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HUGO GERNSBACK
EDITOR



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H.G. Wells
T.S. Stribling
Edgar Rice Burroughs

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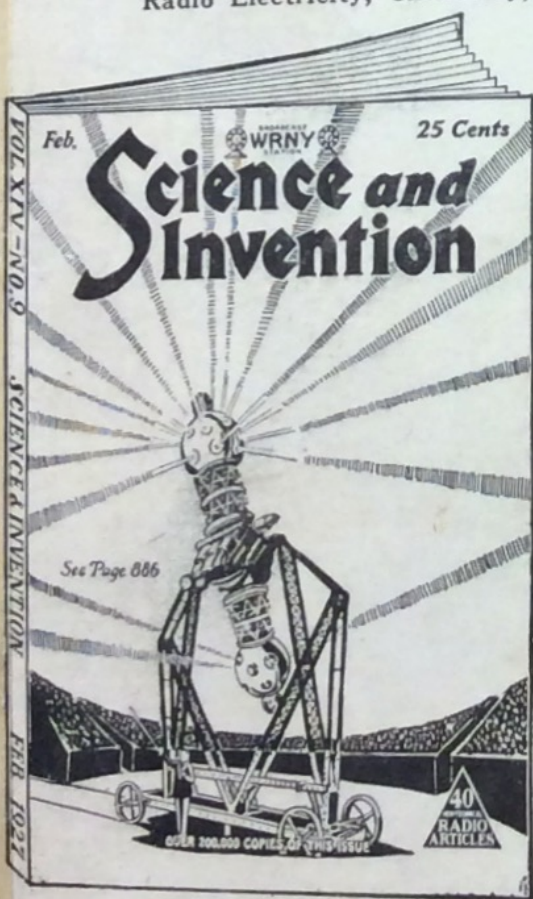
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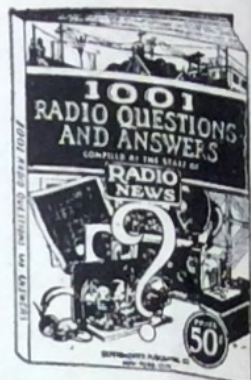
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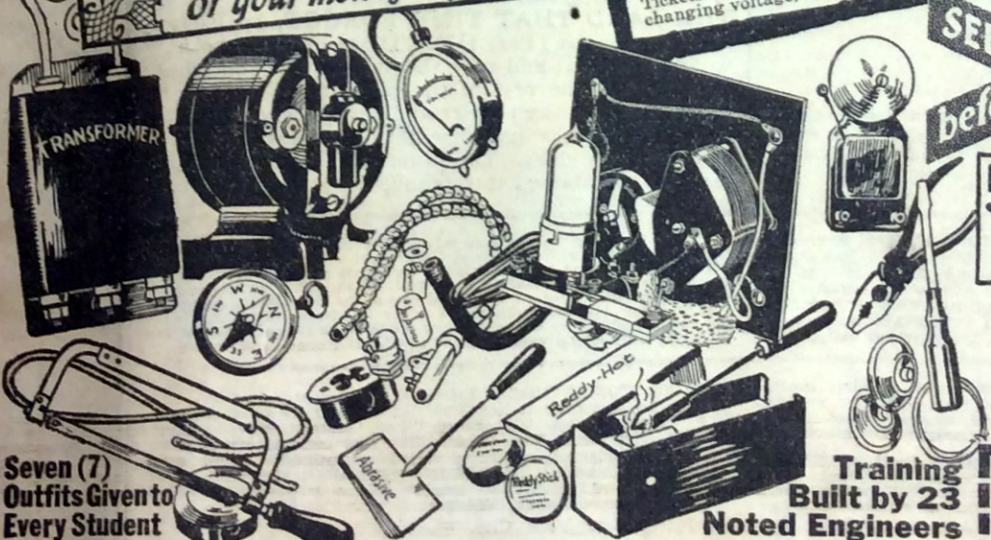
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AMAZING STORIES

Vol. 1 No. 12
March, 1927

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Owners of Broadcast Station WRNY.

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Our Cover

this month illustrates a scene from The Green Splotches, by T. S. Stribling, where we see the great interplanetary flyer after it has taken off from the earth. It has just risen and is gaining momentum with each fraction of a second.

In Our Next Issue:

THE PLAGUE OF THE LIVING DEAD, by A. Hyatt Verrill. The author of "Beyond the Pole" and "The Man Who Could Vanish" has written a most remarkable tale which comes pretty close to straining your credulity, but at the same time you will say to yourself over and over that there is nothing impossible about it. Immortality IS possible, as recent researches at the Rockefeller Institute have indicated; that is, animal tissue can be kept alive indefinitely. You will be thrilled by Mr. Verrill's story.

WHITE GOLD PIRATE, by Merlin Moore Taylor. An absorbing detective story about a daring criminal who baffles many authorities interested in the mysterious disappearance of enormous quantities of platinum. A scientific detective uses the X-ray, finger prints and the phonograph in a particularly interesting manner, making this a most plausible story with a true scientific aspect.

HICK'S INVENTIONS WITH A KICK, by Henry Hugh Simons, in which an entirely new thing in dining tables and service is promulgated. Naturally, being a new invention, mishaps occur, but that only adds to the fun for the reader. A very interesting idea, well told.

THE BALLOON HOAX, by Edgar Allan Poe. Although balloons have long since been a reality, we cannot fail to be impressed by the scope of the author's scientific knowledge and prophetic vision. Also, the story is written in Poe's inimitable style, which in itself assures you of fifteen minutes well spent.

THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT, by Edgar Rice Burroughs (Part III). Those of you who are wondering what and why the Wieroo are and what happened to the rest of the party that landed on Caspak with Bowen Tyler and Lys LaRue will find the answer in the next five thrilling chapters, which conclude this story. The same pitch of exciting interest is maintained throughout the story.

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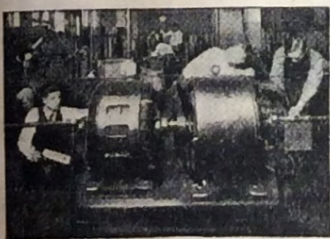
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T. O'CONOR SLOANE,
A.B., A.M., LL.D., Ph.D.

Noted Instructor, Lecturer and Author. Formerly Treasurer American Chemical Society and a practical chemist with many well known achievements to his credit. Not only has Dr. Sloane taught chemistry for years but he was for many years, engaged in commercial chemistry work.

Do you remember how the tales of pirate gold used to fire your imagination and make you want to sail the uncharted seas in search of treasure and adventure? And then you would regret that such things were no longer done. But that is a mistake. They are done—today and everyday—not on desert islands, but in the chemical laboratories throughout your own country. Quietly, systematically, the chemist works. His work is difficult, but more adventurous than the blood-curdling deeds of the Spanish Main. Instead of meeting an early and violent death on some forgotten shore, he gathers wealth and honor through his invaluable contributions to humanity. Alfred Nobel, the Swedish chemist who invented dynamite, made so many millions that the income alone from his bequests provides five \$40,000 prizes every year for the advancement of science and peace. C. M. Hall, the chemist who discovered how to manufacture aluminum made millions through this discovery. F. G. Cottrell, who devised a valuable process for recovering the waste from flue gases, James Gayley, who showed how to save enormous losses in steel manufacture, L. H. Baekeland, who invented Bakelite—these are only a few of the men to whom fortunes have come through their chemical achievements.

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I have not written since I received the big set. I can still say that it far exceeded my anticipations. Since I have been studying with your school I have been appointed chemist for the Seranton Coal Co. testing all the coal and ash by proximate analysis. The lessons are helping me wonderfully, and the interesting way in which they are written makes me wait patiently for each lesson.—MORLAIS COUZENS.

I wish to express my appreciation of your prompt reply to my letter and to the recommendation to the General Electric Co. I intend to start the student engineering course at the works. This is somewhat along electrical lines, but the fact that I had a recommendation from a reliable school no doubt had considerable influence in helping me to secure the job.—H. VAN BENTHUYSEN.

So far I've been more than pleased with your course and am still doing nicely. I hope to be your honor graduate this year.—J. M. NORRUS, JR.

I find your course excellent and your instruction, truthfully, the clearest and best assembled I have ever taken, and yours is the fifth one I've studied.—JAMES J. KELLY.

From the time I was having Chemistry it has never been thus explained to me as it is now. I am recommending you highly to my friends, and urging them to become members of such an organization.—CHARLES BENJAMIN.

I shall always recommend your school to my friends and let them know how simple your lessons are.—C. J. AMDAHL.

I am more than pleased. You dig right in from the start. I am going to get somewhere with this course. I am so glad that I found you.—A. A. CAMERON.

I use your lessons constantly as I find it more thorough than most text books I can secure.—WM. H. TIBBS.

Thanking you for your lessons, which I find not only clear and concise, but wonderfully interesting. I am—ROBT. H. TRAYLOR.

I received employment in the Consolidated Gas. Co. I appreciate very much the good service of the school when a recommendation was asked for.—JOS. DECKER.

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Not only are there boundless opportunities for amassing wealth in Chemistry, but the profession affords congenial employment at good salaries to hundreds of thousands who merely follow out its present applications. These applications are innumerable, touching intimately every business and every product in the world. The work of the chemist can hardly be called work at all. It is the keenest and most enjoyable kind of pleasure. The days in a chemical laboratory are filled with thrilling and delightful experimentation, with the alluring prospect of a discovery that may spell Fortune always at hand to spur your enthusiasm.

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To qualify for this remarkable calling requires elaborate specialized training. Formerly it was necessary to attend a university for several years to acquire that training, but thanks to our highly perfected and thorough system of instruction, you can now stay at home, keep your position, and let us educate you in Chemistry during your spare time. Even with only common schooling you can take our course and equip yourself for immediate practical work in a chemical laboratory. Dr. Sloane gives every one of his students the same careful, personal supervision that made him celebrated throughout his long career as a college professor. Your instruction from the very beginning is made interesting and practical, and we supply you with apparatus and chemicals for performing the fascinating analyses and experimental work that plays such a large part in our method of teaching, and you are awarded the Institute's official diploma after you have satisfactorily completed the course.

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AMAZING STORIES

THE
MAGAZINE
OF
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MARCH, 1927
No. 12

HUGO GERNSBACK, *Editor*
DR. T. O'CONNOR SLOANE, Ph.D.; *Associate Editor*
WILBUR C. WHITEHEAD, *Literary Editor*
C. A. BRANDT, *Literary Editor*

Editorial and General Offices: 53 Park Place, New York, N. Y.

Extravagant Fiction Today - - - - - Cold Fact Tomorrow

IDLE THOUGHTS OF A BUSY EDITOR

By HUGO GERNSBACK

BEGINNING with this issue you will note a difference in paper. We have gone to a great expense to adopt this excellent paper, which is much smoother and prints very much better than our former art paper, which some correspondents felt inclined to call "wrapping paper." Of course the magazine does not bulk as much now, and we have made the change only because so many people wrote us saying that they did not like the paper. A vote-taking among some 200 people brought out this surprising result—over 190 were in favor of the new paper. Of course this new paper costs us a lot more, but we want, first of all to please you.

* * *

The above is the style in which this sort of thing is usually dished-up by an up-to-date editor, but the plain and unvarnished truth is that the new paper costs less money than the old. You probably would not believe this, and class it as an amazing story. Nevertheless, it does cost us less. When we originally brought out *AMAZING STORIES*, we thought it necessary to hand you a big package for the money. Hence the bulky paper, which was made specially for our requirements. Such a paper had never been made before. Now it is known as *AMAZING STORIES Bulky Weave*. We are sorry to discontinue it, because we personally liked it. But we know you will like the new paper, and that, after all, is what counts.

* * *

As a correspondent remarked to us, the editor of *AMAZING STORIES* does not lie on a bed of roses. Quite the contrary. The bed is full of thorns, and if there are roses present, I do not give a scent for them.

It is the most difficult paper that it has been my good luck to edit. The strange fact is that there are no two readers who like the same thing. It is astonishing that the voting coupons show that almost exactly 50 per cent of the readers heartily dislike one story, whereas the other 50 per cent laud the same story to the skies. Stories like "Station X," "The Second Deluge," "The First Men in the Moon," "The Red Dust," all were in this class. A great many readers wrote very complimentary remarks on these stories and voted their preference for them, and almost exactly the same number of readers denounced the same stories.

If you, dear reader, were the editor, what would your reaction be to such a condition. Would you hesitate about the next story before publishing it, or would you simply throw yourself to the fishes and simultaneously throw up the sponge?

I do neither. I simply keep right on smiling, because I seem to have an idea in the back of my head which during

more lucid moments probably runs somewhat as follows:

"Here we have *AMAZING STORIES*, a totally new sort of magazine, different from any that has ever been published anywhere so far. It is, in other words, a pioneer job. No one ever having published such a magazine, there is no precedent. Having made scientification a hobby since I was 8 years old, I probably know as much about it as any one, and in the long run experience will teach just what type of story is acclaimed by the vast majority. Give the readers the very best type of stories that you can get hold of. Try out the best classics first, and get the readers' reactions. When the magazine has been published for a year, you will have a pretty good idea what sort of story makes the greatest appeal.

"In the meanwhile, you are sailing uncharted seas, and as such you are apt to strike rocks once in a while, but if the navigating is done skillfully, the magazine must keep afloat."

The above is very likely what is happening, evidently we are not making a mess of it, because we are printing 150,000 copies at the present time, and the sales seem to be climbing month after month. It is a healthy sign, and shows that there is room for the scientification type of magazine.

* * *

May we ask you, particularly this month, to fill in the voting coupon? You will notice it has been changed somewhat. Several questions as to the illustrations have been included and we should like to have your reactions in connection with these questions. The majority, as usual, will win.

* * *

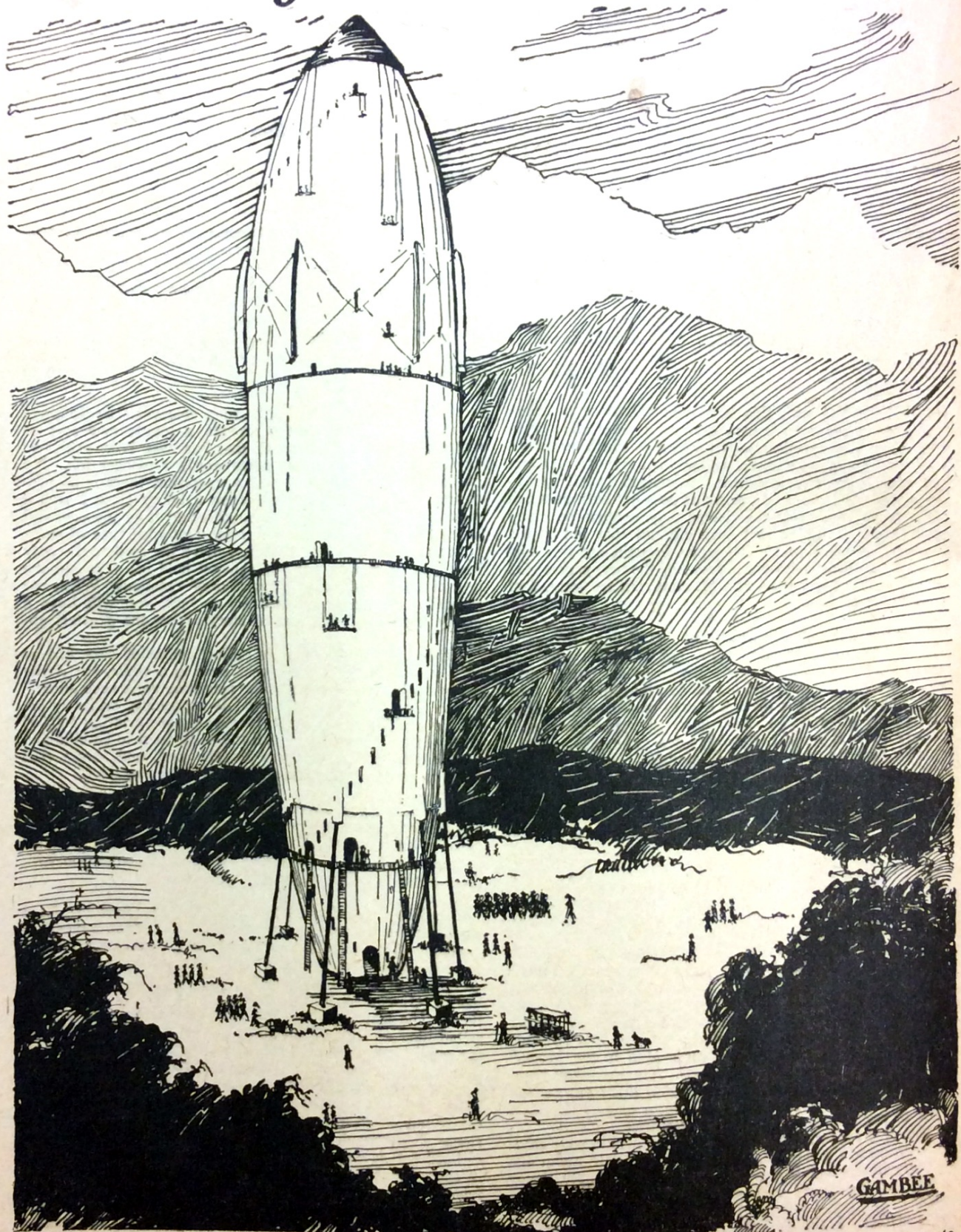
The \$500 Prize Contest announced in our December issue closed just as we were going to press. It has been a most astonishing success, and far surpassed our greatest expectations. Both the quality and quantity were most gratifying. We received no less than 360 manuscripts from all parts of the world. Of course, it was impossible, as yet, to read all of them. The majority, however, have been quite good and an astonishing amount of ingenuity was shown. We shall begin publishing some of the prize winners in an early issue.

While the growth of *AMAZING STORIES* has so far progressed at a fairly satisfactory rate, we are far from satisfied. More readers are what we want. As you noticed, we recently put on an advertising section and added the "Discussions" Department. This, by the way, has been widely acclaimed and is eagerly read by most of our readers. Now, if each one of our readers would call the attention of a friend to *AMAZING STORIES*, we should soon be in a position to add 50 per cent more text to the magazine. It is our aim to get out a book with at least 150 pages, during the coming year. If you want it—boost *AMAZING STORIES*.

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

The GREEN SPLOTCHES

~ By T. S. Stribling ~



Not more than three hundred yards distant rose an enormous structure in the shape of a Zeppelin. It required a second glance to observe this fact, as the huge creation stood on its end instead of lying horizontal as do the ordinary flying-ships. . . . This was no mere bubble of varnished cloth.

(Transcribed from the field notes of James B. Standifer, Secretary DeLong Geographical Expedition to the Rio Infiernillo, Peru, with introductory note by J. B. S.)

Secretary's Note

THIS strange, not to say sinister, record of the DeLong Geographical Expedition to the department of Ayacucho, Peru, is here given to the public in order that a wider circulation of the facts herein set forth may lead to some solution of the enigmas with which this narrative is laden.

These field notes have been privately circulated among the members of the DeLong Geographical Society, and the addenda to this account written by our president, Hilbert H. DeLong, have proved highly gratifying to the writer. No doubt this effort at publicity will bring forward another and equally interesting hypothesis.

It is hardly necessary to warn readers who devote themselves exclusively to fiction that this record is not for them.

Fiction deals in probabilities; geographical societies, unfortunately, are confined to facts. Fiction is a record of imaginary events, which, nevertheless, adheres to and explains human experience. Facts continually step outside of experience and offer riddles and monstrosities.

Thus, in a way, fiction is much truer than fact. Fiction is generalized truth; it is an international

legal tender accredited everywhere; fact is a very special truth, which passes current only with the most discerning—or with none.

Therefore, the writer wishes heartily to commend the great American scramble after fiction. It shows our enlightened public wishes to get at the real universal truths of Life, without wasting precious moments on such improbabilities as science, history, archeology, biography, invention and exploration.

To the last of this censored list these field notes unfortunately belong.

