

He was also told that the Midland Railway Company had replaced the desertions of the first day's panic, had resumed traffic, and were running northward trains from St. Albans to relieve the congestion of the home counties. There was also a placard in Chipping Ongar announcing that large stores of flour were available in the northern towns, and that within twenty-four hours bread would be distributed among the starving people in the neighbourhood. But this intelligence did not deter him from the plan of escape he had formed, and the three pressed eastward all day, and saw no more of the bread distribution than this promise. Nor, as a matter of fact, did any one else see more of it. That night fell the seventh star, falling upon Primrose Hill. It fell while Miss Elphinstone was watching, for she took that duty alternately with my brother. She saw it.

ON Wednesday the three fugitives—they had passed the night in a field of unripe wheat—reached Chelmsford, and there a body of the inhabitants, calling itself the Committee of Public Supply, seized the pony as provisions, and would give nothing in exchange for it but the promise of a share in it the next day. Here there were rumours of Martians at Epping, and news of the destruction of Waltham Abbey Powder Mills in a vain attempt to blow up one of the invaders.

People were watching for Martians here from the church towers. My brother, very luckily for him as it chanced, preferred to push on at once to the coast, rather than wait for food, although all three of them were very hungry. By mid-day they passed through Tillingham, which strangely enough seemed to be quite silent and deserted, save for a few furtive plunderers, hunting for food. Near Tillingham they suddenly came in sight of the sea, and the most amazing crowd of shipping of all sorts that it is possible to imagine.

For after the sailors could no longer come up the Thames, they came on to the Essex coasts, to Harwich, and Walton, and Clacton, and afterwards to Foulness and Shoebury, to bring off the people. They lay in a huge sickle-shaped curve that vanished into mist at last towards the Naze. Close inshore was a multitude of fishing-smacks, English, Scotch, French, Dutch and Swedish; steam-launches from the Thames, yachts, electric boats; and beyond were ships of larger burthen, a multitude of filthy colliers, trim merchantmen, cattleships, passenger-boats, petroleum-tanks, ocean tramps, an old white transport even, and white and gray liners from Southampton and Hamburg; and along the blue coast across the Blackwater my brother could make out dimly a swarm of boats chaffering with the people on the beach, a swarm which also extended up the Blackwater almost to Maldon.

About a couple of miles out lay an ironclad very low in the water, almost, to my brother's perception, like a water-logged ship. This was the ram *Thunder Child*. It was the only warship in sight, but far away to the right over the smooth surface of the sea—for that day there was a dead calm—lay a serpent of black smoke to mark the next ironclads of the Channel Fleet, which hovered in an extended line, steam up and ready for action, across the Thames estuary during the course of the Martian conquest, vigilant and yet powerless to prevent it.

At the sight of the sea, Mrs. Elphinstone, in spite of the assurances of her sister-in-law, gave way to panic. She had never been out of England before, she would rather die than trust herself friendless in a foreign country, and so forth. She seemed, poor woman! to imagine that the French and the Martians might prove very similar. She had been growing increasingly hysterical, fearful and depressed, during the two days' journeyings. Her great idea was to return to Stanmore. Things had been always well and safe at Stanmore. They would find George at Stanmore. . . .

It was with the greatest difficulty they could get her down to the beach, where presently my brother succeeded in attracting the attention of some men on a paddle steamer out of the Thames. They sent a boat and drove a bargain for thirty-six pounds for the three. The steamer was going, these men said, to Ostend.

It was about two o'clock when my brother, having paid their fares at the gangway, found himself safely aboard the steamboat with his charges. There was food aboard, albeit at exorbitant prices, and the three of them contrived to eat a meal on one of the seats forward.

There were already a couple of score of passengers aboard, some of whom had expended their last money in securing a passage, but the captain lay off the Blackwater until five in the afternoon, picking up passengers until the seated decks were even dangerously crowded. He would probably have remained longer had it not been for the sound of guns that began about that hour in the south. As if in answer, the ironclad seaward fired a small gun and hoisted a string of flags. A jet of smoke sprang out of her funnels.

Some of the passengers were of opinion that this firing came from Shoeburyness, until it was noticed that it was growing louder. At the same time, far away in the south-east, the masts and upper-works of three ironclads rose one after the other out of the sea, beneath clouds of black smoke. But my brother's attention speedily reverted to the distant firing in the south. He fancied he saw a column of smoke rising out of the distant gray haze.

The little steamer was already flapping her way eastward of the big crescent of shipping, and the low Essex coast was growing blue and hazy, when a Martian appeared, small and faint in the remote distance, advancing along the muddy coast from the direction of Foulness. At that the captain on the bridge swore at the top of his voice with fear and anger at his own delay, and the paddles seemed infected with his terror. Every soul aboard stood at the bulwarks or on the seats of the steamer, and stared at the distant shape, higher than the trees or church towers inland, and advancing with a leisurely parody of a human stride.

It was the first Martian my brother had seen, and he stood, more amazed than terrified, watching this Titan advancing deliberately towards the shipping, wading farther and farther into the water as the coast fell away. Then, far away beyond the Crouch, came another striding over some stunted trees, and then yet another still further off, wading deeply through a shiny mud flat that seemed to hang up between sea and sky. They were all stalking seaward, as if to intercept the escape of the multitudinous vessels that were crowded between Foulness and the Naze. In spite of the throbbing exertions of the engines of the little paddle-boat, and the pouring foam that her wheels flung behind her, she receded with terrifying slowness from this ominous advance.

GLANCING north-westward, my brother saw the large crescent of shipping already writhing with the approaching terror; one ship passing behind another, another coming round from broadside to end on, steamships whistling and giving off volumes of steam, sails being let out, launches rushing hither and thither. He was so fascinated by this and by the creeping danger away to the left that he had no eyes for anything seaward. And then a swift movement of the steamboat (she had suddenly come round to avoid being run down) flung him headlong from the seat upon which he was standing. There was a shouting all

about him, a trampling of feet, and a cheer that seemed to be answered faintly. The steamboat lurched, and rolled him over upon his hands.

He sprang to his feet and saw to starboard, and not a hundred yards from their heeling, pitching boat, a vast iron bulk like the blade of a plough tearing through the water, tossing it on either side in huge waves of foam that leapt towards the steamer, flinging her paddles helplessly in the air, and then sucking her deck down almost to the water-line.

A douche of spray blinded my brother for a moment. When his eyes were clear again, he saw the monster had passed and was rushing landward. Big iron upperworks rose out of this headlong structure, and from that twin funnels projected, and spat a smoking blast shot with fire into the air. It was the torpedo-ram, *Thunder Child*, steaming headlong, coming to the rescue of the threatened shipping.

Keeping his footing on the heaving deck by clutching the bulwarks, my brother looked past this charging leviathan at the Martians again, and he saw the three of them now close together, and standing so far out to sea that their tripod supports were almost entirely submerged. Thus sunken, and seen in remote perspective, they appeared far less formidable than the huge iron bulk in whose wake the steamer was pitching so helplessly. It would seem they were regarding this new antagonist with astonishment. To their intelligence, it may be, the giant was even such another as themselves. The *Thunder Child* fired no gun, but simply drove full speed towards them. It was probably her not firing that enabled her to get so near the enemy as she did. One shell, and they would have sent her to the bottom forthwith with the Heat-Ray.

She was steaming at such a pace that in a minute she seemed halfway between the steamboat and the Martians—a diminishing black bulk against the receding horizontal expanse of the Essex coast.

Suddenly the foremost Martian lowered his tube, and discharged a canister of the black gas at the ironclad. It hit her larboard side, and glanced off in an inky jet, that rolled away to seaward, an unfolding torrent of black smoke, from which the ironclad drove clear. To the watchers from the steamer, low in the water and with the sun in their eyes, it seemed as though she was already among the Martians.

They saw the gaunt figures separating and rising out of the water as they retreated shoreward, and one of them raised the camera-like generator of the Heat-Ray. He held it pointing obliquely downward, and a bank of steam sprang from the water at its touch. It must have driven through the iron of the ship's side like a white-hot iron rod through paper.

A flicker of flame went up through the rising steam, and then the Martian reeled and staggered. In another moment he was cut down, and a great body of water and steam shot high in the air. The guns of the *Thunder Child* sounded through the reek, going off one after the other, and one shot splashed the water high close by the steamer, ricocheted towards the other flying ships to the north, and smashed a smack to matchwood.

But no one heeded that very much. At the sight of the Martian's collapse, the captain on the bridge yelled inarticulately, and all the crowding passengers on the steamer's stern shouted together. And then they yelled again. For, surging out beyond the white tumult drove something long and black, the flames streaming from its middle parts, its ventilators and funnels spouting fire.

She was alive still; the steering gear, it seems, was intact and her engines working. She headed straight for a second Martian, and was within a hundred yards of him when the Heat-Ray came to bear. Then with a violent thud, a blinding flash, her decks, her funnels, leapt upward. The Martian staggered with the violence of her explosion, and in another moment the flaming wreckage, still driving forward with the impetus of its pace, had struck him and crumpled him up like a thing of cardboard. My brother shouted involuntarily. A boiling tumult of steam hid everything again.

"Two!" yelled the captain.

Everyone was shouting; the whole steamer from end to end rang with frantic cheering that was taken up first by one and then by all in the crowding multitude of ships and boats that was driving out to the sea.

The steam hung upon the water for many minutes, hiding the third Martian and the coast altogether. And all this time the boat was paddling steadily out to sea and away from the fight; and when at last the confusion cleared, the drifting bank of black vapour intervened, and nothing of the *Thunder Child* could be made out, nor could the third Martian be seen. But the ironclads to seaward were now quite close, and standing in towards shore past the steamboat.

The little vessel continued to beat its way seaward, and the ironclads receded slowly towards the coast, which was hidden still by a marbled bank of vapour, part steam, part black gas, eddying and combining in the strangest ways. The fleet of refugees was scattering to the north-east; several smacks were sailing between the ironclads and the steamboat. After a time, and before they reached the sinking cloud-bank, the warships turned northwards, and then abruptly went about and passed into the thickening haze of evening southward. The coast grew faint, and at last indistinguishable amidst the low banks of clouds that were gathering about the sinking sun.

Then suddenly out of the golden haze of the sunset came the vibration of guns, and a form of black shadows moving. Everyone struggled to the rail of the steamer and peered into the blinding furnace of the west, but nothing was to be distinguished clearly. A mass of smoke rose slantingly and barred the face of the sun. The steamboat throbbed on its way through an interminable suspense.

The sun sank into gray clouds, the sky flashed and darkened, the evening star trembled into sight. It was deep twilight when the captain cried out and pointed. My brother strained his eyes. Something rushed up into the sky out of the grayness, rushed slantingly upward and very swiftly into the luminous clearness above the clouds in the western sky, some

thing flat and broad and very large, that swept round in a vast curve, grew smaller, sank slowly, and vanished again into the gray mystery of the night. And as it flew it rained down darkness upon the land.

Book II - The Earth Under the Martians

CHAPTER I

Under Foot

IN the first book I have wandered so much from my own adventures to tell of the experiences of my brother, that all through the last two chapters I and the curate have been lurking in the empty house at Halliford, whither we fled to escape the Black Smoke. There I will resume. We stopped there all Sunday night and all the next day—the day of the panic—in a little island of daylight, cut off by the Black Smoke from the rest of the world. We could do nothing but wait, in an aching inactivity, during those two weary days.

My mind was occupied by anxiety for my wife. I figured her at Leatherhead, terrified, in danger, mourning me already as a dead man. I paced the rooms and cried aloud when I thought of how I was cut off from her, of all that might happen to her in my absence. My cousin I knew was brave enough for any emergency, but he was not the sort of man to realize danger quickly, to rise promptly. What was needed now was not bravery, but circumspection. My only consolation was to believe that the Martians were moving Londonward and away from her. Such vague anxieties keep the mind sensitive and painful. I grew very weary and irritable with the curate's perpetual ejaculations, I tired of the sight of his selfish despair. After some ineffectual remonstrance I kept away from him, staying in a room containing globes, forms, and copy-books, that was evidently a children's schoolroom. When at last he followed me thither, I went to a box-room at the top of the house and locked myself in, in order to be alone with my aching miseries.

We were hopelessly hemmed in by the Black Smoke all that day, and the morning of the next. There were signs of people in the next house on Sunday evening—a face at a window and moving lights, and later the slamming of a door. But I do not know who these people were, nor what became of them. We saw nothing of them next day. The Black Smoke drifted slowly riverward all through Monday morning, creeping nearer and nearer to us, driving at last along the roadway outside the house that hid us.

A Martian came across the fields about mid-day, laying the stuff with a jet of superheated steam that hissed against the walls, smashed all the windows it touched, and scalded the curate's hand as he fled out of the front room. When at last we crept across the sodden rooms and looked out again, the country northward was as though a black snowstorm had passed over it. Looking towards the river, we were astonished to see an unaccountable redness mingling with the black of the scorched meadows.

For a time we did not see how this change affected our position, save that we were relieved of our fear of the Black Smoke. But later I perceived that we were no longer hemmed in, that now we might get away. So soon as I realized the way of escape was open, my dream of action returned. But the curate was lethargic, unreasonable.

"We are safe here," he repeated—"safe here."

I resolved to leave him—would that I had! Wiser now for the artilleryman's teaching, I sought out food and drink. I had found oil and rags for my burns, and I also took a hat and a flannel shirt that I found in one of the bedrooms. When it was clear to him that I meant to go alone, had reconciled myself to going alone, he suddenly roused himself to come. And, all being quiet throughout the afternoon, we started, I should judge, about five, along the blackened road to Sunbury.

In Sunbury, and at intervals along the road, were dead bodies lying in contorted attitudes—horses as well as men—overturned carts and luggage, all covered thickly with black dust. That pall of cindery powder made me think of what I had read of the destruction of Pompeii. We got to Hampton Court without misadventure, our minds full of strange and unfamiliar appearances, and at Hampton Court our eyes were relieved to find a patch of green that had escaped the suffocating drift. We went through Bushey Park, with its deer going to and fro under the chestnuts, and some men and women hurrying in the distance towards Hampton, and so came to Twickenham. These were the first people we saw.

Away across the road the woods beyond Ham and Petersham were still afire. Twickenham was uninjured by either Heat-Ray or Black Smoke, and there were more people about here, though none could give us news. For the most part, they were like ourselves, taking advantage of a lull to shift their quarters. I have an impression that many of the houses here were still occupied by scared inhabitants, too frightened even for flight. Here, too, the evidence of a hasty rout was abundant along the road. I remember most vividly three smashed bicycles in a heap, pounded into the road by the wheels of subsequent carts. We crossed Richmond Bridge about half-past eight. We hurried across the exposed bridge, of course, but I noticed floating down the stream a number of red masses, some many feet across. I did not know what these were—there was no time for scrutiny—and I put a more horrible interpretation on them, than they deserved. Here, again, on the Surrey side, was black dust that had once been smoke, and dead bodies—a heap near the approach to the station—and never a sight of the Martians until we were some way towards Barnes.

We saw in the blackened distance a group of three people running down a side-street towards the river, but otherwise it seemed deserted. Up the hill Richmond town was burning briskly; outside the town of Richmond there was no trace of the Black Smoke.

Then suddenly, as we approached Kew, came a number of people running, and the upper-works of a Martian Fighting Machine loomed in sight over the housetops, not a hundred yards away from us. We stood aghast at our danger, and had he looked down

we must immediately have perished. We were so terrified that we dared not go on, but turned aside and hid in a shed in a garden. There the curate crouched, weeping silently, and refusing to stir again.

BUT my fixed idea of reaching Leatherhead would not let me rest, and in the twilight I ventured out again. I went through a shrubbery, and along a passage beside a big house standing in its own grounds, and so emerged upon the road towards Kew. The curate I left in the shed, but he came hurrying after me.

That second start was the most foolhardy thing I ever did For it was manifest the Martians were about us. Scarcely had he overtaken me than we saw either the Fighting Machine we had seen before or another, far away across the meadows in the direction of Kew Lodge. Four or five little figures hurried before it across the green-gray of the field, and in a moment it was evident this Martian pursued them. In three strides he was among them, and they ran radiating from his feet in all directions. He used no Heat-Ray to destroy them, but picked them up one by one. Apparently he tossed them into the great metallic carrier which projected behind him, much as a workman's basket hangs over his shoulder.

It was the first time I realized the Maritans might have any other purpose than destruction with defeated humanity. We stood for a moment petrified, then turned and fled through a gate behind us into a walled garden, fell into rather than found a fortunate ditch, and lay there, scarce daring to whisper to one another until the stars were out.

I suppose it was nearly eleven at night before we gathered courage to start again, no longer venturing into the road, but sneaking along hedgerows and through plantations, and watching keenly through the darkness, he on the right and I on the left, for the Martians. who seemed to be all about us. In one place we blundered upon a scorched and blackened area, now cooling and ashen, and a number of scattered dead bodies of men, burnt horribly about the heads and bodies, but with their legs and boots mostly intact; and of dead horses, fifty feet, perhaps, behind a line of four ripped guns and smashed gun-carriages.

Sheen it seemed, had escaped destruction, but the place was silent and deserted. Here we happened on no dead, though the night was dark for us to see into the side-roads of the place. In Sheen my companion suddenly complained of faintness and thirst, and we decided to try one of the houses.

The first house we entered, after a little difficulty with the window, was a small semi-detached villa, and I found nothing eatable left in the place but some mouldy cheese. There was, however, water to drink, and I took a hatchet, which promised to be useful in our next house-breaking.

We crossed the road to a place where the road turns towards Mortlake. Here there stood a white house within a walled garden, and in the pantry of this we found a store of food—two loaves of bread in a pan, an uncooked steak, and the half of a ham. I give this catalogue so precisely because, as it happened, we were destined to subsist upon this store for the next fortnight. Bottled beer stood under a shelf, and there were two bags of haricot beans and some limp lettuces. This pantry opened into a kind of wash-up kitchen, and in this was firewood, and a cupboard in which we found nearly a dozen of burgundy, tinned soups and salmon, and two tins of biscuits.

We sat in the adjacent kitchen in the dark—for we dared not strike a light—and ate bread and ham and drank beer out of one bottle. The curate, who was still timorous and restless, was now oddly enough for pushing on, and I was urging him to keep up his strength by eating, when the thing that was to imprison us happened.

"It can't be midnight yet," I said, and then came a blinding glare of vivid green light. Everything in the kitchen leapt out, clearly visible in green and black, and then vanished again. And then followed such a concussion as I have never heard before or since. So close on the heels of this as to seem instantaneous, came a thud behind me, a clash of glass, a crash and rattle of falling masonry all about us, and incontinently the plaster of the ceiling came down upon us, smashing into a multitude of fragments upon our heads. I was knocked headlong across the floor against the oven handle and stunned. I was insensible for a long time, the curate told me, and when I came to we were in darkness again and he with a face wet as I found afterwards with blood from a cut forehead, was dabbing water over me.

For some time I could not recollect what had happened. Then things came to me slowly. A bruise on my temple asserted itself.

"Are you better?" asked the curate, in a whisper.

At last I answered him. I sat up.

"Don't move," he said. "The floor is covered with smashed crockery from the dresser. You can't possibly move without making a noise, and I fancy they are outside."

We both sat quite silent, so that we could scarcely hear one another breathing. Everything seemed deadly still, though once something near us, some plaster or broken brickwork, slid down with a rumbling sound. Outside and very near was an intermittent, metallic rattle.

"That!" said the curate, when presently it happened again.

"Yes," I said. "But what is it?"

"A Martian!" said the curate.

"It was not like the Heat-Ray," I said, and for a time I was inclined to think one of the great Fighting Machines had stumbled against the house, as I had seen one stumble against the tower of Shepperton Church.

Our situation was so strange and incomprehensible that for three or four hours, until the dawn came, we scarcely moved. And then the light filtered in, pale through the window, which remained black, but through a triangular aperture between a beam and a heap of broken bricks in the wall behind us. The interior of the kitchen we now saw grayly for the first time.

The window had been burst in by a mass of garden mould, which flowed over the table upon which we

had been sitting and lay about our feet. Outside the soil was banked high against the house. At the top of the window-frame we could see an uprooted drain-pipe. The floor was littered with smashed hardware; the end of the kitchen towards the house was broken into, and since the daylight shone in there it was evident the greater part of the house had collapsed. Contrasting vividly with this ruin was the neat dresser, stained in the fashion, pale green, and with a number of copper and tin vessels below it, the wall-paper imitating blue and white tiles, and a couple of coloured supplements fluttering from the walls above the kitchen range.

As the dawn grew clearer, we saw through the gap in the wall the body of a Martian standing sentinel, I suppose, over the still glowing cylinder. At the sight of that we crawled as circumspectly as possible out of the twilight of the kitchen into the darkness of the scullery.

Abruptly the right interpretation of the things dawned upon my mind.

"The fifth cylinder," I whispered, "the fifth shot from Mars, has struck this house and buried us under the ruins!"

For a space the curate was silent, and then he whispered:

"God have mercy upon us!"

I heard him presently whimpering to himself.

Save for that sound we lay still in the scullery. I for my part scarce dared breathe, and sat with my eyes fixed on the faint light of the kitchen door. I could just see the curate's face, a dim oval shape, and his collar and cuffs. Outside there began a metallic hammering, and then a violent hooting, and then, after a quiet interval, a hissing, like the hissing of an engine. These noises, for the most part problematical, continued intermittently, and seemed, if anything, to increase in number as the time wore on. Presently a measured thudding, and a vibration that made everything about us quiver and the vessels in the pantry ring and shift, began and continued. Once the light was eclipsed, and the ghostly kitchen doorway became absolutely dark. For many hours we must have crouched there, silent and shivering, until our tired attention failed. . . .

At last I found myself awake and very hungry. I am inclined to believe we must have been the greater portion of a day before that awakening. My hunger was at a stride so insistent that it moved me to action. I told him I was going to seek food, and felt my way towards the pantry. He made me no answer, but so soon as I began eating, the faint noise I made stirred him to action, and I heard him crawling after me.

CHAPTER II

What We Saw From the Ruined House

AFTER eating we crept back to the scullery, and there I must have dozed again, for when presently I stirred I was alone. The thudding vibration continued with wearisome persistence. I whispered for the curate several times, and at last felt my way to the door of the kitchen. It was still daylight, and I perceived him across the room, lying against the triangular hole that looked out upon the Martians. His shoulders were hunched, so that his head was hidden from me.

I could hear a number of voices almost like those of an engine-shed, and the place rocked with that beating thud. Through the aperture in the wall I could see the top of a tree touched with gold, and the warm blue of a tranquil evening sky. For a minute or so I remained watching the curate, and then I advanced, crouching and stepping with extreme care amidst the broken crockery that littered the floor.

I touched the curate's leg, and he started so violently that a mass of plaster went sliding down outside and fell with a loud impact. I gripped his arm, fearing he might cry out, and for a long time we crouched motionless. Then I turned to see how much of our rampart remained. The detachment of the plaster had left a vertical slit open in the debris, and by raising myself cautiously across a beam I was able to see out of this gap into what had been overnight a quiet suburban roadway. Vast indeed was the change that we beheld.

The fifth cylinder must have fallen right into the midst of the house we had first visited. The building had vanished completely smashed, pulverized and dispersed by the blow. The cylinder lay now far beneath the original foundations, deep in a hole, already vastly larger than the pit I had looked into at Woking. The earth all round it had splashed under that tremendous impact—"splashed" is the only word—and lay in heaped piles that hid the masses of the adjacent houses. It had behaved exactly like mud under the violent blow of a hammer. Our house had collapsed backwards; the front portion, even on the ground-floor, had been destroyed completely; by a chance, the kitchen and scullery had escaped, and stood buried now under soil and ruins, closed in by tons of earth on every side, save towards the cylinder. Over that aspect we hung now on the very verge of the great circular pit the Martians were engaged in making. The heavy beating sound was evidently just behind us, and ever and again a bright green vapour drove up like a veil across our peephole.

The cylinder was already opened in the centre of the pit, and on the further edge of the pit, amidst the smashed and gravel-heaped shrubbery, one of the great Fighting Machines stood, deserted by its occupant, stiff and tall against the evening sky. At first I scarcely noticed the pit or the cylinder, although it has been convenient to describe them first, on account of the extraordinary glittering mechanism I saw, busy in the excavation, and on account of the strange creatures that were crawling slowly and painfully across the heaped mould near it.

The mechanism it certainly was held my attention first. It was one of those complicated fabrics that have since been called Handling Machines, and the study of which has already given such an enormous impetus to terrestrial invention. As it dawned upon me first it presented a sort of metallic spider with five jointed, agile legs, and with an extraordinary

number of jointed levers, bars, and reaching and clutching tentacles about its body. Most of its arms were retracted, but with three long tentacles it was fishing out a number of rods, plates and bars which lined the covering of, and apparently strengthened the walls of, the cylinder. These, as it extracted them, were lifted out and deposited upon a level surface of earth behind it.

Its motion was so swift, complex and perfect that at first I did not see it as a machine, in spite of its metallic glitter. The Fighting Machines were co-ordinated and animated to an extraordinary pitch, but nothing to compare with this. People who have never seen these structures, and have only the ill-imagined efforts of artists or the imperfect descriptions of such eye-witnesses as myself to go upon, scarcely realize that living quality.

