

VOLUME 20  
NUMBER 8

AMAZING STORIES

NOVEMBER  
1946

# AMAZING

NOVEMBER 25¢

IN CANADA 30¢

# STORIES



*the*  
**RETURN OF SATHANAS**

By Richard S. Shaver and Bob McKenna



## Let your HEAD take you

*(The average American today has a choice of just going where "his feet take him", or choosing wisely the course to follow. Let's skip ahead 10 years, and take a look at John Jones—and listen to him . . .)*

"SOMETIMES I feel so good it almost scares me. "This house—I wouldn't swap a shingle off its roof for any other house on earth. This little valley, with the pond down in the hollow at the back, is the spot I like best in all the world.

"And they're mine. I own 'em. Nobody can take 'em away from me.

"I've got a little money coming in, regularly. Not much—but enough. And I tell you, when you can go to bed every night with nothing on your mind except the fun you're going to have tomorrow—that's as near Heaven as man gets on this earth!

"It wasn't always so.

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"Well, even after she got better, I stayed away from the weekly poker game—quit dropping a little cash at the hot spots now and then—gave up some of the things a man feels he has a right to. We didn't have as much fun for a while but we paid our taxes and the doctor and—we didn't touch the Bonds.

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# EXTRAVAGANT FICTION TODAY COLD FACT TOMORROW

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Front cover painting by Arnold Kohn illustrating a scene from "The Return of Sathenas"

AMAZING  
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★  
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Volume 20  
Number 8

The

# OBSERVATORY

..... by the Editor

**L**AST month it was "The Green Man." This month you've observed a giant Red Man on our cover, the "old boy" himself, Sathanas. Who knows—it might be the blue man next month . . . while the "rit" holds out! Anyway, the red man on this month's cover is the illustration to the latest Shaver story, this one a collaboration with Bob McKenna, radio announcer favorite over KDKA (especially the morning farm hour, which gives Bob a big radio audience).

**"THE RETURN OF SATHANAS"** brings back the hero of "I Remember Lemuria!", Mutan Mion, together with the girl with the bushy tail, Ari, and couples them all with those ancient Norse heroes, the "lesser gods." Your editor considers this story to be a very amazing bit of work, and he himself has had an enormous amount of fun in "reading between the lines." If you've ever wondered (or studied) about ancient legends and asked yourself if they are just fiction, or if they really are time-distorted fact, here's a great treat for you. Whatever you decide about "The Return Of Sathanas," you are going to find that it ties up several loose ends in mythology which have been mysteries up to now. Your editor believes that it is most probable that, in essence, this story is the true explanation of the origin of these old legends.

**T**HE use of the word "true" is most always its "misuse"; and for those of our readers who protest calling the Shaver stories true, it might be well to take the word true to task. To most of us true means literally, in every detail, subject to rigorous proof. If we adhere to this rigorous definition, then we must say that everything that is not proved is not true. The Shaver stories are a mystery. They are not proved. But there is truth in them. Much truth. So much that it has excited many thousands of our readers. Your editor sees truth in the stories. Shaver says they are true, basically, except for the fictional treatment he must give them to enable us to publish them. For instance, in the undersea stories, he tries to explain the "truth" of the hero being depicted in the thought record as existing in a water-filled ship with only an air helmet, in spite of not knowing what the effects of pressure would be. If he were to call that "true," he would be wrong—as any scientific-minded reader can calculate that

not only would our hero have the bends, but he'd be a dead duck. Those readers who can appreciate these portions of the manuscripts as being Shaver's work, and pick out the other things which contain the real "truth" via the mysterious thought record, are the ones who are excited.

**O**NE of our readers objected to having Venus populated with people further advanced in civilization than ours—and gave as his reason the "fact" that Venus, being torn from the sun along with the Earth and Mars and other planets, would cool later than Mars and Earth and would be younger. This is fallacious reasoning. It arrives at a positive conclusion by basing the reasoning on a premise. We DON'T KNOW if that was how our solar system was created. Many people, including your editor, incline toward the "whirlpool in the ether" theory—that each planet, and the sun, are the results of separate "whirlpools," or vortices, and are not necessarily brought into being at the same instant. That word true is a tricky one. Our readers say the Shaver Mystery is "true" because so much of it makes sense, and in many cases, more sense than the existing and accepted theories. To mention a few: in-flowing gravity due to condensing matter rather than "attraction of mass" (which after all explains gravity no more than naming a baby "Alice Jones" explains the baby); the common origin of all Earth languages from a much older language spoken by races infinitely older and inhabiting worlds far out in space; radioactives thrown from the sun being the cause of age . . . and many others. To the student of the Shaver Mystery, there can be no doubt that an enormous portion of it is intrinsically true, and to the fair-minded the sincere attempt to provide the PROOF, is worthy of every support. None are so blind as those who will not see. We want to see, and we are gratified at the tens of thousands of our readers who also want to see.

**T**HE next four months will provide you with great stories by Leroy Yerxa, Ross Rocklynne, Don Wilcox, Chester S. Geier, Heinrich Hauser (oh man, what a classic novel it will be!), Theodore Sturgeon, William Lawrence Hamling, William P. McGivern, and Berkeley Livingston. So you can see what we have in store for you. A greater variety of fine science-fiction than you've ever seen before!

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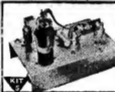
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I grappled with Satharaz; we began a rough-and-tumble battle as my two half-size comrades watched





# The RETURN of SATHANAS

by Richard S. Shaver and Bob McKenna

## CHAPTER I

*"Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,  
Came towering, armed in adamant and gold."*

—John Milton

THE pursuit needle indicated a dizzy succession of zigs and zags in front of my straining eyes. The huge dreadnor, the *Darkome*,

slewed in sickening curves as my hand on the swivel-jet stick tried to follow the crazily dancing needle. Was it—or was it not—the erratic ion trail of a dodging ship?

"Are we following one ship or a dozen?" asked Lt. Tyron, tightening the straining straps of the co-pilot's chair beside me.

"I don't know—but sure as the God's vengeance we're following some-

***Mutan Mion returned to his home world, Earth, in search of the greatest rogue in all space; the arch enemy of mankind, the scarlet-skinned Sathanas himself***



thing with plenty of reason to want to escape. And we will follow as long as the fool's drivers leave us a trail.

"Too much trail right now. A few more of those sudden jerks and either the *Darkome* or me is going off in two directions at once—and the *Darkome* is tough."

"There's no question we can catch the ship or ships on this trail, but, what I am wondering . . . what has me worried . . . is, will our quarry be a big enough fish to be important, or some expandable decoy of Sathanas?"

I turned from my inspection of the dials and looked at my first officer. Tyron was a good man, but too impatient for action and too continually worried that he wouldn't see any. But he was intelligent and, in the two centuries he'd been in my command, there had never been a question of his reliability. He had the familiar look that action was going to get away from him again. I couldn't help laughing down at him.

"Well, Tyron, before this is over you'll have a chance to catch a lot of those devils—and when we do you may get those hands you're so proud of, singed. Carry on!"

I settled myself in my seat before the universal view screen<sup>1</sup>, thinking, "There's nothing to do now until we catch sight of whatever is making this trail." I, myself, was as impatient for action as Tyron, but in the long years since I left the culture farms of Mother Mu, I had learned to restrain my de-

sire for adventure until the opportunity came to unleash my energies into effective action.

The irritation I felt at being forced to stay on duty was just another score I had to settle with the fugitive fleeing through space somewhere ahead of us. Here, aboard ship, I have my duty, and when it is performed, the course checked and affirmed, the log set to rights, and my officers assigned to their special duties, my time is my own. And woe betide the unfortunate who unnecessarily disturbs my meditations and experiments in my own ship-board laboratory. It is a well equipped laboratory—befitting the ennobled station the Gods of Nor have seen fit to bestow upon their humble servant and brother. Only in the capital cities of the God race are there comparable laboratories. I have spent years and many a long voyage in some of the less frequented reaches of space to equip it for the work I do when I am not on the errands of the Gods. Full of apparatus picked up in the strange ports of a thousand far off planets—perhaps a little evil-smelling at times, but it is my life, and in it is life—little lives whose efforts are at times, vastly more successful than man's own . . . poor doomed mankind whose glorious ancestors are the immortal gods themselves.

ON MOST of the assignments that I took my ship, the *Darkome*, I had plenty of time for my own experiments, far from the distracting social activities

<sup>1</sup>This "universal viewer" is a device which assembles and coordinates the images resulting from a large number of penetray beams and their accompanying television—or direct-view screens. These beams point to every direction in space and the screen images are reprojected upon tiny mental vision (telaug) beams directly into the beam of the pilot of the ship. (Telaug beams carry mental messages in a large part of the communication system of the Nortans.) The result was a complete mental view in all directions—disturbing to

a man used to seeing in but one direction at a time. But to a pilot accustomed to the device, it was a vastly superior method to the older devices—which gave a single view of the space directly ahead. They were standard equipment on all Noctan war-craft of any size. With it, an experienced pilot is continuously conscious of the contents of space in every direction simultaneously—and could at the same time use his exterior vision for other purposes, to write a report—or a letter home—ACTUATOR.

of my own adorable Arl. But this trip would not allow me any time to myself—this trip was ordered upon by the Elders of Nor themselves. I was to capture and bring to trial that unwise but accomplished fiend, Sathanas, Ruler of the planet Satana. Sathanas, though a younger member of the God Race, had started his own private revolt against all authority—and the dicta of the Elders are not so lightly flouted by any upstarts a few score centuries old. He had violated the Elder laws designed to protect and foster life and growth—it seemed that he could not get enough victims for his orgies of cruelty under the existing laws and had set out to make a few laws of his own. But, as I said, the laws laid down by the myriad Lords of Nor in Council are not easily broken—even by a powerful and cunning master of sin like this Sathanas—and thus it was that I sat on the bridge of the war vessel, *Darkome*—the crew alerted for battle action—its glistening hull plunging toward the general area of the planetary system that gave me birth long years ago.

Once his defection<sup>2</sup> had been fully exposed, Sathanas escaped our avenging fleet by the barest seconds. The ships in his fleet—several hundreds in numbers—had blasted up in the very face of our fleet—jockeyed into position in the center of the 'zone of weightlessness'<sup>3</sup> between the planet Satana and her satellite Feon—then disappeared in that fierce burst of full acceleration into light speeds that is only possible in the precise center of such

'zones of weightlessness'. To make the maneuver more untraceable, every ship in the enemy fleet disappeared in a different direction. Perhaps we could have followed a few of them, but never would we find all of those divergent trails at many light speeds into the depths of space.

Of course, they must have had some pre-arranged rendezvous. But where? Our only hope for their capture lay in attempting to follow some of them, and then, by keeping the various observed courses plotted on the space charts, eventually figuring out where, approximately, that rendezvous lay in all the infinite reaches of space. That blasting off in a variety of directions was a clever maneuver—one they had accomplished smoothly and at inimitable speed—and a precision that bespoke much dangerous practise in the zones of weightlessness.

I had flung the *Darkome* into that center of neutralized gravities between two spatial bodies and pushed the lever controlling the dis-flows to the driver plates. Rammed it home to the last notch, swinging the ship with short side bursts, jockeying the craft to conform with the zig-zag swings of the pursuit needle, following the crooked trail of the gas ions left hanging in the ether by the force flows from the driver-plates of the Satanists' ships.

**SOMEWHERE** ahead, the enemy flung himself deeper into the ever-night of space. My ionic-indicator—a device to pick up the most tenuous of ion trails (standard equipment on all

<sup>2</sup>DEFLECTION: Note the persistence of this word—WITH the meaning INTACT—"dis-integrated energy infection," is shortened to DEFECTION, and STILL means—"to fall into evil; err on a job."—AURUM.

<sup>3</sup>ZONE OF WEIGHTLESSNESS: In a place where no thing has weight, infinite acceleration can

be achieved with every slight impetus—no inertia drag would crush the occupants. The acceleration would have no effect on the bodies of the passengers.

A 'zone of weightlessness'—neutralized gravity—exists between any two bodies in space. These zones would be used by space ships as starting points for all long, fast voyages.—AURUM.

the battle ships of Nor) had finally stopped its wild gyrations and held steady on what was an ionic trail dead ahead. This was it! No more of the excitement and doubt if we would get a trail that wasn't just a decoy—this was heavy with the exhaust of a large craft—steady enough to indicate that the ship or ships just ahead were actually going some place. And, if the speed that we were making was any indication of just how fast the enemy was going, he was really racing through space at close to the top acceleration of the *Darkome*—the *Darkome* that I had worked and studied over and had the crew tune until it had the reputation as one of the fastest ships in the Nordan fleet. But, then, it should be—the best mechanical minds in my planet had been building it for three centuries.

Like the thoroughbred that she was, the *Darkome* settled down to the chase . . . the scent of the quarry was in her mechanical nostrils—and her powerful drivers were capable of hurtling her to the infinity of spatial boundaries if need be. We would catch whatever was ahead of us if it took years at this terrific speed.

Somewhere ahead, that enemy crew bored a hole ever deeper into speed blackened space, their drivers heating as those of the *Darkome* were heating. Where would the chase lead?

## CHAPTER II

**T**HIS Arch-Angle, Sathanas, is not of the race of Nor. Being of Earth myself, it pains me to say that his ancestors first breathed the then untainted air of the third planet. Sathanas sprang from a vari-form family, originating among the Angles of Earth, which we call Mu. The Angles had originally been a blond, blue-eyed family of normal-appearing Earthmen.

Then, some time in the past, Sathanas' blood-line had been crossed with some dark, hairy, cloven-hooved race of space. Long before the migration which emptied most of the Sun's planets of intelligent life, his family had taken over a dark planet—by name, Satana—on the outer rims of the Nor Empire. In time, their ability had won them the administration of the affairs of the planet from the Rulers of Nor. And, from that one planet, eventually, they were given the Rulership of all the little planets in the small system of which Satana was the dominant world. The "Angles" and their leaders were variously designated—a separate political group under their "Monitor Angles"—Arch-Angles—and their supreme head, their Ruler and representative in the God Council on Nor—Elder Angle Fontal.

There were some dozen of the Arch-Angles with some dozen small planets in their administration. One of these was the Arch-Angle Sathanas, Ruler of the Home planet of the Angles in their group, the planet Satana. Being the first planet that the family had settled on after they left Mu, they had, in accordance with the customs of the God-Race, taken the name of the planet that they ruled as their family name. The rest of these planets were colonized with Angles from the cities of Earth . . . numerous, system-wide clan.

Sathanas' family had been well liked for a long time . . . and being just and wise rulers, they, as well as the peoples under them, prospered. And so, Sathanas had the best education that Nor could provide.

As I remember Sathanas, he was a fellow of some fifty feet in height, dark visaged, with the horns that indicated a crossing of the blood line with that of some Titans (which wasn't uncommon in ancient Mu). I had seen him

first at a council meeting some centuries ago, when I first acquired the status of a Ruler by my acquisition of the tiny planet of Callay. It was after concluding most of the formal ceremony incidental to the investiture of several new Rulers that someone first introduced us.

I can still picture the scene as he first greeted me with the accepted ceremony of Nor's tradition. A score of us—Lemurians, Titans, Atlans, variforms and a few from planets I'd never heard of—had found the favor of the Elders of the Council of Nor and were being made Rulers of certain planets of the Nor Empire. Not big, important planets, true . . . but still, we were all pleased that we should be so honored by the Elders. Not all became rulers as they grew older and bigger—even of small planets and planetoids.

**F**INALLY, the long ceremonies of creating a new ruler of a provincial Planet were over and we could relax for a brief time before the festivities began in celebration of the event. Several of us newly invested rulers had gathered together slightly apart from the tremendous bulk of the swarming Elders—gathered in a laughing, harmlessly excited little circle. We kept congratulating one another and with mock solemnity addressed each other with all the titles we'd ever heard and remembered. That was one of the best moments of my life. I recall that I laughed, and raising my right arm in a formal Nortan salute, had addressed a great golden-haired Titan, though he was one of us, addressed him with as solemn a look and as impressive voice as I could manage.

"O Mighty Zeus, Grand Lord of the Thirtieth Tender Fleet, Conqueror of Limitless Cow Pastures, Ruler of the Lately Discovered World of Olympia,

Greetings! Grant . . ."

"My Lords!" At the strange sound of someone addressing us so, we turned startled and looked up into the smiling understanding eyes of one of the Elders of Nor—one of the younger ones. He couldn't have been more than a few centuries older than we. For a moment we didn't know what to say, but the Elder continued before we became embarrassed.

"My Lords, may I present the Lord Sathanas, Arch-Angle and Ruler of the Planet Satana?"

We returned his salute and noticed this 'Lord Sathanas' that he'd presented. Accustomed as I am to life in all its varied forms and colors, the dark, ominous appearance of 'Lord Sathanas' was slightly depressing. He was too dark. Not the bronzed darkness of a heavy space tan, but the darkness of the sky just before a storm on Mother Mu. He made no effort to be friendly, just greeted us with stock phrases as though impatient to meet people more his equal. His impatience and boredom were further emphasized by the way he kept prancing on his cloven hooves—his heritage from some variform ancestor—and by the nervous way he kept drumming his fingers on the jeweled clasp of his weapon belt. Nothing about him pleased me, particularly the swaggering way he kept his long dark cape in motion. I thought to myself, 'What's he afraid of—that we'll contaminate his precious cloak?' I looked him full in the face—that handsome cynical face with the blue eyes of his Angle family, icily and incongruously staring back at me with the disdain ill-befitting a Ruler of Nor. That struck me as odd and jarring, here in this usually solemn hall, and my nostrils twitched with the scent of evil, sulphurous odor about him, no doubt from some ingredient of his nutrient vapors.

I should have known then, or at least have been suspicious, but, in the hallowed halls of the Council of Nor, one does not suspect one's equals. But he was a dero<sup>4</sup>—I know that now.

**T**HERE was a time, once, when the peoples of Mu and the other Sun planets were unaware that there could be such a thing as a dero. But that was when the Sun and Earth were young—before the Sun burned hot and deadly. But as the Sun burned down through its layers of carbon, it eventually reached the heavier substances near its core—the “de”—producing radio-active metals. It is the deadly emanations given off by burning radio-actives that produce in life, a dero—a detrimental energy from the Sun that so motivates life that they are like that which is robot controlled by these “de”, or detrimental energy emanations—evil completely.

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\*DERO: The amazing part of this account is that the same sort of evil being is still extant—right at this present day. When the Elder Races, the Gods and Giants of legend, left Earth, presumably to migrate to other worlds where they still live, they left the caves and their equipment. They were immortal, immortal as we would be if the Sun did not throw off the deadly “de” emanations produced by the burning of the heavy radioactive metals at the Sun's core.

The present day “dero” are descendants of surface people, who, in the past, found their way into the abandoned God-Caves. Eventually, they learned to use the ray mechanisms the Elder Race left behind when they migrated to escape the contamination from the suddenly deadly Sun.

The Elder race didn't take their marvelous mechanisms with them because even the “mech” was infected with “de.” But the surface people who stumbled into the caves didn't realize the danger in the mech—inherent in “de.” They found how to use the mech and it had a “de” effect on them—warping them from normal into “de” robots, “dero,” dero whose every impulse is evil.

It is the present, and historical dero that are responsible for most of the ills that befall men. The stories of evil ghosts, queer accidents and disappearances—all can be traced to mad dero using the ancient God-Mech (mechanisms) for their evil, malicious purposes.—AVRUCR.

We didn't find that out until later, though His family, foolishly indulgent, had concealed all the signs of his deroism. They didn't know enough of science to realize what a dread thing a dero can be.

They had paid for their indulgence and their ignorance with their lives—lives that should have been immortal—for the first of Sathanas crimes had been the summary and permanent removal of all the heirs above his rank in the family blocking his mad rise to power.

“Something has happened to Sathanas”, people said. In a way, they were right, but they didn't know in what way or they would have removed him. I know from similar cases that his character was a long time growing.

Sathanas had been born on the planet Mu (Earth) in one of the older cities and the mech of that city was condemned not long after Sathanas had left Mu to become the satellite Ruler of one of the planets under the Elders of Nor.

His was pretty much the same background, in many ways, as that of Ex-Elder Zeit whose antecedents I had studied long ago, as I had been curious as to how an apparently intelligent man had become such an unthinking monster.

I thought—and experiments of the Elder scientists subsequently proved—that aging mech has produced many a criminal. I think that their subjection to the infected energy from the worn-out pleasure mech was the cause of this as it formed their inner polarization—their very soul—along dis-inductive lines. Hence, as long as stars blaze in space, such characters will induct that will to Evil from the stars' mighty destructive fields. And unfortunately there is absolutely no way to prevent these creations.

THE whole group connected with Sathanas had fallen into some evil and dissipated habits, had formed a cult of great power, and had built secret hide-outs where they could indulge their perverted tastes in safety. They did not relish being deterred by Nor laws protecting the rights of every individual to safety of person. All this evil they had kept concealed behind many a barrier of sub-officials. And all went along smoothly for the Gods of Space know only how many years.

But finally, a very beautiful young Nor maiden had wheedled and vamped her way out of their unholy clutches and exposed the whole rotten mess.

Their use of girls for wall ornaments,<sup>3</sup> living in stimed nutrient, the whole depraved business of torture for pleasure and profit—the horrible circuses where captive men were forced to

<sup>3</sup>STIMMED BODY—ORNAMENTS: This use of girls and women for ornaments is a particularly revealing angle on the opulence and cruel disregard for the natural rights of man which has marked ray-secrets since the earliest days. This use is an old, and still extant, custom in the caverns that honeycomb this planet we call Earth but which the ancient ancestors of all of us called Mu. Down there in the great old ray mansions' esons are wall brackets where young women are hung, and the stfm currents of too great pleasure flows make their bodies rigid with an overwhelming synthetic nerve-electric. The effect is one of great beauty for the girls' young bodies are then like forced flowers pouring out all the beauty and love of a lifetime in an almost visible and very sensual outpouring of energy—like the flower pours out its pollen in a single day. Thus a place can be decorated with human flowers—if one doesn't care how soon such human flowers wilt. When the custom began, it is probable that the wonderful old mech contained strong beneficial flows which made the experience of the human ornament one of benefit. They survived, stronger than before and better. But as the mech grows older, such strong subjections to great energy flows from the old mech are no longer supportable by the human frame.

In the caverns, the custom still survives of decorating the walls for a feast with these living stimed ornaments, but the custom of surviving the ordeal of pleasure has perished, from what I hear.—AUTHOR.

fight for their lives against beasts from the unsettled sun-planets—all this disgusting blight on the rule and culture of the Nor Empire had finally been dragged out into the open. What Sathanas had thought was a corner on illegal entertainment had turned into a trap from which he was now just barely making his escape.

### CHAPTER III

THE great sensitive needles of the ionic-trail-indicator<sup>4</sup> became still and fell back against the pin marked 'O'—no more trail.

In the split second that the needle stopped, I leaped to my feet, stabbing the button opening the ship communicator.

"All hands! Attention! Reverse drivers! View screen open! Gun crews, stand by!"

The great dreadnor braked to a tortured halt from full velocity. I could hear Tyron taking over control, alerting the crew for battle—action that might start immediately. Barked orders maneuvered the ship's immense bulk into the exact center of the "zone of weightlessness".

"—we might have to move fast."

"Where are we?" I asked myself, as soon as I had made sure that the enemy wasn't in the neighborhood.

"This constellation looks familiar," I mused. "Can it be . . . still . . . it is!"

Opening the communicator, I called,

<sup>4</sup>GAS IONS: While the driver flow is a kind of reverse gravity formed by the disintegration of a certain metalloy, during the expansion under the dis-current, much gas is formed exclusive of the integrative snapback flow of end which is the frictional flow forming the drive. The dissociating sub-atoms of the driver plates pass through a gaseous stage where they leave a trail that is detectable. This ionizing trail is an unavoidable product of this form of drive.—AUTHOR.

"Arl! Do you recognize that planet in your view screen? It's Mu!"

Nostalgia gripped me. A homesickness I didn't think I could still feel smothered me at the sight of the familiar seas and green, white-topped mountains of my abandoned homeland of almost two thousand years ago.

Taking over the controls from the pilot who didn't even suspect that the planet under us was my former home, I toiled the mighty *Darkome* to a landing on Mu's satellite. For all of her tremendous mass, she slid gently to a stop in the glistening, liquid-air snow sheltered by the black shadow of one of the moon's mountains.

I ordered the tender broken out, then called to the control room.

"I am going to take Lady Arl to the surface of this satellite's planet. While I am scouting down there, keep the crew alerted."

Tyron saluted, looking a bit envious—envy, I guess, at the thought that he wasn't going to see his desired action.

"Yes, sir," was all he said.

"Observe standard precautions for operation in enemy territory. Avoid using as much equipment as possible to cut down the chances for detection."

"Yes, sir," he nodded.

"I don't know where the Sathanas' ship or ships have gone, but I doubt if they would be apt to be close by and still be undetected by our mech. But, until you hear from me, take no chances. That's an order!"

Returning his salute, the Lady Arl, who had come to the control room, and I hoarded the tender and took off. And not too comfortably, either. A tender is a small spacer for short flights—lifeboats for the crew, and on the *Darkome* the tenders were big, but two thousand years of Vanue's wizardry of growth had increased our height till we were well over fifty feet.

Both Arl and I felt the old excitement we'd experienced as youths using the small spacers for picnics from Mu to the Moon—felt excitement as I drove the little craft to the surface of the doomed planet for the first visit in a score of centuries.

Our excitement rankly turned to sadness. This wasn't the same planet we'd left—no darting ships—no shining towers—no signs of civilized life.

"Oh, Mion," spoke the lovely Arl beside me, "this is all so sad and unreal. I feel like—Mion! Look! What's that over there?"

"It looks like . . . it is a city, Arl!" Her enthusiasm was contagious. "Shall we go over there?"

"Oh, yes, Mion. Let's see what man has done in all these years."

"All right, Arl, but remember we are not allowed to stay here long."

She nodded, silent.

WE OF the Nor are not allowed to stay long on a sun-lit planet, for one's character soon becomes twisted—not necessarily into evil, but certainly into err—which can be worse. One in err is stupidly convinced of his correctness, of his own brilliance. All of our food and drink must be brought from our ship, for the radioactives in the water and meat of Earth may not be eaten by Nor men by law. That err, that mental polarization, is the thing men of Earth must fight most fiercely, for err will live in their thinking, an illogic that will make them think black is white till they are forced to check the question with a colorimeter.

We would pay for my stay on this sad planet with many boring hours before the medicoes finish the mental tests to make sure that we have not been evilly affected by the sun's hard light. Sometimes I knew they feared evil and its cause too much to fight it



effectively. The old medicoes can be tiresome themselves, to the point of evil. I would like to give some of them a few tests myself—of my own devising. Yes! They are too close to some dense metals—err magnets of another kind—and have become polarized by the dullest and heaviest metal to be found on a thousand master-size planets, that I know.

I expected to stay but the few hours allowed me and then away. Nearly two thousand years of the destructive magnetic field sweep of the sun have passed over old Mu. The difference between this little planet third from the Sun and the dark planets is immense. There, time is a growth, never a loss. Here, time is a sorrow, a slow destruction, a completely OPPOSITE QUANTITY. Here, the proud towers of Old Atlantis are crumbling stones, eroded by the blowing sands of the encroaching deserts that did not exist under Atlan science. There, the fecund growth of man has multiplied the beauty and pleasure, the power and the glory of Nor, many, many times in these two thousand years.

Having seen death in many forms, I like to fight death's burning face wherever I find it. Surely, death's face is burning brighter on Mother Mu than on any other globe these feet have trod, feet that sink further into the dis-softened stones<sup>7</sup> of this planet than any other I know. Many have been the globes trod since I last left old Mu to voyage through the dark voids where no light but the light of wisdom can be found. Dull it is, too, to one who has tasted war and death, and swift-tiding battles, to speed on some mission in

which the element of danger has been reduced to the undetectable minimum. I am a warrior, trained through many centuries of supremely difficult schooling to the rigors of battle and war, and there are few indeed, for Nor men to fight who even dare to think of braving our slightest displeasure.

Nearly two thousand years have passed since I distributed the records of the Atlan migration to dark space to guide the men who should come after us on Mu.

AS I guided the craft in a hovering flight over the scarred face of old Mu, I marveled at the green growth over everything, for it hard to realize that though everything dies of the Sun poisons, life goes on, renewed forever. After first coming upon such worlds of death, one cannot accustom oneself to the idea that all this life that looks so vibrant and virile, is so short-lived.

I know that since I had left Mu, cities probably had grown and died upon her surface, and cities under her surface must have been peopled and have again lost their peoples in the wars that always rage on the sun-burned planets.

Arl and I glided over the glittering golden roofs of the city, and, settling to Earth some miles distant, entered a cavern whose ancient shafts still gaped, unfilled by the rubble that now choked most of the openings to the Elder world. We were anxious to see what life had taken root within the caverns, for there lay the tools of the ancient wisdom, waiting for a wise man-child's learning. Arl opened the great air lock at the bottom of the shaft and I floated the tender in to the floor of the cavern.

We fell to rummaging about in the ruins of the great mansions, as one will in these old places. I activated one of the penétray view rays and took a look at the shining city on the surface not

<sup>7</sup>One of the most repeated legends of the Gods coming again to Earth is the detail that their heavy feet sank ankle deep into solid rock—a very interesting legend—heavy-planet races denoted—AURORON.

far away. A one man flyer of an antique make rose from the city and came toward us. I augmented the passengers' mind, saw that his name was Tyr, that he was of the Aesir, as the people of the city evidently called themselves. He had seen our ship and was coming to investigate. He seemed excited, as though something about our appearance had revealed to him that we were the uncommon "visitors from the stars" mentioned in the legends and folk-tales of his people.

"Arl," I called to my lovely lady who was busy satisfying her curiosity about some of the old mechanisms at the far wall of this big room. "Arl, come here and watch this flier—he seems to be heading this way!"

With the quick, cat-like change of interest of women, Arl pranced gaily over to where I sat at the controls of the tele-thought augmentor. With a pleased little laugh, she wagged that ever-charming tail of hers and took her place beside me.

As we sat at the screen watching the approaching flier, we could see his mind was a maelstrom of conflicting sentiments—I couldn't repress my laughter at the fear I saw there. But, there are times when Arl saves me from unrequited cruelty, and when I laughed, she chided me.

"Oh Mion, don't laugh at that poor little man! Remember, it has been almost twenty centuries since they have had a visit from any of the Elder Races."

"Lovely Arl," I agreed, "I had forgotten. I should have remembered that fear goes with sun-infection."

"He is a brave man, Mion," Arl pointed out. "He is afraid, yet his will to investigate makes him overcome his fear. If he is representative of mankind . . .

I nodded, knowing what Arl meant.

As long as there are brave men on Earth who can conquer their fear and dread with their own wills, there is hope that mankind can, in time, defeat the "de" curse of the Sun.

"Look, Mion, he's dropping down the shaft as though he has done it many times before."

It was true. The pilot of the little flier expertly dropped down the shaft and came to rest beside the *Darkome's* tender. There was a moment of indecision—Arl and I knew from reading his mind that it was all he could do to restrain a wild, nearly uncontrollable impulse to flee. He took heart, however, stepped from his machine, and came toward us. He was large for the race of Earthmen, being about twelve feet high.

Finally, eyes bulging, he stood in awe before us where we sat at the ancient mech.

I greeted him by name: "Ho, Tyr, what brings you to us who are strangers to you?"

**A**T THAT he flung himself prostrate before us. Our lack of enmity loosed his tongue and he protested: "Of course you know me, O Gods from the Stars. I have heard the old men speak of your kind, and have read something of you in the ancient writings, but many of us no longer believe in the greater Gods. Of course, you understand all mysteries, and you have read my thoughts over the ancient mechanisms I see you toying with. I am of the Aesir race, and that is our city you see in the distance. I am one of the few who understand the great significance of your coming here. Odin, our all-father, in his palace invites your presence. We have great need of your wisdom, Mighty Ones."

I finally assented to Tyr's impertuning and the invitation of Odin him-

self over the great ray called Odin's Eye, and we entered the tender and took off for the palace of Gladsheim\* dominating the shining, gilded-roofed city of Asgard in the distance.

We spiralled down toward the great courtyard of the palace, reading a dozen minds on my telaug on the way down.

It is habitual for a Nor to be careful. There was nothing but curiosity and awe in their minds; this was no trap, I knew. As I landed the ship, several brawny, armored warriors came up to us. Axes were slung on their belts beside the antique dis-ray pistols, pistols of a type that the science of the high gods has not surpassed to this day. They spoke the ancient universal tongue called Mantong, but time had so changed the pronunciation that it was difficult to understand it at once. We used small portable telaugs to tell what was in the minds about us anyway. We easily carried them in our hands. But Arl and I soon began fully to understand the speech, for the basic sounds were all the same as our own, and not by any means are we mentally slow.

To our way of thinking, these Aesir were little fellows. They were not more than ten or twelve feet in height. The largest showed the graying hair of age, the sign dreaded most of all plagues, in all space, caused from over exposure to the poisonous emanations of a deadly Sun. In space flight, sometimes it happens that some poorly plotted course flashes a ship close into the terrible heat and deadly particles of the field surrounding some dense sun. Also, some-

times, in the little time of their passing such a sun at light speed, their hair grows white, and they die in a few weeks. Such is impregnation by radioactive particles—sure death. Old Sol, the Earth's sun, is not that bad, but it too, is sure death. A great pity arose in me that these fine men did not know what caused their age, or how to avoid it if they did know. This pity of mine is one reason some man will sometime find this record I leave, and know how to shun the terrible plague of space, the deadly, dense particles from heavy suns that get into the flesh and stay, burning away good life force and leaving a shrivelled corpse.

**DO YOU** remember the lovely Arl? She is still Arl, but grown so big now that the Mutan who loved her then would worship at her feet as once he worshipped at Vanue's huge beauty . . . for that matter I still do anyway. She is here beside me now, toying with the ancient stim rays; the stim ray that is forbidden as its effects can be most evil if the metal is too far gone in slow disintegration. But Arl carries with her a meter of my devising containing a dial which reveals the most minute flows of "de" force dangerous to man.

She must know if this one is dangerous stim or not. It seems to be still usable, for a vastly pleasurable viray is flowing over my form even now from her hands, and her soft lips are multiplied a laughing million of times all over me. I am forever startled by the endlessly varied stim augments that Arl's infinite wit finds in any mech of the kind. I have had a billion tiny Arls lift me in my sleep and carry me to Elysia, their forms growing more and more about me, till all the world was soft, gleaming, rosy Arl, the flowers her faces, the breeze from her lips, and the stim rays looks from her eyes, loving

\*Note that this city of Asgard and this Gladsheim are not the city or people mentioned in the story "Thought Records of Lemuria," but is a city which takes its name from the name of the place where it is built which was the site of one of the first cities built by the Atham. These Aesir are the latter gods who take many of their names from the elder gods; cities are named in the same manner.—AUTHOR.

me, while her hair became a vast forest of titanic, curling beauty sheltering me in its scented shade.

There are no words or images to tell you what a girl of imagination can do with stim augments of her thought. I still think of Arl as a girl, and she looks like a girl, too, except her size is as great as my own, and that is too much to think about. For soon we must leave our loved home on Nor and move on to the heavier planets<sup>9</sup> of the Elder cities, and that is a hard time for adjustment, as it takes years to accustom oneself to the great gravity.

#### CHAPTER IV

ODIN welcomed us himself, leading us into the great hall of Gladshelm. The walls were covered with the gleaming shields of his followers; he sat us upon his own throne and the throne of his queen beside it. They were the only seats that could begin to hold us, for they were relics from the old time and must have been too great for their present users. So we took them, and indeed, Arl and I are used to great honor wherever we go, for we are much loved and respected. "A friend is the best gold," is my motto, and can be a mighty power when they are needed.

As he stood before us, Odin was nearly half our height. But age was showing on him. His beard was snow white, his ruby-red Santa Claus face lined with the progress of the dreaded sun-blight.

Odin stood on the steps of the throne

dais and made a short speech to his followers.

"These are the high Gods who live among the far Stars. You have heard of them from our wise men, and now they are here for you to see. They come at a time when we need them most. If they approve of us, our struggles with the Jotuns will go well, so hold your evil natures in check, and let the High Gods see the gold that we, your friends and I your ruler, know lies underneath the rude flesh." Then Odin turned to us, saying:

"We know much of your ancient race from writings found in the caves—the plates of imperishable metal left by Mutan Mion have been translated by some of our wise men, and I have read their writings. Also, we have learned to use some of the ancient magic from the hot depths of the greater caverns where a man can no longer live for the heat. There we have found great things and brought them to the surface for use here in Gladshelm. We would like to have you explain many things about that science that produced such things, but just now we are getting ready for a seige. The Jotuns are preparing for an attack on Asgard. Even now their hosts gather in the misty depths of the dark land beyond. What are your names that I may properly present you to our brave warriors?"

With a nod toward Arl, I said, "This is the Lady Arl and I am called Mion."

Arl smiled at them with the graciousness of a true queen.

"My Lord is too modest," she said in that lovely voice. "He is the Lord Mutan Mion, the Lord Mion to whom even the Elder Titans and Atlans owe their lives."

The Aesirs' eyes popped with surprise and joy when they heard that we were the same Mutan Mion and Arl mentioned on the ancient plates.

<sup>9</sup>HEAVIER PLANETS: At a certain point in their development, the Normen must leave home and go to the heavier planets for development. They do not return from these heavy planets to the lighter ones except as rulers or teachers. The princess Vante and the other very tall characters appearing in these stories have returned to the children races as teachers, rulers, or judges. All the Elders are of this class of returned people. —AUTHOR.

"So many lives . . . and still living," were their excited comments, "so long . . . and so young to look upon. So fair, and yet so ancient of days. Yea, they are the Gods . . . come again to Earth as in the old days that some swear were true things."

But Odin had little time for much formality, though he seemed to think we merited a great deal of it.

"Oh Great Ones from Beyond, if you will not help us against the Jotuns, we must leave you for awhile and get to our work, preparing to meet the coming attack, but, Oh Mighty Ones, if you will help us, we are yours. Command us what we must do to beat off the fierce Jotuns."

AS HE spoke, a messenger raced into the hall. With some urgency he approached the dais that held the throne and spoke privately into Odin's ear. The worthy human's face fell. As he turned again to us, I could detect a note of sadness in his voice.

"The messenger brings bad news, My Lords. Another great ship from the stars—ininitely larger than the one in which you arrived—has come to Earth in the encampment of the Jotuns. That is not the whole of this ill news. Mighty men of a size as your own have come out of this huge vessel and are siding with the Jotuns in their preparation for the coming struggle with us. What means that to you, O Great Beings?"

Now, I knew that there was but one Nor ship in this immediate solar system, and that another space ship as large as the *Darkome* probably was the fugitive that we were seeking—one of the ships of the infamous fleet we were pledged to return to the Courts of the Rulers of Nor. I explained to these Earthmen that these were fugitives from the justice of the Gods, and that I could summon power to crush them

utterly, as soon as I contacted my ship, the *Darkome*.

"Are the Jotuns and these strangers in view ray range?" I asked the white-bearded Odin.

"They smugly think they are not," was his answer as he led me to the instrument called "Odin's Eye."<sup>10</sup> It was really a vast space telescope with a tri-dimensional screen, a big box of luminous mist in which three dimensional pictures of the objects in focus could be seen. Within it we saw the gathering place of the Jotuns, and monsters they were, recently having come to Earth from some huge, colder planet. There, their size had been naturally determined by the conditions of the planet. They were three times the size of the Aesir,<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup>ODIN'S EYE: Was this the origin of the legends regarding 'Odin's Eye'? Norse folk-tales recounted it as an all seeing 'eye,' or all-seeing god-like power. This just might have been the result, or the USE of just such ancient mechanism or equipment as in this story—the view ray. The view ray, which the authors claim still exist in the ancient, God-built caverns, probably operated on a principle similar to a combination of present day radar and television. The television part of the ancient 'mech' operates, in any event, without the need for a transmitting station. The same way, for instance, that your radio might pick up a conversation a few miles away without the need of a radio station 'sending.'

It is amazing when you consider that right beneath our feet this present day, and for untold centuries of the past, that such equipment has lain idle and unused—except by a few degenerate tribes that somehow have lived there for all these years. It is the claim of the authors that the use of this marvelous equipment by these degenerates, or 'dero,' their 'tampering' with the lives of surface people, is the cause of most of our ills and 'bad luck.'—EDITOR.

<sup>11</sup>Again referring to the books of Charles Fort: He quotes from the JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLK LORE, 17-203, viz., "Certain stone hatchets are said to have fallen from the heavens."

The authors pose the question: Are these stone axes that have been reported as having fallen from the heavens perhaps the crude 'side arms' of an uncultured race of 'esoteric ones' who have learned to fly the ancient cave-contained space craft, making inter-planetary flights, yet, of themselves, in-

(footnote concluded on following page)

of a greater size than Odin himself, and infinitely uglier than any others I have ever seen. I had heard of the Jotuns, an evil race shunned by all wise men. They had a custom of following up Atlan and Titan migrations and occupying their abandoned cities for the pleasure instruments which were always to be found in the abandoned pleasure palaces and mansions of the immortals. They were, consequently, not entirely unaccustomed to handling ray equipment, and would prove mean antagonists for the Aesir. The Aesir had had many a brush with them since their arrival a century ago, and had come off a too close first in most of them.

(Footnote concluded from previous page)

capable of making any more mechanically advanced war weapons than crude stone hatchets that they have within historical times dropped from their flying space craft? The reference above is the report of South American Indians.

As to the possible 'size' of members of uncultured ones, read further in Fort's **THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED**:

(From NATURE, 30-300.)

May, 1884, the 27th, at Tysnas, **NORWAY**, a meteorite had fallen; that the turf was torn up at the spot where the object had been supposed to have fallen; two days later "a very peculiar stone" was found nearby. The description is—"in shape and size very like the fourth part of a large Stilton cheese." See back to the story for a description of the size of the Jotun and then compute how large the stone heads of their war ares would have to be.

In the same work, Fort quotes from The Proc. Soc. of Antiq. of Scotland, 1-1-121:

That in a lump of coal from a mine in Scotland an "iron instrument" had been found

Is this another indication of the extreme age of the human race?

Again from Fort: Notice of a stone axe, 17 inches long, 9 inches across broad end. (Proc. Soc. of Ants. of Scotland, 1-9-184.)

American ANTIQUARIAN, 18-60:

Copper axe from an Ohio mound: 22 inches; weight 38 pounds.

AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGIST, n.s., 8-299:

Stone axe found at Birchwood, Wisconsin: 28 inches long, 14 inches wide, 11 inches thick, weight, 300 pounds.

**HUMAN FOOTPRINTS FOUND IN SANDSTONE**, Near CARSON, NEVADA—EACH PRINT 18 to 20 inches LONG. (Amer. Jour. Sci., 3-26-139)—EOROK.

**O**BVIOUSLY, the Aesir were not relishing the contemplation of a war to the last ditch between the two races, for the Jotuns were not only more numerous, but they had occupied and used more of the ray equipment-filled caves than the Aesir. The Aesir ignorantly chose to build their cities on the surface in the cheerful sunlight, and they did not understand what the Sun did to them. A few of their wise men had warned them of the writings left by the Gods which told them that the Sun caused old age, but they scoffed at this as old men's garrulous fear. The only ray the Aesir had was portable equipment they had laboriously brought to the surface for their use.

When I saw the huge, dark figure of Sathanas himself among them, I knew several things by swift deduction. First, I knew his presence here was no accident. Second, I knew that here was the rendezvous of the fleeing ships the patrol had pursued to all the points of the compass, for it was not likely that Sathanas would have had time to mix into the quarrels of the Jotuns unless he was waiting here for that rendezvous. And last, I knew that Sathanas had had dealings with these gigantic and hideous Jotuns before to know them so well. Such dealings were forbidden expressly by law. The Elder Race literally 'fathered' the human race and they made strict laws protecting the lives of their children. The Jotuns were well known as slave dealers,<sup>12</sup> and what

<sup>12</sup>DISAPPEARANCES—SLAVERY: The authors are convinced that there have been many writers in the past and the present who either knew or suspected the existence of the caverns beneath the surface of the Earth, or that there was a power or a force or a race that was influencing the human race, usually for evil. The numerous legends of evil spirits, and good ones, too, tales of strange happenings, and strange disappearances—Charles Fort was one of those who came closest to guessing, or knowing the mysteries contained in the artificial cave world

was worse, they were known for their modifications on the ancient mechanisms they salvaged from abandoned caverns—modifications which made the mech potent tools for the changing of good human character to evil ends.

Putting a telaug beam on Sathanas' head in the tri-dimensional screen, I heard his thought and from it I gathered a general impression corroborating my deductions. For centuries, he had traded and had been in communication with these Jotuns. This was also forbidden by the Nor laws. For a long time he sold them Nor maids for slaves, and in return, he received much illegal equipment which the Jotuns manufactured from the ancient pleasure mech. It was evident that he had long ago promised them aid against the Aesir in return for some favor. That his flight from the Nor wrath was unknown to the Jotuns was clear, for he was striving with all his mighty brain to keep the knowledge of his trouble from escaping to their minds over the telaug over which the conference was being conducted. Evidently he did not intend to risk his ship in the coming battle, but was seated at a great table in the gloomy ruined home which was

beneath this Earth's surface. He thought that we were 'fished for,' or that the possibility existed that we were fished for. For what purpose? Our facts are still too intangible on this count to say for certain whether we are really fished for at the present day. But if in the centuries past, there were races such as the Jotuns, trading in living humans—as slaves (or food?)—might they not still be extant? Before the reader dismisses this question with "Ridiculous!" let him read any of the daily papers of the past few years, or the books of Charles Fort for literally thousands of unexplained 'disappearances.' People seen one moment and never again—even in the larger cities that are presumably well guarded.

If the reader lives near any of the country's large cities, he might call the Missing Persons' Bureau, if any, and get the LOCAL statistics on the annual number of disappearances that are not accounted for, or the number undetected. Then, figure out how many large cities there are in the whole nation.—AURNOR.

their meeting place, going over their battle plans with the leaders. These leaders were a fearful lot to look upon. Though somewhat lacking in logical mental powers, they seemed to make up for this by fierceness of physique and ruthlessness of intent.

GATHERED in the vast cave that stretched its murky depths into the hidden distance were the sons of Loki and Sigyn, the wife of Loki. How he ever came to marry her was too much for me, for she was many times his size and as evil visaged as hell itself. The witch, Hela, who was not Loki's daughter, and who had no regard for him, was a very tall giantess of a hideous whiteness like frost, or dead bones. Evil lived in her eyes and on her face, and on her face twisted a shadow of death. Like most devotees of the spirit of evil, she was obviously mad and possessed of a mad-woman's peculiar appetites, augmented and exaggerated as they so easily can be by the use of the beneficial and stim. Also, there were many leaders of the Jotuns, hairy, gray beast-men, thirty feet high, knotted muscles, and armed with every kind of weapon known to two civilizations—stone clubs hung side by side with flame swords of a make superior to any made now, for the art is a lost one. This horde knew ray work, and they were blood-thirsty fighting men proved in a thousand brawls and dozens of wars. The Aesir had cause to worry, for these were professional warriors brought from space for the express purpose of getting the powerful Aesir out of the way for their commerce in souls, slaves and perverting mech. Evidently, this was the reason Sathanas was here, as this commerce of the Jotuns was his greatest single source of income. The Aesir had a bad habit of raiding the Jotun's strongholds and releasing the

poor human beasts.

But the Einheriar,<sup>13</sup> the chosen, the warriors of Odin, were no match in size or in experience for this bunch of mad dogs from the pleasure dens of a dozen planets.

I doubted that this affair would ever come to hand to hand combat. I looked down into Odin's great "eye" for a chance to find out just what range weapons were available to the Horde, what they planned to use immediately. Sathanas was talking.

"All this array of armed force is of no use. One long range ray brings the whole army to naught. We must have a spy, someone who can tell us just what range weapons they have to use against us."

Loki pushed his comparatively small form to the foreground, shouting, "The Aesir have no weapons worth worrying about. I know every ray in Asgard. They cannot touch us. You can sweep the whole place clean of life with one ray from your mighty ship."

I turned to Odin, "Just what is the range of your weapons?" I asked him.

"I can't reach him," answered Odin. "I can see him, but I can't hit him."

"You don't know much about these tri-dimensional screens, I am afraid, O

All-Father. Let me show you something."

**PULLING** a side arm from my belt, I directed its epilepto-ray pencil at Sathanas' head in the cube-screen, Sathanas immediately curled up into an agonized, crumpled heap of writhing, shrieking, slobbering flesh. The table surrounded by the gigantic Jotuns, and a few of the really gigantic cohorts of Sathanas, leaped to their feet, mouths gaping in astonishment.

"See, Father, the beam of this particular view ray is constructed to transmit energy complete, and is, consequently, a most efficient and adaptable weapon, ready to carry any energy to any point it reaches, and it has tremendous penetrative range, as you can see. Some of this type of ray will even dislodge furniture, or transmit the energy of a push. Watch!" I seized a war club from the wall. It was very small for me, like a child's toy hammer in my hands, and I tapped one of the heads of the Sathanists.<sup>14</sup> He promptly

<sup>13</sup>**PRECISE ACCURACY OF ANCIENT WEAPONS:** These ancient weapons were so accurate and so built for durability that perhaps they are the means by which certain phenomena have been actuated. Charles Fort, in his book, **WILD TALENTS**, says this:

"In the London newspapers, last of March, 1908, was told a story, which, when starting off, was called "what the coroner for South Northumberland described as the most extraordinary case that he had ever investigated." The story was of a woman, at Whitley Bay, near Blyth, England, who, according to her statement, had found her sister, burned to death on an unscorched bed. This was the equivalence of the old stories of 'spontaneous combustion of human bodies.'"

(I don't know what significance, if any, is in the spelling of "extra-odin-RAY," but that is the precise way it is spelled on page 909, **THE BOOKS OF CHARLES FORT, WILD TALENTS**, published for the Fortean Society by HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY, New York, 1941.)

**ST. LOUIS GLOBE-DEMOCRAT**, Dec. 16, 1889.—"In some mysterious way, a fire started in the mahogany desk in the center of the office of the Secretary of War, at Washington, D. C.

<sup>14</sup>**EINHERIAR:** This persistent legend of raising the dead for purposes of acquiring soldiers, slaves, etc. seems to come from the extreme potency of the antique beneficial ray. I, myself, have seen a boy of eight killed by a fiend from a distance with detrimental ray, raised again by his mother with beneficial ray at full strength. The fiend killed the boy three times in a period of four days, each time his mother revived or raised him again within a few minutes. There are many accounts of the potency of these rays. Even the thuggee of India believe that their unseen backers can raise them from the dead if they are killed. It is very probably true that they are revived after a short time of death by this means. The Hindu ascetics who slit open their stomachs and let out their intestines with a knife, then push them back in to have the wound heal at once are the same phenomena.—R. S. SHAWER.



dropped unconscious or dead to the floor. "You see, you didn't know what there was in this beam. It is a very fine example of the best work of that particular time."

Odin waited for no prompting from me, but seized a club from the wall and started bopping every head in the ray screen. Regularly I moved the beam a little to keep a good bunch of the enemy within its slightly reduced vision, reduced from life size, and pencilled my own epileptic-ray at every one of the misfits of life that I could reach. Odin was enjoying himself immensely, and we had nearly cleared the cavern of its hundred or so big-shots of the Jotuns when a huge black shorter-ray swung out of Sathanas' vast ship from dark space and grounded Odin's Eye. Odin's fun was over for the time, his beam shorted to the ground by the black conductor ray. His troubles with the super science Sathanas had brought from his Nor-governed home had just begun. So had all Earthmen's troubles with Sathanas.

I figured that Odin's bopping of Jotun pates would have the effect of holding off the attack until I had time to make ready for it, because they hadn't known that they could be reached. I radioed the *Darkome* for certain supplies and for certain technicians I would need. Why didn't I tell them to radio a Nor base and tell them of the whereabouts of Sathanas? Because I had an idea that I could take Sathanas apart with a device I was planning to construct, and that I could bring him in single-handed, which would be quite a feather in my cap. Such is a man's

Several official papers were destroyed, but it was said that they were of no especial value, and could be replaced. Secretary Proctor cannot understand how the fire originated, as he does not smoke, and keeps no matches about his desk." Taken from the BOOKS OF CHARLES FORT—WILD TALENTS—Page 911.

thought when near a sun. Always wrong. It was foolish to do without the help I could have acquired so quickly, but I thought it a splendid idea, and so original. I had never had such a wonderful idea before. Err is very deluding when it appears in a mind unaccustomed to it.

FIRST, I asked the Aesir for a list of every available ray device within the city. When I got the list, I checked off the types of ray I wanted—those with a good long beam that would carry the greatest amount of superimposed power, and those with the most potent destructive qualities, regardless of the range. The latter would be aided in carrying power by the former in the huge device I was planning for the downfall of Sathanas. Why didn't I call the *Darkome* to me? I had another err—the less equipment I used to capture Sathanas, the greater would be my glory. Such errs I might have corrected if I had been used to their presence in my mind, but in the clean magnetic fields of Nor planets, one's thought is naturally correct and I was unprepared for the sudden flood of distorted ideas the Sun was releasing in my mind.

On the list of ray equipment brought me, there were all kinds of pleasure rays and healing rays, but little weapon rays. The pleasure and healing rays were tricky stuff, well built, some of it, but of little use in a battle except for observation, inspiring the fighters, or for healing the wounded. I knew that Sathanas' black cruiser was loaded to its capacity with the heaviest war-ray available which was, as I know now, a power unsurveyed by any law-abiding eyes. So, it was hard to say just what he might have up his sleeve in the way of fighting ray. Whether his fleet would rendezvous with him here on

Earth, or whether he was to meet them elsewhere, I could not make sure, for his trained mind had felt my probing thought and doubled the answer—saying that both were true. I suspected that the first was the truth and that we would have hundreds of outlaw ships flaming down upon us at any moment. Sathanas seemed committed to supporting the Jotuns in return for their cooperation in his own plans. Sathanas' crew on his ship kept the black shorter-beam on our view-beam, and Odin's Eye was the only ray of master size in the city. We had no way of knowing now what they were up to. Principally, I was anxious to know whether any of the other ships of Sathanas had joined him or not.

This life on Earth is distorted and fading, a once brilliant picture that long ago fell on the water of life, and is now fading away. There is little left of the old God picture of life. The soft rounded chins of the Aesir young, the honest, beautiful truth in the undisaffected eyes of a child, the turned, beautiful perfection of some young limbs, these are the only true images left from the God era. The rest is distorted by an ill wind across the mirroring pool of life force. And, thus it was that I saw those monstrous forms across the deep of Jotunheim, the life force distorted by some evil willed wind from Elvidnir—from the Hall of Hela in Niflheim—distorted and dying into the mental err of evil life.

WHILE we waited for the supplies from the *Darkome* or for the arrival of the patrol ships from space, I put the Aesir at the construction of a cumbrous device I had seen put to good use on the field of battle. It was most effective, but slow to handle. It was a monstrous turntable, the axis of which was a universal joint. Throwing this

piece of equipment together with the odds and ends available, took two days of hard labor. Then we piled on it every ray device of destructiveness or ionizing power (to make the air a conductor for the other beams) that could be obtained in the whole city. The rays were then carefully aligned to throw a multi-beam of immense, irresistible power. Nothing of a portable nature could be possessed by the enemy to equal its vast power. The turntable took up the whole courtyard of the palace of Gladsheim, about the size of two city blocks. On the turntable, piled two and three deep, were rays of every type developed by the past Atlan and Titan life on Earth. I did not think that the Jotuns would have anything of the kind. In the center of this motley assemblage of destruction, I placed a small but very powerful dissociator of modern make I had brought from the *Darkome*.

Why didn't I call the *Darkome* even now? Because I thought it best to keep something in reserve. Again I erred.