In conclusion the writer wishes to admit that he favors the Incan theory in explaining this narrative, and the reader is warned that this prejudice may color these notes. However, it has not been the writer's intention to do violence, through any twisting of fact, to the Bolshevik theory of Prof. Demetrius Z. Demetrioovich, the Rumanian attaché to the expedition, or to the Jovian hypothesis of our esteemed president, the Hon. Gilbert H. DeLong, than whom, be it said, no man is more tolerant of the views of others.—James B. Standifer, Sec. DeL. Geo. Exp., Sept. 17, 1919.

Transcriber's Note

THE writer met the DeLong Geographical Expedition at Colon in June, 1919, on its way to New York. His curiosity was strongly aroused by the fact that every member of the party, even to the twenty-four-year-old secretary of the expedition, seemed to be suffering from some nervous complaint in the nature of shell shock.

At that time the writer was correspondent for the Associated Press and he naturally saw a "story" in the returning scientists. After some effort and persuasion, he obtained Mr. Standifer's field notes and photographs. The photographs were practically worthless on account of the deterioration of the films. And a single glance through the notes showed him that they were not practicable "A. P." material. After much consideration and many discussions with Mr. Standifer, the writer

decided that the only possible form in which these strange memoranda could be placed before the public was in the guise of fiction.

Unfortunately this disguise is neither deep nor cleverly done. The crude outline of the actual occurrences destroys all approach to plot. Many of the incidents are irrelevant, but the only condition upon which Mr. Standifer would agree to this pub-

lication at all was that the record be given in extenso, "for the benefit," he stated, "of future and more studious generations."

In fact, throughout the writer's association with him, Mr. Standifer seemed of a sour, not to say misanthropic disposition. His sarcasm, which he hurls at the American fiction-reading public in his prefatory note, is based entirely, the writer believes, on the fact that Standifer wrote a book of travel called "Reindeer in Iceland," which he pub-

lished at his own expense and which entirely failed to sell. That, no doubt, is enough to acidulate the sweetest disposition, but in a way it goes to prove that Standifer's notes on the Peruvian expedition are a painstaking and literal setting forth of genuine experiences, for a perusal of his book entitled, "Reindeer in Iceland," which the writer

purchased from Mr. Standifer for fifty-four cents, shows its author has absolutely no imagination whatever.

It is hardly worth while to add that the explanatory note appended to this narrative by that distinguished scholar and author, the Right Honorable Gilbert H. DeLong, has not been touched by this pen.—T. S., Sept. 27, 1919.



SEÑOR IGNACIO RAMADA, prefect of the department of Ayacucho, tapped his red lips under his mustache to discourage an overpowering yawn. It was mid *siesta*, high noon. He had been roused out of profound slumber by his *cholo*—boy—and presented with a long, impressive document with a red seal. Now he stood in the Salle des Armes of the governor's mansion, holding in his hand the letter of introduction from the *presidente* of the Lima Sociedad de Geografico, very much impressed even amid his sleepiness by the red seal of the Sociedad and by the creaking new equipment of his callers.

"How, *señores*, can I assist in such a glorious undertaking?" he inquired in Spanish.

"We need guides," explained Prof. Demetrioivich, who was the linguist of the party.

"Where does your journey carry you, *caballeros*?" inquired the official, crackling the parchment in his hand.

"To the region beyond the Mantaro, called the Valley of the Rio Infiernillo."

Señor Ramada came out of his sleepiness with a sort of start.

"No!"

"Yes."

The prefect looked at his guests.

"*Señores*, no one goes there."

Pethwick, the engineer, smiled.

"If the region were quite well known, Señor Ramada, it would hold little attraction for a geographical exploration party."

"Well, that's true," agreed the prefect after a moment's thought, "but it will be quite difficult to get a guide for that place; in fact—" here he swept his visitors with a charming smile—"the better a man knows that region, the farther he keeps away from it. Seriously, gentlemen, why not explore more hospitable locality, where one can find a comfortable inn at night and procure relays of llamas whenever necessary, for your baggage?"

Pethwick smiled friendly.

"We did think of exploring the suburbs of Lima, but the street service was so bad—"

"Do you read novels?" inquired Standifer, the young secretary of the expedition.

"Why—yes," admitted the prefect, taken aback. "I am fond of Cisneros, Lavalle, Arestegui—"

The secretary pressed his lips together, nodded disdainfully and without further remark looked away through the entrance into the diamond-like brilliance of tropical sunshine in mountainous regions.

The prefect stared. "*Señor*," he said rather sharply, "if you do not approve my literary taste—"

Pethwick stepped to the little Spaniard's side and whispered quickly:

"Overlook it, *señor*, overlook it. Literature is a tender point with him. He has lost one hundred and fifty-four dollars and forty-seven cents on an unprofitable literary venture. In fact, he is a young author."

He nodded confidentially at the prefect.

The official, with Latin delicacy, nodded back and patted Pethwick's arm to show that all was again well. Pethwick then said aloud:

"So we shall have to try to find our own way into the Valley de Rio Infiernillo?"

Ramada looked worried. Presently he slapped his hand on a mahogany sword cabinet that glowed warmly in the subdued light of the *salle*.

"*Señores!*" he cried, rattling the letter of introduction with his left hand. "It shall never be said that the prefect of the department of Ayacucho did not exert plenary powers to aid in disclosing to the world the enormous riches of his province and his native land!"

"So we may expect something?" inquired M. Demetrioivich.

"I have the power to force some one to go with you," dramatically announced Ramada.

"Whom?" asked Standifer, looking around.

"Naturally my authority doesn't extend over freemen," conditioned the prefect.

"Your slaves?" inquired the secretary.

"Sir," announced the prefect, "wherever the Peruvian banner waves, Freedom smiles!"

"What at?" inquired the literal secretary.

As the governor was about to take new offense the old Rumanian hastily inquired:

"Whom do we get, Señor Ramada?"

"*Señores*, a garroting has been widely and I believe successfully advertised to take place on the fifth of August. If I may say it, *caballeros*, my political career depends in great measure on meeting fully and completely the thrills offered by the prospectuses. The executions will be followed by a bull-fight. It was, gentlemen, if I may say it, it was to be the turning point of my political career, upon the prestige of which I meant to make my race for the presidency of our republic.

"Gentlemen, a time comes in the life of every statesman when he can sacrifice his country to his personal ambition, or his personal ambition to his country. That moment has now come in the life of Gonzales Pizarro Ramada. Gentlemen, I make it. Gentlemen, I am going to remit the extreme penalty placed by the *cortes* upon a murderer and a highwayman and permit them to go with you, gentlemen, as guides into the Valle de Rio Infiernillo."

Pethwick, who had been smiling with immense enjoyment at this rodomontade, straightened his face.

"A murderer and a highwayman!"

"Charming fellows," assured the prefect. "I often walk down to the *carcel* and converse with them. Such *chic!* Such original ideas on the confiscation of money—really very entertaining!"

The expedition looked at the eulogist a moment.

"Give us a minute to talk this over, Señor Ramada?" requested M. Demetrioivich.

The prefect made the accentuated bow of a politician, adding that the republic would be proud to furnish chains and handcuffs to guarantee that her sons did their duty in the discharge of a patriotic function.

The three gentlemen of the DeLong Geographical Expedition spent an anxious five minutes in debate.

Presently Pethwick called:

"Señor Ramada, are you absolutely sure we cannot procure guides who are less—questionable for this journey?"

"Gentlemen, to be frank," said the prefect, who had also been studying over the matter, "I doubt very much whether either Cesare Ruano or Pablo Pasca would be willing to accompany you under those terms. I cannot force them. The law prohibits any unusual or cruel infliction of the death penalty and to send them to the Valley of the Rio Infiernillo would fall under that prohibition."

The four men stood meditating in the Salle des Armes. Professor Demetrioivich stirred.

"Let's go have a talk with them," he suggested.

CONTRARY to Ramada's fears, Cesare Ruano, the man-killer, and Pablo Pasca, the road-agent, proved willing to escort the party to the Rio Infiernillo. So on the following day the expedition set forth with the legs of the convicts chained under their mules' bellies.

Ayacucho turned out *en masse* to watch the departure of so distinguished a cavalcade, and it might as well be admitted at once that none of the adventurers made so brave a showing or saluted the villagers with more graceful bows than did Cesare Ruano or Pablo Pasca. In fact, they divided the plaudits of the crowd about equally with the prefect, who kept murmuring to Pethwick:

"Not a bad stroke, *Señor* Pethwick, not a bad stroke."

The legs of the convicts were chained, naturally, to prevent any sudden leave-taking, but this plan held disadvantages. When one of the llama packs became loosened, either the scientists had to bungle the job themselves or take the leg-cuffs off their prisoners and allow them to dismount and do it for them. This entailed endless chaining and unchaining, which quickly grew monotonous and at length was abandoned after the geographers had exacted a solemn pledge of the two cutthroats not to run away. That much of the contract the guides kept to the letter. They never did run away, although the company lost them.

M. Demetrioivich retained the manacles on the horn of his saddle, where, he told Pethwick, he hoped their jingle would have a great moral effect.

Oddly enough both the convicts were entirely innocent of the charges preferred against them, upon which they were convicted and so nearly executed.

Pablo Pasca told the whole circumstance to Pethwick. He, Pablo, did meet an old man one freezing July night in a mountain pass on the road to Ayacucho. They stopped and held some converse and Pablo had borrowed from him two hundred and forty-seven *sols*. Then what did this ingrate of a creditor do but beat his head against a tree, break an arm, go before a *magistrado* and charge Pasca with highway robbery.

Pablo's black eyes flashed as he related the incident. He had been amazed at such calumny, which he could not disprove. The jury believed the old wretch and sentenced Pablo to the garrote.

However, the One Who Ruled the Earth knew the truth, and Pasca prayed every night that he should not have his spinal cord snapped on such an unjust charge. So the One Who Ruled sent this society of fine gentlemen and scholars to fraternize with Pablo and to lift him to an exalted station.

So he, Pablo, supposed now all the neighbors saw that his oath, as strange as it sounded, was true to the last jot and tittle. The padre in his visits to the *carcel* had taught Pablo a little verse which he should never forget: "Seest thou a man diligent in his profession—he shall sit before kings."

Cesare Ruano did not go so much into detail as did his fellow guide and friend, but he told Pethwick that the crime for which he was sentenced to the garrote was trivial and with a shrug of his shoulders let it go at that.

The trivial affair, however, had left a number of marks on Ruano's person, all of which the Ayacucho police had tabulated. A copy of this table was given M. Demetrioivich in order that he might advertise for Cesare in case he should desert.

Pethwick read the inventory. It ran:

Cesare Ruano, a *cholo*, 27 years, reddish yellow, height 5ft. 7in., weight 84 kilos. (189 lbs), muscular, broad face, prominent cheek-bones, straight nose with wide nostrils, very white teeth, handsome. Scars: from right eyebrow through the right cheek to the lobe of ear; from left side of neck to the middle of chest bone; horizontal scar from nipple to nipple, rifle or pistol wound in right leg, two inches above knee; three buck-shot in back, one in left buttock; little toe on left foot missing. Disposition uncommunicative, but of pleasant address and cheerful until irritated. A very handy man. Note: In case of arrest, officers are advised to shoot before accosting Ruano.

ON the first few nights the travelers found lodgings at little mountain inns, whose red-peaked roofs of tiles were pulled down like caps over tiny eye-like windows. The tunnel-like entrance to such a hostelry always looked like a black mouth squared in horror at something it saw across the mountains.

This was much the same expression that the proprietor and guests wore when they learned the travelers were bound for the Rio Infiernillo.

Pablo Pasca always broke the news of their destination in rather dramatic style to the gamesters and hangers-on with which these centers of mountain life were crowded.

"*Señores*," he would harangue, "you see before you a man sentenced to death; but because no garrote could affect his throat, so hard has it become from drinking gin, the prefect decided to send him on a journey to the Rio Infiernillo! Let us drink to our good fortune!"

This announcement usually brought roars of applause and laughter. Once a roisterer shouted:

"But your companions; what caused them to be sent?"

And Pablo answered with a droll gesture:

"One is a murderer; the rest are Americans!"

It made a great hit. The crowd invited Pablo to share its brandy.

However, after these introductions the landlord would presently stop laughing and after some questions invariably warn the scientists against their "mad undertaking." On two such occasions the proprietor became so earnest and excited that he begged the *señores* to walk out with him up the mountain-side to see for themselves the terrors that confronted them.

Pethwick never forgot his first glimpse of the

mystery that colored his thoughts and dreams for the remainder of his life.

The night was clear but moonless. The party climbed uncertainly in darkness up a scarp of boulders and spurs of primitive rock. The landlord picked his way toward a clump of calisaya trees silhouetted against the sky. The chill air was shot with the fragrance of mountain violets. The climbers lent each other hands until the landlord reached a protruding root and then everybody scrambled up.

Pethwick dropped down breathless at the foot of the tree, his heart beating heavily. At first he was faintly amused at his host's promise of a portent, but this amusement vanished presently amid the solemnity of night and the mountains.

The very stars above him wore the strange aspect of the Southern constellations. Against their glimmer the Andes heaved mighty shoulders. Peak beyond peak, they stood in cold blackness, made more chill and mysterious by the pallor of snow-fields.

The whole group shivered in silence for several minutes. At last M. Demetrioivich asked with a shake in his Spanish:

"Well, *amigo*, what is there to see?"

"Wait," began the landlord.

At that moment a star shot far out against the blackness.

"*Alla!*" gasped the Peruvian.

Pethwick shivered and grinned. He had brought them up to see a shooting star.

"But wait!" begged their host, sensing the engineer's mirth.

Almost at once from where the star seemed to strike arose a faint, glowing haze as indefinite as the Milky Way. It must have been miles distant. In front of it two or three massifs were outlined and others, farther away, were dimly truncated by its radiance.

The *huésped* drew a long breath.

"Now there lies the Rio Infiernillo," he chattered. "It is a land from which no man returns alive. I have known many men to go, *señores*, thinking surely there must be great treasure where so much danger lay—and there may be, *señores*. No man can say. Every man has his opinion about the matter. I will tell frankly what mine is—"

He paused, evidently waiting for some one to urge his opinion.

Instead, Standifer spoke up:

"My opinion is it's a meteor and a phosphorescent display which sometimes follows."

The landlord laughed through the darkness with immense scorn of such a puerile opinion.

"What is yours?" inquired Pethwick.

"*Señores*," defined the tavern-keeper solemnly, "that stream is called the Rio Infiernillo for a very good reason. For there every night comes the devil to dig gold to corrupt the priests, and—and, of course, the Protestants, too," he added charitably. "But he can never do it, *Señores*. Let him dig till he scoops down the mountains and reaches his own country, which is the source of the Rio Infiernillo—he will never do it!"

"Has any one ever seen where he has dug?" asked Pethwick, amused again.

"*Sí, señor.*"

"I thought you said no one ever went over there and got back alive," observed Pethwick carelessly.

A slight pause; then the landlord explained:

"This man only lived a few minutes after he fell into my door. I saw him. His hair was white. He was burned. I heard his last words. No one else heard him."

This was uttered with such solemnity that Pethwick never knew whether it was an account of some weird tragedy of the mountains or whether it was cut out of whole cloth.

That night after Pethwick had gone to bed in the upper story of the hostelry, while the laughing and drinking flowed steadily below, it occurred to him that it was odd, after all, that the landlord should have led them on such a clamber to see a shooting star and a haze—and the two phenomena should have occurred so promptly.

ON the following night another landlord led them out on the same mission and showed them the same set of wonders. His explanation was even more fantastic than the first.

Before the party retired that second night, Pethwick asked of M. Demetrioivich:

"Professor, what is the probability that two meteors should perform the same evolutions in the same quarter of the sky and apparently strike in about the same place on two nights in succession?"

"I'd thought of that problem," returned the savant yawning. "In fact, I have set down some tentative figures on the subject." Here he referred to a little note-book. "It is roughly one chance in two-million."

"Small," observed Pethwick.

"That was for the stars alone. For two stars to fall in the same region, each time followed by a phosphorescence, diminishes the probability to one chance in eight trillion."

Pethwick whistled softly.

"In fact, it was not a meteorite we saw," concluded the professor, crawling into bed.

CHAPTER II

PABLO PASCA shouted something from perhaps a hundred yards up the trail. He was hidden from the string of toiling riders by a fold in the precipice. Pethwick looked ahead and saw two vultures launch themselves out over the abyss. One swung back down the face of the mountain and passed within forty feet of the party, its feathers whistling, its bald, whitish head turning for a look at the intruders and its odor momentarily tainting the cold wind.

A moment later the engineer saw the two guides had dismounted and their mules were snorting and jerking on the very edge of the precipice. The men themselves were staring at something and Pasca seemed almost as panic-stricken as the animals. The unquietness spread rapidly down the string of baggage-carriers.

Pethwick slid off his mount and hurried forward, slipping inside the llamas and dodging past the uncertain heels of the mules. He came out by the side of Pablo to a queer, not to say gruesome sight.

In the air circled eight or ten vultures. They had been frightened from a row of skeletons, which

evidently were articulated on wires and iron rods and stood before the travelers in the awkward postures such objects assume. Among the things, Pethwick recognized the whitened frames of snake, condor, sheep, vicuña, puma, monkey and at the end, standing upright, the bones of a man.

The specimens were accurately spaced around the end of the trail, for this was the last of the road. The skulls grinned fixedly at the DeLong Geographical Expedition. In the gusty wind the arms of the man swung and beat against his thigh bone in a grotesque travesty of mirth.

Something touched Pethwick from behind. He turned with a shudder and saw Standifer. The secretary of the expedition looked at the assemblage for a moment, then drew out his note-book and pen, gave the pen a fillip to start a flow of ink and methodically jotted down the list before him. When he had finished he glanced up inquiringly as he rescrewed the top on his writing instrument.

"Don't suppose any one is moving a museum, eh, Pethwick?"

"No," said the engineer, studying the figures.

"You don't think so?" surprised.

"Certainly not!"

"Huh!" Standifer drew forth his book again.

"Makes a sort of little mystery of it, doesn't it?"

And he jotted down this fact.

Prof. Demetrioivich made his observation on the probable source of the objects before them.

"Standifer's hypothesis is not as bad as it sounds, Pethwick," observed the savant.

"You don't mean these really belong to some scientist?" cried the engineer.

"I think their arrangement proves it."

The engineer looked at the professor curiously.

"These skeletons are arranged in the order of their evolutionary development."

A glance showed this to be the case and it rather surprised Pethwick.

"Does that hold any significance?"

M. Demetrioivich walked over to the frame of the puma and shook it slightly as he inspected it.

"It would suggest a scientist arranged these specimens. A savage or a rustic would have been more likely to have strung them out according to size, or else he would have mixed them higgledy-piggledy, and the probability that he would have hit on their evolutionary order would have been remote indeed." The professor gave the puma's bones another shake. "Besides that, this articulation is very cleverly done—too cleverly for unpractised hands."

"But why should a scientist leave his specimens out like this?" demanded the engineer in amazement.

"To begin with, this seems to be the end of the trail—the shipping-point, so to speak, and for the further reason that water boils at a very low temperature at this altitude."

As the professor's fingers had touched some particles of flesh still adhering to the puma's vertebræ, he stepped across to a little patch of snow, stooped and washed his hands in it.

His two companions stared at him.

"Water boiling at a low temperature—altitude—

what's that got to do with it?" interrogated the engineer.

The scientist smiled.

"I thought you would see that. If boiling water is too cool to clean the bones properly, here are some very trustworthy assistants above us."

M. Demetrioivich indicated the vultures still soaring overhead.

The secretary, who had been scribbling rapidly during the last part of this discourse, now crossed out a few lines on a former page with the remark: "Well, there is no mystery to it after all."

"But look here!" exclaimed Pethwick. "We're scooped!"

"What do you mean—scooped?" asked the old Rumanian.

"Somebody has beaten us to this field. There are rival explorers in these mountains."

"Tut, tut," chided the old man. "You should say, my dear Pethwick, we have 'colleagues' instead of 'rivals,' I am charmed to believe they are here. We must get with them and try to be of assistance to them."

The kindly old scientist stared away among the great bluish peaks, speculating on where his "colleagues" would be.