I recall particularly the illustration of one of the first pamphlets to give a consecutive account of the war. The artist had evidently made a hasty study of one of the Fighting Machines, and there his knowledge ended. He presented them as tilted, stiff tripods, without either flexibility or subtlety, and with an altogether misleading monotony of effect. The pamphlet containing these renderings had a considerable vogue, and I mention them here simply to warn the reader against the impression they may have created. They were no more like the Martians I saw in action than a Dutch doll is like a human being. To many, the pamphlet would have been much better without them.

At first, I say, the Handling Machine did not impress me as a machine, but as a crab-like creature with a glittering integument, the controlling Martian, whose delicate tentacles actuated in movements, seeming to be simply the equivalent of the crab's cerebral portion. But then I perceived the resemblance of its gray-brown, shiny, leathery integument to that of the other sprawling bodies beyond, and the true nature of this dexterous workman dawned upon me. With that realization my interest shifted to those other creatures, the real Martians. Already I had had a transient impression of these, and the first nausea no longer obscured my observation. Moreover, I was concealed and motionless, and under no urgency of action.

THEY were, I now saw, the most unearthly creatures it is possible to conceive. They were huge round bodies—or, rather, heads—about four feet in diameter, each body having in front of it a face. The face had nostrils—indeed, the Martians do not seem to have had any sense of smell—but it had a pair of very large, dark-colored eyes, and just beneath this a kind of fleshy beak. In the back of this head or body—I scarcely know how to speak of it—was the single tight tympanic surface, since known to be anatomically an ear, though it must have been almost useless in our denser air. In a group round the mouth were sixteen slender, almost whip-like tentacles, arranged in two bunches of eight each. These bunches have since been named rather aptly, by that distinguished anatomist Professor Howes, the *hands*. Even as I saw these Martians for the first time they seemed to be endeavouring to raise themselves on these hands, but of course, with the increased weight of terrestrial conditions, this was impossible. There is reason to suppose that on Mars they may have progressed upon them with some facility.

The internal anatomy, I may remark here, dissection has since shown, was almost equally simple. The greater part of the structure was the brain, sending enormous nerves to the eyes, ear and tactile tentacles. Besides this were the complex lungs, into which the mouth opened, and the heart and its vessels. The pulmonary distress caused by the denser atmosphere and greater gravitational attraction was only too evident in the convulsive movements of the outer skin.

And this was the sum of the Martian organs. Strange as it may seem to a human being, all the complex apparatus of digestion, which makes up the bulk of our bodies, did not exist in the Martians. They were heads, merely heads. Entrails they had none. They did not eat, much less digest. Instead, they took the fresh living blood of other creatures and *injected* it into their own veins. I have myself seen this being done, as I shall mention in its place. But, squeamish as I may seem, I cannot bring myself to describe what I could not endure even to continue watching. Let it suffice, blood obtained from a still living animal, in most cases from a human being, was run directly by means of a little pipette into the recipient canal. ....

The bare idea of this is no doubt horribly repulsive to us, but at the same time I think that we should remember how repulsive our carnivorous habits would seem to an intelligent rabbit.

The physiological advantages of the practise of injection are undeniable, if one thinks of the tremendous waste of human time and energy occasioned by eating and the digestive process. Our bodies are half made up of glands and tubes and organs, occupied in turning heterogeneous food into blood. The digestive processes and their reaction upon the nervous system sap our strength, colour our minds. Men go happy or miserable as they have healthy or unhealthy livers, or sound gastric glands. But the Martians were lifted above all these organic fluctuations of mood and emotion.

Their undeniable preference for men as their source of nourishment is partly explained by the nature of the remains of the victims they had brought with them as provisions for Mars. These creatures, to judge from the shrivelled remains that have fallen into human hands, were bipeds, with flimsy siliceous skeletons (almost like those of the siliceous sponges) and feeble musculature, standing about six feet high, and having round erect heads and large eyes in flinty sockets. Two or three of these seem to have been brought in each cylinder, and all were killed before earth was reached. It was just as well for them, for the mere attempt to stand upright upon our planet would have broken every bone in their bodies.

And while I am engaged in this description, I may add in this place certain further details, which, although they were not all evident to us at the time,

will enable the reader who is unacquainted with them to form a clearer picture of these offensive creatures.

In three other points their physiology differed strangely from ours. Their organisms did not sleep, any more than the heart of man sleeps. Since they had no extensive muscular mechanism to recuperate, that periodical extinction was unknown to them. They had little or no sense of fatigue, it would seem. On earth they can never have moved without effort, yet even to the last they kept in action. In twenty-four hours they did twenty-four hours of work, as even on earth is perhaps the case with the ants.

In the next place, wonderful as it seems to a sexual world, the Martians were absolutely without sex, and therefore without any of the tumultuous emotions that arise from that difference among men. A young Martian, there can now be no dispute, was really born upon earth during the war, and it was found attached to its parent, partially *budded* off, just as young lily bulbs bud off, or the young animals in the fresh-water polyp.

In man, in all the higher terrestrial animals, such a method of increase has disappeared; but even on this earth it was certainly the primitive method. Among the lower animals, up even to those first cousins of the vertebrated animals, the Tunicates, the two processes occur side by side, but finally the sexual method superseded its competitor altogether. On Mars, however, just the reverse has apparently been the case.

It is worthy of remark that a certain speculative writer of quasi-scientific repute, writing long before the Martian invasion, did forecast for a man a final structure not unlike the actual Martian condition. His prophecy, I remember, appeared in November or December, 1893, in a long defunct publication, the *Pall Mall Budget*, and I recall a caricature of it in a pre-Martian periodical called *Punch*. He pointed out—writing in a foolish facetious tone—that the perfection of mechanical appliances must ultimately supersede limbs, the perfection of chemical devices, digestion—that such organs as hair, external nose, teeth, ears, chin, were no longer essential parts of the human being, and that the tendency of natural selection would lie in the direction of their steady diminution through the coming ages. The brain alone remained a cardinal necessity. Only one other part of the body had a strong case for survival, and that was the hand, "teacher and agent of the brain." While the rest of the body dwindled, the hands would grow larger.

There is many a true word written in jest, and here in the Martians we have beyond dispute the actual accomplishment of such a suppression of the animal side of the organism by the intelligence. To me it is quite credible that the Martians may be descended from beings not unlike ourselves, by a gradual development of brain and hands (the latter giving rise to the two bunches of delicate tentacles at last) at the expense of the rest of the body. Without the body the brain would of course become a more selfish intelligence, without any of the emotional substratum of the human being.

The last salient point in which the system of these creatures differed from ours was in what one might have thought a very trivial particular. Micro-organisms, which cause so much disease and pain on earth, have either never appeared upon Mars, or Martian sanitary science eliminated them ages ago. A hundred diseases, all the fevers and contagions of human life, consumption, cancers, tumours, and such morbidities, never enter the scheme of their life. And speaking of the differences between the life of Mars and terrestrial life, I may allude here to the curious suggestions of the Red Weed.

APPARENTLY the vegetable kingdom in Mars, instead of having green for a dominant colour, is of a vivid blood-red tint. At any rate, the seeds which the Martians (intentionally or accidentally) brought with them gave rise in all cases to red-coloured growths. Only that known popularly as the Red Weed, however, gained any footing in competition with terrestrial forms. The Red Creeper was quite a transitory growth, and few people have seen it growing. For a time, however, the Red Weed grew with astonishing vigour and luxuriance. It spread up the sides of the pit by the third or fourth day of our imprisonment, and its cactus-like branches formed a carmine fringe to the edges of our triangular window. And afterwards I found it broadcast throughout the country, and especially wherever there was a stream of water.

The Martians had what appears to have been an auditory organ, a single round drum at the back of the head-body, and eyes with a visual range not very different from ours, except that, according to Philips, blue and violet were as black to them. It is commonly supposed that they communicated by sounds and tentacular gesticulations; this is asserted, for instance, in the able but hastily compiled pamphlet (written evidently by someone not an eye-witness of Martian actions) to which I have already alluded, and which, so far, has been the chief source of information concerning them. Now, no surviving human being saw so much of the Martians in action as I did. I take no credit to myself for an accident, but the fact is so. And I assert that I watched them closely time after time, and that I have seen four, five, and (once) six of them sluggishly performing the most elaborately complicated operations together, without either sound or gesture. Their peculiar hooting invariably preceded feeding; it had no modulation, and was, I believe, in no sense a signal, but merely the expiration of air preparatory to the suctional operation. I have a certain claim to at least an elementary knowledge of psychology and in this matter I am convinced—as firmly as I am convinced of anything—that the Martians interchanged thoughts without any physical intermediation. And I have been convinced of this in spite of strong preconceptions. Before the Martian invasion, as an occasional reader here or there may remember, I had written with some little vehemence, against the telepathic theory.

The Martians wore no clothing. Their conceptions of ornament and decorum were necessarily different from ours; and not only were they evidently much less sensible of changes of temperature than we are, but

changes of pressure do not seem to have affected their health at all seriously. But if they wore no clothing yet it was in the other artificial additions to their bodily resources, certainly, that their great superiority over man lay. We men, with our bicycles and road-skates, our Lilienthal soaring-machines, our guns and sticks, and so forth, are just in the beginning of the evolution that the Martians worked out. They have become practically mere brains, wearing different bodies according to their needs, just as men wear suits of clothes, and take a bicycle in a hurry or an umbrella in the wet. And of their appliances, perhaps nothing is more wonderful to a man than the curious fact that what is the dominant feature of almost all human devices in mechanism is absent—the *wheel* is absent; amongst all the things they brought to earth there is no trace of suggestion of their use of wheels. One would have at least expected it in locomotion. And in this connection it is curious to remark that even on this earth Nature has never hit upon the wheel, or has preferred other expedients to its development. And not only did the Martians either not know of (which is incredible) or abstain from the wheel, but in their apparatus singularly little use is made of the fixed pivot, or relatively fixed pivot, with circular motions thereabout confined to one plane. Almost all the joints of their machinery present a complicated system of sliding parts moving over small but beautifully curved friction bearings. And while upon this matter of detail, it is remarkable that the long leverages of their machines are in most cases actuated by a sort of sham musculature of discs in an elastic sheath; these discs become polarized and drawn closely and powerfully together when traversed by a current of electricity. In this way the curious parallelism to animal motions, which was so striking and disturbing to the human beholder, was attained. Such quasi-muscles abounded in the crab-like Handling Machine which I watched unpacking the cylinder, on my first peeping out of the slit. It seemed infinitely more alive than the actual Martians lying beyond it in the sunset light, panting, stirring ineffectual tentacles, and moving feebly, after their vast journey across space.

While I was watching their feeble motions in the sunlight, and noting each strange detail of their form, the curate reminded me of his presence by pulling violently at my arm. I turned to a scowling face, and silent, eloquent lips. He wanted the slit, which permitted only one of us to peep through at a time; and so I had to forego watching them for a time while he enjoyed that privilege.

When I looked again the busy Handling Machine had already put together several of the pieces of the apparatus it had taken out of the cylinder into a shape having an unmistakable likeness to its own; and down on the left a busy little digging mechanism had come into view, emitting jets of green vapour and working its way round the pit, excavating and embanking in a methodical and discriminating manner. This it was had caused the regular beating noise, and the rhythmic shocks that had kept our ruinous refuge quivering. It piped and whistled as it worked. So far as I could see, the thing was without a directing Martian at all.

CHAPTER III

The Days of Imprisonment

THE arrival of a second Fighting Machine drove us from our peep-hole into the scullery, for we feared that from his elevation the Martian might see down upon us behind our barrier. At a later date we began to feel less in danger of their eyes, for to an eye in the dazzle of the sunlight outside our refuge must have seemed a blind of blackness, but at first the slightest suggestion of approach drove us into the scullery in heart-throbbing retreat. Yet, terrible as was the danger we incurred, the attraction of peeping was for both of us irresistible. And I recall now with a sort of wonder that, despite the infinite danger in which we were between starvation and a still more terrible death, we could yet struggle bitterly for that horrible privilege of sight. We would race across the kitchen with a grotesque pace between eagerness and the dread of making a noise, and strike one another and thrust and kick, within a few inches of exposure.

The fact is that we had absolutely incompatible dispositions and habits of thought and action, and our danger and isolation only accentuated the incompatibility. At Halliford I had already come to hate his trick of helpless exclamation, his stupid rigidity of mind. His endless muttering monologue vitiated every effort I made to think out a line of action, and drove me at times, thus pent up and intensified, almost to the verge of craziness. He was as lacking in restraint as a silly woman. He would weep for hours together, and I verily believe that to the very end this spoilt child of life thought his weak tears in some way efficacious. And I would sit in the darkness unable to keep my mind off him by reason of his importunities. He ate more than I did, and it was in vain I pointed out that our only chance of life was to stop in the house until the Martians had done with their pit, that in that long patience a time might presently come when we should need food. He ate and drank impulsively in heavy meals at long intervals. He slept little.

As the days wore on, his utter carelessness of any consideration so intensified our distress and danger that I had, much as I loathed doing it, to resort to threats, and at last to blows. That brought him to reason for a time. But he was one of those weak creatures full of a shifty cunning—who face neither God nor man, who face not even themselves, void of pride, timorous, anaemic, hateful souls.

It is disagreeable for me to recall and write these things, but I set them down that my story may lack nothing. Those who have escaped the dark and terrible aspects of life will find my brutality, my flash of rage in our final tragedy, easy enough to blame; for they know what is wrong as well as any, but not what is possible to tortured men. But those who have been under the shadow, who have gone down at last to

elemental things, will have a greater understanding.

And while within we fought out our dark dim contest of whispers, snatched food and drink and gripping hands and blows, without in the pitiless sunlight of that terrible June was the strange wonder, the unfamiliar routine of the Martians in the pit. Let me return to those first new experiences of mine. After a long time I ventured back to the peephole, to find that the newcomers had been reinforced by the occupants of no less than three of the Fighting Machines. These last had brought with them certain fresh appliances that stood in an orderly manner about the cylinder. The second Handling Machine was now completed, and was busied in serving one of the novel contrivances the big machine had brought. This was a body resembling a milk-can in its general form, above which oscillated a pear-shaped receptacle, and from which a stream of white powder flowed into a circular basin below.

The oscillatory motion was imparted to this by one tentacle of the Handling Machine. With two spatulate hands the Handling Machine was digging out and flinging masses of clay into the pear-shaped receptacle above, while with another arm it periodically opened a door and removed rusty and blackened clinkers from the middle part of the machine. Another steely tentacle directed the powder from the basin along a ribbed channel towards some receiver that was hidden from me by the mound of bluish dust. From this unseen receiver a little thread of green smoke rose vertically into the quiet air. As I looked, the Handling Machine, with a faint and musical clinking, extended, telescopic fashion, a tentacle that had been a moment before a mere blunt projection, until its end was hidden behind the mound of clay. In another second it had lifted a bar of white aluminium into sight, untarnished as yet and shining dazzlingly, and deposited it in a growing stack of bars that stood at the side of the pit. Between sunset and starlight this dexterous machine must have made more than a hundred such bars out of the crude clay, and the mound of bluish dust rose steadily until it topped the side of the pit.

The contrast between the swift and complex movements of these contrivances and the inert, panting clumsiness of their masters was acute, and for days I had to tell myself repeatedly that these latter were indeed the living of the two things.

The curate had possession of the slit when the first men were brought to the pit. I was sitting below, crouched together, listening with all my ears. He made a sudden movement backward, and I, fearful that we were observed, crouched in a spasm of terror. He came sliding down the rubbish, and crouched beside me in the darkness, inarticulate, gesticulating, and for a moment I shared his terror. His gesture suggested a resignation of the slit, and after a little while my curiosity gave me courage, and I rose up, stepped across him, and clambered up to it. At first I could see no reason for his terror. The twilight had now come, the stars were little and faint, but the pit was illuminated by the flickering green fire that came from the aluminium making. The whole picture was a flickering scheme of green gleams and shifting rusty black shadows, strangely trying to the eyes. Over and through it all went the bats, heeding it not at all. The sprawling Martians were no longer to be seen, the mound of blue-green powder had risen to cover them from sight, and a Fighting Machine, with its legs contracted, crumpled and abbreviated, stood across the corner of the pit. And then, amidst the clangour of the machinery, came a drifting suspicion of human voices, that I entertained at first only to dismiss.

I crouched, watching this Fighting Machine closely, satisfying myself now for the first time that the hood did indeed contain a Martian. As the greer flames lifted I could see the oily gleam of his integument and the brightness of his eyes. And suddenly I heard a yell, and saw a long tentacle reaching over the shoulder of the machine, to the little cage that hunched upon its back. Then something—something struggling violently—was lifted high against the sky, a black enigma against the starlight, and as this black object came down again, I saw by the green brightness that it was a man. For an instant he was clearly visible. He was a stout, ruddy, middle-aged man, well dressed; three days before he must have been walking the world, a man of considerable consequence. I could see his staring eyes and gleams of light on his studs and watch-chain. He vanished behind the mound, and for a moment there was silence. And then began a shrieking and a sustained and cheerful hooting from the Martians. ....

I slid down the rubbish, struggled to my feet, clapped my hands over my ears, and bolted into the scullery. The curate, who had been crouching silently with his arms over his head, looked up as I passed. cried out quite loudly at my desertion of him, and came running after me.....

That night, as we lurked in the scullery, balanced between our horror and the horrible fascination this peeping had, although I felt an urgent need of action, I tried in vain to conceive any plan of escape; but afterwards, during the second day, I was able to consider our position with great clearness. The curate, I found, was quite incapable of discussion; strange terrors had already made him a creature of violent impulses, had robbed him of reason or forethought. Practically he had already sank to the level of an animal. But, as the saying goes, I gripped myself with both hands. It grew upon my mind, once I could face the facts, that, terrible as our position was, there was as yet no justification for absolute despair. Our chief chance lay in the possibility of the Martians making the pit nothing more than a temporary encampment. Or even if they kept it permanently, they might not consider it necessary to guard it, and a chance of escape might be afforded us. I also weighed carefully the possibility of our digging a way out in a direction away from the pit, but the chances of our emerging within sight of some sentinel Fighting Machine seemed at first too enormous. And I should have had to have done all the digging myself. The curate would certainly have failed me.

It was on the third day, if my memory serves me

right, that I saw the lad killed. It was the only occasion on which I actually saw the Martians feed. After that experience, I avoided the hole in the wall for the better part of a day. I went into the scullery, removed the door, and spent some hours digging with my hatchet as silently as possible; but when I had made a hole about a couple of feet deep, the loose earth collapsed noisily, and I did not dare continue. I lost heart, and lay down on the scullery floor for a long time, having no spirit even to move. And after that I abandoned altogether the idea of escaping by excavation.

It says much for the impression the Martians had made upon me, that at first I entertained little or no hope of our escape being brought about by their overthrow through any human effort. But on the fourth or fifth night I heard a sound like heavy guns.

It was very late in the night and the moon was shining brightly. The Martians had taken away the Excavating Machine and save for a Fighting Machine that stood on the remoter bank of the pit, and a Handling Machine that was busied out of my sight in a corner of the pit immediately beneath my peep-hole, the place was deserted by them. Except for the pale glow from the Handling Machine, and the bars and patches of white moonlight, the pit was in darkness, and except for the clinking of the Handling Machine, quite still. That night was a beautiful serenity; save for one planet, the moon seemed to have the sky to herself. I heard a dog howling and that familiar sound it was made me listen. Then I heard quite distinctly a booming exactly like the sound of great guns. Six distinct reports I counted, and after a long interval six again. And that was all.

CHAPTER IV

The Death of the Curate

IT was on the sixth day of our imprisonment that I peeped for the last time, and presently found myself alone. Instead of keeping close to me and trying to oust me from the slit, the curate had gone back into the scullery. I was struck by a sudden thought. I went back quickly and quietly into the scullery. In the darkness I heard the curate drinking. I snatched in the darkness, and my fingers caught a bottle of Burgundy.

For a few minutes there was a tussle. The bottle struck the floor and broke, and I desisted and rose. We stood panting, threatening one another. In the end I planted myself between him and the food, and told him of my determination to begin a discipline. I divided the food in the pantry into rations to last us ten days. I would not let him eat more that day. In the afternoon he made a feeble effort to get at the food. I had been dozing, but in an instant I was awake. All day and all night we sat face to face, I weary but resolute, and he weeping and complaining of his immediate hunger. It was, I know, a night and a day, but to me it seemed—it seems now—an interminable length of time.

And so our widened incompatibility ended at last in open conflict. For two vast days we struggled in undertones and wrestling contests. There were times when I beat and kicked him madly, times when I cajoled and persuaded him, and once I tried to bribe him with the last bottle of Burgundy, for there was a rain-water pump from which I could get water. But neither force nor kindness availed; he was indeed beyond reason. He would neither desist from his attacks on the food nor from his noisy babbling to himself. The rudimentary precautions to keep our imprisonment endurable he would not observe. Slowly I began to realize the complete overthrow of his intelligence, to perceive that my sole companion in this close and sickly darkness was a man insane.

From certain vague memories I am inclined to think my own mind wandered at times. I had strange and hideous dreams whenever I slept. It sounds strange, but I am inclined to think that the weakness and insanity of the curate warned me, braced me and kept me a sane man.

On the eighth day he began to talk aloud instead of whisper, and nothing I could do would moderate his speech.

"It is just, O God!" he would say over and over again. "It is just. On me and mine be the punishment laid. We have sinned, we have fallen short. There was poverty, sorrow; the poor were trodden in the dust, and I held my peace. I preached acceptable folly—my God, what folly!—when I should have stood up, though I died for it, and called upon them to repent—repent! .... Oppressors of the poor and needy..... The winepress of God!"

Then he would suddenly revert to the matter of the food I withheld from him, praying, begging, weeping, at last threatening. He began to raise his voice—I prayed him not to; he perceived a hold on me—he threatened he would shout and bring the Martians upon us. For a time that scared me; but any concession would have shortened our chance of escape beyond estimating. I defied him, although I felt no assurance that he might not do this thing. But that day, at any rate, he did not. He talked with his voice rising slowly, through the greater part of the eighth and ninth days—threats, entreaties, mingled with a torrent of half-sane and always frothy repentance for his vacant sham of God's service, such as made me pity him. Then he slept awhile, and began again with renewed strength, so loudly that I must needs make him desist.

"Be still," I implored. "They must not hear you."

He rose to his knees, for he had been sitting in the darkness near the copper.

"I have been still too long," he said in a tone that must have reached the pit, "and now I must bear my witness. Woe unto this unfaithful city! Woe! woe! Woe! woe! woe! to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet—"

"Shut up!" I said, rising to my feet, and in a terror lest the Martians should have heard us. "For God's sake—"

"Nay," shouted the curate at the top of his voice, standing likewise and extending his arms. "Speak!

The word of the Lord is upon me. His word has come." In three strides he was at the door into the kitchen. "I must bear my witness. I go. It has already been too long delayed."

I put out my hand and felt the meat-chopper hanging to the wall. In a flash I was after him. I was fierce with fear. Before he was half-way across the kitchen I had overtaken him. With one last touch of humanity I turned the blade back and struck him with the butt. He went headlong forward and lay stretched on the ground. I stumbled over him, and stood panting. He lay still.

Abruptly I heard a noise without, the run and smash of slipping plaster, and the triangular aperture in the wall was darkened. I looked up and saw the lower surface of a Handling Machine coming slowly across the hole. One of its gripping limbs curled amidst the debris; another limb appeared, feeling its way over the fallen beams. I stood petrified, staring. Then I saw through a sort of glass plate near the edge of the body the face, as we may call it, and the large dark eyes of a Martian peering, and then a long metallic snake of tentacle came feeling slowly through the hole.

I turned by an effort, stumbled over the curate, and stopped at the scullery door. The tentacle was now some way, two yards or more, in the room, and twisting and turning with queer sudden movements, this way and that. For a while I stood fascinated by that slow, fitful advance. Then, with a faint, hoarse cry, I forced myself across the scullery. I trembled violently, I could scarcely stand upright. I opened the door of the coal-cellar, and stood there in the darkness, staring at the faintly lit doorway into the kitchen, and listening. Had the Martian seen me? What was it doing now?

Something was moving to and fro there, very quietly; every now and then it tapped against the wall, or started on its movements with a faint metallic ringing, like the movement of keys on a split-ring. Then a heavy body—I knew too well what—was dragged across the floor of the kitchen towards the opening. Irresistibly attracted, I crept to the door and peeped into the kitchen. In the triangle of bright outer sunlight I saw the Martian in its Briareus of a Handling Machine, scrutinizing the curate's head. I thought at once that it would infer my presence from the mark of the blow I had given him.

I crept back to the coal-cellar, shut the door, and began to cover myself up as much as I could, and as noiselessly as possible, in the darkness, among the firewood and coal therein. Every now and then I paused rigid, to hear if the Martian had thrust its tentacle through the opening again.

Then the faint metallic jingle returned. I traced it slowly feeling over the kitchen. Presently I heard it nearer—in the scullery, as I judged. I thought that its length might be insufficient to reach me. I prayed copiously. It passed, scraping faintly across the cellar door. An age of almost intolerable suspense intervened; then I heard it fumbling at the latch. It had found the door! The Martian understood doors!

It worried at the catch for a minute, perhaps, and then the door opened. I lay petrified with fright.

In the darkness I could just see the thing—like an elephant trunk more than anything else—waving towards me and touching and examining the wall, coals, wood and ceiling. It was like a black worm swaying its blind head to and fro.