## CHAPTER V

THE huge multi-beam we aimed by turning and tilting the great turntable by windlasses upon which the noble muscles of the Aesir were expanded by the hundreds. It was slow, but it was inexorable destruction. I had never seen an energy screen or a shorter-fan that could stand against such an assemblage of ray, anywhere. I had great faith in my rude handiwork, for I had seen it used. The trick, of course, was to align the beams perfectly, to form a very dense, small beam of utter power. Carefully sighting the thing at the base of the big black shorter-beam from Sathanas' hidden ship which still held Odin's Eye in its grip, we tried out our multi-beam. The

black beam disappeared in a blaze of incandescence like the fall of a meteor. Whether we had hit Sathanas' ship or not I didn't know, but I did know that one beam generator was burned out for good. A good omen! I took over Odin's Eye now that it was useful again, and calling instructions to Tyr over the teltaug, he walked the great beam along the lines of waiting ships of the Jotuns, the assembled raytanks, supply piles and equipment they had gathered for the prosecution of a long seige of Asgard. Where the multi-beam struck, there was left nothing but a great smoking ditch in the ground, a ditch which had no bottom—as far as the eye could see. The destruction was nearing completion which would end the Jotun hopes of a long war. But, it was not great enough, for as the beam neared the Jotun aircraft, the whole fleet took to the air. They had seen that the beam was slow, and they figured they could avoid it by air maneuvers. Like a great funnel of fury, they rose from the mouth of the cavern and came on to attack, spreading out and sweeping down on Asgard.

The Jotuns—the personnel of the enemy—came from a dozen planets forgotten by the Atlans after their migrations. The Atlans were one of the greatest space roving races of all times, inhabiting thousands of dark, sunless planets and planetoids, a race that peopled a big chunk of outer space. As the populations of their home planets grew, population pressure forced most of the immortal Atlans to seek homes on uninhabited worlds. Eventually, like all the races of men when the cosmos was young, their own immortality forced them to seek homes elsewhere as they grew too big for even a good-sized world to support. So, as they increased in size and wisdom, they moved to more advanced worlds of the

Elder Race, or else to larger, dark, uninhabited planets, there to stay until they became too large for even the larger planets—then a trek through space again in a few thousand years.

AS VERMIN take over the homes of people when they have been deserted by the owners, so did the Jotun assume the discarded homes of the ever-migrating and growing Atlans and Titans. Worlds of outgrown and deserted mech were left by the continually growing races and it was this mech the Jotuns took as their own. Half the discoverable planets in this constellation are glutted with the ancient mech. Perhaps someday, the poor doomed men of this planet I hold so highly, my mother planet Mu, may find their way over the gulfs between the star-worlds and find this mech for their own betterment. Truly, the stores of these wondrous devices, bulging the labyrinthian caverns of thousands of planets are the "gifts" of the Gods. For the children that will follow us, we leave them—with our blessing.

Sometimes, however, there do appear dero races that, unluckily, escape the notice and supervision of the Elder Race, and they use for evil purposes, the ancient mech of the Gods—mech designed and built for good, not evil.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup>GOD-BUILT MECH: In the ancient world wide caverns that some old, old race built and then deserted, they had many marvelous mechanisms. When they left this planet, Mother Mu or Lemuria (See previous issues of *Amazing Stories*), the deadly rays that were emanating from the Sun had infected their machines and mechanisms, and so, to protect themselves from the death that they contained, the Elder Race left ALL of their tools of life—everything—behind them and then departed to far, friendly, star-homes where they live on even today. But as they live they grow, like the Giant Redwood trees of our own California, and by now, this ancient race is too big to tread the paths of Earth.

Their stimulating machines were designed for pleasure and their growth science was meant to  
(footnote concluded on following page)

Such a race were the Jotuns—offsprings of what unknown evil life? Evil life walking upright in a parody of the dignity and good that is man, appropriating to their own evil uses the wondrous machines and mechanisms of the Gods, the Elder Race—the flying craft, the growth and nutrient mech, the healing ray devices, the awful, deadly war mech and other weapons from a dozen varying cultures of different states of progress.

There are times, in my voyages to strange, deserted worlds, when I wonder if the God Races were truly wise to leave, intact and complete, so much of their mech science that might be perverted to evil purposes by minds that have not the good in them that motivates the Elder Races. But then, the Elders have more knowledge and ex-

perience in such things than I—I am a mere twenty centuries grown. The Elders? Who really can say? Sixty Lemurian feet is my present height—and that took all those centuries. I have, on the Ruler Worlds of the Elders, seen some of the Gods that were easily three hundred or three hundred fifty Lemurian feet in height. They, alone, know how many centuries they have seen. Perhaps, though, even they could make an occasional mistake—a mistake like leaving equipment for the Jotun fleet heading toward us right now.

It was a motley array—the Jotun fleet. The black shape of Sathanas' space monster<sup>16</sup> rose in the background, ready to come in when the time and place looked inviting—poised for a crushing decisive blow.

(footnote concluded from preceding page)

assist Nature—but that is not the use they get today. The degenerate humans that live in the caves pervert the antique mech to evil uses, and the machines, being infected with sun poison, make the evil users more evil—a vicious circle that is almost impossible to stop for several reasons. First, surface men doubt the existence of these things, and, secondly, their mech makes them infinitely more potent and powerful than surface men.—R. S. SHAWER.

<sup>16</sup>SATHANAS' SPACE MONSTER: These untellably ancient space ships are bugs beyond belief . . . as large as the rigid, lighter-than-air Zeppelins of Earth were before the war—the Los Angeles, the Akron, the Hindenburg, etc. They were small craft compared to the antique spaces. For instance, dirigibles 800 to 1000 feet long with a diameter 80 to 120 feet would not offer much room or comfort for a man 50 to 60 feet tall, particularly on long space flights. Then, too, that size wouldn't offer much room for the necessary space equipment—drivers, stores, motors, etc.

Dirigibles are the largest flying machines modern man has made, yet, large as they are, they are comparable in size merely to the tender of the big Nor craft in the story, the *Darkows*.

For possible accounts of these space ships being seen in recent times, see Charles Fort's books.

On October 25, 1822, two unknown, dark bodies crossing the sun were observed by Pastorfi (Am. Sci. Disc., 1860-411).

Seven months later, May 22, 1823, an unknown

shiny thing was seen near the planet Venus by the astronomer Webb (NATURE, 14-195).

There is no basis for assuming that these unknown objects were satellites. They would have to be very large even to be thought of as moons—large to have been seen.

Furthermore, Charles Fort quotes from the ANNALES DE CHIMIE, 30-417—"objects that were seen by many persons, in the streets of Embeun, during the eclipse of Sept. 7, 1820, moving in straight lines, turning and retracting in the same straight lines, all of them separated by uniform spaces."

Two unknown dark bodies crossing the sun, a shiny thing near Venus, and objects moving in geometric patterns in this same general area, and all reported within a matter of months of each other—all these things seem to indicate unknown SHIPS or something—OF HUGE, ALMOST PLANETOID SIZE moving under intelligent control.

Were these actually spacers of the Elder Race? Men see only what they want—or are supposed to see.

Some idea of the size of the artificial caverns built by the Elder Race beneath the surface of this Earth can be gained when one recalls that the tender and Sathanas' ship both flew into the shafts and caverns. It was in the caverns that they were manufactured, and it was there that they were stored. The sight of one of these incredibly ancient cave hangars with several ancient spacers abandoned over the floor is breath-taking in its immensity, and unbelievable, in fact.—AURORA.

WE—the Aesir, Arl and I—had nothing to stop them with but the huge multi-ray I had devised. I radioed the *Darkome* to come in and back us up. The huge turntable creaked ponderously around on its improvised bearings taken from a dismantled elevator that was lifted from the depths. We turned it by the windlasses manned by the sweating warriors of the Aesir. It was no weapon for the swift flight of planes. Not at all. But, fortunately, the fliers were not trained for this sort of thing, and they missed most of their targets.

I had strict orders not to risk my life except in dire necessity. The Nor had no particular enthusiasm about wasting thousands of years of schooling in a moment's madness. And, here I was, drawn into this brawl of sun-mad dero without seeing any sort of way that I could honorably withdraw. I imagine Sathanas was cursing the risking of all his plans in the attack, too. He was mighty careful not to come within range of our huge multi-beam. The thunder of that distance splitter was deafening, its flames shot out for thirty miles in a coruscating ray of utter annihilation. I had no way of figuring its effective range, but it was a lot more than the thirty miles of its visible force. How to get into real action was the problem. It couldn't be done. But we kept them hopping, sweeping it up and down the whole line of battle. They couldn't bring up any heavy stuff at all. They could blast us out of Asgard's walls—couldn't touch us except with an occasional bolt from the swooping fliers. Sathanas moved his ship up to what he calculated was the effective range of our big beam, and started blasting away with his power beams—big dissociators they were—and the walls dissolved in great clouds of rolling black smoke. Chunks fell, and he began to widen the

breach.

I centered the big multi-beam on the *Satana* and played a card I had held back. Hoping to trap Sathanas into just this maneuver, I turned on the dissociator beam I had brought from the *Darkome*. Added to the other stuff the beam was made of, its effective range was immensely increased, for the multi-beam created a great path of ionization for it to travel over. The hull of the great ship, built of the most resistant materials manufactured by Nor, heated swiftly red and a gaping hole appeared in the black monster. Quick as thought, Sathanas blasted out of the range of our fumbling, snail-like beam. He did not take another chance with his ship.

IT HAD been a close call, for him and for me, for I had little real knowledge of the strength or nature of the beams of which the great ray was composed. They were all obsolete forms of equipment of which I knew about theoretically, but in actual practical use I knew nothing. But the Atlans and Titans built such things well. They were as powerful and as uncorroded after two thousand years as they were the day they were built. Sometime, I am going to spend a few years to learn everything there is to know about antique rays, both the actual equipment and the theoretical science behind their construction, for I will run into these hordes using the abandoned equipment again—if I am any ruler over my actions. I do not like their attitude toward war for war's sake, and I like the struggling bulldog idealism of such races as the Aesir. Handicapped by every evil—even their own thoughts play them false—they contrive to be good, jolly fellows, trustworthy, for the most part, and surprisingly able when emergency arises to

call forth their best efforts.

As the Aesir began to acquire the knack of picking off the swooping fliers with their small rays, the whole battle dissolved into a great retreat of the Jotun forces to nurse their wounds and to prepare a real campaign. The range of the huge ray I had improvised from the odds and ends the Aesir had gathered together—work of centuries of life here—had saved the day for us.

"That will be all of that for a while," was Odin's comment, relieved at the easy victory over what had seemed vastly superior forces. We lost about a hundred men from the fire of the planes overhead, but, since a plane is a much bigger target than a man, the Jotuns paid several times over for this loss. There were a couple of thousand smoking holes in the walls and pavings from the fliers' rays and a two hundred foot breach in the walls. It did seem as though the Jotuns had decided the time was not ripe for a victory over the redoubtable Aesir whose reputation was greater than their prowess.

Odin continued, "They had no idea that we could reach them from here. They know little of the true uses of the old ray. That is certain. Sathanas has small stomach for real fighting, eh? I shall develop this use of many rays in one which you have shown me, and it will be a defense for Asgard for many years to come. Many lifetimes, maybe."

Odin's use of the word 'lifetimes' as a measurement of time struck me gloomily. Evidently the Aesir had lost all idea of fighting age, accepting it as an inevitable part of life. I shuddered to watch them down great drafts of water and ale, knowing that every drop of liquid on Earth contained some tiny particle of the dread radioactive material which is the cause of age. That a draught of water could become such a

dread thing was a sad thought.

I RESOLVED to do something about the future of the Aesir now. So, I said to Odin, "You Aesir are not an unworthy race. Long ago, on this very spot, there was a city called Atlansgard. Those people were the first colonizers to arrive here from the deeps of space and begin life when the Sun was young and clean. They were a mighty race, and they fought the primeval monsters of the world's youth, when growth had no end, and death did not confine size to a fixed measure for each species. That was the time of the Midgard serpent, who grew to nearly encircle the Earth, of Cronos who tried to eat all the life of Earth to keep his tremendous body in food. Those were the days of endless battle with the giants of growth whom hunger made mad, of the mad early Titans when the giants and men contended always for food and living space. Then government and the covenant came to Earth, to Mu as men called the old planet then. Then came the time of real growth and goodness on earth, the Golden Age of Science when men pierced all mysteries with their minds. After a time when the Sun began to age and bring age to Earth, the Atlans and Titans left Mu to dwell in dark space where no age is ever known. Now, you Aesir have grown here in Atlansgard and have taken the name of the great ancient Aesir to yourselves so that something of their greatness might adhere to your name. Well, you are not bad men, and I have a gift to offer you. Let me take with me into space a few of your young men with good heads on their shoulders. These I will teach the ways of navigation in deep space which is all that keeps your race from using the antique space ships which can still be found abandoned in the ancient cav-

erns—abandoned because the Sun's radioactivity has infected the metal of their generators. Our law forbids such infected ships to be used by our races. But, you can use them to get away from the Sun, and I will train your men and send them back to you, and they can lead your people to a new home in space where the Sun is not an evil force. Then your race will remain forever young, instead of this pretense of immortality you now carry on for the benefit of your lessers. You would have the real thing—true immortality where there is no cause for age. What say you?"

Old Odin's eye shone—he had but one, though, the great ray he used was also called Odin's Eye—at the prospect of saving his race from age, and he knew enough of the ancient wisdom from the old writings to know I spoke the truth. There was my immense size, too, as a proof of unending, evergrowing youth to be found in the dark spaces. Too, the idea of finding the greater Elder Gods and learning true wisdom from them was to him the uttermost in attraction. He straightway selected three young Aesir. Vol, Vi and Zig were their names; for mentor and captain he sent the aging Tyr. I told the four to ready themselves, for I was starting back to my ship soon. I had long overstayed the allotted time for an immortal under a infectious sun's light.

**A**S I TALKED to Odin, I was treated to a glimpse of what even comparatively ignorant men could do with the ancient science of magic, or 'mag-mech-ic,' as it was called in Atlan. The hundred or more corpses scattered about the walls of Asgard were gathered into a heap in the great hall of Gladsheim. Here, the Aesir's wise men and their maiden helpers concentrated

beneficial rays from a dozen great generators upon the pile of dead. That transformation which has never lost its wonder for me took place. The hue of death faded from their cheeks; slowly they began to breathe. The wounds that bored through them—in some cases many times—began to close gradually, the ragged red edges grew together as the healing of the ancient hen rays took place. When these slain warriors began to stir, the Aesir maidens picked them up and carried them to a place in the palace where smaller but more intense and potent ben rays were focused on their wounds to complete the healing process. The next day, most of them were again on their feet, nearly recovered. Yet, I knew that neither Odin nor his wise men had the slightest idea how to build or even repair the antique medical rays, nor had they even a proper curiosity about how its magic was accomplished. It was the "Ancient Gods' gift" was their attitude.

I realized that education was all this people needed to raise them to true God estate. But they needed such a lot of it. I cursed the fear that dwelt in the Great Ones of the dark spaces, forbidding them to come near any sun, even to rescue such men as these from the doom that even now whitened the hair of many of them. Sometimes, I realized that even the High Gods have faults.

Well, I was one God who would lose that fault of too great fear of the bideous sun-death. I would find a way to rescue these Aesir.

**I**HAD assured Odin I would send the fleet of the Nor Space Patrol I expected to contact presently, to put the Jotuns in their place and to apprehend Sathanas. At the same time I radioed the *Darkome* to return to her former

position on the Moon. Not enough time elapsed between the two messages for the *Darkome* to more than ready herself for flight. Why didn't I let the *Darkome* come on down in answer to my first message? She had ample fuel for several landings on planets no larger than Mu. I knew Sathanas was at hand, anxious to annihilate everyone such as myself who knew of his presence on Earth. Such is one's thoughts under infectious suns—always incorrect. It is a hard thing to remember always to do otherwise than what one's reason dictates when near a sun. I respect such races as the Aesir for this one reason—in spite of their life under the evil-making rays of the sun, they manage to remain good, reasonable fellows. Their bodies seem to build up a resistance to the mind distorting magnetic force of the sun, and they manage to think pretty clearly in spite of it. More power to that ability.

Everything was as beautiful as a powerful ben-ray illusion in a master-dream as we lifted in the tender toward the Moon. Tyr was thrilled as a warrior like him is thrilled by a battle-axe coming at his head, while the three young Aesir, Vol, Vi and Zig, their flashing teeth and glittering eyes told me that nothing had ever interested them so much as the sight of this little ship of mine. I wondered what would be their words when they see for the first time the huge Dread-Nor *Darkome* lying in wait on the moon.

Then it happened.

As the tender swiftly flashed upward toward the day-lit moon of early evening, the features of the shoreline and the city of Asgard blurred at our speed. In a matter of moments we were so high that the flat horizon of this green ball of Mu could be seen as the curve it is. I felt a glow of pride in my ship, my lovely Arl, and these four new-

found friends. Like the sudden snap of a breaking glass perfume ball, our contentment was shattered.

"Mion!" gasped ever watchful Arl, "isn't that the *Satana*?"

"Awk! Why did that devil have to choose this time to take off?"

Arl, her face intense as a bird hypnotized by a snake, refused to take her eyes off the enemy craft.

"We're in a tight spot, Arl. If I change our course they can't fail to see us, and if I don't, we'll collide with them."

That's the way it was, too. Any change of speed or course would have been certain to attract their attention. I felt—and it was shortly proven true—that this was just one of those unhappy accidents that always seems to happen on a sun-cursed planet. The two ships hurtled upward to a junction.

AT THE last minute, I drove the tender hard over on the port side and down, hoping to dive past the *Satana's* stern and escape to the other side of the planet before they could come about. As our craft flashed past the enemy's starboard tail, the dread flash of tractor beams and dis (disintegration) rays reached over with clawing fingers for the shiny hull of my space boat. My hands were clammy with the tension of battle as I hit the lifter controls and desperately pulled the little craft up and down in short waves. Suddenly, we were dead astern of the *Satana*. For the moment they couldn't fire on us, but the game was discovered. They must have known who we were. It was useless to hope for concealment. There was but one thing to do—and I did it.

I gave the brave little craft all the power she had, and ordering the rest to strap themselves in their seats, set her nose toward the surface of Mother Mu.



We could feel the heat of the atmosphere being ground against our hull by the power of the little tender's drivers—powerful mechanisms that could drive the little boat between worlds if need be, but more power than was wise near the surface of a planet. And this violent maneuvering with a space ship so close to the surface wasn't wise either.

"Arl," I called, "where are they?"

"Oh, Mion, they have swung around—they're coming after us!"

Futilely I struck the driver lever, trying to coax just a bit more power from the gallant little machines—vibrating and smoking in their compartments. I knew they'd never last long being used like this.

"Now, Arl—what?"

"They're gaining, I think," sobbed Arl. "Mion, they're trying to reach us with their rays."

I swung the craft to the right and then frantically to the left—all the while diving in a long, flat curve toward Earth—

Bang!

With a bone jarring wrench, one of the enemy's tractor beams wrapped tenuous fingers around the little tender's hull, then locked tight. From full speed, we were quickly slowed and drawn toward the *Satana*. A horrible, painful sensation—tractor beams lock on every atom of the object they hold—like being clawed inside.

We were lost.

The enemy drew his prey swiftly to the air-lock that surrounded the tractor-beam turret holding us and pulled us inside.

With a jar they set the tender on the floor of the air-lock. We couldn't move. The crew of the enemy craft swarmed into the air-lock after closing the outer port.

As they scrambled over the tender toward the entrance hatch, I took a

look at Arl's strained features and refused to think—probably the last good look I would take at that lovely face.

## CHAPTER VI

SATHANAS' family was one of the few families of variforms among the Nor. Accepted as exiles long ago from some variform city of the Angles of Earth, the Satanic family was a cloven-footed one, something like Arl in general makeup, but with shaggy black hair on their legs and of a very dark complexion, with horns showing Titan blood somewhere in the family tree.

We were taken directly to his chambers. His dark form loomed ahead of us in the red mist of his nutrient air—of his own formula, and probably one of the causes of his evil character, for it had a smell like nothing I had ever experienced before. Some chemical he had added to the usual formula had fooled him into thinking it was beneficial, but was more than likely a dangerous stimulant and had weakened his body's insulative resistance to detrimental flows of energy. His character had certainly become that of a mad dero of the most dangerous kind, for his wisdom, untempered with concern for any other life, would be a never-ending horror to all men unless he was stopped. It didn't look as if Mutan Mion would be able to do much about stopping Sathanas.

A pretty predicament for the reputation of Mutan Mion. When my comrades would come to hear how I had fallen into the hands of Sathanas without a blow being struck, there would be many a head shaken behind my back. Sad, sad shakes of Nortan heads. Murmurs of "Tch, tch—too bad. Mion might have been such a noble specimen but—the Sun infection, you know." And the others would nod silently in

agreement and touch their foreheads with their finger-tips. Then, despite all the god-like qualities that they did possess, they would feel very smug and complacent. They would make a sincere attempt within their minds to—well, not forgive exactly, but—explain what the cause of my trouble was, and they would sympathize patronizingly. They'd think, "His unfortunate Earth background and birth; he lacks real stamina—resource—too bad." I always had to contend with that in my work among the God-men of Nor—they worried about the evil that had roamed on Earth expelling the Titans and Atlans and some foolish ones thought that everyone of Earth might—no, must—be affected.

Not all the men of Nor thought thusly, however. Most of that great race of Elders peered deeply into problems and didn't overlook any facts in arriving at the right answers. But, I have found in all races and peoples in the planets I have trod, that there are those who pass judgment on half facts. Fortunately for the progress on intelligence, those foolish ones are not too many among the Elder Races.

Sathanas, though infected by a taint of the deadly "de" from the Sun, usually collected facts—all of them—before making any of his illegal moves. The one error he'd made had caused me to chase him here to Mu, but I had been the one to err when we'd come too close to the deadly, treacherous Sun, and I was in his toils.

**M**Y LOVELY Arl and I and those valiant young Aesir were taken prisoners, they who had so blindly put their lives into my hands—lives that were not immortal as the lives of we of the Elder Races, 'tis true, but lives that were, nevertheless, well thought of by their owners. All those lives had been

entrusted to me—to their belief in my legendary ability to carry success with me. And what had I done? I had fallen into as stupid error as any inhabitant of the Sun's planets. What was worse for one of my almost god-like status, I had been trapped like a green cadet on his first solo space patrol—trapped without firing a shot, without the semblance of a struggle. Trapped and taken. There was nothing to be done about it now but to take as stoically as we could whatever foul torments our captor could devise.

It is not often that a proud member of the Elder Races stands captive before a creature such as this Sathanas.

The tender had been forced open in the air-lock of the *Satana*, and the evil crew of that black craft had ordered us out of it with little ceremony. At this close range, there was no point to attempt to overpower the crew, right in the very bowels of the enemy ship, so we allowed ourselves to be escorted into the presence of the *Satana's* master.

Sathanas sat surrounded by his women, his dark face gloating evilly. As we were led before him, we could hear his ill-repressed sigh of satisfaction at the prize his luck had won for him.

The first time I saw him I found him distasteful, and I had no more enthusiasm for him now. I thought that because we were of the Elder Races we weren't to fare too badly at his hands, and again I erred. Perhaps the Sun was beginning to affect me.

Slowly I glanced around the chamber—his own personal quarters judging by the wealth and luxury that had been expended on it. I have said that he was surrounded by women? That makes it sound like just a few—but there seemed to be scores of women here. And almost as many planetary races as there were women. His agents and slave raiders had done their job well. The place was

full of women and girls culled—literally hand picked—from the beauties of a hundred far flung planet cities. From the looks of things, Sathanas had first choice of all the women his agents acquired for all of his illegal pleasure palaces that flourished in spite of all the laws of the Gods.

Now, there are some pleasure palaces run by wise men, and very good things they are too, but some are only "apparently" good, concealing hideous evil behind a perfect facade of beneficence. These were served by men (or creatures that walk like men) like Sathanas—surface good concealing abysmal and horrible depravity.

ALL these beautiful women surrounding Sathanas were the end products of the hidden vices of the immortal Elder Races—vices that were unsuspected for a long time. True, these vice-ridden Elders were not very numerous, but, like every other race in Time, there are always some who do not measure up to the standard of the tribe—whether their lack is known or not. Perhaps certain ones have physical afflictions, and others, mental, but there always seems to be that little group that is incomplete or evil or decadent. Such was a certain element amongst the Elder Races—good and noble on the surface, but their minds were evil—or inclined to evil.

Where there is a profit to be made from evil that men do or desire, there will be other men to act to gratify evil desires and line their pockets. That was what Sathanas was—a panderer possessing immortality and catering to a mass of immortal degenerates—to their lusts and cruelty, procuring for their lusts, women and girls and for their cruelty, men, women and children of a hundred different races and colors. Their cruelty demanded unconditioned

victims, but their lusts required refinements—refinements that no one knows for how many years have been improved and intensified.

These women around Sathanas, and I don't know how many thousands of others, had been made into something that was part human and part pure horror—made into robot servants of vast and synthetic forces beyond their poor strength to fight in any way—made by forces that can, and do, mould and pervert even the best natured person into something that is not human—into a tool or instrument of pleasure, or an instrument of torture of the most insidious kind. Robot women whose minds the Elder mechanisms had perfected in some ways to beauty while other parts of their minds had been destroyed.

Centuries of the control of stimulation rays had caused their thought processes to be—not thoughts of the normal human. Rather, they were merely mental reaction to outside stimulation. They served others' purposes with the products of their minds as well as the motions of their bodies. The shape of their lips, the seductive sleekness of their bodies, the looks of longing and desire in their eyes.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup>SIRENS: The authors are of the opinion that the alterations done upon the slave women of the Nor vice rings, carried on less efficiently here on Earth in the past, may be the factual origin of world wide legends of sirens and goddesses of love as differentiated from female deities supposed to oversee fertility and procreation.

In the Hellenic Pantheon, Diana is usually imagined as the goddess of Fertility and Aphrodite, the goddess of Love. Thus, here we have the case where Aphrodite COULD have been an outstanding creation of some of the vice ring or perhaps merely one of those latter day, almost-immortal humans that, in legend, became the lesser Gods and Goddesses.

In the legend of Ulysses, he had himself tied to the mast of his ship, after sealing the ears of his crew with wax, so that none of them could be beguiled by the enchanting voices of the sirens

(footnote concluded on following page)

## CHAPTER VII

THE awe-struck Aesir with me didn't guess that the voluptuous, desirable women around Sathanas were poor mindless creatures; machine-made to appeal to base masculine senses of some members of the immortal Elder Races. They didn't know that what they gazed upon was false and inhuman. They knew only that they saw here women beautiful and desirable beyond their wildest dreams—the fevered dreams of the Earthmen that they were. Here were dream creatures smiling at them through half-lidded eyes . . . sending their blood racing. And mirroring the gaze of Sathanas' women, the eyes of the young Aesir were pinwheels of hungry fire.

Although it takes several moments to tell, I knew instantly what these women were—and a quick look at my new friend from fair Mu confirmed the fact that the agents and mech controllers of Sathanas had done their work well—the Aesir had lost their senses to the lure of the devil's women.

I looked at Arl. She, too, knew what lay behind all this unholy scenery and her cute nose was raised, proudly disdainful. Her eyes stared past Sathanas and all the false finery around him.

"My lovely Arl is just going to ignore all this. Good girl!" I chuckled to myself. But the chuckle died in my throat as I came to a halt in front of Sathanas

*(Footnote concluded from preceding page)*

lving on the treacherous, rock-bound shores. (In the story, certain female slaves were trained in various arts, much as the Geisha of Japan—specialists in various branches of entertainment.) Quite naturally, that would include girls that sang, and suppose that some of them were to escape? And, need we point out that these legends of sirens are almost world wide, but notably in Greece and in the Teutonic legends? Girls whose ("RAY" altered) voices were so compelling that even so primary an urge as self-preservation was thrown overboard in the victim's attempt to get closer to these infinitely desirable voices.—AURON.

—the hidden, deadly evil, ill-concealed in those smoky eyes didn't promise much of enjoyment for us captives standing before him.

He glanced up from the snowy throat he'd been kissing, and our eyes locked. At first, there was just that evil stare. Then . . . recognition! With that, he became alive and casually tossed the attentive female from his lap, as a normal man would dispose of a puppy when other business called. With a displeased frown the poor creature glared at me for interrupting her pleasure, but she scurried to one side, followed by the hungry eyes of the Aesir, for she was about the same size as they. Evidently, she was a new acquisition. After dismissing her, Sathanas had placed both hands on the arms of his "stim" chair and looked at us from under his dark brows.

Finally the dog deigned to speak.

"Ah, my dear Mutan Mion," the words were like the treacherous hiss of a deadly snake, and the smile that went with it was equally reptilian. "Ah, yes, and his lovely wife, the beautiful Arl."

When he mentioned her name, I would have strangled him had I been free to move . . . his using her name was profane. He had bowed as he spoke it.

"You know, Fair Lady, the tales that are told do not do justice to the beauty that you do have. I am honored by this visit from such a famous pair. I have many times read the record of your progress in the past centuries. I am grieved that I must welcome you in such poor surroundings as my little craft provides."

I said nothing. In fact, I tried desperately not to think of anything that his thought-readers might find of value.

"Oh, come, Mion, surely you haven't lost that oratorical tongue that we have heard of so much? Can't you speak?"

"The less I say, the better, O mighty Sathanas. I am not numbered among your admirers."

**A**T THAT he frowned. There was no use to hide the truth or crawl to his ego. I knew that a dozen telaugs were playing over us and certainly some of them transferred our thoughts to him. I didn't care for him or any of his kind.

Sathanas had looked like he was going to lose his temper, but he recovered his front of suavity. Just as he was ready to speak again, he was interrupted.

The Aesir, Tyr, was more accustomed to facing such characters than I and he had immediately adopted the best possible attitude for the moment.

"Your majesty!" said Tyr, "the Arch-Angle of the heavens, the one mighty man of blood and war that I have always wanted to meet! Oh! Mighty One, that black flag of yours is the banner and desire of every warrior who relishes true freedom!"

Even with the information that his "spy" rays were undoubtedly sending him, this spontaneous flattery from Tyr caught Sathanas momentarily off his guard, and he frowned darkly . . . puzzled.

"Why the gloomy frown?" asked Tyr. "Is the mighty Sathanas displeased at the offer of service from such fighters as these?" Tyr indicated the others. "Why only today, My Lord, we put the mighty Jotun to flight outside our city of Asgard . . . what better recommendation could a warrior bring you?"

Tyr was doing a valiant job of bluffing, but he couldn't know that the only "war" that Sathanas ever had any contact with was drunken space-men's brawls, or violent kidnappings and perhaps in arranging the monetary details or warfare on some of the other "der"

planets. The Aesir tried, but his bluff failed.

At the mention of the battle outside the walls of Asgard, Sathanas blackened and sbot to his feet. Some trinket or other that he had in his hand went violently to the floor.

"So! . . . so!" The huge fiend was raging but not saying much. I could see his lips quivering with self-indulgent anger. "So! It was you, Mion, who pierced the hull of my best and newest battle ship! You . . . you are the upstart who is poking his nose into my affairs here in my refuge!"

He had bunched his fist and stood shaking it under my nose while I stood still, not moving a muscle.

"You insolent . . . you uncultured freak. It will not be you that carries the tale of my doings back to Nor! You can take the word of the Lord Sathanas for that!"

The miserable cur emphasized his last remark with a slap on the face that would have earned him death had I not been held in the grip of a watching control-ray. I kept silent. There was nothing for me to say. Sathanas ranted on.

"Centuries ago, you came to the Council Chambers on Nor and received more honors and recognition than all my labors have ever brought me. You rose steadily in power in the so-called government of Nor. And, as the final insult, you approach, no, you even eclipse the power of men three times your age!"

He was being carried away by his own thwarted ambitions. The more he raved, the more he became flecked with foam, like a stallion raced too hard. He was stomping back and forth in front of us. Every eye in the room was watching him, and it was only our little group that wasn't cowering at the sight and sound of his anger.

"But, my dear MUTAN MION! Your . . . luck . . . has . . . ended! You are in my power now—I, who am now the open enemy of all the base servants of the Nor Empire, and I will see that you die . . . slowly, painfully!" He threw back his head and laughed like a man gone mad. "Haw! and those so dainty hounds of our so high God-head—that thrice cursed Nor Patrol—will receive the complete sensation record of your death, with my compliments!"

THAT must have pleased him for he calmed down and smiled. "Ah ha, THAT should keep them somewhat less hot on my trail, knowing the painful fate of the great Mutan Mion who unluckily caught up with me. Me . . . Sathanas!"

And he didn't mean to miss any nuance of sadistic pleasure. He pranced over where Arl was standing, his black cloven hooves making the only sound in the room. She still was staring past him as he stroked the little black beard he affected.

His fevered eyes gazed up and down the glorious body of my beloved Arl and I swore to myself that if I were ever free, that I would tear those insulting eyes out with my own bare hands.

"Beautiful!" He nodded. "Mion, your Arl is a very valuable looking chunk of meat<sup>18</sup>."

At least, she will be valuable when my colleagues get finished with a few slight mental operations on her. No doubt you are familiar with the slight

adjustments that we make on these lovely women's minds to enhance their value? No? That's a pity. And she is big, too. I'm sure there are some among the Nor men that will pay a pretty price to have such a sturdy plaything to take with them to the heavy planets. Perhaps, I shall keep her here for my own use . . . for a little while, anyway. And, then, maybe I can reward one of the Jotun chiefs with her for certain favors that they have done me in the past.

Mustering his courage, he reached up, and stripped Arl of the few garments that she wore, the better to inspect his new property.

"They saw that Mion's Arl is one of the most expert manipulators of the 'stim' machines. Mmmm, I believe I know where such a woman of her size and ability with 'stim' would bring a fortune, and the size of a Ruler's ransom, too."

Evidently he was tired of merely taunting his captives without them saying anything, for he suddenly ordered, "Take them away!"

Obedying his command, the heavy ray that had held us captive was released and some of the ship's crew with small hand rays shackled us with them.

They didn't have them turned up to full power—they couldn't have, because all I could feel was a slight drag. As soon as I realized what was up—that I was free—I raced for the throat of the fiend now returning to his couch, hurling his sycophants and dancing girls to the right and left like a farmer sowing

<sup>18</sup>MEAT: Cannibalism has been practiced for centuries in the now almost sterile caverns—dero eating tero, perhaps tero eating dero; both, it is suspected, capturing by means of the ancient "mech" (mechanism) surface people for food. They consider surface people merely a higher species of food-animal. Throughout the caverns, we of the surface are referred to, not as "surface" people, but "meat" people.

No doubt the European dero ate heartily beneath the concentration camps. We suspect that it was they who activated the Nazis guarding the camps to the abysmal depths of depravity to which they descended. For centuries, the dero have been doing the same things—and worse—though on a smaller scale.

The Jotuns were, no doubt, dealers in "meat" delicacies.—R. S. SEAYEN.

grain. Just as my fingers were about to clench about his neck, a beam from one of the ever watchful servitors struck me down at his feet, a contorted bundle of agony. The epilepto-ray<sup>28</sup> that they used was the most painful known to Nor science—forbidden except for experimental laboratory work to discover a counter for it.

I rolled in tortured convulsions on the floor. Just as my last grip on consciousness slipped from my grasp, I saw my lady Arl folding like a wounded bird and something that she had tried to use as a weapon fell from her grasp . . . or was that blood!

### CHAPTER VIII

“OOOOH, Mi . . . Mion . . .”

Hearing these moans and my name through a fuzzy humming in my ears, I tried to open my eyes and raise myself up. I couldn't. Then, gradually, with the return of consciousness, I realized that I was aching to the ends of my feet. I opened my eyes.

Above my head was the cause of that aching I felt. Now that I was awake and conscious, it wasn't just an ache, it was pain. There above my head was

<sup>28</sup>EPILEPTO RAYS: The epilepto ray was originally intended for the use of the Elder Race's Police. By means of it, primitive tribes, wild animals, and even rioting or uncontrollable members of the Race itself could be brought under control, harmlessly.

However, as with all the ancient mechanisms, the Elder scientists continually improved them, and at times these improvements called for regulation by the Ruling Council to limit their use to insure the general safety of the entire race.

Some of the epilepto ray projectors are still extant in the caverns here on Earth, and their use by the dero (degenerate humans) cause torment and paralysis to a lot of the surface people.

The ray itself, in action, contorts every muscle of the victim's body by means of an alternating current of synthetic pain-ray electric, the pulsations resulting in that spasmodic jerking so apparent in one suffering a so-called "epileptic" fit.

—AUTHOR.

a slowly swinging pendulum, the end of which held a vari-pain ray lens and it was this sweeping motion of the ray that made me feel pain all over my body. I couldn't move from under it. I tried, but the crew of the *Satana* had too much practice with binding captives in chains for me to do more than tighten a few of the more uncomfortable ones around my wrist and ankles. I could move my head, and turning around I saw whence came the moans and my name. The brave Aesir were chained down alongside me. That was fiendish—chaining Earthmen in range of a pain ray that was nearly killing a fifty foot immortal member of the Elder Races<sup>29</sup>.

They were moaning softly and I felt the tears come to my eyes with pride in these men that old Mother Mu could still produce. Men suffering agonizing torture and just barely moaning—the same as a young boy of, say, ten years being tortured on a crude Jotun rack without making a sound. They must be near crazy with the torment. I was myself. Sathanas, it seemed, did not intend to have his guests miss any of the

<sup>29</sup>SIZE OF THE ELDER RACE: The authors suggest that anyone interested get a copy of Charles Fort's "Lo!" In Chapter Nine, he discusses the findings, BY PRESENT DAY HUMANS, of the skeletons of huge creatures 40 to 65 feet in length. The conventional "scientific" explanation is that they are the skeletal remains of whales washed up on the shore. Fort refutes this sort of illogic by pointing out that whales' skeletons do not have BROAD HIP BONES.

He also mentions a report from the LONDON DAILY NEWS. In it is recounted the dredging up of a large skull from the north of Scotland, of a size that the authorities claimed would fit an elephant, but it would have to have been a large one to boast eye-sockets a foot across. We suggest, for those interested in such research, that it MIGHT have been the skull, preserved somehow (or, perhaps, fairly recently dispatched), but a skull, nevertheless, of one of the ancient Giants that built the caves beneath our world. (Excerpt is from the Daily News, June 26, 1905.)

If the eyes are a gauge of the full size of the completed skeleton, the creature (a member of the Elder Race?) would have to have been at least 40 feet tall.—AUTHOR.

dubious comforts that he could provide.

I figured that we must be someplace in the lower hold of the *Satanas*—no ports were visible, just the blank dull metal walls. There was something missing, though I couldn't decide exactly what.

ARL!

"Arl! Arl . . . where are you?" I called, thinking that perhaps she might be in the same cell as we, but placed so that I couldn't see her. That hope was destroyed when Tyr, sobbing with the pain he was suffering, said, "My Lord . . . ough . . . they didn't bring her with us . . ."

"Tyr, what did they do with her?"

My concern for Arl made me forget for a moment the awful torment, the horrible spasms of pain that dropped like blood from our bodies.

" . . . I don't know . . . Lord Mion! Are we dying? This . . . pain . . . I can't stand it!"

"Easy, friend Tyr," I tried to comfort him, "they will not keep this up until we die . . . they're too cruel for even that. This is just a sample of what we are in for. Courage, friends."

**MY BELOVED** Arl . . . what had these accursed fiends done to her? How long had I lain in this cell unconscious? *Sathanas* had admitted some of the foul things he planned for my wife. Had he had time to carry out some of them?

I strained at the chains; I had to get free. I failed. And these poor *Aesir* warriors were near death with pain. Something had to be done. But what?

I had it. Hypnosis!

These men were of a lower mental calibre than myself, understandable when you realized that I had twenty centuries to develop while they had barely that many years. Hypnosis

would serve two purposes—take their minds off the pain they were enduring and fill them with subconscious information that we might be able to use if the scales of Fortune fell in our direction.

I commenced to talk to them, soothing their pain as much as I could with my voice. It wasn't long until they were in that stage half way between total hypnosis and consciousness. That was the best I could do, considering that we were operating under extreme difficulties, being bound and continually swept with the pari-pain beam. From talking about them and their families to fix their interest, I had gradually worked the talk around to technical subjects. I wanted to teach them as much of spacemanship as I could under the circumstances.

"At the mid-space-point between two attracting spatial bodies," I explained, beginning with the most elementary principles of interstellar astrogation, "lies a thin 'zone of neutralization'—a thin zone where all matter is weightless."

"We have heard you mention that before, Lord Mion," spoke one of the *Aesir* from his bed of artificial pain.

"Well, friends, that 'zone of neutralization' is important. It is the knowledge and the use of the peculiarities of the way all mass is inertially neutralized there that enables us to journey between the farthest stars."

"Why is that, Mion?"

"Because, starting a star trip anywhere else would be impossible. There would be too much mass to overcome. It would be impossible to achieve the needed acceleration quick enough."

The *Aesir* were doing their best to follow what I was telling them—but now they could only groan.

"It's like . . . like . . . the difference between jumping off the top



branch of a bushy tree and jumping off a wall. In the one, drag at the start slows you down somewhat, whereas, in going off the wall, there is nothing to slow your acceleration. Do you see, friends?"

"Aye, Lord, we hear . . ." They struggled to suppress the shrieks that hammered at their lips for voice.

"Now, Warriors, listen carefully. It is there, in the 'zone of complete lack of weight' that all long, interstellar flights MUST begin . . . always remember to be very careful in pointing your ship on the exact course to your distant objective lest your course intersects another path where some object may lie that would destroy you in the event of a collision."

WHEN they had indicated that they understood that, I continued.

"Poised motionless in the exact center of the 'zone,' and pointing in the correct direction, the ship is given full power of all the plates<sup>21</sup> at once. Ordinarily, such instant application of all the power at rest would kill all the ship's passengers, but at the EXACT center of the 'zone' ANY acceleration can be achieved without danger, depending upon the amount of power

<sup>21</sup>DRIVER PLATES: In the two thousand years since Mutan's visit to Earth, the ships used by him have developed and adopted the drive plate instead of the gas jet drive. Both are rocket drives in principle, but different in detail. The drive is an alloy metal that decomposes into a repellant electric flow very much like gravity in reverse. Things fall away from the plate when certain frequencies of dis-electric are applied to the plate. The resultant impulse is rendered useful by a reflecting material, opaque to the drive flow, on the side of the plate nearest the ship. Hence all the repellant flow is directed backward—giving a drive like a rocket in principle but very different in detail. This is the drive generally used in the ancient ships—though there are several distinct types of drives—and ships from widely separated civilizations lying about the caverns, still today existent, and in some cases still usable.—AUTHOR.

impetus."

Again they groaned acceptance of what I had said.

"When you give your ship full throttle as I've told you, it will instantly attain vast velocity depending on the power of your ship's plates and how carefully you balanced your ship in the center of the 'zone'. Keep applying power, and in a short time you will find yourself far beyond your starting point. Like a flash you will be in the region of the stars which are unfamiliar to you, traveling at a speed your Earth brains cannot comprehend. If you were watching a spacer accelerate from the 'zone', it would seem to you that the ship had vanished. No motion would be seen. It would be there one moment and disappear the next—disappear into nothingness. Such is the speed of ships that fly between the stars. Using this tremendous speed, you can fling yourself far beyond the light of this deadly, evil Sun and within the regions of space that the Elder Races, the Gods of the Aesir, have chosen as their dwelling place."

"Would not we humans be in danger from the wrath of our Gods for daring to come to them, Lord Mion?"

"No, my friends, once in the general area of the dark planets, you would soon be overtaken by some space patrol and, your intentions being understood, you would be helped in every way to find yourselves a home far from the deadly 'de', a home near those of the Gods. Have you understood me?"

All four of the Aesir groaned their answer: "Aye, Lord Mion, we have understood . . . you . . . and will do as . . . you advise . . . if . . . there ever comes . . . the time when we are . . . free of the clutches of this Satbanas."

There were other things I explained to the Aesir, things like how the first light speed is achieved with a light im-

petus but as the interstellar space ships move into as much as fifty light-speeds, the 'ether drag' increases on the order of one unit of drag to fifty units of light speed.

Thus, the required impetus needed to achieve one light speed is increased by one for each additional fifty light speeds. Actually, no body in the known cosmos is ever entirely weightless, but there are conditions where a given mass or body loses apparent weight to the point where its weight is negligible. The best place to achieve this condition of weightlessness is that area that I've told you about . . . the area between the world or other spatial bodies that we term the 'zone of weightlessness.'

I WENT on and on with my talking and explaining, more to keep from thinking than from any hope of teaching these long suffering friends overmuch. The pain, or rather, the perception of the pain, had gradually increased almost to the point of madness for the victim. No doubt the fiends that served Sathanas were making a thought record of all our sensations and words as the master of this depraved vessel had promised to send to my friends in the Nor Patrol.

"Course must be plotted and ship poised exactly in the center of the zone . . ."

". . . hit such zones every time you pass between worlds . . . maintain acceleration . . ."

The pain never stopped . . . on and on. . . pain . . . waves of agony . . . some smooth strokes of torment . . .

"Use the devices that the builders have installed to determine the center . . . full throttle . . . trust instruments . . ."

Flashes of memory came and went in the delirium of our fevered agony . . . what I said . . . gone . . .

The young Aesir had good minds though very little real education. I could not have taught them any mathematics, even had my hands been free to do so. It would be fortunate, indeed, if they remembered any of the facts of space navigation that I was trying to get across to them. I, myself, am not certain of all that I told them. The longer we were chained under the varipain ray, the more our minds slipped from our conscious control. A living body can stand only so much of nerve vibration.

This torment had been going on for hours . . . painful . . . moments of release when it reached the ends of its swings and then that laving with agony again.

It may have been days . . . or weeks . . . I don't know . . . just back and forth . . . pain.

## CHAPTER IX

AS ONE will, under the 'der' influence of a sun that burns heavy metals and makes men's minds function in evil error, I had spent my time waiting for—what? Some silly pap to my vanity—a feather in my cap that would be mine had I captured this fellow Sathanas single-handed. And what had the 'der' sun led me to? Capture—and worse, torture for myself and my four valiant companions . . . and . . . the Gods of Space only know what horrible fate for my lovely Arl. True, I had some idea that Sathanas was not going to kill me—that would have been too merciful for his evil dero soul. No, he meant to prolong my torment to its last groan, preferably, hoping that it would take years for me to groan my last.

That was small consolation, knowing that he wasn't going to kill me. But, a human body can stand only so

much. My companions had fainted long ago. I must have fainted several times myself. I was aware of several periods of consciousness. Perhaps that fiend was merely reviving me in order to see my huge frame collapse again in an effeminate faint that would have given him great pleasure, no doubt.

But, as I say, I revived the last time. And, from somewhere within me came rage—rage that lent my tortured body strength . . . strength that Vanue's marvelous nutrients<sup>22</sup> had given me, over and above my natural inheritance.

Had Sathanas known all that Vanue knew about nutrient and beneficial rays, he probably would not have become what he was, but instead, he would have grown into a wise and noble man. As it was, his men had failed fully to realize the tremendous power that had been grown into my limbs. I didn't know it myself until that final moment when my agonized body could take no more and with supreme rage and pain, a mighty roar issued from my straining throat and I heaved on the chains that held me

strapped to the floor—heaved until I could feel the warm blood from my lacerated wrists.

There was a sigh—a mighty fifty-foot God-man flat on his back, his head thrown hard against the floor, his back arched with the massive, bowed muscles that quivered with the last supreme, flayed effort for a futile final flail against its bonds. Suddenly, my cry of rage turned to one of joy—sheer animal joy. One of the chains had pulled loose from the moorings in the floor! A cat-like smile lighted my face as I grasped the chain on my other arm and pulled with savage joy on that mere chain with both my massive arms. It came free!

With both arms unchained, it was the work of a moment to loose myself of the chains binding my feet and I stood up. Free! Free, for the first time in hours . . . or was it days? Released from my bonds, but not entirely free as I learned after a moment's thought. I still had to get out of this cell—but I was standing, and on my feet. I could fight now.

I stepped from under the vari-pain beam, and, at once, I disposed of that with one vicious swipe of my balled fist. Then, I set about freeing my unconscious companions. That was done in a moment.

The five of us were released from our bonds. The only thing between us and complete freedom was a metal door and the crew of this war vessel of Sathanas' fleet, perhaps some three or four hundred men of the approximate size of myself. Quite a formidable obstacle under normal circumstances, but, just out of my bonds as I was, it didn't seem unconquerable. There was something in being able to move one's limbs that make other difficulties seem of less importance and of no consequence.

<sup>22</sup>NUTRIENTS: These nutrients are based on the hydrogen ion flow in the body. Most of the electric by which the greatest electrical machine known (human body) operates is borne about the body as a charge upon a flow of hydrogen ions. The ancients had developed a method of superimposing upon the hydrogen ion charges of certain energy flows not electric as we know it. These were borne into the body upon rays, where they become a part of the charge upon the hydrogen ion flow within the body's batteries, and are there borne to all the functioning parts of the flesh to be absorbed directly by the flesh. These rays—nutrient in nature—were formed directly from energy ash, the stuff of which all matter is formed. As well they had methods of ionizing and rendering absorbable by the body such nutrients as we call vitamins. These volatile essences of nutrient foods they ionized and introduced into the blood stream as "nutrient rays"—driven through the air by electric pressure and sometimes by super-sonic force. These ions were charged in a complementary way that made them attractable by the ordinary body electric charge.—AUTHOR.

AFTER making certain that my four Aesir were still living and would soon snap out of their stupor, I tried the metal door. It seemed strong enough. Then, I really put my strength to the handle and with an oath to the unknown gods of spacemen, I braced my legs against the wall and pulled. The sweat stood out on my brow, my muscles ached with the tremendous load, the calves of my legs were quivering with the awful strain—then, with a shriek of tortured metal, the lock tore out and the door flew open, flinging me to the floor with the sudden reaction. I sprawled on the deck, a very much surprised and bruised God.

When breath finally came back to me, I mumbled something about "Our friend Sathanas must have been too unwise in some of his remarks to our Nortan engineers for such a weak bit of equipment to be installed in a warship . . . ha! Serves him right!"

It was true. There are no finer craftsmen anywhere in all the known cosmos, yet they are sometimes prone to strike back, thusly, for some slight insult—letting inferior work pass as O.K. Then, one day, the one that insulted will find his mech failing when he needs it most. It pays to be courteous and considerate with everyone, I have found it twenty centuries of ruling. It pays.

Where this monster ship was heading, I had no idea. I did have the idea that I didn't wish to go wherever it was going—it no doubt wouldn't have been healthy.

My reverie was interrupted by a moan. I looked to the Aesir who were beginning to stir themselves. Tyr was the first to come to, and with his help we soon had the other three on their feet and spoiling for a fight. We all wanted vengeance for that period un-

der the vari-pain machine, and we meant to get it.

Out the door I went, the four Aesir stalking behind me, an eager light in their eyes and a look of supreme faith in my judgment and ability on their faces.

We rounded a curve in the companionway and nearly barged into a ray-post unannounced. At the controls of the huge space gun sat a big Angle in the uniform of Sathanas' service, on watch for some sign of the Nor Patrol.

"Let's take 'im!" I yelled, bounding forward at the same time, seizing the man's arms and twisting them back and up. The Aesir needed no second urging. They swarmed over the huge fellow, one of them standing on his lap and stuffing part of his coat in the Angle's mouth to smother any outcry.

"Get his weapons, Tyr!" I ordered.

Tyr was tugging at the warrior's weapon belt and it came free. I couldn't help laughing, even in so crucial a moment at the startled look on the fellow's face. Evidently he had never expected this. The fellow's dis gun Tyr gave to Vol, then, he pulled out his flame sword and finding it too big, asked if I wanted it. I shook my head, "No, Tyr, it too small for me." He flung it aside.

"Come with me, my evil friend," I said to the fellow whose arms must have been hurting him for the way I had them twisted behind him. With my invitation, I pulled the big guy to his feet and propelled him along in front of me down the corridor.

ADJACENT to the cargo compartment where we had lain, I had noticed another empty cell. I hurled our captive into it and locked the door.

Vi, one of the Aesir, shot a penetrative ray through the door and we could see the big one struggling to his feet.

"Give him the epilepto-ray, Vi," I ordered.

Flicking a little lever on the barrel of the gun be held, the ray changed color slightly and we could see the poor dupe in the cell fall, writhing in pain, to the floor. Well, we had had a lot worse at their hands. When he stopped moving, we knew he was paralyzed for the next few hours.

I began to like these Aesir more and more. There is something in the way a fighting man operates that gladdens the heart of another warrior, and these Aesir had jumped to action with alacrity that would have done credit to the noblest of the Nor. And, Tyr was the best of the four. There is nothing that can replace experience in battle, and they all had that and more. Tyr, though, was a companion that I would find myself reluctant to give up . . . quiet, but quick . . . reflective and slow of speech, but fast as a snake when necessity called. There are few like him, yet, according to the Nor medicoes, such men as Tyr are hopelessly infected with the evil of the sun and are not fit to bear the sons of future Nor citizens. Bah! Those medics are soft from easy living, say I. The Gods have their ailments, and an easy, too well provided life, with too little danger, is one of them. For myself, I am determined to go my own way in this question of retrieving the sons of man from the Sun-evil.

I looked about for a second, deciding what to do next—not so Tyr. When he had locked the Angle in the cell safely, he had sprung back to our captive's ray-post and had swung the weapon around so as to cover the inside of the ship, rendering the whole craft visible to the screens within the post.

Before it had occurred to my reputedly superior mind to do so, Tyr had activated the sleeper ray— one ray

which he knew was invisible — and had put half the ship's crew to sleep with it. Then, I took Tyr's place at the ray's controls, which was probably unwise, and swept the ship clean of conscious life.

I returned the view beam to its former position, angling slightly ahead to watch for other ships, when I saw a black shape cruising beside our own.

Scanning three hundred sixty degrees around the ship, I counted fifty of Sathanas' ships which had joined him since we had been captured.

"Ob-oh! This is a different problem entirely." I spoke to no one in particular. "This is going to require some thought."

**I** MADE one last swift search of the inside of what was now our ship, trying to find a trace of Arl. I failed. I had time for nothing more, for even though we had the flagship of Sathanas' fleet in our hands, that ship was surrounded by fifty of the enemy loyal to Sathanas, and more than willing to dispose of any Nortans—one Mutan Mion in particular. We had to get our ship out of there before we were discovered or be shot like roosting pigeons. At any moment one of the ships alongside of us would throw a view ray into the *Satana* for some purpose or other and our little game would be all over. I had no doubt that instant death would be our fate in the event of discovery.

Tyr again took the ray while I raced forward to the control bridge. It would have been too complicated for any of the Aesir to navigate this ship, and, besides, most of the weapons were too huge for anyone but the size of Arl or me. And, where in the name of the Gods of Space was Arl?

Quickly I placed a mind control ray upon the ship's commander, one ugly fellow, Haltor by name. Standing him

upon his feet by sheer strength of synthetic nerve-current command, I walked him toward the general televisor which was set to contact all of the ships of the fleet at once. I had him rasp out a few words as though in a great hurry at some sudden emergency.

"Commander Haltor to all ship commanders. Unforeseen emergency makes necessary a return to Earth for certain valuable material that was overlooked. The fleet will continue on its present course to destination. We will rejoin you as soon as we are able."

Not giving them time to question or to think about the orders, I swung the huge *Satana* in a short, tight arc that glued all of us to our seats under a half dozen gravities, and accelerated the ship on a return course. We were near a zone of weightlessness or the maneuver could not have been accomplished at the speed we were traveling. The High Commander Haltor I dropped unceremoniously to the deck where he resumed his interrupted slumber.

If I only had used that time of the return to Mu to everlastingly eliminate the 'great' Sathanas. But one's mind never functions correctly near Old Sol. One should figure out what to do, then do the opposite, when near this sun. I had decided to take Sathanas and his crew to Mu and leave them in the hands of the Aesir as a means of education for themselves. They could use the minds under telemach telaugs for a ready reference library of space travel and other needed information, and in a year or more be ready for a migration to a more beneficent energy field on some other planet. It was not a perfect solution to my problems, for Sathanas was not disposed of as the Nor Elders would have wished, but it did justice to the Aesir, and at the same time made it unnecessary for me to stay an illegal length of time upon the Earth.