"But look here," objected Standifer in alarm; "there will be another secretary with that expedition, grabbing all this literary material—"

"Lads, lads," reproached the old savant, "you have yet to learn the opulence of nature. She is inexhaustible. This party, another party, fifty parties toiling at the same time could never fathom all the marvels that lie under the sweep of our gaze. Why, gentlemen, for instance, in Bucharest I and a colleague worked for three years on the relation of the olfactory system of catarrhine monkeys with that of human beings. Our effort was to approximate in what epoch the sense of smell became of secondary importance to humanity. This, of course, would mark a great change in the mode of living among men.

"As I say, we spent three years on the two nervous systems and yet our discoveries were most dissimilar. Now, what are a few white nerve-threads to all this wilderness of snow and boulders? Your fears are quite baseless."

HIS two companions laughed, half ashamed of their jealousy, and then inspected the scene before them, which up till now had been lost in the grisly detail of the skeletons.

The mountain side on which they stood dropped away in an enormous declivity fully a mile and a half deep and led into a vast and sinister valley that stretched toward the northeast until its folds and twists were lost among the flashing peaks.

The extraordinary part of the scene was that instead of spreading the vivid green of the tropics below the tree-line this great depression looked black and burned. The ensemble recalled to Pethwick certain remarkable erosions he had seen in the West of the United States. Only here, the features were slashed out with a gigantism that dwarfed our western canyons and buttes.

And there was another striking difference. In the North American West the Grand Canyon and the

Yosemite glow with a solemn beauty. The chasm looked like the raw and terrible wound of fire. Its blackened and twisted acclivities might have been the scars of some terrible torment.

A river lay through the center of this cicatrix, and although later it proved nearly half a mile wide, it was reduced to a mere rivulet amid such cyclopean setting. It twisted in and out, now lost to view, now shimmering in the distance, everywhere taking the color of its surroundings and looking for the world like one of those dull, spreading adders winding through the valley.

Pethwick now fully understood why the Indians had given the peculiar name to the river. It was a sobriquet any human being would have bestowed upon it at first glimpse. It required no guide to tell Pethwick he was looking down upon the Rio Infernillo.

"This is the place, *señor*," said Pablo Pasca.

"Do we start back from here?"

Pethwick looked at him in surprise.

"We'll spend the next sixty days in this valley."

"I mean Cesare and myself, *señor*," explained the Zambo in hangdog fashion.

"You and Cesare!"

"We have shown you the Valley of the Rio Infernillo—that was all we promised, *señor*," pursued Pablo doggedly.

Ruano glanced around. "Speak for yourself, Pablo!"

"You are not going into this den of Satan, are you?" cried Pablo to the murderer. "Past these—these"—he nodded at the skeletons.

Ruano grinned, showing two rows of big white teeth. "I'll go help make some more skeletons," he said carelessly.

Pethwick began to explain away Pasca's fears.

"Those are nothing but the specimens of a scientific expedition, Pablo."

"Do scientific expeditions collect skeletons?" shuddered the thief.

"Yes."

"Will you do that?"

"Very probably."

"And leave them for the birds to pick?"

"If we don't boil them." Pethwick grew more amused as the fears of his guide mounted.

"*Dios Mio!* What for?"

"To study them," laughed the engineer.

Pablo turned a grayish yellow.

"And you kill men and let the buzzards pick their bones—to study them?" aspirated the half-breed.

"Will you kill me—and Ruano?"

"Certainly not!" ejaculated Pethwick, quite shocked. "What a silly idea!"

"But the other gang did, *señor*," cried the Zambo, nodding at the skeleton of the man at the end of the line, "and no doubt, *señor*, they told their guide that all was well, that everything was as it should be, until one fine day—*pang!*"

"And here he stands, grinning at me, slapping his knee to see another big fool go down the scarp."

At such a hideous suspicion all three scientists began a shocked denial.

What did Pablo take them for—ghouls? They were civilized men, scientists, professors, engineers, authors.

"Then why did you choose for guides two men condemned to death unless it was to kill them and stay within the law?"

They reassured the robber so earnestly that he was half convinced, when unfortunately an extra gust of wind set the skeleton clapping his knee again.

The gruesome mirth set Pablo almost in a frenzy.

"*Ehue!* Yes! But how did the other party get their man? No doubt they found a dead man in this devil's country! Oh, yes, dead men are frequent in this place where men never go! They didn't kill their guide to study his bones. Oh, no! Not at all! Ha! No! He dropped dead. Very reasonable! Ho!"

With a yell he dropped his mule's rein and leaped for the mouth of the trail.

BUT Cesare Ruano was quicker than the thief. The murderer made one leap, caught the flying Zambo by the shoulder and brought him in a huddle on the stones.

The robber shrieked, screamed, began a chattering prayer.

"Oh, Holy Mary! Blessed Virgin! Receive my soul! I am to be killed! Blessed Queen!"

The words seemed to arouse some sort of anger in Cesare, for the big fellow shook Pablo till his teeth rattled.

"Shut up squeaking, you rabbit! Can't you tell when a man is about to murder you? These are gentlemen! You will stay with this party, coward! and do the work! You will help me! I will not leave them and neither will you. *Sabe?*"

As he accented this "*Sabe?*" with a violent shake, Pablo's head nodded vigorously whether he wanted it to or not.

Oddly enough the trouncing seemed to reassure Pasca more than all the arguments of the scientists.

"You are a shrewd man, Cesare," he gasped as soon as he was allowed to speak. "Are you sure they won't hurt us?"

Ruano laughed again, with a flash of teeth.

"They can't hurt me. I could mash these little men with my thumb. Whom are you afraid of, Pablo—the old gray man who can hardly walk?"

"Why, no," admitted the thief looking at M. Demetrioivich.

"Or of that bean-pole boy, whose head is so weak he cannot remember the simplest thing without writing it in a book."

"Nor him either," agreed Pablo with a glance at Standifer.

"Or the engineer who cannot lift a hand without gasping for breath?"

"Anyway," argued Pasca, half convinced, "how did those other geographers manage to kill their guide? Perhaps they shot him when he was asleep."

"They were not geographers," snapped Ruano, "at least they were not like these men."

"How do you know?"

"Could another such a party be in the mountains and all the country not hear of it? Even in prison we heard the great American scientists were going to the Rio Infernillo. Then take these men—would

they tie all these bones together if they wanted to pack them on llamas to Ayacucho? You know they would not. They would take them apart and put them in sacks until they reached America."

"Why, that's a fact," agreed Pasca, staring at the skeletons with new interest. "Certainly no llama would carry one of these things." He stared a moment longer and added: "But perhaps these other scientists were also fools and did not think of that."

"Then they would not have had wit enough to kill their guide. It takes some wit to kill a man, Pablo, I assure you."

Naturally the geographers had been listening to this very candid opinion of their party. Now M. Demetrioovich inquired, not without a certain respect in his voice:

"Señor Ruano, I may be wrong in my judgment. How do you think those skeletons came here?"

"Señor, returned the convict respectfully, "this is the Rio Infiernillo. I think the devil put them here to scare men away, so they cannot look into hell while they are alive. Because if they had a look, *señor*, it would be so horrible they would change their lives, become good men and go to heaven—and so the devil would lose patronage."

Standifer, who was chagrined with Ruano's description of himself, grunted out the word "barbarous." Pethwick shouted with laughter.

With a blush Standifer drew out his notebook. As he did so, he said to Cesare:

"These entries are made, not because I lack intelligence, as you seem to think, but because I am the official secretary of this expedition; besides I am an author. I wrote a book called "Reindeer in Iceland."

A fit of coughing seized Pethwick.

"I meant nothing by what I said, *Señor* Standifer," explained Ruano, "except to hearten this rabbit. Think nothing of it" He turned to the crowd as a whole. "We will never get the mules and llamas past the skeletons, so we will have to remove the skeletons past the mules and llamas."

This plan recommended itself to the whole party and everybody set to work. The men lugged the things past the trembling animals and finally lined them up behind the cavalcade. They placed the human frame at the head of the troop, just as they had found it.

As Pethwick rode away he looked back at it. There it stood, representing the summit of creation, the masterpiece of life. It rattled its phalanges against its femur and grinned a long-toothed grin at the vast joke of existence—an evolutionary climb of a hundred-million years, a day or two of sunshine, a night or two of sleep, a little stirring, a little looking around, and poof! back it was where it had started a hundred million years ago. No wonder skeletons grin!

ON the forward journey it transpired that Cesare Ruano had obtained a sort of moral ascendancy over the whole party.

He certainly had set the whole crowd straight about the skeletons. They had talked for an hour to decide where they came from and in half a dozen

words Cesare proved to them they knew nothing about the matter whatsoever.

Another thing that gave Cesare prestige was his abrupt quelling of Pasca's desertion. Without Cesare, the Zambo would have escaped. None of the scientists would have acted in time to stop his headlong flight.

Civilization has the unfortunate effect of slowing up men's mental operations in emergencies. Indeed, civilization places such a premium on foresight that a civilized man lacks ability to live from instant to instant. The ordinary American lives usually in next month or next year, but he is rarely at home in the "now" and "here."

This quality of concentration on the future is a splendid thing for developing inventions, building great businesses, painting great pictures, writing novels and philosophies, but it works badly indeed for guarding convicts, who invariably bolt in the present tense.

Cesare used his new authority to possess himself of a rifle.

"We don't know just who shot this skeleton," he explained very simply to M. Demetrioovich, "and we don't know how many more skeletons the fellow may want. I prefer to keep mine. Now I have observed that you *señores* never glance about when you travel, but look straight into your mules' ears and think of a great many things, no doubt. But this fellow could collect your skeletons very easily. So I will take a rifle and ride before and shoot whoever it is before he shoots us."

Ruano chose Standifer's rifle for this task. The secretary was glad of it, for the weapon had been chafing his leg ever since the party left Ayacucho.

The immediate declivity leading into the Valley of the Rio Infiernillo was a field of boulders ranging in size from a man's head to a house. Far below them the tree line was marked by some small trees that had been tortured by the wind into grotesque shapes worked out by the Japanese in their dwarf trees. Here and there patches of snow disguised their precarious footing into white pitfalls.

The mules crept downward, exploring every step of the way with their little hoofs, then easing their weight forward. It made a very swaying, chafing ride. Pethwick's pommel worked against his stomach until he felt he had been sitting down a week, wrong side first.

After an endless jostle it seemed to the engineer that he was not descending in the slightest, but was being shaken back and forth, sticking in one place amid the cyclopean scenery. When he looked back, the endless boulder-field slanted toward the sky; when he looked down, it seemed as far as ever into the black and sinister valley where the river wound like an adder.

He looked to reaching the tree-line with a hope it would bring him relief from the monotony. It did not. His saddle chafed, his mule sagged and swayed. His fellow-scientists did as he was doing, squirmed about on the torturing saddle-horns. The sameness drove his mind in on itself. He began as Cesare had said, "to stare into his mule's ears and think."

He wondered about the skeletons. He wondered what "trivial" thing Cesare had done to get

sentenced to the garrote. He wondered what that shooting star and the phosphorescent mist could have been? Then he wondered about the skeletons again . . . about Cesare. . . .

A rifle-shot that sounded like a mere snap in the thin mountain air disturbed his reflections. He looked up and saw a faint wisp of vapor float out of the .30-30 in Cesare's hands. The engineer glanced anxiously to see if the murderer had shot any of his companions. They were all on their mules and all looking at each other and at him. Every one in the crowd had felt instinctively that the desperado had fired at some person—possibly at one of his own party.

"What is it?" cried Standifer.

"A man yonder!" Pablo pointed.

"I don't know whether it was a man or not!" cried Ruano, jumping from his slow mule and setting off down the declivity at a hazardous run.

"Ruano!" shouted M. Demetrioivich in horror. "Did you shoot at a human being like that? Drop that rifle, you bloodthirsty fellow. Drop it!"

Extraordinary to say, Cesare did drop his gun and as it struck the stones it fired again. The man plunged on downward at full tilt. It was an amazing flight. He took the boulders like a goat. The party stopped their mounts and sat watching the dash.

"Did you say it was a man?" asked the secretary shakily of Pablo.

"As sure as I am sitting here." At that moment, the flying Ruano swung in behind a large boulder.

"He was behind that!" cried Pablo sharply. Then he lifted his voice. "Did you get him, Cesare?" he shouted. "Was there any money on him?"

But almost immediately Pethwick glimpsed the murderer again, in fact saw him twice—or he may have caught a flash of two figures, one chasing the other.

SUDDENLY Pablo began yelling as if on a fox-course.

A shock of horror went through Pethwick. He knew too well what the convict would do if he caught the man. Nobody could waylay Cesare Ruano, even to look at him, in safety.

"Here, let's get down there!" cried the engineer in urgent tones. "Lord, we ought not to have given that brute a gun!"

"Maybe he hit him!" surmised Pablo in cheerful excitement.

"He's chasing him this minute somewhere behind those boulders." declared Standifer nervously.

M. Demetrioivich dismounted, and from between two boulders recovered Standifer's rifle as they passed it.

Pethwick had screwed up his nerves for some dreadful sight behind the boulder, but there was nothing there. Nothing except a splotch of green liquid on the stones.

Smaller gouts of this green fluid led off down the boulder-field, making from one large boulder to another as if some dripping thing had tried to keep a covert between itself and the party of riders.

Pethwick dismounted and followed this trail perhaps a hundred yards, until it ceased. Then he stood looking about him in the cold sunshine. He

could not hear the slightest sound. The blackened valley and the Infernal River lay far below him. High above him, at the end of the trail, the vultures wheeled against the sky.

CHAPTER III.

FROM his headlong pursuit down the mountain-side Cesare Ruano never returned.

What became of him none of his companions ever discovered. He dropped out of their lives as suddenly and completely as if he had dissolved into thin air.

A dozen possibilities besieged their brains. Perhaps he fell over a cliff. Or was drowned in the river. Or he may have deserted the expedition. Perhaps he was still wandering about, lost or crazed. Perhaps the man he pursued turned and killed him.

All these are pure conjectures, for they had not a clue upon which to base a rational hypothesis. The only hope for a suggestion, the green splotches on the boulders, proved to be a hopeless riddle itself.

The men picked up several of the smaller boulders and when camp was pitched Prof. Demetrioivich made a chemical analysis of the stain. Its coloring matter was derived from chlorophyll. If Ruano's shot had penetrated the stomach of some running animal, it was barely possible for such a stain to have resulted—but it was improbable. This stain was free from cellular vegetal structure. In the mixture was no trace of the corpuscles or serum of blood.

On the afternoon of the second day following the incident, the men sat at the dinner-table discussing the matter.

In the tent beside the rude dining-table were cots and another table holding mineral and floral specimens and some insects. Two or three books were scattered on the cots and duffle-bags jammed the tent-corners.

Looking out through the flaps of their tent, the diners could see the eastern peaks and cliffs of the Infernal Valley turning orange under the sunset.

M. Demetrioivich was talking.

"I consider the chlorophyll an added proof that there is another scientific expedition in this valley."

"What is your reasoning?" inquired Pethwick.

"Chlorophyll is a substance none but a chemist could, or rather would, procure. It serves no commercial purpose. Therefore it must be used experimentally."

"Why would a chemist want to experiment in this forsaken place?"

Standifer put in a question—

"Then you think Cesare shot a hole in a canister of chlorophyll solution?"

"When a man has a choice of improbabilities, all he can do is to choose the least improbable," explained M. Demetrioivich friendlyly.

"I wonder what Cesare would say about it?" speculated Pethwick.

"The green trail also suggests my theory," proceeded Prof. Demetrioivich. "When Ruano shot the man behind the boulder, his victim evidently did not know that his can of solution had been punctured, for he sat hidden for perhaps a minute while his container leaked a large pool just behind the

rock. Then Cesare charged, the fellow fled, losing small quantities as the liquid splashed out. At last the man observed the puncture and turned the can over and there the trail ended."

M. Demetrioivich pushed his coffee cup toward Pablo without interrupting his deductions.

"I should say Cesare's bullet entered the can about an inch below the level of the liquid. That would explain why a continuous trail did not mark the fugitive."

"But why would one scientist be ambushing civilized men in a heaven-forsaken place like this?" cried Standifer in slightly supercilious tones. "And why should he carry a canister of chlorophyll around with him?"

Pethwick tapped the table with his fingers.

"It's unfair to demand the fellow's occupation, race, color and previous condition of servitude," he objected. Then after a moment: "I wish we could find Ruano —"

M. Demetrioivich stirred his coffee and looked into it without drinking, a Latin habit he had formed in the Rumanian cafés.

"If I may be so bold, *señores*," put in Pablo Pasca, "a scientist—a lone scientist would go crazy in a place like this."

This remark, while as improbable as the other guesses, nevertheless spread its suggestion of tragedy over the situation.

"Nobody knows the action of chlorophyll exactly," brooded M. Demetrioivich. "Somehow it crystalizes the energy in sunlight. If some man had developed a method to bottle the sun's energy directly, he would probably pursue his investigations in the tropics —"

"And he might desire secrecy," added Pethwick, "so much so that he would even —"

"You mean he would murder Cesare?" finished Standifer.

"A certain type of scientific mind might do that, gentlemen," agreed Demetrioivich gravely.

"What sort, professor?"

"There are only a few countries in the world capable of producing a chemist who could experiment with chlorophyll and sunlight —"

The diners looked at the old scientist expectantly.

"Of these, I know only one country whose national creed is ruthlessness, only one whose chemists would kill an Indian on the bare possibility that the Indian might divulge his secret process—or his political affiliations."

"You mean he could be a German royalist?" queried Pethwick.

"If the Germans could synthesize the sun's energy and thus transform it directly into food, they would certainly be in a position to bid again for world dominion," stated M. Demetrioivich positively. "It would annul a blockade of the seas. It would render unnecessary millions of men working in the fields and put them on the battlefield."

"But that's fantastic, professor!" cried Pethwick, "That's getting outside of probability."

"The green splotches themselves are outside of probability, Mr. Pethwick," stated the old savant gravely, "but they are here nevertheless."

"The moon is rising," observed Standifer casually.

The secretary's silly and trivial breaks into the conversation irritated Pethwick. He turned and said —

"Well, that doesn't bother me; does it you?"

"Oh, no," said Standifer, taking the rather tart remark in good faith. "I like to watch the moon rise. If I may say it, all my best literary ideas are evolved under the moonlight."

"Trot on out and see if you can't think up something good," suggested the engineer.

Standifer caught this sarcasm, flushed slightly but did get up and walk out through the tent entrance. A moment later the two men followed him, leaving the things to Pablo.

THE rising moon centered their attention with the first glint of its disk between two peaks far down the valley. The last bronze of twilight lingered in the west. The men shivered with the chill of coming night.

Despite Pethwick's jibe at the poetical influence of the moon as expressed by the secretary, the engineer felt it himself.

"It looks whiter, more silvery in this latitude," he observed after a continued silence.

"That mist about it looks like the veil of a bride," mused the author.

"May do it," said the engineer, who despised similes, "but it looks more like a mist around the moon."

"What's the matter with you, anyway, Pethwick?" snapped Standifer, wheeling around. "Just because you lack the gift of poetical expression is no reason why you should make an ass of yourself and bray every time I utter a well-turned phrase!"

"Was that what you were doing?" inquired the older man.

"It was, and if —"

Standifer broke off suddenly and stared, then in amazement gasped—

"For Heaven's sake!"

"What is it?" Both the older men followed his gaze.

Standifer was staring into the fading sky utterly bewildered.

Pethwick shook him.

"What is it?"

The secretary pointed skyward.

They followed his finger and saw against the dull west the delicate silver crescent of a new moon.

It required half an instant for the incoherence of their two observations to burst upon them. The next impulse, all three turned.

The full moon they had seen rising in the east had disappeared. The mist, a phosphorescent mist, still hung about the peaks; indeed it seemed to settle on the distant crags and cliffs and glow faintly in the gathering darkness. It defined a sort of spectral mountain-scape. Then, before their astounded gaze, it faded into darkness.

A scratching sound caused Pethwick to shiver. It was Pablo striking a match inside the tent.