Once, even, it touched the heel of my boot. I was on the verge of screaming; I bit my hand. For a time it was silent. I could have fancied it had been withdrawn. Presently, with an abrupt slick, it gripped something—I thought it had me!—and seemed to go out of the cellar again. For a minute I was not sure. Apparently, it had taken a lump of coal to examine.

I seized the opportunity of slightly shifting my position, which had become cramped, and listened. I whispered passionate prayers for safety.

Then I heard the slow, deliberate sound creeping towards me again. Slowly, slowly it drew near, scratching against walls and tapping furniture.

While I was still doubtful, it rapped smartly against the cellar door and closed it. I heard it go into the pantry, and the biscuit-tins rattled and a bottle smashed, and then came a heavy bump against the cellar door. Then silence, that passed into an infinity of suspense.

Had it gone?

At last I decided that it had.

It came into the scullery no more; but I lay all the tenth day, in the close darkness, buried among coals and firewood, not daring even to crawl out for the drink for which I craved. It was the eleventh day before I ventured so far from my security.

CHAPTER V

The Stillness

MY first act, before I went to the pantry, was to fasten the door between kitchen and scullery. But the pantry was empty; every scrap of food had gone. Apparently, the Martian had taken it all on the previous day. At that discovery I despaired for the first time. I took no food and no drink either on the eleventh or the twelfth day.

At first my mouth and throat were parched, and my strength ebbed sensibly. I sat about in the darkness of the scullery, in a state of despondent wretchedness. My mind ran on eating. I thought I had become deaf, for the noises of movement I had been accustomed to hear from the pit ceased absolutely. I did not feel strong enough to crawl noiselessly to the peephole, or I would have gone there.

On the twelfth day my throat was so painful that, taking the chance of alarming the Martians, I attacked the creaking rain-water pump that stood by the sink, and got a couple of glassfuls of blackened and tainted rain-water. I was greatly refreshed by this, and emboldened by the fact that no inquiring tentacle followed the noise of my pumping.

During these days I thought much of the curate, and of the manner of his death, in a rambling, inconclusive manner.

On the thirteenth day I drank some more water,

and dozed and thought disjointedly of eating and of vague impossible plans of escape. Whenever I dozed I dreamed of horrible phantasms, of the death of the curate, or of sumptuous dinners; but, sleeping or awake, I felt a keen pain that urged me to drink again and again. The light that came into the scullery was no longer gray but red. To my disordered imagination it seemed the colour of blood.

On the fourteenth day I went into the kitchen, and I was surprised to find that the fronds of the Red Weed had grown right across the hole in the wall, turning the half-light of the place into a crimson-coloured obscurity.

It was early on the fifteenth day that I heard a curious familiar sequence of sounds in the kitchen, and, listening, identified it as the snuffing and scratching of a dog. Going into the kitchen, I saw a dog's nose peering in through a break among the ruddy fronds. This greatly surprised me. At the scent of me he barked shortly.

I thought if I could induce him to come into the place quietly I should be able, perhaps, to kill and eat him, and in any case it would be advisable to kill him, lest his action attracted the attention of the Martians.

I crept forward, saying "Good dog!" very softly; but he suddenly withdrew his head and disappeared.

I listened—I was not deaf—but certainly the pit was still. I heard a sound like the flutter of a bird's wings, and a hoarse croaking, but that was all.

For a long while I lay close to the peephole, but not daring to move aside the red plants that obscured it. Once or twice I heard a faint pitter-patter like the feet of the dog going hither and thither on the sand far below me, and there were more bird-like sounds, but that was all. At length, encouraged by the silence, I looked out.

Except in the corner, where a multitude of crows hopped and fought over the skeletons of the dead the Martians had consumed, there was not a living thing in the pit.

I stared about me, scarcely believing my eyes. All the machinery had gone. Save for the big mound of grayish-blue powder in one corner, certain bars of aluminium in another, the black birds and the skeletons of the killed, the place was merely an empty circular pit in the sand.

Slowly I thrust myself out through the red weed, and stood up on the mound of rubble. I could see in any direction save behind me, to the north, and neither Martian nor sign of Martian was to be seen. The pit dropped sheerly from my feet, but a little way along, the rubbish afforded a practicable slope to the summit of the ruins. My chance of escape had come. I began to tremble.

I hesitated for some time, and then, in a gust of desperate resolution and with a heart that throbbed violently, I scrambled to the top of the mound in which I had been buried so long.

I looked about again. To the northward, too, no Martian was visible.

When I had last seen this part of Sheen in the daylight, it had been a straggling street of comfortable white and red houses, interspersed with abundant trees. Now I stood on a mound of smashed brickwork, clay and gravel, over which spread a multitude of red cactus-shaped plants, knee-high, without a solitary terrestrial growth to dispute their footing. The trees near me were dead and brown, but further, a net-work of red threads scaled the still living stems.

The neighbouring houses had all been wrecked, but none had been burned; their walls stood sometimes to the second story, with smashed windows and shattered doors. The Red Weed grew tumultuously in their roofless rooms. Below me was the great pit, with the crows struggling for its refuse. A number of other birds hopped about among the ruins. Far away I saw a gaunt cat slink crouchingly along a wall, but traces of men there were none.

The day seemed, by contrast with my recent confinement, dazzlingly bright, the sky a glowing blue. A gentle breeze kept the Red Weed, that covered every scrap of unoccupied ground, gently swaying. And oh! the sweetness of the air!

CHAPTER VI

The Work of Fifteen Days

FOR some time I stood tottering on the mound, regardless of my safety. Within that noisome den from which I had emerged, I had thought with a narrow intensity only of our immediate security. I had not realized what had been happening to the world, had not anticipated this startling vision of unfamiliar things. I had expected to see Sheen in ruins —I found about me the landscape, weird and lurid, of another planet.

For that moment I touched an emotion beyond the common range of men, yet one that the poor brutes we dominate know only too well. I felt as a rabbit might feel returning to his burrow, and suddenly confronted by the work of a dozen busy navvies digging the foundations of a house. I felt the first inkling of a thing that presently grew quite clear in my mind, that oppressed me for many days, a sense of dethronement, a persuasion that I was no longer a master, but an animal among the animals, under the Martian heel. With us it would be as with them, to lurk and watch, to run and hide; the fear and empire of man had passed away.

But so soon as this strangeness had been realized, it passed, and my dominant motive became the hunger of my long and dismal fast. In the direction away from the pit, I saw, beyond a red-covered wall, a patch of garden ground unburied. This gave me a hint, and I went knee-deep, and sometimes neck-deep, in the Red Weed. The density of the weed gave me a reassuring sense of hiding. The wall was some six feet high and when I attempted to clamber it I found I could not lift my feet to the crest. So I went along by the side of it, and came to a corner and a rockwork that enabled me to get to the top and tumble into the garden I coveted. Here I found some young onions, a couple of gladiolus bulbs, and a quantity of immature

were carrots, all of which I secured, and, scrambling over a ruined wall, went on my way through scarlet and crimson trees towards Kew—it was like walking through an avenue of gigantic blood-drops—possessed with two ideas: to get more food, and to limp, as soon and as far as my strength permitted, out of this accursed unearthly region of the pit.

Some way further, in a grassy place, was a group of mushrooms, which I also devoured, and then I came upon a brown sheet of flowing shallow water, where meadows used to be. These fragments of nourishment served only to whet my hunger. At first I was surprised at this flood in a hot, dry summer, but afterwards I discovered that this was caused by the tropical exuberance of the Red Weed. Directly this extraordinary growth encountered water, it straightway became gigantic and of unparalleled fecundity. Its seeds were simply poured down into the water of the Wey and Thames and its swiftly-growing and Titanic water-fronds speedily choked both these rivers.

At Putney, as I afterwards saw, the bridge was almost lost in a tangle of this weed, and at Richmond, too, the Thames water poured in a broad and shallow stream across the meadows of Hampton and Twickenham. As the waters spread the weed followed them, until the ruined villas of the Thames Valley were for a time lost in this red swamp, whose margin I explored, and much of the desolation the Martians had caused was concealed.

In the end the Red Weed succumbed almost as quickly as it spread. A cankering disease, due, it is believed, to the action of certain bacteria, presently seized upon it. Now, by the action of natural selection, all terrestrial plants have acquired a resisting power against bacterial diseases—they never succumb without a severe struggle; but the Red Weed rotted like a thing already dead. The fronds became bleached, and then shrivelled and brittle. They broke off at the least touch, and the waters that had stimulated their early growth carried their last vestiges out to sea. ...

My first act on coming to this water was, of course, to slake my thirst. I drank a great bulk of water, and, moved by an impulse, gnawed some fronds of Red Weed; but they were watery, and had a sickly metallic taste. I found the water was sufficiently shallow for me to wade securely, although the Red Weed impeded my feet a little; but the flood evidently got deeper towards the river, and I turned back towards Mortlake. I managed to make out the road by means of occasional ruins of its villas and fences and lamps, and so presently I got out of this spate, and made my way to the hill going up towards Roehampton, and came out on Putney Common.

Here the scenery changed from the strange and unfamiliar to the wreckage of the familiar; patches of ground exhibited the devastation of a cyclone, and in a few score yards I would come upon perfectly undisturbed spaces, houses with their blinds trimly drawn and doors closed, as if they had been left for a day by the owners, or as if their inhabitants slept within. The Red Weed was less abundant; the tall trees along the lane were free from the red creeper. I hunted for food among the trees, finding nothing, and I also raided a couple of silent houses, but they had already been broken into and ransacked. I rested for the remainder of the daylight in a shrubbery, being, in my enfeebled condition, too fatigued to push on.

All this time I saw no human beings, and no signs of the Martians. I encountered a couple of hungry-looking dogs, but both hurried circuitously away from the advances I made them. Near Roehampton I had seen two human skeletons—not bodies, but skeletons, picked clean—and in the wood by me I found the crushed and scattered bones of several cats and rabbits, and the skull of a sheep. But though I gnawed parts of these in my mouth, there was nothing to be got from them.

After sunset, I struggled on along the road towards Putney, where I think the Heat-Ray must have been used for some reason. And in a garden beyond Roehampton I got a quantity of immature potatoes sufficient to stay my hunger. From this garden one saw down upon Putney and the river. The aspect of the place in the dusk was singularly desolate; blackened trees, blackened, desolate ruins, and down the hill the sheets of the flooded river, red-tinged with the weed. And over all—silence. It filled me with indescribable terror to think how swiftly that desolating change had come.

For a time I believed that mankind had been swept out of existence, and that I stood there alone, the last man left alive. Hard by the top of Putney Hill I came upon another skeleton, with the arms dislocated and removed several yards from the rest of the body. As I proceeded I became more and more convinced that the extermination of mankind was, save for such stragglers as myself, already accomplished in this part of the world. The Martians, I thought, had gone on, and left the country desolated, seeking food elsewhere. Perhaps even now they were destroying Berlin or Paris, or it might be they had gone northward. ...

CHAPTER VIII

The Man on Putney Hill

I SPENT that night in the inn that stands at the top of Putney Hill, sleeping in a made bed for the first time since my flight to Leatherhead. I will not tell the needless trouble I had breaking into that house—afterwards I found the front-door was on the latch—nor how I ransacked every room for food, until, just on the verge of despair, in what seemed to me to be a servant's bedroom, I found a rat-gnawed crust and two tinned pineapples. The place had been already searched and emptied. In the bar I afterwards found some biscuits and sandwiches that had been overlooked. The latter I could not eat, but the former not only stayed my hunger, but filled my pockets. I lit no lamps, fearing some Martian might come beating that part of London for food in the night. Before I went to bed I had an interval of restlessness, and prowled from window to window, peering out for some sign of these monsters. I slept little. As I

lay in bed I found myself thinking consecutively—a thing I do not remember to have done since my last argument with the curate. During all the intervening time my mental condition had been a hurrying succession of vague emotional states, or a sort of stupid receptivity. But in the night my brain, reinforced, I suppose, by the food I had eaten, grew clear again, and I thought.

Three things struggled for possession of my mind: the killing of the curate, the whereabouts of the Martians, and the possible fate of my wife. The former gave me no sensation of horror or remorse to recall; I saw it simply as a thing done, a memory infinitely disagreeable, but quite without the quality of remorse. I saw myself then as I see myself now, driven step by step towards that hasty blow, the creature of a sequence of accidents leading inevitably to that. I felt no condemnation; yet the memory, static, unprogressive, haunted me. In the silence of the night, with that sense of the nearness of God that sometimes comes into the stillness and the darkness, I stood my trial, my only trial, for that moment of wrath and fear. I retraced every step of our conversation from the moment when I had found him crouching beside me, heedless of my thirst, and pointing to the fire and smoke that streamed up from the ruins of Weybridge. We had been incapable of co-operation—grim chance had taken no heed of that. Had I foreseen, I should have left him at Halliford. But I did not foresee; and crime is to foresee and do. And I set this down as I have set all this story down, as it was. There were no witnesses—all these things I might have concealed. But I set it down, and the reader must form his judgment as he will.

And when, by an effort, I had set aside that picture of a postrate body, I faced the problem of the Martians and the fate of my wife. For the former I had no data; I could imagine a hundred things, and so, unhappily, I could for the latter. And suddenly that night became terrible. I found myself sitting up in bed, staring at the dark. I found myself praying that the Heat-Ray may have suddenly and painlessly struck her out of being. Since the night of my return from Leatherhead I had not prayed. I had uttered prayers, fetich prayers, had prayed as heathens mutter charms when I was in extremity; but now I prayed indeed, pleading steadfastly and sanely, face to face with the darkness of God. Strange night! strangest in this, that so soon as dawn had come, I, who had talked with God, crept out of the house like a rat leaving its hiding place—a creature scarcely larger, an inferior animal, a thing that for any passing whim of our masters might be hunted and killed. Perhaps they also prayed confidently to God. Surely, if we have learnt nothing else, this war has taught us pity—pity for those witless souls that suffer our dominion.

The morning was bright and fine, and the eastern sky glowed pink, and was fretted with little golden clouds. In the road that runs from the top of Putney Hill to Wimbledon was a number of pitiful vestiges of the panic torrent that must have poured Londonward on the Sunday night after the fighting began. There was a little two-wheeled cart inscribed with the name of Thomas Lobb, Greengrocer, New Malden, with a smashed wheel and an abandoned tin trunk; there was a straw hat trampled into the now hardened mud, and at the top of West Hill a lot of blood-stained glass about the overturned water-trough. My movements were languid, my plans of the vaguest. I had an idea of going to Leatherhead, though I knew that there I had the poorest chance of finding my wife. Certainly, unless death had overtaken them suddenly, my cousins and she would have fled thence; but it seemed to me I might find or learn there whither the Surrey people had fled. I knew I wanted to find my wife, that my heart ached for her and the world of men, but I had no clear idea how the finding might be done. I was also clearly aware now of my intense loneliness. From the corner I went, under cover of a thicket of trees and bushes, to the edge of Wimbledon Common, stretching wide and far.

That dark expanse was lit in patches by yellow gorse and broom; there was no Red Weed to be seen, and as I prowled, hesitating, on the verge of the open, the sun rose, flooding it all with light and vitality. I came upon a busy swarm of little frogs in a swampy place among the trees. I stopped to look at them, drawing a lesson from their stout resolve to live. And presently, turning suddenly, with an odd feeling of being watched, I beheld something crouching amidst a clump of bushes. I stood regarding this. I made a step towards it, and it rose up, and became a man armed with a cutlass. I approached him slowly. He stood silent and motionless, regarding me.

As I drew nearer, I perceived he was dressed in clothes as dusty and filthy as my own; he looked, indeed, as though he had been dragged through a culvert. Nearer, I distinguished the green slime of ditches mixing with the pale drab of dried clay and shiny coaly patches. His black hair fell over his eyes, and his face was dark and dirty and sunken, so that at first I did not recognise him. There was a red cut across the lower part of his face.

"Stop!" he cried, when I was within ten yards of him, and I stopped. His voice was hoarse. "Where do you come from?" he said.

I thought, surveying him.

"I come from Mortlake," I said. "I was buried near the pit the Martians made about their cylinder. I have worked my way out and escaped."

"There is no food about here," he said. "This is my country. All this hill down to the river, and back to Chaplam, and up to the edge of the Common. There is only food for one. Which way are you going?"

I answered slowly.

"I don't know," I said. "I have been buried in the ruins of a house thirteen or fourteen days. I don't know what has happened."

He looked at me doubtfully, then started, and looked with a changed expression.

"I've no wish to stop about here," I said. "I think I shall go to Leatherhead, for my wife was there."

He shot out a pointing finger.

"It is you," said he. "The man from Woking. And you were not killed at Weybridge?"

I recognised him at the same moment.

"You are the artilleryman who came into my garden."

"Good luck!" he said. "We are lucky ones! Fancy *you!*" He put out a hand, and I took it. "I crawled up a drain," he said. "But they didn't kill everyone. And after they went away I got off towards Walton across the fields. But—It's not sixteen days altogether—and your hair is gray." He looked over his shoulder suddenly. "Only a rook," he said. "One gets to know that birds have shadows these days. This *is* a bit open. Let us crawl under those bushes and talk."

"Have you seen any Martians?" I said. "Since I crawled out——"

"They have gone away across London," he said. "I guess they've got a bigger camp there. Of a night, all over there, Hampstead way, the sky is alive with their lights. It's like a great city, and in the glare you can just see them moving. By daylight you can't. But nearer—I haven't seen them—" He counted on his fingers. "Five days. Then I saw a couple across Hammersmith way carrying something big. And the night before last"—he stopped, and spoke impressively—"it was just a matter of lights, but it was something up in the air. I believe they've built a flying machine, and are learning to fly."

I stopped, on hands and knees, for we had come to the bushes.

"Fly!"

"Yes," he said, "fly."

I went on into a little bower, and sat down.

"IT is all over with humanity," I said. "If they can do that they will simply go round the world...."

He nodded.

"They will. But—— It will relieve things over here a bit. And besides—" He looked at me. "Aren't you satisfied it *is* up with humanity? I am. We're down; we're beat."

I stared. Strange as it may seem, I had not arrived at this fact—a fact perfectly obvious so soon as he spoke. I had still held a vague hope; rather, I had kept a lifelong habit of mind. He repeated his words, "We're beat." They carried absolute conviction.

"It's all over," he said. "They've lost *one*—just one. And they've made their footing good, and crippled the greatest power in the world. They've walked over us. The death of that one at Weybridge was an accident. And these are only pioneers. They keep on coming. These green stars—I've seen none these five or six days, but I've no doubt they're falling somewhere every night. Nothing to be done. We're under! We're beat!"

I made him no answer. I sat staring before me, trying in vain to devise some countervailing thought.

"This is not a war," said the artilleryman. "It never was a war, any more than there's war between men and ants."

Suddenly I recalled the night in the observatory.

"After the tenth shot they fired no more—at least, until the first cylinder came."

"How do you know?" said the artilleryman. I explained. He thought. "Something wrong with the gun," he said. "But what if there is? They'll get it right again. And even if there's a delay, how can it alter the end? It's just men and ants. There's the ants builds their cities, live their lives, have wars, revolutions, until the men want them out of the way, and then they go out of the way. That's what we are now—just ants. Only—"

"Yes," I said.

"We're eatable ants."

We sat looking at each other.

"And what will they do with us?" I said.

"That's what I've been thinking," he said—"that's what I've been thinking. After Weybridge I went south—thinking. I saw what was up. Most of the people were hard at it squealing and exciting themselves. But I'm not so fond of squealing. I've been in sight of death once or twice; I'm not an ornamental soldier, and at the best and worst, death—it's just death. And it's the man that keeps on thinking comes through. I saw everyone tracking away south. Says I, 'Food won't last this way,' and I turned right back. I went for the Martians like a sparrow goes for man. All round"—he waved a hand to the horizon—"they're starving in heaps, bolting, treading on each other...."

He saw my face, and halted awkwardly.

"No doubt lots who had money have gone away to France," he said. He seemed to hesitate whether to apologize, met my eyes, and went on: "There's food all about here. Canned things in shops; wines, spirits, mineral waters; and the water mains and drains are empty. Well, I was telling you what I was thinking 'Here's intelligent things,' I said, 'and it seems they want us for food. First, they'll smash us up—ships, machines, guns, cities, all the order and organization. All that will go. If we were the size of ants we might pull through. But we're not. It's all too bulky to stop. That's the first certainty.' Eh?"

I assented.

"It is; I've thought it out. Very well, then, next: at present we're caught as we're wanted. A Martian has only to go a few miles to get a crowd on the run. And I saw one, one day by Wandsworth, picking houses to pieces and routing among the wreckage. But they won't keep on doing that. So soon as they've settled all our guns and ships, and smashed our railways, and done all the things they are doing over there, they will begin catching us systematic, picking the best and storing us in cages and things. That's what they will start doing in a bit. Lord! they haven't begun on us yet. Don't you see that?"

"Not begun!" I exclaimed.

"Not begun. All that's happened so far is through our not have the sense to keep quiet—worrying them with guns and such foolery. And losing our heads, and rushing off in crowds to where there wasn't any more safety than where we were. They don't want to bother us yet. They're making their things—making all the things they couldn't bring with them, getting

things easy for the rest of their people. Very likely that's why the cylinders have stopped for a bit, for fear of hitting those who are here. And instead of our rushing about blind, on the howl, or getting dynamite on the chance of busting them up, we've got to fix ourselves up according to the new state of affairs. That's how I figure it out. It isn't quite according to what a man wants for his species, but it's about what the facts point to. And that's the principle I acted upon. Cities, nations, civilization, progress—it's all over. That game's up. We're beat."

"But if that is so, what is there to live for?"

The artilleryman looked at me for a moment.

"There won't be any more blessed concerts for a million years or so; there won't be any Royal Academy of Arts, and no nice little feeds at restaurants. If it's amusement you're after, I reckon the game is up. If you've got any drawing-room manners, or a dislike to eating peas with a knife or dropping aitches, you'd better chuck 'em away. They ain't no further use."

"You mean——"

"I mean, that men like me are going on living—for the sake of the bread. I tell you, I'm grim set on living And, if I'm not mistaken, you'll show what insides *you've* got, too, before long. We aren't going to be exterminated. And I don't mean to be caught, either, and tamed and fattened and bred like a thundering ox. Ugh! Fancy those brown creepers!"

"You don't mean to say——"

"I do. I'm going on. Under their feet. I've got it planned; I've thought it out. We men are beat. We don't know enough. We've got to learn before we've got a chance. And we've got to live, and keep independent while we learn. See? That's what has to be done."

I stared, astonished, and stirred profoundly by the man's resolution.

"Great God!" cried I. "But you are a man indeed!" And suddenly I gripped his hand.

"Eh?" he said with his eyes shining. "I've thought it out, eh?"

"Go on," I said.

"WELL, those who mean to escape their catching must get ready. I'm getting ready. Mind you, it isn't all of us are made for wild beasts; and that's what it's got to be. That's why I watched you. I had my doubts. You're thin and slender. I didn't know it was you, you see, or just how you'd been buried. All these—the sort of people that lived in these houses and all those damn little clerks that used to live down *that* way—they'd be no good. They haven't any spirit in them—no proud dreams and no proud lusts; and a man who hasn't one or the other—Lord! what is he but funk and precautions? They just used to skedaddle off to work—I've seen hundreds of'em, bit of breakfast in hand, running wild and shining to catch their little season-ticket train, for fear they'd get dismissed if they didn't; working at businesses they were afraid to take the trouble to understand; skedaddling back for fear they wouldn't be in time for dinner; keeping indoors after dinner for fear of the backstreets; and sleeping with the wives they married, not because they wanted them, but because they had a bit of money that would make for safety in their one little miserable skedaddle through the world. Lives insured and a bit invested for fear of accidents. And on Sundays—fear of here-after. As if hell was built for rabbits! Well, the Martians will just be a godsend to these. Nice roomy cages, fattening food, careful breeding, no worry. After a week or so chasing about the fields and lands on empty stomachs, they'll come and be caught cheerful. They'll be quite glad after a bit. They'll wonder what people did before there were Martians to take care of them.

"And the bar-loafers, and mashers, and singers—I can imagine them. I can imagine them," he said, with a sort of sombre gratification. "There'll be any amount of sentiment and religion loose among them. There's hundreds of things I saw with my eyes, that I've only begun to see clearly these last few days. There's lots will take things as they are, fat and stupid; and lots will be worried by a sort of feeling that it's all wrong, and that they ought to be doing something. Now, whenever things are so that a lot of people feel they ought to be doing something, the weak, and those who go weak with a lot of complicated thinking, always make for a sort of do-nothing religion, very pious and superior, and submit to persecution and the will of the Lord. Very likely you've seen the same thing. It's energy in a gale of funk, and turned clean inside out. These cages will be full of psalms and hymns and piety. And those of a less simple sort will work in a bit of—what is it?—eroticism."

He paused.

"Very likely the Martians will make pets of some of them; train them to do tricks—who knows?—get sentimental over the pet boy who grew up and had to be killed. And some, maybe, they will train to hunt us."

"No," I cried, "that's impossible! No human being——"

"What's the good of going on with such lies?" said the artilleryman. "There's men who'd do it cheerful. What nonsense to pretend there isn't!"

And I succumbed to his conviction.

"If they come after me," he said—"Lord! if they come after me!" and subsided into a grim meditation.