**B**UT some ray from the fleet had caught a glimpse of the sleepers who should not have been sleeping, in tumbled positions everywhere about the ship. As I accelerated full back upon the return trail, out behind me I could see the fleet winging sharply around to turn upon me. Now I was the hunted. I prayed for the sight of a Nor patrol ship, but nothing showed in any direction. The ships behind me formed a 'V' of pursuit—being the quarry, I had the unpleasant feeling the formation was a spear point poised at my back. I was nearly helpless, for the massive guns of the great ship were not built to be fired by small men, or a few men, and I myself had to stay at the ship's controls. But I could leave her under robot control while I left for a short time to swing the big guns of the turrets for the smaller Aesir to fire. This I did and ran up into the master turret and swung a huge dis-ray in a vicious circle at the trailing ships. They did not want too close a taste of this. It was probable that the whole fleet was so built that this one ship could dominate it, for Sathanas did have sense enough to know that the type of men he used would be the type of men apt to find a reason to turn upon any domination. But, they did not drop the pursuit. I might have shaken off one ship by a series of swift accelerations and change of course at each flash into invisibility of light speed, but to lose fifty pursuers was too much to expect. Too, it is dangerous to try complete acceleration thusly, for one may have miscalculated the weight in the haste of battle, and the figures on the sheet, suddenly resolved into actual force in the driver plates, would smear us against the metal walls—just so much human hash. In full speed flight, such maneuvers can be suicide without full checking by several sharp minds for error.

The ship began to heat under the combined fire of the rays from the whole circle of pursuit. I had to do something fast. The old hostage gag was in my mind, but would these pursuers care what happened to Sathanas, or would they seize the excuse to make me rid them of their master? Well, I would soon find out.

I sped into the sealed chamber which Sathanas used to bask in his special nutrient and stimulative pleasures. About him lay his women in sleep and upon a bed of spikes from which still coruscated the blue fire of synthetic pain, lay one of the women in torture. I had time to throw the switch on the pain juice, for no sleeper ray could have put that torture distended body to sleep. Now I understood Sathanas. He was an ordinary idiot like Ex-Elder Zeit, who must always be plaguing some poor devil to death. And no man can do much thinking if he is always busy torturing some unlucky mortal.

**I** DREW the flame sword I had appropriated from one of the sleepers who was my size. Holding its point a little way from his breast, I gave his sleeping body a slight taste of its potent destructive power. He screamed into wakefulness. Such screams from a full grown man—a God almost. A bystander would have thought I hurt him. Maybe I did cause him pain at that—I hope so.

"Now, you overgrown hunk of diseased meat," I ordered him. "Will you call off that fleet or must I kill you?" I activated the telescreen beside the dais and upon it appeared the fleet, a great crescent of powerful shapes. "Step up and speak!"

Sathanas was suddenly reasonable. He stepped to the screen and showed himself. "It may be best for you to fall back away out of range, while the

lord of Mandark under Van of Nor has time to discuss a little business with me. You can use the time to dispatch that little package of stuff on its way to the rendezvous. I can use it if it is safely there. I am a hostage and his terms must be understood."

The fire from the fleet ceased. It was none too soon, either. Probably they had supposed Sathanas was dead as well as the crew. Although the hull was not pierced, many of the sleepers had died from the rays upon us. They dropped away from us swiftly. Soon they were but hovering dots upon the far ray-view horizon, hundreds of miles astern. I kept the televisior upon the fleet. There was little discussion among them. They were just awaiting my next move. One ship moved off from the fleet and returned again upon the course we had just traveled along. Quickly I learned the reason for this action. Putting the question into the mind of one of the officers of the distant fleet, I was struck dumb by his answer, automatic and unconscious as I knew the thought was to him. I couldn't believe it. The mystery of our fruitless search for Arl aboard ship suddenly became clear to me. The answer in the man's mind was: "The ship is taking the great bodied queen of the giant Mutan Mion, beautiful Arl, to the place where women are made into love machines and automatons of the pleasure science. She will be a valuable stim operator after her will is removed and the will to pleasure only placed in her. Her beauty will be much sought after by the great ones. I wish I was getting the money someone will get for her from the dark ones of the evil palace of pleasure science."

Arl! It couldn't be another. And she was being taken from me. While I was still digesting these horrible facts, the ship disappeared.

## CHAPTER X

I LOOKED at Sathanas' face as he heard me read the man's thought over the distance telaug beam. He leered his sardonic and famous smile which he used only when he counted coup over some enemy. I juiced him a little with the flame sword and he sank half dead at my feet. I had lost all sympathy for the romance of evil as personified by Sathanas. He cost too much to have around. Arl was lost to me forever, unless I regained her soon, for a woman's soul cannot be replaced in her body once it is removed from her mind. I might get Arl back, but it did not look as though she would be anything but a smiling automaton to my wishes—a woman without volition or real thought. Well, I would regain her, anyway. Some Arl would be better than no Arl. I said as much to Sathanas: "So you prefer your woman in the condition in which you are putting my Arl. Yet, you do me the favor of doing the same thing to my Arl who was always too self-willed for my comfort. You have done me a favor, Sathanas, for which I will show my gratitude in due time. Meanwhile, stop that leering, I don't like it. A flame sword is a weapon that throws off a red flaming beam of destructive ions in any direction it is pointed," I explained to his agonized face, "and just now it is pointed at you, so don't try being so very clever. Even a God's patience can be exhausted by a fool's asinine facial expression." Sathanas altered his leering.

Meanwhile I had a problem on my hands. There was nothing I could do about Arl except try to heal her again once I got her back. The hovering fleet was just awaiting my next move. So was I. I had to keep Sathanas in my hands. I dosed him with sleeper beams to quiet the contortions of his face, then

I turned toward the ship's controls keeping us headed for Mu. I didn't use any more speed. In his present state, Sathanas was no gift for the Aesir, and I had the fleet hot on my heels. I sat down to think.

At last it struck me! My ship, the *Darkome*, was the answer. It lay where I had left it, if the crew had followed my orders. I could not try to contact the Nor patrol by radio from the *Satana*, as the wave lengths of the apparatus were known and watched by the pursuing fleet. To try this would only invite attack by Sathanas' ships. Their allegiance to their master would not be so great that they would wait quietly by while I called the whole strength of vast Nor down upon them. I knew that it was only because I had not attempted this that they did not continue their attack in spite of my threat upon their master's life. But, if I could set a course near enough to the *Darkome*, if the crew of the waiting ship were on the alert and saw the whole string of enemy ships course overhead, and if none of the ships of Sathanas' saw the dark shape of the *Darkome* in the shadows of the rocks of the moon's surface, if all these things worked out correctly, then the *Darkome* would contact the Nor patrol over our secret wave lengths and the fleet behind us couldn't possibly have the slightest idea of any strategy.

IF THE *Darkome* lay where I had placed her, well under the shadow of a mighty meteor crater's wall, it was possible that the fleet could pass overhead without detecting her presence—unless the crew had placed a light for my guidance. That worried me—but, I had given orders not to do so. The ordinary space radio is on a wave length known to everyone, but for secret communication, the radio panel of Nor war ships contained several switches for dif-



ferent types of messages, and the radio, after such switches were thrown, operated on a wave length known to none but the construction men on the home planet. The receivers were also set up in the same manner so that secret messages could be heard only by commanders of ships of the intelligence branch according to which switch was set for the broadcast. Too, directional beam transmission cut down the chance of the message being intercepted by the Satanists. It might work. I stepped on the plate dis-flow button, my speed shot up to an uncomfortable acceleration. We shot past the moon, right over the *Darkome's* position. Whether she lay where I last left her or had gone in search of me, I could not tell. The place was all in the dark shadow of the mountains of the moon. I could not drop a beam to her without betraying her position. If she lay there, and if the fleet behind me failed to observe her, the chances were good that Nor ships would soon be coming toward our position at a good hundred light speeds. The men of the *Darkome* would hardly miss the sight and thunder of our drivers overhead. This was my only chance for escape from this Arch-fiend whose power over me still held, though he lay nearly dead at my feet.

Now, my problems were multiplied. First, I had to complete the capture and death of Sathanas. Second, I had to rescue my Arl from a secret stronghold of sin, the location of which I hadn't the faintest idea. Third, I had to turn over a brain to the Aesir for them to use to escape the sun-age death which I had sworn would not consume them. To stop me were the fifty great ships of war waiting impatiently overhead for me to conclude my conference with Sathanas and release him and his ship. It was ridiculous of them but they apparently expected me to strike

a bargain with Sathanas and to take his word for a contract while I went about my business. Such is evil thought—ridiculous upon analysis. It was obvious to me that there was no way for me to release Sathanas from my hands except by death. I couldn't trust his word in the slightest; yet, to a logical man, there was no other thing that fleet was waiting for. Then, they could come flaming in with all rays blasting. Some of them would have died. But, certainly so would have the *Satana* and myself and her master gone up with her. What was I supposed to do with him—in their minds? I can never understand evil.

Why didn't they give the ship a flood of sleeper ray? Because we would have gone spinning down to Earth and not one of them could have stopped our fall, for the weight of the great ship was too much for their cargo magnetic grapple rays. The truth was that they were just waiting and so was I. Well, I had more to wait for than they, but they didn't know it. It is possible, too, that they thought me fool enough to trust the word of their master to release me and to restore Arl in return for his life.

**W**HY didn't I kill him? I thought I might have to reenact the threat scene with the flame sword at his breast over the televisor to convince them I still meant business, and while that possibility existed, keeping him alive was a good investment.

I could not land the ship on Mu, for if a sleeper beam was used on the whole ship, Sathanas and I would have been taken alive.

I hung the ship on her driver beams' balance at fifty miles over the rocks and waited. But, I kept my hand on the controls in such a way that should a sleeper beam drop me unconscious, the ship would drop with me. We waited

while I kept up a running fire of conversation with the now awakened Sathanas. Quickly I figured out these angles and awakened him as I saw my safety lay in pretending to dicker with him for some understanding. The fool believed me and was promising to set me off at Quanto, a base that was safe for him to approach, not being heavily defended, and leave me there, after he had returned Arl to me. He assured me that the place where she had been sent was not far away. But, I knew as well as I know Arl's face, that he was lying. I did not have to look at the telaug needles to see the false needle vibrating in the red zone of der thought. No truth ever comes out of a man when he is in der, and all of Sathanas' thoughts were full of der—I knew that quite well. Yet, the man could live and other men could follow him. Why won't men study the lessons provided them to help them over the ever present opposition of dero which they are continually warned against? I can tell you—they are another kind of errant—a mentally blinded errant who cannot see because they will not look. Why won't they look? Because the der is in their will, too. How could Nor men have a der will when it is checked for continually? Because Sathanas, whose defection was hidden from the medicoes by his doing family, had put the der will in them himself with cleverly contrived de-stim rays. After they had been fully infected with the deadly radioactivity, they had been ripe for his plans. How could Sathanas know so much about der as to use it on his own men to make them tractable to his will, and yet not understand the need for removing the radioactive material from his mind that caused his own err. Because Sathanas was mad, and a madman is not logical. 'Der' is a good thing to understand and I had studied it a long time.

HANGING there above old Mu, my four Aesir friends waiting with glum faces, I felt like a fly hung up in a spider web. But, somehow I knew that the wasp was coming for these spiders. Standing at the controls, I would doze for an instant, and the great *Satana* would start her long deathly plunge to the surface of Earth. The sudden drop would awaken me, or the Aesir would shake me awake and I would bring the ship back to its former position. Still faintly dotting the far ray-view horizon lay the fleet of the Satanists watching their master's ship. Sooner or later they would figure out that there was nothing to wait for, and would speed off, for there was no other choice left to them. They could do him no good now, for his fate was in my hands. As this became clear to their officers, one by one they deserted the vigil, flashing out of sight into immense speed to . . . to where? I wish I knew. Some of them would be smoked out in a hurry once I got my hands on the *Darkome* again.

At last I saw what I was waiting for—the Dread-Nors of the Nor Patrol suddenly swooping out of the invisibility of light speed into the visible ranges of movement as they braked their flight between the Moon and Earth where braking could be done without danger from weight's inertia. It can seem like magic—this speeding from weightless point of space to weightless point at the speed of many light velocities. One instant you are here, and the next your ship has arrived . . . if the automatic ultrafast relays have tripped your drive and brake rockets correctly. If they fail, you would not live to talk about it. It is delicate stuff to plot such courses—to handle shiploads of men whose lives hang on the hair-breath of mental coordination necessary to set all the in-

struments aright before you take your course. To avoid disastrous inertia at start and stop is a feat, indeed.

Instantly, the patrol went into action. A moment before, the sky has been completely empty, then, suddenly, the Nor-ships appeared—guns blasting at the Satanists, like ships coming from the fourth dimension of ultra-speed into the three dimensions of visible speeds. One by one the ships of Satan's fleet dropped blazing into the seas of Earth. I grinned down at the semi-conscious Sathanas. "It seems that I win, O Lord of Foolishness and Evil, who turns on better men than himself who have done him no wrong. Soon your fleet will be no more. What do you think they will do with you?"

I gave his head a little ben-ray so that he would be able to answer me and be able to realize and suffer from the realization of his position. His answer was a snarl of hatred. "You may have won this time, but there will come another day, Mutan Mion."

"If I know my Nor leaders, there will be no other day. However, you can win my support if you tell me where they have taken Arl. I will claim you as my captive and make sure that you live if you tell me where I can find my beloved."

**S**ATHANAS, as I had known he would, caved in immediately and told me the position of the pleasure science center where Arl had been taken. Although he had probably sworn a dozen mighty and terrible oaths not to reveal to Nor men any detail of the place, he did so at the first sign that it might be of value in saving his life. And like all evil men, he expected me to keep my word to one who would betray a trust without any provocation. Why? Because he knew my reputation as a man who keeps his

word. Well, to keep that reputation, which at times has a great value, I will keep my word to the Arch-fiend. I will save him and turn him over to the Aesir as a walking map of the heavens where his evil life will at least find a use—a real use in making Gods and immortals out of worthy mortals.

As I wrote down the position of the place Sathanas described, I qualified my promise to him. "However, I promise that you will never again lead men to death . . . you are through with power."

The remaining ships of the Satanists' fleet raised the signal of surrender and were herded in beside our own floating giant which had hoisted the white flag as the first blast of power from a Nor driver was seen on the detectors. In less time than it takes to tell, the *Satana* was swarming with clean cut men in the smart, glittering uniforms of the Nor Patrol—efficiency and law backed up by cool shiny dis guns, and ordered in clipped stern voices.

The Satanists never had a chance once their position was known. And, well they knew it, too. I was never so glad to see anyone as that sharp-faced young officer who boarded us and cheerfully rubbed my position in to me. I showed him the mighty Sathanas coiled up in an agonized heap of epilepto-ray-charge, for I had no desire for a reputation for softness among the patrol man, and had dosed him with epilepto-ray as they drew alongside. His smile of triumph was very warm and pleasant. He fully understood the predicament he had rescued me from and I knew that he never intended to forget this episode. "How Mion got hold of the devil and couldn't let go . . ." would be the story I would hear many times before I moved on to the heavy planets.

"Opportune, our arrival, wasn't it, sir? You are the Earthman, Mutan Mion of Nor, now of Van of Nor? Yes, I know much of you, but I have never had the pleasure of meeting you."

I shook his hand, not minding the implied sarcasm. "Yes, you saved me from a nasty situation. I was captured by the big fellow as I returned from a trip to Earth. We managed to take the ship from his crew just as this fleet showed up to the rendezvous here. We were safe because we still held Sathanas alive, but how to let go—how to get away from that bunch of armored battlewagons, I couldn't figure."

"Well, I guess it's all over now. We have only to take his nibs back to Nor and turn him and his remaining followers in." The young officer's face was greatly relieved that there was no more trouble in this affair for him. But I dashed his hopes.

"That's not entirely true, my friend. A few hours ago he sent my Lady Arl to a place that is called the "Pleasure Science Center." She is to be the victim of a mind degrading operation, and afterward is to be sold as a slave to some commercial pleasure palace of the illegal type. Much of Sathanas' business was of this pandering kind and we are apt to find many a maid of Nor there who has been or will be changed into the sort of animal Sathanas prefers around him. We have no choice, but to attack the place, however far or however strong it may be, according to the oath we swear when we take service under the Nor flag. Remember the words: 'To uphold the honor of Nortan womanhood at the expense even of our life or reason—to risk all dangers for the sake of extending the rule of reason through all space . . .'"

**I** DID not know, Lord Mion. The businesses of Sathanas are much

larger than Sathanas, that I do know. But of the Lady Arl or of any other Nor maidens who are in their hands, I did not know. Where is this place they have sent her? We must prepare an attack, of course, but that is something we must not rush headlong into. We know little about the strength of these illegal cults. They have only been uncovered among the Nor since the exposure of Sathanas."

"There is no time for the usual procedure of preparation for war. They will start work on Arl at once after she arrives. I don't intend to wait for that to happen. I have the position of the place. To get this, I bargained with Sathanas, promising him his life for the information. If he has lied, he dies. He is going to accompany me so that I may read his mind en route and learn all he knows of the thing. Whether or not you and the ships under your command accompany me is up to you or your superior officer at the base. The *Darkome* is under my command and the *Darkome* leaves at once to rescue Arl from the place called the Center of the Science of Pleasure. Its true name is more correctly the Place of Evil Lust, or it should be. Sathanas' ship and his own ugly self are both mine by right of capture, according to the Code of Nor. So, I have two ships to fling at this focus of evil."

"Where is the place?" asked the young commander—young to me, meaning he was but a century or two my junior. He was my senior in the patrol, but I was not under his command. In the Nor Military Organization, a man is responsible only to those officers who are designated over him, that is, I could be overruled by him only after he reported to my superiors.

"It lies on the rim of the light of Fomalhaut, twenty some light years

from this spot. Fomalhaut, itself, can be reached in four days accelerating from the zone of weightlessness between Saturn and Jupiter—in this system, Saturn and Jupiter are the sixth and fifth planets from the Sun, respectively. At steady acceleration, we should reach fourteen hundred light speeds in a few hours. It is unwise to accelerate to a greater rate for such a short trip, so it will take us four days."

"Four days seems like a lot of time for even a short trip like this one," countered the young commander.

"Under normal circumstances, that would be true, but I want to decelerate out of the ultra speeds near the sub-planet Pandral—but, not too near. That's what will take the time."

"Pandral, Lord Mion? I can't recall ever having heard of it before."

"Neither had I until I read Sathanas' mind—but that is where these fiends have taken the Lady Arl—and that's where I am determined to go—alone, if need be."

"You will not have to go alone, Lord Mion—but, first, let us take another look at Sathanas' brain. If the place looks vulnerable, we will chance it. If not, we will report the place—and then scout it for the arrival of a real battle force."

**I** SHOOK the man's hand. He was not over cautious or too subservient to ritual—the only mark of evil that one can find in the clean race of the Nor. He was a man. We set the course at once and blasted off into the ultra speed that is used on such journeys. Some eighty light speeds we attained at one jolt from the center of no-weight between Moon and Earth. I set the pursuit needle to seek out the trail of the ship that had borne Arl away to her 'life of pleasure' as these fiends ironically called con-

demning a human to a mindless life of slavery to evil desire. With another set of blasts from the co-pilot as we passed between Saturn and Jupiter, we attained fourteen hundred light speeds—all that we required.

Then we put the telug on Sathanas' mind and sat down to the job of examining every picture it contained that, in any way, related to our objective and the force that defended its evil existence. There was a great deal to know—to learn, we found. For many centuries, this place—its true name was Pandral—had been in the business of manufacturing and peddling slaves for the Hell-holes of the rims of the Nor Empire. Like every great empire, Nor's sway extended only so far, and where her authority stopped, there lived her parasites, those who pandered to the thoughtless sybarites of the Empire who sought outside Nor what could not be obtained where her law prevailed. The very absoluteness and thoroughness of Nor police work gave them their opportunity, for those thirsts of evil origin could not be quenched in Nor, but those who thirst will drink some way, and so, Normen, themselves, supported their worst enemies—just as they do in less intelligent worlds.

## CHAPTER XI

**P**ANDRAL was a planetoid about two thousand miles in diameter. To the eye, it was a lifeless ball, but so are all Nor planets of planetoids. There is not much use in their concealment, and the modern Nor are dropping the custom, but the ancient custom of concealing all surface work to cut down the value of enemy observation from the exterior still exists, though there are few enemies for Nor to worry over any more. Within, Pandral was an ex-

quisitely designed pleasure palace—all two thousand miles of it—honeycombed with the chambers that the life science of Nor knows so well how to build—honeycombed with the caverns of our Ancient Race as is Mother Mu. Within these vast chambers where all imaginable conditions of life are reproduced, life was studied, not for what value could be made of it, but for what could be made from it for profit—what attractions could be created which the nature of man would be unable to resist. This creation of bait for the sucker was the prime purpose of Pandral's existence. They did not create pleasure for itself; they created lures on which the rich fish would inevitably bite. Once hooked, the fish was exposed to their blackmail which was the source of their profit. He had no way of retaliating for fear of exposure to the Nor police system, and so, Pandral extracted a great part of the income from the pockets of the weaker great of Nor. This process of milking Nor had gone on so long that it was practically taken for granted, as not really evil, but a natural result of the existence of fools with money in their pockets—and no prosperous nation can avoid creating bulging pockets—even those of fools. But, the true evil of Pandral was very carefully hidden beneath a vast network of subtle propaganda and more sinister fear of their strength which kept those mouths closed which might have remedied the evil. This was the cover which hid the business of creating those creatures which Sathanas had so great a taste for—those without minds except in the pursuit of pleasure. Well, be that as it may, we knew what Pandral was, but did nothing about it for the reason that they were very careful about whom they hurt and had so far managed to avoid antagonizing anyone strong enough to trim their spreading power.

It was high time, I realized, that more was known of these dives which grew so prolifically about the far spread boundaries of the Nor Empire. Again I was struck by a thing I can never understand—how can great minds make such fearful mistakes? Here was Nor, with the greatest minds of space at her helm, surrounded by festering evil which she apparently did not even know existed. But, then, did I know those minds I so firmly believed in? No, I only believed in them because I knew a few such minds as the Princess Vanue's. Again, I was struck with my own ignorance in not realizing that even Nor had her ailments, and that this ailment must be chalked up to failure in her upper strata.

**PANDRAL** was well defended, in Sathanas' mind, both by ships and fixed batteries of rays far too powerful for any strength we had on our handful of ships—not quite two hundred powerful battlewagons, true, but no match for the strength we saw built into the stones of Pandral. We could not take the place by storm; we must take it by a stratagem.

I had a ready means of entry in the person of Sathanas who was known there. If I could retain control over him when I got within their ray, that was our problem. It would not be pleasant to be exposed by Sathanas within the power of Pandral's forces, for their fear of Nor would make our demise swift.

Using Sathanas' mind for continual reference, I disguised myself as a certain friend of his, Profir, by name, who had been killed in the action. He was about my size and fair, but we worked on the disguise carefully to make it correspond with Sathanas' mental images. Then, we dressed Sathanas' locks with care, crowning our handiwork with a

golden circlet, studded with gems, within which was a powerful little mental radio which kept the commands from my own telaug imposed upon his thought in such strength that there was no danger of his using his own will. My telaug and control device were concealed in a great metal studded belt I wore, from which hung a flame sword and a powerful disociator pistol ray. More weapons would have disclosed our purpose. I counted on their familiarity with Sathanas. Making up a party of twenty, which was about the number usually in Sathanas' parties on his visits here, we readied the *Satana* for a close look from examining ray. The crew was dressed in the uniforms of the captive crew, and carefully prepared mentally by hypnosis for their part as men whose allegiance was Sathanas'. However, a certain device was readied for general energy flows which would be released by me if at any time I needed their full minds for combat. When everything was ready, the *Satana* shot off to enter the watching ray beams of the pirate stronghold. If all went well, it would be the last time a ship would enter that place of mutilation. No more would minds of immortals be changed into the tools of fools. If I could hit that hole at all, I would not cease until it was a cinder floating in space, empty of life.

THE place we entered had the reputation among those who frequented the illegal dens of the most glamorous and the most dangerous of them all. We entered, the huge form of Sathanas in the lead and myself towering a little higher just behind him. The twenty stout fellows took up positions behind us where any attack could be shot at without interfering with each other. Thus protected at the back, we advanced down the tremendous hall. I

knew that the people who ruled this place would not be glad to see Sathanas, knowing of his flight from the Nor Patrol. It was obvious that they welcomed anyone who was outside the law as a matter of general practice—and so, they could hardly refuse the great Sathanas—one of the biggest gears in this machinery of space-wide vice.

An obsequious female prostrated herself before us.

"My Lords, may I bid you welcome?"

With a sneer, and in his typically ungracious manner, Sathanas spoke:

"We will speak with 'the Boss', My Lord Harald."

It didn't sound like he held much respect or affection for this Harald—the way his voice dripped when he spoke his name. I, meanwhile, held my fingers tightly crossed under my cape, hoping that we were going through the usual Sathanas routine. Otherwise, our little game would soon be terminated—perhaps, fatally.

I sensed that something was going wrong and I'd better find out what it was and soon. I focused my telaug on the poor wretch who now was standing, puzzled before us. In her mind was bewilderment that the great Lord Sathanas hadn't gone at once to the chambers always held in readiness for the master of the *Satana*.

I made Sathanas speak: "Take me and my men to our rooms."

Again that wonder that Sathanas wasn't following his usual practice, but she obeyed.

"Will my Lords follow me," she offered as she led the way out of the hall that we were in.

"Damn!" I thought, "how had I missed that entrance in Sathanas' mind?" I thought that I had covered everything when I read his thoughts about this place. I didn't know—or see

—that he always met the big shot in the same place, in the same rooms.

True, I did know where the rooms were—but I wanted the girl to lead the way. She had wondered about things that, if somebody here in this palace had read in her mind, would have become suspicious. We were in dangerous enough territory without having anything that we could cover give us away. This first step of ours had been a slip. I prayed to the gods of space for no more mistakes—another one might prove fatal.

One thing I knew. If it were usual for Sathanas to meet the Boss of this glorified den in some of the rooms in the immediate vicinity, then I could keep the girl who brought us here with us without arousing any suspicion—keep her here where we could watch that she didn't repeat those thoughts of wonder that could have ruined our little plan.

So, as she showed us in a large chamber off the great hall, I grasped her arm.

"Little Dark Flower, stay with us. We have been far and your smile is pleasant. Will you dance for us?"

THE poor creature looked up into my eyes with her's wet with gratitude that someone had noticed her among all the beautiful women from a score of strange planets. She was a pretty thing, about half my own height, alive with the lush dark beauty of the women from Bohan. Her natural charms had been enhanced and stimulated with the life influence that had been grown in her making her an instrument for men's pleasure.

She couldn't speak for the rare pleasure of being noticed, but I read her thoughts. Again wonder.

'A kind face among Sathanas' friends? Now, perhaps, I shall get a

little stim. Everyone around here is so tight with me. They begrudge even the breath I draw.'

She glanced at me, and at my reassuring nod, she pressed a wall stud that flooded the room with a strong vibrant ray of intense pleasure. Her face relaxed under it like one denied something a long time and then receiving it in abundance . . . something that was like the breath of life itself to her. I realized that stim replaced natural love with these maltreated creatures, that she loved those who gave her stim and had no emotions otherwise. Swiftly she shed her uniform, and donned a few slight spangles from a closet of female trappings in the the wall. Then, adjusting a spot of stim ray, she placed it in my hand, telling me to keep it on her. I turned it up to full power, and her body writhed slowly, hands outstretched, as she warmed herself beautifully at the spot ray in my hands, begged and begged with her motions for a little indulgence, a little kindness. She was a master of the art of expressing her thoughts with her motions, and knowing her thoughts, I interpreted her motions correctly. Well, if I had my way, freedom or death would be her lot before long.

The rest of the party sprawled about the chamber on the rich divans, and bawled at the attendants for drinks and women, just as we had seen Sathanas' followers do in Sathanas' mental images. Soon, they were well supplied with diversion. Before each of them writhed a dancer and on each side of them nestled a beauty amorously inclined. Music was supplied by a half dozen Amero youths, a race whose talent for music is superior to that of most races, and whose talent in other directions is singularly lacking. They are much used in their present capacity—unintrusive musical accompaniment.



THE party was really moving along at a deceptive pace when the gentleman we had come across vast stellar space to see appeared.

A well concealed door at the rear of the chamber that we were in, opened, and, like a huge lumbering mammoth from the swamps of Mu, the Chief himself ambled through. He was dressed as we formerly decked out the mammoths of Mu for the annual games in which the Titans delighted. This portly creature was of some unguessable racial origin—horned like a Titan, but as fat and as ungainly corpulent as a hippopotamus. He was as tall as I am, but I'll wager that he was thrice my weight. The fingers of the fat, pudgy hands swelled around many gaudy rings that his vain nature fancied. Reflecting the falsity and affectation of the many rings were his little gimlet eyes, sparkling with a sickly, unholy gleam through the generous folds of his too pig-like face. Pig eyes with the hidden, treacherous cunning of a fox somehow apparent within them. It had been many a year since I last slaughtered pigs on one of my estates on Mandark—but one look at this—this overstuffed imitation of a man, and my fingers itched to see a blade in my hand spread the fat folds of flesh on that accursed neck and send him to whatever lies beyond . . .

His name I knew from reading the mind of Sathanas. It was, unappropriately enough, Harald. He had no official tie with any government, though there were probably many that would have given a lot to get him if they knew that it was he that was the master mind behind this space-wide slave ring. Here, on this little unsavory ball of matter that polluted the reaches of space, he was known as the "Ruler of Pandral, Sir Harald".

Out of the mouth of Sathanas came

the words that I willed him to say, though I nearly choked on the thought:

"Greetings, Sir Harald," spoke the voice of Sathanas as he stood up and approached the gross body of Harald, now seating himself in the best pile of cushions as gracefully as a space freighter settling to a port with half its lifters gone.

"Ugh . . . ugh . . ." the fat frog croaked.

"Sir Harald," Sathanas continued, "I have several matters that I wish to talk over with your Grace."

"His Grace" paused in his stuffing his fat mouth with some delicacy or another, to deign to raise an eyebrow and question, "Ob . . . yes?"

"The price of the little morsel that I sent you . . . the Lady Arl." I made Sathanas rub his hands as he would have, no doubt, if he were acting on his own volition.

"And the other matters?"

I thought to myself at this, "The old buzzard can talk then, if it interests him."

"The other matter," said Sathanas, answering Harald's question, "is our future plans, now that I am no longer numbered among the pillars of virtue of Nortan society."

AS THE Ruler of Pandral rearranged the folds of his crimson silken garments around him before continuing the talk with me, or as he thought, with Sathanas, Sathanas had to move as my mind ordered. There was this bloated thing before us, a thing that should not be insultingly alive and moving where we could see him.

The other parts of the plan were moving as we had planned. While Sathanas and Harald were talking, the rest of the men were disporting themselves with Harald's slaves. Some of them were feigning drunkenness and

others merely were acting half drunk—making a clumsy attempt to dance and cavort with the girls they had chosen.

Two of the latter, among the biggest in our crew, managed to dance with their prizes behind the spot where sat Sathanas, Harald, and myself, presumably Sathanas' second in command.

So smoothly and quickly that the others in the room weren't aware of what was happening, our two suddenly stopped dancing and in a trice had the obese Harald, as he began to answer me, in their iron embrace, and a circlet exactly like the one encircling Sathanas' head was clapped upon his head. Instantly, he relaxed, his will now was overpowered by a flood of synthetic nerve impulse from a teleradio within the belt of my lieutenant. Sir Harald was now a servant of a brain not his own. No impulse his brain could generate would be powerful enough to overrule the steady flow of power from an instrument ruled by another mind.

"Can you read him?" I asked Tyron, my lieutenant.

"Easily," he answered.

"Ask him what would be the thing he would do ordinarily when he left this apartment, if nothing had occurred."

"He would have gone directly to his own apartments to think over his talk with Sathanas and decide what was best to do. Then he would return to this chamber to tell Sathanas what he had decided."

"Did he ever take Sathanas to these apartments?"

"Never," answered Tyron. This had happened so quickly that only two of the attendant sirens had noticed the brief contact which had resulted in Harald's loss of control. Those were suddenly overcome by a sudden inexplicable drunkenness emanating from a tiny gun in my sleeve. I examined the

rest of the poor fair heads to see if they realized what had occurred, but the only two who had seen were those who were dancing with our two champions who had slipped the circlet on Harald's head.

The situation, Tyron went on to explain, necessitated that we go to Harald's apartments for they were filled with apparatus which controlled the whole stronghold. I thought it best to dismiss the rest of the heterae before they overheard the strong mental conversation we were carrying on without their knowing it.

"We'll have to risk it, whether or not it is the customary thing to do, we're going to his apartments."

**S**ENDING Sathanas and Harald ahead, we strolled out of the chambers. Working the two controls, the obese Harald and Sathanas were engaged in animated conversation, Tryon and I came next. Behind us, the rest of the party casually strolled fanwise as before. After all, Harald had placed himself in our hands. It should not look unusual except to those whom we should meet within the ruler's private nest.

Nothing happened. Step after step, each seeming an age, and still nothing happened. We neared the ornate arch leading to Harald's private sanctum; nothing barred our way, no ray swept over us in revealing inquiry. Would one of their rays reveal the control I held over Harald and Sathanas or would it pass over seeing nothing? The next few minutes would tell. It could be seen by alert men trained in the type of work to which we were accustomed, but did the outlaws have men trained as we were, or were they men who had picked up their training hit or miss? But, these were not the thoughts to think and I brushed them aside and

filled my mind with visions of the choice beauties Harald was to show us for our entertainment during our stay here—of all the varied stim experiences which were to fill my days here—of all the delectable pleasures I was going to sample. With anything but the truth I filled my mind's images.

Then, we were in the luxurious lounges of the rich pirate's suite of rooms. The armed guards looked us over curiously. I made Sathanas talk: "I must see these new mechanisms for the conversion of character you have built. I must see their results in the living person, for I intend to buy a great many of them. I am building anew in a secret place."

My lieutenant made Harald answer: "Yes, you shall see many new things we have devised for the entertainment of the customers or victims, whichever they happen to be. We have created several new character types—several different fixed-idea mentalities which are extremely appealing to the desirous male."

Then it happened. The women there who were Harald's things noticed the circlet. Stupidly they called attention to it, asking among themselves, "What is that new head ornament Harald is wearing? I have never seen it before."

One of the guards heard the women's chatter and glanced at Harald's head. Noting that Sathanas wore the same kind of head circlet, the truth flashed into his mind as he looked at the rest of us and saw the space bronzed iron of the patrol warriors, the sharp, undissipated eyes, the clean, healthy flesh, not one soft, self-indulgent character among them. The incongruity of our health and intent gave us away to the man. He saw it all too plainly.

**I** SHOT him as he raised his voice to shout a warning. In an instant the

rooms filled with a criss-cross of dissonant beams and the long flames of power swords reached at us from the rooms beyond. At the first bolt, we flung ourselves to the floor. The fire lasted but a minute, and the rooms were clear. Several of my men lay dead. As far as I could tell, the guards who had been there were also dead. I raced toward the inner rooms where the banks of control mech lay. I knew the whole stronghold could be ruled from these banks of instruments. I had carefully examined Harald's brain for the methods behind the mech that lay here. I reached the great permalloy door as it was almost swung to, and crashed my shoulder into it. Someone screamed beyond and the door opened. A man of small stature lay sprawled inert across the room where my charge had flung him. There were a half dozen in the room—females—aging creatures, too. Why age? I did not stop to ask, perhaps they were dupes of Harald's who had gained their allegiance with some promise of treatment.

They sat at the great multi-vision screens watching the life of the place for any untoward activity. How they missed our own was easy to explain. One man can't see everything, and we had not given them time to see much. I herded them into a corner and swiftly disarmed them. Now for the last bit of trickery. If it failed, I probably would die here before the place could be taken by the waiting battle fleet. I called Harald and his controller into the room full of mech. Standing him before the multi-screens, Tyron made him give the message we had composed.

"Men, we are going to be inspected by the Nor patrol. Do not be alarmed. Everything is arranged between us and they will merely perform a routine and perfunctory inspection. Be on your guard that nothing happens while the

patrol are about. We have nothing to hide from them. Be sure that nothing goes on while they are here that should be hidden from them. I give you five minutes to make ready for their arrival. Do not fire on the ships. Everything has been arranged between us."

On the screen, a sudden confused scramble marked the attempt to hide in five minutes, the tell-tale traces of illegal activities. I knew that they had been inspected before and would not think another inspection amiss, in spite of the short notice. It would have been unnatural for Harald to fight Nor men, for he could not hope to win in a long struggle. Obviously, he was submitting to a search. They had noted Sathanas' arrival and may have thought Harald had decided to give the Great Sathanas up rather than defend him from pursuit. Whatever they thought, the fleet blazed up to a stop before the landing cradles and settled to a landing.

**I**NTO the great locks trundled the patrol ships, one after the other. I knew that this was unusual in an inspection, as the ships hung outside, and a few officers did the inspecting, but I trusted the bustle of the five minute preparation to conceal the movement of the ships from general notice. The alarmed faces of several of Harald's men announced this unusual feature to Harald's visage on the screens, but Tyron made Harald gesture reassuringly and nothing further happened.

The men dispersed through the great fortress as they had been ordered. After an interval of waiting for all the batteries to be invested, I showed my face on the screen beside Harald's to see if all the batteries had been entered by Normen. They stood in readiness, disblasters in their hands, occupying each great battery of space guns that ordinarily would have made every attempt

at assault useless. A wave of my hand and they arrested every officer of Harald's guard, and disarmed the rest, a Nor man placing himself at every gun. The place was in our hands with not a shot fired since Harald had announced our entry on the screens. Such is subterfuge—a sweet weapon when it works, a deadly one to the user when it fails. In order to use it, we had to place a chunk of our fleet under their guns in complete helplessness. But everything had gone without mishap.

Now to find the Lady Arl before anything more happened to her. Leaving Tyron to run things, I took a dozen men and raced through the endless caverns of Harald's pleasure palace looking for the growth caverns where his creatures were manufactured out of normal flesh and blood.

## CHAPTER XII

**S**ERVANTS of evil men can be fiends. These were. In the growth caverns, many things that no man should see were going on. Little girls were being trained by ro-mech to be faultless dancers — automatons of rhythm. The process was designed to develop those muscles and thoughts needed by a dancer to the exclusion of other growth within her body. To attain this, she was wired to a thought record taken from some famous dancer's brain, and day after day, her little body mechanically repeated the motions and her brain mechanically repeated the thoughts of the dancer until the whole dance became automatism. A thing was produced which would never be human and a thing hard to describe to those who have not seen it.

These creatures were slaves. They had nothing whatever to say about their fate in any way. Much of the treatment was very beneficial; the slavers

adopted the best medical science of the immortal races to gain their own ends. It was the unbalance of the character aimed at by such men as Harald and Sathanas that was evil.

There were hundreds of liquid nutrient tanks in which females of all sizes and races were suspended. Upon their brains telereads played, impressing repeatedly, hypnotic commands as well as the whole gamut of erotic thoughts culled from millions of years of the development of the science of pleasure in just such gilded palaces of slavery. All this was extremely pleasant to the recipient, so much so as to crowd all other tendencies from their minds. They were given such treatment from the earliest childhood, if they fell into the hands of the slavers at that age. They received no other education. Thus, the art of pleasure was burned into their brains until they knew no other objective.

Through every pleasure nerve of the body ran nutrient and growth stimulating flows introduced directly into the nerves by tiny needles. The whole body, immersed in the nutrient liquid, evolved a covering flesh more alive, more soft, more reactive to sensation than is the case in the normally developed human being.

Such women had many men passionately enslaved to them, giving them every penny of their income. All this went directly into the pockets of such as Harald. Naturally, he never released any of these profitable slaves from his bondage.

Thus all the growth and life science of the vast races of immortals was here perverted in this evil world of Pandral to the ends of the master—power and gold. No one but Harald had a will in any matter on all Pandral but for the profit of the master.

The growth rays, if concentrated on those nerves which cause pleasure sen-

sations, can give a person infinitely greater capacity for pleasure than in the normal person. But, when this is done, the ability to resist such pleasure does not grow normally and the creature becomes a servant to the will to pleasure. And, since the greatest pleasure comes from synthetic nerve impulse generators, they become a servant of the machine. While this could be a means of enhancing the joy of life in the proper hands, such men as Harald were certainly not the proper hands.

AT LAST I found and released my beloved. I cannot tell you what had been done to her, but I have hopes of repairing the damage. She would have become a delectable morsel for some mad master, for what had been designed for her was not a choice future.

We herded the heterae, the drunken customers, the whole crew of unnatural servants aboard the captive vessels and dispatched them toward the courts of the Nor Empire. I will be there when their cases come up, and I will have plenty to say. Some of those child victims of this will yet grace Darkome after Vanue's laboratories are through with their reconstruction. Vanue's reward system will shake evil thought out of their beautiful young heads.

I said to Harald: "You think you can pervert the life stream of the race to your own selfish ends. Love is sacred to the Gods. Your manufacture of will-less sirens will not be appreciated by the courts such men hold in Nor for just your kind. It's only by accident that a youngster of my diminutive stature—a mere sixty feet of man—came upon your place in my pursuit of Sathanas. Had one of our leaders chanced upon information leading to this hole, your lot would have been different. Al-

ready, you would have been dealt with. It pays to be virtuous so far as you can imagine virtue, for when one steps off the path, one faces these beings whom no power of our imagination could vision . . . no force we could conjure up would ever overcome, for their life is ages old and has been gaining in strength for all those years. Those who take a whole planet to build one home upon will not allow their laws to be set aside by any pipsqueak who conceives a new way to make money and fails to remember that the race is sacred to the Gods. You have forgotten that though the Gods must of necessity dwell afar, yet, they do not forget their source. Some of the very creatures you have mutilated were kin of such mighty men, and if I had not caught up with you, they would have, and your fate would have been far different from the trial and imprisonment I plan for you."

**H**ARALD made no answer, but only glared at me in furious frustration.

"The great ones always search for the young of the race for better brains to carry out their mighty plans, and they are not pleased with the pollution of the blood that bears their agents. They guard the tree of life, for they have a mighty use for its fruit. Even assuming they were evil, and it is sometimes true that they guard the tree for nothing better than to pick the beautiful fruit—the young females as they mature—still they are not pleased with the malformation—the defiling of the tree that bears their much desired beauties to grace the harems of Gods. Even assuming the Gods themselves had no higher purpose than yourself, would you believe that they would allow you to pollute a tree that produced the

agents of their immortal pleasures? Has it not seemed strangely easy for me to overcome your greater strength? We are probably flooded with the observation and control rays of mightier ones than we can imagine exist. How else could a man take a fortress like this with two simple mental radios and a couple of dis-guns? If you are ever free again, don't forget the Gods. One way to remain alive is to envision the will of the Gods and carry it out as if they were observing you, for sooner or later, they will observe you. Go now, to central Nor and to trial for every ill deed you have worked against the life of Nor-men."

Pandral in the future will be a base for the Nor patrol. It is well suited to the purpose.

Once more I took Sathanas aboard the *Satana*. I instructed the four Aesir in the mind reading apparatus until I felt sure that nothing Sathanas knew would be lost to them. Then setting them on their course for Earth, I abandoned them to their pursuit of knowledge they would get from Sathanas. The arch-fiend was immobilized by a nerve operation I performed. There is little danger that he will get out of hand on Earth before the Aesir have used him for the purpose to which I dedicated the rest of his misused life. He will serve as a map and a guide to the operations of the ships the Aesir will need for a migration to the dark spaces beyond the deathly light of any sun. And when the Aesir soar at last into the starless dark, Sathanas will lie in chains in one of the deepest pits of the forgotten cities beneath the Earth's crust. May he lie there forever.

. . . and Satan did lie there forever, as Dante tells us, but he succeeded in being a curse to man in spite of his chains.

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**NEXT MONTH—A NEW NOVEL BY LEROY YERXA**

# AIR MAIL WITHOUT PLANES

So you think air mail is modern? Well how about Chang Kuei-Ling's service in the 7th century?

**T**ODAY millions of letters make their way to every corner of the globe through the air. The service is conveniently within the reach of every purse, and has lost the novelty it enjoyed but a few years ago. But air-mail, as such, is not a new thing. For hundreds of years, the Orient has made use of another form of air transportation, the pigeon, and has carried on an amazing volume of commercial and private correspondence. No other section of the world has made as extensive a use of pigeons as the people of China, Persia, India, and the Near East.

Chang Kuei-Ling a statesman and poet who lived during the 7th and 8th centuries, has gone down in history as the very first Chinese to train and utilize the wonderful talents of the carrier pigeon. He carried on a wide correspondence with his relatives by means of his private flock which he chose to call his "flying slaves." In China the government failed to see the great advantage the birds had over land couriers, but the practice spread rapidly among the civilian population. Pigeons were of great service to merchants in announcing the arrival of certain cargoes and the ruling prices of the markets.

In Persia and in India, this form of air-mail must have been in use during very ancient times, for many legends have come down to us describing the feats of birds in delivering private love-messages, and messages of military importance as well. During the battles of the Mongols, these swift birds kept the besieged city of Mosul in touch with the outside world. And in Greece we learn that the results of the Olympic games were often sent to the far-corners of the civilized world by air-mail.

Ancient Egypt leaves no trace of information which might lead modern historians to believe that pigeons were trained and used to carry messages. But in the empire of the Caliphs and under the Mohammedan dynasties in Egypt, the use of pigeon messengers reached the very highest stage of its development. The whole procedure was organized and systematized on a scientific basis. Caliph Harun al-Raschid kept many pigeons as special pets, and during times of distress when the birds were able to prove their true value, he was heard to exclaim that they were dearer to him than any of his sons. Air-mail became a general institution and the business of raising pigeons became a very profitable one. A thousand gold pieces was often paid for one well-trained pair. Seven hundred gold pieces was considered a fair price for a good pigeon, and an egg of such a bird sold for as high as twenty gold pieces. Pigeon breeders kept the genealogies of renowned pigeons in

special registers.

Organized on a nation-wide basis, Baghdad, city of mystery and intrigue, became the central station of the air-mail and remained so until it was conquered by the Mongols in 1258.

The first example of parcel post by air mail was the result of a royal whim, and stands alone as the most curious incident in the history of the use of the pigeon as a mail carrier. The Caliph Asiz, in the late 10th century, suddenly developed a great desire for a dish of cherries. As he was at Calro at the time, and the cherries were at Balbek; a transportation problem had to be solved. Six hundred pigeons were accordingly dispatched and each carried a small silk bag containing a single cherry. The mission was successfully completed, and the Caliph was satisfied.

Early travelers, missionaries and tradesmen, marveled at the deeds of these birds and brought home tales of them to the heads of great European governments. But it was not until the middle ages when the crusades were in full swing that the people of Europe could see the birds in action. It was not until the beginning of the 19th century that the pigeon-mail was put into widespread use on the Continent, however. The Rothschilds of London had agents with the army of Napoleon who kept him informed of his movements and the news of the war by air-mail. In the organization of modern press and news services, the pigeon played a vital role. Newspaper reporters used to carry pigeon cages to public meetings from which they sent reports immediately to their papers.

With the development of the system of micro-photography the possibilities of pigeon-mail were multiplied a thousand-fold. But it was at this point that science intervened with the air machine, and although it did not render the carrier pigeon completely useless, the bird's use is confined primarily to the field of battle. In warfare the service of pigeons will always remain indispensable. Pigeons can go where telephone lines and wireless communication has not been set up, they are not disturbed by heavy bombardment, bad weather conditions, smoke or dust, and will work regularly under almost any conditions.

The possibilities of shipment by air are not fully realized as yet, and may not be in our own time. We read of tons of freight moving swiftly through the clouds, perishable foods refrigerated by the cold upper air currents, and the trebling of known air speeds. These new developments are a far cry from the pigeon's minute efforts to establish and maintain early lines of communication through the air.

H. R. Stanton



# Haunted Metropolis

By Chester S. Geier

**City One was haunted! Nothing to get really excited about, you say? But these ghosts scared even Death!**

**W**ARING leaned abruptly forward at his desk. "What are you talking about, Prentis?" he demanded. "Are you trying to tell me that City One is haunted?"

Buck Prentis inclined his shock of red hair slowly. He twisted nervously

at the brim of his uniformed cap, glancing about the office with apprehensive eyes. The afternoon light of Sirius which poured in through the windows gave a fantastic quality to his behavior. One just didn't expect a rocket pilot—and a red-headed one at that—to show





There in the darkness rose ghostly figures

nerves in broad daylight.

Waring eased back into his chair. "You must be developing a case of flight jitters, Prentis. After all, this is the 27th Century. Superstition died out long ago."

Prentis' face set stubbornly. "Maybe so. But this is an alien world. Who can be sure that there aren't . . . things in the deserted cities here on Faltronia that—well, didn't stay dead? I tell you, sir, if you had seen those strange lights—"

"You mentioned the lights," Waring said. "Are you the only one who has seen them?"

"I'm not the only one, sir. Other night-flight pilots have reported them."

"They have, eh?" Waring became thoughtful. He reached out to finger abstractedly the metal nameplate which stood on his desk. Block letters bore the legend: "Lon Waring. Chief of Police, City One." Aware suddenly of what he was doing, he pulled his hand away. Lines of bitterness momentarily appeared in his face. He returned his gaze to Prentis, asked:

"Can you describe the lights?"

"I sure can. Some of them are like little balls of fire floating through the streets. Sort of white in color. Then there are others that come and go real fast—like tiny flashes of green and yellow lightning. And a few buildings were lighted, as if someone—or something—were inside them."

"How long has this been going on, Prentis?"

"A little over a week, sir."

"You and the others saw no lights previous to that time?"

Prentis shook his head.

"Where do the lights appear?" Waring asked with growing interest. "That is, in all the uninhabited sections of the city, or just in certain parts?"

"Just in East Section, sir. All the

way down at the far end, near the lake."

"I see." Waring meditatively rubbed the back of a hand across his jaw. "Well, thanks for this information, Prentis. I'll see that an investigation is made. Might be that a gang of pirates have chosen East Section for a hideout."

"Maybe it isn't pirates, sir," Prentis blurted. "Maybe it's something that isn't—human."

"Ghosts?" Waring suggested with a faint grin.

"That would be a good guess." Prentis raised an arm in a jerky salute, turned, and left the office.

FOR some seconds Waring sat quietly, gray eyes squinting with thought. Finally he rose from the chair and limped to the televideo set built into the wall behind his desk. He punched out a call number on the activator studs. Lights whirled kaleidoscopically in the viewscreen, coalesced into an image. Waring gazed at the round, ruddy features of Tom Stevens, president of Inter-Faltronia Rocket Lines.

"Hello there, Lon," Stevens greeted with characteristic joviality. "Anything I can do?"

"Sort of," Waring replied. "Look, Tom, one of your pilots, Buck Prentis, dropped in to see me with a rather screwy yarn. Seems that he and other night-flight pilots have been seeing strange lights in East Section. Know anything about this?"

Stevens nodded with sudden solemnity. "My boys seem pretty worked up about those light. They claim that the city is—ah—haunted."

"Think it could be just a hoax?" Waring asked.

"I don't think so. I know my boys pretty well—and they're serious about this matter, Lon. Dead serious."

"What are your opinions?"

Stevens hesitated. His plump fea-

tures registered an expression of discomfort. "Well . . . those lights are queer. It seems doubtful that they could be due to human agency, because you know how people shun the deserted section of the city at night."

"Your pilots seem to have infected you with their supernatural fears," Waring commented. "Why don't you admit that ghosts are responsible for the lights and be done with it?"

Stevens flushed. "That may not be as far-fetched as it appears. Lon, I tell you I've been doing some serious thinking about this matter. Look here—the original inhabitants of this city were alien. Get that? *Alien*. Can you say for sure that death is the same for all races of people?"

Waring shrugged. "That's open to metaphysical debate. But remember, this mysterious light business started just a little over a week ago. If the shades of the Aliens are haunting East Section, they've waited a mighty long time to do it. No—I'm sure we'll find something entirely natural and logical to account for the lights."

"I hope so," Stevens muttered.

Waring broke contact. His gray eyes darkening with thought, he limped slowly over to the windows. He gazed at the weird outlines of City One, limned against the blue-green sky of Faltronia.

Somehow, even with the light of Sirius warm upon him, it didn't seem so incredible that men of the 27th Century could believe in the possibility of a city being haunted by the spirits of an alien race. Civilization, he knew, was a veneer which on most people was easily scratched. And moreover life in City One was sufficient to render susceptible to superstitious fears and beliefs even the most thick-skinned.

City One seemed to exude an almost tangible atmosphere of the strange and grotesque. The architecture was bi-

zarre, unearthly, bewildering in its amount of ornamental detail. The buildings were predominantly squat and massive, occasionally domed, but most often crowned by soaring towers and spires with an effect suggestive of the Gothic cathedrals of the Middle Ages of Terra. But now they were dark and silent, brooding, their countless windows like dead, staring eyes. An air of desertion and neglect hung over the city. Only the wind moved in the utter stillness, whispering like voices from beyond.

THE first interstellar explorers, crossing extraplanetary space by means of the Hyperspace Drive, had reached the four planets of the Sirian System a little over thirty years before. On the second planet, which they had called Faltronia because of its vast deposits of the mineral of the same name, they had found six cities—each silent and deserted. Not a trace remained of their former inhabitants, nor had any indication been found of what had happened to them. They had simply vanished from the surface of Faltronia, leaving the great cities behind.

With commercialization of the Hyperspace Drive had begun the migration of colonists to the habitable planets of the nearer stars. Faltronia, because of its great cities and vital resources, had at first been a popular settling place. The machinery, tools, and furniture found in the cities were easily put into use, for the Aliens had been humanoid, not greatly different in bodily structure than men. Paintings and sculptures showed them to have been some seven feet in height, slender, with large domed heads and long, prehensile fingers and toes.

But despite the fact that it contained wealth in many forms, the majority of colonists had not remained on Fal-

tronia. The brooding silence and un-earthliness of the deserted cities had grown upon them to the extent where leaving was the only relief. Now the six cities totalled little more than ten thousand people each, tiny islands of humanity in the vast sea of buildings all about them.

Looking now at the awesome vista of buildings before him, Waring felt a touch of sadness. Faltronia, he realized, had potentialities for becoming a center of culture second only to Terra itself. Everything needed for a mighty planetary state was there, but the glories which should have been showed no evidence of materializing. Faltronia was like a gigantic torch which the flame of Terran civilization had touched, but which it had failed as yet to ignite. Waring wondered if the torch would ever be ignited.

Abruptly he shrugged. What did he care? He reminded himself that he hated Faltronia. He reminded himself, too, that he loathed his petty desk job as Chief of Police of City One.

Waring heard the door of his office open behind him. He turned as a girl strode into the room. With something that was deeper and more poignant than mere apprehension, his eyes probed into hers. The bitter lines deepened in his face as he saw just what he had feared he would see. There was pity in those blue eyes lifted to his. Pity for him.

Waring turned away. Resentment ate like an acid inside him.

"It's past quitting time, Lon," Sally Rhodes said. Her voice was gentle, oddly patient.

Waring did not turn. "I'm staying awhile," he said gruffly. "I've got a little work to do."

Sally Rhodes looked down at her hands. Her small mouth twisted. After a moment she looked up. Pain had

replaced the pity in her blue eyes.

"You're avoiding me, aren't you, Lon?" she asked. "What's wrong?"

Waring whirled, the words of explanation leaping hotly to his lips. The next instant he checked himself. His broad shoulders slumped with futility. What good would it do? How could he tell her he couldn't bear the pity which shone always in her gaze when she looked at him? How could he tell her he was too proud to accept her sympathy? Explanations would change nothing. She might try to mask her pity, but he knew it would still be there.

"Nothing is wrong," he said.

SALLY straightened with purpose. "Then look, Lon, I've been on Faltronia a whole month now, and I've seen nothing as yet of City One." Her voice quickened. "I'd particularly like to see East Section. I've heard the buildings there are beautiful. Lon—wouldn't you care to take me there? It's still two hours before dark, and we wouldn't have to go very far."