AFTER his observation of what for want of a better name will have to be called the pseudo-moon, a curious mental apathy fell over Pethwick. Not that he failed to think of the extraordinary series of events that had befallen the expedition. He did think of them all the time. But he thought weakly, hopelessly. He picked up the problem in his brain without the slightest hope of finding the solution. He exhausted himself on the enigma, and yet he could not let it go.

He tried to forget it and center himself on his work. But little mysteries cropped out in his everyday toil. His principal duty with the expedition was map-making, the determination of the altitudes of the various observed peaks, and a mapping of the outcrops of the black micas, limonites, serpentines, pitchblendes, obsidians, and hornblendes. It was these dark-colored stones, he found, that gave the great chasm its look of incineration.

And this is what he did not understand. Here and there he found places where streams of lava sprang, apparently, out of the solid escarpment of the cliffs.

Now the whole Peruvian sierras are volcanic and these lava pockets did not surprise Pethwick. The inexplicable part was that no volcanic vent connected these little fumaroles with the interior of the mountain. They seemed to have burned from the outside. They looked as if some object of intense heat had branded the mountain-side.

Ordinarily Pethwick's mind would have sprung like a terrier at such a problem; now, through sheer brain fag, he jotted the descriptions without comment. In this dull, soulless way he made the following extraordinary entry in his journal one morning:

This morning, close to one of those burned pockets, or fumaroles, which I have before described, I found a roasted rabbit. The little animal was some twelve feet from the fumarole, sitting upright on its haunches and roasted. It looked as if its curiosity had been aroused, and it had been cooked instantly. As decomposition had not set in, it could not have been dead for more than a week.

I wonder if this is a tab on the date of these fumaroles? If so, they must have been burned a few days ago, instead of being of geologic antiquity, as I at first assumed. If recent, they must be of artificial origin. Since they roast a rabbit before frightening it, they must occur with the abruptness of an explosion. Can these splotches be connected with the evil mystery surrounding this expedition? I cannot say. I have no theory whatever.

THAT evening at dinner Pethwick showed this entry to M. Demetrioich. The old Rumanian read it, and his only comment was a nod and a brief —

"Yes, I had discovered they were of recent origin myself."

Presently he suggested a game of chess to take their minds off the matter before they retired.

"You look strained, Pethwick," the old man said. The engineer laughed briefly.

"I am strained. I'm jumpy every minute of the day and night."

The old savant considered his friend with concern.

"Wouldn't you better get out of here for a while, Herbert?"

"What's the use? I could think of nothing else."

"You would feel out of danger."

"I don't feel in danger."

"Yes, you do—all mystery connotes danger. It suggests it to us. That is why mystery is so stimulating and fascinating."

"Do you think we are in danger?"

"I am sure the man who killed Cesare would not hesitate over us."

Standifer, who was seated at the table began to smile in a superior manner at their fears.

Owing to the engineer's nervous condition this irritated Pethwick acutely. However, he said nothing about it, but remarked to M. Demetrioich—

"Tomorrow I am through with my work right around here."

"Then you'll take a rest, as I suggest."

"No, I'll take a pack, walk straight down this valley and find out what is making these fumaroles—and what became of Cesare."

At that moment, in the gathering blue of night, the eastern sky was lighted by the glare of the pseudo-moon. Its pallor poured in through the tent flaps and the shadows of the men's legs streaked the floor.

The mystery brought both the old men to the outside. They stared at the illumination in silence. The light was as noiseless as the aurora. As they watched it, Pethwick heard Standifer laughing inside the tent.

The secretary's idiocy almost snapped the engineer's control. He wanted to knock his empty head. At last the phenomenon died away and left its usual glimmer on the surrounding heights. In a few minutes this vanished and it was full night.

When the men reentered the tent, Standifer still smiled as if he enjoyed some immunity from their mystification and nervousness.

"Well, what's the joke?" asked Pethwick at last.

"The way you fellows go up in the air about this thing."

"You, I suppose, are on solid ground!" exploded Pethwick.

The author said nothing but continued his idiotic smile.

"I admit there are points here and there I don't understand," continued Pethwick after a moment. "No doubt we fail to understand it as thoroughly as you do."

"You do," agreed Standifer with such matter-of-factness the engineer was really surprised.

"What in the devil have you found out?" he asked irritably.

"Oh, the facts, the facts," said Standifer nonchalantly. "I'm a writer, you know, a trained observer; I dive to the bottom of things."

Pethwick stared, then laughed in a chattering fashion—

"Y-Yes, I see you diving to the bottom of this —"

The old professor, who had been studying the secretary, quietly interrupted—

"What do you know, James?"

The literary light hesitated a moment, then drew a handful of glittering metal out of his pocket and plunked it down on the table.

"I know all about it," he said and grinned in spite of himself.

The men stared. Pablo Pasca paused in his journeys to and from the kitchen tent to stare at the boy and the gold.

"Know all about what?" cut in Pethwick jumpily. "The gold or the mystery?"

"Both."

Suddenly Pablo cried—

"I told you, señores, wealth lies where danger is so great!"

"Have you found a gold mine?" asked M. Demetriovich.

"No, I sold one of my books."

"Whom to—when—where—my Lord; who was the sucker?" Pethwick's questions almost exploded out of him.

"I had no idea my book had such a reputation," beamed the author.

"Youngster, if you'll cut the literary twaddle——" quavered Pethwick on edge.

"Well, I had a hunch there must be some very simple explanation of all this skull and cross-bone stuff you fellows were trying to pull. You know that doesn't go on in real life. It's only fiction, that resort of the mentally muddled——"

"Standifer! Spill it—if you know anything!"

"Go on, tell it your own way," encouraged Demetriovich. "You were saying 'mentally muddled.'"

"Sure—yes, well, nothing to it, you know. This life is very simple, once you get the key."

"Lord, doesn't that sound like 'Reindeer in Iceland!'" groaned the engineer.

"What was the light we saw just then, Mr. Standifer?" inquired the savant, who saw that the secretary would never get anywhere unaided.

"A new sort of portable furnace, sir, that extracts and reduces ores on the spot."

"Who runs it?"

"Indians."

"Have you seen any of them?"

"Saw one not three hours ago. Sold him a copy of 'Reindeer in Iceland.'"

Pethwick interrupted the catechism.

"Gave you that much gold for a copy of 'Reindeer in Iceland! —— for the whole edition of 'Reindeer in Iceland!'"

"Did you enquire about Cesare?" proceeded M. Demetriovich.

"Yes, he's working for them."

"Did you think to ask about the chlorophyll?"

"That's used in a secret process of extracting gold."

"You say the men engaged in such a method of mining are Indians?"

"The man I saw was an Indian."

"Did you talk to him in English, Spanish, Quicha? What language?"

The secretary hesitated.

"Well—in English, but I had to explain the language to him. I think he knew it once but had forgotten it."

"A lot of South Americans are educated in the States," observed Pethwick, who by now was listening intently.

"Tell us what happened, Mr. Standifer," requested the Rumanian.

"WELL, today I was about twelve miles down the valley. I had sat down to eat my lunch when I saw an Indian behind a rock staring at me as if his eyes would pop out of his head. I don't mind admitting it gave me a turn, after the way things have been happening around here. On second glance I thought it was Cesare. I was about to yell and ask when the fellow himself yelled at me—

"Hey, Cesare, is that you?"

"Well, it nearly bowled me over. But I got a grip on my nerves and shouted back, 'No, I'm not Cesare!' And I was about to ask who the fellow was when he took it right out of my mouth and shouted to me, 'Who are you?'"

"I told him my name and address, that I was an author and secretary of the De Long Geographical Expedition; then I asked him to come out and let's have a talk.

"The fellow came out all right, walking up to me, looking hard at me. He was an ordinary Indian with a big head and had on clothes about like Cesare's. In fact, you know it is hard to tell Indians apart. As he came up he asked me the very question I had in mind—

"Do you know Cesare?"

"I said, 'Yes; where is he?'"

"He stood looking at me and shook his head.

"I said, 'You don't know,' and he touched his mouth and laughed. Then I guessed that he didn't understand English very well, so I began explaining the language to him.

"He would point at something and say, 'Is that a bird? Is that a stone? Is that a river?' In each case he got it right, but there was always a hesitation, of about a second, perhaps, as if he were thinking like this: 'is that a—river?'"

Both the older men were staring intently at the boy as if they were trying to read something behind his words. Pethwick nodded impatiently.

"I am sure," continued Standifer, "the fellow once knew English and it was coming back to him."

"Undoubtedly," from Pethwick.

"Then he saw the corner of my book in my haversack, for I—I sometimes carry my book around to read when I'm lonely, and he said, 'What is that—'Reindeer in Iceland?'"

"That joggled me so, I said, 'Yes, how the deuce did you know that?'"

"Well, at that he almost laughed himself to death and finally he said just about what was in my mind; 'That has a wider reputation than you imagine,' and he added, 'What is it for?'"

"What is what for?" says I.

"'Reindeer in Iceland,' says he.

"To read,' says I. 'It contains facts,' says I. 'It's not like the rotten fiction you pick up.' And with that my whole spiel that I used to put up to the farmers in New York State when I sold my books from door to door came back to me. I thought what a lark it would be to try to sell a copy to an Indian in the Rio Infernillo. 'If I do that,' I thought to myself, 'I'll be the star book-agent of both the Americas.' So I began:

"'It's not like the rotten fiction you buy,' says I. 'This volume gives you the truth about reindeer in Iceland; it tells you their food, their strength, their endurance, their value in all the different moneys

of the world. It states where are the greatest herds. What reindeer hides are used for. How their meat, milk and cheese taste. How to prepare puddings from their blood. How the bulls fight. Their calls; their love-calls, danger-calls, hunger-calls. How their age may be calculated by the tines on their horns and the rings on their teeth and the set of their tails. In fact, sir,' said I, 'with this little volume in your pocket, it will be impossible for any man, no matter how dishonest he is, to palm off on you an old, decrepit reindeer under the specious representation that he or she is young, agile and tender.

"The price of this invaluable compendium puts it within easy reach of one and all. It will prove of enormous practical and educational value to each and any. It makes little difference whether you mean to rear these graceful, docile animals or not; you need this volume, for as a means of intellectual culture it is unsurpassed. It contains facts, nothing but facts. You need it. Do you want it? Are you progressive? Its price is the only small thing about it—only fifty-four cents. Let me put you down.'

"With that, so strong is the force of habit, I whipped out an old envelope to take his order on.

"What is fifty-four cents?' he asked, 'Have I got fifty-four cents?'

"Just what I was wondering,' says I. 'Turn your pockets wrongside out and I'll see.'

"He turned 'em and spilled a lot of metals on the ground. I saw these pieces of gold and told him they would do. I told him I would give him all five of my volumes, for that is the number I brought on this trip, and I'm sorry now I didn't bring more.

"He just pushed the gold over to me without blinking an eye and we traded. I told him where we were camped and he said tomorrow he would call and get the other four volumes. And, gentlemen, that is all I know."

AT the end of this tale, Standifer leaned back, smiling with pleasure at his sale. The two men sat studying him. At last Pethwick asked—

"You say he knew the title of your book?"

"Yes."

"Was the title showing?"

"No, just a little corner stuck out of the knapsack."

Pethwick considered a moment.

"You at first thought it was Cesare?"

"Yes."

"Did he have a scar on the side of his face?"

"No, I would have noticed that sure. Still his face was painted very thickly. I couldn't see any scar."

"You are sure it wasn't Cesare?"

"Absolutely sure."

Here M. Demetrioivich took up what might be called the cross-examination.

"You say he didn't understand English at first—could he read the book you sold him?"

"No, that was the odd part. I had to tell him what the letters were and how they made words; how words made sentences. But he caught on the moment I showed him anything and never forgot at all. I tried him."

M. Demetrioivich paused:

"You are sure it was an Indian?"

"Yes."

"But he didn't know the value of gold?"

"Well, I don't know about that," began Standifer.

"Did you say he gave you all that money for five dinky little books!" stormed Pethwick.

"Yes, but that doesn't say he doesn't understand—"

"A gold-miner," interrupted M. Demetrioivich, "who is so highly scientific as to employ chlorophyll in a secret process of extracting gold and yet who—doesn't know the value of gold!"

The secretary caressed his glittering pile happily, yawned and slipped it back into his pocket.

"Anyway I wish I had a cartload of those books down here."

Pethwick sat on his stool clutching his knee to his breast, glaring at the author. Finally he gave a nervous laugh—

"I'm glad you've cleared up the mystery, Standifer."

"So am I," returned the secretary genially. "I was getting worried about it myself."

"I shouldn't think it would worry you, Standifer." Pethwick gave another shuddery laugh.

"I'm not bad to worry," agreed the secretary heartily.

The engineer sat moistening his dry lips with his tongue while little shivers played through him.

"By the way," he asked after a moment, "did you think to enquire about those skeletons? Is that—cleared up, too?"

"Yes, I did. He said he put them up there to keep the animals away. He said you never knew what sort of animals were about and he didn't want any in till he was ready. He said he put one of every species he could find because each animal was afraid of its own dead."

M. Demetrioivich sat gazing at the boy. A grayness seemed to be gathering over the old man.

"That's a fact," he nodded. "I'd never thought of it before—each animal is afraid of its own dead. No skeleton shocks a human being except the skeleton of a man. I suppose it's true of the rest."

"Anyway, it's all cleared up now, Standifer," repeated the engineer with his chattering laugh. "It is as you say, Standifer; there are no mysteries outside of fiction."

He began laughing, shaking violently. His exclamations grew louder and wilder. M. Demetrioivich jumped out of his seat, hurried over to his medicine-chest, fixed up a glass of something and with a trembling hand presented it to the engineer. Pethwick drank some and then the old man took a deep swallow himself.

"What's the matter?" asked the secretary, lifting a happy head.

"It's the reaction," shivered the engineer less violently. "You cleared up the mystery—so suddenly—Go on to sleep."

The boy dropped back to his pillow and was off instantly after his long walk.

The two older men sat staring at each other across the little table, their nerves calming somewhat under the influence of the sedative.

"Is it a lie," whispered Pethwick after long thought, "to cover the discovery of gold?"

M. Demetrioivich shook his head.

"That boy hasn't enough imagination to concoct a fragment of his fantastic tale. The thing happened."

"Then in God's name, what is Cesare going to do to us tomorrow?"

"Cesare would never have given away all that gold," decided the old savant slowly.

"Unless—he means to recoup it all tomorrow."

M. Demetrioivich shook his head.

"Cesare might have put on the paint—he could never have thought up such an elaborate mental disguise. That is far beyond him."

The two men brooded. At last the savant hazarded:

"It may be possible that the Bolsheviki have quit using gold. I believe there is a plan to use time-checks down in their socialistic program."

The engineer jumped another speculation, "The old Incans used gold as a common metal—the old Incans—sun-worshippers, who sacrifice living men to their deity—"

The two scientists sat in silence. From the ice-fields high above the chasm of the Rio Infernillo came a great sighing wind. It breathed in on them out of the blackness; its cold breath chilled their necks, their hands, their wrists; it breathed on their ankles and spread up under their trousers, chilling their knees and loins.

The men shivered.

CHAPTER IV

PETHWICK awoke out of some sort of nightmare about Incan sun-worshippers. He could hear the groans of victims about to be sacrificed and even after he had shuddered awake his sense of impending calamity persisted. He lifted himself on an elbow and stared about the tent. The sun shining straight into his face, no doubt, had caused his fantasy about the sun-worshippers.

He got to a sitting posture, yawning and blinking his eyes. Outside the day was perfectly still. A bird chirped querulously. In the corral he could hear the llamas snuffling. Then he heard repeated the groan that had disturbed him in his sleep. It came from the secretary's cot.

The engineer glanced across, then came fully awake. Instead of the young author, Pethwick saw an old, white-haired man lying in the cot with the back of his head showing past the blankets. The engineer stared at this thing blankly. A suspicion that Demetrioivich had changed cots passed through his mind, but a glance showed him the old savant still asleep on his proper bed.

The engineer got up, stepped across and leaned over this uncanny changeling. It took him a full half-minute to recognize, in the drawn face and white hair of the sleeper, the boy Standifer.

A shock went over the engineer. He put his hand on the author's shoulder.

"Standifer!" he shouted. "Standifer!"

As Standifer did not move, Pethwick called to the professor with an edge of horror in his voice.

The old savant sprang up nervously.

"What is it?"

"Here, look at this boy. See what has happened!"

The scientist stared from his cot, rubbed his eyes and peered.

"Is—is that Standifer?"

"Yes."

"What's happened to him?"

"I haven't the slightest idea, professor."

The scientist jabbed his feet into his slippers and came across the tent. He shook the sleeper gently at first, but gradually increased his energy till the cot squeaked and the strange white head bobbed on the pneumatic pillow.

"Standifer! Standifer!"

But the youth lay inert.

He stripped the covers and the underclothes of the young man.

Standifer lay before them naked in the cold morning air; his undeveloped physique looked bluish; then, on the groin of his right leg, Pethwick noticed an inflamed splotch that looked like a severe burn.

M. Demetrioivich turned to his medicine-chest and handed Pethwick an ammonia bottle to hold under the boy's nose while he loaded a hypodermic with strychnin solution. A moment later he discharged it into the patient's arm.

A shudder ran through Standifer at the powerful stimulant. His breathing became better and after a bit he opened his eyes. He looked drowsily at the two bending over him and after a minute whispered—

"What's matter?"

"How do you feel?"

"Sleepy. Is it time to get up?"

"Do you ache—hurt?"

The secretary closed his eyes, evidently to take stock of his feelings.

"My head aches. My—my leg burns."

He reached down and touched the inflamed spot.

As the strychnin took firmer hold the boy became alert enough to show surprise at his own state. He eased his sore leg to the floor and sat up on the edge of the cot. Both his companions began a series of questions.

Standifer had no idea what was the matter with him. He had not bruised either his head or his leg. Nothing had happened to him through the night, that he recalled, nor on the preceding day. After a bit, he remembered the sale of his books and drew from under his pillow the gold which he had received.

A thought crossed Pethwick's mind that Pablo Pasca had crept in during the night and had assaulted the sleeper. Demetrioivich took the bag and inspected it, smelled of it gingerly. Pethwick watched him with some curiosity.

"How did you bring this home yesterday afternoon, James?" queried the old man.

The secretary thought.

"In my pocket."

"In your right trousers pocket?"

Standifer made a movement to place his right and left sides and said:

"Yes."

"Put on your trousers."

The youth did so, working his sore leg carefully inside.

"Put that gold in your pocket. Does it fall directly over the burn?"

Standifer cringed and got the metal out as quickly as possible.

"I should say so."

M. Demetrioivich nodded.

"And you slept with the gold under your pillow last night for safe-keeping?"

"Yes."

"Then that did it." diagnosed the scientist.

"But how can gold—"

"The stuff must be poisoned somehow. I'll see if I can find how."

The savant moved to the table containing his chemicals and test-tubes.

TO Pethwick, the idea of poisoned gold sounded more like the extravagance of the Middle Ages than a reality occurring in the twentieth century. The engineer stood beside the table and watched the professor pursue his reactions for vegetable and mineral poisons. Standifer limped to the engineer's side. In the silver bowl of an alcohol lamp, the boy caught a reflection of himself. He leaned down and looked at the tiny image curiously. At length he asked:

"Pethwick, is there anything the matter with my hair?"

Then Pethwick realized that the boy did not know his hair was white. And he found, to his surprise, that he hated to tell Standifer. He continued watching the experiment as if he did not hear.

Standifer took up the lamp and by holding its bowl close he got a fair view of his head. He gave a faint gasp and looked for a mirror. At that instant Demetrioivich took the only mirror on the table to condense a vapor floating out of a tube. The old man began talking quickly to the engineer:

"Pethwick, this is the cleverest destructive stroke that the Bolsheviks have ever invented."

"What is it?"

"I still don't know, but they have poisoned this gold. They could probably do the same thing to silver. It makes the circulation of money deadly. It will perhaps cause the precious metals to be discarded as media of circulation."

The engineer looked incredulous.