I sat contemplating these things. I could find nothing to bring against this man's reasoning. In the days before the invasion no one would have questioned my intellectual superiority to his—I, a professed and recognised writer on philosophical themes, and he, a common soldier—and yet he had already formulated a situation that I had scarcely realized.

"What are you doing?" I said presently. "What plans have you made?"

"Well, it's like this," he said. "What have we to do? We have to invent a sort of life where men can live and breed, and be sufficiently secure to bring the children up. Yes—wait a bit, and I'll make it clearer what I think ought to be done. The tame ones will go like all tame beasts; in a few generations they'll be big, beautiful, rich-blooded, stupid—rubbish! The risk is that we who keep wild will go

savage—degenerate into a sort of big savage rat.... You see, how I mean to live is underground. I've been about the drains. Of course, those who don't know drains think horrible things; but under this London are miles and miles—hundreds of miles—and a few days' rain and London empty will leave them sweet and clean. The main drains are big enough and airy enough for any one. Then there's cellars, vaults, stores, from which bolting passages may be made to the drains. And the railway tunnels and subways. Eh? You begin to see? And we form a band—able-bodied, clean-minded men. We're not going to pick up any rubbish that drifts in. Weaklings go out again."

"As you meant me to go?"

"Well—I parleyed, didn't I?"

"We won't quarrel about that. Go on."

"Those who stop, obey orders. Able-bodied, clean-minded women we want also—mothers and teachers. No lackadaisical ladies—no blasted rolling eyes. We can't have any weak or silly. Life is real again, and the useless and cumbersome and mischievous have to die. They ought to die. They ought to be willing to die. It's a sort of disloyalty, after all, to live and taint the race. And they can't be happy. Moreover, dying's none so dreadful;—it's the funking makes it bad. And in all those places we shall gather. Our district will be London. And we may even be able to keep a watch, and run about in the open when the Martians keep away. Play cricket, perhaps. That's how we shall save the race. Eh? It's a possible thing? But saving the race is nothing in itself. As I say, that's only being rats. It's saving our knowledge and adding to it is the thing. There men like you come in. There's books, there's models. We must make great safe places down deep, and get all the books we can; not novels and poetry swipes, but ideas, science books. That's where men like you come in. We must go to the British Museum and pick all those books through. Especially we must keep up our science—learn more. We must watch these Martians. Some of us must go as spies. When it's all working, perhaps I will. Get caught, I mean. And the great thing is, we must leave the Martians alone. We mustn't even steal. If we get in their way, we clear out. We must show them we mean no harm. Yes, I know. But they're intelligent things, and they won't hunt us down if they have all they want, and think we're just harmless vermin."

The artilleryman paused, and laid a brown hand upon my arm.

"After all it may not be so much we may have to learn before—— Just imagine this: Four or five of their Fighting Machines suddenly starting off—Heat-Rays right and left, and not a Martian in 'em. Not a Martian in 'em, but men—men who have learned the way how. It may be in my time even—those men. Fancy having one of them lovely things, with its Heat-Ray wide and free! Fancy having it in control! What would it matter if you smashed to smithereens at the end of the run, after a bust like that? I reckon the Martians will open their beautiful eyes. Can't you see them, man? Can't you see them hurrying, hurrying—puffing and blowing and hooting to their other mechanical affairs? Something out of gear in every case. And swish, bang, rattle, swish! just as they are fumbling over it, *swish* comes the Heat-Ray, and, behold! man has come back to his own."

FOR a while the imaginative daring of the artilleryman, and the tone of assurance and courage he assumed, completely dominated my mind. I believed unhesitatingly both in his forecast of human destiny and in the practicability of his astonishing scheme. and the reader who thinks me susceptible and foolish must contrast his position, reading steadily, with all his thoughts about his subject and mine, crouching fearfully in the bushes and listening, distracted by apprehension. We talked in this manner through the early morning time and later crept out of the bushes, and, after scanning the sky for Martians, hurried precipitately to the house on Putney Hill where he had made his lair. It was the coal-cellar of the place, and when I saw the work he had spent a week upon—it was a burrow scarcely ten yards long, which he designed to reach to the main drain on Putney Hill—I had my first inkling of the gulf between his dreams and his powers. Such a hole I could have dug in a day. But I believed in him sufficiently to work with him all that morning until past mid-day at his digging. We had a garden barrow, and shot the earth we removed against the kitchen range. We refreshed ourselves with a tin of mock-turtle soup and wine from the neighboring pantry. I found a curious relief from the aching strangeness of the world in this steady labour. As we worked, I turned his project over in my mind, and presently objections and doubts began to arise; but I worked there all the morning, so glad was I to find myself with a purpose again. After working an hour, I began to speculate on the distance one had to go before the cloaca was reached—the chances we had of missing it altogether. My immediate trouble was why we should dig this long tunnel, when it was possible to get into the drain at once down one of the manholes, and work back to the house. It seemed to me, too, that the house was inconveniently chosen, and required a needless length of tunnel. And just as I was beginning to face these things, the artilleryman stopped digging, and looked at me.

"We're working well," he said. He put down his spade. "Let us knock off a bit," he said. "I think it's time we reconnoitred from the roof of the house."

I was for going on, and after a little hesitation he resumed his spade; and then suddenly I was struck by a thought. I stopped, and so did he at once.

"Why were you walking about the Common," I said, "instead of being here?"

"Taking the air," he said. "I was coming back. It's safer by night."

"But the work?"

"Oh, one can't always work," he said, and in a flash I saw the man plain. He hesitated, holding his spade. "We ought to reconnoitre now," he said, "because if any come near they may hear the spades and drop upon us unaware."

I was no longer disposed to object. We went to-

gether to the roof and stood on a ladder peeping out of the roof door. No Martians were to be seen, and we ventured out on the tiles, and slipped down under shelter of the parapet.

From this position a shrubbery hid the greater portion of Putney, but we could see the river below, a bubbly mass of Red Weed, and the low parts of Lambeth flooded and red. The red creeper swarmed up the trees about the old palace, and their branches stretched gaunt and dead, and set with shrivelled leaves, from amidst its clusters. It was strange how entirely dependent both these things were upon flowing water for their propagation. About us neither had gained a footing; laburnums, pink mays, snowballs, and trees of arbor vitae, rose out of laurels and hydrangeas, green and brilliant into the sunlight. Beyond Kensington dense smoke was rising, and that and a blue haze hid the northward hills.

The artilleryman began to tell me of the sort of people who still remained in London.

"One night last week," he said, "some fools got the electric light in order, and there was all Regent's Street and the Circus ablaze, crowded with painted and ragged drunkards, men and women, dancing and shouting till dawn. A man who was there told me. And as the day came they beheld a Fighting Machine standing near by the Langham, and looking down at them. Heaven knows how long he had been there. He came down the road towards them, and picked up nearly a hundred too drunk or frightened to run away."

Grotesque gleam of a time no history will ever fully describe!

From that, in answering to my questions, he came round to his grandiose plans again. He grew enthusiastic. He talked so eloquently of the possibility of capturing a Fighting Machine, that I more than half believed in him again. But now that I was beginning to understand something of his quality, I could divine the stress he laid on doing nothing precipitately. And I noted that now there was no question that he personally was to capture and fight the great machine.

After a time we went down to the cellar. Neither of us seemed disposed to resume digging, and when he suggested a meal, I was nothing loath. He became suddenly very generous, and when we had eaten he went away, and returned with some excellent cigars. We lit these, and his optimism glowed. He was inclined to regard my coming as a great occasion.

"There's some champagne in the cellar," he said.

"We can dig better on this Thames-side burgundy, said I.

"No," said he; "I am host to-day. Champagne! Great God! we've a heavy enough task before us! Let us take a rest, and gather strength while we may. Look at these blistered hands!"

And pursuant to this idea of a holiday, he insisted upon playing cards after we had eaten. He taught me euchre, and after dividing London between us, I taking the northern side, and he the southern, we played for the parish points. Grotesque and foolish as this will seem to the sober reader, it is absolutely true, and what is more remarkable, I found the card game and several others we played extremely interesting.

Strange mind of man! that, with our species upon the edge of extermination or apalling degradation, with no clear prospect before us but the chance of a horrible death, we could sit following the chance of this painted pasteboard and playing the "joker" with vivid delight. Afterwards he taught me poker, and I beat him at three tough chess games. When dark came we were so interested that we decided to take the risk and light a lamp.

After an interminable string of games, we supped, and the artilleryman finished the champagne. We continued smoking the cigars. He was no longer the energetic regenerator of his species I had encountered in the morning. He was still optimistic, but it was a less kinetic, a more thoughful optimism. I remember he wound up with my health, proposed in a speech of small variety and considerable intermittence. I took a cigar, and went upstairs to look at the lights he had spoken of, that blazed so greenly along the Highgate hills.

At first I stared across the London valley, unintelligently. The northern hills were shrouded in darkness; the fires near Kensington glowed redly, and now and then an orange-red tongue of flame flashed up and vanished in the deep blue night. All the rest of London was black. Then, nearer, I perceived a strange light, a pale violet-purple fluorescent glow, quivering under the night breeze. For a space I could not understand it, and then I knew that it must be the Red Weed from which this faint irradiation proceeded. With that realization, my dormant sense of wonder, my sense of the proportion of things, awoke again. I glanced from that to Mars, red and clear, glowing high in the west, and then gazed long and earnestly at the darkness of Hampstead and Highgate.

I remained a very long time upon the roof, wondering at the grotesque changes of the day. I recalled my mental states from the midnight prayer to the foolish card-playing. I had a violent revulsion of feeling. I remember I flung away the cigar with a certain wasteful symbolism. My folly came to me with glaring exaggeration. I seemed a traitor to my wife and to my kind; I was filled with remorse. I resolved to leave this strange undisciplined dreamer of great things to his drink and gluttony, and to go on into London. There, it seemed to me, I had the best chance of learning what the Martians and my fellowmen were doing. I was still upon the roof when the late moon rose.

CHAPTER VIII

Dead London

AFTER I had parted from the artilleryman, I went down the hill, and by the High Street across the bridge to Lambeth. The Red Weed was tumultuous at that time, and nearly choked the bridge roadway, but its fronds were already whitening

in patches by the spreading disease that presently removed it so swiftly.

At the corner of the lane that runs to Putney Bridge Station I found a man lying. He was as black as a sweep with the black dust, alive, but helplessly and speechlessly drunk. I could get nothing from him but curses and furious lunges at my head. I think I should have stayed by him but for the brutal type of his face.

There was black dust along the roadway from the bridge onwards, and it grew thicker in Fulham. The streets were horribly quiet. I got food—sour, hard, and mouldy, but quite eatable—in a baker's shop here. Some way towards Walham Green the streets became clear of powder, and I passed a white terrace of houses on fire; the noise of the burning was an absolute relief. Going on towards Brompton, the streets were quiet again.

Here I came once more upon the black powder in the streets and upon dead bodies. I saw altogether about a dozen in the length of the Fulham Road. They had been dead many days, so that I hurried quickly past them. The black powder covered them over, and softened their outlines. One or two had been disturbed by dogs.

Where there was not black powder, it was curiously like a Sunday in the City, with the closed shops, the houses locked up and the blinds drawn, the desertion, and the stillness. In some places plunderers had been at work, but rarely at other than the provision and wine-shops. A jeweller's window had been broken open in one place, but apparently the thief had been disturbed, and a number of gold chains and a watch were scattered on the pavement. I did not trouble to touch them. Further on was a tattered woman in a heap on a doorstep; the hand that hung over her knee was gashed and bled down her rusty brown dress, and a smashed magnum of champagne formed a pool across the pavement. She seemed asleep, but she was dead.

The further I penetrated into London, the profounder grew the stillness. But it was not so much the stillness of death—it was the stillness of suspense, of expectation. At any time the destruction that had already signed the north-western borders of the Metropolis, and had annihilated Ealing and Kilburn, might strike among these houses and leave them smoking ruins. It was a city condemned and derelict....

In South Kensington the streets were clear of dead and of black powder. It was near South Kensington that I first heard the howling. It crept almost imperceptibly upon my senses. It was a sobbing alternation of two notes, "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," keeping on perpetually. When I passed streets that ran northward it grew in volume, and houses and buildings seemed to deaden and cut it off again. It came to a full tide down Exhibition Road. I stopped, staring towards Kensington Gardens, wondering at this strange remote wailing. It was as if that mighty desert of houses had found a voice for its fear and solitude. "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," wailed that superhuman note—great waves of sound sweeping down the broad, sunlit roadway, between the tall buildings on either side. I turned northward, marvelling, towards the iron gates of Hyde Park. I had half a mind to break into the Natural History Museum and find my way up to the summits of the towers in order to see across the park. But I decided to keep to the ground, where quick hiding was possible, and so went on up the Exhibition Road. All the large mansions on either side of the road were empty and still, and my footsteps echoed against the sides of the houses. At the top, near the park gate, I came upon a strange sight—a 'bus overturned, and the skeleton of a horse picked clean. I puzzled over this for a time, and then went on to the bridge over the Serpentine. The Voice grew stronger and stronger, though I could see nothing above the housetops on the north side of the park, save a haze of smoke to the northwest.

"Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," cried the Voice, coming, as it seemed to me, from the district about Regent's Park. The desolate cry worked upon my mind. The mood that had sustained me passed. The wailing took possession of me. I found I was intensely weary, foot-sore, and now again hungry and thirsty.

It was already past noon. Why was I wandering alone in this city of the dead? Why was I alone when all London was lying in state, and in its black shroud? I felt intolerably lonely, My mind ran on old friends that I had forgotten for years. I thought of the poisons in the chemists' shops, of the liquors the wine-merchants stored; I recalled the two sodden creatures of despair who, so far as I knew, shared the city with myself....

I came into Oxford Street by the Marble Arch, and here again was black powder and several bodies, and an evil, ominous smell from the gratings of the cellars of some of the houses. I grew very thirsty after the heat of my long walk. With infinite trouble I managed to break into a public-house and get food and drink. I was weary after eating, and went into the parlour behind the bar, and slept on a black horsehair sofa I found there.

I awoke to find that dismal howling still in my ears, "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla." It was now dusk, and after I had routed out some biscuits and a cheese in the bar—there was a meat-safe, but it contained nothing but maggots—I wandered on through the silent residential squares to Baker Street—Portman Square is the only one I can name—and so came out at last upon Regent's Park. And as I emerged from the top of Baker Street, I saw far away over the trees in the clearness of the sunset the hood of the Martian giant from which this howling proceeded. I was not terrified. I came upon him as if it were a matter of course. I watched him for some time, but he did not move. He appeared to be standing and yelling, for no reason that I could discover..

I tried to formulate a plan of action. That perpetual sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," confused my mind. Perhaps I was too tired to be very fearful. Certainly I was rather more curious to know the reason of this monotonous crying than afraid. I turned back away from the park and struck into Park Road,

intending to skirt the park, went along under shelter of the terraces, and got a view of this stationary howling Martian from the direction of St. John's Wood. A couple of hundred yards out of Baker Street I heard a yelping chorus, and saw, first a dog with a piece of putrescent red meat in his jaws coming headlong towards me, and then a pack of starving mongrels in pursuit of him. He made a wide curve to avoid me, as though he feared I might prove a fresh competitor. As the yelping died away down the silent road, the wailing sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla, ulla," reasserted itself.

I CAME upon the wrecked Handling Machine halfway to St. John's Wood Station. At first I thought a house had fallen across the road. It was only as I clambered among the ruins that I saw, with a start, this mechanical Samson lying, with its tentacles bent and smashed and twisted, among the ruins it had made. The fore-part was shattered. It seemed as if it had driven blindly straight at the house, and had been overwhelmed in its overthrow. It seemed to me then that this might have happened by a Handling Machine escaping from the guidance of its Martian. I could not clamber among the ruins to see it, and the twilight was not so far advanced that the blood with which its seat was smeared, and the gnawed gristle of the Martian that the dogs had left, was invisible to me.

Wondering still more at all that I had seen, I pushed on towards Primrose Hill. Far away, through a gap in the trees, I saw a second Martian, motionless as the first, standing in the park towards the Zoological Gardens, and silent. A little beyond the ruins about the smashed Handling Machine I came upon the Red Weed again, and found Regent's Canal a spongy mass of dark-red vegetation.

Abruptly as I crossed the bridge, the sound of "Ulla, ulla, ulla," ceased. It was, as it were, cut off. The silence came like a thunder-clap.

The dusky houses about me stood faint, and tall and dim; the trees towards the park were growing black. All about me the Red Weed clambered among the ruins, writhing to get above me in the dim. Night, the Mother of Fear and Mystery, was coming upon me. But while that voice sounded, the solitude, the desolation, had been endurable; by virtue of it London had still seemed alive, and the sense of life about me had upheld me. Then suddenly a change, the passing of something—I knew not what—and then a stillness that could be felt. Nothing but this gaunt quiet.

London about me gazed at me spectrally. The windows in the white houses were like the eye-sockets of skulls. About me my imagination found a thousand noiseless enemies moving. Terror seized me, a horror of my temerity. In front of me the road became pitchy black as though it were tarred, and I saw a contorted shape lying across the pathway. I could not bring myself to go on. I turned down St. John's Wood Road, and ran headlong from this unendurable stillness towards Kilburn. I hid from the night and the silence, until long after midnight, in a cabmen's shelter in the Harrow Road. But before the dawn my courage returned, and while the stars were still in the sky, I returned once more towards Regent's Park. I missed my way among the streets, and presently saw, down a long avenue, in the half-light of the early dawn, the curve of Primrose Hill. On the summit, towering up to the fading stars, was a third Martian, erect and motionless like the others.

An insane resolve possessed me. I would die and end it. And I would save myself even the trouble of killing myself. I marched on recklessly towards this Titan, and then as I drew nearer and the light grew, I saw that a multitude of black birds was circling and clustering about the hood. At that my heart gave a bound, and I began running along the road.

I hurried through the Red Weed that choked St. Edmunds Terrace (I waded breast-high across a torrent of water that was rushing down from the waterworks towards the Albert Road), and emerged upon the grass before the rising of the sun. Great mounds had been heaped about the crest of the hill, making a huge redoubt of it—it was the final and largest place the Martians made—and from behind these heaps there rose a thin smoke against the sky. Against the skyline an eager dog ran and disappeared. The thought that had flashed into my mind grew real, grew credible. I felt no fear, only a wild trembling exultation, as I ran up the hill towards the motionless monster. Out of the hood hung lank shreds of brown at which the hungry birds pecked and tore.

In another moment I had scrambled up the earthen rampart and stood upon its crest, and the interior of the redoubt was below me. A mighty space it was, with gigantic machines here and there within it, huge mounds of material and strange shelter-places. And, scattered about it, some in their over-turned war-machines, some in the now rigid Handling Machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and laid in a row, were the Martians—*dead!*—slain by the putrefactive and disease bacteria against which their systems were unprepared; slain as the Red Weed was being slain; slain after all man's devices had failed, by the humblest things that God, in His wisdom, has put upon this earth.

FOR so it had come about, as, indeed, I and many men might have foreseen had not terror and disaster blinded our minds. These germs of disease have taken tolls of humanity since the beginning of things—taken toll of our prehuman ancestors since life began here. But by virtue of this natural selection of our kind we have developed resisting-power; to no germs do we succumb without a struggle, and to many—those that cause putrefaction in dead matter, for instance—our living frames are altogether immune. But there are no bacteria in Mars, and directly these invaders arrived, directly they drank and fed, our microscopic allies began to work their overthrow. Already when I watched them they were irrevocably doomed, dying and rotting even as they went to and fro. It was inevitable. By the toll of a billion deaths, man has bought his birthright of the earth, and it is his against all comers; it would

still be his were the Martians ten times as mighty as they are. For neither do men live nor die in vain.

Here and there they were scattered, nearly fifty altogether in that great gulf they had made, overtaken by a death that must have seemed to them as incomprehensible as any death could be. To me also at that time this death was incomprehensible. All I knew was that these things that had been alive and so terrible to men were dead. For a moment I believed that the destruction of Sennacherib had been repeated, that God had repented, that the Angel of Death had slain them in the night.

I stood staring into the pit, and my heart lightened gloriously, even as the rising sun struck the world to fire about me with his rays. The pit was still in darkness; the mighty engines, so great and wonderful in their power and complexity, so unearthly in their tortuous forms, rose weird and vague and strange out of the shadows towards the light. A multitude of dogs, I could hear, fought over the bodies that lay darkly in the depth of the pit, far below me. Across the pit on its further lip, flat and vast and strange, lay the great flying-machine with which they had been experimenting upon our denser atmosphere when decay and death arrested them. Death had come not a day too soon. At the sound of a cawing overhead I looked up at the huge Fighting Machine, that would fight no more forever, at the tattered red shreds of flesh that dripped down upon the overturned seats on the summit of Primrose Hill.

I turned and looked down the slope of the hill to where, enhaloed now in birds, stood those other two Martians that I had seen over-night, just as death had overtaken them. The one had died, even as it had been crying to its companions; perhaps it was the last to die, and its voice had gone on perpetually until the force of its machinery was exhausted. They glittered now, harmless tripod towers of shining metal, in the brightness of the rising sun.. ..

All about the pit, and saved as by miracle from everlasting destruction, stretched the great Mother of Cities. Those who have only seen London veiled in her sombre robes of smoke can scarcely imagine the naked clearness and beauty of the silent wilderness of houses.

Eastward, over the blackened ruins of the Albert Terrace and the splintered spire of the church, the sun blazed dazzling in a clear sky, and here and there some facet in the great wilderness of roofs caught the light and glared with a white intensity. It touched even that round store place for wines by the Chalk Farm Station, and the vast railway yards, marked once with a graining of black rails, but red-lined now with the quick rusting of a fortnight's disuse, with something of the mystery of beauty.

Northward were Kilburn and Hampstead, blue and crowded with houses; westward the great city was dimmed; and southward, beyond the Martians, the green waves of Regent's Park, the Langham Hotel, the dome of the Albert Hall, the Imperial Institute, and the giant mansions of the Brompton Road, came out clear and little in the sunrise, the jagged ruins of Westminster rising hazily beyond. Far away and blue were the Surrey hills, and the towers of the Crystal Palace glittered like two silver rods. The dome of St. Paul's was dark against the sunrise, and injured, I saw for the first time, by a huge gaping cavity on its western side.

And as I looked at this wide expanse of houses and factories and churches, silent and abandoned; as I thought of the multitudinous hopes and efforts, the innumerable hosts of lives that had gone to build this human reef, and of the swift and ruthless destruction that had hung over it all; when I realized that the shadow had been rolled back, and that men might still live in the streets, and this dead vast city of mine be once more alive and powerful, I felt a wave of emotion that was near akin to tears.

The torment was over. Even that day the healing would begin. The survivors of the people scattered over the country—leaderless, lawless, foodless, like sheep without a shepherd—the thousands who had fled by sea, would begin to return; the pulse of life, growing stronger and stronger, would beat again in the empty streets, and pour across the vacant squares. Whatever destruction was done, the hand of the destroyer was stayed. The hand of the destroyer was stayed. All the gaunt wrecks, the blackened skeletons of houses that stared so dismally at the sunlit grass of the hill, would presently be echoing with the hammers of the restorers and ringing with the tapping of the trowels. At the thought I extended my hands toward the sky and began thanking God. In a year, thought I—in a year....

And then, with overwhelming force, came the thought of myself, of my wife, and the old life of hope and tender helpfulness that had ceased for ever.

CHAPTER IX.

Wreckage

AND now comes the strangest thing in my story. And yet, perhaps, it is not altogether strange. I remember, clearly and coldly and vividly, all that I did that day until the time that I stood weeping and praising God upon the summit of Primrose Hill. And then I forget....

Of the next three days I know nothing. I have learnt since that, so far from my being the first discoverer of the Martian overthrow, several such wanderers as myself had already discovered this on the previous night. One man—the first—had gone to St. Martin's-le-Grand, and while I sheltered in the cabmen's hut, had contrived to telegraph to Paris. Thence the joyful news had flashed all over the world; a thousand cities, chilled by ghastly apprehensions, suddenly flashed into frantic illumination; they knew of it in Dublin, Edinburg, Manchester, Birmingham, and at the time when I stood upon the verge of the pit. Already men, weeping with joy, as I have heard, shouting and staying their work to shake hands and shout, were making up trains, even as near as Crewe, to descend upon London. The church bells that had ceased a fortnight since suddenly caught the news, until all England was bell-ringing. Men on

cycles, lean-faced, unkempt, scorched along every country lane, shouting of unhoped deliverance, shouting to gaunt, staring figures of despair. And for the food! Across the Channel, across the Irish Sea, across the Atlantic, corn, bread and meat were tearing to our relief. All the shipping in the world seemed going Londonward in those days. But of all this I have no memory. I drifted—a demented man. I found myself in the house of kindly people who had found me on the third day; wandering, weeping and raving, through the streets of St. John's Wood. They have told me that I was singing some inane doggerel about "The Last Man Left Alive, Hurrah! The Last Man Left Alive." Troubled as they were with their own affairs, these people, whose name, much as I would like to express my gratitude to them, I may not even give here, nevertheless cumbered themselves with me, sheltered me and protected me from myself. Apparently they had learned something of my story from me during the days of my lapse.

Very gently, when my mind was assured again, did they break to me what they had learnt of the fate of Leatherhead. Two days after I was imprisoned it had been destroyed, with every soul in it, by a Martian. He had swept it out of existence, as it seemed, without any provocation, as a boy might crush an ant-hill, in the mere wantonness of power.