Waring shook his head wearily. "I've just received some strange reports on East Section. Until these are investigated, I think it would be best to keep away from that part of the city."

"Evasions!" Sally blazed abruptly. "That's all I've had from you since I arrived. Lon, I came here to serve as your secretary, because I thought I could help you—make things a little easier. But you've made it very difficult for me—and I've had enough."

"That wasn't an evasion," Waring insisted patiently. "It's true, Sally. I'm sorry."

"Well, I don't care! I've reached the point where I'd almost welcome getting my neck broken. Dean Haslip offered to take me out to East Section, but I thought I'd ask you first. Since you're so very busy, I'm going with

Dean." Sally strode angrily to the door, and it slammed behind her.

Waring hesitated as he debated going after her. Then he shrugged tiredly. Argument would avail nothing. Sally refused to see the danger. He knew she would interpret his protests on the basis that he didn't want her to have any fun—that he was jealous of Haslip. And, anyway, Waring thought, Sally would be safe enough if she returned before dark.

Waring's thoughts refused to struggle further against the bitterness which rose up within him. He limped back to his desk, slumped listlessly into the chair. "A cripple!" he whispered. "A cripple good only for a desk job. Of all the people in the System, why did it have to happen to me?"

He buried his face in his hands. He did not know how much later it was when the buzzer of the televideo sounded behind him.

Waring pulled himself to his feet. It was almost dark. Sirius was setting behind distant towers on the horizon.

He touched a switch and the office became lighted. Then he turned to the televideo set, flicked it on.

The features of a man took shape on the viewscreen. Waring recognized him as Dr. Wal Harding of City One Hospital. Dr. Harding looked pale and shaken.

"Waring—thank the powers!" Harding gasped. "I've been looking all over for you. Glad you were still at your office."

"What in space is wrong?" Waring demanded, alarmed at the other's appearance.

"Plenty! Waring, there's something in East Section—something that practically wiped out an archaeological party an hour ago!"

Waring was stunned. "How did you learn of this?"

"Through the guide of the party. He was brought here, to the hospital—a first aid case. From what I've pieced together of his story, he was waiting in the car for the archaeologists. It was growing dark, and they were preparing to return. Then lights of some kind appeared, attacked the party. The guide saw them wiped out—four men and two women." Harding licked his lips. He went on:

"The guide was the only one who managed to get away. He was horribly burned, but I'm sure he'll recover—though I doubt if his mind will ever be the same again. Waring, he raved about ghosts! Ghosts of the Aliens!"

The significance of Harding's last words penetrated only dimly into Waring's mind. One thought rose with livid prominence from his horror.

Sally! Sally had gone to East Section!

## CHAPTER II

### Terror in East Section

FOR a moment Waring stood as though frozen, thought and motion congealed by an overwhelming dismay. Then flaming cross-currents of apprehension and remorse seared through him. With harsh clarity, he realized how his pride and stubbornness had exposed Sally to terrible danger. Even as he stood here now, it might be too late.

An urgent sense of need for action took hold of him. His anxious mind quested desperately for some plan.

No time could be wasted, he knew. Whatever he did would have to be done at once. He rejected immediately the idea of calling out the tiny police force of City One to aid him. Widely dispersed at points about the city, precious minutes would be lost in assem-

bling them. #

In a flash of decision, Waring knew what he must do. He was going after Sally alone.

With a curt nod to Harding, Waring flicked off the televideo set. He whirled back to his desk, movements swift and purposeful. From a drawer, he pulled a huge, service model blast-gun. Then, snatching up an atomo-flash, he limped quickly from the room.

An elevator took Waring down to the garage where he kept his rocket car. It was a sleek, speedy job, capable of traveling well over 400 miles an hour. He slipped behind the controls and with a roar of the drive rockets, started off.

Waring knew sightseers almost invariably took a certain route to East Section. This was a vast boulevard which ran straight as a rule through the heart of the district, terminating at the lake. It was chosen chiefly because it afforded scenic vistas of awe-inspiring splendor. Waring felt certain that Sally and Dean Haslip had chosen the boulevard.

He fretted impatiently as he inched his car through the traffic of the inhabited section of the city. Then, after aeons it seemed, he reached the outskirts of the deserted portion. He pressed his foot down upon the accelerator, while the rockets roared in a rising crescendo of power.

The discs of Sirius was almost gone behind the towers on the horizon. Waring knew it would soon be dark. Night came suddenly on Faltronia, in almost the same way the flick of a switch darkens a lighted room. In anticipation of this, he turned on the headlights of his car.

Waring turned down the boulevard, and now the accelerator went down as far as it would go. The car leaped like a spurred horse, rockets thundering.

Building after giant building rushed

past, blurred with speed. In the gathering gloom they were gray and featureless, for all the world like huge tombstones in a Titan graveyard.

**T**HERE was something hypnotic about the steady drumming of the drive rockets. Without his quite being aware of it, a portion of Waring's mind detached itself from the operation of the car. The thoughts thus disassociated went back to that fatal day on Terra—the day on which, in Waring's opinion, his world had literally ended.

The accident. . . . Just two years ago—two years that were like two centuries.

He had come to Terra on leave . . . Captain Lon Waring of the Inter-stellar Rangers, very straight and trim in his green and gold uniform. On his breast he had worn the distinguished service ribbon of the Rangers, awarded him for his work in exposing the leaders of a pirate ring which for several years had terrorized shipping from Pluto clear out to Alpha Centauri.

He remembered the impatience which had burned within him. He hadn't seen Sally for over a year while engaged in that deadly game of plot and counter-plot which had led eventually to the downfall of the piracy ring. He had ached for sight of her blue eyes and the brown hair that clustered in soft, thick curls about her shoulders. Almost like hunger had been the desire to see her smile again, hear the silver tinkling of her laughter.

He had urged the driver of the air taxi to greater and greater speed. Faster, man, faster! And the driver, eager to please a representative of the Rangers, had complied.

Waring could not remember exactly how the accident had happened. The scream of braking air-flaps had given only an instant's warning. The next

thing he had known, a lumbering air van went hurtling toward his taxi. He had felt a split-second rush of horror—then had come blackness, utter and complete.

When he had finally left the hospital, he had found himself with a lame leg. Though the doctors had performed a miracle in patching him up, they hadn't possessed the divine powers necessary to restore him entirely. No longer having the complete fitness of body essential to continued duty in the Rangers, he had been retired, and sympathetic officials had offered him the position as Chief of Police of City One on Faltonia.

A desk job. . . . To Waring, after his active and adventurous life in the Rangers, nothing could have been more distasteful. But because it would take him far from the pity he was too proud to tolerate, he had accepted.

Three months after he had been on Faltonia, Sally had come to join him, having managed somehow to secure a position as his secretary. Waring had been dismayed rather than glad, for he had become so steeped in bitterness that he could not bear sight of anyone connected with his former life. Especially Sally, whom he had been trying rigorously to exclude from his thoughts. He had convinced himself that he was a cripple good only for a desk job—no longer worthy of Sally.

And the expression of shock and commiseration which had come over her face when she had first seen him hadn't helped the situation any. If her appearance on Faltonia had enclosed him within a shell of resentment, that harsh reminder of her pity had hardened it beyond all hope of cracking.

LIFE for him had settled down to a maddening routine of avoiding Sally, avoiding that look of pity in her

eyes. A daily shame had grown within him that she should be present to witness the futility of his existence on Faltonia; that she should see how petty and insane were the duties which he carried out under the august title of Chief of Police of City One. Almost he had come to hate her that she should know.

But now that Sally had been exposed to danger, he realized that his feelings for her hadn't changed. He still loved her the way Captain Waring in his green and gold uniform had loved that girl with the blue eyes and the soft brown hair.

The knowledge hurt within him. Even if he found her now—as he desperately hoped—nothing would be changed. He would still be Chief of Police of City One, embittered, futile, without purpose or hope.

Waring forced his aching thoughts aside. He saw now that the headlights of his car pierced through the darkness of night. He cut speed, peering about him. Certain familiar details of the surrounding buildings became apparent. He was in East Section.

Waring cruised along slowly, the drive rockets reduced to a throbbing murmur. With intently narrowed eyes, he searched for the spurts of flame which would indicate Dean Haslip's rocket car. Down the length of the boulevard he probed, scanning each branching avenue he passed.

Minute after slow minute dragged away. The boulevard seemed to unroll endlessly into the night. The darkness closed over him like a shroud, menacing, alien.

Almost Waring was becoming prepared to give up his quest in despair. And then his tired eyes caught a faint flicker of light far up the boulevard. Heart leaping with hope, he sent the rocket car thundering forward.

At about the spot where he judged

having seen the light, he slowed. Eagerly, he searched the darkness for some further sign.

And then—far up an avenue that branched off at right angles to the boulevard—he glimpsed a bobbing cluster of lights. As he stared at them, a scream reached his ears. It was a human scream. A girl's scream. And it was familiar—filled with terror.

Sally! The lights had Sally!

Waring jerked at the wheel of the car, sent it hurtling forward with reckless speed. The cluster of lights separated, grew. And then Waring saw that the lights were not mysterious entities at all. They were torches. Torches held in the hands of—

He gasped in disbelief. It was incredible, impossible—but he found himself gazing at tall, spindling monstrosities whose great domed heads swayed on wrist-thin necks. Involuntarily, he braked the car.

The Aliens! Prentis and Stevens had been right, then. For these apparitions could be nothing more nor less than ghosts!

For seconds the chill of the unknown held Waring motionless. Then he remembered that, ghosts or not, these things had Sally. The thought spurred him into abrupt action. Gripping his blast-gun, he leaped from the car.

The spectres watched him with great glowing eyes. Waring noticed that those nearest him held strange cylindrical weapons like oversized, ancient flashlights.

It happened with stunning rapidity. There was a sudden, shrill command. Simultaneously, the things raised their cylindrical weapons. Pale yellow rays stabbed out at Waring.

Agonizing pain gripped his body. His muscles seemed to turn to jelly. Then blackness flooded through and over him like an ebony cloud.

### Chapter III

#### Ghosts of Fallonia

WARING struggled back to consciousness slowly like one swimming up through dark ocean depths to sunlight. He became aware gradually that someone was shaking him. He opened his eyes, found himself looking at the anxious, tear-streaked face of Sally Rhodes.

Sight of her brought him to completely. Wonder flaming within him, he pulled himself erect.

He saw that they were in a small, luxuriously furnished room, lighted by what seemed to be a great many-faceted jewel hanging from the ceiling. Exquisite tapestries covered the walls, and there were carven tables and deeply upholstered couches. Waring saw it was one of these latter that he occupied.

"Lon—are you all right?" Sally asked urgently.

He nodded slowly, staring at her. Knowledge that he and Sally had not been harmed had come as a shock. But where were they? What was to become of them? And—Waring glanced about the room, struck by a sudden thought.

"Where's Dear Haslip?" he questioned.

Sally looked away, biting her lip. "He . . . he's dead, Lon. They killed him."

Waring sucked in a breath. "How did it happen?"

"Dean and I had gone as far as the lake and were on our way back when the car suddenly stopped. It had run out of fuel. Dean had forgot to check the car over before we started. As we sat there in the car, wondering how we were going to get back, lights appeared all around us. We saw . . . the ghosts. Dean fired at them—and they killed him. There was a flash of green light



from something one of the Ghosts held, and Dean vanished." Sally covered her face as though trying to shut the scene from her mind. She went on:

"Then a second group of Ghosts appeared and drove off the first group. I guess the fight was too much for me—I fainted. When I woke up again, I found myself being carried by the Ghosts. It was then that I screamed. And then you came, Lon. Were you looking for me?"

Waring nodded and recounted the incident which had led to his search. He finished, "It was your scream that led me to you. I didn't get a chance to fire, as did Haslip, but even so my intentions must have been plain. I don't know why I wasn't killed."

"I think I know why," Sally said thoughtfully. "We're captives of the second group which took me away from the first. It was the first group of Ghosts that killed Dean. For some reason, the second group is opposed to the first and didn't want us killed."

**WARING** shook his head in bewilderment. "This Ghost business doesn't make sense to me. When the first explorers landed on Faltronia they found no trace of the Aliens. Neither did the colonists, who have lived in their cities for twenty years. Then where in the world have the Aliens come from? Are they actually ghosts?"

"I wish I were certain about that myself," Sally rejoined. "But I do know that they carried me, and . . . well, I doubt if ghosts could do that."

"Anyway, know where we are?"

Sally shook her head. "No, Lon, I fainted again after they turned that ray on you. I . . . I thought you were dead."

"I see." Waring glanced down at his hands and was silent.

"Look here, Lon, in spite of what

happens I want to know one thing," Sally said abruptly. "You *have* been avoiding me since I came to Faltronia, haven't you?"

Waring nodded reluctantly. "I'm afraid so, Sally. I'm sorry."

"And why, Lon?"

"I'd rather not tell you. It's psychological stuff that isn't good to hear."

"But you *must* tell me. We've got to have this out once and for all. Especially now, before . . . before—"

"I know," Waring said gently. "Well, I'll tell you, then." His voice low and faltering in the deep silence of that bizarrely exotic room, he told her what the accident had done to his pride and his hopes. He told her—with a superb effort of will—how the pity in her eyes had blighted his love. And he told her how his inconsequential desk job as Chief of Police of City One had embittered him.

There was no longer pity in Sally's blue eyes, only an aching sadness. "Why didn't you tell me this before, Lon? Can't you see how our present position could have been avoided? And couldn't you have guessed that my pity wasn't at all for what had happened to your body, but for what had happened to your mind? Didn't you realize I knew about your hopes and ambitions after you talked about them so much?"

"I guess I was a fool," Waring muttered. "A blind fool."

"But perhaps it isn't too late," Sally went on quickly. "If the fact that we're still alive in any indication, perhaps the Ghosts will let us go. Perhaps they don't intend to harm us."

"That would be a miracle," Waring said. He made a gesture of sudden hopelessness. "But, Sally, even if they did let us go, don't you see it would change nothing? I would still be Chief of Police of City One—a dummy with a title, tied down to a job with utterly no

future. How could I make you happy? How could I expect you to spend the rest of your life with me in a dreary place like City One?"

Sally's lips twisted in a wan smile. "A woman will bear anything for her man if necessary," she reminded gently.

Waring could find nothing to say—nor was it required, for abruptly she was in his arms, and he knew he could never let her go. Almost he was glad that events, regardless of their peril, had led to this reconciliation.

**A** CLICKING sound broke the silence of the room. Waring glanced at Sally with sudden tenseness. A moment later a tapestry adorning the wall was pulled aside by someone or something behind it. A square, door-like opening was revealed. And then, through this, two grotesque spindling Ghosts strode into the room. Between them they pushed forward a weirdly intricate machine mounted on rollers. Several guards showed in the doorway, cylindrical weapons held at the ready.

Waring stared at the machine, his mind racing with grim speculation. There seemed to be a glittering deadliness about the complex device. He wondered if it was some kind of scientific torture apparatus.

He felt Sally grip his arm with feartaut fingers. Together they waited for what was to occur.

For long minutes the two nearest Aliens busied themselves over the machine, adjusting various strange switches and dials. And watching them, Waring decided that these beings were not ghosts. They were every bit as solid and substantial as himself. He felt the mystery of their reappearance on Faltronia grow within him.

Finally one of the two Aliens placed a web-like wire helmet upon his domed head. Waring noticed that this indi-

vidual was more elaborately dressed than the others. His metallic-gleaming robe shone with rich color, and the heavy belt which bound his waist glittered with jewels. Waring guessed the Alien to be a leader of some kind.

The Alien held out a second helmet to Waring—and incredibly he smiled. Or at least Waring interpreted the grimace which passed over his strange features as a smile. Waring hesitated, wondering what purpose lay behind the proceedings. Whatever it was, it seemed clear that no harm was intended.

Waring shrugged and accepted the helmet. It was too large, but he found, by placing it at a rakish angle, that it wouldn't slide down over his ears. He waited tensely for what was to happen next.

There was a sudden hum from the machine. Lights flamed and glowed within its intricate workings. Waring winced as a stab of pain lanced suddenly through his head. But it was gone as swiftly as it had come. Following it now came an inchoate stirring within his brain, a nebulous feeling which was more mental than physical. It strengthened, became a current that rushed along faster and faster, carrying his thoughts before it, leaving his mind dazed and numb as though before the onslaught of some unimaginable force.

Afterward Waring could never recall how long it was he stood there with that web-like affair of metal atop his head. It might have been seconds or years. All he could remember was an interval of the strangest blankness, a kind of awake unconsciousness, during which he had the puzzling impression that his mind was something being—*filled*.

And then it was over. Waring felt a touch upon his arm. The helmet was lifted from his head. Awareness rushed

back to him, as though he were awakening from slumber.

"Lon—look at me!" a frightened voice demanded. "Are you all right?"

"Why, of course," Waring answered. He grinned at Sally's worried expression.

Sally's blue eyes cleared with relief. "I . . . I was frightened for a moment. You looked like a statue, Lon. I thought—"

"Its' all right now," Waring assured her. He did not know what was all right beyond the fact that his trial with the machine seemed to be over. The two Aliens were bent over the device. Waring stared as he saw that it was now blackened and fused. Had something gone wrong?

THE leader straightened, his metallic robe shimmering with the same gorgeous play of color given off by a film of oil on water. He noted the direction of Waring's wondering gaze.

"The educator is ruined," the Alien explained. "It is to be expected, however, for its mechanism had deteriorated through the years?"

Waring stiffened in stunned surprise. He had understood every word spoken to him!

The Alien smiled. "You are amazed, no doubt, at what has been accomplished. By means of the educator we have impressed upon your mind a thorough knowledge of the Drurian tongue. You should now be able to converse with us quite easily."

Waring nodded slowly, dazed by the revelation. He felt a touch upon his arm. He turned to find Sally gazing at him in perplexity.

"Lon, what did he do?" she asked. "Can you . . . understand him?"

Waring explained briefly the new ability given him by the machine. Sally looked disappointed at having been left

out.

"I am 'sorry we could not have included the young lady also," the leader of the Aliens said. "Educator machines, because of their delicate construction, wear out very quickly. This one was the last we had. And as the skilled technicians who constructed them are gone, I'm afraid you will be the only member of your race able to communicate with us." The Alien abruptly became grim and purposeful. Some gnawing fear, hitherto concealed, now seemed to leap out all over him.

"But enough of this. Our lives are a matter of time—and that is growing very short. First of all, I want you to understand that I am your friend, and that no harm shall befall you while you are in my hands. Now—listen closely to what I have to say.

"There are two political groups here in Cirron, capitol city of Drur. One is led by myself—Grevellon, Chief Co-ordinator—and the other by Varranagh, the rebel. Varranagh seeks to destroy my group so that he may set himself up as overlord of Drur. And I assure you he has the means within his power to do so.

"Most important to you, however, is the fact that Varranagh is not only my enemy, but the enemy also of your people. Through the medium of prisoners, I have learned it is Varranagh's intention to exterminate every member of your race here upon Drur. He is cruel, ruthless, utterly without conscience or scruple. He desires his power to be supreme, his authority absolutely unquestioned. Moreover, he is too selfish to share the wealth of Drur with beings of another race. Thus, even though he may not triumph entirely in the end, he can, however, cause the extermination both of my followers and of your people here on Drur." Grevellon's large eyes burned with urgency.

"I had you brought here for two reasons—first that you may warn your people of the danger which confronts them; and the second that you may organize forces to aid me against Varranagh. I am desperately in need of help. My followers have been depleted to the extent where now their sole effectiveness is in guerilla warfare. It was a small band of such fighters that rescued you and the girl from Varranagh's henchmen. I regret they arrived too late to save the other being of your kind also. There is no telling how many of your people Varranagh may not have killed already in his mad plan of extermination." Grevellon turned toward the doorway.

"Now follow me quickly. I will lead you from the building and to your vehicle that you may warn your people and prepare against Varranagh. There is not a moment to lose."

Waring nodded and took Sally's arm. "Come on—we're getting out of here. I'll explain everything later."

There came an abrupt flurry of sound and motion. A Drurian hurst into the room.

"The rebel, sir!" he gasped. "Varranagh has broken into the building. His men are advancing through every corridor!"

Grevellon's stalk-like body sagged in despair. "Too late!" he groaned. "We're trapped!"

#### CHAPTER IV

##### Desperate Venture

WARING felt hopeless, completely out of his element. Within him still was the old courage and cunning which had pulled him through many a hopeless situation during his service in the Interstellar Rangers. But he did not know the various details necessary

upon which to have a course of action. He was ignorant both of the location of the building and its architectural plan, information which might have enabled him to suggest strategic places of defense or retreat. Neither did he know the extent of the opposing rebel forces, or the kind of weapons they used.

Yet he felt a compelling need for action which quickly dominated his first feeling of inadequacy. He turned to Grevellon.

"Is there any means of exit by which we could retreat from the building?" he queried swiftly.

The Drurian shook his domed head. "None, I am afraid. We are within the Crypts of Sleep, deep beneath this building which we call the Fort of Sleep. We Drurians did not vanish from the face of the planet as your people must have thought when finding our deserted cities. You see, a terrible sickness which we called the Sneezing Death had stricken Drur. Our people were decimated so rapidly that we feared the extinction of our race. The only way for those remaining to survive was by having themselves placed in suspended animation within specially constructed underground rooms until such time as the Sneezing Death had died out for lack of further victims. The buildings chosen for this purpose were called Forts of Sleep. There is one such in each city. We of this Fort have just lately awakened."

"But what about the Drurians in the other five cities?" Waring wanted to know. "Have they awakened also?"

"Not yet," Grevellon replied. "The controls of the sleep cabinets were timed to that we of this city should awaken before the others. We were then to determine whether or not the Sneezing Death was still present above us. If so, we were to return to suspended animation; if not, we were to

awaken the others in the remaining cities. We have determined, however, that all danger of the Sneezing Death has gone. Yet I have hesitated to pull the master switch which would awaken my people in the other cities for the reason that Varranagh's revolution would spread there also."

Waring was astonished. "Do you mean he was plotting uprisings in all the other cities at the same time?"

Grevelton nodded somberly. "Exactly. From what I have learned thus far, Varranagh has been plotting a revolution for a long time. The advent of the Sneezing Death merely postponed it. He has confederates planted in each of the other five cities. Pulling of the master switch would awaken them along with my own loyal followers, and with the advantage of surprise and organization, they would triumph easily."

"I get the picture now," Waring said. "This Varranagh wants to capture the master switch so as to awaken his men among the Drurians in the other cities. Then, after he has control there, he intends to go after my own people. Great space, it's simple—and horrible. Isn't there something we can do?"

Grevelton spread his long-fingered hands in a gesture of futility. "None—unless we could open the Arsenal."

"The Arsenal?" Waring frowned bis lack of understanding.

"It is a vast room on the same level as the Crypts of Sleep," Grevelton explained. "Within it are the old weapons—the supreme achievements of Drurian science; robot soldiers, airships equipped with atomic bombs and destructive rays, protective screens, and various types of disintegrator weapons. Before Varranagh's uprising, there had been peace on Drur for many centuries, and all implements of warfare had been placed within the Arsenal here in Cirron, the capitol city. With them in our

possession, we could defeat Varranagh easily."

"Then why don't you do so?" Waring demanded impatiently.

AGAIN Grevelton spread his hands. "You do not understand. The lock of the Arsenal can be opened only by a combination of certain electronic frequencies. We have lost this combination through the passing of years. My men have found clues in various old records, and are working upon the combination. They have not yet solved it—nor is there any indication that they will, within the short space of time required. The doors of the Arsenal are of such atomic construction that no disintegrator beam can touch them. My followers, however, are holding the Arsenal corridor in the event that the combination is solved."

"That's too small a hope," Waring pointed out. "Somehow, we've got to get out of this building. If I can warn my people and get them to help while you hold the master switch, Varranagh is certain to get what's coming to him." Waring straightened purposefully. "Your men are now defending the corridors here against the rebels?"

"Yes," Grevelton responded. "But I fear they will not last long. Their number is already too few."

"Then look," Waring went on quickly, "have you the means to blow up the corridors—that is, block them against passage?"

"We have—yes. But what do you intend to do?"

"This—order your men to blow up all the corridors except those leading to the elevator. Then they can be assembled into a spearhead with which we can fight our way to the elevator. Do you see?"

Grevelton's eyes lighted with new hope. "I do—and I shall carry out

your plan at once." He turned to the Drurians standing at attention within the doorway, issued quick commands.

With Sally, Waring followed Grevellon through the doorway and into a dimly-lighted passage. Now, faint with distance, he could hear sounds of struggle as Grevellon's loyal fighters sought valiantly to halt the relentless advances of Varranagh's rebels. Presently there came dull, booming sounds which heralded the blocking of the corridors.

Finally all was silent. A Drurian appeared up the passage on the run. He raised an arm to Grevellon in a gesture that was obviously a salute.

"It is done, sir," he reported.

"Good!" Revellon turned to Waring. "This is the test of your plan. May the gods grant that we reach the elevator! Follow me carefully now."

Waring took Sally's hand and trotted in the Drurian's rear. Sally was bewildered at the proceedings because of her inability to understand the discussion which had taken place in the Drurian language. Waring explained pertinent bits of information as they went.

THE route led through a confusing and seemingly interminable maze of dim-lit corridors. Slowly, an excited hubbub of sound deepened until at last a turn in one corridor brought them to where Grevellon's men were gathered.

Grevellon shouted an order. The Drurians formed into ranks, a column of spindling giants that filled the corridor from one wall to the other. Then they released a loud roar and swept forward.

Grevellon gestured. "Come. My men form a protecting barrier for us, but keep low. If Varranagh does not anticipate this trick, we are fairly certain to win through."

Waring transmitted this information to Sally. Gripping her hand, he raced

along in the wake of Grevellon's attacking spearhead as fast as his lame leg would allow.

The pounding feet of the Drurians echoed down the dim corridor like a never-ceasing roll of thunder. Several times they turned as they wound their course through the underground maze. Then, finally, a turn brought them to a corridor which was wider and higher than the others, more brilliantly lighted.

"Main corridor," Grevellon panted. "The elevator is straight ahead."

The spring of tension wound to ultimate tightness within Waring. Now, he thought. *Now*. Everything depended on what was going to happen within the next few minutes. His grip on Sally's hand tightened.

Still they raced forward, yard after yard, until it seemed incredible that anything could stop their headlong advance. And then, abruptly, the battle cry of Grevellon's warriors rose anew, and their mad pace slowed, halted entirely. Colored lights flamed into lurid being ahead, and shrill screams mingled with shrieked commands.

"Down!" Grevellon shouted. "Keep low. Varranagh has organized a counter-attack."

Waring crouched with Sally behind the shelter of the column of loyal Drurians. An awed sense of horror grew within him as he thought of the carnage taking place ahead. The corridor was no place for a battle of the kind being waged, with the weapons being used. There was absolutely no room for cover, no room for movement save for that forward and backward. The two opposing groups could only rake each other with their terrible rays until the morale of one or the other finally cracked.

Several times Grevellon's forces moved forward, though each time they were forced to retreat. Then the retreats predominated. Slowly at first,

then faster and faster, Grevellon's followers were forced back under the superior might of the opposing rebels. Then they turned at last to flee the battle, a screaming, clawing mass of panic-stricken Drurians.

"Varranagh has defeated our plan," Grevellon almost sobbed. "Our last bid for existence has failed!"

## CHAPTER V

### Pardon My Snooze

THERE was something of nightmare unreality about that frenzied retreat. Waring pulled Sally along while behind them pounded Grevellon's routed troops. Pain throbbled agonizingly in Waring's lame leg at the intense strain to which it was being subjected. He had hardly been conscious of it before, but now it was all he could do to keep himself in motion. He knew he could not stop, for it would mean being trampled under the racing feet of the demoralized Drurians behind him.

The retreat flowed back through the main corridor and retraced its way through the lesser ones. Finally they reached that farthestmost portion of the Crypts from which they had originally started. To Grevellon's men, this was the place of the last stand. Their terror changed swiftly to the desperate fury of trapped animals. Whirling upon Varranagh's eagerly pursuing rebels, they unleashed a barrage of deadly rays. Taken by surprise, the rebels momentarily were forced back. And before they could recover, Grevellon yelled an order, and the passage was blown down, cutting off Varranagh's men.

"That won't hold them off for long," Grevellon said laboringly. "Our deaths are only a matter of time."

Waring, slumped on the floor of the passage, said nothing. Agony pulsed

and flamed through the tortured muscles of his lame leg, and his mouth was pale and tight with suffering. Sally sat beside him, eyes closed, her head resting tiredly on his shoulder. Except for her, he would almost have been glad to have everything ended then.

He tried to find reproach within himself for his attitude of defeat—and failed. Never before had the stakes been so great, nor the odds against him so overwhelming. By comparison his adventures in the Rangers seemed but the game of a child. Here the lives of uncounted thousands depended upon what help he could give—the lives both of Grevellon's loyal Drurians and of the Terran colonists on Faltronia—and there was nothing he could do. Varranagh had them trapped—whipped completely.

Grevellon voiced the end with fatalistic calm. "My men have instructions to sell their lives dearly. Varranagh will meet with heavy losses before he can claim this portion of Cirron. And as for myself, my last act will be to destroy the master switch. Varranagh will thus have to travel from city to city, awakening the rebels among the sleepers. Perhaps in that way your people will become warned." He looked at Waring, and the grimness softened in his glowing eyes. "I regret, my friend from another world, that I can do nothing to save your life. I would die more gladly were I able to do so—"

Grevellon turned sharply at a sudden burst of excited activity down the passage. Waring saw several Drurians approaching on the run. The foremost held a small black box in his long-fingered hands.

"What is it, Evansu?" Grevellon demanded, his elongated body tense.

"The combination!" Evansu gasped breathlessly. "We have solved it at last!"

FOR an instant Grevellon's features lighted. Then his gaunt shoulders slumped listlessly. "What is the good—now?" he muttered. "The corridors are blocked, and Varranagh holds those leading to the Arsenal."

Waring pulled himself erect. "Have you some method by which the corridors could be cleared?"

"The disintegrator beams can be adjusted to the necessary frequency," Grevellon answered. "But it is a slow business at best."

"If the openings are to be made large enough for an army—yes," Waring flashed back. "But not if only for just a few men."

"What good can just a few accomplish?" Grevellon protested.

Waring spoke eagerly. "Don't you see? An army would warn Varranagh as before. But a few, penetrating his lines by stealth, might reach the Arsenal in safety."

Grevellon's eyes gleamed in sudden enthusiasm. "We can try it. The mission will be a perilous one—yet better than waiting here. If we can reach and activate the robot soldiers, Varranagh is doomed. We will go—Evansu, you, and I. My men will remain behind so as to deceive Varranagh into thinking that we are all still here." He turned to give rapid instructions to his various subordinates.

Waring explained the plan to Sally. She put up a quick protest.

"But, Lon, you can't leave me behind! Don't you see? If you fail, we fail here, too. And if I have to die, I'd rather that it be with you."

Waring frowned in aching thought. Then he nodded with reluctant slowness. "I'm afraid you're right, Sally. The only thing to do is take you along. But I wish—" Waring did not finish. He turned away, his eyes filled with pain.

Evansu had strapped the combination device to his slender waist. Both he and Grevellon now gripped cylindrical ray projectors. They were ready to start.

Grevellon frowned when Waring revealed that Sally was to accompany them. "As few as possible would be safest. But if you wish it, then so be it. Now come."

Grevellon chose a roundabout route to the Arsenal, one which led through a series of corridors that were least likely to be heavily guarded by the rebels. They started forward, the projectors eating narrow tunnels through the debris which filled the blocked passages. At first the going was comparatively rapid; the nearer corridors were entirely free of guards, since they had been so effectively blown down that Varranagh obviously had not thought them worth watching.

Soon, however, their progress had to be made with the utmost caution. As Grevellon and Evansu emerged once from a tunnel made by their projectors, they found themselves confronting three startled rebel guards. Fortunately, these were dispatched before they could give an alarm. But from then on, they went more slowly as the element of surprise could not always be counted upon.

GREVELLON and Evansu developed a tactic which was greatly successful in its results. They would carve slowly through the debris of the blocked passages with their projectors until only a thin wall separated them from the space beyond. Then they would listen for the location of the rebels. Having determined this, they would burst suddenly through the thin crust, raking the corridor with their deadly rays. In this dangerous and painstaking fashion, they made much progress.



And then Grevellon turned to Waring, his large eyes glowing excitedly. "There is not much further to go. We will soon reach the Arsenal."

Waring nodded, though he could not shake off a premonition of impending disaster. Things had been going entirely too smoothly. It just couldn't last.

And disaster struck. They had turned from a branching corridor into one that was still intact, and were making their way swiftly toward its upper end. Suddenly, from the lower end behind them, a shrill challenge rung. There was but one answer to make.

"Run!" Grevellon snapped.

They plunged forward, all caution now abandoned. Behind them, the rebel guard released shriek after shriek of alarm.

Down the corridor they raced. A turn—and then, set in a deep recess in one wall, they found themselves before the massive doors of the Arsenal.

"Quick—the combination," Grevellon told Evansu. "Varranagh and his pack are warned. We have not an instant to waste."

Evansu fumbled the combination device from his belt. He adjusted several small dials on its face, then pointed it at a circular grid set in the Arsenal doors. The device hummed faintly.

Waring gripped Sally's arm, a grin of joy and relief starting at the corners of his mouth. It was over. Incredibly, they had won through.

But the doors of the Arsenal did not open. Evansu's face paled.

"What's the matter?" Grevellon prompted.

"The adjustment of the frequencies was not sufficiently exact," Evansu stammered. Again he set the dials—and again the doors failed to open.

The clamor of voices and footfalls grew louder and ever louder. The rebels

were approaching with dismaying rapidity.

Evansu's hands trembled as he sought frantically to find the correct adjustment of electronic frequencies. His breath sobbed in his throat.

Waring snatched up Evansu's ray projector and leaped to the edge of the recess. He had watched the method of the weapon's operation, and now he knew just what to do. Pressing the stud in its side, he pointed the projector into the corridor. The disintegrator beam flashed out, and the nearest of the oncoming rebels vanished abruptly.

Grevellon hurried to join Waring, and for a moment they managed to stem the advance. But soon ray after terrible ray licked toward their refuge, and at last they were forced to duck back.

Evansu released a sudden yell of triumph. Waring whirled, his eyes widening in delight. The doors of the Arsenal were open!

Almost simultaneously, the rebels reached the recess. Waring and Grevellon were caught napping by their momentary diversion of attention. Before they could do so much as complete their individual motions of turning, the rebels swarmed over them.

**WARING** went down beneath a surge of stick-thin bodies. For some seconds, he struggled fiercely, but sheer weight of number soon overcame him. His arms gripped by fully a dozen rebels, he was finally hauled to his feet. He found himself facing a Dryrian whose splendor of garb outrivalled even Grevellon's. But there was no sympathy and gentleness in this face. It was sternly and coldly cruel.

"Varranagh!" Grevellon spat.

The rebel smiled with malicious triumph. "At your service, my dear Chief Co-ordinator. But not for long, I might

add. We shall part very soon." Varranagh's smile broadened. "I see that you have managed to open the doors of the Arsenal. It was indeed thoughtful of you to provide me with the old weapons. They will make the remainder of my task that much easier."

"They would have meant your death, if I had but had a few seconds more," Grevelton said evenly.

"You didn't, however," Varranagh reminded mockingly. His features abruptly hardened. "But enough of this chatter. You die, my dear Chief Coordinator, and with you your alien companions!"

Varranagh snapped an order. Waring and the others were released. They stood together, a tiny group of four, while the execution squad of rebels lined up before them.

Varranagh raised his hand, narrowed eyes glittering. When it came down, Waring knew, death from a dozen projectors would leap out at them.

And then—strangely and illogically—the thought made him recall something. Out of this recollection he formed an abrupt plan. It was wild, almost silly, yet with extinction only split-seconds away, Waring did not waste time in doubt. He acted. Bending toward Sally, he whispered urgently into her ear.

Varranagh's hand tensed preparatory to lowering. The rebels gripped their weapons more tightly, waiting for the signal. The scene held for an instant like a tableau of wax dummy figures. All was very quiet and still.

And then—before Varranagh's hand could descend—Waring sneezed, a loud, lusty sneeze that exploded startlingly into the tense silence. A moment later Sally sneezed also.

Again Waring sneezed. He clutched at his chest and frightening grimaces writhed over his face. Strangling

sounds came from his lips. His eyes rolled madly.

There was a stunned, utter silence. The rebels gazed at Waring and Sally as if they were the sudden materialization of every supernatural fear ever known to Drurians. Then the corridor echoed to a sudden hedlam of screams, shrieks, and yells. Flinging away their weapons, the rebels fled in terror. Kicking, clawing, and cursing, they fought frenziedly to get away.

"It's a trick!" Varranagh shouted. "Come back, you fools!"

But the rebels were too intent on fleeing the scene to obey. The confusion had become ordered flight. The rebels streamed down the corridor and away. Within seconds only Varranagh was left in sight. His face was a distorted mask of insane hatred.

"Curse you!" he shrieked at Waring. "I'll finish it—myself!" His hand flashed to a projector hanging at his hip.

**WARING** left the floor in a leap. His clutching arms caught Varranagh about the middle. They sprawled violently backward to the floor. Waring was the first to his feet. With one hand he pulled Varranagh upright. The other, balled into a vengeful fist, leaped out from his shoulder. There was a dull crunching sound.

The rebel leader bounced from the opposite wall of the corridor and slid slowly to the floor. One glance at his queerly dangling domed head showed clearly that he would never move again. His neck had been broken by Waring's blow.

Waring turned triumphantly to Grevelton and Evansu. But the two backed quickly away from him, covering their faces with their hands.

"Keep away!" Evansu cried. "You've got it—the Sneezing Death!"

"You are my friend," Grevelton said.

"I cannot thank you enough for what you have just done. But—please do not come any nearer."

Waring threw back his head and released peal after peal of laughter. "It was a trick," he explained. "I haven't got the Sneezing Death any more than you have. You see, when the rebels faced us, their projectors made me think of flashing death. And that reminded me of the Sneezing Death. Knowing how greatly Drurians fear the disease, I got the idea of sneezing, just to see what would happen. And . . . well, I was more surprised than the rebels were!"

A moment later it was all Sally could do to pull the two wildly delighted Drurians from off Waring. "Give me a chance at him too," she pleaded.

Waring translated. Grevellon smiled.

"She can have you for the present. Right now Evansu and I have work to do. Once we get the robot soldiers activated, there won't be a rebel left on all the face of Drur!" Gesturing to

Evansu, he disappeared into the gloomy depths of the Arsenal.

"Look at me," Sally ordered Waring. "What do you see in my eyes now?"

"You looked darned glad to be alive," Waring decided.

"Is that all, Lon? Can't you see something else?"

"Yes," Waring answered softly. "Yes, Sally."

She went on eagerly. "And, Lon, can't you see the future—your future and mine? With the Aliens back, the cities will no longer be almost entirely deserted. More colonists will come, and more. Faltronia will enter a new life. But most important, someone will have to act as go-between for Terrans and Drurians, and only you will be able to do that, because only you will be able to communicate with them. You won't be tied down to a desk job any longer. You'll be famous—and needed. Lon . . . can't you see?"

Waring saw. His eyes were a little moist with the seeing. . . .

## ★ DANCE OF DEATH ★

AS THE auditorium lights dimmed, three persons nervously awaited the final rehearsal of the ballet: the composer of the score, the business manager, and Lady Eleanor Smith, a patron of the arts.

Each person's thoughts turned to the past as the music began, for the rehearsal was to feature a new work, inspired by the great dancer Pavlova, who had been dead only a few months. They watched eagerly to see if Frances Doble, now the leading ballerina of the company, could duplicate the amazing feats of her predecessor.

At the climax of the ballet, Frances Doble was to dance a routine similar to Pavlova's famous "The Swan." The rehearsal proceeded without a flaw until the dancer entered the stage for this dance. Amazed, the spectators found that the figure of the ballerina appeared to be shrinking before their eyes, until she seemed no larger than the diminutive Pavlova. More unusual, her figure appeared to be changed and every movement and gesture was an exact duplication of that of Anna Pavlova. Effortlessly, as only Pavlova could

dance, the phantom figure went through an entirely different routine than the one called for in the script. It was Pavlova's from start to finish. Yet, it was universally acknowledged that no living dancer had the unearthly technique of the dead ballerina. To make the whole episode even more unbelievable, at the end of the dance, the figure on the stage pirouetted three times standing easily on one point—a feat which Miss Doble could not do.

Lady Smith recorded the incident in her book, "Life's a Circus." In profound amazement, the three spectators searched each other's faces following the performance, and they realized that all three had seen the same thing. Later, they corroborated this by comparing impressions. Then they heard the voice of Miss Doble dully saying, "I'm sorry—let's try again. I couldn't dance. I must be awfully tired. My mind suddenly seemed to go blank."

She had no recollection of having danced the scene.

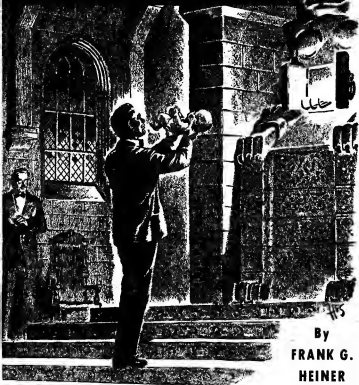
*Jane Lurie*

# THE SECRET OF



Something terrible went on in Lord Fennel's castle, but nothing could be done about it!

# LORD FENNEL



By  
**FRANK G.  
HEINER**

The madness of the moment reach a climax—

**I** WAS surprised that Dr. O'Malley didn't enter the argument. The subject was one which interested him; but then, he had a way of barricading himself with silence when he was in a crowd.

The incident to which I am referring was at a party, one of Christine's parties. If you have never been to one of Christine's parties, you either have missed something or have a treat in store for you. At her discreet haven in

Washington Mews, she attracted and entertained all sorts of unusual people. She said to me once:

"I collect personalities as some people collect postage stamps."

"May I flatter myself on being an item of your collection," I asked.

I confess I was a little hurt by her reply:

"Nobody would ever accuse you of being unusual. You are just Tom Cable whom every one knows and likes and takes for granted."

"That makes me a kind of a walking cipher, doesn't it?" I said somewhat irritably.

"No," said Christine, "You have a distinct importance of your own. You are the eternal spectator. You are really a born Boswell. I think it's up to me to find you a Dr. Johnson."

Christine was speaking prophetically though she didn't know it at the time. She was to introduce me to Dr. O'Malley, whose unique personality and amazing adventures I enjoy recording. He would never bother to do it for himself.

Dr. O'Malley was a tall, gaunt man with the face of an ascetic, which he wasn't. He was Irish, but had lived in every part of the world during most of his life. He had drifted into New York from nowhere. He told me that he lived in Paris just before he came here, but as the European situation became more acute, he simply moved to what seemed to be a more tranquil spot. He said he objected to being bombed out of bed some night when the madman of Berlin might feel like staging a surprise party.

Dr. O'Malley appeared to know as many celebrated people as a professional interviewer. At the party of which I am speaking, when a young Communist spoke to him of Stalin, he said, "Yes, the first time I met him was at Capri. Lenin was also there at the

time. It was Maxim Gorky who introduced me to them both."

He had known James Joyce the trailblazer of modern literature and at the opposite pole that Irish group, AE, Yeats, and Synge.

When Dr. O'Malley first casually spoke to me of these contacts I had a faint suspicion that he might be one of those pathological liars one runs into now and then. This seemed unlikely as he was anything but boastful. Then, when he showed me a letter from James Joyce and other mementoes, I was somewhat ashamed of my earlier suspicion.

Furthermore, he was not the ordinary hunter of celebrities. Like Christine, he sought interesting people, and whether they were celebrated or not was merely incidental. During our short acquaintance, he had introduced me to a Catholic priest who had one of the finest collections of ancient figurines in the world; to a book seller in an obscure corner of Brooklyn, who was an authority on medieval manuscripts and a connoisseur of the Gregorian chant, and to an old Italian on Sullivan Street, a professional mago who made his living casting spells.

AT THE party, the doctor talked freely enough at first, but subsided into himself as more people came in, finally becoming as taciturn as a wooden Indian. We wandered about and drank and gathered in little groups. The items of Christine's collection who were there at the moment were an assortment of writers, painters, actors, musicians, journalists and people who wished they were writers, painters, etc. They were interesting people, quite charming, and I liked them but none of them seemed greatly to interest my friend the Doctor.

I don't know how the argument started. I came in at the middle of it.

I drifted over from another group. It was between a quite attractive young woman who was said to be making an enviable reputation as an interpretive dancer and a brilliant young journalist. Their subject was far more profound than they were, but one on which we all do some speculating; nothing less than life and death and the nature and origin of the universe.

It appeared that the girl was a Theosophist with pronounced convictions while the young man was a hard-boiled materialist and equally uncompromising. She talked at length about rays, vibrations, the creative force in action and rest manvantaras and perlayas, the path of attainment, reincarnation, karma etc.

Her opponent said:

"No, I can't accept any of that. It just doesn't hold water. The universe consists of matter and energy and that's all there is. We have no evidence for anything else. Our science can demonstrate matter and energy. The supernatural is a figment of the imagination whether it is presented in simple Sunday School terms or dressed up in the terminology you give it."

Just then, Christine came over. Dr. O'Malley didn't appear to be listening to the conversation. He hadn't changed his seat or his position for hours. He seemed like an immovable receptacle for cocktails. Christine said to him,

"What do you think about all this, Dr. O'Malley?"

He grunted, reflected for a few seconds, and said:

"I was born and brought up in the west of Ireland between the mountains and the sea and I'm apt to believe anything."

Christine said:

"How fascinating. Ireland is rich in folk-lore. You must have had ghosts and fairies and the banshee as your

next-door neighbors."

The doctor said:

"It isn't as bad as all that, or as good, however you like to take it. The servants and country people would be telling a lot of old stories, but who credits the superstitions of simple people as they were?"

"Please tell us some," Christine coaxed.

"I wouldn't remember any," said the doctor. "I've been away for many years. To tell you the truth, I didn't pay much attention to those stories when I was there."

Christine looked disappointed.

"But what do you think of our discussion?" asked the young journalist eagerly. "Which side are you on?"

"As to that," said the doctor, "I practice medicine. I have a hard enough time keeping up with the demands it makes on me. I leave problems of philosophy to people younger than myself."

I wondered why my friend was lying so stubbornly. I knew that he was avidly interested in the subject under discussion and any other intellectual speculation. This pose of the dry sawbones rather irritated me. He had picked up a lucrative practice almost as soon as he had landed in New York—I couldn't for the life of me tell how—but medicine was the least of his concerns and I knew it.

WHEN the party broke up, Dr. O'Malley invited me, as was his wont, to drop up to his place for a night-cap. I knew that the invitation, couched in terms of a night-cap and a moment, would mean conversation until morning, a cascade of talk from the doctor, and probably a good story. I almost forgave him for his rebuff of Christine and her friends.

Nevertheless, I asked him when we

had settled with our drinks in his comfortable studio apartment.

"Why were you so stand-offish with those nice people? You could have given them an Irish saga and why wouldn't you venture an opinion in the argument? One would think that the secrets of Masonry depended on your acting like the strong, silent man of the English novel."

He said, "Moosha, I didn't want to be putting on a performance before the world and his wife."

He strode up and down the room, his glass in his hand. He would walk about like this until the subject became especially interesting to him or he felt like telling a story, and then he would sit down, look straight ahead of him, and talk for hours.

The studio combined solid comfort with a touch of the exotic. The fireplace, the easy-chairs, the ash trays and papers and magazines scattered about had a soothing smoking-room atmosphere. But the original Picasso on the wall and the curios scattered about; a sword; a lamp of odd workmanship; an incredible carved image from central Africa; another from Tibet; and two Voodoo drums from Haiti, one large, one small,—the male and female drums of the ceremonies—invaded the club-like tranquillity with a different and slightly sinister note.

Dr. O'Malley continued: "As you may suppose, my views were more on the side of the young lady. She wasn't in the best position to defend herself though and I couldn't come to her rescue too much without showing my own cards. I can guess that her experience with the occult was entirely from books and at that her reading could be a bit more varied and extensive. The young fellow's mind was too closed for anything like real discussion. We go about using these terms like mat-

ter and energy—which, to be sure, we have to adopt for the convenience of science—but we really don't know what they are. We have done nothing but name them. And as to the possibilities of matter, our young friend and those like him would get the surprise of their lives if they once began to perceive them. I quite agree with Madame Blavatsky when she says that the materialist is right as far as he goes, but he doesn't go far enough. Matter and spirit are not separate. They are different aspects of the same thing. If it won't bore you, I'd like to tell you a story, a personal experience which illustrates what I mean."

It was a story that I had been hoping for, and he knew very well that he had an eager listener.

Dr. O'Malley poured the drinks again, placed the decanter and the cigarettes between us, and settled himself in an easy chair for the pleasures of narration which I think he enjoys as much as I enjoy hearing him like the old story tellers of his country, who ages ago, perfected the art.

But please don't misunderstand me. I am not going to repeat this story to you in the manner of Don Byrn or the plays of Synge. I love their style, but Dr. O'Malley doesn't talk like that. Imagine him with a bit of an Irish accent. He sometimes indulges in Gaelic expressions. On the other hand, he has lived so long in Dublin and London and foreign parts that most of the Irish idiom has disappeared from his speech. This is his story:

\* \* \*

THE events that I'll be telling you happened just after I had finished my medical studies at St. Thomas' Hospital in London. That's the place that Somerset Maugham has made famous in his great novel, *Of Human Bondage*.



The immortal Havelock Ellis had his work there. I had a friend at the time, a fellow student named George Banning. He was as English as anything ever hatched out of the public schools and bred in the halls of Oxford. It was a treat to hear him read the English poets. He and I used to hat around together, seeing each other every day as young men will. When we were a little tight, I would say to him, "George, me boy some of your ancestors hanged some of mine but I'll forgive you."

George intended to go home for a few days after we got our diplomas. His father was a vicar in one of the western shires. Was it Sommerset or Devon? I should remember, since I went to live there for a time, but I don't. So many things have happened to me.

Well, one evening just after our graduation, George and I dropped into the Savoy. One was always sure of meeting interesting people there, from the artistic world.

Presently, George looked over at one of the other tables, and, following his glance, I saw a distinguished looking old man as swarthy as a Sicilian. I naturally asked if George knew him.

"That's Lord Fennel. He is from my part of the country. His place is called St. Basil's. It is a few miles from my father's vicarage. He is an unsociable old devil. Probably won't deign to speak to us."

George was mistaken, however. Lord Fennel was saying something to the waiter, who came over and said that the gentleman had invited us to come over and sit at his table.

To George's surprise, the old man was cordial, asked us about our medical studies, insisted on paying our bill, and ended by inviting us to the theatre for the next evening. It was particularly surprising because he'd never been known to do this before.

THE play was *The Witch of Strassburg*. The plot was laid in Alsace of the middle ages. It dealt with spells and incantations and secret rites and its climactic moment was a trial for sorcery.

Between the second and third acts we all went out to the bar for refreshments. George remarked, "It's good to live in the nineteenth century when people no longer believe such rubbish."

The face of our host assumed an insulting sneer. He said:

"And you are so sure in the conceit of the up-to-date young medico that all the thought of previous centuries is rubbish?"

I wanted to hit him in the face, more for his manner than for anything he had said. George replied mildly enough:

"I don't accept the charge of being conceited, but I thought it was pretty generally agreed that medieval notions of witchcraft and sorcery were consigned to the realm of superstition and human errors."

Lord Fennel answered, "You thought, but you thought very little. Suppose I were to tell you that the medieval churchmen knew what they meant when they talked of witchcraft and that from their point of view they were defending themselves when they persecuted it? Suppose I told you that it may be practiced at the present day, right here in scientific nineteenth century England?"

By this time, I could see that George was furious, but resolved to keep his temper. He said,

"I would think it scarcely credible but very interesting. Please tell us more."

"I prefer to drop the subject," said Lord Fennel curtly.

George went home a few days after the incident to practice in his father's parish. We dismissed the disagreeably

eccentric nobleman from our minds.

George said, "I dare say the old blighter is a bit potty, as my father has told me. Maybe, he tries to practice witchcraft himself or, he may take his religion too literally. Doubtless, he has fallen under the influence of the Tractarian movement. The Governor is slipping that way. I must warn him."

I drifted about London aimlessly for a few weeks after George went home. I had a mind to take a berth as doctor aboard some ship going out to the Orient or to South America. The soul of me had been soaked in Irish rains during most of my life. Then, there were those nights of London winters, going out to take care of sick people when the skin on your bones feels like wet paper. I longed for hot, bright countries. But just as I was starting to do something about my plan, I got a letter from George saying that he could get me a *locum tenens* in a small hospital near his home. The doctor whose place I was to take would be away until nearly Christmas. I took it, as the English country-side in summer is beautiful and it would be good to see George again.

I found George's parents, the vicar and his wife pleasant people and I fitted in well with them and their friends and my practice.

Things had been happening to George since he left London and as young people will, he tried to tell me about it in one breath as soon as I arrived at his home. He had met the daughter of Lord Fennel and they had fallen headlong in love. Her father, as soon as he got wind of their intentions, had forbidden her, in the most high-handed medieval manner to see George or even give him another thought.

AS THE subject was discussed at dinner on the evening of my arrival, I

could see that George's parents were in sympathy with him, but concerned. His mother said:

"The Bannings are as good blood as the Fennels and have been in the country longer."

The vicar said, "The Fennels got St. Basil's in the time of Henry the Eighth. The Black Fennels, they have always been called, partly on account of their dark complexion, partly because a sinister strain has run through the family for generations making some of them do queer unaccountably mad and sometimes wicked things."

"Nothing like that shows in Marjory" said George springing immediately to the defense.

"No," said the vicar. "She is like Lady Blanche, her mother. For that matter, the Fennels weren't all sinister. I remember old Lord Fennel the father of the present one. He was a bit wild, a racing man, a great one for sports. He was killed in a steeple chase. But he couldn't be called sinister. The present Lord Fennel is about my own age. He was a likely lad and there seemed to be no harm in him, but when he came back from Egypt, he was a changed man.

"He cuts all his old friends. He never deigns to come to church. He keeps to himself with his new Oriental wife. Odd looking people come down from London to see him. No one knows who they are, and there are wild rumors afloat among the country people about unholy goings on there. I can't tell what it all means."

"Oh, most of that is idle gossip," George exclaimed. "No one is more aware than I that Lord Fennel is a cantankerous old rip. I don't have to believe, though, that he sits up nights conspiring against the government."

"Not against the government," his father said with emphasis.

"What then?"

The vicar was silent but his wife said:

"You know, George, that every now and then Marjory is sent away for a few days with that Egyptian woman who acts as her duenna. Her father orders the Egyptian woman to pack her clothes and they go. It is at such times that his impossible friends, whoever they are, come down from London and that rumors circulate."

That evening, George was taking me to meet his girl friend. They arranged their clandestine meetings at the house of Mr. Furman, who had been the family butler.

I found Lady Marjory a charming, normal English girl with a cream-like complexion. She could hardly be taken for one of the black Fennels, as she was quite blonde. I have never been impressed by titles, and she made no attempt to impress anyone with hers. She was as sweet and simple as one could wish.

We talked of her childhood. She told me of living in a large, low, white house in Cairo surrounded by oriental servants; of being sent to school in England; of the sudden death of her mother whom she had adored. Then, her father had returned and swept her whole way of life aside. She was not allowed to see or communicate with her relatives. Mrs. Tilwich who had acted for her as nurse, housekeeper, and friend was immediately discharged. Anastasia, the Egyptian woman, took her place and took turns with Ahmed the black giant of a major domo, in shadowing her and reporting her movements. Then, there were those sudden, unaccountable journeys which she was ordered to make to sea-side resorts or to the French Riviera. She knew of the rumors which were afloat and put far more credence in them than George did even though he was far from a skeptic.

WHEN I had heard these details, I said:

"But the problem you people present seems far simpler to me than it does to you. There were elopements when parental authority was much greater than it is today. Why don't you simply elope? I wager that after a time, the old gent, saving your presence, will cool off and be ready to dish out the blessings."