"It's a fact. Do you recall how the report of ground glass in candies cut down the consumption of confectionery? If a large body of men should persistently poison every metal coin that passes through its hands—who would handle coins? Why, gentlemen," he continued as the enormity of the affair grew on him, "this will upset our whole commercial system. It will demonetize gold. No wonder that scoundrel offered our secretary so much gold for a book or two. He wanted to test his wares."

The old man's hand trembled as he poured a blue liquid from one test-tube to another.

"I am constrained to believe that in this Valley of the Infernal River we are confronted with the greatest malignant genius mankind has ever produced."

"Why should he want to demonetize gold?" interrupted Pethwick.

"It will force mankind to adopt a new standard

of value and to use an artificial medium of exchange—'labor-hour checks,' perhaps, whose very installation will do more to socialize the world than any other single innovation."

The two friends stood watching him anxiously. "You can't find what they do it with?"

"Not a trace so far. It seems to defy analysis."

"Notice," observed Pethwick, "your electro-scope is discharged."

M. Demetrioivich glanced at the gold-leaf electro-scope and saw that its tissue leaves were wilted.

Suddenly Standifer interrupted:

"Pethwick, is my hair white? Did that stuff turn my hair white?" He seized the mirror. "Look! Look!" he cried out of nervous shock and a profoundly wounded vanity.

The engineer turned with genuine sympathy for the author, but in turning he saw a man standing in the entrance watching the excitement with a slight smile.

The engineer paused abruptly, staring.

The stranger was a medium-sized Indian with an abnormally developed head and a thickly painted face. He wore the usual shirt and trousers of a *cholo* and for some reason gave Pethwick a strong impression of Cesare Ruano. Why he resembled Cesare, Pethwick could not state, even after he had inspected him closely. To judge from the Indian's faintly ironic expression, he must have been observing the scientists for several minutes.

M. Demetrioivich first regained his self-possession.

"Are you the man who gave my boy this gold?" he asked sharply, indicating the metal with which he was experimenting.

The painted man looked at the heap.

"I gave a boy some gold for some books," he admitted.

"Well, that's the gold all right," snapped Pethwick.

"Did you know the gold you gave him was poisoned?" proceeded the savant severely.

"Poisoned? How was it poisoned?"

"That is for you to tell us."

"I don't know in the least. What effect did it have?"

The man's tones were completely casual, without fear, regret, or chagrin. "You see for yourself what it did."

The stranger looked at Standifer in astonishment and presently ejaculated:

"Is that the same boy?"

"You see you nearly killed him," stated the scientist grimly.

"It was quite accidental; I don't understand it myself. Let me look at his trouble."

He walked over with more curiosity than regret in his manner.

Pethwick watched the fellow with a sharp and extraordinary dislike. It was so sharp that it drove out of his mind the amazing fact of finding this sort of person in such a desolate valley.

Standifer exhibited the burn. The stranger looked at it, touched a spot here and there and finally said, more with the air of an instructor lecturing his inferiors than with that of an Indian talking to white men:

"This is the effect of a metal which I carried with the gold. A metal—I don't know what you call it in your language—possibly you may never have heard of it. Here is some."

He reached in his pocket and drew out a piece of silvery metal as large as a double eagle and dropped it on the table before M. Demetrioivich.

The old savant glanced at the metal, then looked more carefully.

"It's radium," he said in a puzzled voice. "It's the largest piece of radium I ever saw—it's the only piece of pure metallic radium I ever saw. It—it's worth quite a fortune—and owned by an Indian!"

Here M. Demetrioivich breached his invariably good manners by staring blankly at his guest.

"So you are acquainted with it?" observed the stranger with interest.

"Not in its metallic form. I have extracted its bromides myself. And I've seen radium burns before. I might have known it was a radium burn, but I never dreamed of that metal."

"But that was gold that burned me," complained Standifer.

"That's true," agreed M. Demetrioivich, "but, you see, the emanations of radium have the power of settling on any object and producing all the effects of radium itself. The gentleman carried those lumps of gold in his pockets along with about two million dollars' worth of radium." The old savant laughed briefly at the eeriness of the situation. "The gold became charged with radium, burned your leg and whitened your hair. It also affected my electrostat."

THE three men turned to the stranger, who apparently carried fortunes of various metals jingling loose in his pocket.

"Sir," began the savant, "we must apologize to you for our unjust suspicions."

"Do you mean your suspicions were incorrect?" queried the red man.

"I mean," said the old savant with dignity, for this was no way to take an apology, "that we were morally culpable in attributing to you criminal motives without waiting for conclusive evidence."

The stranger smiled at this long sentence.

"I can understand your idea without your speaking each word of it. But the idea itself is very strange." He stroked his chin and some paint rubbed off on his fingers, showing a lighter yellowish skin beneath. Then he laughed. "If you should apologize for every incorrect idea you maintain, gentlemen, I should think your lives would be one long apology."

The superciliousness, the careless disdain in this observation, accented Pethwick's antipathy to the man.

At that moment the fellow asked—

"Do all your species live in cloth shelters such as these?"

Standifer, who seemed more kindly disposed toward the stranger than the others, explained that tents were temporary shelters and that houses were permanent.

The newcomer continued his smiling scrutiny of everything and at last asked:

"Can't you gentlemen even communicate with each other without using words and sentences?"

He paused then, as if to simplify what he had said, and went on—

"Suppose you, Mr. Pethwick, desire to communicate with Mr.——" he made a gesture toward the scientist and added—"Mr. Demetrioivich, would you be forced to articulate every word in the sentence?"

"How did you come to know my name?" asked the engineer, surprised. "Have we met before?"

The stranger laughed heartily. "I am sure we have not. I see you desire my name. Well, I have a number. In my country the citizens are numbered. I am sure when your own countries become densely populated, you, too, will adopt a numerical nomenclature."

"What is your number?" asked Standifer, quite astonished at this, as indeed were his companions.

"1753-12,657,109-654-3."

The secretary laughed.

"It sounds like a cross between a combination lock and a football game. Where do you come from, Mr.—Mr. Three?"

The painted man nodded down the valley casually.

"The name of my country is One, or First," he smiled. "Of course that is a very ancient and unscientific name, but notation must begin somewhere, and it usually begins at home. Now I dare say each one of you lives in a country called One—no, I see I am wrong." Then he repeated in a lower tone, "America—Rumania—Peru—very pretty names but unscientific."

By this time Mr. Three's remarkable feat of calling the men's names and then calling the countries of their birth made the explorers realize that they had encountered an amazing man indeed.

"Do you read our thoughts before we speak?" cried Standifer.

Mr. Three nodded easily.

"Certainly; without that all study of the lower animals would be a mere cataloguing of actions and habits."

Pethwick wondered if the fellow meant a very delicate insult to begin talking about the study of "lower animals" so promptly when the conversation naturally turned on himself and his companions. He said nothing, but Mr. Three smiled.

But M. Demetrioivich was utterly charmed with the vistas of investigation the man's suggestion opened to him.

"Why, that would be wonderful, would it not!" he cried.

"Certainly, without mind-reading comparative psychology is impossible."

"We have professional mind-readers," cried M. Demetrioivich with enthusiasm. "I wonder why the psychologists have never thought to have one try to read the minds—say of the higher simians!"

Mr. Three seemed to find all of this conversation funny, for he laughed again. But his words were quite serious.

"Besides, this 'mentage,' as we call mind-reading, enables one to converse with every other creature, just as I am talking to you. I take your language forms right out of your own minds and use them.

If the creature has no language at all, you still receive its impressions."

BY this time even Pethwick, who disliked the fellow almost to the point of hatred, realized that the stranger was wonderful indeed. The engineer decided Mr. Three came from some unknown country, which, he reluctantly admitted to himself, seemed to be more highly cultured than England or America. So, by accepting these facts, Pethwick, in a way, prepared himself not to be too surprised at anything.

"Do all your countrymen understand 'mentage' or mind-language?" enquired the engineer.

"It is our national mode of communication. I observe you move your hands when you talk—gestures, you call it. In One, we speak a word now and then to accent our thoughts—verbal gestures. Some of our population, who are nervous, sometimes speak several words, or even complete sentences. Often it is an affectation, unless, of course," he added politely as if to exempt his companions, "their minds are not strong enough to converse without words.

"On the other hand, a few well-placed words make speeches, and especially orations, very impressive. Still, some of our greatest orators never utter a sound. But I consider this too much repression, in fact rather an academic thing to do. What you would call a—a—a highbrow. Thank you, Mr. Standifer, for thinking me the term."

"It would be a great saving of time," mused Pethwick.

"Yes, indeed; in One, a person can present a whole thought, or a whole series of thoughts, in a single flash of the brain, if the thinker's brain is sufficiently strong. It is almost instantaneous."

Standifer smiled blissfully.

"Think of instantaneous sermons. Let's get to that place!"

Pethwick and the professor did not share in Standifer's badinage but sat amazed at this being whose name was a number. The engineer realized the futility of all the questions he could ask. Turn the idea about. Suppose Mr. Three should ask Pethwick to explain American civilization in a casual talk. It would be impossible. So it was impossible for Mr. Three to give Mr. Pethwick much idea of the land of One.

Mr. Demetrioivich took up the questioning:

"Have you been using radium for a long time, Mr. Three?"

"For centuries. We are in the midst of a Radium Age. It was developed out of the Uranium Age. And that out of the Aluminum Age. All this arose out of a prehistoric Steel Age, a very heavy clumsy metal, I have heard archaeologists say."

"You don't mean your mechanical appliances are made out of radium?"

"No, radium is our source of power. It has changed our mechanics from molecular mechanics to atomic mechanics. The first men of One could utilize only molecular energy, such as steam and gasolene. With the aid of radium, we soon developed the enormous force that lies concentrated in the atom. This gives my countrymen unlimited power. It can be derived from any sort of matter,

because all matter is composed of atoms and our force is generated through the destruction of atoms."

All this time Mr. Three's voice was growing weaker and weaker until finally he said—

"You will have to excuse me from any further conversation, gentlemen; my throat is not accustomed to much talking."

He tapped it with an apologetic smile. As he did so, he glanced about and his eyes lit on the chess-board and men which Pethwick and M. Demetrioivich had been using the previous evening.

"What is that?"

"A game."

"Who plays it? Ah, M. Demetrioivich and Mr. Pethwick. I would not object to a party if you feel disposed."

"Professor and I will try a consultation game against you," suggested Pethwick, moving a stool over to the table.

"I don't understand the game, but if you will just think how the pieces are moved," requested the mind-reader, "I dare say I will soon learn."

The engineer framed the demonstration in his mind and Mr. Three nodded.

"I see. It seems to be a sort of rudimentary stage of a game we call 'cube' in First. However, 'cube' is an entirely mental game, although young children are given material boards and pieces to assist them in focusing their attention.

"'Cube' has eight boards such as this, superimposed upon one another. Each board has thirty-two pieces on it, thus giving two-hundred and fifty-six pieces in all, each player controlling one hundred and twenty-eight. All the major pieces can move up or down, forward or backward, but the pawns can only advance, or go higher. As no real boards are used, the whole play must be kept in mind. The game becomes a contest of intricacy, that is, until one player grows confused, makes an incoherent move and is checkmated. It is a very pleasant amusement for persons who have nothing more serious to think about."

"I have seen mental chess-players in America," observed Standifer, "but they use only one board. I suppose more would complicate it. I don't play myself."

The chess-players made no answer to this remark, but set up the men. Mr. Three defeated the scientists' combined skill in a game of ten moves.

AS this extraordinary party was brought to a conclusion, Pablo Pasca entered the tent with breakfast on a tray. When the thief saw the guest, he almost dropped the food, but after a moment came in and placed the dishes on the table. As he did so, he looked meaningly at Pethwick, nodded faintly and retired.

The engineer excused himself and followed the Indian. He found Pablo in the kitchen tent, shaken out of his ordinary stoicism.

"Do you know who he is, *señor*?" he asked in a low voice.

"His name is Three," said Pethwick, involuntarily guarding his own tone.

"No, I mean, do you know he is the man who murdered Cesare Ruano?" asked the thief earnestly.

The engineer nodded.

"I'd thought of that. How do you know he did?"

"How! *Dios Mio*—everything the man has on is Cesare's. Cesare's clothes! Cesare's shoes! On his finger is Cesare's ring—the ring Cesare was saving to be garroted in!"

"I thought somehow he resembled Cesare," nodded Pethwick, "and I knew it was not his face."

"*Ciertamente*, not Cesare, but his murderer," aspirated Pablo excitedly. "I saw this fellow behind this very boulder! This same fellow!"

Pethwick nodded in the sunlight, unaware that Pablo expected him to do anything. Indeed, the engineer was glad he had come out of the tent. Mr. Three's intelligence was oppressive. So now he stood breathing deeply, as if from some struggle. The cliffs, the sunshine, the river, the savor of the kitchen, almost made him doubt the existence in his tent of such a personage as Mr. Three from the Land of One. Where in Heaven's name was that land? Did there flourish over behind the Andes somewhere an unknown race of extraordinary arts and sciences who called themselves the First?

And there recurred to him his fancy that if such a nation existed, it must be an offshoot of the old Incan race. Perhaps fugitives flying before the old *conquistadores* found a haven in some spot and there had built up the most advanced civilization upon the face of the earth. The thought was utterly fantastic, and yet it was the only explanation of Mr. Three sitting there in the tent.

"Well?" said Pablo interrogatively.

The engineer came out of his reverie.

"Is that all you wanted to tell me?"

"All? Isn't that enough?"

"Oh, yes."

"Aren't you going to do anything?" demanded Pablo. "He is an Indian. I thought when Indians killed any one the white men garroted them. *Qwk!* Like that!" He pinched his throat and made a disagreeable sound.

"What am I to do?" inquired Pethwick blankly.

"Blessed Virgin! Does not the white man's law work in the Valley de Rio Infernillo? I knock an old man on the head and barely save my neck. This *cholo* kills my good *camarada*, wears his clothes, steals the very ring Cesare meant to be garroted in, what happens to him? Why, he sits at the table with white men and plays! *Ehue!* A fine justice!"

The engineer hardly knew how to answer this. He stood looking at Pablo rather blankly. He felt sure an attempt to arrest Mr. Three would prove perilous indeed. On the other hand, Pablo's attitude demanded that Pethwick should act.

Isolated like this, Pethwick was the lone representative of the great Anglo-Saxon convention of justice. It is a strange convention that polices every clime and every tongue. Red, brown, black and yellow men refrain from violence because the white man says:

"Thou shalt not kill!"

Wherever a single unit of the white race is placed, that law inheres in him. Men of all colors come to him and say: "Murder has been done; now what will you do?"

And he must act.

He must deal out that strange Anglo-Saxon con-

vention called justice, or he must die in the attempt.

That is what the white race means; it is what civilization means. It is not any one white man who has this power of judging and punishing; it is any white man. They are the knight-errants of the earth. Each one must fight, sit in judgment and administer justice to the best of his ability and conscience, so help him God.

It is the most amazing hegemony on the face of the earth, when one comes to think of it—and the most universally accepted.

Now Pablo was asking Pethwick an account of his stewardship.

Certainly the engineer did not think of the problem in just those terms. He was not conscious of his racial instinct. He thought, in rather loose American fashion, that since Pablo had put it up to him like this he would have to do something.

The Zambo began again.

"Look at what I did. I only knocked an old man on the head—"

Pethwick interrupted with a gesture:

"Pablo, get those handcuffs you and Cesare used to wear and bring 'em to the tent."

"*Si, señor,*" hissed the half-breed gratefully.

Pethwick turned back toward the tent with thorough distaste for his commission. As he entered, Mr. Three glanced up with quizzical eyes and it suddenly flashed on the engineer with a sense of embarrassment that the man from One already knew what was in his thoughts.

THIS was soon proved. Mr. Three nodded his head smilingly.

"Yes," he said, "Pablo is quite right. Here is the ring."

He held up a hand and displayed an old silver ring engraved in the form of a snake.

M. Demetrioivich glanced up at this extraordinary monologue.

"Then you did kill Cesare Ruano?" exclaimed the engineer.

Mr. Three paused for a moment, then answered:

"Yes, I did. There is no use going through a long catechism. I may also add, I knew the emanations of radium would have some effect on the boy, Standifer, but I did not know what."

The old savant stared at the man from One.

"Be careful what you say, Mr. Three. Your confession will place you in jeopardy of the law."

"Then you maintain laws in this country," observed Mr. Three. "What will be the nature of the instruction you will give me?"

"No instruction," said Pethwick; "punishment."

"A very antiquated custom. I should think anyone could see that criminals need instruction."

At that moment Pablo appeared in the entrance with the manacles.

"This is hardly the time to enter into an abstract discussion of punishment, Mr. Three," observed Pethwick brusquely. He held the manacles a moment a little self-consciously, then said, "You may consider yourself under arrest."

To Pethwick's surprise, the man from One offered no resistance, but peaceably allowed himself to be chained to the chair in which he sat. He watched the procedure with faintly amused expres-

sion and even leaned over to observe how the anklets were adjusted to his legs.

A certain air of politeness about the Incan at last constrained Pethwick to say:

"You understand, Mr. Three, we are forced to do this—it is the law."

"And you rather dislike me anyway, do you not, Mr. Pethwick?" added Three genially.

The engineer flushed, but kept his eyes steadily on Mr. Three's.

"I dislike you, but I dislike to do this more."

After the shackling the captors stood undecidedly. So they had captured the murderer of Cesare Ruano.

"We'll have to carry him before a magistrate," pondered M. Demetrioivich. "It's very annoying."

"M. Demetrioivich," said Mr. Three, still smiling in his chains, "you have studied physiology?"

"Yes."

"And perhaps vivisection?"

"Certainly."

"Then why all this disturbance about killing a lower animal for scientific ends?"

The old Rumanian looked at Mr. Three steadfastly. "I cannot accept your point, Mr. Three. We are all human beings together, even if Cesare Ruano did not have the culture—"

The rather pointless proceedings were interrupted by a burst of snorting and braying from the corral. Pethwick hurried outside, for the pack animals were really of more importance than the prisoner. The engineer got out just in time to see Pablo go at full speed toward the enclosure. The Indian had a repeating rifle and no doubt feared the attack of a puma or jaguar.

On Pethwick's heels came both M. Demetrioivich and the white-haired secretary. The valley was strewn with boulders big and little and the men had difficulty in running over broken ground. From afar off Pethwick saw that the down-river side of the corral had been knocked down, and all the llamas and mules came storming out, flying down toward the camp as if the fiends pursued them.

Pablo fired his rifle in the air in an effort to turn them. As he did so, the Zambo reeled as if he had received a mighty but invisible blow. Mules and llamas plunged straight past their staggering master and for a moment Pethwick was afraid they would run him down.

Next moment the engineer heard the secretary and the professor shouting at the top of their voices. He looked around and saw the comb of his tent on fire.

Thought of his prisoner likely to burn up, sent Pethwick sprinting breathless toward the tent. As the flames rushed over the oiled canvas Pethwick jerked up the ground-pins of the rear wall and shoved under.

Mr. Three still sat in the chair with arms and legs bound to the posts. He slumped queerly. His hat dropped down on his shirt. Half suffocated, the engineer grabbed up chair, manacles, man and all and rushed into the open.

Once outside, he dropped his burden and began to slap at the fire on his own clothes. The other men began to put out the fire on Mr. Three's garments. At their strokes the garments collapsed.

Inside Cesare Ruano's clothes was an empty human skin cut off at the neck. M. Demetrioivich drew it out of the burning rags. It had a cicatrice across its breast from nipple to nipple. It had bullet wounds in legs and buttocks. It tallied exactly with the police description of the marks on the skin of Cesare Ruano.

With colorless faces the men stood studying the ghastly relic of the murderer in the brilliant sunshine.

The pack-animals were just disappearing down the river valley. A few remaining shreds of cloth burned where their tent once stood. About them the sinister landscape lay empty.

CHAPTER V

PROF. DEMETRIOVICH held up the gruesome relic.

"Gentlemen," he stated in his matter-of-fact voice, "somebody—something has been stalking us masked in this."

"But why masked?" Standifer's voice was tinged with horror.

"He was stalking us in a human skin, exactly as a hunter stalks a deer in a deer robe," returned M. Demetrioivich.