I was a lonely man, and they were very kind to me. I was a lonely man and a sad one, and they bore with me. I remained with them four days after my recovery. All that time I felt a vague, a growing craving to look once more on whatever remained of the little life that seemed so happy and bright in my past. It was a mere hopeless desire to feast upon my misery. They dissuaded me. They did all they could to divert me from this morbidity. But at last I could resist the impulse no longer, and promising faithfully to return to them, and parting, as I will confess, from these four-day friends with tears, I went out again into the streets that had lately been so dark and strange and empty.

Already they were busy with returning people, in places even there were shops open, and I saw a drinking fountain running water.

I remember how mockingly bright the day seemed as I went back on my melancholy pilgrimage to the little house at Woking, how busy the streets and vivid the moving life about me. So many people were abroad everywhere, busied in a thousand activities, that it seemed incredible that any great proportion of the population could have been slain. But then I noticed how yellow were the skins of the people I met, how shaggy the hair of the men, how large and bright their eyes, and that every other man still wore his dirty rags. The faces seemed all with one of two expressions—a leaping exultation and energy, or a grim resolution. Save for the expression of their faces, London seemed a city of tramps. The vestries were indiscriminately distributing bread sent us by the French Government. The ribs of the few horses showed dismally. Haggard special constables with white badges stood at the corners of every street. I saw little of the mischief wrought by the Martians until I reached Wellington Street, and there I saw the Red Weed clambering over the buttresses of Waterloo Bridge.

At the corner of the bridge, too, I saw one of the common contrasts of that grotesque time: a sheet of paper flaunting against a thicket of the Red Weed, transfixed by a stick that kept it in place. It was the placard of the first newspaper to resume publication—the *Daily Mail*. I bought a copy for a blackened shilling I found in my pocket. Most of it was in blank, but the solitary compositor who did the thing had amused himself by making a grotesque scheme of advertisement stereo on the back page. The matter he printed was emotion; the news organization had not as yet found its way back. I learned nothing fresh except that already in one week the examination of the Martian mechanisms had yielded astonishing results. Among other things, the article assured me what I did not believe at the time; that the "Secret of Flying" was discovered. At Waterloo I found the free trains that were taking people to their homes. The first rush was already over. There were few people in the train, and I was in no mood for casual conversation. I got a compartment to myself, and sat with folded arms, looking grayly at the sunlit devastation that flowed past the windows. And just outside the terminus the train jolted over temporary rails, and on either side of the railway the houses were blackened ruins. To Clapham Junction the face of London was grimy with powder of the Black Smoke, in spite of two days of thunderstorms and rain, and at Clapham Junction the line had been wrecked again; there were hundreds of out-of-work clerks and shopmen working side by side with the customary navvies, and we were jolted over a hasty relaying.

All down the line from there the aspect of the country was gaunt and unfamiliar; Wimbledon particularly had suffered. Walton, by virtue of its unburnt pine-woods, seemed the least hurt of any place along the line. The Wandle, the Mole, every little stream, was a heaped mass of Red Weed, in appearance between butcher's meat and pickled cabbage. The Surrey pine-woods were too dry, however, for the festoons of the red climber. Beyond Wimbledon, within sight of the line, in certain nursery grounds, were the heaped masses of earth about the sixth cylinder. A number of people were standing about it, and some sappers were busy in the midst of it. Over it flaunted a Union Jack, flapping cheerfully in the morning breeze. The nursery grounds were everywhere crimson with the weed, a wide expanse of livid colour cut with purple shadows, and very painful to the eye. One's gaze went with infinite relief from the scorched grays and sullen reds of the foreground to the blue-green softness of the eastward hills.

The line on the London side of Woking Station was still undergoing repair, so I descended at Byfleet Station and took the road to Maybury, past the place where I and the artilleryman had talked to the hussars, and on by the spot where the Martian had appeared to me in the thunderstorm. Here, moved by curiosity, I turned aside to find among a tangle of red fronds, the warped and broken dogcart, with the whitened

bones of the horse, scattered and gnawed. For a time I stood regarding these vestiges....

Then I returned through the pine-wood, neck-high with Red Weed here and there, to find the landlord of the Spotted Dog had already found burial; and so came home past the College Arms. A man standing at an open cottage door greeted me by name as I passed.

I looked at my house with a quick flash of hope that faded immediately. The door had been forced; it was unfastened, and was opening slowly as I approached.

It slammed again. The curtains of my study fluttered out of the open window from which I and the artilleryman had watched the dawn. No one had closed that window since. The smashed bushes were just as I had left them nearly two weeks ago. I stumbled into the hall, and the house was empty. The stair-carpet was ruffled and discoloured where I had crouched soaked to the skin from the thunderstorm, the night of the catastrophe. Our muddy footsteps I saw still went up the stairs.

I followed them to my study, and found lying on my writing-table still, with the selenite paper-weight upon it, the sheet of work I had left on the afternoon of the opening of the cylinder. For a space I stood reading over the abandoned arguments. It was a paper on the probable development of Moral Ideas with the development of the civilizing process; and the last sentence was the opening of a prophecy: "In about two hundred years," I had written, "we may expect—" The sentence ended abruptly. I remembered my inability to fix my mind that morning, scarcely a month gone by, and how I had broken off to get my *Daily Chronicle* from the newsboy. I remembered how I went down to the garden gate as he came along, and how I had listened to his odd story of the "Men from Mars."

I came down and went into the dining-room. There were the mutton and the bread, both far gone now in decay, and a beer bottle overturned, just as I and the artilleryman had left them. My home was desolate. I perceived the folly of the faint hope I had cherished so long. And then a strange thing occurred. "It is no use," said a voice. "The house is deserted. No one has been here for ten days. Do not stay here to torment yourself. No one escaped but you."

I was startled. Had I spoken my thought aloud? I turned, and the French window was open behind me. I made a step to it, and stood looking out.

And there, amazed and afraid, even as I stood amazed and afraid, were my cousin and my wife—my wife white and tearless. She gave a faint cry.

"I came," she said. "I knew—knew——"

She put her hand to her throat—swayed. I made a step forward, and caught her in my arms.

CHAPTER X

The Epilogue

I CANNOT but regret, now I am concluding my story, how little I am able to contribute to the discussion of the many debatable questions which are still unsettled. In one respect I shall certainly provoke criticism. My particular province is speculative philosophy. My knowledge of comparative physiology is confined to a book or two, but it seems to me that Carver's suggestions as to the reason of the rapid death of the Martians is so probable as to be regarded almost as a proven conclusion. I have assumed that in the body of my narrative.

At any rate, in all the bodies of the Martians that were examined after the war, no bacteria except those already known as terrestrial species were found. That they did not bury any of their dead, and the reckless slaughter they perpetrated, point also to an entire ignorance of the putrefactive process. But probable as this seems, it is by no means a proven conclusion.

Neither is the composition of the Black Smoke known, which the Martians used with that deadly effect, and the generator of the Heat-Ray remains a puzzle. The terrible disasters at the Ealing and South Kensington laboratories have disinclined analysts for further investigations upon the latter. Spectrum analysis of the black powder points unmistakably to the presence of an unknown element with a brilliant group of three lines in the green, and it is possible that it combines with argon to form a compound which acts at once with deadly effect upon some constituent in the blood. But such unproven speculations will scarcely be of interest to the general reader, to whom this story is addressed. None of the brown scum that drifted down the Thames after the destruction of Shepperton was examined at the time, and now none is forthcoming.

The results of an anatomical examination of the Martians, so far as the prowling dogs had left such an examination possible, I have already given. But everyone is familiar with the magnificent and almost complete specimen in spirits at the Natural History Museum, and the countless drawings that have been made from it; and beyond that the interest of the physiology and structure is purely scientific.

A question of graver and universal interest is the possibility of another attack from the Martians. I do not think that nearly enough attention is being given to this aspect of the matter. At present the planet Mars is in conjunction, but with every return to opposition I, for one, anticipate a renewal of their adventure. In any case, we should be prepared. It seems to me that it should be possible to define the position of the gun from which the shots are discharged, to keep a sustained watch upon this part of the planet, and to anticipate the arrival of the next attack.

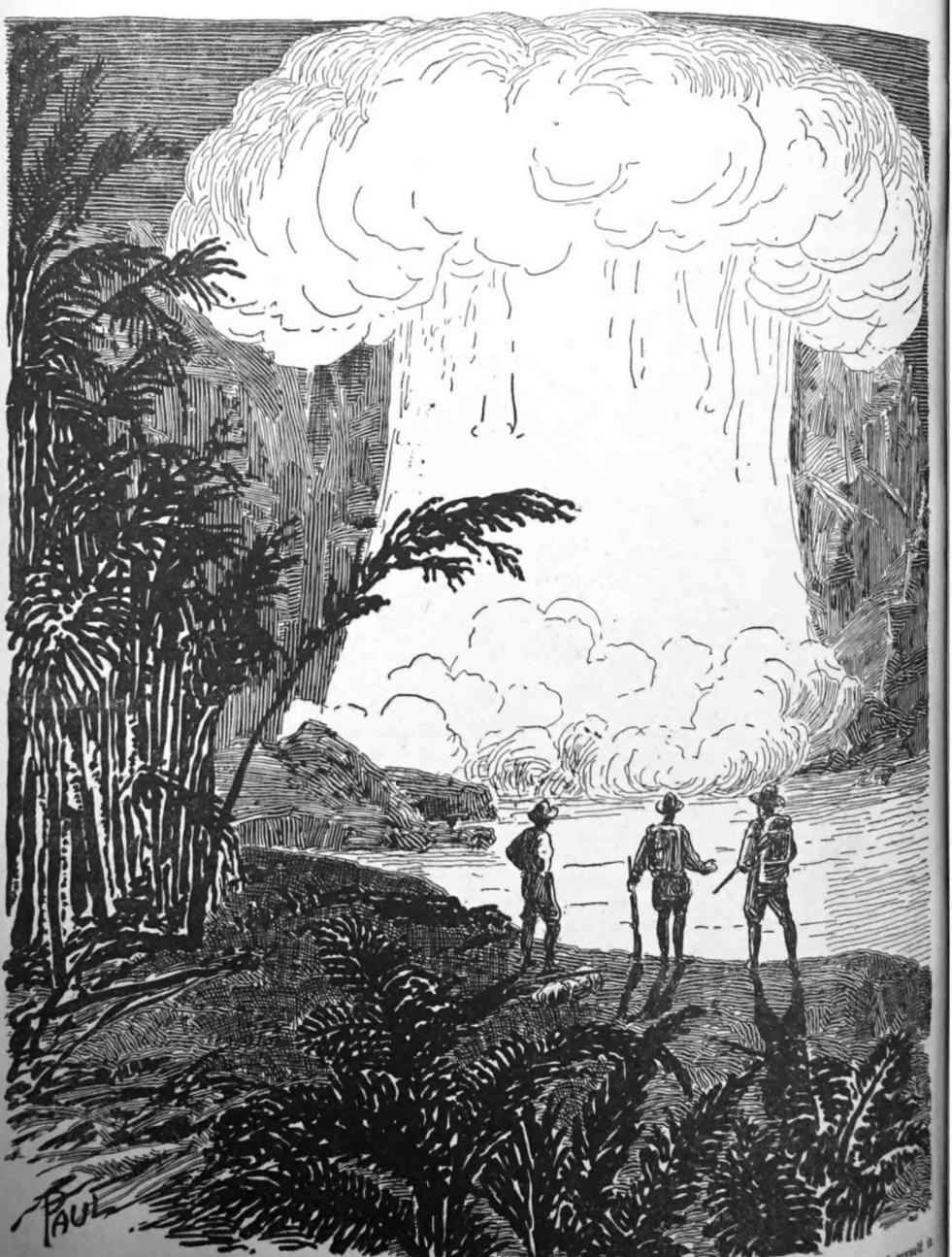
In that case the cylinder might be destroyed with dynamite or artillery before it was sufficiently cool for the Martians to emerge, or they might be butchered by means of guns so soon as the screw opened. It seems to me that they have lost a vast advantage in the failure of their first surprise. Possibly they see it in the same light.

Lessing had advanced excellent reasons for supposing that the Martians have actually succeeded in effecting a landing on the planet Venus. Seven months ago now, Venus and Mars were in alignment with the

(Continued on page 609.)

A LINK to the PAST

By Charles G. Blandford



From the edge of this clearing, if it may be so termed, we got our first close view of the *Feu Perpetuel*. To Prof. Schlecting and myself it was merely awe-inspiring, but to Lomen, it was more. He was terrorized by the majesty of it.

I AM seldom interested in moving picture shows, but this particular film had promised to be of interest, for as Assistant Curator of the State Museum of Natural History, I had helped assemble into substantial replicas, scattered remnants of just such creatures as were moving lifelike before me on the screen.

For a time I was completely lost in the picture, marvelling at the manner in which the eye could be deceived by the camera. It seemed incredible that the weight of the largest of these pseudo-beasts wallowing in the mud scarcely exceeded five pounds, when the smallest of the live Dinosaurs doubtless weighed as many tons.

I was rudely aroused from my revery by a violent nudge from the man occupying the seat next to me. I remembered that this fellow had addressed a remark to me as I entered the theatre and seeing that he was a stranger I had not responded. He had then followed me down the aisle, passing many empty seats and had taken the seat next to me.

"Can you imagine," he said, leaning over and whispering in my ear, "that a man could be bitten by one of those things and live to tell of it?"

"I am sure that I cannot," I answered in a tone that should have discouraged further conversation, but the man was persistent.

"I was bitten by one," was his startling assertion, "and stand ready to prove it."

I have been told that the sort of liquor one usually gets these days might produce a phantasmagoria that would conjure Dinosaurs and any number of other impossible things, but certainly not the evidence of the bite of one. As this man hadn't the tell-tale odor of liquor on his breath, I decided that he must be crazy, and, having a particular aversion for crazy people, I quit the show before it was ended. My seat-mate, however, was not to be disposed of so easily. While standing at the curb, waiting for a car that would take me back to the Museum; he appeared, carrying a cheap-looking case of the telescope variety. This, he plunked to the walk and to my annoyance, again addressed me.

"Well, Professor Jameson," he said, "guess you didn't recognize me in there?"

He appeared normal enough here under the bright lights; his clothing was clean and the quizzical smile in his wide blue eyes was disarming. And there was something vaguely familiar in his seamed, weather-beaten face. Still, though he knew my name, I was sure that he was a total stranger. I had read that it is always better to humor the mentally unsound.

"Not entirely," I responded, evasively, "you will excuse me, please, for I see my car approaching."

"I am Ronald Jarvis," he said picking up his telescope and following me to the car track, "do you forget that it was I who went with Professor Schlecting on an exploring expedition for the Museum twenty years ago?"

And it was indeed Jarvis, the right-hand man of the former Curator-in-Chief of the museum, who had gone into northern Quebec twenty years before, in search of a tribe of white Indians who were said to exist somewhere in that great country and whose Manitou or God was the fabled "*Feu Perpetuel*," or everlasting fire, reports of which persisted at that time. The entire party was supposed to have perished, for till this minute no tidings had been received of the expedition. My car was standing before me and the Conductor was impatiently demanding that I get on or get off, as I had a foot on the lower step. I grabbed the case from the hand of Jarvis and jumped to the platform and he, to regain the case, was forced to follow me. The car started with a jerk.

"I can't see why you did that, Prof. Jameson," protested Jarvis, indignantly, "I must find a lodging house for the night."

"You may lodge with me," I replied. "Professor Münster is still at the Museum and will want to hear from you at the earliest possible moment."

"But I am not due to report till tomorrow. I wrote him from Cochrane that I would be here on the Twelfth."

"He knows then that you are coming? I was hoping to spring a pleasant surprise on him. Here we are," I said, as the car slowed at the Museum crossing, and still holding the telescope, I hopped off, followed by Jarvis. Jarvis balked again at the entrance to the museum.

"I am dog-tired, Prof. Jameson," he said. "I have been on the move almost continually for three months. Let us postpone this till tomorrow." But I would not listen to such a thing. I knew that the Chief must have received the letter from Jarvis in the last mail, just after I had left the museum, and that he would be on tenter-hooks till he got at least a preliminary report about the last expedition.

Prof. Münster sat at his desk. Before him was stretched a great map of Canada, which he had evidently been studying in anticipation of the visit from Jarvis.

"Jarvis!" he exclaimed, when he saw us, "God bless my soul, but I'm glad you came this evening, otherwise I am sure I would not have slept a wink all night."

As I explained the circumstance that had put me in touch with our former attaché, Jarvis sank wearily into a chair across the desk from the Curator, who

EXPLORERS from various parts of the world have a habit of startling us with their tales of almost unbelievable things which they find in their wanderings over our planet. Is it possible some prehistoric beasts may still be roaming somewhere on this planet, where conditions are just right? Science hesitates to answer this, because you can never know. It is not at all impossible—that is, if conditions are just right. Most of the prehistoric animals probably roamed on earth when it was very much hotter than it is today, when there were dense water vapors still lying in thick, fogs over the earth. If such conditions were duplicated anywhere, it is possible that there might be a survival from the past. Our new author has used this rather interesting plot, and we know you will find his story of much interest.

surveyed him keenly through the thick lenses of his glasses.

"The past twenty years have done well by you, Jarvis;" he remarked, "when you left, you were thin, now you are robust. Though you did not mention the fact in your letter, I assume that Prof. Schlecting was unable to survive the rigors of a winter in the far north?"

A pained expression stole across the features of our visitor. "It was not the cold, Prof. Münster, it was something more horrible that overtook our poor friend. Do you insist on a report tonight?"

"A preliminary one, at least, my dear Jarvis," replied the Curator, eagerly, "you might tell us how our dear friend met his fate and why you have permitted twenty years to elapse before communicating with us."

Jarvis settled himself resignedly in the chair. "To do that," he said, "It will be necessary for me to give you an outline of the entire trip."

"Very good," said the Chief. He passed a pad and pencil to me with the admonition that I take notes and be most accurate. "They will be considered at the Director's meeting to be held here at the museum tomorrow night," he explained.

"I think," said Jarvis, "that the last you heard from us was through a letter sent you from Cochrane by Prof. Schlecting on the eve of our departure."

"Correct," agreed the Chief, "I have the letter here before me; in it is mentioned that you were obliged to abandon many scientific instruments at Cochrane, that you had hoped to take along. Prof. Schlecting had foresight enough to address the cases to the museum, which were to be returned by the Express Office at the end of October, when you were expecting to return."

"At Cochrane," said Jarvis, "we were lucky enough to get in touch with a very capable guide; he was a Norwegian half-breed and it was he who discouraged the attempt to get the heavy instruments through to the north country. When we started for our first objective, which was a point on the Moose River, eighty miles from Moose Factory, we had merely a small transit, a thermometer, a barometer, our cameras, firearms and necessary camp duffle, which included a tent of balloon silk. The first leg of our trip was made on horseback. Ninety miles on horseback, over rough country, for men unaccustomed to riding horses proved a most harrowing experience. We made it in five days, arriving at the Moose River, where we engaged Indians to paddle us in their canoes down to Moose Factory, at the head of James Bay, where there is a Hudson Bay Trading Station. Here the Factor, on learning the object of our expedition, endeavored to dissuade us from proceeding; he said that it would be extremely dangerous, as the country north of Lake Minto was practically unexplored and that the Indians there were hostile and that reports had repeatedly been made at Moose Factory, that many had lost their lives in attempting to penetrate the country north of Lake Minto. He also said that without the cooperation of the natives it would mean death to attempt to winter there.

"Lomen laughed at this statement. 'I have no fear of the freeze,' he said, 'I have lived out many winters and do not need Indians to show me how to hole-up.'

"When the Factor found he could not persuade us to give up the trip, he did all in his power to speed us on our way. We obtained some trustworthy Swampy Cree Indians, who had large, seaworthy canoes, and started up James Bay. I will not give you the details of the long voyage on James Bay and later along the coast of Hudson's Bay to Christie Island, where we left the water for Lake Minto. Here, inside of Christie Island where there was another Indian village, we got a fresh relay of Indians to paddle us up through the chain of lakes to Lake Minto. These fellows were very reluctant to go to Minto. Lomen, who spoke their dialect, found on questioning them that they were in fear of white men, dressed in skins, who ruled that district and who killed all interlopers. This was the first authentic report that we had received of the existence of this tribe of White Indians. We arrived at Lake Minto on the Seventy-fifth day of our journey. The Swampies, as they were termed up there, wanted to return to the coast at once, but Lomen would not have it so and told Prof. Schlecting to withhold their pay till we had arrived at our destination. The guide shot a deer which was skinned, cut into strips and dried into pemmican over an oak wood fire. Fish were caught in the lake and smoked, and by the end of the second day at the lake we were well provided with food for the trip into the wilderness. The fact that we had seen none of the 'white men dressed in skins' during our stay at the lake seemed to reassure the Swampy Crees, and Lomen, by offering each of them as a reward for their services, a cheap, long-barreled revolver and some ammunition, which we had brought along for just such an emergency, persuaded them to continue the trip with us.

"The morning of the third day, as we were preparing to depart, a man suddenly appeared at the edge of the grove of trees in which we were encamped. He was tall and, though sun-browned, he was unmistakably a white man. His appearance was a signal for the Swampies to take to their canoes. That they were thoroughly frightened, there was little doubt, for they remained only long enough to snatch up their bows, which lay on the bank near shore. Lomen called repeatedly for them to return, but this only caused them to paddle more quickly. The White Indian, for such he was, stood for a moment gazing disdainfully at our retreating help, then turned towards Lomen, who, he thought, was leader of our party. He addressed the guide, speaking low and musically, accompanying his speech with gestures so eloquent that even Prof. Schlecting and myself understood that he was warning us against proceeding further north. The language he used seemed to be comprised of vowel sounds, interspersed with an occasional word, so

tense and labial, that it seemed as if there were two separate languages being spoken. Now and again Lomen would nod and smile. When the man had finished, Lomen answered him in the Norwegian tongue, which, strange to say, he seemed to understand and answered in monosyllables.

"'That is a funny one' said Lomen, 'here's a man born and bred in this north country who can speak some Norwegian, though he has never before spoken to a white man, other than to members of his own tribe; he demands that we turn back and absolutely forbids us to push further north.'

"'Objection overruled,' replied Prof. Schlecting, promptly, 'what is the penalty if we disobey the order?'

"'He says that no man has ever ventured north of here and returned.'

"'Tell him that is not going to deter us; we are headed north.'

"Just like Schlecting," remarked Prof. Münster; "he was as courageous as the very devil."

"His decision cost him his life," said Jarvis, "Lomen also was a brave man, yet I could see he was apologetic as he explained to this dignified aborigine, mostly with signs, that we were going through. The Indian did not argue; he merely drew a long arrow from his skin quiver, fitted it to his immense bow and shot it head deep in a tree that stood thirty feet to the eastward of where he was standing. The shaft of the arrow evidently indicated a line barrier beyond which we were forbid to go. This arrow was peculiar in that instead of the usual stabilizing feathers that are fitted to arrows, it had a shield-shaped piece of skin hanging pendant by a sinew or thong from the notched end. Lomen, who was carrying his rifle, elevated the barrel and with quick aim, shot away this bit of skin from the arrow. It was a neat piece of marksmanship and though the Indian must have been ignorant of fire-arms, he showed wonderful imperturbability, for he did not even start at the loud explosion. He raised his left hand, with palm in, and stalked majestically away.

"'Well, that's that,' said Prof. Schlecting, laughing heartily at what he considered a lot of mummery; 'it was a good shot, Lomen, and will cause our white brethren to think twice before they attempt to molest us.'

"Because the Swampies had deserted, we were obliged to leave the transit and our cameras behind, the latter being useless as all the films had been ruined during a storm in which we were caught coming up Hudson's Bay. We cached them in a watertight bag, under a heap of stones and though they were completely ruined, they served a valuable purpose when I got down to Minto this summer."

"Well," continued Jarvis, "the Indian had scarcely disappeared from view when we started for the north, toward a lofty range of mountains we could see in the distance. We made the foothills of these mountains by night-fall and encamped in a copse of pines. The following morning, our guide, who was up with the sun, awakened us to show us an arrow, similar to the one the Indian had warned us with the day before, sticking in a tree directly over the place where we had been sleeping.

"'That fellow is on our trail,' said Lomen, 'don't you think it would be wise for us to heed the warning? I am convinced that as soon as he comes in contact with his party, we will be attacked.'

"'Child's play,' answered Prof. Schlecting, 'it might answer as a warning to the Crees, but according to my information, savages are not given to warnings; if that fellow had been disposed so, he could have killed all three of us as we slept. I do not think that is their intention. While they evidently do not want us to proceed, they mean no harm to us. For five nights thereafter we found an arrow, either imbedded in a nearby tree or sticking in the ground where we slept. On the sixth night, we were awakened by the loud report of a gun. We found Lomen standing beside us with a smoking shot gun in his hand.

"'I couldn't see him,' he explained, 'but I fired at the twang of his bow string.'

"A very senseless thing to do," reprimanded the Professor, "the man has done us no harm; if you happened to reach him with some of those bird shot, we have made a mortal enemy.'

"Thereafter, we stood guard in three relays during the night, but we found no more arrows, nor did we again see a sign of the man who we knew was watching our every move.