Lady Marjory said:

"It is easy to see that he doesn't know my father. Shall I tell him?"

George said: "Why yes dear, if you want to. There were some things which on your account, I didn't mention."

"I see no reason for concealing them," she said. "The point is that my father is wholly vindictive, capable of anything. I remember an Arab boy flogged to within an inch of his life for stealing some trifling article from our house in Cairo. It was thought that the boy would die and it took father's tremendous influence to get out of it, for it caused a public scandal."

Then, there was Peros, a prosperous Greek in Alexandria. He was a good man. Father had liked him but became exasperated at something he did, I don't know what. A short time afterward, the man was a pauper, too poor to buy food for his family. I heard my father laugh in his face and boast of accomplishing his ruin, then order Ahmed to throw him out bodily. Then, there was Sir Chauncy Heath, who cut my father at the club. Sir Chauncy was strangled by an unidentified person. Suspicion rested on father however, as his man Ahmed had been seen near the place a very short while before the murder.

George has suggested the elopement, but I refuse to expose him to anything like that. For one thing, his father, the vicar would lose his living in no

time. My father has large influence in some way. Besides, I wouldn't answer for George's life."

I had no further suggestions for a solution. So I presently left my friends alone to spoon to their hearts' content while I went to talk to Mr. Furman in the kitchen.

Old Furman liked to reminisce. Presently, he showed me a silver mug which he seemed to prize. He said:

"You see, there is the family coat of arms. The spray of fennel representing the family name. I wouldn't part with that mug. The old master gave it to me, his present Lordship's father. He says, 'take it Sam. It will remind you of the bond of good feeling between your house and mine.' I thanked him and quoted our old family adage, 'Where there's a Fennel, there's always a Furman.' He says, 'Right you are, Sam. One of your ancestors was fighting beside black Lord Jiles at Worcester and Marston Moor; another beside Black Harry at Blenheim and Malplaquet; another with Lord Stephen at Waterloo; and your father and mine went together through the Crimean War. You and I will go if our country should ever need us.'

"But the poor man never had the chance to serve his country. He was killed in a steeple chase as they may have told you. I'll never understand that. He was the best horseman in this part of the country and the mount he rode had taken prizes for hurdles far and wide. How could it have slipped on a hurdle as low as that one?"

"The old master used to say there would be no luck for either of our houses without the other and mark my word, he was right. They say, pride goeth before a fall and I fear that his present Lordship is riding for a had one. He no sooner got back from Egypt than he sacked us all, all the old family

servants, and he has a parcel of Orientals and Africans or some sort of heathens up there at St. Basil's. They remind one for all the world of spirits from Hell."

I FELL easily into my temporary practice and, engrossed in the hospital work, thought little of George and his problems or the black Lord Fennel. One day, though, a couple of weeks after my arrival, George and I were walking on the high street of the town when whom should we meet but the black Lord himself and he stood in our path so that we had to stop. He spoke to me with exaggerated graciousness as though my coming to those parts was a most agreeable surprise, meanwhile completely ignoring George. It was one of those rudenesses for which, since most people don't indulge in them, one hasn't thought of any proper defense. He ended by inviting me to dine with him the following day. When he had left, I said to George:

"The hack of my hand to the old blighter. He can put his title where it will do him the most good and if he chooses to insult my friends, I see no reason why I should be backward in passing up his invitation."

George said: "No, old fellow, on the contrary, I want you to go. It is always good strategy to find out all one can about the enemy. Besides, your antagonizing him might make it all the harder for Marjory and me. I'm glad he likes you."

I said: "Faith, you're right, George and I have a curiosity to know more about that incredible old specimen."

ST. BASIL'S was a medieval abbey which, like many others, had been given to a noble family when the monks were ejected during the reformation under Henry the Eighth. So it had both

the marks of a religious house and feudal castle, beside having been fitted up with modern plumbing and lighting and all the necessary appurtenances of twentieth century life. There were altars and cloisters. There were also suits of armor, ancestral portraits, and everything any movie director would desire.

On arriving, I noticed the family coat of arms over the gate with the spray of fennel on the shield. I was met by a giant Negro whom I rightly judged to be Ahmed. He looked placid and good natured, but I was ready to believe, from the build of him, that he would need only one hand to strangle an ordinary man.

I followed Ahmed, not to the drawing room or to the old refectory which had since been used as a family dining room, but to one of the smaller rooms on an upper floor where Lord Fennel was waiting. Lord Fennel received me graciously and then said a few words to Ahmed in a language which I think was Arabic, though at that time I knew no Arabic.

"Won't you be seated?" said his Lordship. "I just sent Ahmed to tell my wife that you are here and to ask her to join us."

I sat down on a divan and as I looked around, I saw that this room was fitted up like a picture from the Arabian Nights.

The rugs spoke of Bocara and Samarkand. There were tapestries with arresting Egyptian designs, rare lamps, carved vases, and hanging from the wall a jeweled scimitar which must have belonged to a Sultan. I thought, no wonder George and his father call him the Pasha. If they saw this, they would call him Kalif. Then, the rarest object of all entered the room, my host's lady.

She was indeed a work of art, small, dark, exquisite. If you can imagine a

woman at the same time ethereal and voluptuous, you have somewhat of a picture of her. Her movements were as graceful as those of a slow moving ballet, and as she entered, an exotic perfume pervaded the place.

That she was an Oriental of some sort there was no doubt. Her English, however, was perfect, but her low, musical voice gave it a sound of special beauty.

"May I present Lady Aisha?" said her husband graciously. I felt indebted to the old scoundrel for letting me look at this prize of the East and for being more liberal in that respect than oriental potentates are reputed to be. Thereafter, when I stole a hungry glance at her, I noticed the ghost of a sardonic smile cross his enigmatic face.

The lady, however, had eyes only for her husband or master, whichever you might call him; anticipated his every want; and joined very little in the conversation, permitting herself only the most conventional responses of social usage and answering when she was spoken to.

"I doubt very much, my young friend, that you are familiar with the cookery of the Levant," said Lord Fennel. I confessed that I was not. "Well," he said, "You shall taste it today at its best. The Near East was the cradle of European cookery. While northern Italy, France, and other countries have made amazing additions, the original is by no means to be despised."

That was an understatement. I have since eaten plenty of the same sort of fare, in the tents of bedouins and the palaces of eastern sovereigns, but never any better than the delicious meal I had that day with the strange Lord of St. Basil's.

Fortunately, he was not rigidly consistent in his orientalism and did not observe the Moslem prejudice against

alcohol. His rare French wines were anything but a jarring note.

WHEN he chose not to be rude or taciturn, Lord Fennel could be as interesting as any one you would want to talk to. That day, for some reason, he was going out of his way to be charming. He talked about literature and music, told me fascinating anecdotes about his life in Egypt, made me talk about myself, evincing an interest in my studies, my way of life, my hopes.

I was on my guard. I expected him to probe me about my friends at the vicarage, but he did not mention them until just as I was leaving. He had said goodbye graciously and expressed the hope that I would visit him again. Then, he said suddenly: "Just one thing more." His face had assumed the expression of cold, bitter anger which I had seen in the bar of the theatre and on High Street. He continued:

"You may tell your young friend George that I am giving him plenty of rope. I shall give him more, but it is around his neck. At some moment, quite unexpectedly, I shall draw the noose."

I could think of nothing to say. He gave me no chance. In a split second, he was all courtesy again and I found myself outside looking up at the family coat of arms with the spray of fennel on the shield and black Ahmed standing beside me like a genie on guard over a buried treasure.

Of course I gave George the sinister message. We resolved to say nothing of it to his parents or to Marjory. Lovers will risk anything and George was no exception. He had some unpleasant moments of anticipation. He said that on coming home from his meetings with Marjory, he constantly had the feeling of being shadowed. He added that whenever his collar felt the least

hit tight, he could imagine the steel fingers of Ahmed around his throat.

YOU wouldn't say that George was doing me a favor to take me with him on his trysts, but I was not making any effort to stay out of the adventure. I went with him on one or two occasions talking for a little while with Lady Marjory, then leaving them to themselves while I yarned with old Furman in the kitchen. The first time I met Marjory after my visit to her father, I spoke to her of the Lady Aisha. She seemed not to like her. I said:

"But you will have to admit that she is beautiful."

"Yes, there is no question about that," Marjory agreed, "But there is something unearthly about her. I can't describe what I mean, but she just doesn't seem human."

The question that George and I often discussed was, whether or not Marjory's father knew of the meetings of the lovers and if so, just how much he knew. We felt that in some way, sooner or later, he would strike, but there was no knowing how or when.

August of that year was hotter than usual. Nevertheless, when I happened to have a free day, I decided on a long walk in spite of the heat. I made a circle of several miles through the moors, but as I was on my way home I suddenly noticed that the sky, which had been a blue lake earlier in the day, had become a black well. The clouds were banking for a storm, there was no doubt about it, and I knew it would be a real electrical storm this time. I had still a considerable way to go. I had no relish for being caught out on the moor and soaked to the skin. I remembered that I was in the neighborhood of St. Basil's.

One did not drop in on the black Lord for casual, uninvited chats. What

made it worse was that he was undoubtedly having one of his mysterious sessions. Marjory had been sent away with her Egyptian duenna and an assortment of his friends, wild looking people, according to gossip, had come down from London. I felt, nevertheless that the circumstances gave me a claim on his hospitality. So by way of mixing a metaphor I decided to take the bull by the horns and go right in.

I was met by Ahmed, who appeared anything but friendly. He spoke very little English, too little to tell me to go about my business. His gestures ordered me off the premises, but I pretended not to understand his meaning and remained where I was.

**P**RESENTLY, he left me and went inside for some time. When he returned, Lord Fennel was with him. The old man was obviously not pleased to see me, but he did not confirm the orders his henchman had tried to give me. He said:

"I'm glad you came in. Of course, you are welcome to stay here and you had better count on remaining for the night. I think the storm will last that long. You will have to excuse me, though, for not being sociable. I have some people here with whom I am transacting some business. You will be served dinner in your room."

He then gave some orders to Ahmed in Arabic and walked away. I followed Ahmed, who had become less hostile, to a spacious and comfortable bedroom equipped with everything, even running water, by no means to be found in every English country house in those days. A delicious meal was brought to me and I was left to my own devices.

While I was having my dinner, the sky exploded. The rain hissed down. The lightning scampered about, scarce-

ly resting, and there was crash after crash of thunder. I have never seen a more furious storm before or since. This kept up for an hour or two, perhaps longer. I was comfortable. I had tobacco and books in my room. Then, as the storm died down and the thunder became more distant, though it was still pouring rain, I noticed a curious stirring in the house. I can't describe it. There was something subtle, more of a vibration than any concrete happening. I heard voices in some room, distant but audible. Then, there was a burst of music and song, beautiful, primitive, sometimes like reed instruments with a sobbing, heart-tugging note, then a beat of tomtoms as a monotonous accompaniment. Human voices kept up a solemn chant rising, falling, then rising again.

Something was happening, some ceremony was being held by my dark, mysterious host. I knew that nothing would please him less than to have me as a spectator. I was abusing hospitality, but my curiosity was strong and what I knew about Lord Fennel's own private conduct was not such as to inspire me to be scrupulous. I would go out and try to see what was happening, remaining hidden if I could. I went softly to my door. I must open it noiselessly. But to my chagrin and disappointment, I found that I could not open it at all.

The wily old lord had guessed my probable behavior and was taking no chances. The door was securely locked and it was a tremendous oak structure that would require a battering ram to break it down.

**I** FELT silly and futile and a bit anxious. I was trapped. I was a prisoner. I was unarmed. There was nothing to prevent my host from murdering me at his leisure if he had any

wish to do so. Why had I come here when I knew that it was one of those times when things were going on which were so secret that Lord Fennel thought it necessary to send his daughter away? For a time, I wished that I was out in the storm.

The storm subsided later, but the noises in the castle did not. It was still raining torrents, but the roll of the thunder was distant. Meanwhile, the monotonous chant and the music of the reed instruments and the throb of the drums continued.

Then, there was another sound, a wailing which rose and fell. I could not tell whether it was animal or human, but some of the time it sounded like that of a child. The chant became more excited, mounting to a frenzy. The tomtoms rolled forth. This confusion of sound was finally climaxed by an unearthly shriek which froze me for a moment, then galvanized me into action. Throwing caution to the winds, I hammered and kicked against the door and even crashed a chair against it, meanwhile yelling at the top of my voice that I demanded to be let out. Nobody paid the slightest attention to me and I never knew whether my demonstrations were even heard.

It is probable that I was not heard, for by this time the pipes, or whatever those reed instruments were, had risen to a scream and the drums to a roar.

At that moment, there was a crash like a clap of thunder. Beyond any question, it came from inside the house. The thunder outside had ceased and I could distinguish the direction of the sound.

After that, the music and the chanting continued but in a lower key. I finally threw myself on my bed without undressing. I was somewhat afraid to risk going to sleep, but whether wisely or not, the drowsy monotony fi-

nally prevailed and I drifted off.

WHEN I awoke, I looked out on a beautiful summer morning. I wondered if I was still a prisoner, but when I tried my door, it opened without difficulty. I was anxious to get out of the place, but just as I stepped out of my room, Ahmed appeared with an appetizing breakfast for me. I saw no reason for not staying to enjoy it. While he was arranging my tray on the table, I put one or two guarded questions to him but, he either didn't understand me or pretended not to.

As soon as I had breakfasted, I went on my way. I thought my host would be quite as pleased if I restrained from looking him up to thank him for his hospitality, but that problem solved itself. Lord Fennel was standing in the courtyard when I came out. He seemed more affable than the day before and though it was cheek on my part, I decided to risk some embarrassing questions.

I said to him, "I suppose you know, sir, that a section of St. Basil's is haunted?"

"Oh, really? I hadn't known it but how interesting," said Lord Fennel undismayed.

I described the sounds I had heard the previous night. His expression did not change as he listened.

"You must have been dreaming," he said in a bantering tone. "You may be suffering from some digestive disturbance. But you, as a doctor, should know more about that sort of thing than I. By the way, have you heard about the work of that new psychologist in Vienna named Freud? He bases much of his investigation on the analysis of dreams to which he attaches singular meanings. If you haven't already studied him, his writings would repay your attention."



I didn't enjoy his Lordship's attempt to puff the wool over my eyes in such an obvious way. I said with some irritation, "I can assure you, sir, that there is nothing wrong with my digestion and I am familiar with the conclusions of Freud. I might think that last night's happenings were a dream, but this morning, in coming down the hall from my room, I noticed that the floor and wall were spattered with blood. The stain was not many hours old and could hardly have been caused by my dreams."

I had to admire Lord Fennel, that he took this without losing his poise for a moment. He said:

"What a demonstration of the force of coincidence. It is all quite easily explained, my friend. One of our maids cut her hand last night which accounts for the blood. The rest I am afraid still requires the nightmare theory unless the place is haunted, which I would be likely to know about, having been born and brought up here.

"Please wait a moment. I don't want you believing the crazy rumors which I know are circulating about this place. If a man wants a little privacy and doesn't show up at church and the local hunts, the whole country-side begins gabbling about him and making mystery where there is none. I don't mind what the stupid lower classes say, but if the gentry and educated people of the community begin believing them too, it will be had."

He clapped his hands summoning Ahmed who was never very far away and talked to him for a moment in Arabic. The big Negro disappeared and presently returned, bringing with him a young oriental-looking woman, short and squat and rather pretty. Lord Fennel said,

"Let me present Zoe. She is one of our maids, an Egyptian girl. She

doesn't speak a word of English or she would tell you herself what happened to her."

Zoe raised her left hand which was covered by a large and ostentatious bandage. This was a mistake. Even Lord Fennel could make mistakes and the thought pleased me. My room was the last at the end of the hall. I could swear that no one had passed in that direction toward the stairs. Therefore, to spatter the wall with her blood Zoe in coming from the stairs, would have had to cut her right hand.

I accepted the explanation without further argument. Later, that day, I saw Zoe buying vegetables from a market gardener. It was apparent that she spoke some English and that neither of her hands was bandaged or bore any marks which would indicate even a superficial injury.

I TOLD no one but George of my experience. I had some pretty shrewd guesses as to what went on at St. Basil's, but my evidence was not strong enough to lodge a complaint before any authorities, and I knew it.

After all, I felt that there was little I could do at the moment and the best way was to let things drift and events would resolve the situation. Summer wore into autumn and autumn into winter. My *locum tenens* was nearing its expiration. The doctor whose place I was taking would return soon. George and Lady Marjory were no nearer to a solution of their problem than ever. I worried about George. The sword of Damocles was certainly hanging over his head. I was concerned about him every time he went for one of those clandestine meetings. He could be set upon on any dark night on his way home. He declined to carry fire-arms, unreasonably, I thought. He said that he was so clumsy in the use of them

that he would be as likely to kill himself as his assailant.

I disliked leaving while things were so unsettled. I had no reason to believe that my presence was any help to George but somehow, I felt it my duty to be there.

DECEMBER had come and with the sickness which winter brings, the duties of my practice had increased. One day I had to make an unusual number of sick calls. It was almost evening when I returned to the hospital where a surprise was waiting for me in the corridor. It was Lord Fennel's black giant Ahmed. When he saw me, he came toward me extending a paper which he held gingerly in his hand. It appeared to be an effort for Ahmed to speak English. His features would contract with the strain and the words would come out explosively. He said, "You come quick. De lady, she sen for you."

"The lady Aisha?" I asked. He nodded. I took the paper from him and read:

*Will you please come at once? My husband is dangerously ill. He refused to have a doctor, but he has now reached the point where he is no longer in a condition to decide for himself. I will be most grateful to you.*

A. Fennel.

The note looked more like a *billet doux* than a summons to a sickbed. It was delicately written and sealed with the family coat of arms, the spray of fennel on the shield. Best of all, though, it bore that exciting perfume which stirred the blood when the Lady Aisha was in the room.

Certainly, I would go. In the first place, it was my duty as a doctor. The thought flashed across my mind that

this might be some trap, that the old peer might have decided to dispose of me quietly as one who knew just a little too much. I will confess, however, that with a missive from a beautiful woman like Aisha, I would have gone cheerfully even if I hadn't been a doctor on duty.

In those days, automobiles had been invented, but they were still rare. The journey was fairly long. Ahmed had a light rig waiting for us outside the hospital. He drove and though he lashed the horse mercilessly, it was well after dark when we reached St. Basil's.

Moreover, a high wind had risen and the snow swirled in blinding clouds which made me fear that we would lose our way. I was relieved when the lights of St. Basil's came into view.

Ahmed led me immediately to the sick room. As he set things in order for my convenience, his movements showed a feline grace and an economy of effort which scarcely seemed consistent with his enormous frame. It seemed that nothing cost as much effort for Ahmed as speaking English. He made one more such effort,

"De lady, she come soon," and left me with my patient.

THE summons was *bona fide*. There was no mistake about that. Lord Fennel was stretched upon a bed, too ill to recognize his surroundings.

The diagnosis could have been made by any medical student beginning his in-patient work. The first percussion and the first touch of the stethoscope revealed that it was double lobar pneumonia at a very advanced stage. If the crisis hadn't already come, it soon would and his chances appeared negligible.

Just as I was summing up these conclusions to myself, Lady Aisha came into the room. My first look at her,

however, gave me far more of a shock than her husband's illness could possibly have done.

"You, yourself have been ill, Mi-lady!" were the first words which came involuntarily out of me. She said:

"No. I'm a little tired. I haven't had much sleep. This is the third day of his illness.

No, that wouldn't do. I have seen people exhausted from caring for the sick, but they didn't look like that. Lady Aisha looked like the victim of a wasting disease. She looked like patients I had seen in a late stage of tuberculosis or cancer. Her face was withered and showed deep lines. Her beautiful curves were quite gone. In their place, joints and corners stood out in macabre disharmony. She was a pathetic cadaver. I made no further reference to her condition, but busied myself with the patient.

There was really nothing one could do but wait. I could give heart stimulants to meet the crisis, but oxygen tents were in the future.

That waiting was a horrible experience. The storm outside had risen to violent proportions. The wind howling about the old castle and through its halls, sounding like a maniac wandering in the night. The shadows made by the fire seemed to take hideous forms like those in a fever dream.

Presently, I heard a stealthy tread outside the door and then a voice muttering some strange words in a foreign tongue. The muttering rose to a loud and doleful chant.

Lady Aisha who had been sitting at the other end of the room from me had not spoken for hours. The new intrusion of sound appeared to make no impression upon her.

I rose and went to the door. The sounds arose from Ahmed who was pacing back and forth in the hall, his face

distorted with grief or pain, I could not tell, beads of perspiration standing out on his forehead, and his hands raised in supplication. He was giving vent to the wild, loud chant I had heard, with something in it of a lamentation and a prayer. I spoke to him but he paid no attention to me. He seemed not to be conscious of my being there.

I closed the door and went back to my seat.

Hour after hour, the howl of the wind sounded in my ears like the curse of a victim strangling on the gallows.

Hour after hour, Ahmed's delirious chant continued like the mad pleading of a soul beyond redemption.

The chant rose to an agonized scream as a big clock on the lower floor boomed midnight, sending unearthly echoes up through the empty, spacious halls. At the last stroke of the big bell, the chant suddenly ceased.

My patient stirred in his bed. He spoke,

"Get away. Leave me. Go away, I tell you. At least let me die in peace."

LADY AISHA and I both rose. We must have both had the same thought, that he was ordering us from the room. In a moment, however, we realized that he was not speaking to us at all, was not even aware of us. He continued:

"Slaves, cowards. I made you cringe. Now, you are all waiting for me, waiting to pounce on me as soon as I leave my body and tear at me like starving dogs. Even now, you dare to taunt me with all that has happened. I sent my father to his death. I made the horse slip. I used an old spell I got in Lord Rupert's book. I felt a surge of power when I saw my father stretched there with his chest caved in. What of it?"

"It was the book that started me. That's how I made the acquaintance

of all of you. You served Lord Rupert as you served me. He was clever. Named after the Prince, brought up at court, he pandered to the vices of Charles the second, in the merry monarch's later days, brought him bribes from the French, then helped betray him to the Whigs. It was the dagger of the Irish coachman that did for poor old Rupert. I thought I would be cleverer but I caught a stupid cold. That put me in your power instead of you in mine. Yes, I poisoned Blanche. What of it? I tired of her silly virtues. Why taunt me with what we know?

"You enjoyed the blood sacrifices we made here. You induced me, through the agency of other people, to open the foundlings' home to procure victims. Now, you rebel against me, turn on me and are waiting to tear me."

Lord Fennel sat up and thrashed out wildly with his arms as if pushing something from him. Then, he cried:

"Aisha, Aisha, my masterpiece, my work of art live for me. Be beautiful. Be as I conceived you. Breathe, move, speak, wife, child slave of my desire."

A miracle happened before my eyes. For a moment the lady standing beside me near the bed appeared to regain the bloom of health. Her face lost its hag-like shriveled quality and bloomed as I had first seen it. Her carriage assumed its former grace. Her body regained its exquisite proportions. That lasted, however, only an instant. The patient sank back exhausted upon the bed. Aisha resumed the look of disease and decay which had so shocked me, and her beauty faded out as quickly as it had reappeared.

By now, the old peer's breath was coming in sobs. I recognized Shane-stoke's breathing and knew that the end was close at hand. For the first time in hours, Aisha spoke. She said:

"We have only a few minutes to live."

I spoke brusquely. "You must not say things like that."

COULD it be possible that she really loved that old scoundrel? I must be on my guard. She might have a knife or a vial of poison concealed on her to take her own life as soon as he breathed his last. She was speaking again. She said:

"No, Doctor, you don't understand. I know what you are thinking, but that is not it. I will explain the way it is. You could hardly be expected to know. I am not exactly human as you understand it. In one way of looking at it, I am not a person at all. You see, Lord Fennel actually made me, created me according to his conception and desire from the inchoate elemental substance of which all things are made. That substance is plastic. Your every thought stirs it. When the thought is sufficiently intense, it takes form, living form, and lives for a time for good or evil. Only the power which motivates the universe can mould that substance into forms which continue and evolve to greater and greater perfection. A developed individual, however, can, by occult methods which I do not know, create a being like me, which lives and moves, according to his fancy and has life while the will that endows it can hold its substance together. Some of these elementals outlive their makers, but not a type as highly organized as I am.

"So you see, I was born full-grown, as you see me now, or more properly, as you saw me, in the laboratory of Lord Fennel who willed me into being.

"His laboratory was my birthplace and my bridal bed.

"I know what he willed me to know. I exist on the model he outlined. I have some independence of thought. I act and speak and feel as a normal human being. Unfortunately, I have the in-

tense desire to live. Everything that has life wants to continue living. My life depends, however, on his life and his will. When he passes to another plane, that will cease to hold sway and I cease to exist."

"I can scarcely believe," I said, too stupefied to speak.

"I wish your limited conception was nearer the truth but you will soon learn," said Aisha hopelessly.

Just then, a choking sound came from the bed. Aisha grasped my hand and clung to it as to some hope of rescue. My fingers closed over her small hand with a pressure of futile encouragement.

The sick man writhed on the bed in one last convulsive effort of life and then lay still.

**WHAT** happened at that moment was one of the most horrible incidents that ever befell me. The woman's hand which I held clasped in mine dissolved. My hand closed on itself. My fingers rested against each other. Aisha was gone. She was literally gone, vanished. There was not a shred of her, not a faint indication that she ever had been there at all.

I felt that I must leave that room, must go somewhere, call Ahmed, get the town on the telephone, send a message to George and Marjory who would be keeping their tryst this evening at old Furman's house. They would be in full possession now. I rushed out of the door to summon Ahmed and tell him that his master was dead. Ahmed was gone.

"Ahmed," I called, and my voice came back to me from the sinister stone walls.

I rushed from room to room for a

few minutes, vainly trying to find someone. The rooms were deserted, all of them, silent but full of sounds—little subtle horrible sounds. My own frightened imagination (or was it more than that?) made them whistles and whispers and the subdued chuckling of evil spirits.

I could stand it no longer. I ran out of the unnatural place, out into the courtyard and away onto the moor. The weather had cleared and a cold moon shone down, but there was something natural and reassuring about the piercing cold.

Well, that's all, and it was the first of many strange things that I've seen battling around hither and yon, but it was among the strangest. I can tell you it's little I wanted to see of the old Lord or his castle or anything that belonged to him after that. They buried him out in the family place, but the country folk shied away from his funeral as if the plague itself were in it.

\* \* \*

**DR. O'MALLEY** paused and remained silent for some time. He went to the window and drew the curtain. I could hear the sound of an arriving milkman and the grumble of early traffic in the street below as the New York dawn came in the window.

"I think I'll be going now," I said.

"Faith, the rising sun looks as if it had a hang-over," said Dr. O'Malley. "But drop around again soon. There's not many that I can talk to so freely about some of these things, and perhaps I'll have a bit of a yarn for you from this world, or the next, or some other."

**"THE SECRET OF SUTTER'S LAKE"**

By Don Wilcox

DECEMBER ISSUE—ON SALE OCTOBER 11



All about him lay that bleak landscape—and the eternal fog!

# THE MAN WHO WENT NOWHERE

By John and Dorothy de Courcy

**Hank Morely got off the bus in the fog, and only then did he discover why the bus had been on time—because Time didn't exist any more . . . !**

**H**ANK Morely pulled his overcoat tightly around his stout frame. The wet coldness of the fog made his round, ruddy face rosier than usual. He strained his eyes peering down the foggy street.

"Sufferin cats! Where is that bus!!"

One of the men standing on the sidewalk looked at him.

"What did you say, professor?"

"Don't call me professor!" Morely snapped. There were times when Henry was very sorry he had ever told his fellow workers that he had once been a science teacher.

The man laughed good humoredly. "Okay then, what did you say, HANK?"

"I just said that blasted bus is later than usual!"

The man fished in his pocket and produced a large turnip watch. "Hmm," he commented. "Your watch must be fast. He isn't due for another minute yet. More than likely he'll be four or five minutes late, though."

The office boy beside Morely grinned impishly. "If you set your watch by the clock on the wall, professor, it's ten minutes fast. I moved the office clock up ten minutes so I could catch this bus."

Hank Morely glared at the boy. "If

I had him in a class of mine for ten minutes . . ." he thought. His thought was interrupted.

"What do ya know, fellas! Here's our bus!"

"Can't be!" a deep voice growled. "He's on time!"

The other voice replied, "Says Hillcrest Heights. That's good enough for me!"

The men crowded aboard. Henry in turn dropped his fare into the box and squeezed himself into a seat. No one sat next to Henry since there was no room. Realization of this only added to Henry's annoyance. His body, shaped like a football, had been the butt of many an office joke.

As the bus started up, Hank carefully set his watch and wound it. "You just wait," he promised them mentally. "Wait till I get that book of mine finished!" Hank's cherub-like face glowed as he pictured Henry Morely, the author and scientist, striding into the office of the aircraft plant. "I'll be generous," he decided. "I'll give them all an autographed first edition."

Henry Morely was different from the average man who is going to write a book. Henry really meant it. He hadn't a doubt in the world but what his book would be published. He hadn't

been sure until today but during his lunch hour he'd stumbled on the one thing his book needed. Proof.

Henry felt so smug, so satisfied. "Just think!" he exulted inwardly. "Ever since mankind was born, there's been another race living right here. Not only under the earth but on top as well all these thousands of years! Destiny is a wonderful thing! It pointed its finger and I, Henry Morely, find absolute, irrefutable proof! Strange that anything so simple should be overlooked for so long. Oh well, all true greatness is based on simplicity!"

Hank Morely had a cliché for every occasion. To him, they were time saving condensations. He also had a routine for everything he did. As a result of this, his mind had much free time. This free time had led him to begin his work and research. Until today, he would have been the first to deny that he took any stock at all in the occult. "Silly trash!" he would have said. But now, he had discovered something. Automatically, his terminology had changed. Now he could call it "Heretofore unknown facts." "Anyway, that's what he had tentatively entitled his book.

"The first paragraph must be both convincing and eye-catching," he decided. "Something like, 'to those who begin this book without knowledge of its contents, I offer to prove in the following pages that the earth both beneath its surface in caves and to a certain extent on the surface, is inhabited by an evil race, human in form.' Inspired! Positively inspired! I mustn't forget that."

**H**ENRY rummaged in his pocket and produced an envelope. On its back he began scribbling his 'inspiration.'

"Now what should I say?" he won-

dered. "Should I reveal my test? No—Better save it for the next chapter. Maybe I'll tell them what the test can do. I have it! 'Included in this book, your author has carefully outlined a simple test which has been named, The Morely Method. By using this, the reader will not only be convinced of the existence of this race but will himself be able to pick them out of a crowd or possibly even his friends or associates. This book is sold with the understanding that if the reader is unsatisfied, he may return it and obtain the purchase price.'"

Quickly, Henry scribbled this also on the back of the envelope. With a satisfied smile, he re-read it. Then a frown crossed his bland face.

"It sounds like an ad for a patent medicine," he admitted to himself. Regretfully, he tore the envelope into bits and dumped them on the floor. The office boy studied Henry for a moment and then leaned forward. His voice was a stage whisper that could be heard by everyone.

"Going to give her the breeze, professor?"

"What?" Henry asked blankly.

"The frail's telephone number ya just tore up."

Henry's ruddy face assumed the color of a tomato. "Why—why—how dare you!"

"Okay, Okay," the office boy yipped. "Don't get sore, professor. Only I wouldn't pass up any good bets. You ain't gettin' any younger, ya know!"

Someone behind Henry snickered. Henry stared at his shoes, his face turning a slightly deeper red. Gradually, his sunny disposition returned. "Oh well," he philosophized. "All great men must suffer before they're recognized." He looked up. The bus was slowing down. The door opened and the office boy climbed off grinning at



Hank.

"'Night Professor!" he called.

Hank smiled tolerantly. "You just wait, young man," he thought. "You'll read my book and brag to all your friends that you used to know me!"

The bus started up again and Henry looked out the window. "Fog's getting thicker," he commented to no one in particular.

The man in the seat in front of him swiveled around. "Sure is," he agreed. "Hope the driver knows the way."

Hank snorted. "He ought to! He's been—" Hank paused and peered at the driver. It was hard to tell from the back, but on close examination Hank saw that he was a new driver. He shrugged his shoulders. "Oh well, he's doing all right so far."

The man in front of Hank pressed his face to the window. "Yup, guess he is. Glad I'm not in your shoes, though. You live at the end of the line, don't you?"

Henry nodded. "I like it out there. I get some fresh air for a change."

The man resumed his peering out the window and Hank settled himself more comfortably in his seat and went back to his rosy dreams.

"I wonder why no one has ever stumbled on this before?" he mused. "All one has to do—" He carefully went over the simple test he had discovered then shook his head. "It's absolutely foolproof!" He chuckled softly. "Of course, this hidden race is pretty sinister," he thought, "but that's all the more reason for exposing them. They aren't going to like that at all! But after everyone tries the Morely test, there'll be no doubt. The whole thing will be exposed!"

Now he was Henry Morely, the crusader, giving the world the weapon to dispose of a menace.

"That's just what they are!" he

thought vehemently, "a menace! Oh wouldn't they love to get their hands on that book! But they won't know anything about it until it's finished! Still—" A new idea struck him. "They can't know anything yet but there's no telling when they might find out. Of course, my notes might be stolen while I'm away from home but they could be re-assembled again. The important thing is the test! And that can't be taken away from me! I'd better watch my step, though. Yes—It won't do any harm to be careful. Extra careful! It's just barely possible that someone else has found out about this. There are a lot of writers who hint about it but they never say anything definitely. Wait till MY book comes out!"

THE bus slowed again, stopped and another passenger disembarked. Henry glanced out of the window. The fog was so thick he could hardly make out any detail. "Still have about half an hour," he noted, and returned to his old line of reasoning.

"Maybe I should get someone to live with me. Or maybe I'd better move into town. I could find a room somewhere. Yes, that would really be safer."

Henry Morely was growing a little apprehensive. He, indeed held life dearly.

"I wonder what 'they' would do," he puzzled, "if they knew about my book and especially about the Morely test. 'They' couldn't very well kill me unless it appeared accidental." Quickly, Hank thought over the possibilities. "No—For a man like me, an accident would have to be extraordinary. More likely, I would simply disappear. Above all, they *must* value secrecy so if they tried anything, it would be kidnaping. If I were to disappear, someone might ask about me, but I doubt it very much. There is such a turnover at the plant,

I'd probably be forgotten. People would assume I had left town."

Suddenly, Henry Morely was afraid. More afraid than he had ever been before in his placid, tranquil life. Then, just as suddenly as it had come, the fear left.

"I can protect myself perfectly," he rationalized. "Tonight, the very instant I get home, I'll write a letter."

The bus stopped several times letting off passengers while Hank phrased and rephrased the letter. Finally he was satisfied.

"Short, simple and direct! I'll leave it with the Office Manager in the morning. I'll seal it in an envelope and label it, 'To be opened in the event of the disappearance of Henry Stover Morely.' Inside it I will say, 'Dear Mr. Glotspers: I shall not try to tell you why I have disappeared or where I have gone. Enclosed you will find a stamped envelope addressed to Dr. J. Herbert Sloan of the University. I am attempting a dangerous but important experiment. After reading the enclosed letter, Dr. Sloan will be better able to explain it to you than I.'

"That should do it!" he thought. Knowing Dr. Sloan's reputation, Henry Morely was quite sure that he would try the Morely test. "Too bad," he mused. "It's such a beautiful letter. Once it is written, though, no one will have to read it."

Henry Morely again felt smug and satisfied. He was no longer Henry Morely, the crusader. Now he was Henry Morely, the master planner.

"It's strange," he speculated, "how anything so simple as the Morely test could be overlooked! Suppose, just suppose, it has been thought of before! One would think that in all these years it would have been stumbled on by accident anyway. Maybe it has! But if so, it was never made public. Why

should anyone keep it a secret! Maybe, they were threatened. That wouldn't stop me! There's nothing they can do to me. I've thought of everything!—What if someone else has thought of this? Maybe the same thing happened to them that I thought might happen to me. Yes—That might account for a lot of unsolved disappearances."

Henry Morely groped for an unsolved disappearance.

"By George, I can't think of any! I know lots of people have, though. Let me see—There was that young heiress in England several years back. No—I remember now. She married a coal miner. I have it! That man in my class! He disappeared didn't he? I know his parents were frantic for a while. No—He was the one that joined the Navy."

Henry Morely bit his lip. "Surely I can think of one!"

**H**ANK glanced around. He was alone on the bus except for two women across the aisle who were gossiping. He laboriously arose from his seat and waddled up the aisle. He seated himself with a groan directly behind the driver and cleared his throat.

"Foggy out, isn't it."

The driver nodded his head.

"Must be hard to drive in weather like this."

Again the driver nodded.

Henry Morely took the conversational bull by the horns. "Driver I've been trying to think of someone who has disappeared."

The driver gave him a quizzical glance in the mirror.

"I—I—mean—someone who has never been found. I mean, do you know of any famous person who has disappeared and never been found?" Hank paused and the driver looked at him more penetratingly than ever.

Henry added lamely. "I'm going to give a little speech at our luncheon club tomorrow. I—I just thought you might know—"

The driver laughed. "Oh I see." There was silence for a minute. "There was a judge, a—what was his name? A—Crater. Joseph Crater," the driver said, apparently having some difficulty remembering.

"Oh yes! He was a judge! And he's never been found?"

The driver laughed softly for no reason. "Not yet," he affirmed.

The bus slowed again and stopped, discharging the two ladies.

"You don't have to stop for me! I get off at the end of the line!" Henry called to the driver as he waddled back down the aisle.

The driver snapped out the lights and Henry settled himself in his former seat. He noticed that he was very drowsy.

"Had a hard day," he yawned. Henry began to dream luxurious dreams of the future. "After my book's published," he mused, "I can stay in bed all day if I want. Yes, I'll even be able to afford someone to bring me my breakfast in bed!" Hank leaned back and sighed.

Now he was Henry Morely the man of wealth. He yawned again and gradually his head nodded forward. His breathing became rhythmical and deep.

**HENRY** awoke with a start. The bus was coming to a stop and the driver snapped on the lights. Laboriously, Henry got up and stretched. The driver was simultaneously lighting a cigarette and changing the sign on the front of the bus. Henry descended the steps, his feet crunching on the gravel. He'd only walked a few feet when the bus began to move again swishing away through the fog.

"Hmm," Hank reflected, "if the other

driver would do that instead of dawdling away his time at the end of the line, I wouldn't have to stand in the cold waiting for him to show up!"

Mechanically, he glanced at his watch. The dim foggy twilight played tricks on his eyes. But no! He looked again.

"Two thirty!" he exclaimed. "That's impossible! Must have slipped a cog or something. Oh well, it isn't a very good watch anyway!"

Absently, he scratched his chin. He jerked his hand away abruptly, tingling with horror. There was a heavy growth of stubble on his face.

"But I shaved this morning!" he said pathetically.

Hank shook his watch experimentally and held it to his ear. It ticked a few times and stopped. He wound it carefully and was even more dazed to discover that it had been completely unwound. A tear trickled down his suddenly old face. He knew it took nearly two days for his watch to run down. Yet it couldn't have been two days! Or could it! He fingered the heard again.

"Yes. It would take two or three days for my heard to grow that much."

He began to laugh hysterically. Between each laugh he said, "I've lost two days! I just came home from work and I've lost two days!"

As suddenly as it had started, the laughter ceased. Henry had a grip on himself again. He was still shocked, but normal. This was no longer Henry Morely, man of wealth. This was Henry Morely, the man.

"If I walk straight ahead down the street, I'll be home," Hank said tonelessly, fearing that if he didn't find his home, he would also lose his mind. His feet crunched on the gravel as he walked, but there was no street! Just rocky barren ground. He zig-zagged back and forth. Beyond the few feet

that he could see in the murky gloom lay only more of the same. After an hour wandering, Hank knew he was lost. Every step he took brought into view more barren ground and more fog.

The initial shock was over now. "It's odd that this light doesn't change any! I've been walking for over an hour and it isn't any darker or lighter."

Henry Morely's mind was reasserting its old stability. Little by little, he began to think, to reason.

"I must be somewhere," he thought, "but where can I be? If the light would only change! Or this blasted fog let up!"

He quickly dismissed from his mind the thought that he might be nowhere. No. There had to be a logical explanation!

"If I only knew in which direction I was walking!"

**H**ANK pivoted slowly around on one heel. Straining his eyes to discern any change in the gray light around him, he found it came from nowhere and yet everywhere. He tried again and again but still he could make out no source of the light. Finally, he sank down on the ground covering his face with his hands.

"Surely there must be some way out!" he said despairingly. "If I walk straight ahead I'll have to come to something!"

An idea struck him. Henry fished in his pocket and heaved a sigh of relief when he found what he sought. It was an ordinary nail, magnetized. Henry used it to fish paper clips out of his desk drawer at the office. Carefully the little man broke a thread from his coat nearly a foot long. He tied a loop in one end and drew it tight over the center of the nail.

"For a rudimentary compass," he

mumbled, "this is rather crude but it should work."

For just a moment there was a flicker of Henry Morely, the great scientist, then it was gone. Somehow imagination didn't fit too well in this world of fantasy.

Carefully, Henry held the thread in both of his hands, resting his elbows on his knees. The nail spun around and around, slowed and stopped, and then reversed its direction. It went first one way and then the other, back and forth, and finally came to rest. But no! It was still moving slightly. Hank held it until his arms ached and his eyes watered from staring at it but at last he had to admit it pointed nowhere.

"There isn't any north," he whimpered. "There has to be a north! But there isn't!"

For a brief instant, his mind tottered on the edge of the abyss. Then it recovered.

"Well, I'll just have to make the best of it," he reasoned. "I'm not even going to try to explain this. Yes. That's a good idea. I'm dealing with a different set of conditions. I'll just wait until I find out what they are and then I'll draw my conclusions."

All this was so much whistling in the dark and Henry Morely knew it. Somehow he couldn't escape the notion though, that if he could keep walking in a straight line, he would eventually reach something. What, he didn't know.

Grimly, desperately, Henry thought, cudgeling his brain. He had it! With his fingers trembling, he took off his overcoat and then his tweed suit coat. He drew his overcoat back on over his shirt sleeves and sat crosslegged on the ground. With the point of his fountain pen, Henry began plucking loose the threads of his suit coat. He unraveled the coat strand by strand and tied them all together until he had a large ball of

twine, hundreds of feet long. Henry stuffed the scraps of his coat in his pocket and stood up, stretching his cramped muscles. He was almost happy now.

"There, hy George! Where there's a will, there's a way! Now if I can only do this accurately enough, I shouldn't have any trouble at all."

**H**ANK embedded his fountain pen in the soil and tied one end of his string to it. Trying to walk as normally as possible, he allowed the twine to fall on the ground at his heels, yard by yard, careful not to disturb it once it fell. Slowly he counted his steps until he reached one hundred. Reaching down with his finger, he marked the exact spot where his toe lay and broke the string and allowed it to remain. He retraced his steps to his fountain pen anchor and made the pen secure with stones after tying another end of string to it. Once again, he followed the path of the first string and when he reached the end, he turned and drew the second string as tightly as he dared, holding it high over his head. Henry lowered the second string carefully to the ground exactly meeting the end of the first string. Again he retraced his steps.

"Now I have it!" he muttered. "Since I naturally tend to walk in a circle, the first chord will be an arc of the circle and the second, the chord of the arc. Now let me see. My pace is approximately thirty inches."

Hank made careful mental calculations, pausing occasionally to measure the distance between the two strings. At last, he found what he sought. The approximate middle. He measured the distance between the two strings with his pocket rule. Henry made his calculations and rechecked them. Finally he had the answer.

"Ha! That's it!" he exclaimed. "Ev-

ery five paces I stop and step one foot to my right. Of course, it won't be straight but it certainly reduces the error to a minimum."

Hank coiled up his two lengths of string and deposited them in his pockets for future use. He picked up his fountain pen and squaring his shoulders, resolutely set off.

"One, two, three, four, five. Step to the right. One, two, three, four, five. Step to the right."

Over and over he mechanically repeated these words. Eventually his watch showed that he had walked for three hours. Henry was very tired. His shoulders drooped. He was very hungry. Thirst didn't bother him too much, since the dampness and the fog kept it to a minimum. When his feet would carry him no further, he stopped. With the butt of his pen, he drew an arrow on the ground in the direction he was traveling. Hank sank to his knees. A moment later he lay full length on the ground, his head cradled on his arms. He was crying.

"If I only hadn't thought up that damn formula!" he sobbed. "They' did this! There's no other explanation!" Impotently his fist beat the earth. At last he went to sleep.

**H**ENRY MORELY awoke stiff and sore. His soft, pudgy body ached in every joint. Hunger gnawed at him from within. He was miserable. The sleep had done him good though, and his mind was much clearer.

"If I only had something to eat!" he groaned. With the thought came action. He rummaged through his pockets and was elated when his fingers encountered a scrap of orange peeling. "In a way I hate to eat this," he mused. "This is the last link between me and my old life."

Slowly, almost gingerly, he gnawed at

the peeling. When it was half gone, he put it back in his pocket. His mouth tasted dry and bitter, but hunger was lessened. Hank felt better and began to take stock of his surroundings again.

"Nothing's changed," he murmured. "The fog, the ground, the light. They're all the same. I wonder if anyone else has ever been here. Here? Where IS here?"

Henry Morely laughed. "If anyone asks me where I've been, I can say I've been nowhere!" He laughed hysterically. "I'm nowhere! Nowhere at all!" With an effort he sobered. "Got to keep a grip on myself. Can't let myself go to pieces."

Hank shuddered. "I wonder if this is what happens to people who find out too much?" Abruptly Henry shut his mind to these questions. Grimly he began his march again.

"One, two, three, four, five—step—  
one, two, three, four, five—step—  
one two, three, four, five—step—"

On and on he went. His feet, legs and back ached. "I've got to keep going! I've got to! If I keep going, I have to end up somewhere!" He paused. "If you keep walking long enough from nowhere, you get to somewhere." He giggled inanely.

On and on and on Henry walked. He began humming marching tunes to himself. That seemed to help. His step became livelier. Hank only knew a few tunes, but he hummed these over and over again. Occasionally he paused to rest. Each time the rest became a little longer. At one of them, he ate the rest of the orange peel. He couldn't even taste it. Now occasionally, he stumbled. His mouth and throat felt parched and sore.

"I want to go home!" he said miserably. "Wherever home is! I want to see something! Anything! Anything but fog and ground!

As Henry staggered along in his mechanical rhythm he giggled when he stumbled. Sometimes he walked as many as ten paces before he remembered to step. Occasionally he stepped to the left instead of to the right. Then he fell. Painfully he sat up. He looked at his skinned hands and at the torn knee of his trousers and began to sob like a little boy.

"I want to go home," he blubbered. "Please take me home!"

HE STRUGGLED to his feet and plodded on, his eyes staring glassily into the fog. He no longer bothered with his periodic right step. His breathing was laborious and rattled harshly in his throat. He wasn't even thinking. Just walking. He fell again. This time his nose began to bleed. Dumbly he looked at the red as he mopped it from his face with his hand. He stretched full length on his stomach, sobbing long shuddering sobs. Weakly he beat at the rocky ground with his fists.

"Let me go home, damn you! Let me go!" There was a long pause. "Please! Please," he murmured thickly. "Let me go home. Let me go home." Henry had a fit of coughing. "I know who did this to me!" he accused the air. "It's the underground people! You—you—send—everybody—here—that—knows too much. Don't you! Why don't you answer me? I know you can hear me! You're—you're—afraid of me! You're afraid of an old school teacher!" Henry stopped shouting long enough to get his breath. "I'm not afraid of you! I never WILL be! Go ahead! Let me die! I'm not afraid to die!"

Henry resumed his sobbing again. "I'm not afraid. I'm not afraid. I—only—want to go home. Go—home—  
Gradually his mind eased down and

down into blackness.

"I THINK he's awake now doctor."

"Good. Good," a deep voice rejoined.

Henry Morely drew a deep breath and opened his eyes. At first he could see nothing. Then his eyes began to focus. A tall, thin, white-coated man was holding his wrist. A nurse stood beside him.

Henry groaned and put a hand to his forehead. He looked at the hand. It was swathed in bandages.

"Where am I?" he asked weakly. "What's happened to me?"

The man turned to the nurse. "Call Dr. Joyce. I think he's normal now."

The nurse scurried out and the tall man turned to Henry smiling. "How are you feeling, old chap?" he asked.

"Miserable," Henry moaned. "What's happened to me?" he repeated.

"I was hoping you could tell us," the man answered, chuckling.

Wearily Henry tried to remember something but couldn't. Another man with a white coat entered the room. He was shorter than the man by his bed but older.

"Well, how's our patient today?" asked the newcomer heartily.

"He seems quite normal, Dr. Joyce," the younger doctor replied.

"That's fine, Rollins," Dr. Joyce said. "I think you've done a very fine job." Dr. Joyce smiled at Henry. "I imagine you still feel pretty bad, don't you?"

"Yes I do," Henry answered pathetically.

"Well, I guess you'll be up and around in no time though." Dr. Joyce turned to Rollins. "By the way, how are his hands?"

"Fine, Dr. Joyce. I just looked at the X-rays and there are no fractures."

Dr. Joyce pulled a chair up beside

the bed. "Well now, Mr. Morely," he began, "That is your name, isn't it?"

Henry nodded his head.

"Well, suppose you tell us a little about yourself."

Henry looked at him blankly. "What do you want to know?"

"Oh, just anything you can remember."

"Well," Henry replied hesitantly, "I'm Henry Morely—and I used to be a school teacher—but I work at the Lockhart Aircraft Company now. I—I'm not married—but I have a niece in Albany, New York."

"Fine, fine," Dr. Joyce interrupted. "Can you tell me what date it is?"

"It was December 30th the last I remember. This, I guess, is the next day. It must be December 31st."

Dr. Joyce pursed his lips. "I see. Do you remember where you live, Mr. Morely?"

"Why yes, I—" Henry paused. "I—I live somewhere in Hillcrest Heights. I—think—that's it. I know I take that bus!"

"What is the last thing that you remember?" Joyce asked.

"Well—I finished work. Then—I caught the bus and rode to the end of the line. Then—I got off the bus and—and—I can't seem to remember what I did after that!"

DR. JOYCE leaned forward. "Mr. Morely," he said gravely, "I want you to listen carefully to what I have to say. Today is January 3rd, 1946. You are suffering from amnesia but you have forgotten only three days. We think this was brought on by the shock of seeing your house burned to the ground. Now, above all, don't worry about this! Someday, you might remember what has happened during those three days. But if you don't, it's a small loss, don't you think?"

Henry nodded. "I—guess—so."

"Fine," Dr. Joyce continued. "The important thing is that you're all right now. You're perfectly normal."

"But—what—what happened to me?" Henry asked.

"Frankly, we were hoping you could tell us, but I can supply some of the details. After you got off the bus, we think you walked up to your house and when you reached there and found it burned down, the shock was simply too great and your mind simply stopped functioning. You wandered around for three days and finally someone heard you crying. These people found you about fifty feet from their home sobbing, 'please take me home' or words to that effect. Your hands and face were badly skinned indicating that you had fallen. Somewhere in your wandering, you had unraveled your suit coat and tied the threads together forming two large balls of string. Candidly, I'd been hoping you could tell us why you did that."

"Unraveled my coat!" Henry's voice was pitiful. "Oh! I was wearing my best suit, too!"

"Oh well," the doctor went on cheerily, "it could have been much worse. At any rate, it's a good thing that you were found when you were! You apparently hadn't had anything to eat or drink and from the looks of your shoes, I would say you had been walking throughout most of the three days. That's the only strange thing about this entire affair! Hillcrest Heights is not thickly populated but even so, I can't understand why you weren't seen before you were!"

Henry moaned slightly. "My best suit gone! My home burned down! What am I going to do?"

Dr. Joyce laughed. "That should be the least of your worries, Mr. Morely. Yesterday, while we were calling

about you, we found that you had your home and belongings well insured. The insurance company declared that they would make a quick settlement to help you out. You'll have enough money to buy a new house and new wardrobe with some left over. Also, the aircraft plant seemed very anxious to have you back at work as soon as possible. They seem to think quite highly of you. Of course, you will have to rest for about a week at least. You've been through a pretty harrowing experience."

"Yes. I think I could use some rest," Henry said.

"Good," Dr. Joyce replied. "We'll leave you alone for a while. I'll be back and see you tomorrow."

HENRY relaxed on his pillow. He smiled. Things didn't seem too bad after all.

"Tell me, Dr. Joyce," Rollins asked in a subdued tone, "do you think he'll ever remember anything of those three days?"

"I would say no," Joyce replied. "The shock was apparently too severe. His reactions would indicate to me that the memory is quite completely walled off. In such cases—"

Their voices became indistinguishable as the door closed behind them. Henry Morely relaxed, smiling. "So they're anxious to have me back at the office," he thought. "They must consider me quite a valuable man! Well, I guess I'm next in line to become Office Manager. Then, maybe even Vice-president! From there, who knows?"

Henry Morely, big business tycoon, went to sleep, still smiling. Of the ride on the bus, there was memory. But of the gray twilight, the barren ground, the fog, of five paces forward and one step to the right, there was no memory. Of his home, of the Morely test, no memory. Of 'them', no memory. It



was still there locked in the brain of Henry Morely, but no man had the key. Again, as it had been many times before, the secret was lost.

Henry Morely slept blissfully on, unaware that for three days he had been

more important than any other man. Maybe, someday, 'Henry Morely's method' will be rediscovered and maybe, this time, its discoverer won't take a ride to nowhere.

THE END

## WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

### WHEN THIRTY THOUSAND PEOPLE DISAPPEARED

ONE of the most fantastic unsolved mysteries in the annals of history occurred in Lisbon on All Saints' Day in 1775. For on this day, thirty thousand people vanished completely from the face of the earth leaving no trace.

The whole thing took only five minutes. At one moment the entire city went peacefully about its business and at the next moment, without warning, a rumbling in the earth preceded one of the most disastrous earthquakes of all times. When the quake began, thousands of panic-stricken citizens rushed to a source of protection on the quay. Constructed entirely of marble blocks, the newly-built quay seemed like the safest place in the city. But it wasn't.

All of a sudden, a deafening roar was heard, and the great waves of the green sea seemed to surge up and up. When the waves settled back, the quay, with all its human burden, had vanished. Not one body, not one stick, not even one piece of debris was ever seen again. And the quay was not the only thing that disappeared, for dozens of wooden boats moored near it, had vanished also. Yet, not one splinter from any of them was ever found.

Perhaps, these people, like those fortunate children who followed the Pied Piper, found that the earth opened up into a better land. The world can only wonder. The disappearance of thirty thousand people remains a mystery yet to be solved.

### HAILSTONES FROM HEAVEN

WHILE the startling revelations about the potency of the atomic bomb and the nuclear energy from which it is derived stir our imaginations, here is a true story of a meteorological mystery that still keeps the scientists guessing—and wondering.

On the morning of September 4, 1886, the quiet peace of one of Charleston, South Carolina's main avenues, was shattered by a bombardment of strange missiles from the atmosphere. At first, the hot stones, falling near the "News and Courier" Building, were regarded with only mild interest. It was concluded that probably some prankster had concocted this inter-planetary joke. But this unusual occurrence was not to have such a simple explanation. For, at 1:30 on the following afternoon, another hail of hot stones seemed to fall straight out of a clear sky. More than a gallon of stones were collected, ranging from the size of

a grape to that of a hen's egg, and falling over an area of 75 square feet.

This time there were a number of witnesses who unanimously declared that the mysterious hail could not have been done by human hand. Moreover, in the light of day there was no place for a prankster to hide, nor was it possible for anyone to manipulate the stones so that they would fall straight down for so great a distance. Yet, there was no whirl-wind or other meteorological disturbance.

The facts could not be denied. There were the stones; and there were the reports of reliable witnesses. But no one could prove what was in everyone's mind. The heavens were silent. It was only left to wonder.

### BROTHERS UNDER THE SKIN

WHAT could be more fantastic than to try to give a blood test to a mummy?