"Then wasn't he a human being?" gasped the secretary.

"It certainly was the devil," gasped Pablo Pasca with a putty face. "The prefect told us not to come here."

"He knows he is a human being," accented Pethwick irritably, "but he doubts if we are. Did you notice his manner? Did you observe the supercilious, egotistical, conceited air of everything he did or said? He put us down as Darwin's connecting link. We are animals to him. He puts on one of our skins to hunt us down. Otherwise, he was afraid we would go scampering off from him like rabbits."

"Then he is a fool if he thought white men are animals," declared Pablo angrily.

"Well, he's not exactly a fool either," admitted Pethwick grudgingly, "but every single thing he said was a knock at us. I never heard—" The engineer's angry voice trailed off into angry silence.

The party stood puzzling over the extraordinary tactics of the man from One. As they buffeted the problem in their brains, a rabbit dashed almost under their feet bound down the valley. They paid no attention to it.

"I'll give you my guess," offered Pethwick. "I still believe we have encountered one of the ancient Incans. In Prescott's account of them, you notice the highest arts of civilization mingled with the grossest barbarities. A custom of wearing an enemy's skin may have grown up among them, just as our North American Indians used to take scalps. No doubt this fellow was spying on our number. I expect him to return soon with a band and attempt our capture."

"What a curious fate for the DeLong Geographical Expedition," mused the white-haired young secretary.

"Still," objected M. Demetrioivich, "it might be a Bolshevik method of spreading terror."

"So, professor, you don't believe after all he put on Cesare's skin to stalk us?" queried Standifer.

"James, I don't know what to think," admitted the savant.

"The whole thing fits in better with my Incan theory," pressed the engineer. "The half-civilized Indians around here, like Pablo and Cesare, could very easily be afraid of some highly developed branch of the Incans, especially if the Incans were seeking victims to sacrifice to the sun. Under such circumstances it might be necessary to slip on the hide of a half-breed to get near the others."

"It would also explain why that man ambushed our party when we entered the valley," added the secretary.

"Thanks, Standifer, for helping me out," said Pethwick. "It would also show why the peons around here call this the Rio Infernillo and give it such a wide berth."

M. Demetrioovich pulled his chin.

"Your theory seems to hang together right now," he admitted. "If you are on the right track, we will have a marvel to report—if we ever get back."

"Then, too," went on Pethwick, encouraged, "since the prefect warned us against the valley, it suggests to me there has been something sinister here for years—long before Bolshevism became a power."

"These are queer theories," laughed Standifer, "one going to the extremely ancient and the other to the extremely modern."

During the latter part of this discussion, an atok, a sort of huge native rodent, slithered down the valley past the scientists, dodging from one boulder to another. Now a Peruvian fox whisked past.

The unusual animals passing within a few minutes proved sufficient to draw Pethwick's attention from the subject under discussion. The engineer looked up the stony stretch and a surprising sight filled his eyes.

The whole valley worked with glimpses of flying animals. Rats, hares, civets, what not, darted here and there from covert to covert. Along the edge of the river slunk a panther, making cat-like rushes between hiding-places. The shrill whistle of three frightened deer sounded down the valley.

It seemed as if a wave of fear were depopulating the whole Rio Infernillo. All the engineer could see was innumerable furtive dodgings. From the dull surface of the river arose a loon, screaming, and it boomed down stream with fear-struck speed. Only one animal fled in the open, a huge black bear with a white muzzle, the ucumari. He was king of the Andes, as the grizzly reigns in the Rockies. He lunged down the middle of the cañon, taking the whole Infernal Valley for his course. He was afraid of nothing in the Sierras—except what was behind him.

The scientists hurried out from in front of the brute and let him lunge by unchallenged. They stared up the burnt valley, marveling at this exodus of animals.

Presently, far away against the blackish stones, Pethwick descried what seemed to be yellow fleas hopping among the boulders.

"That must be what made our pack-animals break loose!" cried the engineer.

"Wonder what they are?" from the author.

"I say it's the devil making a drive," answered Pablo, crossing himself with fervor.

The animals kept darting past. The distant fleas grew into bugs, then into some sort of animals and at last were defined against the charnel gulch as human beings.

"Jumping Jehosophat!" cried Standifer. "They are those Incans you were talking about, Pethwick. Scores of 'em! They've come for us!"

The secretary stepped around behind a large boulder that hid everything except his head.

Others of the expedition followed suit, hardly knowing what to believe.

The approaching party were yellow men. Each one carried something in his hand that flashed like metal. They leaped from boulder to boulder in their chase with amazing activity. The very vicuñas themselves that skittered along the craggy sides of the valley did not exhibit a greater agility.

Pablo Pasca, notwithstanding his belief that all this was a great drive of the devil, nevertheless became excited at the passing game. As one speckled deer came shimmering down through the diamond-like sunshine, Pablo determined to beat Satan out of one carcass, so he leveled his rifle for a shot. The author saw it and put his fingers to his ears to dull the report.

At that moment a voice quite close to the party broke the silence with:

"Don't shoot. There must be no holes in the skins."

The word "skins" brought the party around with a start. They were nervous on the topic. The secretary, however, still stood with his fingers in his ears, watching deer.

On top of a large boulder, still wearing his look of condescension and amusement, sat the recent prisoner of the expedition, Mr. Three. Since he had flung off Cesare's clothes and skin, the weird creature was without apparel and sat naked in the cold vivid sunshine, his body of a clear yellowish complexion and his large head still painted a coppery red.

IT was the most grotesque combination Pethwick could have imagined, but Mr. Three maintained a perfect composure, dignity—and condescension. His painted face had the faintly amused expression of a man watching the antics of, say, some pet goats.

The fellow's body suggested to Pethwick a ripe pear or yellow peach. His hands and feet were disagreeably small—sure sign of ancient and aristocratic blood. He must have slipped right through the manacles the moment his captors turned their backs. In one hand he held a small metallic rod.

Pethwick stared at the remarkable transformation and finally blurted out:

"Did you break loose from the handcuffs and set fire to our tent?"

"The fire was quite accidental," assured the man from One. "I did it with this focusing-rod when I got rid of your quaint old manacles."

"Focusing-rod," caught up Standifer, for, notwithstanding all he had suffered at the hands of Mr. Three, the pride of a flattered author and the remarkable sale of his books left him with a kindly feeling in his heart for the fellow.

"Yes, focusing-rod."

"What does it focus?"

"Wireless power."

"We have transmission of wireless power in America," observed the Professor, "but that is certainly the most compact terminal I ever saw."

Mr. Three glanced at the rod in his hand.

"Oh, yes, this is one of the primitive instruments. I fancy this came into use among thinking creatures along with fire, the keystone of the arch and the old-fashioned seventy-two-mile gun. They were important additions to human knowledge, but their discoverers and the dates of their discovery are lost in prehistoric eras."

For a moment Mr. Three sat pensively in the sunshine, his mind dwelling on that misty time in the land of One when some unrecorded genius found out how to focus wireless power with a little metal rod. No doubt to this mysterious man the principle of the rod appeared so simple that any rational creature would know it.

Presently he came out of his reverie and waved his focusing bar down the valley.

"You men," he directed, "will follow the rest of the quarry down the river—everything must go!"

For a moment the scientists stared at him, not understanding.

"What is it?" inquired Standifer.

"Follow the quarry down the valley and be quick about it," snapped the yellow man brusquely.

An indignant flush swept over Pethwick.

"You must be crazy, Three. We'll do as we please."

"Why should we go?" inquired Demetrioivich with his academic suavity.

Mr. Three tapped impatiently with his rod on the boulder.

"So our commander can select specimens to carry to One," he explained briefly.

"Oh, I see," cried Pethwick, somewhat mollified. "He wants us to help him select the animals, as we are naturalists."

For once in their intercourse, Mr. Three showed genuine surprise. He sprang to his feet and stared at them.

"You help him select! You!" The gnome broke into the most insulting of laughter. "You bunch of idiots, he is going to select one of you as a specimen to carry to One!" Here he threw off his brief tolerance of opposition and shouted, "Forward, march! I don't want to have to use force!"

For a moment the men stood almost paralyzed with amazement. Mr. Three evidently read the mental state, for he put a hand over his mouth to conceal his grin and to maintain his air of grim authority.

Pethwick first organized active resistance. Pablo Pasca still stood with his rifle at ready. Pethwick whispered sharply to the Indian:

"Get him!"

Almost by reflex action, the Zambo swung his rifle on Mr. Three and fired.

At the same moment Pablo staggered backward as if he had received a powerful blow out of the air. His rifle clattered to the stones. At the same instant Pethwick felt a sensation like a strong electric shock. Standifer grunted and clapped a hand to his already wounded leg.

At this act of war the party of scientists threw themselves flat behind boulders. Pethwick adjusted his rifle with hands shaking from his shock and then peered around his shelter for a glimpse of Mr. Three. He saw the yellow man still standing on the boulder. The engineer eased his rifle around unsteadily. The head of the gun wavered about the big painted head. With a determined effort the engineer settled it on his target. He was just squeezing the trigger when tingling knots rushed through his arms, legs and body, stiffening them, flashing fire in his brain, beating him with a thousand prickly hammers. It was an electric shock. He flattened under it, squirming and twisting.

The moment his thought of opposition vanished in pain the shock ceased.

All three white men and the Indian lay motionless. The only sound Pethwick could hear was an occasional groan from Standifer and the faint patter of passing animals.

A ray of sardonic amusement fluttered through the engineer's dizzy brain—the DeLong Geographical Expedition captured as a curious species of lower animals.

Sudden hearty laughter from the nearby boulder told the Engineer that Mr. Three had caught the jest and was enjoying it. Pethwick flushed angrily.

AFTER this convincing contest with the focusing-rod the expedition abandoned resistance and surrendered themselves as prisoners of war, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say prisoners of science.

Although Pablo had shot at Mr. Three, the strange being regarded it no more than if a cat had scratched at him. Instead of being angry, he really tried to comfort the men. He told them only one of their number would be taken as a specimen to the land of One; the person chosen would be retained alive and, if he proved tractable, he would undoubtedly be allowed to run at large within certain limits and might be taught simple tricks where-with to amuse the visitors at the zoo; such as playing a simple game of chess on one board.

This may or may not have been a sarcastic fling at the feeble game of chess which Pethwick had just played; at any rate the thought of playing endless games of chess through the bars of a zoological cage filled the engineer with nausea. No doubt on one side of him would be a monkey begging for peanuts and on the other a surly orang. For Pethwick did not doubt the specimen selected would be classed among the simians.

As they walked along the engineer thought up a new line of defense. He began to threaten Mr. Three with the American Army and Navy. He told the yellow man this expedition was American and their capture would be no small affair. They were a famous scientific body. They would be missed. Their abduction would mean a war between the land of One and the whole League of Nations.

At this Mr. Three interrupted incredulously: "Do you creatures really compose a scientific body?"

Pethwick was so cut by the remark that he stopped talking and walked along in silence.

The professor plied his captor with many questions. He discovered that the men from One had a portable furnace and were extracting radium from the outcrop of pitchblende in the valley. The mysterious burned places which Pethwick had noted in his journal were spots where the furnace had been operated. The strange lights which the expedition had seen on several occasions were the men moving the furnace from one place to another. Mr. Three explained that they always moved the furnace at night; it was difficult to do this during the day because the sun's rays created an etheric storm.

The yellow man's conversation entertained the white men notwithstanding their uncertain fate. Pablo Pasca, however, trembled on the verge of collapse. He knew he was in the hands of the imps of Satan. Now and then Pethwick heard him groan.

"Oh, Mother of Heaven! Oh, if I could get back to the garrote! Poor Cesare Ruano, in torment without his skin—or the ring he meant to be garroted in!"

Animals still rushed past the party and behind them came the yellow beaters, scaring up the game.

It was useless for anything to hide from these terrible men with their focusing-rods. Evidently they could sense an animal's fright and locate it as an ordinary man can locate a sound. As soon as they found something in a covert, a slight electric shock sent it headlong after the other animals.

For the first time in his life Pethwick felt some kinship for the lower animals. He, too, was in the *battue*, one with the foxes and rabbits that fluttered past him. For ages man had slaughtered the lower animals exactly as the men from One were doing now.

And just as man had annihilated the bison, the apteryx, the dodo, so no doubt this new and more powerful race from One would exterminate man and his cities, his works of art and his sciences. The vision of a charnel world painted itself on his depressed imagination—a wiping out of existing races and a re-peopling by these yellow Incans. Compared to such such a conflict the late world war would be trivial.

AMID the day-dream of Armageddon, the engineer heard M. Demetrioich ejaculate to himself:

"So it is a German Bolshevik undertaking after all. There's a Zeppelin!"

Pethwick looked up suddenly. The prisoners had rounded a turn in the valley. Not more than three hundred yards distant rose an enormous structure in the shape of a Zeppelin. It required a second glance to observe this fact, as the huge creation stood on its end instead of lying horizontal as do the ordinary flying-ships.

Instead of being made of cloth, this Zeppelin had a skin of white metal, no doubt aluminum. Indeed, for the first time a dirigible had been constructed that had the staunchness and air-worthiness that

deserved the name ship. This was no mere bubble of varnished cloth.

It was enormous. It rose some seven hundred and fifty feet high, an amazing skyscraper of silver whose fulgor was enhanced by the dark and melancholy background of the Infernal Valley.

The immense vessel rested on its stern which tapered down to perhaps four feet in diameter. It was shored up with long metal rods anchored in the earth. The rods, some hundred feet long, were inserted in the airship just where its great barrel began to taper to its stern.

Five hundred feet up the side of the cylinder Pethwick noticed the controlling planes, which looked exceedingly small for the vast bulk they were designed to pilot. When the engineer pointed these out to the professor, M. Demetrioich seemed surprised.

"Do you realize, Pethwick, what their small size indicates? The speed of this ship through the air must be prodigious if these tiny controls grip the air with sufficient leverage to direct this monster."

Then the old scientist went on to commend the novel idea of landing the dirigible on her stern. It did away with wide maneuvering to gain altitude. This aluminum dirigible could drop into a hole slightly larger than her own diameter and launch herself out of it straight at the sky. It was an admirable stroke.

Workmen dotted the vessel's side, scrubbing the bright skin as assiduously as a crew painting a man-of-war. Pethwick could distinguish this scrubbing force up for two or three hundred feet. Beyond that he caught only glimmers of moving dots amid the reflections of the sun.

The organization of the crew seemed cast along military lines. Small squads of men or soldiers marched in exact ranks and files over the valley to gather up the animals stunned by the focusing-rods.

At first Pethwick had not observed these animals, but a more careful look showed him a number of specimens that had been struck down as they passed the ship. The big-headed yellow men were collecting these in cages, evidently for exhibition purposes when they returned to the extraordinary land from which they came. The slaughter had not been wasteful. Only one member of each species had been taken.

The yellow men worked at top speed and were plainly under the continual barked orders of soldiery, but oddly enough not a sound was heard. The whole control was mental. The silence gave Pethwick the strange impression that he was looking at a gigantic cinema.

A MOVEMENT behind the white men caused them to look around. A file of yellow soldiers was moving toward the dirigible, coming from the direction of their burned camp up the valley. These men bore the mounted skeletons which the DeLong Geographical Expedition had observed when they first entered the strange valley of the Rio Infiernillo.

The removal of these objects suggested to Pethwick that the men from One and their super-dirigible would soon sail from the valley. A great curiosity to see the departure seized the engineer.

He looked for the big driving propellers which he thought must draw the ship, but he could see none.

At that moment four soldiers with a large metal cage approached the DeLong Geographical party. At the same time on one of the upper rounds of the airship, some seventy-five feet above the base, appeared a yellow man with a peculiar scintillating star fixed to his big yellow head. The personage looked directly toward the explorers but said nothing.

When he looked Mr. Three drew himself up and saluted in military fashion.

Then, evidently for the benefit of his captors, Mr. Three answered aloud the mental questions which his superior must have put to him. Here are the words of the one-sided conversation:

"Yes, sir."

"No, sir."

"Ordinary ruby-blooded mammals, sir, with intelligence somewhat higher than monkeys, sir.

"They communicate their simple thoughts exactly as monkeys do, sir—by chattering.

"They are absolutely insensible to all mental vibrations, sir, more completely so than the four-legged animals.

"I would suggest you take all five. They will prove very amusing, sir, in the national zoo. Their attempts to deceive each other and to deceive even me, sir, are as good as a farce. I believe you will find them much more humorous than chimpanzees or the ordinary monkeys, sir.

"Sorry you can't. In that case I suggest we take the brown one. His color is the nearest human. Then, too, he has the best physique. None of them have any minds to speak of.

"Very well, sir."

Here Mr. Three saluted stiffly and directed the four workmen with the cage toward Pablo Pasca.

As the laborers lowered their cage and started for the half-breed Pablo's eyes almost started from his head. He whirled to run, but seemed to realize the hopelessness of trying to escape from the amazing agility of the men from One. Next moment he whipped out a knife and dashed into the midst of his assailants, slashing and stabbing like one possessed.

But the soldiers of One had feline agility. They dodged, whipped under his blows like game-cocks. One leaped straight over the heads of his comrades and landed headlong on the Zambo. It was an unfortunate leap. Pablo's blade caught him in the shoulder and a dark liquid spurted out.

In the instant of withdrawing the blade, the yellow men seized the half-breed's arms and legs. They went down with the Zambo in a struggling pile. Pablo kicked, bit, twisted his knife with a wrist movement, trying to cut something. But the yellow men worked swiftly and methodically.

"Quick!" commanded Mr. Three. "We must start in four minutes!" Then in answer to some question the yellow soldiers thought to him, "I can't use my focusing-rod. It might destroy what little mind he has."

A moment later the yellow men got to their feet with the ex-thief hanging between them by his legs and arms. The poor fellow turned an agonized face to Pethwick.

"Señor! Señor!" he screamed. "Save me! Save poor Pablo! Oh, Holy Mary! Sacred Mother! Señor, Señor Pethwick!"

His voice rose to a screech. Blood trickled from his nostrils. His face was white with fear.

Pethwick stared with wide eyes at the struggle. The injustice of this capture for scientific purposes thundered at the American's heart. Pethwick was a white man, of that race which deals justice among weaker men and carries out its judgments with its life.

At Pablo's shriek of despair something seemed to snap in Pethwick's head. He hesitated a second, then lunged into the victorious yellow men.

He never reached them. A wave of flame seemed to lap around him. Then came blackness.

WHEN Pethwick revived, there were no more yellow men in sight. The great shining dirigible stood entirely closed and apparently lifeless. The sun was setting and its rays filled the great charnel valley with a bloody light. The dirigible looked like an enormous red water-stand. In a few minutes the lower half of the great ship was purple in shadow, while the upper half turned a deeper red. The silence was absolute. The three white men stood staring at the strange scene.

Quite suddenly from where the stern of the Zepelin nested on the ground broke out a light of insufferable brilliancy. A luminous gas seemed to boil out in whirls of furious brightness. It spread everywhere, and in its radiance the great ship stood out in brilliant silver from stem to stern.

In that fulgor Pethwick saw the restraining rods cast off, and the dirigible from the land of One mounted straight into the green heart of the evening sky.

The moment it struck full sunlight at a height of five hundred yards it seemed caught in some tremendously strong wind, for it moved eastward with a velocity that increased by prodigious bounds. Within half a minute its light was reduced from the terrific glare of a furnace to the glow of a headlight, and then to a radiance like that of a shooting star against the darkening eastern sky.

As the watchers followed it with their eyes a strange thing happened. That white light turned to violet, then indigo blue, green, yellow, orange and red, and so faded out.

In the Valle de Rio Infernillo lingered a phosphorescent mist that told of the first men's passing. It settled on the cliffs and crags and glowed with spectral luminosity. The men looked at each other; they too were covered with this shining stuff.

"Gentlemen," quavered M. Demetrioivich, "I believe we have on us the residual emanations of radium. It will likely kill us. Let us go down to the river and wash it off."

The three men set out, stumbling through the darkness, guided somewhat by the faint light given off by their own bodies.