"Soon we entered a valley, the bottom of which was a vast muskeg swamp. Here the mosquitoes attacked us fiercely. To make matters worse, our supply of repellent was exhausted. We donned our head-nets and pushed on, but the little pests made life miserable for us. Finally, Prof. Schlecting found an aromatic herb that he knew was obnoxious to biting insects. This he made into a paste with some of the smoked fish and it proved an excellent repellent. Each day the going proved more difficult, the swamp became contiguous with the shore and we were forced to take to the mountainside in order to proceed. On the 29th of June, which was the eighty-fourth day from Cochrane, the swamp suddenly opened into a lake. Lomen suggested that we build a raft and proceed by water, but this plan was not considered feasible, owing to the lack of time. The heat in this valley was terrific. We came through many thunder storms, which should have clarified the air, but each day the sultriness increased. Prof. Schlecting had kept an accurate reading of the thermometer since the beginning of the trip. Till now, the mean temperature had been 68°F in two daily readings, taken at eight in the morning and four in the afternoon. This had increased gradually, till now it was 86°F!

"'I am unable to explain this excessive heat,' declared Prof. Schlecting one day, as he paused to mop his streaming forehead, 'night and day seems the same and even the springs run warm water.' He sat down on a projection of rock and arose with an exclamation, 'I've got it,' he said, 'that rock is hot, this valley is superheated by internal heat, we are in a volcanic district.'

"This was evidently so and the valley we were traversing had been formed when some great seismic disturbance had cleft the mountain in twain, which was evidenced by the perpendicular cleavage of the two ranges.

"On the night of the third day of our journey along the canyon lake, we made camp on a rocky ledge that jutted abruptly in our path and completely shut off a view of the lake ahead. Lomen was preparing our meager supper, while I was endeavoring to make the little tent stand on the ledge of rocks. Prof. Schlecting, who was continually making observations of some sort, had disappeared. I heard his voice calling me and was at first unable to locate the direction of the sound.

"'Come along by the water's edge,' he called, 'I am around the cliff.'

"I did as directed and by walking in the water to the depth of my knees, was enabled to scramble around the rocky projection. I saw the form of Prof. Schlecting silhouetted against a lurid bank of fire. Vapor was arising from the lake ahead in a great streaming cloud, which terminated in a billowy mass as it came in contact with the cooler, upper reaches of the air and became more condensed. The most magnificent sight I have ever witnessed, a veritable mushroom of fire.

"'It is lighted by the *Feu Perpetuel*,' exclaimed Prof. Schlecting, enthusiastically, 'we have reached our goal!'

"Though we heard Lomen call us repeatedly, we remained there for a full hour feasting our eyes on this gorgeous Birth of Clouds. The actual fire that was causing the illumination, we could not see, but we estimated that it must be less than five miles distant. We awakened the following morning at daybreak. The towering mushroom of clouds still floated above the surrounding mountains, but its apex, touched by the rising sun, while no less gorgeous, had lost its ruddy tint. The canyon twisted tortuously below and not till we were within a mile of our destination did we behold the great fire. It was awe-inspiring. Imagine, if you can, Niagara Falls, turned to fire and inverted. From a fissure in the sheer mountain-side at least half a mile long there rippled a cataract of ignited gas, that licked steadily up along the perpendicular cliff to a height of a thousand feet. From where we stood we imagined that we could feel the radiation of this tremendous heat and likely could, though it would have been difficult to determine, considering that the very ground on which we trod was heated and the thermometer stood at 91°F. at eight o'clock. Prof. Schlecting had hung the thermometer on a branch of a small tree that grew near the water's edge; as he removed it, I saw him take out his hand glass and examine the tree.

"'Gad, Jarvis!' he exclaimed, 'will wonders never cease? Have you noticed these trees that are growing here?'

"I could see nothing strange about a copse of tamaracks, and said so. We had come through many miles of tamaracks.

"'Tamaracks, fiddlesticks,' he said witheringly, 'have you ever seen tamaracks with green stalks? Have you ever seen tamaracks with stalks two inches through that you could do this with?'

"He crooked his forefinger around one of the trees and brought it crashing to the ground. 'Those are ferns, my boy. This is another Carboniferous Era, on a small scale. Without our cameras, won't they brand our report as a fine tissue of lies when we return to civilization?'"

"Poor Schlecting," interjected Prof. Münster, sympathetically, "what a shame that he could not have lived to make the report."

"As we proceeded," continued Jarvis "the tropical heat increased and the size of the fern trees grew proportionately. The lake bank had leveled and we were traversing a fern forest of considerable magnitude. Some of these trees had grown to a height of fifty feet, which seemed to be the limit of their growth, for they would then collapse by their own weight. We witnessed this phenomenon a number of times, when we happened to brush violently against some of the larger ferns. Their growth must have been very rapid, for underfoot there was a great clutter of stalks in various stages of decay, in which we at times sank thigh-deep—an oozy, black morass. This must have been a zone of perpetual calm, for the slightest wind would have razed the entire forest. Strange as it may seem, the mosquitoes had entirely disappeared, nor was there any bird life. Luckily, before we left camp that morning, we filled our water flasks, for, on taking the temperature of the lake that afternoon we found it stood at 104°F. We had emerged from the fern forest and came to a meadow of considerable extent. This meadow was covered with a growth of mossy grass, luxuriant and heavy. It must have been peculiar to that section, for I have never seen anything resembling it. While the blades were soft and fine and grew to a height of at least three feet, the underbody was so rigid that one could lie at full length upon it, with the sensation of resting on air. Like the ferns, it must have had an exceedingly quick growth. In places we could see where it had lately been cut away, possibly by the Indians, with rude instruments and already the new growth had started thickly.

"Along the shore, deep indentations had been made in the mud; these, Lomen said, had been made by the boats of the Indians, who had come to harvest such grass as they needed for their purposes. While our guide was usually correct in interpreting signs in the wilderness, he was all wrong in attributing these marks in the lake bank to boats shoved on shore. From the edge of this clearing, if it may so be termed, we got our first close view of the *Feu Perpetuel*. To Prof. Schlecting and myself, it was merely awe-inspiring, but to Lomen, it was more. He was terrorized by the majesty of it.

"'I hope, Sir,' he said to Prof. Schlecting, 'now that you have found what you were in search of, that you will be satisfied to leave this place at once.'

"'I hope you are not frightened by that beautiful sheet of flame; it is something that you may relate to your children and grand-children. A veritable fairy-tale; it is magnificent!'

"'Yes, Prof. Schlecting, if I live to get back. I never before believed the old Norwegian folk tales of my father, of the "ünderjordiske," (subterranean beings) but now I am willing to believe anything.'

"Owing to the dense fog which hung like a pall over the lake, we could not see the opposite shore, but the echo of our voices indicated that it was less than a thousand feet distant. Save for the deep roar of the great flame above, the silence of this valley was oppressive. We would have welcomed a demonstration by the natives, who, we knew, must be somewhere near at hand, yet we had seen no signs of them. In fact, the only evidence of life in the surroundings was a sluggishly creeping reptile about a foot long, which resembled a water-newt, making for the water along the edge of the fern growth. This was discovered by the watchful eye of our guide, who would have killed the beast, had he not been deterred by the Professor.

"'Do not kill wantonly, my dear Lomen,' he said, 'the creature is harmless and besides, the sound of your rifle might bring the Indians down upon us.'

"To the north we could see that the lake terminated in a circular bowl, the hollow of which was totally devoid of vegetation.

"'We are in the crater of an extinct volcano,' pronounced Prof. Schlecting. 'The absence of vegetation on the heights to the south would indicate that the soil is permeated with some active salt that has discouraged its growth. Let us investigate.'

"Throughout the journey, Prof. Schlecting had repeatedly demonstrated that he was possessed of greater stamina than either Lomen or myself. Older by twenty years than either of us, he had goaded us on when we would otherwise have dropped from fatigue. Now he led the way around the meadow and up the steep side of the crater. Our feet sank ankle-deep in the loose, powdery soil and for each yard we gained, we would slip back two feet; but at length we came to a well-defined path which led from the great fire, towards a rocky plateau to the west. Across this plateau and under the base of the mountain, extensive caverns could be seen. Lomen declared that he had seen people observing us from the entrance of one of these caverns, but neither Prof. Schlecting nor I could distinguish any signs of life in that direction.

"'I believe,' said the Professor, 'that these people do not intend to molest us, but are wondering why we are here and what we will do.'

"'Let us do something at once,' begged Lomen, who was rather fleshy, 'this heat will make a grease-spot of me.'

"Professor Schlecting had forgotten the tests he had intended making of the loose ash of the crater-side and we were proceeding on the path in the direction of the *Feu Perpetuel*, the blistering heat of which was intensifying rapidly. Lomen who seemed unable to further withstand the radiation turned about for relief. He uttered an exclamation.

"'They are waving a warning!' he cried. We looked and saw a dozen or more men running down the plateau, from the direction of the caverns. Their arms were waving, rhythmically. 'They are friendly,' interpreted Lomen, 'they say for us to get under cover and are motioning to the left.'

"To the left of where we stood was a large boulder; we ran to it and crouched under its protection. It was indeed a relief to be out of the direct heat, though where we stood the thermometer registered 120°F. Here we discovered a dozen shields fashioned of skin, drawn taut over light wood frames. There was a loop attached to each shield, by which it could be hung from the shoulders.

"'These are what the Indians use so that they may approach the fire more closely,' said Professor Schlecting, adjusting a shield to his body.

"'Why go any closer?' asked Lomen, 'are we not half-cooked already?'

"'This path may lead us out of the canyon,' suggested the Professor. 'I can think of nothing worse than returning over the route we came.'

"Lomen accepted this possibility at once; we each adjusted a shield and were once more on our path towards the great fire. The skin shields proved wonderful insulators and we proceeded without further discomfort. The path led down around the crater bowl, then up again to a cave that we could see in the cliff ahead, under a shelf of rock that extended perhaps two or three hundred feet from the breast of the mountain. This cave was about fifty feet long and half as deep and proved unaccountably cool, considering its proximity to the fire. This was explained when it was discovered that the entire cave was lined with asbestos rock and strange as it may seem, there was a spring of cool water issuing from a fissure in the wall of the cave. A rude altar had been erected in the center of the floor, which indicated that some sort of rites were performed here by the tribe. Possibly they were indeed fire worshippers and here was where they came for their worship. We examined a cradle-like contrivance that stood in the north end of the cave and discovered that a section of the wall had been carved through and that this chunk could be removed by the aid of the cradle. This aperture was a yard long and half as wide and it was through this that the Indians, when necessary, could replenish their cave fire, though we did not guess this at the time.

"Lomen was the first to prepare to leave; he adjusted his shield and laid aside his rifle, which was ever in his hand.

"'Why so anxious to go?' inquired Prof. Schlecting, 'this is the most comfortable spot we have found in weeks; we might remain here for the night.'

"'Suits me,' replied the guide, 'I merely want to find if there really is a path over the top of this cavern that will lead us out of here.'

"The Professor tried to dissuade him from attempting such a thing, but Lomen laughed. 'If I find it too warm I will return,' he replied. These were the

last words the poor fellow uttered. He sprang up to the slight declivity that led above. We saw him falter, as if stricken by a rifle bullet, then he slumped inertly and instantly his clothing was afire. It was a horrible fate. Professor Schlecting would have gone to his assistance, but I held his arm. 'It would be useless,' I said, 'he is beyond help.' It was evident that the entire plateau in front of the blazing cliffs oozed gas, which was burning incandescently. And Lomen had inhaled flame.

"We had no mind now to remain in the cave overnight. Silently we donned our shields in reverse and carrying the guide's rifle and pack, together with our own duffle, we struck off on the return path. We had gone but a dozen steps, when a muffled fusillade of shots sounded behind us; we knew that we were hearing the explosions of the ammunition in Lomen's revolver, and I was reminded of obsequies I had witnessed that Spring, over the grave of a Civil War Veteran. It was depressing, this returning over the path without our guide and neither of us spoke till we reached the shelter of the big boulder, where we could lay aside our shields. From this place we could see the green meadow beckoning to us from below, and we were weary from travel and overcome by the depression caused by the heat and Lomen's awful death.

" 'Now that we are here,' said Prof. Schlecting, 'I have no idea of leaving till we find out more about our friends over there on the plateau. However, I think after a good night's rest, we will be in better shape to cope with any difficulties that may arise when we attempt to make their acquaintance.'

"We returned to the lake shore and the stifling humidity was a decided relief from the direct heat we had experienced above. For supper, we ate a small quantity of our remaining pemmican and washed it down with crystal-clear water we had obtained from the fire-cavern.

"The balloon tent, spread over the soft grass of the meadow, made a most comfortable refuge and owing to the total absence of mosquitoes, we were enabled to remove our woolen shirts. When the sun at last sank behind the mountain, the wonderful mushroom of clouds, red-tinted by the great flame, towered majestically above us. For a while, we were silent in our thoughts. I glanced at Prof. Schlecting; his chin was on his breast and I thought he was asleep. But he wasn't.

" 'Jarvis,' he said, suddenly sitting erect, 'Lomen was a fine fellow; we must find out about his family. I am sure the Museum will do something for them.' I replied that I thought they might, as he had lost his life in the service of the Museum. 'If they do not,' he continued, 'I have a small private fortune and no dependents. If anything happens to me before we return, please see to it that Lomen's family is benefitted to the entire extent of my estate.' I promised, though at the time I had no idea that I would be obliged to carry out his wishes in this respect. With the setting of the sun, there suddenly appeared out of mists of the lake a great swarm of bats. There seemed to be millions of them, squeaking and whirling about.

" 'That accounts for the absence of mosquitoes,' I remarked, 'but I can't imagine what they find to subsist on.'

"Professor Schlecting indicated the edge of the lake, which shimmered with the evidence of a myriad of some small life under the surface. Here the bats seemed to hover, much the same as kingfishers do when in quest of fish; they would dart into the water and emerge with something in their mouths. Their prey seemed to be in size out of proportion to the size of the animal. I succeeded in knocking one of the creatures out of the air with the barrel of the shot gun and it fell at the feet of Prof. Schlecting. As he picked it up, I noticed it was different from any other bat that I had ever seen. The wings were long and slim and it had an elongated jaw.

" 'If my eyes do not deceive me,' said the Professor, 'that creature is a pero-pero...' He called it a pero, something or other," explained Jarvis.

"A Pterodactyl?" suggested Prof. Münster.

"That was it," replied Jarvis, "Pterodactyl."

"Schlecting would know," mused Prof. Münster, " yet the thing seems improbable. Did Prof. Schlecting mention rhizopods or trilobites as the creatures upon which the pterodactyls were preying?"

"I do not recollect that he mentioned anything regarding them," replied Jarvis, "he probably would not, owing to the fact that he knew my scientific knowledge was meager. Shortly after that," continued Jarvis, "we dropped off to sleep. How long I slept I do not know. I was awakened suddenly by a violent pain in my right leg, accompanied by the sensation of having the leg pulled from the socket. Prompted more by a sense of self-preservation than by a realization of danger, I drew back violently and succeeded in releasing my leg, but with the sacrifice of my trouser's leg, my shoepac and considerable epidermis. Now I was entirely awake. I opened my eyes to see a great bulky body looming over me, at a distance of several yards. Attached to this bulk was a waving, snaky neck, the head of which was a horrible warty-looking object, whose small red eyes were balefully observing me. As I recoiled from this menacing monster, my hand came in contact with my high-powered rifle. I released the safety of the rifle and without taking time to raise it, quickly pumped the entire contents of the magazine into the great creature. It hissed loudly and an overpowering odor as of musk pervaded the air. I saw it turn on its short legs and waddle seal-like towards the water. I must have lost consciousness then. When I opened my eyes again, the rising sun was shining through the mists of the lake. At first, in spite of the pain in my leg, I thought I had been the victim of a phantasmagoria, but seeing that Prof. Schlecting was no longer at my side and glancing at my terribly mutilated leg, I realized that the experience had indeed been real."

At this point in his narrative, Jarvis drew the trouser of his right leg up as far as his knee and

displayed the mutilation that had been caused by the creature's serrated teeth.

"Megalosaurus?" I ventured, looking at Prof. Münster.

"Very good, Jameson," he commended, "but I should rather say it was an Allosaurus. The Megalosaurus, also, a carnivorous Dinosaur, as you likely remember, had its habitat in Europe, as far as we have been able to ascertain. It was distinctive from the North American Allosaurus, in that, like the Stegosaurus, its big cousin, it had an external fin-like bony ridge running from head to tail. A fossilized Megalosaurus had not as yet been discovered in North America. Let me ask you a question, Jarvis," continued Prof. Münster, "had Prof. Schlecting disappeared at the time you were attacked?"

"I am quite certain that he had," answered Jarvis, "I remember having made an outcry, when I felt my leg being held. If the Professor had heard it, he would have tried to give me assistance."

"You saw no trace of him when you regained consciousness?"

"None whatever, the thing had probably disposed of the Professor, before he attacked me."

The reply was so matter-of-fact, that Prof. Münster glanced up quickly and regarded Jarvis keenly through the thick lenses of his glasses. He was a man who weighed things well before deciding. I could see that now he was weighing the story in his mind. The story was so fantastic that any man of science would hesitate to give it credence. True or false, it was interesting and certainly should be heard to the end.

"No, Jarvis," said Prof. Münster, deciding negatively on the theory advanced. "As huge as the Allosaurus was, owing to its inadequate neck it could not have bolted so large an object as the body of a man. I am of the opinion that the mate to the creature that attacked you had also ranged up the lake bank in search of prey. This was the one that discovered the sleeping form of our colleague, who was likely killed by one crunch of its powerful jaws. It then carried its victim to the lake where it rended the flesh in sections that were favorable for its gustatory process. Continue, Jarvis, please."

"I was weak from the loss of blood, and ill," continued Jarvis. "When I finally regained my feet, I found that my stiffened leg would scarcely bear my weight. I wondered if I could expect aid from the Indians. It was better, I decided, to throw myself on their mercy than to remain there to be devoured by the water-beasts. Out on the lake, somewhere in the heavy mist, I could hear a violent splashing and wondered if it was caused by the agonized struggles of the creature I had wounded and wavelets breaking along shore gave evidence of the commotion. Fear spurred me on as I climbed the side of the crater and went hobbling across the path in the direction of the plateau. As I gained the plateau, Indians came down to meet me. They carried their long bows but did not unsling them from their shoulders. The Indian who had met us at Lake Minto, was in advance; he was a Chief and was named Jovo. He raised three fingers of his right hand, pointed towards the great fire, then he raised one finger. I knew that he was asking if one of my companions had lost his life in that manner. I nodded. Then he raised two fingers, pointed toward the lake and made a sweeping gesture with his hands to indicate the size of the great beasts of the water and then, one finger. I nodded again. Again he described with a motion of his hands, the size of the beasts and pointed at my injured leg. I again nodded and tapped my rifle. He said 'Jorman' and addressed a few words to his companions. It was evident that they were ignorant of the use of fire-arms for they looked curiously at my rifle, as if wondering how so tiny an object could repel so mighty a beast."

"Wait," commanded Prof. Münster, who was a philologist of note, "did you say that the Indians designated the Allosaurus as a Jorman?"

"Yes," replied Jarvis, "that was their name for it. Often later I heard them speak of them as Jormen."

"That's most interesting," remarked our Curator, "the name would seem to have been derived from Sjoorman, a mythical serpent of the lore of ancient Norway. I am convinced that these white Indians are descendants of survivors of some Norwegian vessel that had been wrecked, many years ago, on the shores of northern Ungava. They likely fell in with an Indian tribe, or possibly some Eskimos, with whom they intermarried, and the white strain, persisting throughout the ages finally obliterated the aboriginal strain. They likely became nomads and in their wanderings, happened on this canyon, and recognizing its advantages for easy living, remained there, segregated from other tribes. Thus we can account for the admixture of Norwegian words in their language. Excuse the interruption, Jarvis, and pray proceed."

"There is little more necessary to be told at this time," said Jarvis wearily. "I have been traveling months to get here and have had little rest. I wrote from Cochrane the day I arrived and the day following I left for the States."

"But tell us my dear Jarvis," said Prof. Münster, persuasively, "how have you passed the time that has intervened and how does it happen that you have permitted twenty years to elapse without attempting to communicate with us?"

"As you have likely guessed," replied Jarvis, "the Indians took me in. I had blood poisoning following my injury and was gravely ill. An old crone of the tribe applied unguents to my injured leg and fed me soothing potions of herbs she collected and brewed. When I had recovered sufficiently to be about I was seized and bound for sacrifice to the *Feu Perpetuel*, which, according to a tradition of the tribe, none but a member of the tribe could behold and live. Jovo, who had conducted me to the caves, was an under-Chief and he succeeded in saving me, by having me adopted into the tribe. Later I married his sister. The women of the tribe were beautiful and Jalo was the most beautiful of them all." A look of sadness crept over the face of Jarvis and this was noted by our Curator.

"You loved this native woman you had taken for wife?" he asked.

"Devotedly, Prof. Münster," replied Jarvis, "she was possessed of all the attractions of women of civilization and of many more virtues. I could not attempt to describe her womanly devotion. A woman such as she was could not hope to be long of this world. In spite of the supposed paganism of fire-worship, I am sure that her spirit went on High to join the other good souls that have preceded hers."

"Very nice sentiment and I hope you are right," replied Prof. Münster, who boasted of no religious belief. "Was there any issue from this union of yours?"

"None," replied Jarvis. "Jalo passed away with the scourge, two years after our marriage. It was a dying race, Prof. Münster. Tuberculosis was accounting for the white Indians by the score. During the twenty years I remained with them their number was reduced from three thousand to as many hundreds. They did not know the nature of the disease, but were aware that it was contagious. The bodies of those who succumbed were at once incinerated by being fed to the fire through the hole in the fire cave, which I have already described."

"On what does the tribe subsist: what is their principal food."

"For meat, outside of a few caribou, mountain sheep and goats brought in by hunters, they subsisted almost entirely upon the flesh of anlos; this and a sago-like cereal they obtained from the sap of certain ferns, comprised their diet."

"Anlos?" interrogated Prof. Münster, "You have not mentioned anlos that I remember," he said, scanning his notes.

"The anlos," explained Jarvis, "were some of the smaller creatures that infested the lake. They were herbiverous and were preyed upon by the Jormen. They were easily killed by crushing their skulls with a stout club when they came into the meadow to feed at night. The anlos furnished both food and clothing to the tribe and their name seemed to be the root of the simple language spoken. Everything that was of benefit was anlo, which was shaded with prefixes or suffixes to differentiate. The main activities of the tribe were to repel all Indians who attempted to penetrate the canyon. Guards were out continually during the summer and these men became so sensitive to the proximity of interlopers that they literally sensed them and could locate outside wanderers at once."

"One more question, Jarvis. You are tired, I know, but I cannot let you go before inquiring as to the temperature during the freeze that grips northern Quebec and Ungava in the winter months. The canyon of course is alike affected?"

"Practically no. Snow never reaches within a thousand feet of the surface of the lake. At that height it is transformed into a soft warm rain. Frost is unknown. I kept a faithful reading of the thermometer and have never seen the temperature of the plateau go below 75° F. Down at the water edge it is ten degrees warmer. However, the immense quantities of snow that melts on the mountains above, must affect the temperature of the water considerably, for as soon as the snow appears, the water creatures retreat to the big sub-aqueous caverns under the west mountain and remain there till about the month of May."

"And what brought you back to civilization, away from this paradise that you picture?" inquired Prof. Münster, gazing quizzically at Jarvis, whose tale seemed ended. I could trace a note of sarcasm in his voice and wondered if it was caused by the religious sentiment Jarvis had interjected, or if he thought that he was being hoaxed by a cleverly built story.

"I was forced to leave, by a violent volcanic eruption that swept away the entire district and filled the canyon with lava," explained Jarvis.

"And you alone escaped?" This time the sarcasm was not veiled and I saw at once that Prof. Münster discredited the entire tale. Both the Professor and I were aware that Prof. Schlecting had carried with him in this expedition a considerable sum of money and we had both got to wondering if Jarvis had obtained this money, either by disposing of his companion, or in some other way and was now concocting a plan to obtain the fortune of the missing former Curator.

"One other escaped with me," replied Jarvis. "Owing to the fact that I could not eat the flesh of the anlos, I often went hunting for sheep or caribou. In company with a young man of the tribe, I happened to be on one of these expeditions when the catastrophe occurred."

"To substantiate this story then, you have but to produce this white Indian. I confess that I am more than curious to see this fellow."

"Okamo returned," replied Jarvis simply. "He left me while I slept, the second night of my journey to Lake Minto. I arrived at the lake, more dead than alive. Here I luckily came upon a party of young Canadians, who had come up along the coast in a steam yacht. When I dug up the remains of the cameras and transit, where they had been cached, these men believed my story and took me along. The leader of the party provided me with funds for an outfit of clothing and for fare here."

"A good story and cleverly mapped out," replied Prof. Münster, dryly, "I am afraid though, Jarvis, if it is your aim to put a claim to the Museum authorities for back pay for this period, you are going to encounter difficulties that you have not figured upon."

I saw Prof. Münster reach under the edge of his desk and press a button that would summon two night guards to the office. I knew then that he meant to place Jarvis in custody, pending an investigation.

"But," protested Jarvis, "I had no intentions of making such a claim!"

"Just what were you expecting to claim?" demanded Prof. Münster, sharply. He was momentarily looking for the guards to appear.

"I merely thought that I might be paid my salary for the year I was attending Prof. Schlecting and I was hoping a position would be open for me here."