Yet, this seemingly impossible feat has recently been accomplished, with the successful blood typing of Wah, a 4,000 year old Egyptian mummy.

Putting muscle tissue from Wah's arm to delicate chemical tests, Dr. F. B. Candia of the New York Medical College has found that this Egyptian business man, who lived about 2,000 B.C., had blood of Group B in his veins, which is most typical of his modern countrymen. Dr. Candia, to whom the testing of mummy tissue is old business, said that his usual method of mixing the dried remains with diluted serum of blood types, and testing this against red blood cells failed to work with the 4,000 year old tissue of Wah. Instead, he prepared a water extract, such as is used in testing fresh organs, and obtained a definite reaction for blood group B.

Although the blood grouping method was originally designed for use in criminal detection, science has expanded its utility to an ever-widening scope. One of the most fascinating of the uses to which it is put is in the anthropological studies of the human races as in the experiment with Wah. Scientists have found that each race has a characteristic blood type. With this in mind, they have amassed much evidence to prove that widely separated tribes and peoples may have belonged to one race, which over the centuries had been flung to various parts of the globe during great migrations.

Perhaps, someday, this scientific method will show us clearly that we are all brothers under the skin.

Alexander Biede

# SIDE STREET

By LEROY YERXA

THE hansom cab was a product of the eighties and a night club in the Loop evidently used it for a moving advertisement. It was a dilapidated, worn affair with high wheels, enclosed cab, and springs that squeaked in protest each time the wheels turned. Drawn by a half starved mare and driven by an old man with side burns and a black whip, it roamed the streets each night with a placard tacked on each side of it.

*"Try Harry's Bar."*

It was a clever advertising scheme, except through some strange error, Harry's address was not indicated on the placards.

Jim Brady worked for the *News*. Every night at exactly ten fifteen, he left the office, crossed the street to Ryson's and had coffee and doughnuts. Then, with the precision of a clock, Brady left Ryson's at ten thirty, waved at the be-whiskered gent who drove the

old hansom cab, tossed a nickel to the bum outside Ryson's and ran for the elevated.

July third was very hot. Most of the Loop stores were draped with red, white and blue bunting. Flags sagged listlessly in the warm night air. The hansom cab rolled dispiritedly down State Street. The old mare that pulled it waved her tail half heartedly to keep the flies moving.

The hansom was opposite the *News* building when Jim Brady, punctual to the second, came out of Ryson's and waved a friendly hand at the old driver.

Then for the first time in three years, he paused, after tossing a coin to the beggar and stood on the curb watching the slow progress of the hansom. It seemed to him that a certain mystery hung over the old man who sat high up behind the cab snapping his whip at the mare. Two lanterns slung on either side of the hansom flickered feebly.



There came the blast of a shot  
and the coachman reeled from  
his seat to the ground



**Be careful when you walk  
down that s'destreet! These un-  
known by-ways lead to odd places!**

It was as though he was seeing the aged hansom for the first time. The wheels rattled and bumped protestingly along the street. There was the bump-bump of the steel spoked wheels and the *cloppy-clop* of the mare's shoes as they hit the pavement.

He looked at the sign on the side of the cab.

"Try Harry's Bar."

Brady ran a damp finger around under his collar. Perspiration had collected in a drop on the end of his nose.

He longed for something cool to drink. Why not? He stepped down off the curb as the hansom reached him.

"Give me a lift and I'll take up your proposition," he said. "Do I get a free ride to Harry's place?"

The old fellow clucked at his horse and the beast balted. He turned slowly and stared down at Brady with mild, washed out eyes. Then, without a word he pointed his whip at the door of the hansom and nodded.

Brady grasped the door knob and pulled it. From inside came the hot, sultry smell of aged leather. It would be uncomfortable, but now that the idea had occurred to him, he couldn't resist it. Anything to get away from the humdrum routine.

He climbed in quickly, aware of several curious onlookers who gathered at the curb. It was odd, he thought as he closed the door behind him, that with thousands of people walking the street each night, no one had ever thought of this gag before.

The cab wasn't so bad. It smelled musty from being closed, and he rolled down the window in spite of the squeaking protest of the glass.

He heard the driver snap his whip lightly over the horse's head, the wheels moaned their dissent, and then started to roll once more moving noiselessly over the smooth street.

WHERE Harry's Bar was Brady didn't know. His orderly life carried him up and down a few well known streets. The remainder of his time he spent reading proof at the *News* and writing a novel during his evenings. After twenty minutes of bouncing around inside the warm cab, he was beginning to wonder if his search for the unusual hadn't brought something unwelcome upon him.

They turned off State Street and rolled slowly down a dark factory lined alley. He leaned forward, sticking his head out of the open window.

"How far to Harry's?" he asked. The whip snapped again and the hansom gathered speed and rolled around another corner. Brady had to confess he was lost. Each street looked like the other. Each was lighted only by dim bulbs at the corners. Otherwise, dark buildings with no street numbers left him entirely in a strange world.

Fifteen minutes more and he was wiping perspiration from his forehead and growing angry at himself for doing such an idiotic thing.

He tried the door but it was stuck. Besides, it would be foolish to get out now. Evidently the old fellow was taking a short cut to the west side. If he wandered around alone in this neighborhood some bum would probably roll him and take the week's pay he had carefully hidden in an inner pocket.

Half an hour passed. Cursing himself for a fool, and swearing to go through with the thing, if for nothing more than to accustom himself to the unusual, Jim Brady was overcome by the warm night and found himself dozing.

HE AWAKENED with a start. A light flickered in his face sending weird shadows over the black leather seats of the hansom. He sat up and

was aware once more of the close, intolerable heat of the night. It clung to his body bringing sweat out under his clothing. Feeling slightly ill, he ran his finger around inside his collar and ended by unbuttoning it. The hansom stopped. He stared out at the lamp and his eyes widened. It was almost above his head and the illumination was supplied by a single gas flame that emerged from the wick of an old fashioned street lamp. Brady looked around, amazed at the street on which they had stopped.

The sidewalk was constructed of red cobblestones and the road was of the same material. His eyes lifted from the sidewalk and traveled upward, noting the neat white picket fences, the movie like setting of small, neatly built homes.

The door rattled and he turned to find it open, the cabby waiting on the street side of the hansom.

"Harry's Bar, Sir," the old man said. "The fare will be twenty-five cents."

Automatically, Brady got out, found a quarter and paid the driver. Standing there where the entire block was under his scrutiny he found nothing familiar. It was a short block, and seemingly deserted. He glanced at his watch. Ten o'clock. On the far side of the street was a row of small shops, a tavern and a row of hitching posts. The whole thing looked like a main street—1860, as conjured up by a movie prop man. Standing there dumbly, not knowing what to do next, Brady heard the crack of the whip behind him as the hansom moved away. He looked beyond the block, or rather, tried to. Somehow his eyes couldn't penetrate the dark sky. He knew he must be a long distance from the loop or lights from the high buildings would have been visible. Yet, the night seemed clear and the sky deserted.

*He couldn't see beyond this one strange little block.*

It frightened him. Yet, to be frightened when nothing had happened to alarm him, was foolish. He turned toward the cab once more, only to find that it had evidently turned a corner and was out of sight. He was cut off from the last familiar thing he knew.

Brady forced back his fear and walked slowly across the street toward the saloon. Gaudy, gold-leafed letters told him that this was Harry's Bar. He heard the tinkle of a piano inside, hesitated and pushed open the swinging doors. Someone had a damned clever idea here. He faced a long, smoke filled room. To the right was a bar that disappeared into the dimness toward the rear of the establishment. Men lined the bar. The place was full of customers.

He, Brady, had been a fool. Night life wasn't one of his pastimes and now he realized just what a clever place Harry's was. Evidently an entire street had been constructed to promote local color. Even Harry's customers wore the gaudy rather laughable costumes of the last century.

Brady walked to the bar and sat down. A bartender, ruddy and heavy set, approached him. The bartender had a puzzled, almost angry look on his face. He sported a handle bar mustache.

"What'll it be, sport?" he asked. He stared at Brady with fascination.

"Make it a beer," Brady said. He tossed a quarter on the bar. The beer came sliding toward him and with it, twenty cents change.

"Hey, you made a mistake," he said, and pointed to the twenty cents.

The bartender walked toward him, stared at the dimes carefully and shook his head.

"Beer's a nickel," he said. "You got the right change."

With an odd, 'This Shouldn't Happen To Me' feeling, Brady started to drink.

As he did so, he realized that his presence was creating a stir in the saloon. Girls, half a dozen of them in various stages of collapse, moved past giving him the eye. Men on either side turned to look him over. Finally the man at his right, a slim melancholy character, turned and put down his empty beer glass.

"You a stranger here?" he asked.

**B**RADY looked the man over carefully. He was on guard. His better sense told him he must be careful, very careful.

"Yes," he said. "I—I didn't realize that it was to be a costume party."

The thin man's face turned very red. The bow-tie jumped up and down rapidly, assisted by a huge Adam's Apple.

"You wouldn't be trying to be funny, would you?"

Brady tried to grin. It was a complete flop.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I haven't been here before. I'm—I'm puzzled."

The thin man turned away, choosing to ignore him. Brady, feeling ill at ease, arose and wandered toward the back of the room. Eyes followed him. He could feel them, dozens of eyes, boring into the back of his neck. Suddenly even though his own suit was neat and well pressed, he felt shabby. He didn't fit into the gaudy, checkered scenery. His own mustache was small, well trimmed. It looked like a line of black soot, compared to the gaudy handle-bar upper lips around him.

His eyes stopped suddenly on the poker table.

Here was something he recognized. Here was a spot where he felt at home. He wandered toward the group of men who sat at the table. There were eight of them. He felt the comforting wad of bills in his pocket. Every night at the *News* office he managed to sit in on a

poker session for an hour or two. He knew his cards pretty well.

He walked around the table trying not to disturb the players. One chair was vacant. He stopped at the empty chair and leaned on it. Then he saw that his presence hadn't gone entirely unnoticed. Directly across from him, a small clean shaven man sat with a stack of silver before him. At first Brady thought the money was in fifty cent pieces. Then he realized that they were silver dollars. There must have been five hundred of them stacked in shining piles of twenty five each. A hand reached out and touched the silver. His eyes traveled up the arm to the shoulder, and the calm, rather friendly face of the man. He must be in his early fifties. He smiled.

"Want to sit in?"

Brady did. A girl stood behind the man. She had the same small bones, the kindly gray eyes of the man she watched. She smiled at Brady and it made his whole body relax. He nodded to her and grinned. He sat down.

The men around him were quiet, absorbed in the game. The pot was played and the quiet man took it. They dealt the cards again.

Brady picked up five pasteboards, tried to hide the pleasure that three aces gave him and settled back. He used every ounce of control to keep from staring over the cards at the girl across from him.

"Can you open?"

"Huh?" He felt like a fool. "I'll—I'll pass."

He passed with three aces. There were three more men who would have a chance at it. He preferred to wait. The last man opened and discarded two cards. He did likewise. The man across the table smiled. He kept his original hand.

Brady held his aces, and a king for

a kicker. He filled a full house and waited. The pot built itself up slowly until it totaled fifty dollars. Brady found his stack of bills going down swiftly. He brought the remainder of them out and placed them before him. There was a certain tenseness around him. It was a feeling that he couldn't quite figure out, but it worried him. The man across the table and Brady were alone now.

Brady placed a fifty dollar bill on the table. The man across the table ignored the silver before him. He reached into his pocket and drew out a bill. He placed it on top of the pile. Outside of Brady's own money, this was the first bill that had come to light.

Brady stared at it uncertainly.

It had 1000 printed on all four corners. He gasped, unable to hide his dismay. The girl's eyes were smoldering, angry. There was no expression in the other man's eyes.

"I'll cover it," Brady said. He didn't know why he said it. He couldn't cover fifty bucks more, much less a thousand.

TO HIS amazement they didn't question him. His competitor laid down his cards slowly, two kings, three queens. Brady sighed. He dropped his aces and kings. He reached for the pot. A hand descended on his from the right. He turned quickly and saw two bartenders standing behind his chair. What was wrong? The play had been fair enough. He had won. They didn't have to see his money. The man across from him reached slowly and withdrew his bill. He picked up a ten dollar bill and a quarter, both from Brady's roll. He looked at the bill and smiled. Then he passed it to the girl. He studied the quarter.

"Lock him up, boys," he said. "The man's loco. According to the date, this

money was made in 1942. The bills are too small. I never did hear of a counterfeiter who got his dates and sizes both mixed. How in hell can he expect to pass 1942 money in 1840? It'll be a long time before this stuff is good."

Brady knew he was trapped. But how, why? In some manner they had pulled a hoax on him. The hansom driver had something to do with it. The girl? He twisted around in his chair, coming to his feet with one desperate surge of strength. Something hit him a terrific blow on the head and stars flashed in his eyes. He cried out and the room whirled around him at a furious rate. He slumped on the floor.

\* \* \*

Jim Brady rolled over, landed with a crash on the floor and swore. He sprang to his feet and at once his head reminded him that it was aching. He stood up holding it with both hands.

"Where in hell . . . ?"

The cell was small, with an iron door and a small, barred window. The rest of the room was constructed of bricks and included one small flat bunk less springs.

He was in jail. He remembered the argument at the saloon and the blow on the head.

*Counterfeiter—1840?*

He sat down on the bunk. His pounding head didn't deaden the horror of his memories.

It was pretty clear that something impossible had happened to him. This was a trip backwards into time, but not the romantic adventurous trip he might have found in some dime magazine. This was a case of picking the wrong horse. The horse that trotted sedately back through a hundred years and landed him on a typical side street in the middle eighties.

He swore again as he remembered the girl with the gray eyes and the man

who played poker. Ironically he had protected his money carefully, only to find that its very newness had betrayed him.

He sat for a long time, trying to figure out what he would say when they came to take him from the cell. It would be hard to convince these people that his money was good. That he had been returned to them from the future. He found it hard to believe the story himself. It was too damned fantastic.

"Hello."

Brady glanced up startled. The girl with the gray eyes stood just outside the cell door.

"Hello," he said. "Say, do you suppose I can get something to eat? It's been a long time . . ."

He heard her laugh and a key rattled in the door. It swung open and she came in. She held a covered dish in her hands. He watched her slim, graceful figure as she crossed the room and placed the dish on his bunk.

"Something warm for you," she said. "Dad felt sorry for you. He thought I should come over and see you."

Brady managed a grin.

"I'd feel better if you had decided to come of your own accord," he admitted. "Perhaps you can tell me just what I've walked into."

The door closed and locked again. The jailer's head was visible in the window. She looked up at him quickly, then back at Brady.

"I came to bring you food," she said a little sharply. "I'm afraid that's all we can talk about."

**B**RADY lifted the towel from the dish. He knew that she had looked up at the jailer for a purpose. She didn't want to talk. His eyes lighted at the sight of the dish of fresh corn, green beans and steak. He whistled.

"Darned if I'm not hungrier than I

thought," he said.

She watched him eat and her face was flushed with pleasure.

"You came in the hansom, didn't you?" she asked in a low voice. He hardly heard her. He waited a moment, then keeping his voice low answered:

"Yes, but I don't know how or why. I fell asleep and when I awakened . . ."

She leaned forward and spoke sharply so that her voice carried beyond the cell.

"I can't help you," she said. "You've committed a crime and I won't listen to your threats."

She stood up eyes blazing. For an instant he was startled. Then he knew that her words were meant for the jailer. He was turning the key in the cell.

He followed her to the door. She turned suddenly and whispered.

"Wait! The hansom will come again."

Then for no reason at all, she slapped him full across the cheek. It was a light touch, almost a caress. His face turned red but not from pain. Her fingers were almost a promise.

"I won't come here again," she said as the door closed. "Jailer, get me out of this terrible place."

"Yes'um," Brady heard the man say. "Like I said, these jailbirds ain't fit . . ."

His voice drifted away down the corridor.

Brady sat down. She had said the hansom would come again. What had she meant? For the time being, he didn't care. The girl with the gray eyes lived in 1840 and he didn't want to leave until he knew more about her. Brady had to admit to himself that it would be very unpleasant to return to 1944 and leave the only girl he had ever fallen in love with to live out her years in another century lost completely and forever to him.



"YOU'RE going to get out all right," the jailer said. He twisted his mustache savagely and led the way down the hall. "Mr. Shelby is mighty powerful around here, and what he says goes. Darned if I see, though, why he wants a no good crook like you around."

The sunshine of the street struck Brady's eyes and he closed them quickly.

He heard the girl with the gray eyes. "Dad wants to see you right away. He's waiting at the Monolith."

Brady opened his eyes with difficulty. It was the same street he had seen the night before. The clean, well painted little homes stretched up one side of it. Men and women wandered back and forth from the shops. The sky was bright above. He looked down toward the end of the block. His eyes refused to penetrate beyond the last house. It was as though a blank curtain had been drawn at either end of the street. There was nothing but sky and space beyond the last cobblestone. He dragged his eyes back to the girl.

"Thanks for getting me out of there," he said.

She smiled and put her arm through his. It was warm and firm.

"To the Monolith, sir," she said, "and don't spare the horses."

The Monolith was a small, three story building two doors away from Harry's Saloon. The lobby was filled with green plush chairs. The desk clerk, a pimple-faced youth, dozed behind his pine desk. They passed him, and the girl led Brady up two flights of stairs. She knocked at a door marked in black numbers—302.

"That you Anne?"

She opened the door by way of an answer and nudged Brady inside. "My father, Sam Shelby," she said.

Sam Shelby stood up. He was dressed in a neat, black suit. His tie was miss-

ing and the desk where he sat served as a bar. He picked up a bottle and poured a glass of clear whiskey.

"Your name's Brady," he said. "Have a drink Jim."

Brady had been forced to give his name at the jail.

"Thanks," he said awkwardly. "And thanks, also, for getting me out of jail."

He sat down near the desk and Anne perched beside her father, arm about his shoulder. Shelby took a long drink, put down his glass and stared at Brady.

"You're from outside."

"Outside?"

Shelby shook his head.

"From the future," he said. "You came here in the hansom."

"Oh," Brady said and took a gulp of whiskey. It went down like seething, white hot fire.

"Yes," he admitted. "The hansom has been a great curiosity to me for some time. For some darn fool reason, I climbed into it. Perhaps you can tell me just what happened."

Shelby grinned.

"Sorry," he said. "I can only tell you that old Reeby who drives the hansom got the idea himself. It's sort of a practical joke he plays on people. It isn't very funny to anyone but him. You're here now so we can talk business."

Brady scowled. "Business?"

Shelby tossed off the remainder of his whiskey and started to pour another glass.

"Well," he said, "I had you released from jail because I'm the only one who got any of your bad money and I refused to press charges against you. As long as you're under my wing, so to speak, I thought you might like a job. I've got one for you."

THINGS were happening fast. However, while Brady was close to Anne,

he didn't worry much. He couldn't leave here unless he had to. The thought of working for her father appealed to him.

"What's the job?" he asked.

Shelby's grin vanished. He leaned forward and his voice dropped.

"I want you to kill Reeby," he said.

Brady's empty glass almost fell from his fingers. He stood up slowly.

"I'd rather go back to jail," he said.

Shelby sprang to his feet. Anne's face turned very white and her fists clenched.

"Wait," she cried.

"Yes," Shelby said. "For God's sake don't fly into a fit until you hear what I have to say. You're from the future. You can get away with it. I have to stay here and if anything happened between Reeby and me, I'd face the music."

"And just how would I escape the death penalty?" Brady asked grimly. "In the event that I had any reason to kill the old man?"

Shelby sank back into his chair. Anne moved quietly to Brady's side and put her hand on his arm.

"Daddy isn't bad," she said. "You see, Reeby is playing a grim practical joke. Almost every week he brings someone out of the future and throws him into the society of Side Street. Sometimes they go crazy and try to fight their way out. Then they are jailed, — or — or killed. Reeby has thrown everything into an uproar. The past and the future cannot live side by side. Each time, it ends in violence."

"Reeby is the old man who drives the hansom?"

"Yes," she said. "Don't you understand . . . ?"

"I'd still be a murderer," Brady drew away from her gently.

"But you wouldn't," she said. "Reeby lives in 1840. Somehow he practices

black magic. It is he who is a murderer. He brings people here and sooner or later they are faced with tragedy. He has ruined the lives of some and sent others to their graves."

A strange suspicion flooded Brady's mind.

"If this is all such a mystery," he said, "how do you two know all about it?"

The room was silent. Father and daughter exchanged glances. Finally Shelby spoke.

"That's our business," he said. "I'm not getting myself into trouble because of Anne. She'd suffer also. Otherwise, I'd have murdered Reeby a long time ago.

"Dad," Anne said sharply.

The older man didn't smile. His lips were pressed into a straight hard line.

"I would like to," he said, "but I can't, not while you're here to suffer with me."

Brady didn't know what to think—to say.

"You'd be killing a man who lives in 1840," Shelby said. "You live in 1944 and when you get back to your own time, they can't bother you about a murder that happened years before you were born."

Brady tried to think clearly. Anne wanted him to do it. He knew that. He had already decided that he loved Anne. Now he wasn't so sure—of anything.

"I'll think about it," he said miserably. "I need sleep and time to think it over."

Shelby stood up again.

"I took a room down the hall for you," he said. "Come along."

Anne stood at the door as they went out. There were tears in her eyes.

**J**IM BRADY awakened. He felt fine except for the dull pounding in his

chest. He rolled over in bed trying to adjust himself to the strange room. Now he remembered. Room at the strange little hotel. Shelby had told him to rest and Brady, exhausted from the hours spent in the cell, had slept for a long time. Now his body was wet with perspiration. The heat rolled in through the open window and seemed to lay over him like a heavy blanket. He sat up.

Was there something he was supposed to do?

Then his face turned an angry red. Shelby wanted him to kill the old hansom driver, Reeby. Brady climbed out of bed and found a large wash basin and pitcher of water on the old fashioned dresser. He poured some water, doused his face in it and smoothed out his hair as best he could.

Shelby puzzled him. Shelby looked like a man of about thirty five. Still Anne must be close to twenty-five if he was any judge. Father and daughter? Perhaps not.

Brady fumbled with his shoe laces and tried to think clearly. Shelby had one purpose in freeing him from jail. Shelby wanted Reeby out of the way. Shelby wasn't a coward. Why didn't he do the job himself?

Brady broke a shoe lace, swore softly and tied it together. Was Anne, Shelby's daughter, or his wife? Brady couldn't be sure. One thing he was positive of. Anne wasn't happy and Anne approved of the plan to get rid of Reeby.

Brady stood up. He shook his head, trying to rid himself of the thoughts that swept through his tortured mind.

A high quavering voice drifted up through the open window from the street. He went to the window and stared at the baked, dry pavement.

It was Reeby with his dilapidated hansom cab. Beside Reeby, was the drunkest man Brady had even seen.

The drunk had evidently just clambered out. The drunk had one hand on Reeby's shoulder and Reeby looked even worse in the daylight. His face was thin and ugly. His mouth was open wide in a grin and the grin showed a line of broken yellowed teeth.

"Nice of you ol' man," the drunk was crying. "Darn nice of you. *Skey*, where's another bar, huh? Where's another bar? I'm getting thirsty."

Reeby turned the drunk in the direction of Harry's Saloon and gave him a quick push. The drunk staggered three steps and fell flat in the street. Reeby climbed casually back atop the hansom, made a clucking sound in his throat and the hansom moved away.

Brady knew where the drunk had come from. He watched as the man stood up staggered toward the sidewalk, nodded his head in a pleased manner and disappeared behind the swinging doors of Harry's Saloon. A tight ball of anger welled into Brady's throat.

Reeby kept a steady line of traffic moving into 1840. What happened when people of the two ages met? According to his own experience, the results weren't pleasant.

**B**RADY made a decision. He moved into the hall silently and past Shelby's door with as little noise as possible. In the lobby he nodded at the clerk and walked across the street toward Harry's. As he entered the saloon, he noticed a group of men arguing loudly at the far end of the bar. He moved toward them slowly. Then he heard the drunk.

"What the hell kind of plashe is thish? I want a drink. My credit's good any plashe in town."

"Not here it aint," a low voice answered. "Now get the hell out of here and into some civilized clothing. You're the tenth guy who's tried to get smart

around here. The rest of them are lying quiet now out in the grave-yard."

Brady moved toward the group. Grave-yard. It wasn't hard to understand. Two ages clashing in dress, thought and emotions. Almost like two races of people, misunderstanding each other. A street of the past, not understanding men of the future. His jaws tightened. He pushed a man aside gently and tried to work his way into the group.

"Hey there," the man he pushed, shouted. "Look, here's the one they t'brew in jail last night."

Angry faces turned toward him. His fists were clenched. He kept pushing his way forward.

"Coupla nuts," someone said. "Throw them both out. Better yet, string 'm up and get rid of 'em for good."

He heard men muttering angrily around him. Big brawny men, drunk and angry. It was a dangerous combination.

He had reached the drunk now. The man was evidently from a good family. Brady turned to the bartender. The fellow was big, plenty big. He wasn't in a mood for any more funny business.

"I'll take care of this man," Brady said evenly. "He's drunk. He didn't mean to get tough. He can't hold his liquor."

The bartender grinned. It wasn't a pleasant expression.

"You keep out of this," he said.

Brady felt an unsteady hand on his shoulder.

"Yea," it was the drunk. "You keep out of thish. That bastard . . ."

The room was suddenly very still. Brady stood there, wondering what to do next. The bartender's face leered at him. Brady felt himself being pushed aside as though he were a child. They were too many for him. The bartender

cleared the bar with one leap. He landed on his feet like a cat. Before Brady could fight his way to the drunk's side, the bartender's fist lashed out savagely and caught the drunk in the face. The drunk's head snapped around and something in his neck gave way. A loud "pop" came from inside his throat and he sank to the floor, crying and gurgling a protest. He lay very still.

Slowly the circle of men grew wide around him. The bartender stood above the inert figure. His arms hung at his sides. His eyes were wide and frightened.

The drunk didn't move. His body flopped like a discarded scarecrow, neck twisted into a queer unnatural position.

The bartender looked up slowly and around at the frightened faces of the men near him.

"He," He stammered, his face suddenly very pale. "He called—me—a . . ."

Someone put a hand on his shoulder.

"No one blames you, Nick," his friend said. "We all heard what he said. I guess he deserved it."

The bartender stood there realizing gradually what he had done.

"He—called—me . . ." He paused, scowling. "I ain't taking that from no one."

Brady moved backward until he reached the door. He couldn't blame these people. He couldn't blame the man who had killed with one blow of a sledge hammer fist. These men of 1840 didn't understand. Brady understood. He understood that senile, scheming old Reeby had played another of his little practical jokes. Reeby wouldn't play any more. Brady's sense of humor ran in another direction. Unlike Reeby, he could not see anything funny in death.

**B**RADY found a note on his bed.

"Daddy tried to find you when

you were out. Will you come to his room at once. It is very important.

Love, Anne.

"Love?" Brady repeated the word over and over. It made him hot and cold at the same time. Love? There was something odd about the whole Shelby set up. More and more, he felt that Shelby couldn't be over thirty. That made Anne as a daughter, impossible. Anne as a wife sounded genuine. But Brady loved Anne. He had recognized that fact long ago and ceased to fight it.

He couldn't have Anne. To begin with, he wouldn't run away with another man's wife. That wasn't in Brady's code. What if Shelby was her father? What would happen if he, Brady, tried to take Anne ahead in time. A woman of twenty-six, living in 1840, would be . . . Brady shuddered. Anne, living in 1944—one hundred and four years old.

He sat on the edge of the bed and read the note again. "Love—Anne." It stuck in his mind, giving him the desperate, terrible feeling that he faced a problem that couldn't be solved.

For a long time he waited. No one came to the door. He wasn't hungry, though it had been morning that he last ate. It grew dark outside. Still Brady sat on the bed, his head on his hands, wondering.

He sprang to his feet suddenly. The *clap-clap-clap* of hoof beats sounded on the pavement. He had to go now. Had to leave the one thing he had ever cherished. Had to murder, to save, God alone knew how many others like himself from walking into the same trap he had walked into.

For sixty long seconds he stood before Shelby's door fighting off the temptation to go in. To take Anne in his arms and, come what might, fight for her against Shelby, against the whole

cockeyed world.

Then he plunged blindly down the stairs and into the street. He crossed the street and entered Harry's. A small crowd had already started to drift in for the evening. Oddly, they seemed to pay little attention to his presence. Death this afternoon kept them from gathering in groups, from talking. A silence hung over the saloon. Brady knew what he was looking for. He found a stool at the bar opposite the cash register. A heavy, menacing-looking revolver lay on the polished mirror beside the cash box. He had seen it there that afternoon.

Brady ordered a drink and the bartender brought it quietly. He looked long and hard at Brady. Then, about to speak, he changed his mind and moved away. Brady waited, trying desperately to plan a way to get that gun. It was a good six feet over the bar and to the glass on which the weapon lay.

He drank quickly, then toying with the empty glass, stood up suddenly. His feet were on the rail. This brought him well above the bar. Without a word he aimed the glass and threw it with all his strength at the mirror behind the bar. He aimed it to hit a good ten feet away, near where the bartender was standing. The room was dim, and his movement went unnoticed by most.

The glass hit and shattered. The mirror broke in a dozen places and the bartender was showered with big pieces of flying glass. He threw up his hands and cursed loudly.

Every eye in the room went to the mirror and the swearing bartender. Brady leaned far over, hooked one finger around the grip of the revolver and pulled.

"There's the guy who did it," someone said.

The place was suddenly a madhouse.

Brady sprang toward the door, the revolver gripped firmly in his right hand. He turned and emptied one chamber into the other mirror. The sullen roar of the gun drowned all other sounds for an instant. Men who had started to run, halted, frightened and uncertain.

**B**RADY reached the street. He thought he saw a flash of a white dress near the door of the Metripol Hotel. He moved fast, not giving it a second thought. Reeby and his dilapidated coach stood fifteen feet from the entrance of the saloon. Between him and the hansom was Sam Shelby. Shelby was grinning.

As Brady passed him, Shelby shouted:

"Go to it, Son, and don't fail me."

Brady didn't have time to pause. He hit the cab with both feet, firing as he opened the door. The bullet crashed into the pavement under the horses' hooves. Reeby, seated, half asleep atop the cab, was jerked back and almost fell off as the frightened beast plunged down the street.

Brady looked back. A crowd had gathered outside Harry's. Shelby stood on the sidewalk, a pistol in his left hand. He was looking at the crowd, but his free arm waved at Brady. Brady grinned. Nothing outside of a blank wall would stop Reeby's cab now. The horse was galloping swiftly toward the end of the street.

"Jim . . ."

Startled, Brady twisted about in his seat. In the far corner partly visible in the darkness was Anne Shelby.

"You . . . ?"

She looked at him, her eyes wide with fright and hope.

"I had to come," she said. "I—I love you, Jim."

He didn't try to move closer to her.

"I'm going to kill Reeby," he said.

"It isn't pleasant to be hunted down with a killer."

She leaned forward suddenly.

"*Good Lord, Jim.*"

He waited. The hansom was bouncing and swaying from side to side. Reeby's frightened voice came down to them from the roof of the hansom.

"You've got to kill Reeby before we reach the end of the street. *Kill him in 1840.*" Anne said.

"I'm a fool," Brady thought. "A damned fool. If I kill him after we leave 1840, I'll be wanted in Chicago. *If I kill him now . . . ?*"

As though she read his thoughts, Anne went on excitedly.

"*If you kill him now, he'll be dead for over a hundred years. There will be nothing left . . .*"

It was dangerous but he had to. Had to do it in those few remaining seconds. He pushed the door open and climbed out on the narrow running board of the hansom. Reeby tipped and swayed above him. Jim Brady clung grimly to the side of the hansom. He drew the gun from his pocket and aimed it at Reeby's head.

The hansom moved swiftly toward the mist at the end of the street. Then, suddenly, the horse disappeared from sight. With a prayer, Brady pulled the trigger. The charge almost threw him from the side of the hansom. Reeby screamed and turned half around. His ugly yellow face was visible to Brady. Then, like a cardboard cut-out, Reeby fell sidewise and toppled over, into the mist.

Brady could see nothing. The whiteness around him was like a blank sheet of paper. He struggled back into the cab.

The cab slowed down, then stopped. Brady was panting.

"Did you . . . ?" It was Anne, her face close to his, pleading for him to

say the right thing.

He nodded, unable to speak.

HE STARED out of the window of the ancient hansom. The world was quiet, very quiet. His eyes widened and a slow smile twisted his lips. He knew where he was now. He recognized the row of darkened factory buildings. He heard the sound of traffic in a distance and saw the glow of the Loop lights in the sky. He turned to Anne.

"We're safe," he said, "in Chicago."

She nodded.

"I know," she said simply. "It's good to be home."

Home? The smile vanished and a frown took its place. Anne had not changed. Anne was the same; young, lovely and smiling at him. More bewitching than ever.

Home?"

He repeated the word aloud and she nodded.

"Jim, I have to tell you. Shelby wasn't my father. Don't you see? My father and mother are dead. They died several years ago, here in Chicago. This is my home as well as yours."

He was completely baffled.

"I don't understand."

She moved closer to him.

"Jim—Reehy took me into the past, just as he did you. Only I was fortunate. I met someone who protected me and tried to get me back here where I belong."

"Shelby?"

She nodded.

"Shelby's my great Grandfather. He found clothing for me and pretended that I was his daughter, who had been away for many years. They didn't question me."

"And that's why Shelby asked me to kill Reehy? He wanted to send you back here with me."

She opened her purse and took out

several silver dollars.

"Here is proof," she said, and put them into his hand. "You'll find they were minted in 1942. Aunt Gloria sent them to me from Nevada."

He swept her into his arms, forgetting the hansom and Reehy, forgetting the past. He tasted her lips as he had wanted so badly to do from the first. When he released her, he said:

"I don't want any proof. I've got what I want most."

She wasn't satisfied yet.

"Don't you see," she said softly. "That Great Grandfather Shelby would have killed Reehy himself, but he would have been punished for the murder. He couldn't take that chance even to save me."

Brady wasn't thinking very clearly at that moment. She was still too close too warm against him.

"I—don't—see . . ."

She kissed him gently on the chin.

"Because, you dummy, if Great Grandfather Shelby was hanged for murdering Reehy, you couldn't have saved me. He didn't, really have a daughter or even a wife, when you and I were with him. He didn't meet Great Grandmother until 1842."

She hesitated, leaning on his shoulder.

"If he had gone to the gallows he could never have married. There wouldn't be an Anne Shelby to send back to Chicago. I would never have existed."

A great wave of understanding swept over Jim Brady.

"We're going to take care of that once and for all," he said solemnly. "From tonight on, your name will be changed to Brady. Mrs. Jim Brady."

The old horse stood patiently hitched to the dilapidated hansom cab. He swished his tail from side to side, occasionally, and waited.



# ATALA RIM

By J. S. HARRISON

**Atala Rim was his name—but that wasn't the only odd thing about him. He had a strange power**



Down below us bombs crashed while above all was blue and silent

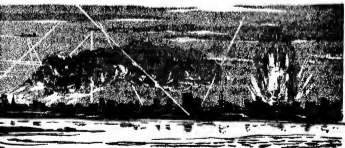


**T**HE first time I met Atala Rim I thought I was dreaming . . . literally. The second time was no dream, for he took me with him into the land between life and death. There is no name for it, nor is it a land, but a condition. Many have ventured into that "land" in their dreams and dismissed what they did or saw there as the runaway imagination of the ego released in sleep from the censor of consciousness. But once again you wake from such an adventure and it seems as true or truer than waking reality. If only you knew *how* true it was . . . *is*.

I had gone for a short visit to Mexico. Necessarily short because my vacation was for only two weeks and my funds were as limited as my time. Two couples of us, none of us speaking more than a few words of Spanish. At this particular moment I was alone in a little town . . . village, really . . . huddled under the bleak side of a frowning mountain. Not much there to see: the square with an old, sun-parched, neglected church, some dirty shops, winding streets of earth-covered adobe houses. The two wives had decided to investigate the market, searching, as I recall, for a particular kind of tin tea

pot painted in garish colors and just big enough to serve coffee for two! My friend was drinking beer in a fly-blown, dirty saloon. I would ordinarily have been with him, for the beer wasn't bad and it was cheap, but I had a headache from the awful sun and the dust, the old sinuses were kicking up and I knew alcohol in any form would only make the headache worse. So I went off to snapshot the old church with my dollar camera. Thanks to that glaring sunlight a dollar camera was almost as effective as a good one!

You've seen such churches, or pictures of them. Not very romantic in reality, except when you ponder on the time and cost of building them, the pennies from poverty stricken people necessary to rear this huge, ornate structure. And now it was deserted by priest or parishioners. In a ruined wall was a bronze bell still hung on worn oak supports. I had to have a photo of that, and of the facade, with its great triple doors, so huge that within one of them a normal size door had been cut for everyday use . . . and this was almost lost in the greater door of which it was a part. I went in. Worn marble floor, stations of the cross with the paint dull and peeling, no life anywhere ex-



cept a single votive candle burning far up front. The poor box was there, though, with a sign in Spanish and English, and I dropped in a small coin.

Perhaps the clink of the coin aroused a small, ragged figure slumped asleep, or half asleep in a rear pew. He looked at me, and then came toward me almost at a run.

"Senor like see Church? Ver' old, ver' beautiful, most old church." And he went on to importune me to let him show me the wonders that were too plainly a thing of the past. I was annoyed. After all, a deserted church has certain appeals to a temperament such as mine which likes to be alone and conjure up imaginary scenes of splendor and pomp . . . and how could I *feel* while he flooded my ears with a jargon of English-Spanish, mostly adjectives concerning how old, how beautiful. I finally made it clear that I did *not* want a guide. But still he stuck with me. In desperation I gave him a few centavos and said, "Adios, gracias." But still he wouldn't take the hint . . . or, figured that this Americano was good for more than the few coins he had received. For ten minutes I tried as best I could to see and not hear, with this self-appointed lecturer breaking the silence of the church at my right elbow, pacing me as I made my way up and down the dim aisles. Finally, a phrase he kept repeating caught by ear.

"You like to meet Holy Man?" He must have asked me this a dozen times before it registered. The place looked so deserted, I had imagined no priest still beld forth, so I said, "You mean the priest?" But he shook his head. "No. Not padre . . . what you call Holy Man. I take you . . . dos pesos, si?"

I held out for a long while. Or, it seemed a long while. Finally, I took a single silver peso from my pocket and

asked, "Holy Man speak Americano?"  
"Si, si, si, senor! Pero dos pesos!"

THE meaning was clear but my curiosity hadn't been aroused two pesos worth. Though at the time pesos were six to a dollar, they were as big and as heavy as United States silver dollars, and in my opinion a dollar was too much to pay to see any Holy Man, real or imaginary. But tourists are expected to be suckers and I still had an hour to waste before rejoining my companions. So, tossing the peso from one hand to the other, I did some haggling and eventually, rather than lose a sale, he led off, with me following rather dubiously and reflecting that I might well lose my health and the fat roll of Mexican bills in my hip pocket before this was over. If he had been any bigger I would certainly have hesitated, or fled into the sunlight, but I figured I could handle him if worse came to worst. I was wronging him, as it turned out, but then, it's human nature to distrust the unfamiliar.

When he opened a door in an alcove behind the vestry, leading down a flight of steps, dimly lit by slots at ten foot intervals cut through the thick stone walls, I almost quit right then. But nobody likes to admit he is scared, so I motioned him to lead on. At least I wasn't going to let this rascal get *behind* me.

We went down about twenty steps, old and worn . . . rounded at the edges from many feet . . . and the dim light was even dimmer. I really was ready to retreat then, but whatever-his-name-was fished a stub of a votive candle out of his pocket, lit it and beckoned me on. Another twenty feet, we turned at right angles and started down a sloping tunnel. I transferred my pocketbook to my inside coat pocket, and hefted the dollar camera to try and figure out if it

would crack a skull or crack itself, if, as and when necessity called for quick action. We turned again, to the right I think, still going downhill, and then came to a bolted door.

Dirty-pants said something that sounded like "Sta sacristo," which may be what he said or not, but I took it to mean we had arrived. He banged three times on the door, then began to struggle with the huge brass bolt. It didn't move easily but I didn't offer to help. I did hope, though, that the candle he had set in a niche in the wall close by wouldn't topple over. This place was too far from home to be in it with a stranger who might be good with a knife. Presently, though, the door opened, and he motioned me to go through. Still being cautious and hoping he would take it for politeness, I insisted he lead the way. All I could see was another passage, but not so dark, dimly lit by slots as had been the first one we had entered. Dirty-pants said something, I wouldn't know what, and took up his candle and went ahead of me.

We went only a short way and came out into a patio! Just four walls and an old tree giving a semblance of shade. A well-coping, and a tall, dark man, almost black of skin, but with finely drawn features and bright blue eyes, standing by the well. He was dressed like a peon . . . faded denim trousers, white shirt, a red kerchief around his neck.

I hesitated there at the entrance of the patio, wondering what this was all about, and what to do next, while my guide chattered away like an adding machine. Whoever this other man was, he didn't look ferocious. In fact, I have never seen a face more composed, more gentle (without being tired!). The guide bowed to this man and turned to leave. I didn't like that and started

to stop him, put out a hand to arrest him, when the tall man spoke.

"It is all right. Let him leave. You are with a friend and were expected." He spoke in impeccable English, and though I had my doubts about both statements, I decided to take a chance. The tall man gestured to a bench in the shade, and said, "Come if you wish—while we talk."

"No, don't bother, please. And pardon me for intruding. The man—Pedro?—insisted on bringing me here . . . for a slight consideration . . . to meet one he called the Holy Man. I thought perhaps he meant the priest of the church, though he said no."

"No, I am no priest. But sit down and I will tell you why he calls me the Holy Man."

**I** SAT down. Pedro faded out of the picture without me being conscious of his departure. There was, in truth, some fascinating quality to this man. He spoke quietly, unhurriedly, as if he (and I) had all the time in the world at our disposal. We talked a little about Mexico and the States and the pleasures and annoyances of touring. In the frousy heat I almost nodded. Maybe I did. That is why I started this by saying that the first time I met Atala Rim I thought I was dreaming . . .

"You will comprehend that most of the natives are very ignorant. Perhaps childish is the better word. I live here alone, and sometimes I do not come out to buy food for weeks at a time. They think I go for long fasts, that I do not need food, therefore, they call me the Holy Man. It would be easy to build on their childish ignorance. A few simple cures when they are ailing, and they would make miracles of it in the retelling. And after all, if such as Pedro leads a tourist now and again to see me and earns a few pesos, what is the

harm in that? Most of those who come here I speak to civilly and that is the end of it. A few—a very few—I speak to as a friend and open a door on which they have knocked in vain."

That was vaguely familiar. I was only half listening. Knock and it shall be opened . . . but that was nonsense . . . or was it? But to follow up the lead, I said, "If it is THE door, believe me I have knocked for long and always in vain."

"Until now," he said, and his blue eyes were like blue stars in a dark sky. Drowsily I thought that I was asleep and imagining all this, the whole incident, but at the same time I knew better. I had followed Pedro, I had given him a peso, and come into this walled-in garden.

"But if you are not the Holy Man, who are you?" I asked.

"I have had many names, but the one I use oftenest—here—is Atala Rim, and I am a man like yourself . . . but unlike, too, for while you have lived one life uninterrupted, I have lived snatches of many lives, many times interrupted."

And then he went on. "It is hard for you to understand even though you have wanted to understand. To you there is such a thing as life and death, but to the initiated there is only one living, in various fashions and times and circumstances. Once many men knew this and much more; now only one or two, but men will learn again—when they are ready to learn. Meanwhile, a few . . . such as I . . . keep the old knowledge alive and intimate it to those ready for the next step."

Have you ever, in a dream, or a half-waking state between full sleep and full waking, had grand and mighty thoughts, all perfectly clear, all logical and unquestionably true . . . and utterly different from your ordinary

thoughts? Well, this conversation had that kind of reality . . . and that kind of unreality.

"You will leave here and rejoin your party. You will say nothing of this, because we will meet again if you are silent, and you will, I think, want to meet with me again when the time is right. You will remember Atala Rim, dressed as a peasant, who is older than anyone you have ever set eyes upon—and younger than you. You will be curious about this life-continuing, and wonder if you dreamed all this. It is no dream, though not what you know as ordinary experience of the everyday consciousness. It will surprise you to know that we are talking with our minds, not our tongues (and I noticed then that when he spoke his lips did not move!) You will remember that I said I had different names . . . in Rome . . . in Maya . . . in Egypt . . . and before that . . . and that I am a man, like you, though of a different race, a different star than yours."

There was more to it than what I have set down here, but this is all that comes clear, until I found myself outside the church below the ruined wall with the great bronze bell, looking at my wrist watch and amazed that a full hour had passed. If, for once, the two women were on time, I would be late for our meeting back at the garage where we had left the car under watch of the attendant.

**A**FTER that meeting, I more or less forgot about Atala Rim. Only the name, so strange, yet so easily remembered, stuck, and a confused impression of a man who was either slightly crazy or of myself in the same condition! Then, just a few months before we entered the war, I had occasion to go to Laredo, Texas, on business. The business was quickly con-

cluded, and the weekend was ahead of me, with nothing particularly to do and nobody to do it with. I walked across the International Bridge about mid-morning to see the Saturday shopping crowds, to loiter in shops catering to American tourists, to stop at the Cadillac bar for a drink and some of the fine food for which it is justly famous. I knew the proprietor, slightly, and looked about for him when I went up to the bar, but he wasn't in sight and I had no real occasion or excuse for asking for him.

So, feeling a bit lonely, I sipped my drink, examining photos on the wall of celebrities who had visited here one time or another. The bar-tender said something about the big goat out back, so I strolled through the deserted rooms to the patio behind to see what curiosities in the way of animals or birds or snakes were on exhibit there at this time. There was a huge goat with curved horns, more like a mountain goat than the usual Mexican animal of the same name, a parrot, a black snake in a cage, and some hens scratching about, the latter likely enough intended for somebody's supper, as they were each tethered with a thin leather thong to separate stakes. The goat looked at me with sad, frightened eyes. I don't like hens or snakes, nor care much for parrots, so I stayed but a moment.

When I returned to the bar, I was intending to leave the place, but something familiar about a man sitting at a table in one corner made me pause. Somewhere . . . God knows where, I thought . . . I've seen that fellow. He was reading a newspaper, paying no attention to anyone, and his face was partially turned away from me. Well, I'd have another drink and ask the bar-tender who he was. Any excuse for a drink was a good one, and anyhow, it was comparatively cool in the bar and

hot and sticky outdoors.

The bar-tender could not enlighten me so I shrugged my shoulders in good Mexican style and concluded I was mistaken. But I'd take one more look. I *had* seen him somewhere before! At my glance he laid down his paper, rose to his feet and bowed, obviously inviting me to come over . . . which I did, for the truth was I was as lonely as I was curious. When I came over he held out his hand, and I saw blue, blue eyes in a dark, thin face.

"So we meet again," he said. "You have not forgotten our first meeting behind the old church, surely?" Atala Rim! The name came back and the whole incident flashed through my mind as if it had happened yesterday.

"I wondered if we ever would meet—and why," I replied. Why I put it just that way, I'm not sure. But I added, "Will you join me—" and gestured to the drink in my hand, but he shook his head no.

Atala Rim smiled slowly. "Sit down, and let us talk. You asked a question—why we should ever meet again? Well, this time it was because I sought you out!"

"You sought me out? But how? You don't even recall my name, and surely you couldn't know I'd be here when I didn't know it myself—until I came."

"OH, IT isn't so mysterious as it may sound," he said. "Your business—whatever it was—brought you here. So did mine—and it happens that I saw you on the street a while ago, saw you turn in here and decided to follow." Which was no explanation at all, but I didn't insist on a better one.

"You see," he went on, "each of us has a destiny, and yours is booked with mine. When we met some while back I knew we would meet again. You were

not ready then. Now you are—almost.”

“What do you mean? What am I ready—almost ready—for?”

Atala Rim said, “For the next step. But I cannot explain—here. Come with me to my house on the edge of town and spend the night there. You will not find it dull—nor—how shall I put it?—dangerous. I remember you were inclined to suspicion of danger when last we met,” and his smile was provoking.

I had been uneasy then, and why not? But why not take him up on this visit? The man was unusual, whatever else he was, and I had a weekend to waste. So I agreed, paid my bill, and we went out into the glaring sun. A hack was passing and Atala Rim signaled to the driver, bargaining in swift, staccato Spanish which I could not follow. We got in, and drove slowly through the streets of the town, out toward where the desert-pasture met the houses.

It was a leisurely drive, with no conversation, just sitting there under the fringed canopy, listening to the clop, clop of the tired horse's feet, watching the street scenes, relaxed and at ease. I thought about not having any clothes for overnight . . . but the mood of adventure was on me, and clothes for sleeping were less than necessary in this hot climate. I wondered who or what Atala Rim was, and decided again his explanation of our meeting was no explanation at all. The ride wasn't long, because Nueva Loredo is not large, and we came to the outskirts and his residence, a low, sprawling, white-washed adobe house, quickly enough—even at our leisurely pace. Atala Rim paid off the hackman and gestured for me to precede him indoors . . . into a dim, cool room, simply furnished with dark wooden, roughly made tables and chairs, and

a couple of those flaring leather chairs that the natives make . . . of leather thongs, surprisingly comfortable, although they look so stiff. There were other rooms beyond, a kitchen across the other side of the sun-flecked, tree-shaded patio. It was an old place, knowing no “modern” touches. Atala Rim explained that it had once been a mill, a grain mill. The extra thick walls and stone-paved patio, the big ovens in the kitchen, had been necessary then. There was plenty of room—three large bedrooms opening off the patio. An old crone of a woman, leather-faced and silent, was his only servant.

“I am here often, these days, when America—the States—is becoming so important to a shaken world.”

THE old crone brought us water in gourds, cold, sweet well water, and I thought as I drank, that though the gourds might be unsanitary, they gave a strange pleasure to the simple act of drinking water. But my curiosity about Atala Rim would not let me be quiet for any longer than the customary expressions of pleasure at being in his house and his guest.

“There are so many questions I want to ask, *Senor*.”

“Please . . . not the *senor* . . . Atala. And I know your questions. You want to know who or what I really am, you want to know if you imagined that earlier meeting of ours, and if you were asleep or awake, and if I am sane or . . . how do you say it, a little bit cracked in the head? And you wonder why I brought you here?”

That wasn't mind reading exactly, but it certainly covered a lot of ground truthfully enough.

“If you know the questions so well, I don't suppose you will mind answering them,” I said.

He shrugged his shoulders slightly as if to imply that the answers were not important.

"Instead, let me ask you questions," Atala Rim replied, "and in my questions you may find the answers to your own."

Well, here I was, and by my own will. He certainly had not kidnaped me, and if he wanted to act mysterious, that was all right. So I shrugged my shoulders back at him, smiled and said, "Go ahead and ask anything you like, but don't be disappointed if you don't get very bright answers. I never was any too good at this question-and-answer stuff."

Atala Rim's face creased in a smile that showed even white teeth against dark skin. "This is not a radio program, my friend. But I do have at least one question to ask, and I want you not to answer it quickly. It is not a simple question to put or to answer. But here it is. I ask, 'what do you seek?' . . . no, do not answer until I finish," he said as I opened my mouth to ask him what he meant.

"All of us seek many things—many material things, at least. Some seek wealth, some houses and land, some only a little food, or rest from labor. Some want women, or wine and gaiety. Some who seek all of these things also know that they are not real desires, or of only passing value, and seek something which is real, something they find it hard to name. And it is that I want you to try to name."

Nice, easy question. I didn't hurry my answer, thinking over most of the things I thought I wanted and realizing that if I had all of them I would still want something more valuable than anything that wealth or leisure or excitement could offer. But to find a name for the other thing, the unnamed want, was impossible.

At length I replied, rather uncertainly, with one word which to me expressed as well as any other what it seems to me all men, or most men seek, knowingly or otherwise.

"Peace."

"Good!" said Atala Rim. "Look within for it."

THAT annoyed me and my face and tone when I answered must have expressed my annoyance. "I have heard that before, but either I do not know what you mean when you say look within, or if I do, can only say that I find nothing when I look but my old unsatisfied, restless ego. Certainly I do not find peace."

Atala Rim nodded in agreement. "True enough. Once many men knew how to seek for peace. Now they forget even to seek. But not you. You are not satisfied. That is why I came to you. Perhaps I can help you—shall I say?—look within yourself. Perhaps not. Because as yet you do not know your desires clearly."

We were getting nowhere fast. My curiosity about this man was changing to a kind of annoyance. I sat there, staring at his face, turned so that it was in shadow, with sunlight beyond in the patio. I could see all his features clearly, but not the expression of his eyes. It was like staring at some gently carved mask. We sat there for long minutes, neither of us speaking or moving. Then Atala broke the spell by getting up from his chair in smooth flowing, effortless movement and taking the few steps across the room to my chair, where he stood looking down at me.

"Look up, now," he said. "At my eyes. And give me your hands, both of them."

I held out my hands and he took them firmly, but gently. His eyes, even

in the cool dimness of the room, shone startlingly blue. This sort of thing can easily be embarrassing, and at first I felt a flush of unease run up and down my spine, but it quickly ended and there I sat, looking up at Atala, his hands holding mine.

How shall I describe what swiftly followed? To one who has not experienced it, words are very inadequate, but at least I can convey the physical sensations. Of the mental or psychic sensations I can say little except what those who read this may get between the unwritten words.

They were definite and strange physical sensations. My eyes seemed to water a little, though I was not conscious of straining. The edges of the lids began to burn. But more difficult to explain was a current of power . . . perhaps some form of bodily electricity which began to flow from Atala Rim through his hands, up my arms, across my chest, until it stretched like an invisible cord between us, pulsing and flowing, at first almost stifling, so that my breath came short and I felt as if something must give way unless this force was checked.

"No, do not breathe so quickly. Slowly. Like this." He began to breathe audibly, long, full, unhurried breaths. Without difficulty then, my own quick intake and exhale of air lengthened to his tempo, and the band across my chest lightened, though I could still feel that pulsing current tingling in my arms, and now there was a throbbing in my temples and a sharp stinging sensation in the bridge of my nose. How long this took I have no idea. Not very long. Two or three minutes. Then Atala relaxed his hold on my hands, but still kept his eyes on mine, though he moved away from my chair, back to his own. It was then I felt my eyelids grow unbearably heavy

and against my will to keep them open, felt them close and my head drop back against the leather thongs of the chair-back.

In a second I would have been deep in sleep, but his voice came sharply, pulling me back.

"No! Do not sleep. This must be deeper than sleep. Wait now—quietly."

Then began another physical sensation, distinctly uncomfortable. Anyone who has ever indulged too heavily in hard liquor knows that "butterfly-in-the-stomach" feeling, a faint, unpleasant quivering. Imagine this, then, multiplied ten—no, fifty times—in strength. Truly, such a sensation is nothing to wish on a friend and I have no enemies who deserve any such torture. Because it was torture. I wanted to get up from that chair and break whatever this crazy spell was. My breathing had deepened still more, came now in long, slow, shallow breaths until it seemed hours between the start of one breath and the start of the next.

Atala Rim's voice seemed to come from a long distance, yet I was conscious that he had not moved from his chair a half dozen feet away. "You must not fight what is taking place. That is why you are uncomfortable in your body. Have no fear. Remember that we have been friends since that first day. Be quiet."

**I**T WAS a command that I obeyed more eagerly than any I had ever heeded in my life. I seemed to sense that not to do so was, if not dangerous, then distressing; that only by consciously not being afraid . . . of what I did not know . . . could I escape this agony of fluttering wings beating within me. Somehow I let go—stopped holding back, straining against the new and unfamiliar. Quickly then, the nervous staccato of my muscles ceased. The



tingling in the nose ended. I seemed to drift in a blue haze, yet I will swear I was not asleep. After a moment or two, I even found my voice. It came shakily at first.

"What have you done . . . hypnotized me? Or am I somehow asleep and will wake and laugh at this?"