They waded into the black waters of the Infernal River, and began scrubbing each other furiously, trying to rid themselves of this dangerous luminosity. High above them it still shivered from cliff

and crag. Presently this faded out and there reigned complete darkness and complete silence.

ON the following morning, when the DeLong Geographical Expedition was about to start back for civilization they saw on the scene of the conflict between Pablo and the yellow soldiers, where the half-breed had stabbed his captors, a number of dark green stains.

On analysis this green also proved to be chlorophyll.

A communication from Gilbert DeLong, President of the DeLong Geographical Society, to the Trustees of the Nobel Prize Foundation, Stockholm, Sweden:

Sirs: It is my privilege to bring to your attention the extraordinary journal of the DeLong Geographical Expedition into that unmapped region of Peru, in the department of Ayacucho, known as the Valle de Rio Infernillo.

Enclosed with this journal is M. Demetrioivich's able presentation of the theory that the dirigible observed in that valley was operated by the Bolshevik government of either Austria or Russia.

Also enclosed is the monograph of Mr. Herbert M. Pethwick, C.E., who presents a most interesting speculation tending to prove that the strange aircraft was a development made independently of the known civilized world by an offshoot of the ancient Incan race, depatriated by the Spaniards in 1553 A. D.

To my mind, both of these hypotheses, although brilliantly maintained, fail to take into consideration two highly significant facts which are set forth, but not greatly stressed in the record of the expedition as kept by Mr. James B. Standifer, Sec.

These two facts are, first, the serial number which served as a name of the man from One, and the other fact, that in both cases where a man from One was wounded he bled what for want of a better term must be called chlorophyllaceous blood.

From few other writers than Mr. Standifer would I accept so bizarre a statement of fact, but his power of exact and minute observation is so well attested by his well-known work, "Reindeer in Iceland," that I dare not question his strict adherence to truth.

The phenomena set forth in the journal happened. That is beyond cavil. The problem for the scientific world is their interpretation.

In handling this problem, I shall not only assume that the journal is accurate, but I shall still further assume that the being known in the record as Mr. Three told the precise truth in every statement ascribed to him.

I have every confidence in Mr. Three's probity for several reasons. First, he has no motive for prevarication. Second, a man who habitually communicates with his fellows by telepathy would not be accustomed to falsehood, since falsehood is physically impossible when a man's mind lies before his companions like an open book. Third, to a man habitually accustomed to truth, lying is a difficult and uncongenial labor. In brief, lying is like any other art; it requires practise to do it well.

In regard to the serial number, both of the above

mentioned writers apparently fail to see the enormous problem it possesses. As for the chlorophyllaceous blood, our authors pass it with a vague surmise that somehow it is used in extracting gold, when the whole object of the expedition, according to Mr. Three, was not gold but radium.

Because my esteemed colleagues neglected these two critical points, their whole theories, as ably and ingeniously defended as they are, to my mind collapse into mere brilliant sophisms.

In the brief analysis herewith presented I shall touch on a number of points, among which the questions evoked by the serial number and the chlorophyll blood will be noticed in their proper places.

First, then, Mr. Three himself states that the object of the expedition was the extraction of radium from the pitchblende in the Infernal Valley. The use the men from One made of this radium was demonstrated at the departure of the dirigible, for that vessel must have been propelled by the emanations of radium. According to the description of Mr. Standifer, the ship used no screw propellers or tractors, but a powerful emanation of radium from under its stern shot the great metal cylinder upward exactly as powder propels a skyrocket.

That radium would possess such power is well known. It has been calculated that two pounds of radium would possess sufficient force to swing the earth out of its orbit.

With such power the airship would be capable of enormous speed. A high speed was guessed by M. Demetrioivich when he observed the small controlling plane. However, the vastness of this speed was demonstrated by Mr. Standifer in the last paragraph of his account, by his curious observation that the airship, as seen against the evening sky, turned violet, indigo blue, green, yellow, orange, red and then was lost. In other words, it ran through the whole spectrum from the most rapid to the lowest vibrations per second and then vanished.

What is the meaning of this significant detail?

Allow me to recall an analogy in sound. The tone of a bell on a train departing at high speed becomes lower in pitch. This is because the vibrations reach the ear at longer intervals.

Apply that to the change of light observed on the airship. Then the vessel must have been withdrawing at such a speed that it lowered the "pitch" of light vibrations from white to red and finally cancelled its light in blackness.

The only conclusion to be drawn from this is that at the time of the light's extinction, the mysterious metal cylinder was hurtling through space at the speed of light itself; that is to say, at a speed of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second.

OBSERVE that I say, "space," not air. In the first place such a speed in air would fuse any metal. But there is another and a better reason.

It requires the average human eye one-twentieth of a second to perceive a color change. If Mr. Standifer had observed these color changes at the highest possible nerve rate, the operation would have acquired seven-twentieths of a second. Let

us assume it required half a second. During that interval the cylinder would have traversed, at the speed of light, ninety-three thousand miles in a straight line. That is more than eleven times the diameter of this globe. Therefore it is far outside of our atmosphere. Also it proves the mysterious vessel was not bound for Austria or Russia. It was leaving the earth.

How was this velocity attained?

I submit by the reaction of radium upon sunlight.

As every schoolboy knows, the drift of a comet's tail is caused by the pressure of light. As soon as this airship arose to the height of about five hundred yards into sunlight, it began to drift eastward with a rapidly increasing velocity. In other words, the metal skin of the ship, which Mr. Pethwick took for aluminum, was probably a much lighter metal—a metal so light that it was capable of being buffeted along in the surf of sunlight. Now if the ship were propelled merely on the barbs of sunbeams, it would have attained the velocity of light. But the velocity of radium emanations is one-fifteenth that of light. So by running down the light current, and allowing the radium to react against the sunbeams, a speed of one and one-fifteenth the velocity of light may be generated; that is one-hundred and ninety-eight thousand miles per second.

Such speed would admit of interplanetary travel.

However, it is probable the men from One could accelerate the radiation from radium by electrical or chemical means. They may have learned to boil the metal as men boil water. In such case the pressure of its radiation would be vastly increased, and with it the possible speed of the ship. This gives an unknown and problematical power of transition far beyond the velocity of light. At such rate a journey even to one of the fixed stars would be within the realm of possibility.

We may therefore with prudence hypothesize that the mysterious ether ship observed in the Valley of the Rio Infernillo was an interstellar voyager stopping by the earth as a coaling port to refuel with radium.

However, as it is improbable that the ether ship was going beyond the confines of our solar system, a speculation as to what planet the men from One were bound may be reached by noting the day and the hour the ship sailed from the earth.

As our earth swings around the ecliptic, it would be possible for interplanetary mariners to obtain a favorable current of sunlight in any direction. No doubt the navigator of the ether ship was bound for one of the planets in opposition to the sun at the time of the ship's departure. That is to say the yellow men were sailing for either Neptune or Jupiter.

That the men were returning to some planet much larger than the earth is suggested by their small size and extraordinary agility. No doubt these men found the gravitation of the earth slight compared with the attraction to which they were accustomed. This fact gave them extraordinary vigor.

Now let us consider the serial number that

formed Mr. Three's name. It was 1753-12,657,100-654-3.

This gives rise to a most interesting speculation:

The probable number of the units contained in a series, when any serial number is given, is computed by multiplying together the component parts of the serial number.

For instance, if one has two series of twelve each, the whole number of objects would be twenty-four. If one had six major series of two subseries of twelve each, the total number of units would be 144.

Applying this idea to Mr. Three's serial number, one would find the total probable population of Jupiter, or the land of One, by multiplying the component parts of this number together. This reached the enormous number product of 14,510,894,489,356. That is to say, fourteen and a half quadrillions.

This utterly quashes the Incan hypothesis. There is not room in South America for fourteen and a half quadrillion people—there is not room on the globe for such a number. That, in fact, is the probable population of either Neptune or Jupiter. For sake of simplicity, we will assume it is Jupiter.

No wonder, then, with such an inconceivable population, the inhabitants of Jupiter are militarized. No wonder they suggested Bolshevism to M. Demetrioivich.

With such masses of life, all other species of animals are probably extinct. This would explain why the Jovians were so eager to capture specimens of fauna as well as radium.

The last point in the record, the chlorophyllaceous blood, has been to me the most difficult to find any analogy for in our terrestrial experience.

However, we must needs grasp the problem firmly and proceed with considered but ample steps toward any conclusion to which it leads.

Chlorophyll is the coloring matter in plants. It possesses the power of utilizing energy directly from sunlight. There is no reason to doubt that in the veins of the Jovians it still retains that peculiar power.

With such an extraordinary fluid in his veins, it might be possible for a Jovian to stand in the sunshine and to obtain from it energy and strength, just as a human being obtains energy and strength by eating vegetables that have stood in the sunshine.

In fact, the first method is no more amazing than the second. If, indeed, there be a difference, undoubtedly our human method is the more fantastic. The idea of obtaining energy from sunshine, not by standing in it, as any one would suppose, but by eating something else that has stood in it, is grotesque to the verge of madness.

Let us pursue that thought. No doubt in a course of fourteen and a half quadrillion inhabitants space would be so dear that there would be no vacant or tillable land. Therefore on Jupiter every man must absorb whatever sunshine he received. There would be no such thing as eating.

This accounts for the amazement of Mr. Three at seeing Standifer eat his lunch.

To put the same idea in another form—the crew of the ether ship were flora, not fauna.

This accounts for the yellow pear-like texture of

their skins. No doubt the young Jovians are green in color. It would also explain why Mr. Three was entirely without anger when attacked and without pity for Pablo's pleadings, or for Standifer when he was burned, or for Ruano when he was murdered.

Anger, pity, love and hatred are the emotional traits of the mammalia. They have been developed through epochs of maternal protection. It is not developed in plants.

Mr. Three was a plant.

It would also explain why Mr. Three took only one animal of each species, instead of a male and a female. Sex is perhaps unknown on Jupiter. Mr. Three was perhaps expecting his animals to bud or sprout.

THE last question to be broached is, How is it possible for plant life to possess mobility?

I wish to recall to the inquirer that here on our own globe the spores of the algae and other plants of that order have the power of swimming freely in the sea. Still, they are plants—plants just as mobile as fishes. They become stationary only at a later stage of their development.

Now, if for some reason these algae spores could retain their mobility, the result would be a walking, swimming or crawling plant.

The line between animal and plant life has never been so clearly drawn. It seems mere fortuity that the first forebear of animal life swam about and caught its sustenance by enveloping it in its gelatinous droplet, rather than by adhering to a reef and drawing its energy directly from the sun.

If that far-off protozoa had clung to the reef, the reader of this paragraph might have been a sycamore or a tamarind—he would not have been a man.

Now Mr. Three's forefather evidently crawled out of the sea into the sunshine but found nothing to

envelop; therefore he followed the lip of the Jovian tide up and down, drawing his energy from the sun's rays. The result was a walking vegetable—in short, Mr. Three.

However, gentlemen of the Nobel Prize Foundation, it is not to press the views of the writer that this note was written, but to offer for your consideration as candidates for the fifty thousand dollar Nobel Prize for the year 1920 the names of:

Demetrios Z. Demetrioovich, Herbert M. Pethwick and James B. Standifer.

One of the five prizes for 1920 will be awarded to the man or group who have done the greatest service for the advancement of human knowledge during the twelvemonth.

These men, by their observations, taken at the peril of their lives, have blazed new avenues for the use of radium. Their journal suggests the feasibility of the universal use of telepathy, a development now confined to a few adepts and belittled by the unthinking. Their discoveries reveal the possibility of interplanetary travel and the vast commercial emoluments such a trade would possess. Their journal suggests to the ambitious soul of man a step beyond world citizenship, and that is stellar citizenship. It is a great step and will profoundly modify human thought.

In the past, gentlemen, epoch-making discoveries have been too often rewarded by Bridewell or Bedlam; it is gratifying to know that we have reached a stage of civilization where the benefactors of their race receive instead honor and emolument.

GILBERT H. DELONG.

New York City,
May, 1920.

Note by the Transcriber: It may interest the reader to know that the Nobel Prize was awarded to Dr. Gilbert H. DeLong, for the series of brilliant inductions set forth above.—T. S.

THE END.

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UNDER *the* KNIFE

By *H.G. Wells*

Author of "The First Men in the Moon," "In the Abyss," etc.



.... Flashing suddenly out of the darkness there came a flying multitude of particles of rock, glittering like dust-specks in a sunbeam and then I saw a bright spot of light, that shone a little to one side of my path, growing very rapidly larger, and perceived that it was the planet Saturn rushing toward me.



HAT if I die under it?" The thought recurred again and again, as I walked home from Haddon's. It was a purely personal question. I was spared the deep anxieties of a married man, and I knew there were few of my intimate friends but would find my death troublesome chiefly on account of their duty of regret. I was surprised indeed, and perhaps a little humiliated, as I turned the matter over, to think how few could possibly exceed the conventional requirement. Things came before me stripped of glamour, in a clear dry light, during that walk from Haddon's house over Primrose Hill. There were the friends of my youth; I perceived now that our affection was a tradition, which we foregathered rather laboriously to maintain. There were the rivals and helpers of my later career: I suppose I had been cold-blooded and undemonstrative—one perhaps implies the other. It may be that even the capacity for friendship is a question of physique. There had been a time in my own life when I had grieved bitterly enough at the loss of a friend; but as I walked home that afternoon the emotional side of my imagination was dormant. I could not pity myself, nor feel sorry for my friends, nor conceive of them as grieving for me.

I was interested in this deadness of my emotional nature—no doubt a concomitant of my stagnating physiology; and my thoughts wandered off along the line it suggested. Once before, in my hot youth, I had suffered a sudden loss of blood, and had been within an ace of death. I remembered now that my affections as well as my passions had drained out of me, leaving scarce anything but a tranquil resignation, a dreg of self-pity. It had been weeks before the old ambitions and tenderesses and all the complex moral interplay of a man had reasserted themselves. It occurred to me that the real meaning of this numbness might be a gradual slipping away from the pleasure-pain guidance of the animal man.

It has been proven, I take it, as thoroughly as anything can be proven in this world, that the higher emotions, the moral feelings, even the subtle unselfishness of love, are evolved from the elemental desires and fears of the simple animal: they are the harness in which man's mental freedom goes. And it may be that as death overshadows us, as our possibility of acting diminishes, this complex growth of balanced impulse, propensity and aversion, whose interplay inspires our acts, goes with it. Leaving what?

I was suddenly brought back to reality by an imminent collision with the butcher-boy's tray. I found that I was crossing the bridge over the Regent's Park Canal, which runs parallel with that in the Zoological Gardens. The boy in blue had been looking over his shoulder at a black barge advancing slowly, towed by a gaunt white horse. In

the Gardens a nurse was leading three happy little children over the bridge. The trees were bright green; the spring hopefulness was still unstained by the dusts of summer; the sky in the water was bright and clear, but broken by long waves, by quivering bands of black, as the barge drove through. The breeze was stirring; but it did not stir me as the spring breeze used to do.

Was this dullness of feeling in itself an anticipation? It was curious that I could reason and follow out a network of suggestion as clearly as ever; so, at least, it seemed to me. It was calmness rather than dullness that was coming upon me. Was there any ground for the belief in the presentiment of death? Did a man near to death begin instinctively to withdraw himself from the meshes of matter and sense, even before the cold hand was laid upon his? I felt strangely isolated—isolated without regret—from the life and existence about me. The children playing in the sun and gathering strength and experience for the business of life, the park-keeper gossiping with a nursemaid, the nursing mother, the young couple intent upon each other as they passed me, the trees by the wayside spreading new pleading leaves to the sunlight, the stir in their branches—I had been part of it all, but I had nearly done with it now.

Some way down the Broad Walk I perceived that I was tired, and that my feet were heavy. It was hot that afternoon, and I turned aside and sat down on one of the green chairs that line the way. In a minute I had dozed into a dream, and the tide of my thoughts washed up a vision of the resurrection. I was still sitting in the chair, but I thought myself actually dead, withered, tattered, dried, one eye (I saw) pecked out by birds. "Awake!" cried a voice; and incontinently the dust of the path and the mould under the grass became insurgent. I had never before thought of Regent's Park as a cemetery, but now, through the trees, stretching as far as eye could see, I beheld a flat plain of

writhing graves and heeling tombstones. There seemed to be some trouble; the rising dead appeared to stifle as they struggled upward, they bled in their struggles, the red flesh was torn away from the white bones. "Awake!" cried a voice; but I determined I would not rise to such horrors. "Awake!"

They would not let me alone. "Wike up!" said an angry voice. A cockney angel! The man who sells the tickets was shaking me, demanding my penny.

I paid my penny, pocketed my ticket, yawned, stretched my legs, and, feeling now rather less torpid, got up and walked on towards Langham Place. I speedily lost myself again in a shifting maze of thoughts about death. Going across Marylebone Road into that crescent at the end of Langham Place, I had the narrowest escape from the shaft of a cab, and went on my way with a palpitating heart and a bruised shoulder. It struck

THE master of scientifiction has written a remarkable tale, and although the title may scare you at first, the story is not of the horror type at all. Quite the contrary. Wells knows his P's and Q's and in this story particularly you will find nothing to complain about. Other authors would, perhaps, foist a real horror tale upon you, but Wells, as usual, handles his material in a masterful manner. Have you ever undergone an operation? If you have, then perhaps you will appreciate more than other readers this fascinating tale.

me that it would have been curious if my meditations on my death on the morrow had led to my death that day.

BUT I will not weary you with more of my experiences that day and the next. I knew more and more certainly that I should die under the operation; at times I think I was inclined to pose to myself. The doctors were coming at eleven, and I did not get up. It seemed scarce worth while to trouble about washing and dressing, and though I read my newspapers and the letters that came by the first post, I did not find them very interesting. There was a friendly note from Addison, my old school-friend, calling my attention to two discrepancies and a printer's error in my new book, with one from Langridge venting some vexation over Minton. The rest were business communications. I breakfasted in bed. The glow of pain at my side seemed more massive. I knew it was pain, and yet, if you can understand, I did not find it very painful. I had been awake and hot and thirsty in the night, but in the morning bed felt comfortable. In the night-time I had lain thinking of things that were past; in the morning I dozed over the question of immortality. Haddon came, punctual to the minute with a neat black bag; and Mowbray soon followed. Their arrival stirred me up a little. I began to take a more personal interest in the proceedings. Haddon moved the little octagonal table close to the bedside, and, with his broad back to me, began taking things out of his bag. I heard the light click of steel upon steel. My imagination, I found, was not altogether stagnant. "Will you hurt me much?" I said in an off-hand tone.

"Not a bit," Haddon answered over his shoulder. "We shall chloroform you. Your heart's as sound as a bell." And as he spoke, I had a whiff of the pungent sweetness of the anæsthetic.

They stretched me out, with a convenient exposure of my side, and, almost before I realized what was happening, the chloroform was being administered. It stings the nostrils, and there is a suffocating sensation at first. I knew I should die—that this was the end of consciousness for me. And suddenly I felt that I was not prepared for death: I had a vague sense of duty overlooked—I knew not what. What was it I had not done? I could think of nothing more to do, nothing desirable left in life; and yet I had the strangest disinclination to death. And the physical sensation was painfully oppressive. Of course the doctors did not know they were going to kill me. Possibly I struggled. Then I fell motionless, and a great silence, a monstrous silence, and an impenetrable blackness came upon me.

There must have been an interval of absolute unconsciousness, seconds or minutes. Then with a chilly, unemotional clearness, I perceived that I was not yet dead. I was still in my body; but all the multitudinous sensations that come sweeping from it to make up the background of consciousness had gone, leaving me free of it all. No, not free of it all; for as yet something still held me to the poor stark flesh upon the bed—held me, yet not so closely that I did not feel myself external to it, independent of it, straining away from it. I do not

think I saw, I do not think I heard; but I perceived all that was going on, and it was as if I both heard and saw. Haddon was bending over me, Mowbray behind me; the scalpel—it was a large scalpel—was cutting my flesh at the side under the flying ribs. It was interesting to see myself cut like cheese, without a pang, without even a qualm. The interest was much of a quality with that one might feel in a game of chess between strangers. Haddon's face was firm and his hand steady; but I was surprised to perceive (*how* I know not) that he was feeling the gravest doubt as to his own wisdom in the conduct of the operation.