The guards had appeared at the door of the anteroom. At a motion from the Chief, they remained

quietly standing there. Jarvis, whose back was to the entrance could not observe them.

"What proof have you, other than your word, that your story is true?" asked Prof. Münster.

"Proof!" cried Jarvis, "you do not believe my story?"

"I did not say that I did not believe it," replied the Professor, imperturbably, "I merely asked for proof."

Jarvis' face brightened perceptibly. "I still have my suit of anlo skin; that should be proof enough." He opened the telescope and dumped its contents on the desk, disclosing, among an assortment of cheap raiment and toilet articles, a shirt and a two-piece suit, dirty and torn, fashioned of a soft gray-colored skin, beautifully tanned."

"A nicely tanned skin," remarked Prof. Münster, "but as it might be young caribou or deer skin, it is not convincing. If it could be proven to have been made of the skin of a Dinosaur; it would be most interesting. We will give you the benefit of the doubt, Jarvis, I will give it a microscopic examination and if your contention can be sustained, the suit alone would be worth a fortune. However, I do not want to hold forth any false hopes, for a tanning process shrinks the cellular tissue of a skin so that it is impossible to identify the animal from which it is obtained. You have understood, Prof. Jameson, have you not?" asked Prof. Münster, turning to me," that Jarvis, while a college man, has had little scientific training. In his story, by connecting the Later Paleozoic, with the Mesozoic, as evidenced by the fern growth and the Dinosaurs, he has bridged a gap that Scientists know is at least ten millions of years. That statement alone would brand the story as preposterous. Sorry, Jarvis," he continued, "your story does not even offer proof of the demise of our good Professor Schlecting, and this—" he tossed the skin suit contemptuously across the table towards its owner, "means absolutely—" he cut the balance of the sentence short and gasped ludicrously, as a small object dropped from a pouch of the coat and rattled on the mahogany desk top.

"My Lord! what's this?" he exclaimed, retrieving the object in his long, white fingers. With a hand glass he examined minutely the gelatine like shell of the thing. " Gad, Jameson," he said, "do my eyes deceive me or is this the unfossilized shell of an *Angelina Sedgwicki*, a Trilobite, intact save for the broken head-spines?"

My eyesight is good and I saw, at a glance, the ringed pygidium, whose whorls resembled in a way, the rattles of a rattle-snake. Though I could not at that distance, recognize it as a *Sedgwicki*, I knew that I was gazing upon the only unfossilized specimen of a Trilobite that had been beheld by civilized man.

As soon as Prof. Münster could recover from his elation, he sprang to his feet, grasped the amazed Jarvis by the hand and poured out congratulations.

"That's only a ta-anlo shell," explained Jarvis, "the children used to play doll with them in the caves and one must have slipped it in my pouch as a joke."

"A most astoundingly lucky joke," pronounced Prof. Münster. "That little shell makes your whole story good and will be guarantee to you of back pay for twenty years and a pension for the balance of your life. Even though future explorations fail to unearth further remnants from your enchanted canyon, this alone will be regarded as 'A Link to the Past.' "

THE END.

The Stone Cat

By Miles J. Breuer, M. D.

(Concluded)

have known what to do. The electric light was reflected in a million spots from the glass and polished metal; pieces of apparatus assumed strange shapes, and grotesque shadows stretched dizzily off into corners and dark places.

At the far end of the room, the black depths of a recess yawned at us, with a curtain stretched partly across it. Near it, Richard was busy at a sink in the corner. He paused and stood in front of a window to light a cigarette, and the action had all the appearance of being a preconcerted signal to the policemen below. His face was set, and I knew he was thinking hard. Apparently his plans had been somewhat interfered with by the doctor's unexpected presence.

I also thought hard, as I talked with the doctor, wondering how I could help Richard. Finally, it occurred to me that his inviting me along must have been an afterthought. Evidently he had planned things to carry out alone. Therefore, if I left he would have a clear field. I dreaded to do so, for now I was sure that some danger lurked in wait for him. But, duty is duty. I suggested that I had dropped in for a moment, and had to be moving on. I read approval in Richard's eyes.

As Doctor Fleckinger turned his back for a moment to go to the door with me, Richard darted to the curtain across the black recess and dipped out a ladleful of something from behind it. I could see him fish a frog out of his pocket and drop it into the ladle. Then he set the whole into the sink, at the same time that I walked out into the hall. I did not go away, however; I dodged behind the door, and watched through the crack.

The doctor whirled suddenly about and walked with a queer, tense swiftness toward the curtained recess. He crossed the room and reached it before I realized what he was about; and with the suddenness of a wildcat he leaped upon Richard, caught him around the body, and lifted him off his feet. He began to shove the body into the darkness of the recess.

What fiendish fate awaited him there, I could only gather from the scream of dismay that broke from Richard's throat. The lad had been taken completely by surprise, and was helpless. His face was ghastly white, and paralyzed with terror. I stood rooted to the spot for a valuable moment, trying to realize what was happening, and then started toward them.

Suddenly, a piercing scream broke upon my ears, and turning around, I saw Miss Lila's pale figure for an instant in the doorway. Then she fell backwards in a faint. This startled the doctor only a little, but enough to enable Richard to get a hold and make the game a little less one-sided. For another moment I watched, and then my mind was at rest concerning the outcome, for the doctor's sedentary muscles were no match for Richard's splendid training. While I stood there, with Miss Lila's unconscious form lying in the doorway, and the two men locked in reeling, swaying embrace at the end of the room, there was a hurried trampling on the stairs, and the officers who had been waiting below, swarmed into the room.

They stopped an instant in surprise. Then, as one of them picked up Miss Lila and carried her to a sofa, the others hurried toward the combatants in front of the curtained recess. For a moment my heart jumped into my mouth, and I thought they would be too late. In some way the doctor had gained an advantage and was pushing Richard behind the curtain. Again a cry broke from Richard's throat, something between a gulp and a shout of "Help!" Then Richard made a mighty effort and with a clever twist, had hurled the doctor bodily into the shadow behind the curtain. As the doctor's wriggling body suddenly grew limp, Richard jumped quickly backwards, and as I approached on the run, I heard a splash, and saw drops of a thick, foul-smelling liquid spatter out from the gloom. Richard looked hurriedly at us and himself, to see if anyone had been touched.

He was trembling as though from the ague, and his breath came in gasps.

"It was a barbarous thing to do," he panted. "But I had to do it, or I would be there myself——where Brian is now."

We approached the curtain.

"Stay away from the vat!" Richard commanded anxiously. "The stuff may do you harm. I don't know just how to handle it. If you want to know what has happened, look here!"

He stepped to the sink and poured out the ladleful of black, heavy liquid. The frog tumbled out into the sink, and Richard pushed it under a stream of water from the tap. Washing it thoroughly, he handed it to me.

"You saw me put it in——alive?" he asked significantly.

Now it was hard as stone, and heavy——petrified. It looked for all the world like the little stone frogs in the Pompeiian collection at the Metropolitan Museum.

Richard explained.

"The first thing that struck my attention," he began, "was the sorrow of the housekeeper's child for her missing cat. The baby recognized the figure on the pedestal, where our acquired conventional associations of statuary put us off the track. Then, gradually, the fearful resemblance of the statue in the lower hall to the missing lawyer, broke upon me."

His face took on a hard look as he turned toward the vat behind the curtain.

"He ought to be set up in some museum," he said grimly. "But, for God's sake, don't make it too sudden for Lila!"

THE END

The War of the Worlds

By H. G. Wells

(*Continued from page* 597)

sun; that is to say, Mars was in opposition from the point of view of an observer on Venus. Subsequently a peculiar luminous and sinuous marking appeared on the unillumined half of the inner planet, and almost simultaneously a faint dark mark of a similar sinuous character was detected upon a photograph of the Martian disc. One needs to see the drawings of these appearances in order to appreciate fully their remarkable resemblance in character.

At any rate, whether we expect another invasion or not, our views of the human future must be greatly modified by these events. We have learned now that we cannot regard this planet as being fenced in and a secure abiding-place for Man; we can never anticipate the unseen good or evil that may come upon us suddenly out of space. It may be that in the larger design of the universe this invasion from Mars is not without its ultimate benefit for men; it has robbed us of that serene confidence in the future which is the most fruitful source of decadence, the gifts to human science it has brought are enormous, and it has done much to promote the conception of the commonweal of mankind. It may be that across the immensity of space the Martians have watched the fate of these pioneers of theirs and learned their lesson, and that on the planet Venus they have found a securer settlement. Be that as it may, for many years yet there will certainly be no relaxation of the eager scrutiny of the Martian disc, and those fiery darts of the sky, the shooting stars, will bring with them as they fall an unavoidable apprehension to all the sons of men.

The broadening of men's views that has resulted can scarcely be exaggerated. Before the cylinder fell there was a general persuasion that through all the deep of space no life existed beyond the petty surface of our minute sphere. Now we see further. If the Martians can reach Venus, there is no reason to suppose that the thing is impossible for men, and when the slow cooling of the sun makes this earth uninhabitable, as at last it must do, it may be that the thread of life that has begun here will have streamed out and caught our sister planet within its toils. Should we conquer?

Dim and wonderful is the vision I have conjured up in my mind of life spreading slowly from this little seed-bed of the solar system throughout the inanimate vastness of sidereal space. But that is a remote dream. It may be, on the other hand, that the destruction of the Martians is only a reprieve. To them, and not to us, perhaps, is the future ordained.

I must confess the stress and danger of the time have left an abiding sense of doubt and insecurity in my mind. I sit in my study writing by lamplight, and suddenly I see again the healing valley below set with writhing flames, and feel the house behind and about me empty and desolate. I go out into the Byfleet Road, and vehicles pass me, a butcher-boy in a cart, a cabful of visitors, a workman on a bicycle, children going to school, and suddenly they become vague and unreal, and I hurry again with the artilleryman through the hot, brooding silence. Of a night I see the black powder darkening the silent streets, and the contorted bodies shrouded in that layer; these rise upon me tattered and dog-bitten. They gibber and grow fiercer, paler, uglier, mad distortions of humanity at last, and I wake, cold and wretched, in the darkness of the night.

I go to London and see the busy multitudes in Fleet Street and the Strand, and it comes across my mind that they are but the ghosts of the past, haunting the streets that I have seen silent and wretched, going to and fro, phantasms in a dead city, the mockery of life in a galvanized body. And strange, too, it is to stand in Primrose Hill, as I did but a day before writing this last chapter, to see the great province of houses, dim and blue through the haze of the smoke and mist, vanishing at last into the vague lower sky, to see the people walking to and fro among the flowerbeds on the hill, to see the sightseers about the Martian machine that stands there still, to hear the tumult of playing children, and to recall the time when I saw it all bright and clear-cut, hard and silent, under the dawn of that last great day....

And strangest af all it is to hold my wife's hand again, and to think that I have counted her, and that she has counted me, among the dead.

THE END.

Discussions

In this department we shall discuss, every month, topics of interest to readers. The editors invite correspondence on all subjects directly or indirectly related to the stories appearing in this magazine. In case a special personal answer is required, a nominal fee of 25c to cover time and postage is required.

A STORY

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Several days ago I happened to be in the cigar store owned by one of our dealers. While talking to the clerk, a boy about thirteen to fourteen came hurriedly in and said in a voice brisk with excitement:

"Have you the latest AMAZING STORIES?"

The clerk laughed and pulled it out of the rack for him. I replied:

"Well, you know an interesting magazine when you see one. Do you read it regularly?"

"I've got them ever since they came out. My mother doesn't like it though because my father stays up all night reading it."

Whereupon everyone laughed and the boy went merrily on his way, with the July number of AMAZING STORIES tucked under his arm.

(This little incident took place in the store of R. E. Ellis.)

Dwight B. MacCormack
Our Boston Roadman

[This little anecdote from a friendly reader, we insert to give a touch of human nature to these columns. We have all heard of "the blow that 'most killed father." We are glad to note that this boy's father shows no sign of being killed by AMAZING STORIES.—Editor]

INTERESTING COMMENTS ON THE WINNERS OF THE PRIZE CONTEST

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Inasmuch as I have been reading AMAZING STORIES since it first came out, and have not yet written you to tell you how much I enjoy and appreciate it, and seeing that you have invited comment by us readers on the three prize stories, I thought this would be a good time for me to comment thereon, and not put it off any longer.

I think it is certainly high time a magazine was created to be devoted solely to scientifiction,

because there is and always has been, plenty of such fiction going around to warrant it, only heretofore it has had to appear in other fiction magazines, sandwiched between love, adventure, detective, and other types of stories, or else in non-fiction science publications, where it would perhaps feel a little more at home.

I certainly do not think the name of the magazine could be much improved upon, and there seems to be a sufficient number of illustrations, not that I would object to more of course. Also I think that once a month is often enough to publish AMAZING STORIES, because then it is more welcome when it does come. There is plenty in it to read and digest (what with other worthy magazines to which I also subscribe) not to wish it to come oftener, and then it would be twice as much expense to have it twice a month, unless you issued two smaller magazines each month, at 15 cents each as some of them do. Then too your stock of good stories would be used up the sooner and more likely to run out when there was a dearth of good stories being submitted.

I found all the stories very interesting so far, whatever their other faults may have been, take "The Green Splotches," and "The Time Machine," for instance, which I will comment on some other time.

I think you are to be congratulated on your choice of "The Visitation" as the winner of first prize in the story contest. It is indeed a cracker-jack of a story and I was delighted with it and read it through several times. Mr. Wates so ingeniously reconciles and explains away everything that to me appeared so improbable, and incongruous when I first saw the picture, that if I didn't know about the contest, I would certainly think it was drawn to fit the story, rather than that the story was inspired by it.

Only two serious flaws appear in this splendid story. First he chooses South America as the continent whereon the Deelathon were found. While there are doubtless regions in the jungle interior of South America which are yet unexplored and might harbor strange races not yet known to mankind, there could be no such isolated spots along the coast as it is too well known and populated. If he had chosen some Pacific isle or the Antarctic Continent it would have seemed more probable. Also it seems absurd that with all their scientific knowledge and attainments the Deelathon should be imprisoned in their small country by such ordinary things as cliffs and the sea for thousands of years, during which time they were living right along and thinking of this difficulty always and never finding a way out of it. They would certainly have driven pegs into the cliffs or blasted them away, and as for the sea they could have built galleys and set forth upon it even as did the Norsemen when they crossed to America.

I enjoyed reading "The Fate of the Poseidonia" almost as much as "The Visitation," and think it ought to have been given second place because there is much more probability to it as well as better science, although no such disastrous consequences as the author depicted would result, even from theft of ocean water on such a scale as she described.

"The Electronic Wall" seemed probable enough until the time when the vessel was out in space and the fog cleared and revealed to the occupants the sphere. The author's description of it as a small world inhabited by microscopic beings seems too fantastically improbable altogether.

A Globe as small as that would not possess sufficient gravity to keep such minute beings on it. And if they endowed it with an artificial gravity, such as they did to the ship through their electronic forces, and this gravity were strong enough to hold them on their globe, it would also flatten out the polar bosses and the equatorial bulge, and they would present a rocky appearance, and to be inhabited would also have to have water or seas upon it and growing things, which asteroids have not. The globe in the picture does not present such an appearance, like a world, but rather appears to be of metallic construction, an artificial creation, more like a space ship. Even the moon, so much larger than the asteroids lost its air and water through lack of sufficient gravity to hold them on. Since such a world therefore must be necessarily an artificial one, granting that it could be created, and its gravity also artificial, the race that created it must have first been beings similar to us in size, and inhabiting a planet of a size similar to that of Earth or Mars, and if so what race of people would be likely to make such a globe and then proceed to diminish their own size in order to live upon it? And if they would not stop there, they would proceed to create more such globes, out of all the material they could get, and thus make themselves the more powerful. But it is far more likely that the reverse would be their course, they would proceed to enlarge themselves and to make their planet larger and lighter, and with it journey to other uninhabited planets and do the same by them.

I would like to comment on some of the other stories in this letter but since I've already made it a rather long one I think I'd better forbear. I commenced a story myself, written around that picture, but did not complete it in time to get in on this contest. After reading the prize-winning stories I don't think it would have won a prize, tho perhaps it might have gotten an honorable mention.

Looking forward with pleasurable anticipation to the appearance of the other five stories, I remain

Alfred H. Richards
Flint, Michigan

[The above criticisms are very valuable. One point is that they vindicate the picture. The effort was to make the picture about as impossible as could be, yet you find that our authors did manage to elicit from it most readable stories. As regards the location of the Deelathons on the continent of South America, if we recollect right, this was the location of Samuel Butler's mythical country of "Erehwon," which our readers will notice is "nowhere" written backwards. This distinguished author was quite content to keep his mythical characters confined there. After all such elaborate criticisms as those of this correspondent, go to prove what a grip the stories in this magazine have upon their readers. Such letters are received by us with very great pleasure.—Editor]

THE FOURTH DIMENSION. SERIALS

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Some time ago it was my good fortune to discover an issue of AMAZING STORIES and curiosity led me to purchase a copy of same. Needless to say, that now I am a constant reader of this splendid publication, and not only that but I have succeeded in interesting a large circle of readers of the publication, in my vicinity. To a person who has natural liking for science and new inventions your magazine surely presents a large meal of thought.

Your recent prize contest offer was certainly splendid and the published prize-winning stories were simply great. The "Electronic Wall" winner of the first prize I believe, was splendidly written, the science was as nearly flawless as a story could be and still be fiction. (On reference I see that it was the winner of the second prize, but if you will pardon my opinion I still think it the best story.) I would like to know where you found the picture which you made the subject of the contest. Stories of the type, incorporating interplanetary travel always were fascinating to me. Another interesting fact concerning these stories seems to be that most of the writers are of the opinion that the "Sphere" and the "People" in the picture should be a power for good rather than evil, probably suggested subconsciously by the headgear which needs no great stretch of the imagination to be likened to the appearance of the popular conception of an angel.

Stories incorporating the "Fourth Dimension" are a kind I do not like. A great many of the would-be scientists try to weave an air of mystery about this topic and their reasoning for the most part is hazy and absurd. If scientist and writer alike wish to treat another form of existence let them use a different and more scientific name for the subject, instead of trying to mask their ignorance on the part they do not comprehend by calling it the "Fourth Dimension," which implies a something or state of whose existence we haven't the slightest proof.

Stories on the other hand embracing different kinds of light rays, both visible and invisible, have a sound background and have a ring of truth behind them which always makes the scientifiction more interesting. Spirit communication through these mediums always makes interesting reading, for what subject is of more moment and more vital to the human race than the ultimate proving of an after-existence of life after our brief span of years?

Another thing which I take the liberty of mentioning is the subject of having continued stories in magazines. Many publishers seem to have the impression that they are essential to gain a larger circulation in their magazines. It is my idea that they are absolutely wrong. One loses the trend of thought if they must wait until the following month to gain another final installment. For myself, as well as a great many others of my acquaintance, I always wait until I have all the copies in hand before I read a continued story. It is my opinion that a magazine having such splendid qualities as AMAZING STORIES does not need to have any drawing card other than its merits. If a magazine is not worth reading no amount of continued stories will make it popular with the reading public. If a story is to be published and it is very long, and if it really has exceptional merits it should be printed if it fills the magazine. If this cannot be done it should be printed in book form and sold separately. If the story is not worthy of so much space it should be boiled down. If it cannot be made to conform as above it is my opinion it should not be published at all. As you have noticed I presume, a great many writers can use a "barrel of words to express a spoonful of thought." A great many "serials" are like that.

Luckily AMAZING STORIES does not have many serials and there may be advantages in having them but I cannot see this although I retain an open mind and would be willing to revise my opinion in regard to same should someone have a convincing argument in their favor.

Mr. H. G. Wells is one of your most interesting "staff writers" if such I may call him and has mastered the art of the "pen" to a high degree. Though some of his opinions may differ from mine I like his style. The Jules Verne stories are very good also and many of his stories will become immortal. He has an uncanny insight into the future of science. But of what avail for me to praise the writers as their work speaks for itself.

Taken as a whole the chief fault that I find with AMAZING STORIES is that it is not a weekly or a semi-monthly publication.

H. L. Drape
Dayton, O.

[This letter from a very appreciative reader, is a good illustration of what we are sure those who peruse the discussion column, must have observed—namely—that our critics in their letters take the stories which are, of course, fiction, almost as seriously as if they were cold matters of fact. As regards the fourth dimension, the votes of our readers in favor of *The Runaway Skyscraper* show that a great many differ from our correspondent in their view of the fourth dimension, highly approving of it, as a basis for the flight of fancy. There is much truth in what you say about serial stories, but some stories are so long that they have to be published in several issues, and are so good that it would be a shame to miss them. As for boiling down, this is a responsibility we do not care to take, and a boiled-down story is inevitably spoiled in the treatment. Furthermore, no great author as for instance H. G. Wells would stand for it—quite rightly so.—Editor]

A STRANGE TREE IN NEW GUINEA

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have always been intensely interested in scientifiction and I think that AMAZING STORIES is by far the best magazine your company has ever published.

I read "The Experimenter" and many of your other publications for a number of years but now I buy only Science and Invention and AMAZING STORIES.

I enclose a clipping from the Philadelphia Inquirer in which is mentioned a tree similar to that described in the story "Through the Crater's Rim." This only goes to show there is more truth in Scientifiction than most readers think.

Robert M. Gerfin
Lancaster, Pa.

WONDERFUL TREE DISCOVERED

The banyan-tree is well known to science. It throws out branches, which touching the ground take root, so that after a while a whole forest may grow from a single tree.

But there is another wonderful tree with similar power, that has just been discovered in New Guiana. This tree also throws out branches, but instead of taking root, the branches twine themselves around any object they touch, and lift the object into the air.

In this way the long tendrils pick up stones, bones, bits of wood, and other trifles, holding them until they grow into the tree.

[We thank our reader for the clipping which he sends us. The description of the banyan-trees is interesting and very well known, but the New Guiana tree, which carries out so wonderfully the idea of the story, *Through The Crater's Rim*, is not so well known, and is extremely interesting and certainly implies the suggestion that it is not very safe to say that stories of the type we publish are entirely impossible.—Editor]

FROM A YOUNG READER AND CRITIC

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have read AMAZING STORIES ever since Ju[illegible] 1926, and, although but thirteen years old I ha[ve] liked it very much.

To my way of thinking, the "Time Machine" was the finest story ever published in A. S. [I] have just finished the last installment of "In the Fourth Dimension." By all means don't [re]print that. Help ! ! One story from Science and Invention that ought to make a hit is the "Ark of the Covenant," by Victor MacClure, which appeared in S. & I. about a year ago. I think that Mr. MacClure is in the same class as H. G. Wells.

Regarding the "Singing Weapon," the enclosed clipping from the department "Picked Out of the Air," in Colliers' for May seventh is interesting.

Here is a rather unusual experience related by Abe Silvert of Bryn Mawr, Pa. "Several nights ago," he says, "I was listening to a jazz orchestra broadcasting from WJZ. I took my violin and started to play with the orchestra. I had achieved a dubiously high note, when suddenly the radio was drowned out under a loud buzzing noise. Turning to the radio I found the bridge lamp alongside it casting a bluish light. I discovered the filament had broken, but the gap was still short enough to let a stream of electrons flow. I tapped the bulb sharply, and the noise immediately stopped as the light went out.

"The bulb was a new one, and it seemed to me more than a coincidence that it burned out when it did. As I figure it, the note I played reinforced with that of the radio happened to be the fundamental vibration of the filament inside the bulb, and it broke. What do you think?

Yours for a semi-monthly.

Henry Gordon Adamson
Highland Park, Ill.

[The clipping enclosed by Mr. Adamson is interesting. The *Ark of the Covenant* impressed the editors as a very fine piece of fiction. It was not published in S. & I. but in *The Experimenter*.—Editor]

A PIONEER IN ITS FIELD

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Caught in the torrent of admirers and critics who flock to your office with suggestions, praise and criticisms, I cannot help sending in my bag of opinions in letter form.

It seems that there are many advantages derived from "AMAZING STORIES." It teaches science, stirs the imagination, and still keeps the reader thoroughly entertained. But there is one advantage your magazine has that exceeds every thing. It teaches us to imagine the future of the world by the change which has come about from the past to the present. Scientific development

BURIED TREASURE

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Good Chemists Command High Salaries

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T. O'CONOR SLOANE, A.B., A.M., LL.D., Ph.D.

Noted Instructor, Lecturer and Author. Formerly Treasurer American Chemical Society and a practical chemist with many well known achievements to his credit. Not only has Dr. Sloane taught chemistry for years but he was for many years engaged in commercial chemistry work.

Do you remember how the tales of pirate gold used to fire your imagination and make you want to sail the uncharted seas in search of treasure and adventure? And then you would regret that such things were no longer done. But that is a mistake. They *are* done—today and everyday—not on desert islands, but in the chemical laboratories throughout your own country. Quietly, systematically, the chemist works. His work is difficult, but more adventurous than the blood-curdling deeds of the Spanish Main. Instead of meeting an early and violent death on some forgotten shore, he gathers wealth and honor through his invaluable contributions to humanity. Alfred Nobel, the Swedish chemist who invented dynamite, made so many millions that the income alone from his bequests provides five $40,000 prizes every year for the advancement of science and peace. C. M. Hall, the chemist who discovered how to manufacture aluminum made millions through this discovery. F. G. Cottrell, who devised a valuable process for recovering the waste from flue gases, James Gayley, who showed how to save enormous losses in steel manufacture, L. H. Baekeland, who invented Bakelite—these are only a few of the men to whom fortunes have come through their chemical achievements.