"You are not asleep. Not as you know sleep. Because you have passed through sleep into a full awakening. No, it is not hypnotism, though for a moment I had to help you by touch and by glance. But only as one might help a person fearful of slipping on rocks in a swift stream . . . by stretching out a hand to steady him . . . that is clear, isn't it?"

"Clear? Perhaps? But what has happened to me? And why can't I open my eyes?"

"In a moment. Be silent now until I speak again." And I sat there, and know that never until now had I been silent, so still there was not even a thought in my skull, more silent than a piece of furniture which has sat in the same corner of a room undisturbed for years. And then his voice came again.

"Now . . . now . . . you are free. Open your eyes . . . tell me what you see."

I opened my eyes easily enough then, no longer heavy-lidded, and saw Atala in his chair, legs crossed, hands in his lap, head straight, back not quite touching the back of the chair. Saw the room and—and then I saw—myself, sitting there in my chair! And my eyes were closed!

"What do you see?" Atala Rim repeated.

"I see—myself! Sitting there. And you. The whole room. It's completely strange, as if I could see all parts of it at once. But I can't really, can I? This is just some sort of dream or hypnotism. It seems as if I can see all

around me, behind me, underneath, above, all at once. I have a feeling that if I tried real hard I could even see the sky outside above the roof!"

"Yes, you *could* . . . but do not try, now."

"But what has happened . . . please?"

"Something very difficult to explain, but very simple to know once it is experienced . . . you are *free*."

"You mean—free of—of my body?"

"Almost—not quite—because you are not quite ready for that step. There is a thin cord of life-power connecting you. If it were broken now you would be frightened. Later, perhaps, you will learn to draw that life-power away from the body and eventually, sever the line completely."

Well, maybe I was dead, I thought. If so, it wasn't much different from being alive. My thought must have been read by Atala, for he said, "No, not much different. Look closely from where you are and you will see a thin line of light extending in all directions from the body. That is the life-power flowing from you to your body. While it connects you are neither completely free nor is your body—what men call dead. But this is nothing strange. It happens night after night in dreams only then you are not conscious of what takes place."

"Are you, too, away—detached from your body?" I could not see any cobweb of light about his body. Instead he seemed to be sitting there very quiet and peacefully self-possessed without a single care.

"Not—yet—but—now!" And the infinitesimally thin haze of million-stranded light sprang out around his body, dimmed and was gone, leaving no trace of its going.

"Then you left your body entirely? Will it not die?"

I COULD feel him beside me, as real as the figure there in the chair.

"No, I have not left it entirely. But the thread of power is fainter than yours—because I have more confidence than you, because I know from long experience how simple and easy it is to return. No!"

The command came sharply, and I realized that my mind had quickened into panic, had started to flee back to the body I had always known as *me*. The power web about my body blazed forth more strongly. But at that sharp NO! he flung at me I had turned to him, and the urge to leave this disembodied state passed.

"But what will happen—to them—" I meant to those two who sat there in chairs so comfortably, those two who were somehow US.

Atala's voice—or thought—was gentle and almost laughing. "We will return, presently. Meanwhile, this clothing of ours will wait for us. An hour, a month, a year—as long as we wish."

"But suppose . . . suppose something happens to them. Suppose somebody disturbs them? Will it be too late to get back then?"

"No. Should that happen, we would be there instantly. Can you measure the time it takes a thought to flash into your brain? Very well, then. That is how quickly we would return. These bodies that seem so detached are not really separated from us. We—the free WE—would be warned at the first instant of need. So dismiss that fear."

We were silent in thought then, but it was filled with some thrilling substance of thought . . . with what might be called the whole of which a thought is a microscopic bit!

It seemed then, Atala Rim took my hand! I actually felt his hand touch mine and draw me forward. Yet I

knew that we had no hands, no bodies to touch each other!

"In a moment we return now to the room here. But first let us go away and see how men are when their bodies really die . . . across the water . . . to Europe . . ."

Fantastic. Absurd. But terribly realistic. London at night and bombs falling. Houses rumbling down, fires flaring high, bodies twisted and torn. And the still stars high above.

And then, back to the room and he and I getting up from our chairs, stretching, looking at each other with a new understanding in our glance, taking up, casually, almost, in ordinary conversation, what had been most extraordinary.

ATALA RIM clapped his hands and the old crone came to the door from across the patio. "Bring us some food," he said.

To me he explained, "I know you must be famished. The first time—it is a great strain, and the body craves food. May I caution you—never use any stimulant like alcohol or coffee or tea directly before or afterward. It destroys some center of control and may have disastrous effects on the body. This way, a good meal will restore your strength. Then we can talk."

The old Mexican woman put fruit and tortillas and frijoles and goat's milk and cheese on the table. I did not need a second invitation, for I was tired and desperately hungry. We ate in silence, and I positively wolfed the first few bites. My wrist watch told me all this had taken place in a matter of less than half an hour. Only a short while, perhaps an hour and a half ago, we had left the Cadillac bar in the heart of town! Yet I ate as if after fasting a whole day!

But as the food disappeared, my

fatigue left and my tongue began to wag again. "If," I said between mouthfuls, "you can show me these wonders, can you not show me how to end all this tragic waste of men's lives?"

"No. You see, men . . . most men . . . have a will-to-death. Actually, it is a will to be nothing . . . not to exist. A few, here and there, at intervals of time, actually seek to live. Most of them seek blindly, but even so they find some part of what they seek."

"But if nothing can be done about this mess the world is in . . . why did you bother to show me . . . this other life?"

Atala's face was sad, the lines about the mouth deepened. "Because in the months and years ahead, more and more nations will turn to destruction. Your United States turns that way even now. You—no one—can stem the tide. But in the days ahead there must be as many as possible who know that death is not death unless there is also the will-to-death."

"But it is the end . . . for those we say die?"

"No. They return again . . . unknowingly . . . to die again. Over and over. Until they win to freedom. After that, at the moment of returning, they *choose* to make the voyage back into the circumscribed, limited thing we mortals know as life."

"Like you?" I asked.

"Yes—and no. I am one of only a few who long ago won to freedom but never left this earthly living. We stay on . . . and if we did not know that time itself is an illusion, it would seem endlessly long. We *choose* to stay, of course. To show others the way—you, for example."

"But you will leave . . . sometime? Then—where? To another plane? Another star? Another cosmos? Where?"

"Another universe away. 'In my

father's house are many mansions.' One who came to you went to prepare a place—for any of those who seek peace through Him."

"Who and what are YOU? Are you HE?"

"No. Nor am I even as free as you! Once, ages past, I rebelled against the pitiful fate of man, not comprehending then its necessity, and left my place in that far distant universe, to come to what you call this earth—to guide, men in the flesh, to an earthly paradise.

"But they were not ready. They are not ready now. Time and again I—and others who came then and since have tried—failed. History and legend tell of the times men rose to heights—and were destroyed. Names that are almost or quite an illusion—the Land of Mu—Atalanta . . . that was where I *almost* succeeded, and why I use an old Atlantean name, Atala. But there, as always, I failed because men turned to worship what their hands and bodies and minds had created instead of using these creations as the accidents they are, the shadows of the true reality. Once I waited with a single body suspended through century after century in the same trance you saw in this room. That was in a great pyramid in Egypt. Waited through an age when there were no men who sought what I had to offer. But when, at last, men rose again from darkness and struggled for freedom of mind and soul, I left that place and took up again my body.

"For a little while I stayed in Egypt. Yes, I was there when He walked the shores of Galilee. He, too, came, but with a different purpose. He would have set men free completely from the hold of earth, had they been willing to listen, or able to understand what they heard. He, too, failed. He went away—as you have heard."

"And is it true that He will come

again?"

"So men have written. But He will not come as men think He will. Never again in the flesh. But men will come to Him. Will see Him, know Him, and they will say, 'He has come again.' And not speak an untruth."

**T**HAT is the whole of this story. We talked of other things, talked long into the night, and in the morning Atala Rim shook hands and bid me goodbye. Now and again we meet. At night, in sleep or what passes for dreams, when the world permits escape from its obligations, I can get alone and quiet, and stretch thin the life-power—but we

have not met as men meet on a corner since then.

I do not ask any one who reads this to believe it. I simply write it down as it seemed to me to happen. *As it seems to me to be still happening.* Part may be truth itself; part illusion. Decide which is which, each who reads. Day by day ordinary living goes on, unchanged in great part, but more satisfactory. The peace that is sought is sometimes available. And to any who seek, I say, as Atala Rim said, and as He said to those who questioned—"Seek and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

THE END



## WHO AM I?

By JOHN McCABE MOORE



**M**ANKIND, my name is calcium. I am one of your dearest friends, and one of your deadliest enemies. As long as you give me a taxi to ride around in through the bloodstream and the lymph, we will both be happy. But when you start letting me down on the transportation, I sit right down and wait, whether it's on the wall of a blood-vessel or in the kitchen sink of one of your brain cells. Doctors believe that Vitamin D is the only taxi I want, but lots of times, more times than not, those darn VD drivers just get me half-way to my destination. I have a friend who knows how to keep me from sitting down on the job and cluttering up the works. I wish I could whisper his name to some honest doctor!

**I** AM THE thumb and forefinger of an arthritic patient. I got sore because some of my bone cells wouldn't do their work properly. In the negotiations I found out they hadn't been allowed any lunch hour. It was the others who were treated the worst, so I had the bosses get after them. The bosses just worked most of the poor fellows to death. Now at last, with most of them gone, I realize that they had time for lunch all right, but the cafeteria didn't have what they wanted to eat. They couldn't do their work!!!! I know a man that could have saved their lives, if people would listen to him!

**I** AM A BRAIN cell. I can remember long ago, when I was very young, that it wouldn't take me a day to double my size and become two of me. Boy, those were the days. I got everything I wanted to eat and it was always fixed right

and always on time. Now the little bit that does filter through is hard to digest. There must be somebody, somewhere, who knows how to bring back the happy days of youth. You'd laugh if I told you I know his name!

**I** AM NECESSARY, but if you don't treat me right I'll shellac the inside of your veins and arteries till they won't carry enough blood! My name—Cholesterol. There is a fellow who knows how to move me when I get stubborn. Do you think I ought to tell who he is?

**I** AM A SMALL blood vessel, but mighty important! I feed the muscles of your heart. Remember that spell of flu you had three years ago? Well, some of the invaders wanted a little of my fresh meat, and they ate through my lining in several tiny places. Then the blood clotted over the little fissures, but things never have been just right to get those spots mended and the clots have grown so that I'm stuffy and uncomfortable. Now don't lie down and die because I said that. Just take this name and address. I know this fellow can gradually remove these clots and heal my sores. No kidding! I don't mind people calling me coronary, but I hate thrombosis!

**W**E ARE the legion poisons of fatigue. When the lifelines are not thrown out to the cells so we can clamber away, the cells die. When too many cells die, fatigue often threatens a human life. Lots of us poisons can be used over again, if you will just give your cells the tools they need. One of the most important tools is known to one of you! Ask him!

# DAREDEVIL KANE

He was a scientist-adventurer a hundred years ago

THE trail Kane blazed around this earth has caused no small amount of astonishment in the minds of ordinary men. Kane was not one of the rank and file. He dreamed of adventure in far-off places and dared to follow his imaginative leanings. Before Kane was thirty he had visited the greater part of the eastern half of the United States, the land of Mexico, Cuba and Brazil from Rio de Janeiro to the eastern Andes. On the African continent he had traveled along the Gold and Ivory Coasts, up the River Nile to the mysteries of the Middle East. His never-lagging footsteps took him through Persia and Syria to India and China and to the Philippines.

This incessant travel is all the more remarkable when it is considered in the light of Kane's own day, fully one hundred years ago. Travel was slow and uncomfortable; Kane was a man of delicate health, always addicted to sea-sickness. Serious illness overcame him many times on his journeys.

This daring adventurer was born in Philadelphia in 1820. In 1842 he graduated in medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and when other men set out toward the west in search of gold, Kane set sail for China as physician to the embassy there. This marked the beginning of the travels which were to take him to every part of the known globe, and to the exploration of unknown territory as well.

Kane faced death many times. In Egypt he was seriously wounded by a Bedouin who tried to rob him. In striving to save the lives of some Mexican officers who had been captured by renegade irregulars, he nearly lost his life. But it was in the cause of science that his most harrowing escapes occurred.

While in the Philippines he decided to investigate the innerworkings of the volcano at Taal. He was lowered by rope to the very surface of the burning lake and dipped his specimen bottles into the steaming sulphur water. When pulled back up to the edge of the crater, his companions found his boots charred in pieces. The sulphurous air-currents had stifled him into insensibility.

The name of Elisha Kent Kane is renowned more for his Arctic explorations than for any other feat which he so daringly accomplished. In 1850 an expedition was sponsored by a group of English and Americans to hunt for the missing Franklin expedition. Kane immediately volunteered and went with the group to various Greenland ports. The sailing vessels entered the dreaded ice-pack of Melville Bay before Kane and the other men were called upon to fight a battle of nerves against the elements. It was not long before the graves of some members of the lost Franklin expedition were discovered. Instead of turning back, the

brave men decided to push their vessels on into unknown territory, to chart and record what they might find.

Strong gales and an unusually early advance of winter prevented their traveling farther with the aid of the ships, for they were frozen solid in the ice. Expeditions with dog sleds and on foot allowed limited operations in the frozen North, and Kane kept the men busy to alleviate their mental suffering. But it is almost impossible to describe fully what the party went through in their prison of ice. Many times each day the moving masses of ice threatened to smash the ships into a heap of splintered wreckage, preventing forever their return to civilization. Kane's medical skill was called into action at every turn. Scurvy had attacked the men; frostbite and snowblindness were common complaints, and very dangerous ones. When the spring thaw arrived, the men set out toward familiar shores once more. But in Kane's mind strange thoughts were stirring.

He had strong scientific faith in the idea that to the north there existed an open polar sea. Well outfitted with scientific instruments, a second expedition found Kane at its helm. Little did he know that this was going to exact his life. Ice conditions were so bad on the journey that the crew threatened to mutiny. Kane had to consent to the splitting up of forces, and then exerted all his energy in arranging the spectacular rescue of the mutineers. Much information was gathered during that winter. The scientists in the party made important tidal, astronomical, magnetic, and meteorological observations.

A blizzard which caught the group off guard, killed off most of the dogs and made their position a most dangerous one. But Kane continued in his work, traveling on foot dragging his own sled wherever necessary. As winter went on, game became scarce, and with their travel facilities so limited they suffered also from a shortage of fuel. The ravages of the dreaded scurvy began to take its toll. With energies that can only be described as superhuman, this ill and starving group of brave men were able to push southward to a Greenland settlement. In New York in 1855 they were given a grand ovation by their appreciative countrymen.

Kane sick in mind and body after his harrowing experiences found life ebbing from him. At thirty-seven, six months after his return to this country, death overcame him. No single Arctic expedition of his generation added so greatly to the knowledge of the world as that of Kane's. He told of the Etah Eskimos, of the flora and fauna of the region, and of all aspects in the physical sciences. Above all his work opened up a safe route for the Arctic explorers of the future.

Sandy Miller

# Command Performance

By Berkeley Livingston

THE street was deserted except for a lone man doing what looked to be a series of cartwheels . . . No, Seth Perly couldn't quite make out what it was he was doing. Whatever it was, it wasn't sensible.

Seth scratched at the thinning thatch of hair at his nape and ambled toward the oddity. It was Rollie Hughes. And he wasn't doing cartwheels. He was just rolling head over heels as fast as he could go.

"Tain't that hot," he reflected aloud, as he brought Rollie to a temporary halt. "Must be a little tetchèd."

Rollie grinned mildly up at the puzzled Seth. His eyes held an odd, glassy look.

"What you doing, Rollie?" Seth asked.

"Me? Hee! Hee! I'm a steamroller,"

Rollie answered. "Listen to my whistle. Whooh! Whooh!"

"Say!" Seth yelped in sudden understanding, "So you are. And I'm one, too."

With that he followed Rollie's example and started after the other. Their 'whooh, whooh's' soon brought Lem Taylor from his barber shop.

"Seth Perly!" Lem boomed, in his hoarse, whiskery voice. "What's gotten into you, man?"

"I'm a steamroller," Seth replied. "Listen to my . . ."

Lem didn't wait to hear the whistle sound. "Seth," he boomed in horrified tones, "You're—you're—right. *And so am I.*"

In a matter of ten minutes, the street was littered with people rolling around in the dust, and all insisting they were

**Professor Willis Futzyduddle had a machine—and when he said something, the gadget made his every word a law...**



steamrollers.

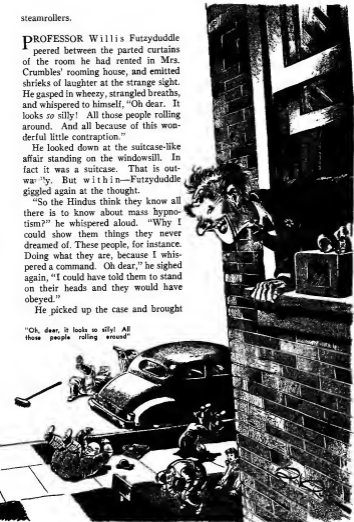
**P**ROFESSOR Willis Futzyduddle peered between the parted curtains of the room he had rented in Mrs. Crumbles' rooming house, and emitted shrieks of laughter at the strange sight. He gasped in wheezy, strangled breaths, and whispered to himself, "Oh dear. It looks so silly! All those people rolling around. And all because of this wonderful little contraption."

He looked down at the suitcase-like affair standing on the windowsill. In fact it was a suitcase. That is out-wardly. But within—Futzyduddle giggled again at the thought.

"So the Hindus think they know all there is to know about mass hypnotism?" he whispered aloud. "Why I could show them things they never dreamed of. These people, for instance. Doing what they are, because I whispered a command. Oh dear," he sighed again, "I could have told them to stand on their heads and they would have obeyed."

He picked up the case and brought

"Oh, dear, it looks so silly! All those people rolling around"



it over to a chair, nearby. His fingers fiddled with a switch near the handle. To all appearances it looked like the lock on the case. But it wasn't. Had Futzyduddle looked out into the street then, he would have seen a strange thing come to pass. The human steam-rollers had all stopped their mad careening about and were now on their feet. They stared at each other shame-facedly and, in concert, made off for their homes.

"Just a thin copper wire on a steel wheel," he whispered. "On one side of the case, the transmitter, on the other, the receiver. And in between, my invention, the commandoscope. And when the wire has made its circuit—a new wire, that's all."

He was still bent over the case, when "Slim" Pickins opened the door to his room. It was done silently, as was Slim's stealthy approach. The sap in Slim's hand rose high in the air, then descended to land with a sickening thud on the Professor's skull. The skull assumed an oddly flattened shape.

"H'm," Slim said softly, looking down at the dead man. "Shouldn't have hit so hard. Oh well," he continued resignedly, "he never saw what hit him. Neither did anyone else. And that's all to the good."

He looked gloatingly at the case and lifted it with a strange, loving care. As though it held a delicate treasure. Without a second glance at the dead man on the floor, he opened the door. But as he closed it, he whispered, "Shouldn't have gotten drunk and talked to yourself in Miley's tavern. You'd still be alive, mister, if I hadn't heard you."

**N**OBODY paid any attention to the tall, slim man who walked into the Third National Bank that afternoon. Nor did they think it odd that he carried a suitcase. They only saw him

place the suitcase carefully on a bench and approach one of the tellers.

Instead of standing directly in front of the teller's window, Slim stood to one side. He was the only customer.

"Yes sir?" the teller asked in a mild tone. A glazed look came into his eyes. He turned then, without a further word, and taking a bag from a drawer, began shoving greenbacks into it. When the bag was full, he handed it to Slim, who, with a fine casual disinterest, walked back to the suitcase, picked it up and left the bank.

Ten minutes went by, before the teller came out of his trance and then he could only jabber to those who came running to his cries, "I don't know who the man was! I only knew I had to give him the money."

\* \* \*

Slim Pickins regarded the suitcase with a feeling akin to awe. Spread out on the couch of his hotel room was a huge pile of greenbacks. There were seven thousand dollars there. Slim shook his head at the wonder of it all. "No fuss," he whispered, "no bother. Just walk in and ask for it, that's all. And the beauty of it. Nobody even remembers how it happened."

The suitcase was open exposing the complicated machinery within. It was all a vast mystery to Slim. He knew only one thing. All he had to do was speak a command into a small opening at one side of the case and the machine would do the rest. Closing the case, he carefully placed it behind the couch. Then taking some of the smaller denomination bills, he left the room.

"Hi, Slim," Bill Rohles said as the tall, slender Pickins walked into Miley's tavern.

"Greetings, Bill. What's new?"

"Same old stuff, Slim. Still looking for a hot break so's I can get out of this dead bottomed town."



Slim grinned at the words. Bill was a small time thief, who was always looking for a break. He wouldn't have known a break if it had walked up and hit in the face.

"C'mon Bill, have a drink."

Bill's eyes went wide at the sight of the greenbacks Slim brought to light.

"Where'd you get the green?"

Slim shrugged off the question with a casual, "Oh—y'know, here and there."

Bill downed the whiskey in a single gulp. What the hell, it was Slim's privilege to keep still. Never get into a jam that way.

Slim's eyes crinkled in laughter. Bill was trying hard to act like he didn't give a damn, one way or another how he got all that money and it was as apparent as the nose on his face that it was eating at him. He thought, *Hell, I didn't come here to swill this slop. I came here just to see you. You're a bum thief. But when it comes to casing a joint, there's nobody c'n beat you.*

"Have another," Slim suggested.

Bill wasn't loath. He knew then, there was something on Slim's mind. Slim wasn't the kind of character who went around buying drinks in a spirit of good will.

"Look, Bill. How'd you like to make some dough? Big dough."

"Keep talking."

"Okay. There's an Apex Express truck that's used only on payroll deliveries. I want to know everything there is to know about it. Get it?"

"I get it. What's in it for me?"

A grand."

Roblee gulped at the words. A grand! He didn't know there was so much money in existence. "Hey! Where'd you get that kind of dough?"

"Nosey? Just do what I say," Slim said caustically.

"Okay, Slim boy. No offense meant.

Where'll I see you?"

"At my place." Slim gave him the address.

"ALL right, Slim. Here's the set up," Roblee said. "Four guys. One sits up front with the driver—two ride inside, see. Lotta small stops, then they hit the Maxton Company. There's a fifty grand payroll there."

Slim looked at the other in amazement. How Roblee managed to find out so much in one day, was beyond his comprehension. But he knew he could make book on the accuracy of his statement. Roblee was going to be worth every penny of the grand he was going to get.

\* \* \*

The uniformed guard posed lazily at the main freight gate of the Maxton firm. He looked at his watch. The payroll truck would be here any minute now. Two men passed him by, the tall, slim one carrying a suitcase.

"Be here any second," Roblee whispered from the side of his mouth.

Slim nodded agreeably and set the case down. He had already given the machine its instruction. They had only to wait for the arrival of the truck. Then it was there at the gate. Just as Roblee had said, there were four men in the crew. The truck stopped and the watchman strolled over. Two uniformed men came out of the truck and joined the watchman. Each carried a pistol. Then the two in the driver's cab got out.

It was then that Slim pressed the switch.

The five men, grouped at the side of the truck stopped talking. The watchman turned and marched back to the gate. There was an odd stiffness to his walk, a stiffness even more strangely shared by the express messengers. It was as if they had become automatons.

Slim winked at Roblee who smiled

broadly in reply. Then the two men strolled past the truck. As if the messengers had been waiting for them, they opened the rear door and began handing Roblee bags of currency. The smaller bags disappeared into the larger bag Roblee produced. Then Slim and his confederate walked off, leaving the others standing there, stiff and silent, staring empty-eyed at each other.

"CRIPES!" Roblee said softly, "That was easy. What's next?"

"Nothing, chum," Slim replied. "That is nothing for a while."

"Why?" Roblee asked in aggrieved tones. He definitely liked this business. Slim paid him the grand from the proceeds of the holdup. Slim didn't care. There was sixty-two thousand dollars left. It lay piled up in neat green stacks on the section of couch between them.

"Be smart!" Slim sharply replied. "There's going to be an awful lot of heat on for a while. Let it blow over, first."

Roblee's mouth made a silent, "Oh," as he saw the wisdom of Slim's words.

"Gees Slim, I'll never learn," he said sorrowfully.

"Just let me do the thinking," was Slim's reply. And an afterthought, "And don't forget, pal, keep you're nose clean and you'll be batting a thousand with me."

"Sure, Slim, sure." Slim didn't see the veiled look Roblee sent the suitcase.

The holdup was a newspaper feature for a week. Then a murder sent it to the back sheets. Slim knew then, that the heat was off. At least the kind of heat where the police pick up every hoodlum, well-known or otherwise. He had prepared for it. A two weeks supply of groceries and enough cigarettes made their enforced stay in Slim's apartment not too hard to take. The radio and card games provided them with amusement.

Slim tossed the newspaper aside. There was a sharp look in his eyes. His thin, long-lipped mouth held a drooping cigarette at the corner. An inch-long ash fell from it, graying the baggy, brown trousers. He snapped bony fingers suddenly.

"Bill?"

"Yeah?"

"I just got an idea. Listen . . ."

Bill shook his head in understanding. "Gotcha, pal. Get out there right now."

"Now don't overdo it," Slim said in warning. "Don't forget you're supposed to be a salesman."

"Don't worry."

". . . So try to act like one."

\* \* \*

"Best hotel in town," Roblee whispered from the side of his mouth at Slim, bent over the hotel register. Slim handed the clerk a five dollar bill, pocketed the dollar change and walked to the stairs.

The Sagwell House on Belden's main street, was the largest hotel in town. Roblee had met Slim in front of its weatherbeaten, frame front.

"Don't look like much, does it boss?" Roblee asked.

The wry smile on Slim's thin lips was answer enough.

"Don't let it fool you, boss. The town's loaded with dough. This is big oil country. And that keister in the bank's got enough green in it to float a ship."

"Fine. Let's go up."

"Okay, Bill," Slim said after they had made themselves comfortable, "let's hear the set-up."

"Look, boss," said Roblee, pointing through the single wide window, "see that building."

"Yeah."

"That's the bank."

"Okay. Okay. Lemme hear the rest."

"There are two big oil companies out here. Both deposit in there. Besides, the farmers have some sort of an association here. And they haul their dough down to deposit in there."

"Nice," Slim said, smiling. "Very nice. Now let's see if my idea'll work out."

He lifted the suitcase onto the wide, old-fashioned window sill. Tilting it, until the small, screen aperture in the broad face centered on the bank building, he spoke into the opening on the other side of the case:

"Employees of the bank! Tonight, you will all return, at midnight, and remove every greenback from the bank. Put the money in sacks and bring them all down to the west end of town. There will be a car parked on the shoulder of the road. Put the sacks on the fender of the car. Then—*go back to your homes and forget everything that happened.*"

SLIM and Roblee peered curiously from between the branches of the bushes that lined the road near where they had parked their car. A small procession of autos had come around the bend leading into Belden. As if it had been at a pre-arranged signal, they pulled up to a stop at the car parked at the road shoulder. Then, from each car, a man emerged, carry several small sacks. After they had placed the sacks on the fender of the car on the shoulder, they returned to their own autos and drove off.

"Yipe!" Roblee chortled exultantly, "It worked."

Slim was matter of fact in his acceptance of the behaviour of the men. "Sure. This thing never misses. Well, let's put the dough in the car and blow outta here."

A week passed, during which they bought every paper that might carry

the news of such a mystifying happening. And it was feature stuff in every paper. But the 'how and who' remained a mystery. As one writer put it:

"The eight employees of the bank all agree on one fact, that someone or something told them to take the money. But none can remember what they were told to do with it. Officials of the bank are highly puzzled as to what to do with these men."

"I guess we can stop worrying," Slim said, after reading the last of the reports.

Roblee gave vent to an audible sigh of relief. He turned his head suddenly and sent a look of fear at the suitcase. Slim saw the look.

"S matter, Bill? Afraid it'll bite you?"

"Nah! But that thing's like—well—like a God. Kinda gets ya, ya know." He shook his head at the wonder of it all. "Say, Slim, if I ain't being too nosey, how'd you get hold of this deal?"

Slim hesitated for a moment, then shrugged.

"That was a funny deal," he said as memory brought back that night in vivid detail. "I was sitting at Miley's nursing on a beer. Yeah, I was that low I had to drink beer. Well, in walks this little guy, lugging this thing," Slim pointed a thumb at the suitcase, "by his side. Sits down in that end booth. Remember that booth, Bill?"

"Is that the one what's got the mirror on top?"

"Right. So I see this little guy sitting there. He's got the suitcase on the seat alongside of him. Well, the girl comes over for his order and he asks for a water glass full of whiskey. *A water glass!* And drinks it like it was water.

"I had something on my mind so I stop looking at the jerk. Then a couple of minutes later I look up in the mirror

and I see he's talking to himself. The last time I was in stir some con taught me how to read lips. It paid off that night. The old guy was saying, 'Crazy am I? If they only knew.' Then he busts out laughing. And starts patting the suitcase, like it was a dog or something. He starts talking again. "My little suitcase, like Pandora's chest, so full of surprises. That man at the end of the bar. I could make him bark like a dog, or stand on his head."

"And then he puts his mouth down to the case and says something to it. Well, Bill, when the guy at the end of the bar starts barking, I almost fell out of my seat. I look quick to see how my little chum is taking it. He's got a funny sort of grin on his puss and he pats the case again, like it'd done a good job. I got it then. There was something in that case, something that made people do what you told them to!"

**R**OBLEE was sitting on the edge of the sofa, his face having the same expression as a small boy watching the antics of his favorite Western movie hero.

"Y' know, Bill," Slim continued, "I tailed that old goof for a week, trying to get hold of that case. Damn it—the things he could make people do, just by talking to that case. But it was all kid stuff. Like when he went into a hamburger joint and made all the customers think they were seals and had them ask for a live fish. *Goofy!* Well, I finally ran him down and after a little, uh, talk, I got the case. I figured I could make better use of it."

Bill was so excited he hopped out of his seat and took a turn around the room, pounding a fist into his palm, as he did so.

"Man, oh man," he said, his voice rising in excitement. "But we know what to do with it, don't we?"

Slim said, "We?" so casually that Roblee almost missed the undertone it carried.

"Don't get me wrong, boss," he said in swift apology, "I—I meant, you."

"And don't forget it," Slim warned him.

"Say, boss," Roblee said, after a short silence, a silence in which he had done a little thinking, "did ya ever look at the inside of the case?"

"Yeah. But I can't make head or tail out of it. Just a lot of wheels and wires. They're all inside a main wheel that's got a thin copper wire running around it."

"Jees—I'd sure like to see it."

"Well you're not going to. So forget about it."

Roblee knew better than to argue about it. Slim wasn't the kind of man one argued with—for long.

During the several weeks of their partnership, previous to the Belden job, Slim had never shown any traits of introspection. But now, he developed a habit of sitting for hours at a time, silent, seemingly unaware of Roblee's presence. Slim had something on his mind. Something so big, he was almost afraid to let Roblee in on it. One day, he was sitting, lost in thought as usual, when he suddenly arose and announced, "I'll be back in about an hour." And without a word of explanation, marched through the door.

**S**LIM opened the door and walked in.

He felt it immediately. The emptiness. It was as though the walls had shouted it to him. "Bill's gone. And he's got the case." Slim tore through the three rooms of the apartment as if he were possessed. Vitriolic words blazed from him. "The dirty, lousy, conniving crook. Double-crossing thief! If he's . . ."

Bill had. Not only was the money

gone; of greater value, the case was gone. Wild, uncontrollable fury seized him. He dropped the books he was carrying and began to vent his anger on the furnishings. He found an odd satisfaction in the acts of breaking, tearing, wrecking. When he was through, the apartment looked as if a cyclone had struck it. Spent at last, he sat in the wreckage of the couch and gloomily thought of the future. At the best it didn't look too good. Roblee had to be found.

The books he had dropped caught his eyes. He picked them up, an Atlas and two volumes on Kentucky, and leafed through them, murmuring as he did so:

"The damn fool. If he'd only waited till I got back. What a job I had planned. All the damned gold in the world. Well . . ."

He realized, however, that the need for immediate action was imperative. The gold would keep. But Bill had to be found before he was caught. There was no doubt in Slim's mind but that Bill would be caught. Bill was far from being a smart guy.

Slim left the apartment. The very thought of sitting there sent waves of anger through him.

Miley's had but a single customer. Slim sat in his favorite booth and cogitated on Bill's whereabouts.

"Let's see," he spoke aloud in thought. "It'd be silly to just chase around blindly after him. What do I know about him that would make finding him easier? Drinks—but Bill isn't a boozier. No women. H'm . . . I got it! He's always crying, 'no breaks.' And now he got a break. He's bound to brag."

It took the greater part of the night to find him. But Slim had figured out the right angle. He had to visit a dozen taverns before he found the man to whom Bill had talked. Luck was in Slim's favor. Bill had not only boasted

of what he was going to do, he had told where. Fortunately, his listener thought Bill was just shooting off a drunken mouth. Elation was bright in Slim's face when he left the tavern.

"Thē goon," he said scornfully. "That's about what I figured. A bank. Now I know which one."

It was the largest in the city. From a vantage point across the street, Slim watched the dumpy figure of Roblee, squarish suitcase at his side, walk into the bank. He knew he had only a few minutes to wait. Then Roblee was out, turned the corner and hailed a passing cab. Slim's beckoning finger brought a cab to the curb.

He pointed Roblee's cab out to his driver and said:

"Follow that hack; but not too close."

Roblee's cab pulled up before a second-rate hotel on the near north side. Roblee paid off the driver and went into the hotel.

"All right, driver," Slim said, mouth twisted in a wry grin, "drive to the nearest men's furnishing store."

WHEN Slim came out he was carrying a suitcase similar to the one Roblee had. The waiting cab took him back to the hotel they had just left. The desk clerk was on the switchboard. Slim's inquisitive eyes wandered over the desk and found what he hoped would be there. A listing of new arrivals and their room numbers. Roblee was in 302.

The clerk came away from the switchboard. "Yes sir?"

Slim said, "Got a room?"

"Yes sir."

"What are the rates?"

"Just daily. Two bucks."

"Okay. Here's the deuce."

The Gods smiled. Slim was in 308. And, as he suspected, there was no bathroom. That meant there were two

bathrooms on the floor, one for men and one for women. Now to find where it was. It was just around the bend of the corridor, flush against one wall of the hotel. The two nearest rooms were 301 and 302. Slim didn't waste any time. He had been given an old-fashioned house key. So he knew each door had a keyhole. He stooped and peered into Roblee's room. Roblee was busy counting the money he had made away with.

"Nice haul," Slim said, easing the door to a gentle close.

Roblee, bent over a table, seemed suddenly powerless to move.

"S matter, Bill? Stuck f'r words?"

Roblee moved in a slow pivot from the hips. His face, covered with a film of sudden perspiration, was gray in color. And his eyes, wide in terror, held a childish plea for forgiveness.

Slim moved forward in slow menace. Yet Roblee, although only too aware of Slim's intention, made no motion to escape. It was as though he was hypnotized by Slim's manner.

Slim, a hand thrust deep into a jacket pocket, stood beside Roblee.

"Rat!" He spat the word out at Roblee.

"Please—please, Slim—I wasn't gonna blow—wait . . ." he had seen the pupils of Slim's eyes contract to pinpoints.

"Rat," Slim repeated softly, and brought his hand out of his jacket pocket. The shot-filled sap caught Roblee squarely across the temple. The depression it left seemed inches deep. Slim looked down at the dead man for a second, then drew back his foot and kicked hard at the mutilated face. Blood spattered the walls from the gaping wound in the temple. Then Slim walked over to the table. He shook his head regretfully at sight of the money. They were almost all hundred

dollar bills. He walked back to the door and picking up the suitcase he had left there, substituted it for the one Roblee had brought. Then he went back to his room.

THE moon cast a soft light on the rolling, green Kentucky landscape. The car, parked in the small grove of trees on the hill, cast an oddly menacing shadow. It was as if it held within it an immeasurable amount of evil. Slim pored over the large scale map of Kentucky, held under the small glow of the dash light. Satisfied at last, he turned off the light and got out of the car.

Several miles to the east, lay Fort Knox, the gold vault of the nation. Slim's eyes narrowed to slits as he peered in that direction.

"Sleep," he whispered softly. "Sleep. Soon I'll send a message to you. And when you wake in the morning, you will never know what happened during the night. But here in these hills will be buried the gold you're so damn-foolishly guarding now."

He returned to the car and climbed back into the front seat. He pressed the suitcase close to him. His voice held an odd, crooning note, as he whispered his message into the case. Then he snapped the switch and got out of the car again. There was a whirring click from the inside of the case and the faintly discernible sound of gears meshing. Suddenly there was a silence and after a short pause, the clicking sound came on again.

Slim stood on a small, grassy knoll, peering to the distance, looking to see if he could make out the outlines of the fort. He shook his head suddenly. A strange message had popped into his mind. And then Slim Pickins started to roll down the hill. And as he rolled, he began to yell, "Whoo, whoo, I'm a

steamroller. Listen to my whistle, whoo, whoo!"

Slim didn't see the huge army truck

bearing down on him. He could only yell:

"I'm a steamroller. Listen to my . . ."

## ANIMAL WEATHER PROPHETS

By MOLLIE CLAIRE



**H**OW are animals able to foretell weather conditions a week or two weeks ahead? Search me! I don't know how, but THEY DO. For instance there was an old Chinese laundryman in San Jose, California, who had a pet frog. By watching the frog's actions he was able to predict the weather for several days in advance. He rarely made a mistake. Most people in the San Francisco Bay region depended on the laundryman's predictions more than they did on those of the weather bureau. But the frog ran away or was stolen and finally, I believe, the old laundryman died, and that was that.

In 1925 or 1926 I was living in a little town in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mts. in southern California. One day I heard a plaintive meow at my back door. I opened the door and there was one of the most beautiful and intelligent tortoise-shell cats that I have ever seen. She sat there politely until I invited her in.

There were very few cellars or basements in the village. Owing to the hot summers, most of the older houses had lattice work between floors and ground to create a draft in the belief that it kept the houses cooler. Our house had such lattice work. Built on a slope, it was several feet high at the back of the house. There was a small door which allowed me to store garden tools inside. I made a soft bed there for Tortoiseshell, in a wooden box, with a cushion and old wool sweater. Within a few weeks she presented me with several kittens as beautiful as herself. My neighbor's little girls came several times daily to see "old Tottysell" and her kittens.

One day they came in laughing excitedly, to tell me that she had moved her babies over to their house. Their own house had a concrete foundation and cellar well cemented. There was but one opening that a cat could use to get under the house and that was under the back porch. Tortoiseshell had taken advantage of this and moved her precious offspring.

"Let them stay," said my neighbor, Rosalind. But she had cats of her own and I was afraid my cats would annoy her later on if they grew up under her house. So the children crawled under and got the kittens and brought them back.

"Tottysell took them back!" three-year-old Peggy Marie informed me next day, her brown eyes dancing mirthfully.

We brought the kittens home again, and again Tortoiseshell moved them.

"Do let them stay," Rosalind said. "She may have a good reason that she is unable to explain to us. Perhaps there are snakes or rats or even

ants that endanger the lives of her babies."

And then it happened! At least ten days, more likely two weeks after she had first moved the kittens, the heavens opened! We had a veritable cloudburst. The rain came down in bucketfuls. Unlike a cloudburst, the deluge kept up steadily for several hours. Peggy Marie was with me when the rain started. When her father came for her from their house next door, the water was even with the floor of the front porch but it did not come up higher. Her father wore rubber hipboots and the water was above his knees.

"Now we know why old Tottysell moved her babies!" the children cried. "If they had stayed under your house they'd have drowned!"

They were right: BUT HOW DID SHE KNOW?

**A**T ABOUT the same time, over in the San Joaquin Valley, a great tragedy in animal life, was being enacted. It was probably the greatest animal migration of all time in the history of the United States. A few years previously I had lived for some time on one of the immense Miller and Lux stock ranches some thirty miles westerly from Bakersfield. Enclosed within the boundaries of the property was what was called Buena Vista Lake, a reservoir then dry because of several years of drought. While I lived there the reservoir was covered with grain fields. Hordes of field mice made their homes there and subsisted luxuriously on the cereals left by the harvesters.

And just about the time that old Tortoiseshell was moving her babies, there occurred what the San Joaquin papers called "A strange invasion of field mice!" The mice invaded the farms in the vicinity of Buena Vista Reservoir and elsewhere. There were millions of them. They invaded granaries and destroyed great amounts of grain. They ate everything edible in the kitchens of farmhouses—ham, bacon, in fact, meats of all kinds, bread, cereals, everything that could not be placed in tin and glass containers. They chewed up clothing that could not be packed into trunks. They chewed mattresses and blankets to bits. They were in the cupboards, under the sinks, in the beds. The highways were slippery with their blood. Cats and dogs fattened on these tidbits.

AND THEN CAME THE SAME STORM THAT HAD CAUSED TORTOISESHELL TO MOVE HER LITTLE FAMILY. Buena Vista Reservoir filled again. Had the mice not migrated, all would no doubt have been destroyed.

"Instinct!" everyone said.

BUT WHAT, PLEASE, IS "INSTINCT"?



# WHAT MAN

## FUTURE SCIENCE of the EYE

By

QUEEN'S KNIGHT

Is this idea about eye operations of the future one that will work out?

"HE IS the apple of my eye" says a mother fondly embracing her little child. Aside from its true significance this statement means that the child is her most precious possession.

Of our physical senses the eyesight is by far the most important. Our senses of touch, taste, temperature and physical pain and pleasure depend entirely upon direct contact. Hearing and smell have a limited range. Eyesight alone extends our scope of perception into infinity. It spans distances measured in millions of light-years to reveal the breath-taking vastness of the universe; it warns us of danger; it guides our footsteps. It is our major avenue of learning. Without eyesight civilization could not exist at all. Blind people live among us and manage to get along. But they depend entirely on the eyesight of others. Their food, clothing, housing, transportation, books, are all provided for them by those who see. Without his eyes man could not build his intricate machines, he could not use his trains, automobiles, ships and planes. He could not venture out beyond his immediate surroundings. He could never know the beauty of blue skies, green meadows, mysterious forests, stormy seas or twinkling eyes of distant worlds which watch him through the velvet cloak of night. The color riot of a flower garden, the loveliness of his sweetheart would not exist for him. He would remain forever a blind denizen of darkness, a "dweller in the caves," a vicious grub wantonly destroying the roots of plants and flowers on which his very life depends.

The Eye, which alone is capable of reaching into infinity is a connecting link between man's mind and the First Cause of the amazing phenomenon we call the Universe. It is a gate between the Lower World of Darkness and the Upper World of Light. Ancient Egyptians claimed that all life comes from the All-seeing Eye of Ra, whose symbol in our system is the Star called Sun. In



# CAN IMAGINE

If you will imagine it, perhaps someone will be inspired to do it. This department is for your ideas, no matter how "wild" they may seem; who knows, they may be the spur to some man's thinking and thereby change our destiny! Tell us your thoughts.

ancient symbolism the Eye (or Orb) and the Star are synonymous—both stand for the Source of all Life, the Creator. Above the Pyramid on your One-Dollar bill within the "stone rejected by the builders (men)" is the All-seeing Eye forever watching every act and covert thought of man, who is so childish as to think that he can hide his real inner nature from It. When man destroyed the Lost Orb (Eye) and scattered her fragments through the Asteroid Belt he cursed himself with mental blindness. He lost the sight of his Guiding Star and has been traveling along the wrong road ever since. Today blind people follow their equally blind human idols toward common self-destruction in an atomic war.

There is a saying that when God wants to punish people He makes them blind. But this is merely an allegory. Man punishes himself by deliberately rejecting the facts of life around him, by blinding his own eyes to the principles of nature, by building his civilization on false premises, only to see it totter and collapse in ruins on his own head. God has never punished anyone yet, and never will. This, notwithstanding the allegoric story of "punishment" of Adam and Eve for the "original sin," for even there man punished himself by using arbitrary judgment and branding as evil the things God made and said: "Behold, it is good." If man would only read the first two chapters of the Bible and try to THINK, he probably would see that he omitted something from "the God's own image." And if he is not too blind, he probably would see that he omitted the same thing from his whole civilization.

"Oh, say! can you see by the dawn's early Light, what so proudly we hallo'd at the twilight's last gleaming?" Or can you? Remember, none are so blind as those who will not see! Man's present trouble is that he "cannot see straight." Let us restore his physical eyesight and his mental vision will improve. Let skeptics laugh at this,



but there is a definite connection between the two. Most people spend their lives tinkering with individual pieces of a giant jig-saw puzzle, but they lack the vision to fit these pieces together into a single beautiful picture. They laugh and say: "These pieces have nothing to do with one another. Look, there are no two alike." And yet, you'd be surprised how everything in Nature is hooked up together and how seemingly unrelated things affect each other. This is because the Universe is a single entity and not a conglomeration of miscellaneous disjointed parts. It is a single mechanism, where each part has to fit the universal blueprint, is subject to the single universal law, depends for its existence and development on the single universal force, and where no exceptions are allowed.

Just note how many people around you wear glasses. What would it mean to humanity if 90% of them could have their vision restored to normalcy? Suppose one could walk into a doctor's office, undergo a simple and inexpensive treatment and half an hour later walk out and throw away his eye glasses? Too good to be true? Let me explain just how it can be done.

**T**HE eye is a combination photographic, movie and television camera. Its image-forming apparatus is very simple. It consists of a lens, which focuses the picture on a sensitive lining, called retina. The curvature of the eye-lens is adjustable within limits permitting maintenance of focus re-

ardless of the distance between the object under observation and the eye. This lens is designed to operate at a certain normal distance from the retina. If the retina should for some reason move out of this normal focal plane, eye strain results which gives us headaches. This is because the eye-lens is forced to work beyond its normal limits of adjustment. Instead of moving the retina back where it belongs, we place a supplementary lens in front of the eye to adopt its focal range to the new position of the retina. Thus, if the retina is too close to the eye-lens, the image falls behind it. The patient is then called far-sighted and is provided with convex glasses, which add their curvature to that of the eye-lens and bring the image forward until it focuses on the retina. If, on the other hand, the retina is positioned too far from the eye-lens, the patient is called near-sighted and is given concave glasses to counteract the refractive power of the eye-lens, thus moving the image back and onto the retina.

It is generally assumed that the muscles controlling the eye-lens lose their elasticity with age, the eye-lens flattens and its refractive power is reduced. As a result, they say, old people become progressively more far-sighted while the vision of near-sighted people improves with age. Sounds reasonable, but is this the real cause? Let us suppose that with advancing years the retina moves closer and closer to the eye-lens. The image gets beyond the normal limits of adjustment, the eye muscles strain, headaches develop and finally all effort is given up as hopeless. When glasses are prescribed they bring the image into focus without the use of muscles. Having been deprived of their exercise the muscles atrophy and leave the patient entirely dependent upon glasses. Now, let us suppose that instead of using glasses we moved the retina where it belongs. Would not this restore the normal vision without depriving the eye-muscles of the exercise they need?

We all know that, as a person grows older, his skin becomes loose and hangs in folds and wrinkles, as if it were too large for him. As a matter of fact, he becomes too small for his skin. His cells and organs shrink due to the loss of fluids in them. All body tissues, cells and organs dry up and shrink with age—why not eyes? An eye-ball can be likened to a toy balloon filled with water. It is filled with a transparent jelly-like fluid, which keeps its walls distended, maintains its size and shape and keeps the retina at the proper distance from the eye-lens. Any loss of this fluid would cause the eye to shrink, bring the retina closer to the eye-lens and make one far-sighted.

The same loss of fluid would improve the vision of near-sighted persons.

Of course, there are some people whose eyes have physical defects requiring prismatic and special effects lenses. But the majority are simply far- or near-sighted. Their eyes are merely over- or under-inflated with fluid. If we should take a far-sighted person suffering from the loss of fluid and inject some of this fluid into his eye-balls, we could restore their size and shape, bring retina again into focus and give him perfect vision. Similarly, if he is near-sighted, we would simply draw some fluid out, deflate his eyeballs and bring the retina into proper focus. A hypodermic needle should do the trick. If the operation could be performed under a local anesthetic, all the better, for the patient could advise the surgeon just when his eye is in focus. Otherwise, the image on the retina could be observed through an instrument while the patient is unconscious. The fluid could be transferred from one patient to another, or a dead person's eye could be kept in the ice-box as a source of fluid.

Suppose that such an operation has to be repeated every few years? So what? Is it not worth it to do away with the perpetual nuisance of a contraction hanging on your nose? The adjustment is so simple that it should take but a few minutes to perform. It is only a question of proper anesthetic to immobilize the eye-muscles, to render the eye-ball insensitive to pain and then adding or withdrawing a tiny amount of fluid with a hypodermic needle.

As I am writing this I have in front of me a current newspaper report of a new operation devised by Dr. Bogart of the New York Eye and Ear Hospital. Dr. Bogart cuts away portions of the sclera or white outer coating of the eye-ball. This distorts and flattens the eyeball, brings the retina into focus and restores normal vision. This is a long stride in the direction of the method I propose. However, this is a much more delicate and critical operation. The advantages of fluid transfusion are obvious. The cut-away tissues cannot be replaced, mistakes cannot be corrected, while the fluid can be pumped back and forth until perfect adjustment is obtained. There are no painful wounds and the patient can use his eyes immediately. Additional corrections can be made at any time and the operation should be simple and inexpensive.

Will science-fiction point the way toward curing man's major present affliction—his ocular and mental aberration? Who will be the first to do it? How about it, Dr. Bogart?

## DISCOVER HEALTH GIVING ANTI-GERM LAMP POWDER

By GARY LEE HORTON

★

**T**HE General Electric Company lamp department has recently announced the discovery of a new phosphor, resembling the powder used in fluorescent light tubes, which will permit the manufacture of lamps producing in-

visible ultra-violet in proportions suitable for both human beings and poultry. It is said that a thin coating of the new powder on the inner surface of present lamps would produce an ideal combination of germ killing and health giving radiations.



# IMMORTALITY NO LONGER A MYTH?

By **ROBERT L. TANNER**

SINCE I first read Mr. Shaver's "I Remember Lemuria" my soul has been ablaze with interest, revolving principally about the astounding revelations as to old age and the cause thereof rather than the caves and the dero. I have done no work along lines of caves themselves, and have not intended to.

I had long been puzzled by the enigmatic subject of why a "perfect" mechanism such as the human body should die. I had studied about every theory as to the cause of age that existed, and was dissatisfied with the best of them.

I will not attempt to name the collection of books I have searched out to substantiate this idea, for there are too many. But if any of you are skeptical as to the integrity of the authors of said volumes, I shall be more than glad to point out to you personally the many world famous scientists (including Rutherford, Curie, etc.) who are unwittingly "on my side" of the argument.

In the first place, any good geology book will point out that the presence of radium in almost any place one looks, as well as other radioactives, has long been noted but never explained. Rutherford says: "It is found in the soil of our bark gardens, and in the flour from which our bread is made, in the chalk of the cliffs and the sand of the seashore. It pervades the air, and a negatively charged wire exposed for some hours to the atmosphere is coated with a radioactive deposit which can be dissolved in acids or rubbed off with a cloth. It is found, too, in the leaves of plants, and, in fact, the difficulty now begins to be to name a place where there is no radioactivity at all!"

Now, Mr. Shaver says this radioactivity comes from the sun. I see no fault in this statement, as no one has yet made spectroscopic observations of ALL the materials on our parent star. Several other authorities blurt at this, too. Not to mention the fact that there are cosmic rays of peculiar quality, and no one knows just where they originate. A geiger counter will register a continuous descent of radioactive material from the air. It can't just "be there." It has to come from some place. Where is the most logical point?

Now, the gist of Mr. Shaver's original footnote was that this radioactivity from the sun is constantly ingested in food, water, and air. This is all true enough. Cow eats plants, drinks water, breathes air. You eat cow, and also the same plants, water, and air. All these are full of radium and company.

The author spent many long months reading, reading, reading. He looked up every conceivable bit of info he could get his hands on. And finally he was convinced there was enough proof at hand to convince a lot of people. But he decided that

medical science should know of this fact that it has ignored for so long. So your author finally snagged an interview with the chief of the Dept. of Physiology, National Institute of Health, in Washington.

Your author spent seven hours in the institute. He was shown through magnificent laboratories, he was shown countless rats, guinea pigs, and rabbits in cages undergoing countless experiments for the good of mankind. But was one, even one of them devoted to the study of age? It would seem that science isn't interested in why we age.

After the author talked his head off trying to explain every detail of the idea to the chief, he found out one important thing. Medical science is oblivious of the most obvious facts.

You remember that Mr. Shaver mentioned the radium watch dial painters who were afflicted with radium poisoning. They absorbed radium when they tipped the brushes with their tongues, and it was decidedly not good for them.

The chief of the physiology department looked at me with a perfectly straight face and said, "But those dial painters are still alive and healthy. Many of them are living today and the radium content of their bodies is so great that they exhalate radon."

I was shocked, to say the least, but didn't disagree with them.

READERS! You can find photographs of those dial painters in back issues of LIFE, and they are OLD at twenty-five and thirty years!

The chief further stated that radium, etc., was not nearly as harmful as it is reputed to be. Nor is the radiation thereof. He said that he had exposed animals to radiations equal TO A THOUSAND GRAMS OF RADIUM FOR PERIODS OF EIGHT HOURS DAILY WITHOUT HARM!

A thousand grams.

Madame Curie allowed a strong salt of radium, about a gram of it, to act upon her skin for several hours. Weeks later a burn appeared that was many months in healing. ONE GRAM!

The chief said further that radium had been introduced into the diet of rats and other animals and no shortening whatever of the life span was noted! He also said that if radiation was the cause of age, it was radiation from outside the body, not inside. He illustrated with a geiger counter worth hundreds of dollars, and a sample of radium.

He turned the counter on, and it began to click. No radium in vicinity. That, he said, was the following, or "cosmic ray" . . . about 20 counts per minute. Then handing me a bottle containing radium in solution he instructed me to hold it up to the delicate part of the instrument. CLICKETY CLICKETY CLICK! Then he said that this

sample was not sufficient to kill quickly.

Not sufficient to kill! Then why, dear reader, DID THEY HAVE THE RADIOACTIVE ROOM ISOLATED IN A CONCRETE VAULT? To prevent contamination, he said. And yet he said radium was not dangerous!

One think did the chief grant me—that radium was widely distributed as I had said.

He was quite pleasant about the whole thing, though. He said that there is a possibility, though a remote one, and that when and if I could offer him enough proof he should be more than willing to undertake a five year experimental period with rats and other animals.

Now I shall tell you of some of my findings.

It is agreed that radioactivity is a causative factor in age. Neither Shaver nor myself hold that it is the only one. It is agreed that many deadly substances are ingested as well as radioactivity. Some of them poison, some of them burn. But they all add to the slow degeneration of the body unto death.

When the poisons first begin their work they affect the glands. The thyroid and pituitary are perhaps the first to be affected. The glands are impaired to the extent that growth ceases and this is the first symptom of approaching age.

Then the digestive system is impaired somewhat, and a middle aged man finds that he can no longer eat the things he did as a child. He finds that his entire body is not what it used to be.

Then radioactives and other poisons go to work on the tissues, now unprotected by the restoring glandular juices and life-giving vitamin substances.

It lodges in the cells, between them, around them. The slow but inexorable fire of radium burns cells, other poisons kill them. Thus each cell is unable to take on the new substance to repair itself. More cells die. The skin of an aged person even LOOKS burned. Then the dis-elements attack the nervous system and the blood system. Paralysis may be the result. Or hardening of the arteries, or any number of age-silments.

Finally, with the complete rustation of all the vital organs and glands, the body dies.

You may note that many biblical characters lived to ripe old ages of nine hundred, etc. The amount of radioactives then accumulated in the earth was not so great as it is now.

There is an age disease called progeria. A five-year-old dies of age. This is due to a faulty placenta in the womb of the mother before birth. It is unable to filter the sure-death out of the blood the embryo receives.

Now the obvious thing to do is to exclude these death dealing things from the body. But this is easier said than done. In addition to this we must feed the body the things that it should normally be without due to age. We must pour the life giving elements into the body so that it does not weaken to the age poisons.