What Some of Our Students Say of This Course:

I have not written since I received the big set. I can still say that it far exceeded my anticipations. Since I have been studying with your school I have been appointed chemist for the Scranton Coal Co. testing all the coal and ash by proximate analysis. The lessons are helping me wonderfully, and the interesting way in which they are written makes me wait patiently for each lesson.—MORLAIS COULENS.

I wish to express my appreciation of your prompt reply to my letter and to the recommendation to the General Electric Co. I intend to start the student engineering course at the works. This is somewhat along electrical lines, but the fact that I had a recommendation from a reliable school no doubt had considerable influence in helping me to secure the job.—H. VAN BENTHUYSEN.

So far I've been more than pleased with your course and am still doing nicely. I hope to be your honor graduate this year.—I. M. NORKUS, JR.

I find your course excellent and your instruction, truthfully, the clearest and best assembled I have ever taken, and yours is the fifth one I've studied.—JAMES J. KELLY.

From the time I was having Chemistry it has never been thus explained to me as it is now. I am recommending you highly to my friends, and urging them to become members of such an organization.—CHARLES BENJAMIN.

I shall always recommend your school to my friends and let them know how simple your lessons are.—C. J. AMDAHL.

I am more than pleased. You dig right in from the start. I am going to get somewhere with this course. I am so glad that I found you.—A. A. CAMERON.

I use your lessons constantly as I find it more thorough than most text books I can secure.—WM. H. TIBBS.

Thanking you for your lessons, which I find not only clear and concise, but wonderfully interesting. I am—ROBT. H. TRAYLOR.

I received employment in the Consolidated Gas, Co. I appreciate very much the good service of the school when a recommendation was asked for.—JOS. DECKER.

Experimental Equipment Furnished to Every Student

We give to every student without additional charge this chemical equipment, including forty-nine pieces of laboratory apparatus and supplies, and forty different chemicals and reagents. These comprise the apparatus and chemicals used for the experimental work of the course. The fitted heavy wooden box serves not only as a case for the outfit but also as a useful laboratory accessory for performing countless experiments.

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You Can Learn at Home

To qualify for this remarkable calling requires elaborate specialized training. Formerly it was necessary to attend a university for several years to acquire that training, but thanks to our highly perfected and thorough system of instruction, you can now stay at home, keep your position, and let us educate you in Chemistry during your spare time. Even with only common schooling you can take our course and equip yourself for immediate practical work in a chemical laboratory. Dr. Sloane gives every one of his students the same careful, personal supervision that made him celebrated throughout his long career as a college professor. Your instruction from the very beginning is made interesting and practical, and we supply you with apparatus and chemicals for performing the fascinating analyses and experimental work that plays such a large part in our method of teaching, and you are awarded the Institute's official diploma after you have satisfactorily completed the course.

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You don't have to have even the small price of the course to start. You can pay for it in small monthly amounts—so small that you won't feel them. The cost of our course is very low, and includes everything, even the chemistry outfit—there are no extras to buy with our course. Our plan of monthly payments places a chemical education within the reach of everyone. Write us and let us explain our plan in full—give us the opportunity of showing you how you can qualify for a highly trained technical position without even giving up your present employment.

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NAME .....

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the last few decades has been marvelous. Fifty years ago, who would have thought of seeing a person who is miles away and speaking to him at the same time! Who would have thought that one can travel from one continent across more than 3,000 miles to another in less than a day and a half? Similarly who can tell what fifty years hence will be?

The passing of time and its effects upon us, the all-important consequences of that one word "change" means most in our lives. It brings us into the world—it takes us from it. What do we care for sudden business troubles? Why should we worry about wrangling politics? It is the change in our lives, the rushing into the future that means most. Science has grown rapidly, and now is displacing all else. We are in the center of the struggle between the big business problems that engross us and the ever-growing science. We are benumbed by the struggle. We are weakened by the stubborn fight that the products of the almighty dollar is staging. And "AMAZING STORIES" comes as a relief to our strained minds—it is the psychological moment for the millions of people to think more of their physical life, to find out where they came from, what they are, and where they are going to. These questions have been the incentive for all the scientific achievements of today. It is about time for the idle mass of the people to wake up to its physical consciousness and see itself as a tiny human being as compared to the endless universe.

"AMAZING STORIES"—to my mind—is the pioneer to a flock of such similar works that are to come; and being such, it deserves more credit than the human hand or mouth can express. If there are any particular stories that fall short of expectations here and there, they are not to be criticized. I am sure that thousands of readers have felt sorry when they couldn't get more than a vague idea of some scientific invention that the author suggested. How can he when there is so much for science to achieve? The world knows very little as yet. The great encouragement that AMAZING STORIES gives to science is like a pleasant boomerang. In a few years, through its help, scientifiction will be newer and more intricate—and I dare say more frequent and popular.

Having had my say, my only wish is that AMAZING STORIES does become the "pioneer;" and like all pioneers, the best in its field.

Samuel Shackman,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

[We are very glad to get, what you term, your "little bag of opinions;" such letters as yours are a great encouragement and we can assure you that to the hard-working editor, such commendation as you give is most inspiring, and even such gentle criticism as you indulge in is of distinct value, because we must know what our readers think in order to intelligently give them what they want.—Editor.]

COMMENTS FROM ENGLAND

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I note with interest in this (June) issue of "AMAZING STORIES" that you publish a letter from a reader residing in India and as I have been a reader of the magazine since the first number I thought you might welcome a few comments from this part of the world.

As regards the make-up of the magazine, I think this is very good indeed. It is quite a relief to open a magazine without having to place a weight on each of the leaves to keep it open! I think the magazine contains more value in reading matter than I have yet come across in other magazines, even though the price I have to pay for it is 50 per cent above the price of the magazine in New York. I am very glad you have not succumbed to the practice objectionable to me, which seems prevalent in American magazines, of giving a small portion of the story in the front part of the book and then making the reader hunt up the greater part of the story in a mass of advertisements in the rear. Personally I cannot think of anything more irritating than this.

With regard to the stories themselves, I think your choice is excellent, and one thing that strikes me particularly is the international character of the magazine. England, France, and America are equally represented in the stories, and I was very pleased at the way in which the English characters were woven into such excellent stories as "The Second Deluge" (Serviss) and the "Land That Time Forgot" (Burroughs.)

I certainly agree with "M. J. Wriggins, Philadelphia, Pa.," as regards the reprinting of old scientifiction stories of Jules Verne, etc. I have read most of Mr. H. G. Wells' fine stories, but all the same I was very pleased to see you reprinting them in "AMAZING STORIES," as I can imagine the pleasure they will give to people who have yet to read them.

I note with interest you have arranged for Mr. H. G. Wells' story "The War of the Worlds" to appear in the August issue. All the towns, villages, places, etc., mentioned in this story such as Ottershaw, Chertsey, Horsell Common, Woking, Chobham, Maybury, Leatherhead, Ripley Street, Weybridge, Shepperton, Kingston are within less than ten miles of my home and I know them all very well, as I have also visited Tillingham, Foulness, and Chelmsford, and can therefore vouch for the fact that they actually exist and are not merely inventions for the purposes of the novel. This fact adds to the realism and interest of the story. I would mention, however, that in chapter

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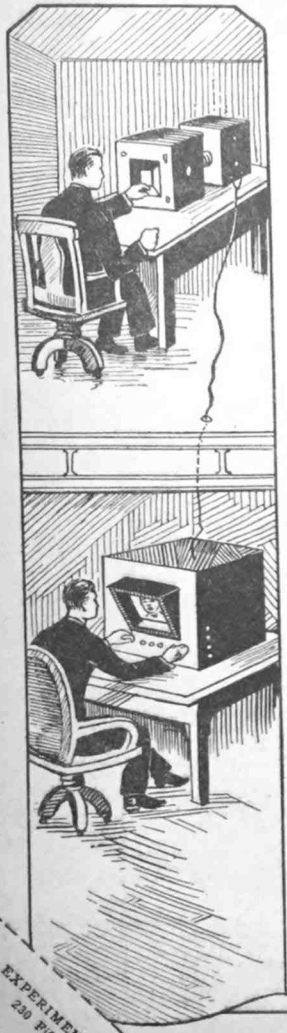

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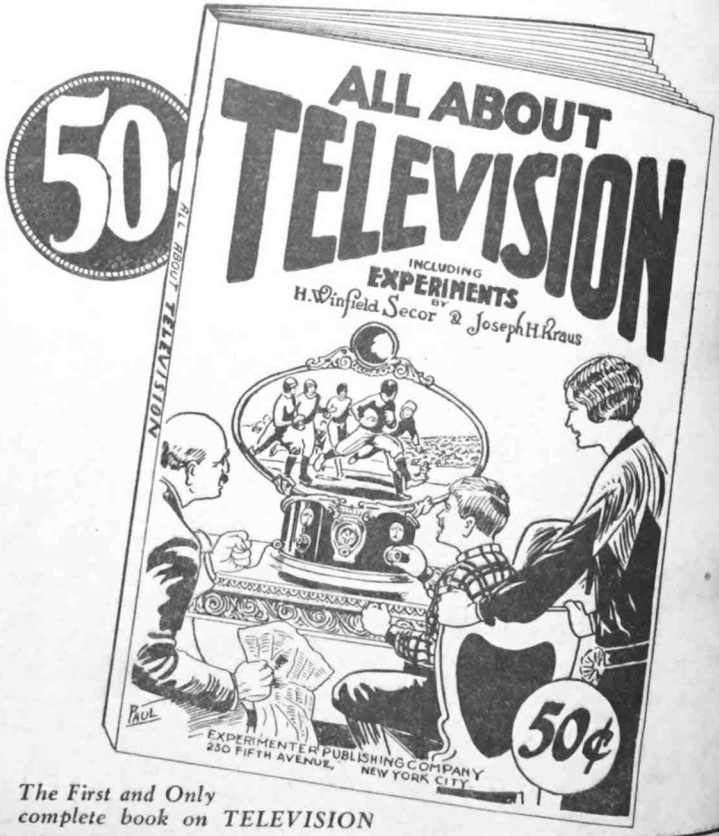

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was immensely excited by the opening of the line of communication, which is invariably closed between the South-Eastern and South-Western Stations ...... etc." but owing to the amalgamation of the S.E. and S.W. Railways into one, the Southern Railway, and also to the entire rebuilding in recent years of Waterloo Station, the "line of communication" in question was taken up and no longer exists.

I regret the length of this letter, but I have not sent in any "Readers Vote of Preference" coupons, having regard to the length of time they would take to reach you, and, besides I find it very difficult indeed to decide which story I do like best. I will however give you the four I particularly enjoyed, viz:—

"The Land that Time Forgot" (Burroughs).
"The First Men in the Moon" (Wells).
"Off on a Comet" (Verne).
"The Second Deluge" (Serviss).

In closing this letter may I wish a very long life to "AMAZING STORIES" and trust it will continue at its present high standard.

A. M. D. Pender
Tolworth, Surbiton,
Surrey (England)

[We can understand that our correspondent enjoyed Mr. Wells' local knowledge. There is not the least doubt that Mr. Wells knows his London, for if you know London, you must know its wonderful environs and to those of us who have been in any of these places, a most pleasing atmosphere is given to the story by the familiar names. We can imagine how a reader living within ten miles of the localities of *THE WAR OF THE WORLDS* would be pleased at having these names before him. Even to those who do not know London, the quaint English names have a great charm, and this author has made very good use of his topographical knowledge.—Editor]

REJUVENATION BY THE ELIXIR OF YOUTH

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Somewhere I have read a story similar to Mr. Verrill's "The Ultra-Elixir of Youth" (which appears in your August issue, p. 477). In that account, also, an elixir produces upon its victims "youth reduced to the *nth* degree"—the adults pass once again through all the stages of youth and childhood, finally reverting to the original egg cell; but after they recommence to grow, in due time becoming adults once again. Their growth however, differs from their reversion in that it is perfectly normal. I confess that the most important point of both stories I do not understand. Why should such an elixir reduce an adult to childhood? If age is merely an exhaustion of cells, what else should a youth-giving potion do but rehabilitate a person by rejuvenating the cells? Is there any foundation for believing that such an elixir would actually reduce the number of cells in proportion as it revives them? It is clear that only by decreasing their number could it reduce the stature of a person.

Not, let me hastily add, that I really wish to criticize or curtail the freedom of a scientifiction writer by compelling him to adhere only to the possible throughout. I merely conclude that since two writers similarly work out a theme, it may be that they follow a well known scientific fact.

You have no more faithful reader than myself, I am certain. Thus far I have missed no copy of AMAZING STORIES except the June, 1926 issue; I cannot yet account for its eluding me. I notice that in the "Discussions" for August, 1927, several readers plead for a semi-monthly appearance of the magazine. With them I heartily concur, as I remarked in a previous letter. At any rate, I wish you all good luck—and, by the way, I certainly wish you those thirty odd pages of advertising about which you speak in the August editorial.

Edgar Luia.
New York City.

[Indeed, why should the situation as shown by Mr. Verrill in his story not be feasible or possible? If you can take a decrepit old man, as science has done a number of different times, and by glandular operation or otherwise make this man thirty years younger, why should it not be possible to continue the process? Of course the shrinkage of the bones would seem an insurmountable obstacle at first, but is it really? Take a man in the prime of his life and measure him. You will find that forty years hence, when he is old he will have shrunk perhaps several inches. On the other hand, there is no reason why certain chemicals should not stunt the growth, so that it could even be made to go backwards. It may be said that any live matter, if suitably treated, can take on the most surprising shapes. Any one who has seen the crippled feet of Chinese women, which are only about half the size of a normal foot, will probably realize this.—Editor.]

COMPARISONS OF AUTHORS—COMMENTS ON "THE MOON POOL"—A GOOD WORD FOR THE GERMANS

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I cannot very well tell you how much I have appreciated your stories. Especially I want to know who this A. Merritt is? To my mind, as I have often told my friends, E. R. Burroughs is endowed with the most marvelous and remarkable imagination I have ever encountered. But this Mr. Merritt—appropriate name, eh!—has almost got my favorite beaten. He has created a masterpiece and told it in such a convincing style, I am speaking of "The Moon Pool." His description of the Shining One and of the mechanism of the Corial's motor leaves a very vivid picture, in fact, a very plausible one on the mind. I almost wrote you for the rest of the book—after finishing the first installment. I must point out tho, that in the journey to the place of the Silent One Goodwin and Larry go through a whole lot of unnecessary dangers. To this part of the story holds the interest of the reader throughout, I think he feels rather that all this has been useless because of the point where Larry's struck down, the path to the Crimson Sea is quite unprotected from the outer roadway. Why couldn't the adventurers have chosen to take this short cut and avoid the dangers. The moss-spore plot has occurred before, I think, in one of Dr. Fu Manchu's stories by Sax Rohmer. The description of the Silent One's is unparalleled and quite conceivable. The use of ancient Irish superstitions lends an interesting touch to the realism of the story.

"The People of the Pit" was rather too gruesome—fatalistic, as I remember it. Wells, in his "The Plattner Story" gives one another view of what comes after death—I discount the Fourth Dimension idea and will soon forget the reversing of Plattner's anatomy but I will not soon forget the picture of the souls watching the results of their endeavors upon earth.

I have just read Burrough's "The Moon Maid"—fatalistic—and hope for better results from your Annual. I have read all of his "Mars Stories," his "Tarzan Stories" and a few others. Especially the "Land that Time Forgot" carries out a very remarkable plot with plenty of action and very good science.

To return back to Merritt, isn't Burroughs behind it all? For instance they both have to bring in a German as the villain. It's the one thing I can't tolerate in Burroughs—his aversion to Germans. It must be a germ. I have lived in Germany a good many years and I know the people and their side of the recent war and it's all been hashed up so many times. Why can't it be some other nationality? Or, is it because the Germans are really such an intelligent race that only they could conceivably be on the alert enough to take first place among our author's villains?

I would like to commend you on the outcome of your prize contest. The stories were all most remarkable both for ingenuity and versatility.

William C. Dreher, Jr.
Anderson, Ind.

[We agree with our correspondent that the war should be forgotten with all its hatreds, yet one of the great lights of the French Army, General Foch, is credited with predicting another war in twenty years. Travelers tell us that Americans are now very unpopular in Europe, in spite of the money they spend there. As *"The Moon Pool"* is a reprint and was published in book form many months ago, a little of the spirit of the world war must be anticipated in its pages. The author wanted a villain and the poor German had to take the onus. Our correspondent, however, does consider *"The Moon Pool"* a masterpiece. It is surprising as well as gratifying how much commendation has been lavished on this beautiful flight of fancy.—Editor]

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EARN $87-$110 WEEKLY SELLING CHRISTMAS CARDS. Full or spare time. $10 sample book FREE. Weekly payment. Experience unnecessary. Our co-operation insures success. John Hertel Co., 320 Washington, Chicago, Ill.

FREE! To honest men over 18: new patented cigarette lighter. Show your friends and make $90 weekly. Send 25c to cover mailing costs and mention name of this magazine. E. Z. Lite, Dept. 2-G, 15 Westminster Road, Brooklyn, N. Y.

$20 daily easy selling amazing rain-proof caps. Made-to-measure. Finest fabrics and styles. Big advance profits. Free outfit and free cap offer. Taylor Cap Manufacturers, Dept. R-7, Cincinnati, Ohio.

HIGH-SALARIED POSITIONS waiting for you in automobile, tractor and airplane work. I'll train you in eight short weeks so you can earn $45.00 to $75.00 a week—unlimited future for good men. Qualify as an expert and own your own garage or service station. Write me TODAY for big FREE AUTO BOOK. Your Railroad fare included in this big special offer. The opportunity of a life time—don't miss it by delay. J. H. McSweeny, The Auto Man, Address, Z300—654 E. McMillan, Cincinnati, or Z300—1815 E. 24th St., Cleveland, Ohio. Please mention this magazine.

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Agents $240 month. Bonus besides. Sell finest line silk hosiery you ever saw. Auto furnished. Credit given. Write for samples. Wilknit Hosiery Co., Dept. 235, Greenfield, O.

AGENTS MAKE $3.00 HOUR TAKING orders for 40 fascinating "Handy Things" for Kitchen. Sell on sight! Write General Prod. Co., Dept. SM1, Newark, N. J.

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LADIES: TO EMBROIDER, ETC., AT home wanted immediately. Bonafide proposition. Liberal pay guarantee. No canvassing. Particulars free. Viking Products Co., Dept. 50, Leipsic, Ohio.

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Linenwhite Laundry Bluing Paddles Big Sellers, housewives, bazaars, fairs, carnivals. Send dime for sample and money making proposition. A. Ada Products, Buffalo, New York.

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Men, Get Forest Ranger Job; $125-$200 month and home furnished; hunt, fish, trap on side; permanent, no strikes or shutdowns, vacations on full pay. For details, write Norton, 270 McMann Bldg., Denver, Colo.

$40.00 Suits for $23.50! All one price. Union made of finest quality Virgin Wool. You don't have to know anything about selling clothing. We guarantee your success if you are honest and willing to work. Write at once. WILLIAM C. BARTLETT, 850 Adams, Dept. 368, Chicago, Illinois.

A CALIFORNIAN BOOSTER

ve been reading AMAZING STORIES since the publication; this is very unusual, for I never ke to read magazines, outside of Science and tion, which I have bought since 1915, at time known as the Electrical Experimenter. can truthfully say I have spent over two hun- d dollars in experiments of ideas I have gleaned ough the reading of some stories in this maga- I was going to send in a story at the time of cover contest, after spending some ten dol- to follow out a theory I received from the pic- of that spherical float, and failing, I did not the heart to send in a story based on nothing. have just purchased the August issue, and for unusual reason, looked the Discussions sec- first, and it is with alarm that I see so readers in favor of a semi-monthly issue. is fair enough, but I hope you do not pub- this magazine but once a month, this maga- is too good a thing for that, it is like watch- act of ventriloquism or "Mind Reading," fifteen minutes is enjoyable; more, no. believe there are many people who buy this zine once a month, and if it were printed , rather than lose an issue, would stop en- I among them, for I run myself on a

erning the stories of AMAZING STORIES, they be beaten. I will admit there were two stor- blished in this magazine over which I went , and at the same time, there were two that me such night-mares I could not sleep, so the good and the bad were mutual, but as a the short stories and the serials are wonder- congratulate you upon the choice of authors. er completing the reading of the story en- "The Moon Pool," by A. Merritt, I am of the on it is the *ULTRA-DE LUXE* of written nted stories, it is perfect in all detail. A. Merritt, A. Hyatt Verrill, Garrett P. Murray Leinster and H. G. Wells are sure *REAM of SCIENTIFICTION.* I remain, AMAZING STORIES and Science & Invention ster.

Frank Kallenberg.
Long Branch, Cal.

Here is a most refreshing letter. When a man s up his conviction by $200.00 in cash to ex- ment on ideas stimulated through the reading MAZING STORIES, the editors feel that they have e done a public service, and have perhaps ed the world in its progress. This is the sort timony that speaks far more eloquently than s ever could. It is this sort of letter that en- s the humdrum existence of the editor.—Ed itor.]

CRIPTION IN SCIENTIFIC STORIES

r, AMAZING STORIES:

ave just finished perusing with the utmost en- ent the July issue of AMAZING STORIES. ould it be possible to have less scientific ptions, which are usually uninterpretable to rman, and more action? This I find to be ly fault in your magazine. However, its g and soul-satisfying qualities are of such rwhelming majority that such a small mat- akes not a great deal of difference.

stories, "The Runaway Skyscraper," "The Deluge," and "The Moon Pool," were g the best you have yet published. But then, ally everything you have yet published has so excellent, that it seems unnecessary to ate any.

most heartily agree with Mr. P. J. Lydon, who that you reprint in "AMAZING STORIES," the Cummings stories that have appeared in "Sci- and Invention." And the suggestion that masterpiece be issued twice monthly has so agreeable to so many of your readers it is now almost a necessity. Let me cast vote in favor of it. That you print not ch in one issue is my despair, for when I the first copy you issued, "AMAZING ," was promoted immediately to first place r ranks of reading matter.

en let me ask that your magazine may hold Cummings' very interesting stories, and that be issued just as often as your authors can you supplied with material and your presses nt the great number of copies I predict be necessary.

ld not Mr. A. B. Chandler, your English ndent, overlook the stories he has read be- when he realizes that you are giving us who but had the opportunity of reading them, that ere? His is the only letter I have seen which ing of stories from Science and Invention ne.

Thomas O'Neill says that we, who do not ver-descriptive stories, do not know how to I have read, I can safely say, all the bet- hors, some of them I have read over and again, and even some of the dryest books in- greatly. But in a periodical like yours, especially of scientific facts or im- ions, become rather poor reading. nking you for your attention in reading this.

J. Graham Shipman
Winnipeg, Can.

We do not feel it would be best to reduce the of scientific descriptions which appear in STORIES; as they are imaginary they are ponderable extent, uninterpretable, and we do feel that they make the stories deficient in ac- We thank our correspondent for his very criticism, even though we do not agree him in many respects, and he will find that ews seem not to be shared by a majority r correspondents and readers.—Editor]

OPPORTUNITY AD-LETS

This column will appear monthly in AMAZING STORIES

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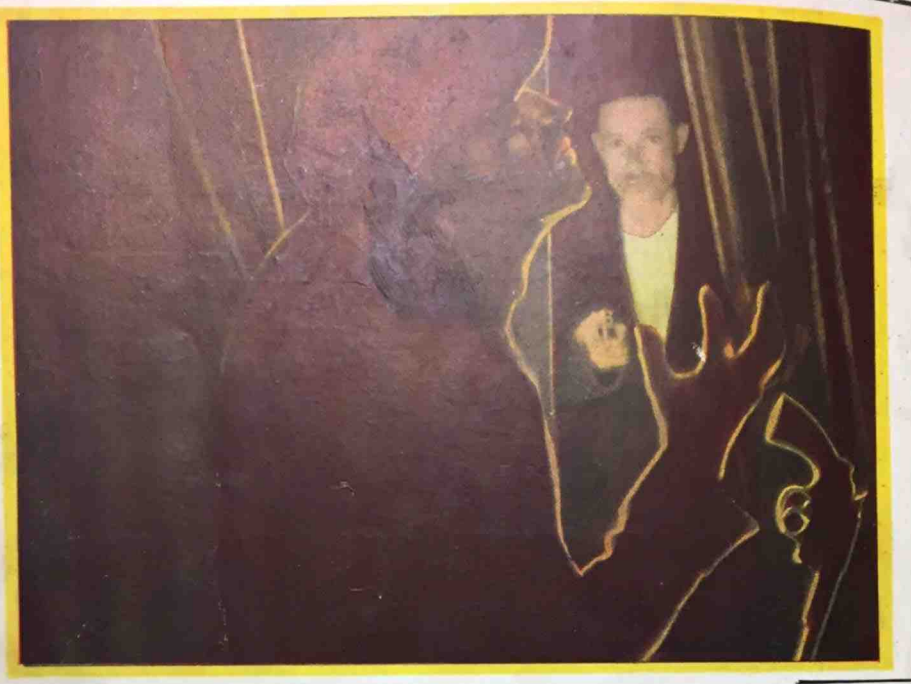

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