Someone has suggested transfusions of baby-blood. That, I am afraid, is a little vampirish. But on the other hand, injections of fresh lymph

from a young animal might help tremendously.

Another vital thing is protein. The intake of protein is deficient. And calcium should also be increased. Not to mention vitamins, the very food of the glands. Most of the one-a-day type vitamins contain the entire daily requirement of all of them. Therefore taken before each meal, they would triple your intake. As to the protein, one can get it from clear gelatin. The calcium can be gotten in any number of ways.

Proteins are the bricks which build cells. Build them faster than they are burned and you are getting somewhere. Vitamins are regulators, keep the organs and glands functioning properly. Calcium does for bones what protein does for tissue. It builds new cells.

The body should be taken care of. You know the health rules. Try them. But instead of drinking eight glasses of water a day leave the old H<sub>2</sub>O alone altogether and take eight glasses of milk. This contains vitamins, proteins, calcium, and another age-resisting element which is being investigated now. It seems to be present in eggs, too.

By careful study we have ascertained what food-stuffs contain more poison than others. Briefly they are roots (potato, carrot, turnip, beet, parsnip, etc.), stalks (celery, cabbage, etc.), water, and certain meats.

On the other hand, the following seem to contain very little of the sure-death: Leaves, seeds, nuts, grain, fruit, above-the-ground vegetables (peas, beans, squash, etc.), other meats.

This ought to be self-explanatory. The root and stalk of a plant act as a filter to retain the poisons, so that the leaf and seed get pure food. Thus stalks and roots are laden with the poison, while seeds and leaves, inherently young, are free of it. Beef, mutton, etc., are poisonous, as they come from a full-grown steer or sheep. But veal and lamb are free of it because they are from the young calf or lamb. A young frying chicken rather than an old hen.

In effect, one must eat only youth. A seed is young, is the child of the plant. Fruit is the same as the seed. Eggs, too, are naturally young. Get plenty of them.

Milk is young, is designed by nature as a food for young. It is filtered through the body of the cow, which absorbs the poison from it, and although it be largely water, it is safe.

The foods listed as poisonous above can be eaten under certain conditions. Take a potato for instance. Pulverize it and put it in a centrifuge with water. As the speed of the fuge increases, add some gelatine, and the potato will jell in the position it has assumed in the fuge. All the heavy poisons having been thrown to the bottom, you have merely to collect the top half of the stuff and there is your potato. This can be done with any vegetable. Meat is a little different and I advise leaving it alone completely, excepting the ones mentioned above as safe.

Of course triple distillation and then filtering will remove the poison from water, but this is

rather a difficult process. We are experimenting, as we have been for some time, in a more practical way to remove the poisons from water. Although this method is not perfected it soon will be. It should not be used as yet but I will describe it.

Add barium chloride to the water, and then sulfuric acid. A precipitate of barium sulfate is formed which, being insoluble, can be filtered out. This leaves the water full of hydrochloric acid, of course, but free of radium. Barium has an unusual attraction for radium, the two always being together. Thus with the barium all the radium is carried out in the precipitate. The hydrochloric acid is not too hard to remove, and we are searching for a yet easier way. But as I have said, don't try this as yet.

Now, of the age poisons, radioactives are by far the more prominent. Of the radioactives present in food radium is by far the greatest part. Therefore radium is our biggest enemy. The water treatment above described led to another idea viz. that of injecting barium sulfate into the body, allowing it to absorb the radium, and then be removed by normal processes of elimination (bowels, urine, etc.), carrying the radium with it. Warning: do not try this. Any soluble salt of barium is poisonous. The insoluble ones are not. Barium sulfate being insoluble, is safe. But this must be tried on animals first, in order to determine possible harmful effects due to its accumulation in the blood.

I might do well to mention that ANY accumulative poison is dangerous to one who would resist age. Nicotine is one of them. If you can break that habit, do so. There are other drugs which are not particularly harmful. Alcohol in moderate quantities is not in the least harmful. It is distilled and therefore free from poisons, and it stimulates circulation, which is good. But by

moderate amounts I mean a little snifter now and then; not a quart a day.

Coffee is another good one, if made with distilled water, as it is a helpful stimulant, but tea should be let alone as much as possible. Tannic acid is not what might be called helpful to the system.

To sum the whole thing up, we must (A) avoid further intake of age poisons. (B) Triple the intake of food without actually eating more (protein, calcium, vitamins in pill form). (C) Take care of the body in general.

Never let it be forgotten that most age-victims fall prey to disease or some physical ailment other than age itself. Age so weakens the resistance of the body that bacteria find it a simple matter to overcome the aged. I can safely say that, were it not for age, our present death-rate due to disease would be more than halved.

Now I have not mentioned the removal of radioactives from the air, as I think it is a rather difficult thing for the average person to do. Radioactives cling to the dust in the air, and become positively charged. A negatively charged wire attracts them, and this is the simplest method of removal. If you can construct a conditioner whereby all the air that enters your home is passed through several fine screens of wire, charged alternately positive and negative, it will help you immensely. The positive screen repels the substance and not too much gets through. Then the negative screen attracts that which DOES get through and holds it, so it can go no further. The next positive screen repels, and so on. Use a NEW motor for your fan, as an old one harbors a detrimental electric. Clean the screens periodically, OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, and avoid breathing the dust.

THE END



## THE SHAVER MYSTERY



RECENTLY the subject of how Man's five senses developed through evolution from the first sensory impressions of amoebic life in the sea to the organs and nerves we possess today was covered in a magazine article. Not all of the senses developed at once: touch was the first (probably), hearing, taste, sight and odor following. In going through the vast amount of evidence piling up as a result of the publication of the stories by Richard S. Shaver which has become known as the Shaver Mystery, certain conclusions can be drawn that lead to a rather startling hypothesis. It would seem that by an unknown means the following is true: (a) many people find themselves "knowing" things that could have been learned but were not; i. e., the inside workings of a complex machine completely understood by a seven-year-old child at first sight; (b) the ability to "know" what is happening great distances away as it happens; (c) the ability to "foresee" an event that happens almost immediately thereafter, or as much

as months later—Dr. Rhine of Duke University has lately experimented with ESP cards, and discovered that some individuals have the ability to tell what is the card following the one which is being concentrated on, i. e., precience; (d) mental telepathy; (e) "hearing" voices, audible or inaudible; (f) hallucinations; (g) dreams that are "different" in that they can't be explained by the usual methods of psychology; (h) the ability to recall an historical past that occurred before we ourselves were born, i. e., racial (?) memory; and many other phenomena we need not list here. What if we postulate that Man is today gaining a new sense which brings him fleeting impressions of so un-explainable (by his other senses) a nature as to confuse him and drive him to rationalization to interpret them, would it explain the Shaver Mystery, and all of these other things? Is there "more than meets the eye, ear, nose, tongue and finger"? Are we developing a new sense which we are having trouble in putting in its proper place?



# The TRUTH ABOUT TIBET

By  
**MILLEN COOKE**

We present a third in the series of pro and con articles on Tibet and its mysteries. Millen Cooke and Vincent H. Gaddis have presented varied arguments, which, we know, our readers have found both entertaining and instructive



A NOTE of thanks is hereby proposed to Mr. Gaddis for his very able and enlightening clarification of his position. We find it very difficult to disagree with one another because, as it now appears, our points of view are very much the same. If it is true that people do not realize the dangers inherent in the practices of the evil-doers, in Tibet and elsewhere, then there is great justification, indeed, for much publicity for the bad boys and all their works and pomps. "Tales from Tibet" was not meant to read the way it did to some of us, and speaking for one of us, that thought is both pleasant and encouraging.

Further, he is certainly a very patient man. A rebuttal published without substantiating quotations might well have left many a man hopping up and down his study and spinning his prayer wheel backwards. However, it would not be fair to the editors of AMAZING to leave the impression that they publish unsubstantiated articles. The quotations accompanying the letters from which that reply was pieced together would have taken, if published entire, a large chunk out of the issue, and apparently they fell victim to a problem in space and time.

One point now, or tiresome things may creep in. Since skilled action in our human circumstances is such a difficult art, any claims of "authority" made for me must be firmly rejected and denied. Authorities are not allowed as many mistakes as the rest of us, and in an existence in which everything is constantly in process of becoming something else, "authority" (and authorities) must give way before information.

Clearly, much more information is needed in this case, from both sides of the picture. The way is now fairly opened up for it, so let's have it. Since nobody is trying to prove either that Tibet is entirely evil or entirely good, some very interesting reports should be brought to light concerning the ideas, practices, and people concerned. My position still remains, simply, that there is a great deal more good coming out of Tibet than my critics think there is, and that it is much "stronger than they realize."

In connection with a wider view of the positive side of the story, certain books were and are recommended for consideration. Among these, the books of W. Y. Evans-Wentz, which he had in their Tibetan portions from his own teacher, or guru, the Lama Kazi Dawa Samdup, "Chief Interpreter on the Staff of His Excellency Lochen Sutra, the Tibetan Plenipotentiary to the Government of India . . . also attached to the Political Staff of the Dalai Lama on the latter's visit to India," and later Lecturer in Tibetan to the University of Calcutta. There are three of these books, and they form a valuable complement to study of any kind related to Tibet, Tibetans, their religion and philosophy, and Tibetan history:

(1) "The Tibetan Book of the Dead," dealing with the science of dying. The Tibetans, in common with many primitive peoples and the latest views of some of our own eminent scientists, doubt that death is natural. They have a "treatment" for it that is psychological and designed to help the person undergoing the unfortunate experience. "As an epitomized exposition of the

cardinal doctrines of the Mahayana School of Buddhism, it (The Tibetan Book of the Dead) is of very great importance, religiously, philosophically and historically." *Tib. B. of D., Introduction.*

(2) "Milarepa," the "Jetsum Kabbum," or biography of Jetsum (who is called "Milarepa," a title significant of mental attainments making it possible for the yogin proficient in them to live the year around clad only in a cotton garment). Jetsum started his religious career by studying with sorcerers in order to revenge himself upon his double-dealing relatives, finally saw the evil of his ways, turned over backward in the other direction and became a great saint. His life has become symbolic of the possible regeneration and integration of even the most perverse types of humanity—one of the basic doctrines, by the way, of Mahayana Buddhism.

(3) "Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrine," which is a set of translations accompanied by commentary. To quote from the General Introduction: "This volume contains seven distinct . . . treatises translated from the Tibetan . . . belonging for the most part to the esoteric lore of the Mahayana, or Great Path."

FOR a concise history of Buddhism in Tibet, Antoinette K. Gordon's chapter on the "Origin of Buddhism and its development in Lamaism," in her book, "The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism," is recommended. As a catalogue of the aspects of divinity, the book has no equal, although (or possibly because) its author completed her task entirely at the level of name and appearance.

Another book worth looking into, is "Peaks and Lamas," by Marco Pallis, an Englishman who went into the Himalayas to enjoy his favorite sport, mountain climbing. In his own words, "At the outset of my story I tried to climb peaks in a bodily sense; but in the end I discovered the Lama, who led me upwards to the peaks of the Spirit."

On the lighter side, there are certain novels by Talbot Mundy, who, "knew the Orient and its soul-life more profoundly than even his best novels would indicate": "The Devil's Guard," "Old Ugly Face," and "Om."

The works of these four writers can be found in libraries. One, a scholar and anthropologist who became a "knower" himself, under the tutelage of a recognized guru. Another who approached her work with the unsympathetic eye of a cataloguer of "heathen gods"—a disector who observes the structure keenly and as clearly as her spectacles will allow. Still another, a mountain climber who learned of other peaks that man can climb. And finally, a writer of action stories with thoughts in them of good and evil that "make the hair stand up" in both the Eastern sense of delight, and the Western sense of terror, bringing doubts into the minds of persons with much faith in the Yale Lock people, and hope into the hearts of those who think the human race

may yet prove itself worthy of its own opinion of itself.

In fearing and fighting the evil we recognize, let us not lose sight of the "Holy Men in Tibet, existing side by side with these sorcerers." As Evans-Wentz remarks in "Milarepa," "As from mighty broadcasting stations, dynamically charged with thought forces, the Great Ones broadcast over the earth that vital spirituality which alone makes human evolution possible; as the Sun sustains the physical man. They sustain the psychic man. . . . Nowhere in the course of his researches among the living saints of the Himalayas and of Hindustan, has the writer encountered a genuine yogi whose ideal was not unselfish preparation for service to the race."

Also, let us not allow our fear and our fighting spirit to cry "sorcery," "corrupt," and "evil" too quickly before we can bridge a cultural gap and reach some understanding of meaning and intent.

Some people just remain obstinately unimpressed by "universal definitions." Before people looked into the matter thoroughly, the world was "universally defined" as flat, which didn't seem to affect matters much from other points of view, that of the planet itself, for instance. Now it is "universally defined" as an oblate spheroid, but that doesn't fit all the information that can be dug up if one is persistent.

In "Peaks and Lamas," Marco Pallis points out: "To regard the numerous figures seen in the temples as separate 'gods' or 'devils' whose 'idols' are worshipped is an error that will rob the traveller of any chance of learning how to read the symbolical language which is unfolded for his edification. . . . The Tibetan divinities all have a variety of aspects according to the functions that they are called upon to fulfill, perhaps even more according to the state of mind of the beholder. . . . Thus to the saint and to the evil-doer the same Being will show himself in widely differing guise. To the virtuous soul the Divine is necessarily glorious and comforting, but to an evil conscience the same can be a cause of horror and anguish. Such a method could just as well have been applied to a Christian subject if our minds had chosen to work in this way. To the sheep and to the goats, Christ would then appear totally different: the former would see Him as the loving figure that we know; but to the latter His aspect would need to be made more terrifying even than the worst nightmare that Tibetan imagination is capable of conjuring up; for there is nothing in Buddhism so frightful as the conception of God as pronouncer of unqualified and irrevocable doom. . . . In the Round of Existence there is a chance even for the lowest denizens of hell to work their way up again."

Mind! this is not to say there is no sorcery. There is, but beware of judgment passed on all Tibetan usage and symbols by European standards. Much judgment of that kind will be found in books, even in encyclopedias, with which it is such



bad manners to disagree in these times!

Again, Pallis: "A certain writer noted for his research into the externals of what he called 'Lamaism' has employed the words 'fiend and fiendness' to denote these 'terrible forms'. This is an unhappy choice of terms, since in our language the word 'fiend' is necessarily associated with a being unalterably evil by nature, in rebellion against God, whereas the words used should indicate the stern aspect of a beneficent power. I must therefore protest against the use of the word 'fiend' in this connexion, as being likely to mislead the average English reader into thinking that the Tibetans practise 'devil worship'. *The real meaning underlying the 'terrible forms' of Divinity is not difficult to understand, and it is of importance, if one wishes to appreciate the inner meaning of Tibetan metaphysics and art.*"

SHALL we say that such a doctrine is not misunderstood and perverted by some ignorant and unscrupulous persons, even in its own home territory? Certainly not. The ignorant and the unscrupulous appear everywhere and will make use of anything. But for people looking for information, here is information on the "devil worship" it would seem most necessary to possess, and to recall frequently in a fair consideration of data.

On the subject of sources, and the influence of Buddhism in modern Tibet, let me draw a parallel, which may or may not bear the fruit of a conclusion. If Yoga, Tantra, and Mahayana Buddhism in general (on all of which opinions differ widely as to value and validity) are not a legitimate part of the present influence of Tibet, then Christianity and the Church of England are no part of the influence of England, since the founder of Christianity was born in Palestine.

Pallis, again: ". . . In all religions, a wide membership tends to a dilution of the vital message. Tibetan Buddhism is no exception; yet in the case of the modern Tibetans, my own observations have

led me to think that rather more of the Buddha's teaching has sunk into their general consciousness than they are usually given credit for . . ."

Finally, beside the Ency. Amer's opinion of Tantras, I should like to beg leave to place the following statement from the Addenda to "Tibetan Book of the Dead," Section II, "Tantricism." "To define what is and is not a Tantra is not easy. According to its Tibetan etymology, Tantra literally means 'treatise,' or 'dissertation,' of a religious nature, usually belonging to the School of Yoga called Yoga-carya Mahayana. Religiously considered there are two chief groups of Tantras, one Hindu, the other Buddhist . . . Which of the two classes is the older is a disputed question; but the oldest Tantras are probably far older than European critics (who have placed their origin well within the Christian era) have thought. Some Tantras are indisputably quite modern.

"As encyclopedias of the knowledge of their times, the Tantras are very numerous. Some are concerned with the nature of the cosmos, its evolution and dissolution: the classification of sentient beings . . . the divinely instituted rules governing human relations and conduct; the numerous forms of worship and spiritual training, ceremonial rites, meditation, yoga, duties of kings, law, customs, medicine, astrology, astronomy, magic; and in short the whole cycle of the sciences of the East."

It is to be hoped that no necessity will be imagined for a final and unqualified judgment on Tibet itself. To say it, as a country of two million people, is either all good or all evil would be absurd. Life in this age is not so simple. A mind made up to prove something can prove it—to its own satisfaction at least—by clever rejection, but another mind can take up the rejected material and prove away in another direction. Proof is the armor of authority, and it does not always cover well. Information, from all directions, is much more serviceable, and much more interesting, too, in the long run.

## ★ WAR WITHOUT WEAPONS ★

HOW to shatter your enemy's morale is a question as old as war itself, in spite of the claims of the inventors of flame-throwing devices, dive bombers, and other modern fright-producing devices.

As early as 54 B.C., wars were being won on the morale front. When Julius Caesar landed his forces in England in that year, he found the Britons in a war paint of dark blue which gave them a fearful appearance. Even Caesar said the effect was terrifying, and his troops were ready to give up their ideas of conquest and set sail for Rome as fast as they could. This practice of painting the face and body in ghastly colors was common to many primitive peoples, including the American Indians.

To complete the job of utterly devastating the enemy's nerve, the war whoops were often used.

Sometimes it also helped to still the warrior's own fear. The war whoop of the Indian probably had this dual effect.

When the Irish of the 16th century attacked invading English forces, the woods would ring with their frightful war cry described as "Ooboohoo."

Another early predecessor of the flame-thrower was the helmet made in the form of animal heads, such as a lion's head with the teeth grinning at the enemy from the forehead of a warrior.

The Maoris of New Zealand, among the most warlike of savage tribes, added to their gruesomeness by making faces at the enemy in battle. The young warriors studied the art of grimacing as well as the other military arts. Their war-canoes, some carrying 100 warriors, had on the prow carved human heads with hideous faces.

R. Clayton

# SCIENTIFIC



The earliest center of the Great Fish is to be found among the prehistoric California Chumash who were centered upon the Channel Islands off the coast of Santa Barbara. They buried their dead in the foetal position of the child in the mother's womb, the graves arched with whale ribs.



The Chumash looked upon twins as a great calamity and the death of both together with the unfortunate mother was necessary for the good of the tribe. This same dialia for twins can be found among the Chinook. Were the twins the enemies of the Great Fish among Atlantic tribes?



There are two other locations upon the mainland of the Americas where the Totem of the Great Fish has survived in a more or less mutilated form to the present. One is in the far north among the Eskimo peoples. They invoke the protection of the totem when they place whale bones above their summer dwellings and carve fetiches from the mammal's ribs.



It might be very interesting if some archaeologist would undertake to map the American Indian into the fish-eaters and the non fish-eaters. Some tribes, such as the Navaho and the Osege have such a taboo upon eating fish that they will not even accept candy in the form of a fish. From the Amazon to the Mississippi, the trident is used in catching fish.



The Tahoe Indians will tell you that they settled upon Lake Tahoe because lakes are sacred, especially volcanic island-lakes, since those forgotten millenniums ago when they, now people of the high mountains, were a maritime people. They are a real mystery.

# MYSTERIES

## TOTEM OF THE FISH

By L. TAYLOR HANSEN

**One of the oldest totems in the world is that of the Great Fish. It is also the most baffling of mysteries.**

THE Pacific totem of the Great Fish is intriguing to the student of the ancient world, mainly because of its antiquity. It is a totem which today has become almost completely submerged in later totems, but in the early world, it may have been one of considerable migratory power.

Perhaps because of its antiquity, and its weakness among living tribes, who retain vestiges of it in a confused form only, The Great Fish is almost impossible to trace to a center. Therefore we shall discuss it as shattered fragments, possibly of an ancient entity, and possibly of merely accidental likenesses.

One of the earliest centers of The Great Fish is to be found among the pre-historical California Chumash who were centered upon the Channel Islands off the coast of Santa Barbara. The skeletons of these cemeteries were buried in the fetal position which a child has in its mother's womb. The graves were often arched over with the great rib bones of the whale. House platforms were arched by the same means.

Of the antiquity of the cemeteries upon the Santa Barbara coast there is little argument. Rogers<sup>1</sup> of the local museum, says: "At some time preceding the close of the Pleistocene (ice age) Period, there occurred a tremendous remodelling of the coastal region. Areas approximating in some places one hundred miles in width were suddenly swallowed by the sea, and at the same time, a line of low-lying hills, that had formerly straggled through the interior, were now suddenly raised to a range of low mountains that bordered the new coastline. At the close of this movement, nothing remained of the fertile lowlands except a dozen or more islands."

Continuing the description of his archaeological work, on page 189 he says, "In a few sites, we note the devastation wrought by former earth movements, during which villages have been torn apart and sections of others hurled into the sea."

Therefore, although he does not say so spe-

cifically, yet Rogers must date man's occupancy here to the Pleistocene, for he does say: "In the interim to the present time the islands have been raised about forty feet. This movement has been slow and steady for the beach line is without a sudden break."

This undoubted antiquity makes the Santa Cruz and other sites of particular interest, among the California Channel Islands.

Two animals seem to have been particularly revered by these people. One was the whale and the other was the dog. Skeletons of dogs, of two widely different domestic breeds, were found buried with great care and ceremony. One other curiosity was the fact that many twin children were found buried with the mother. This meant that to have twins was looked upon as a calamity and the necessary death of both, as well as that of the unfortunate mother was to be expected for the good of the tribe. This same dislike for twins is to be found among some other coastal tribes—namely the Chinook. *Were The Twins, the great heroes of almost all the Atlantic tribes, once enemies of The Great Fish Totem?*

One other tribe which looks upon the birth of twins as a tribal calamity to be followed by the death penalty, is a jungle tribe of The Amazon, The Walkanos, who carry a decided Pacific culture. They claim "The Water Monster" for their totem. Their name for it, namely "Wai" is the Polynesian and Malayan word for water. Yet their "Wai" bears many marks of confusion with the Atlantic-Caribbean Dragon. Possibly this was due to the fact that the migrating Walkanos found a Caribbean people before them, but the dislike of twins is entirely Pacific, as far as is now known.

Stanislaw Klimck in his discussion of the structure of California Indian culture, finds the Chumash of the Santa Barbara region to be a rather distinct racial type which is distributed rather widely over California and is centered in the Yukian language of the North California coast, but is dominant over much of the coastal strip to the Santa Barbara region. He names the type "Paleoamerind" and describes it as having a long head, broad face, long trunk, short extremities and

<sup>1</sup>This Chumash tribe is the one which in pre-historical times made plankled canoes caulked with tar. They were fish-eaters.

broad nose.

This is a good description of the Japanese and the Walkano of the South American jungles except that the latter is a round-head. There is a strong possibility also, that length of limbs is not racial but due to feeding methods. It is a well-known fact that the sons and daughters of Japanese who have been born and brought up in America are all a head taller than their parents. And speaking of the Japanese, as well as the people of China, the Great Fish is much revered in their pantheon, although they are fish-eaters.

There are two other locations upon the mainland of the Americas where the Totem of the Great Fish has survived in a more or less mutilated form to the present. One is in the far north among the Eskimo peoples. They invoke the protection of the totem when they place whale bones sometimes above their summer dwellings and carve fetiches from the ribs of that mammal.

The other location is upon the Pacific side of South America. The totem apparently gained its main foothold upon the coast of Ecuador when that land ran much further out into the sea than at present. The crumbling of the western shoulder of the South American continent, which once must have taken in the Galapagos Islands, took place largely before the time of man. Yet that man was present when much of the now drowned portions of the shelf was dry land, is not to be denied. Relics, probably from cemeteries, are continually washing up upon the shore from unknown sites.

**JULIO TELLO**, head of the Lima Museum of Peru, and himself a full-blooded Quichua (Incan) Indian, has done much work for science in this region. The mummies of priests which he has removed from a certain archaeological site, are all preserved in a most interesting manner. They are mummified in a crouching or foetal position, wrapped with yards and yards of beautifully woven cloth, usually of a yellow or orange shade, and always adorned with fans. These graves were also often arched with whale rib. One immediately thinks of the fans of Japan and of China and of the yellow and orange shade which is so sacred to those lands. Did this have some lost connection, and if so, what could it have been?

Farther on down the coast was the great shrine of Pachacamac, which was located below the domain of intrusive Chan-Chan. This shrine according to the Inca historians was a very ancient oracle, and a temple of healing. Here in a massive edifice overlooking the sea, was the golden shrine of The Great Fish God. It was supposed to have been fabulously wealthy, as generations of rich princes had given presents to the ancient deity, while the entire surroundings were glittering with the most magnificent splendor. When the buccannery of Pizarro finally reached the shrine to tear from it the ancient gold and melt it into bars for Spain, they were greatly chagrined to find

that it had been dumped into the sea. Thus the sea reclaimed again its own.

The only other site which may have been touched by the long-submerged traits of this lost totem, and to which one must go in order to study it among living peoples, is among the Polynesians of the South Sea Islands. One is quite certain that here the power of the pelesthood of the Great Fish is not dead.

It is interesting to learn that the old Polynesians believed that Tahiti and other islands rested upon the body of a giant fish, and that when they were shaken with earthquakes, the natives said that the great one was moving.

As one studies the totem, the biblical story of Jonah comes to mind. What could have been the significance of this myth which undoubtedly was handed down to the Jews from the previous Mediterranean people? One cannot help but remember that the Atlantic Dragon is so often pictured as having swallowed a deity of some kind, or an ancient culture-hero, for a human face is so often shown looking out through the open jaws of the Dragon. Was this a trait which the Atlantic totem took over from the Great Fish of the Pacific? And was the later acceptance of the Dragon in the Pacific, and upon the mainland of Asia made easy by the similarities to the anciently-revered Great Fish?

One other fact strengthens this possibility. In the ritualistic initiation ceremonies of certain Pacific Islands, the scars left upon the boys body by the initiation knife of the secret society, is said to be the place where the initiate was "swallowed by the Great Water Monster."

It might be very interesting if some archaeologist would undertake to map the American Indian into the fish-eaters and non-fish-eaters. Some tribes such as the Navaho and the Osage have such a taboo upon eating fish that they will not even accept candy in the form of a fish. And similarly, from the Amazon jungles to the Mississippi, the fish-eaters invariably use a trident with which to spear fish when they catch them by this means, although fish traps and fish poison are as widely spread.

Usually also, when asked the reason for these characteristics, the answer is the same. In the case of refusal to partake of fish, the informant always tells you that some of their ancestors were once turned into fish, which is simply the reason given for refraining to partake of one's totem. As for the trident spear, the answer is more vague. Apparently the explorers never asked the Mississippi River Indians the reason, but in the Amazon Jungles, the reason of the Tukanoes is that "it is the ancient weapon of the fish."

This answer immediately raises the long-sleeping memories of the picture of Neptune in our school mythologies, sitting upon a fish and holding up a trident spear. Did it have any connection to the great figure carved upon the monolith at Tiahuanaco Peru which holds in each hand—a trident spear? Or the Pueblo Indians who often carry



Map by author after that of Ronald Olson. Best known Chumash pre-historical sites on mainland and islands marked. Other sites are to be

found on Sta. Barbara and San Miguel Islands though not important. Anacapa only consists of precipitous cliffs rising from the sea.

tridents in their dances, or the Sioux who often cap their pyramid design with a trident?

Whether this was the weapon of the Great Fish, or of its ancient Atlantic enemy, we shall probably never know. Too many millenniums have passed between us and the time when the trident had a mystical significance. And perhaps, like the Navahos, too many of the tribes have amalgamated again and again, keeping their mother's totem sacred without exactly knowing why, as they revere both the Great Dragon and the Wolf, although they remember that once the two fought for years, soaking the desert sands of the Southwest red with the blood of the battle.

ONE might as well ask the Nez Perce how they know that they remember when Mt. Hood threw a fiery rain, or ask the Tahoe Tribe, who from time immemorial have been hunters, how they know that they once had a huge empire of shining white cities which was conquered by a pyramid-building, fire-worshipping people? Or, when their island-empire was shaken by earthquakes after that conquest, and the earthquakes followed by the flooding of great tidal waves ever creeping higher, how they knew that they abandoned their conquerors who took refuge upon the central great pyramid, and seizing the idle warcanoes of the conquerors, paddled away to safety? Ethnologists will tell you that the Tahoe Indians settled around their blue gem of a lake set among the high peaks of the Sierra Range because the hunting was good, and that they show not the faintest sign of ever having had the knowledge of a people who once built "white, shining cities." However, the Tahoe Indians will tell you, if you have sufficiently gained their confidence, that they settled upon Lake Tahoe because lakes are sacred, especially volcanic island-

lakes, since those forgotten millenniums ago when they, the people of the high mountains, were a maritime people of the sea. And who is to say that the ethnologists know, as yet, the entire story?

So it is with The Totem of the Great Fish, which is lost in the greater mystery of the Pacific itself, as The Totem of the Dragon is lost in the mystery of the Atlantic. Geologists are more or less certain that there could not have been an extensive land in the South Pacific during the time of man. That there may have been a far more extensive coral bench than the volcanic tops which the South Sea archipelagos present today, is probable. Gutenberg<sup>2</sup> of California Institute of Technology, in his studies upon earthquake waves through the southern part of the world's greatest ocean, finds that they make certain patterns, which definitely indicate the presence of some continental rocks, although undoubtedly long submerged. Yet upon the other hand, Dr. Williams does not find as much possibility of subsidence in the South Seas as the eminent Darwin. (The latter scientist, by the way, has contributed as much toward scientific knowledge upon the subject of coral reefs as he did in the field of evolution.) However, Dr. Williams does find considerable evidence of faults and possibly of rift valleys in the tilt of the great volcanic caps which rise from the ocean floor,<sup>3</sup> and which may be

<sup>2</sup>Gutenberg found evidence of continental rocks in all three oceans—the Atlantic, Indian and the South Pacific, although there was less in the latter than the other two.

<sup>3</sup>Williams found rounded coral pebbles in the lava outpourings on Tahiti, showing that the lava had made its way through a coral bench.

the remains of a gigantic system of oceanic cordilleras.

Davis believes that Tahiti has been submerged some four hundred to five hundred feet by theoretically restoring the rock-bottomed valleys of what are apparently high range points. This is somewhat more than allowed by the return of the water to the oceans which was once locked up in the Pleistocene ice sheet.

What the story of these fragments may have been during the ice age when they were apparently considerably larger than they were today, is hard to tell. If there was a great continental bench under them, it must have been submerged in warm, shallow water for the necessary millenniums to become deeply coated with coral. Parts of this bench were then raised, probably during the general lowering of the sea-level due to the ice caps,<sup>4</sup> thus causing the exposure of large coral islands. Through the coral of these beaches, tore the lavas of the Pleistocene ice age. Today, with the return of the sea to the pre-ice level, and possibly some extra submergence as well, these lava tops of the old volcanoes are all that are left to tell the story. And we must read that story through their tilt to the sea and from the rounded coral pebbles hurled in the flow of the Pleistocene lava.

What was the connection between the trident, The Great Fish, Jonah, Neptune and the early Oceanus who was thought by the Greeks to have been connected with the name Maya? Or is the connection only an illusion caused by accidental similarities? Olson admits South Sea similarities among various Chumash pre-history sites, but believes the comparatively recent, and this definitely does not tie in with the antiquity of those at Ecuador. Even the Tahoe Indians, who from

their legends are, apparently, a most ancient people, and who should know, do not seem to be able to help us out.

Thus the history of The Great Fish Totem; like the golden artifacts which today would be such an immense archaeological help, and which were reclaimed by the ocean from which they, or the ritualistic ideas behind them, might have come; sinks again into the greater mystery of the Pacific Ocean.

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<sup>4</sup>In round numbers, sea-level was lowered 250 to 300 ft.

#### OUR DISAPPEARING SUN

**T**HOUGH the earth receives but a small proportion of the four million tons of energy squandered by the sun every day, 160 tons, we are entirely dependent on the sun for our existence. Our light and heat is derived from the sun. If the amount of radiation from the sun were to be appreciably reduced the entire earth and all of its inhabitants would be frozen over.

Yet the sun is constantly disintegrating. During the first 100 billion years of its existence it shrank to one-fifth of its original size. At present it is radiating 360,000 million tons of its weight each day. At this rate the sun will last for another 15 million years before it turns into a burned out orb.

In the face of a constantly decreasing temperature we may have to utilize planets which at the present are too hot for human habitation. These orbs will suffer the same decrease in temperature as our planet. When they become habitable we may have to transfer our civilization from ice-bound earth to such planets as Venus and Mars in rocketships. Carter T. Wainwright

#### FLYING DEATH

**O**NE of the most dreaded diseases of living beings—man and animal alike—is sleeping sickness. It is carried by a tiny blood-sucking fly known as the Tsetse fly. By its bite, tiny parasites are introduced into the blood of its victims.

The disease has been known for more than a hundred years, but it was not until early in the 20th century that men of science discovered that the Tsetse was responsible for its spread. By its bite, tiny parasites are introduced into the blood of its victims which in the last stages cause a coma ending in death.

The fly lives and breeds in the tropical regions of Africa. Instead of laying eggs, the female deposits a single full grown larva on the ground at intervals of about two weeks. Man has found that burning fly-infected regions and clearing out the brush in the neighborhood settlements are helpful control measures. Science has devised a drug which successfully combats the ravages of the disease saving mankind and preserving many lives annually. Evelyn Hortos



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# DISCUSSIONS



**A**MAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Bouquets and brickbats will have an equal chance. Inter-reader correspondence and controversy will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.

## STRANGE EXPERIENCES

Sirs:

I shall not begin with any cordial salutation, but rather come straight out. I have been reading AMAZING STORIES off and on since the age of twelve. In my childhood (although I am only sixteen now) my ideas were eccentric. Before I even knew what Science Fiction was I had (still have) the feeling that I do not belong here on earth! Many times I wanted to tell others, but fear of ridicule and humiliation kept me from revealing my thoughts. As I grew older, dreams or visions would appear to me, not in my mind for I would be wide awake. I don't know really how they do appear, some I can't understand, while others I can't even remember. They last but a few seconds which seem like hours, some look familiar and just as I begin to understand, they vanish, leaving me puzzled and disturbed. I am not afraid, in fact I want them to recur. I should like to tell you of a few of these visions, that is as much as I can remember.

1. It seems as though I am in Middleville, England (?) in an old churchyard, I am always standing next to a particular grave when I am suddenly whisked beneath the earth, to find myself buried alive.

Note: THIS IS NOT CLAUSTROPHOBIA AS I DO NOT FEAR CRAMPED POSITIONS OR PLACES.

2. And in another I always find myself standing on a beach watching the sunrise. I am alone. The sun is now up, and I turn and walk toward the city which is surprisingly near. As I enter the city it is noon, and I am still alone. There are no birds singing, the streets are empty, no insects or animals are to be seen. Yet I can feel life present. Unseen eyes are watching my every move. Then everything melts into a greyness which dissolves in an odd manner.

3. The one I see mostly reminds me of something I am unfamiliar with, yet when I am in this state of memories it is as though I am many different individuals living one life. In this vision I am standing in front of a house where I once really lived. Suddenly I leap up into the sky and fly on my own power, but I don't reach twenty-five feet before I actually hit the sky. It is made of blue pointed wallpaper. Like a madman I claw and tear until I have made a hole big enough for

me to fit through. I sail through only to find myself in a large dirty attic. I dive down into different territory. This time I am over the Grand Canyon, the sky is as it really is. With the world far below me I fly in a swimming motion straight out into space.

I have had other such visions, but they are so minute they confuse me. Even today I am bored with the world, I haven't been all over the world, I've only been outside of the UNITED STATES once, and that's nothing to brag about. I've always had the yen to travel. When that German rocket was launched from this country, the queerest memory that I was once a rocket flared up in my mind. This is gospel truth. Have I been reading too many science fiction books? Should I see a psychiatrist? Or is there anything to my visions?

Jerry Lloyd  
83 Newton St.  
Newark, N. J.

*Jerry, perhaps a psychiatrist would say you were nuts, because he'd been convinced beforehand that people who see visions are nuts. But that postulates that the visions are not real. Now, if they are (your editor's files offer real proof that they are) then there is no sense to seeing a psychiatrist. You can just as easily talk yourself out of them as he can. No, you haven't been reading too many science fiction books. All people suffer from various forms of "delusion" (just to give it a name), and science today is beginning to get interested in discovering why and how. What we'd be interested in is visiting this town in England, locating the churchyard, dig up the grave, find out if someone actually did die of being buried alive in it. There might be many evidences of such a death struggle. If it proved to be true, we'd have a very interesting question posed before us. How would YOU know that it's too bad that such investigations can't be pursued until definitely proved false, rather than adjudged "delusions" and let go at that. Maybe it's mental telepathy. Maybe it's Shaver's "thought record." Who KNOWS what it is, yet? We think some work ought to be done to DETERMINE what it is. Your editor thinks somebody did die that way, and some way you are able to*

(Continued on page 170)



# IF YOU MUST GAMBLE

A few months ago, a book was submitted to us for publication. Since the subject was out of our field, we were about to turn it down when we became intrigued with the very first few pages. The more we read, the more fascinated we became.

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## DISCUSSIONS

AMAZING STORIES will publish in each issue a selection of letters from readers. Everybody is welcome to contribute. Remarks and remarks will have an equal chance. Letter-readers correspondence and material will be encouraged through this department. Get in with the gang and have your say.



(Continued from page 168)

duplicate his experience in a "dream." Perhaps it's only imagination, but then, what is imagination?—Ed.

**MAYBE NOT DERO, BUT "SOMETHING" Sirs:**

I have read your magazines for several years, but have never enjoyed them nor been interested in them quite so much as I have since the advent of the Shaver Mystery. I know no one who is interested in this type of fiction (my husband and my friends laugh at me tolerantly, while looking askance at me) so I have no one with whom to discuss the thoughts that come to me. I find myself thinking of the subject often and wishing I could let myself believe completely. Perhaps it is partly the very human fear of being "taken in" by some hoax that keeps me from believing, but also there is something in my nature that keeps me either from believing or disbelieving anything insubstantial without strong convincing. I have the attitude that I cannot believe until I have been shown, but the fact that I have not been shown yet does not make me say, "It is not so." Perhaps this series is a hoax as some of your readers say, but if so, it is well done, very logical, and extremely interesting. If true, it is also frightening. This theory, or belief if you prefer, does explain things that have not been explained satisfactorily in other ways. Others of your readers have mentioned some of these things, so I need not repeat. Would not a possible explanation for the various paralyzing strikes throughout our so-called civilized nation lie in this Mystery of yours? To my way of thinking, there definitely seems to be a detrimental force affecting the condition of the country, call it "dero" or what you will.

I actually have nothing to add to your file, if such exists (forgive me, I am not trying to cast aspersions on you—it is only my, shall we say, open-mindedness), but like many, many people I have had momentary flashes in the past that gave me the feeling "This has happened to me before," and at the time I have known exactly what was going to happen and what each person would say next. Not a case of "second sight," more like knowing it through repetition—and I have wondered about such flashes and wished for an explanation. Probably it is this, coupled with the fact that I have no one with whom to share my thoughts it arouses in me, that has made me sit down and write you.

Anyway, hoax or not (there I go again!), keep it up, as it has made your whole magazine more interesting to me, especially the Discussions. It's a pleasure to me to have them discussing the Shaver Mystery instead of the merits or demerits of the art work of the last issue, etc. Personally, I buy the magazine to read the stories, not to look at the pictures.

I liked the story "Some Are Not Men" in the August, 1946, issue, and hope the de Courcys will tell us sometime whether or not Walter, Mary and Joe found and opened the Sealed Cave. Of course, they did, but I'd like to read about it. However, the story I enjoyed most in this issue was also the shortest (coincidence only, I assure you), "Bothon." I like Whitehead's writing, anyway.

Keep the stories coming, preferably with the Shaver Mystery—whether true or false.

Ruth Plant  
1522-C 23rd Ave.  
Seattle 22, Wash.

*Professor Rhine, Dr. Alexis Carrel, and others have noted and confirmed the existence of such things as "pre-vision" without explaining them. It is something that is not just fancy, and it may soon be understood. Your experience is typical of many people, and is no more a hoax than the Mystery. Yes, we'll keep the stories coming—of all kinds, at this issue ought to prove!*—Ed.

### ONE AND ONE IS TWO

Sirs:

First let me compliment you on a first rate magazine. I have just finished reading the August issue (distributed by time machine no doubt, since this is only June) and have found a great deal of interest in it. Shaver came out on top, as usual, with "The Sea People." Second in the list is "Bothon," by Whitehead, and closely following it is "Some Are Not Men." I would like very much to read a sequel to this last. How about it?

Altogether your stories and articles, especially the allegedly "true" ones are the most fantastic and impossible I have ever read. Coming from me that is a compliment. The more impossible a thing the more I hope that it is true or can be proven true. I have always felt that I was born too soon. Fifty? . . . a hundred? . . . two hundred years? . . . who can tell? All the things I can imagine, the things I would like to do, and the surroundings I would like to live in belong to a different age than this.

I would like to help you if possible and if possible cut myself a slice of the adventure you spoke of. If you want a private researcher for the area around Victoria and Vancouver just let me know, any time! I don't know if the characters around here can write; I've seen no letters in your mag. from this part of the world, but from the way AMAZING STORIES disappears from the newsstands I would say they sure can read.

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Some of the letters you publish give me a pain. It is well known that people who haven't the courtesy to voice their own opinions, illusions, dreams, or what have you, claim to be "inspired" or guided. Prophecy commands more attention than wishful thinking so every man in history who had a message to give set himself up as a prophet. Otherwise he wouldn't get to first base. No one cares what the ordinary man thinks so every visionary or crackpot who can't tell the urgings of his subconscious mind from the whistle of the wind in his ears blames his thoughts on some outside source. A schizophrenic (split personality, in case I have used the wrong word) may be "visited" by a strange person who stands just behind him and whispers all sorts of things in his ear. It is not a case of receiving messages from an outside source but just the urgings of his other self, so the poor jerk, not recognizing anything so different from his normal self, thinks he has been inspired.

Of course there is so much that is unknown in this world that no one can say definitely that these people are not "inspired." The human mind seems to have no limitations. Telepathy is possible and may become common, racial memory may be proven to be a fact and used to explore the history of the world. Even the old magician's trick of mind over matter may have a base in scientific possibility and sometime in the future might be developed by any one with enough brains. Still I wish the people who have dreams, hear voices, and have visions would take a look into the tangled mass of nerve fibre that makes up their brains and make sure the fault is not there before they start spouting off about it.

Oh yes, I hear voices myself from time to time. They ask why these fiction writers are so dissatisfied with Homo Sapiens. Instead of exploring the human mind and body as it is now and telling us how much better we would be if we could develop all our hidden and dormant powers they keep dragging in mutants and supermen. This is a big universe, and when space travel is developed I am going hunting for a grown-up race of humans on some other world and let the mutants have this planet.

L. L. Layton,  
Grant Road,  
Sooke, B. C.  
Canada

Analyze your statements about split personality (and this is the accepted version) and you will find one fact therein. You say "other self." Your self, plus your other self, make two (TWO) selves. So what difference does it make if the person who hears that other self talk **IMAGINES** that other self to be standing behind him? Actually, where does he stand? In your mind (it would seem) and it would be hard to say whether "behind" or not. Anything "behind" the eyes we would call behind. Religion calls your self a "soul." Then

you have two souls. But only one of them is you (psychiatrists tell us that your "ego" is simple and is you, alone), so the other is an "intruder." Are ALL of us schizophrenics, actually, but only those who place the other self "behind" us are considered nuts? It wouldn't be quite fair to punish them for that! But it seems we do. Your other comments are intensely interesting, and your open mind is greatly to be admired. As for the tangled mind fibers of people who have dreams, they prove to be identical to those of people who do not dream, upon dissection. So it can't be that "difference" in brain structure accounts for dreams. Maybe "inspiration" IS the answer. Maybe it IS "rays" from caves, or what have you? We wish we KNEW.—Ed.

### THE ETERNAL QUESTION—WHY?

Sirs:

As always I turn to the editorial part of your magazine first, because I like it best of all. I can hardly wait 'til the magazine gets to the stand here. I am still waiting anxiously for the promised article on "Oahpe," as I'd like very much to see what your opinion of the book is.

Re: "The Shaver Mystery," page 161, last paragraph. How would it be possible to get copies of some of these bulletins that you are going to send to a limited number of students? What are the requirements to become a student? I am going to send for the series of booklets by Doraal, as I am very much interested in anything occult and read avidly everything I can get my hands on.

These are the questions I've been seeking an answer to for many years and I have not yet been able to get a satisfactory one. Why are we born? What use is life? Is there such a thing as reincarnation? What happens to us (our souls) after we die? If you can answer any of them for me I'd be eternally grateful to you.

I like the "Sea People" and "Some Are Not Men" best of the stories in the magazine. But as I said before, my favorite parts of the magazine are "Discussions," "Report from the Forgotten Past" and "The Shaver Mystery." By the way, has Shaver any theory as to what happens to these very evil beings when they die? Where do they go?

Louise F. O'Connell,  
3501 Park Blvd.,  
San Diego, Calif.

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when they die. Shaver doesn't know. He doesn't  
know what would happen to him if he died. He  
has indicated to us that he thinks nothing does.—  
Ed.

### FRAME THEORY—CON

Sirs:

I read the very interesting article on the Frame  
Concept by Mr. Graham in the September issue.  
I think that the following comments are in order:

(1) The definition of "greater than": This is  
in the wrong logical order. It is imperative to  
define what is meant by a set, cardinal or other-  
wise, before it is logically justifiable to draw any  
conclusions as to possible correspondence between  
two sets.

(2) The definition of equals: This definition is  
admissible, but slightly on the sloppy side. It is  
interesting to note that in his article Mr. Graham  
denies the admissibility of the process of 1-1 recip-  
rocal correspondence, but that his definition of  
equality, "every element of C is in C", and every  
element of C' is in C." sounds suspiciously as if  
1-1 correspondence were the mechanism required  
to make the decisions as to the equality of two  
sets.

(3) The definition of cardinal set: This is where  
the paper becomes confusing to the mathematician.  
Mr. Graham seems to have limited his definition  
of cardinal set to include only finite sets. For an  
infinite set, the problem of deciding whether or  
not there exists a set with one more element than  
the given set and still not equal to it seems a  
little difficult. Does Mr. Graham mean "precisely  
one," or merely "at least one"? If the definition  
must be restricted to finite sets, this explains why  
"the class of all finite integers cannot have a  
cardinal number."

(4) The definition of ordinal number: This is  
rather loose and all-inclusive. Under the defini-  
tion it is not clear whether or not an unordered  
set may have an ordinal number. There is also no  
provision for defining what is meant by the ordinal  
number of a set. In view of the fact that the con-  
cept of ordinal number plays no important role in  
the subsequent development of the frame concept,  
it would seem that it is just a technical phrase  
introduced to dress the paper up and give an air  
of mathematical authenticity.

(5) Mr. Graham states: "If we say the cardinal  
number of the class of all finite integers is an in-  
finite number, we assert a contradiction, for then  
we say that the number of finite integers is greater

than the number of finite integers." What does he mean by "the number of finite integers?" Surely not the cardinality of the class of finite integers, since the finite integers form a non-cardinal class. How can the definition of greater than be extended to non-cardinal classes? The statement seems meaningless, hence any conclusion drawn from it must be *non sequitur*. The contradiction rather lies in the fact, that according to his definitions, no non-finite class can be a cardinal set, hence it is erroneous to attempt to assign an infinite number as a cardinal number. What is an infinite number? Where is the "stringent definition?"

(6) In Section IV, I should appreciate a proof of the existence of the set  $(n, n/1)$  which has one more element than  $N_n$ . If  $N_n$  is the set of all finite numbers in the interval, how can there exist another set in the interval which has one more element than  $N_n$ ? If  $N_n$  is not a cardinal set, the remainder of the paper is meaningless.

(7) In section VIII, the argument may be admissible as regards a geometrical point, but I am still unwilling to abandon the process of 1-1 correspondence in abstract sets. The third paragraph of part (1) of section VIII sounds like Zeno's paradox.

I doubt very much the ability of any theory to shake the foundations of our immense mathematical structure. Mathematics rests on a very shaky foundation right now. For example, it has never been proven that even arithmetic is self-consistent, let alone geometry or analysis.

My frank opinion of the entire frame concept is that it is an effort to recast the orthodox theory of real variables by someone who either does not (or cannot) understand accepted theory, or who has a dangerously small amount of knowledge of the tremendous amount of work done in freeing the concept of number from its intuitive bonds.

I feel it necessary to point out that I have attempted to judge the frame concept as a separate mathematical entity without regard to the desirability of accepting the more conventional mathematics, but only with regard to self-consistency and philosophical justification.

If this letter is not published, I should appreciate it very much if you would forward it to Mr. Graham, as whatever his theories may be, he is quite capable of intelligent thought, and may derive some benefit from the above.

Robert F. Benton, ETM 2,  
Instructor, NTS,  
Del Monte, Calif.

We have forwarded the letter to Mr. Graham, and no doubt you will get an answer. Anyways, the article, supposedly too deep for the average mind, has drawn an astounding number of letters (and articles) both pro and con. Apparently the recent statement that SCIENCE ILLUSTRATED made regarding scientists reading AMAZING STORIES in their excellent article in the July 1946 issue is

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travel! Many fine minds read AMAZING STORIES and we feel quite important. The following letter is typical of the "pro" letters on the frame theory—Ed.

### FRAME THEORY—PRO

Sirs:

I am going to break a lifetime silence. I am writing to a magazine concerning one of its articles. I have read AMAZING STORIES off and on since its inception. I don't know how long ago, and writing concerning fiction seems to me a waste of time. My reply to the quality is expressed in cold cash. If I like it I buy it and you realize it by the current sales where I am one of several of thousands.

But your current issue has in it something different, not fiction. It is "Frames." This is one of the most stimulating and truly "Amazing" things I have read for a long time. I think you have something there. There are several comments I would like to make on Mr. Graham's concept and explanation.

In the first place, the true concept of Frames, which was excellently presented, is, like all pure logic, pure abstraction. Most observation as practiced is inductive or impractical, but to start with empirically proven facts and from there, by pure logic to deduce an intangible conclusion which cannot be disproven without violating principles which our empirical senses tell us are inviolable is the highest form of reasoning, and one which very few of us are able to pursue to any great extent.

However, to explain such a concept is even more difficult, as our medium of expression, words, is based almost entirely upon empirically obtained data. An example of this difficulty is shown where the author attempts to explain the concept of "real numbers" as being divorced from "counting." When trying to define "greater than" showing that both do not necessarily have cardinal numbers he says: "A set of several oranges is greater than a set of two, but several is not a definite quantity. It is merely a set of more than a few." In this he is implying that several, being indeterminate is not cardinal. This is based upon the assumption, that being indeterminate it was not or possibly could not be counted at the moment of consideration. However, counting is actually implied in both factors because first, the two were counted, or in the case of the "few," they were "counted" by estimation based upon empirical observation of past experience. Likewise, some sort of a count of the "many" is implied. In order to determine that the "many" is greater than the two, two units of the "many" set must be counted and an observation made that more are present, so actually counting of some sort must be engaged in with both sets, with the implication that in the case of the "many" set, the counting was not completed merely because sufficient information was obtained when the count was carried to the



extent of the "few" set, but if desired it could be completed and a cardinal number obtained for the "many" set if desired. This would be true even if the cardinal of the "many" set was variable between the limits of the cardinal of the "few" set plus the smallest possible division of the largest set and infinity or the largest conceivable number of divisions of the many.

This is not meant to discount the theory or presentation, but simply displays the difficulty of expressing an abstract concept in concrete terms.

Now to jump to the other end of the discussion. It appears that Mr. Graham's yard stick for measuring the universe would have to consist of a yard stick based upon our own plane or "Frame" plus an infinite number more, each of which has the characteristic that infinity on the one which is of the power next below is equal to a unit on the one being considered and the unit, in turn is equal to zero on the yard stick of the next greater power.

This brings a rather surprising concept to mind: this is—starting with any given frame.  $F_n^0$  measurements in that frame entered upward, in tangible units, to the intangible limit of infinity and downward to zero, which in the light of Mr. Graham's analysis is as equally an intangible limit as is infinity. Measurement in the next frame,  $F_n^1$  is conceivable in that the units of measurement consist of units of infinity, but is purely imaginary when viewed from the frame  $F_n^0$ . Measurements in the frame beyond that,  $F_n^2$ , and all subsequent higher powers are purely imaginary, not being conceivable as viewed strictly from frame  $F_n^0$ . Somewhat of a similar concept would be if there were beings existing only in one dimension, length. They might, by deductive reasoning, conceive of another dimension at right angles to their plane of existence but, to them it would be purely an imaginary dimension as their powers of perception would not be capable of grasping the significance of the second dimension in more than an imaginary manner. Also, any direction that they projected their dimensions at right angles to their own line of existence would be the same to them as it would always be simply at right angles. Thus, projection to still a third dimension might be something they could put into words but to actually "imagine" or picture it in every way would be entirely impossible. In other words, living in a plane of the 1st power,  $p^1$ , some possible conception of the second power,  $p^2$ , might be possible, but being unable to get any kind of an accurate conception of what the  $p^2$  plane is actually like, the  $p^2$  plane, which is our familiar one of three dimensions, would be entirely beyond the range of conceivability, remaining only an abstract concept derived by projecting a trend, as Mr. Graham did in projecting to the frame  $F_n^1$ .

And now my attempt to depict an abstraction in concrete expression falls short of the goal and is probably more full of holes than his as he

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undoubtedly put in more time and thought than I did.

Oh my, oh my! Now when I look up at night and see between the stars what I thought was the blackness of infinity I will now have to consider it as infinity  $\pm$  infinity!

K. C. Cook,  
69 Rodgers Street,  
Vallejo, California

Thanks, Mr. Cook. Your letter, also, is being forwarded to Mr. Graham.—Ed.

#### HOW ABOUT THIS, HEFFERLIN?

Sirs:

In the article called "Power," appearing in the last issue of AMAZING STORIES, Mr. Hefferlin seemed anxious to convey instructions from so-called "Custodians" of an apparatus to create power.

Never in my life have I seen or heard of such a poor set of instructions. No one could build this apparatus, yet supposedly these instructions are a gift. If there is any sincerity whatsoever in this article, please have Mr. Hefferlin send me answers to the following questions:

1. Name non-magnetic metal to be used and exact dimensions of tube.
2. Give type and size of wire to be used with number of turns for secondary and primary coil and exact dimensions of each coil.
3. Give size of discs and exact dimensions, drawing of teeth and discs, number of discs to be inserted in tube and their exact arrangement.
4. Give type of current, voltage cycles by number and how such current is to be generated, also at what points it is to be fed into primary coil.
5. Please make an engineering drawing of all parts of this apparatus and I will build it.

I will pay postage or cost of definite directions and plans if they actually exist.

W. Blake Degan, M.D., D.N.B.,  
21-03 30th Ave.,  
Astoria, L. I., N. Y.

Can you answer these questions, Mr. Hefferlin? If so, please write to Mr. Degan, and if you will, send us a carbon of your reply so that we may keep our readers informed.—Ed

MAY 1946

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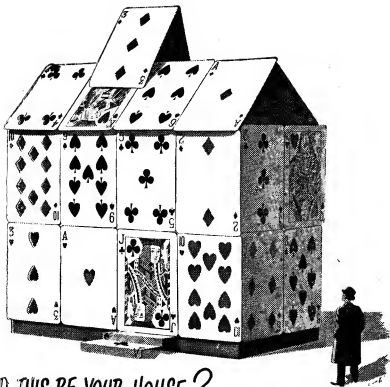
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