Mowbray's thoughts, too, I could see. He was thinking that Haddon's manner showed too much of the specialist. New suggestions came up like bubbles through a stream of frothing meditation, and burst one after another in the little bright spot of his consciousness. He could not help noticing and admiring Haddon's swift dexterity, in spite of his envious quality and his disposition to detract. I saw my liver exposed. I was puzzled at my own condition. I did not feel that I was dead, but I was different in some way from my living self. The gray depression, that had weighed on me for a year or more and colored all my thoughts, was gone. I perceived and thought without any emotional tint at all. I wondered if every one perceived things in this way under chloroform, and forgot it again when he came out of it. It would be inconvenient to look into some heads, and not forget.

Although I did not think that I was dead, I still perceived quite clearly that I was soon to die. This brought me back to the consideration of Haddon's proceedings. I looked into his mind, and saw that he was afraid of cutting a branch of the portal vein. My attention was distracted from details by the curious changes going on in his mind. His consciousness was like the quivering little spot of light which is thrown by the mirror of a galvanometer. His thoughts ran under it like a stream, some through the focus bright and distinct, some shadowy in the half-light of the edge. Just now the little glow was steady; but the least movement on Mowbray's part, the slightest sound from outside, even a faint difference in the slow movement of the living flesh he was cutting, set the light-spot shivering and spinning. A new sense-impression came rushing up through the flow of thoughts; and lo! the light-spot jerked away towards it, swifter than a frightened fish. It was wonderful to think that upon that unstable, fitful thing depended all the complex emotions of the man; that for the next five minutes, therefore, my life hung upon its movements. And he was growing more and more nervous in his work. It was as if a little picture of a cut vein grew brighter, and struggled to oust from his brain another picture of a cut falling short of the mark. He was afraid: his dread of cutting too little was battling with his dread of cutting too far.

THEN, suddenly, like an escape of water from under a lock-gate, a great uprush of horrible realization set all his thoughts swirling, and simultaneously I perceived that the vein was cut. He started back with a hoarse exclamation, and I saw

the brown-purple blood gather in a swift bead, and run trickling. He was horrified. He pitched the red-stained scalpel on to the octagonal table; and instantly both doctors flung themselves upon me, making hasty and ill-conceived efforts to remedy the disaster. "Ice!" said Mowbray, gasping. But I knew that I was killed, though my body still clung to me.

I will not describe their belated endeavors to save me, though I perceived every detail. My perceptions were sharper and swifter than they had ever been in life; my thoughts rushed through my mind with incredible swiftness, but with perfect definition. I can only compare their crowded clarity to the effects of a reasonable dose of opium. In a moment it would all be over, and I should be free. I knew I was immortal, what would happen I did not know. Should I drift off presently, like a puff of smoke from a gun, in some kind of half-material body, an attenuated version of my material self? Should I find myself suddenly among the innumerable hosts of the dead, and know the world about me for the phantasmagoria it had always seemed? Should I drift to some spiritualistic *séance*, and there make foolish, incomprehensible attempts to affect a purblind medium? It was a state of unemotional curiosity, of colorless expectation. And then I realized a growing stress upon me, a feeling as though some huge human magnet was drawing me upward out of my body. The stress grew and grew. I seemed an atom for which monstrous forces were fighting. For one brief, terrible moment sensation came back to me. That feeling of falling headlong which comes in nightmares, that feeling a thousand times intensified, that and a black horror swept across my thoughts in a torrent. Then the two doctors, the naked body with its cut side, the little room, swept away from under me and vanished, as a speck of foam vanishes down an eddy.

I was in mid-air. Far below was the West End of London, receding rapidly—for I seemed to be flying swiftly upward—and as it receded, passing westward like a panorama. I could see, through the faint haze of smoke, the innumerable roofs chimney-set, the narrow roadways, stippled with people and conveyances, the little specks of squares, and the church steeples like thorns sticking out of the fabric. But it spun away as the earth rotated on its axis, and in a few seconds (as it seemed) I was over the scattered clumps of town about Ealing, the little Thames a thread of blue to the south, and the Chiltern Hills and the North Downs coming up like the rim of a basin, far away and faint with haze. Up I rushed. And at first I had not the faintest conception what this headlong rush upward could mean.

Every moment the circle of scenery beneath me grew wider and wider, and the details of town and field, of hill and valley, got more and more hazy and pale and indistinct, a luminous gray was mingled more and more with the blue of the hills and the green of the open meadows; and a little patch of cloud, low and far to the west, shone ever more dazzlingly white. Above, as the veil of atmosphere between myself and outer space grew thinner, the sky, which had been a fair springtime blue at first,

grew deeper and richer in color, passing steadily through the intervening shades, until presently it was as dark as the blue sky of midnight, and presently as black as the blackness of a frosty starlight, and at last as black as no blackness I had ever beheld. And first one star, and then many, and at last an innumerable host broke out upon the sky: more stars than any one has ever seen from the face of the earth. For the blueness of the sky is the light of the sun and stars sifted and spread abroad blindly: there is diffused light even in the darkest skies of winter, and we do not see the stars by day only because of the dazzling irradiation of the sun. But now I saw things—I know not how; assuredly with no mortal eyes—and that defect of bedazzlement blinded me no longer. The sun was incredibly strange and wonderful. The body of it was a disc of blinding white light: not yellowish, as it seems to those who live upon the earth, but livid white, all streaked with scarlet streaks and rimmed about with a fringe of writhing tongues of red fire. And shooting half-way across the heavens from either side of it and brighter than the Milky Way, were two pinions of silver white, making it look more like those winged globes I have seen in Egyptian sculpture than anything else I can remember upon earth. These I knew for the solar corona, though I had never seen anything of it but a picture during the days of my earthly life.

When my attention came back to the earth again, I saw that it had fallen very far away from me. Field and town were long since indistinguishable, and all the varied hues of the country were merging into a uniform bright gray, broken only by the brilliant white of the clouds that lay scattered in flocculent masses over Ireland and the west of England. For now I could see the outlines of the north of France and Ireland, and all this Island of Britain, save where Scotland passed over the horizon to the north, or where the coast was blurred or obliterated by cloud. The sea was a dull gray and darker than the land; and the whole panorama was rotating slowly towards the east.

ALL this had happened so swiftly that until I was some thousand miles or so from the earth I had no thought for myself. But now I perceived I had neither hands nor feet, neither parts nor organs, and that I felt neither alarm nor pain. All about me I perceived that the vacancy (for I had already left the air behind) was cold beyond the imagination of man; but it troubled me not. The sun's rays shot through the void, powerless to light or heat until they should strike on matter in their course. I saw things with a serene self-forgetfulness, even as if I were God. And down below there, rushing away from me—countless miles in a second—where a little dark spot on the gray marked the position of London, two doctors were struggling to restore life to the poor hacked and outworn shell I had abandoned. I felt then such release, such serenity as I can compare to no mortal delight I have ever known.

It was only after I had perceived all these things that the meaning of that headlong rush of the earth grew into comprehension. Yet it was so sim-

ple, so obvious, that I was amazed at my never anticipating the thing that was happening to me. I had suddenly been cut adrift from matter: all that was material of me was there upon earth, whirling away through space, held to the earth by gravitation, partaking of the earth-inertia, moving in its wreath of epicycles round the sun, and with the sun and the planets on their vast march through space. But the immaterial has no inertia, feels nothing of the pull of matter for matter: where it parts from its garments of flesh, there it remains (so far as space concerns it any longer) immovable in space. I was not leaving the earth: the earth was leaving me, and not only the earth but the whole solar system was streaming past. And about me in space, invisible to me, scattered in the wake of the earth upon its journey, there must be an innumerable multitude of souls, stripped like myself of the material, stripped like myself of the passions of the individual and the generous emotions of the gregarious brute, naked intelligences, things of new-born wonder and thought, marvelling at the strange release that had suddenly come on them!

As I receded faster and faster from the strange white sun in the black heavens, and from the broad and shining earth upon which my being had begun, I seemed to grow in some incredible manner vast: vast as regards this world I had left, vast as regards the moments and periods of human life. Very soon I saw the full circle of the earth, slightly gibbous, like the moon when she nears her full, but very large; and the silvery shape of America was now in the noonday blaze wherein (as it seemed) little England had been basking but a few minutes ago. At first the earth was large; and shone in the heavens, filling a great part of them; but every moment she grew smaller and more distant. As she shrank, the broad moon in its third quarter crept into view over the rim of her disc. I looked for the constellations. Only that part of Aries directly behind the sun and the Lion, which the earth covered, were hidden. I recognized the tortuous, tattered band of the Milky Way with Vega very bright between sun and earth; and Sirius and Orion shone splendid against the unfathomable blackness in the opposite quarter of the heavens. The Pole Star was overhead, and the Great Bear hung over the circle of the earth. And away beneath and beyond the shining corona of the sun were strange groupings of stars I had never seen in my life—notably a dagger-shaped group that I knew for the Southern Cross. All these were no larger than when they had shone on earth, but the little stars that one scarce sees shone now against the setting of black vacancy as brightly as the first-magnitudes had done, while the larger worlds were points of indescribable glory and color. Aldebaran was a spot of blood-red fire, and Sirius condensed to one point the light of innumerable sapphires. And they shone steadily: they did not scintillate, they were calmly glorious. My impressions had an adamant hardness and brightness: there was no blurring softness, no atmosphere, nothing but infinite darkness set with the myriads of these acute and brilliant points and specks of light. Presently when I looked again, the little earth seemed no bigger than the sun, and

it dwindled and turned as I looked, until in a second's space (as it seemed to me), it was halved; and so it went on swiftly dwindling. Far away in the opposite direction, a little pinkish pin's head of light, shining steadily, was the planet Mars. I swam motionless in vacancy, and, without a trace of terror or astonishment, watched the speck of cosmic dust we call the world fall away from me.

Presently it dawned upon me that my sense of duration had changed; that my mind was moving not faster but infinitely slower, that between each separate impression there was a period of many days. The moon spun once round the earth as I noted this; and I perceived clearly the motion of Mars in his orbit. Moreover, it appeared as if the time between thought and thought grew steadily greater, until at last a thousand years was but a moment in my perception.

At first the constellations had shone motionless against the black background of infinite space; but presently it seemed as though the group of stars about Hercules and the Scorpion was contracting, while Orion and Aldebaran and their neighbors were scattering apart. Flashing suddenly out of the darkness there came a flying multitude of particles of rock, glittering like dust-specks in a sunbeam, and encompassed in a faintly luminous cloud. They swirled about me, and vanished again in a twinkling far behind. And then I saw that a bright spot of light, that shone a little to one side of my path, was growing very rapidly larger, and perceived that it was the planet Saturn rushing towards me. Larger and larger it grew, swallowing up the heavens behind it, and hiding every moment a fresh multitude of stars. I perceived its flattened, whirling body, its disc-like belt, and seven of its little satellites. It grew and grew, till it towered enormous, and then I plunged amid a streaming multitude of clashing stones and dancing dust-particles and gas-eddies, and saw for a moment the mighty triple belt like three concentric arches of moonlight above me, its shadow black on the boiling tumult below. These things happened in one-tenth of the time it takes to tell them. The planet went by like a flash of lightning; for a few seconds it blotted out the sun, and there and then became a mere black, dwindling, winged patch against the light. The earth, the mother mote of my being, I could no longer see.

With a stately swiftness, in the profoundest silence the solar system fell from me as if it had been a garment, until the sun was a mere star amid the multitude of stars, with its eddy of planet-specks lost in the confused glittering of the remoter light. I was no longer a denizen of the solar system: I had come to the outer Universe, I seemed to grasp and comprehend the whole world of matter. Ever more swiftly the stars closed in about the spot where Antares and Vega had vanished in a phosphorescent haze, until that part of the sky had the semblance of a whirling mass of nebulae, and ever before me yawned vaster gaps of vacant blackness, and the stars shone fewer and fewer. It seemed as if I moved towards a point between Orion's belt and sword; and the void about that region opened vaster and vaster every second, an incredible gulf

of nothingness into which I was falling. Faster and ever faster the universe rushed by, a hurry of whirling motes at last, speeding silently into the void. Stars glowing brighter and brighter, with their circling planets catching the light in a ghostly fashion as I neared them, shone out and vanished again into inexistence; faint comets, clusters of meteorites, winking specks of matter, eddying light-points, whizzed past, some perhaps a hundred millions of miles or so from me at most, few nearer, traveling with unimaginable rapidity, shooting constellations, momentary darts of fire, through that black, enormous night. More than anything else it was like a dusty draught, sunbeam-lit. Broader and wider and deeper grew the starless space, the vacant Beyond, into which I was being drawn. At last a quarter of the heavens was black and blank, and the whole headlong rush of stellar universe closed in behind me like a veil of light that is gathered together. It drove away from me like a monstrous jack-o'-lantern driven by the wind. I had come out into the wilderness of space. Ever the vacant blackness grew broader, until the hosts of the stars seemed only like a swarm of fiery specks hurrying away from me, inconceivably remote, and the darkness, the nothingness and emptiness, were about me on every side. Soon the little universe of matter, the cage of points in which I had begun to be, was dwindling, now to a whirling disc of luminous glittering, and now to one minute disc of hazy light. In a little while it would shrink to a point, and at last would vanish altogether.

Suddenly feeling came back to me—feeling in the shape of overwhelming terror; such a dread of those dark vastitudes as no words can describe, a passionate resurgence of sympathy and social desire. Were there other souls, invisible to me as I to them, about me in the blackness? or was I indeed, even as I felt, alone? Had I passed out of being into something that was neither being nor not-being? The covering of the body, the covering of matter, had been torn from me, and the hallucinations of companionship and security. Everything was black and silent. I had ceased to be. I was nothing. There was nothing, save only that infinitesimal dot of light that dwindled in the gulf. I strained myself to hear and see, and for a while there was naught but infinite silence, intolerable darkness, horror, and despair.

Then I saw that about the spot of light into which the whole world of matter had shrunk there was a faint glow. And in a band on either side of it the darkness was not absolute. I watched it for ages, as it seemed to me, and through the long waiting the haze grew imperceptibly more distinct. And then about the band appeared an irregular cloud of the faintest, palest brown. I felt a passionate impatience; but the things grew brighter so slowly that they scarce seemed to change. What was unfolding itself? What was this strange reddish dawn in the interminable night of space?

THE cloud's shape was grotesque. It seemed to be looped along its lower side into four projecting masses, and, above, it ended in a straight line. What phantom was it? I felt assured I had seen that figure before; but I could not think what, nor where, nor when it was. Then the realization rushed upon me. *It was a clenched Hand.* I was alone in space, alone with this huge, shadowy Hand, upon which the whole Universe of Matter lay like an unconsidered speck of dust. It seemed as though I watched it through vast periods of time. On the forefinger glittered a ring; and the universe from which I had come was but a spot of light upon the ring's curvature. And the thing that the hand gripped had the likeness of a black rod. Through a long eternity I watched this Hand, with the ring and the rod, marveling and fearing and waiting helplessly on what might follow. It seemed as though nothing could follow: that I should watch forever, seeing only the Hand and the thing it held, and understanding nothing of its import. Was the whole universe but a refracting speck upon some greater Being? Were our worlds but the atoms of another universe, and those again of another, and so on through an endless progression? And what was I? Was I indeed immaterial? A vague persuasion of a body gathering about me came into my suspense. The abysmal darkness about the Hand filled with impalpable suggestions, with uncertain, fluctuating shapes.

Then, suddenly, came a sound, like the sound of a tolling bell: faint, as if infinitely far; muffled, as though heard through thick swathings of darkness: a deep, vibrating resonance, with vast gulfs of silence between each stroke. And the Hand appeared to tighten on the rod. And I saw far above the Hand, towards the apex of the darkness, a circle of dim phosphorescence, a ghostly sphere whence these sounds came throbbing; and at the last stroke the Hand vanished, for the hour had come, and I heard a noise of many waters. But the black rod remained as a great band across the sky. And then a voice, which seemed to run to the uttermost parts of space, spoke, saying, "There will be no more pain."

At that an almost intolerable gladness and radiance rushed in upon me, and I saw the circle shining white and bright, and the rod shining and black and many things else distinct and clear. And the circle was the face of the clock, and the rod the rail of my bed. Haddon was standing at the foot, against the rail, with a small pair of scissors on his fingers; and the hands of my clock on the mantel over his shoulder were clasped together over the hour of twelve. Mowbray was washing something in a basin at the octagonal table, and at my side I felt a subdued feeling that could scarce be spoken of as pain.

The operation had not killed me. And I perceived, suddenly, that the dull melancholy of half a year was lifted from my mind.

THE END.

The LAND that TIME FORGOT

By Edgar Rice Burroughs



.... and as I glanced up, I saw a most terrific creature swooping down upon me. It must have been fully eighty feet long, with an equal spread of wings. It was hissing frightfully as it came straight down toward the muzzle of the machine-gun.

What Went Before

THE teller of this story discovers a quart thermos bottle turning and twisting in the surf of a small island on Cape Farewell at the southern extremity of Greenland. He rescues it and finds that it contains a manuscript, neatly written and tightly folded, which tells the following story:

A young American, with his Airedale, Nobs, while floating on a raft, apparently the lone survivors of a ship torpedoed by a German submarine, discovers a beautiful young girl, seemingly dead, floating on the sea. He rescues her, she returns to consciousness, and later they both are picked up by an English vessel. Soon that vessel also is attacked by the same submarine, but the English captain tries to maneuver his ship to safety and a battle ensues. The ship sinks, but the crew, together with the American and the girl, Lys La Rue, gain control of the submarine and the Germans. Because it is a German submarine, no neutral or friendly boat will answer their call for help, and naturally they ask for none from a German ship.

Benson, who later confesses himself a traitor to the group, manipulates the compass so that they swerve far from their intended course and finally find themselves near an island, which they decide must be Caprona. On account of its tremendous inaccessible cliffs, they cannot gain access to the interior. After much investigation and searching, they discover what seems a subterranean river. They submerge and soon find themselves in an open interior sea. Because they are in a submarine, they are able to go with comparative safety past the monstrous

sea and air reptiles, which are plentiful and dangerous in warmer waters.

They soon come to what seems a good landing place and an advance party lands to find a good camping place. They meet with a band of beings, closely resembling the Neanderthal man, who are quickly scared off by the sound of the discharging rifle. One, a little more highly developed, is captured and brought back to the party. They soon learn something of his language and find him a great help around the island while they are building their camp.

Later, some of the group discover oil and the Germans are permitted to stay on the grounds, well provisioned and with plenty of ammunition, while they are refining the oil. When they have enough for their purposes, they surreptitiously return to the submarine and start for home, leaving the others stranded on the island.

Ahm, the Neanderthal man, tells of the "evolution" of his people—a process of graduation, whereby each one leaves his tribe and goes to the next one somewhat higher in the stage of development, "when the call comes." He expects some day to become a Galu—the highest stage, most nearly approximating the civilized man.

One morning, Lys La Rue fails to appear and Ahm has disappeared. Bowen Tyler, the young American, alarmed, goes to Lys' room and finds her gone, apparently having been kidnapped. He immediately makes preparations to attempt a search and a rescue.

THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

Part II

CHAPTER VIII

LT WAS a sad leave-taking as in silence I shook hands with each of the three remaining men. Even poor Nobs appeared dejected as we quit the compound and set out upon the well-marked

spoor of the abductor.

Not once did I turn my eyes backward toward Fort Dinosaur. I have not looked upon it since—nor in all likelihood shall I ever look upon it again. The trail led northwest until it reached the western end of the sandstone cliffs to the north of the fort; there it ran into a well-defined path which wound northward into a country we had not as yet explored. It was a beautiful, gently rolling country, broken by occasional outcroppings of sandstone and by patches of dense forest relieved by open, parklike stretches and broad meadows whereon grazed countless herbivorous animals—red deer, aurochs, and infinite variety of antelope and at least three distinct species of

horse, the latter ranging in size from a creature about as large as Nobs to a magnificent animal fourteen to sixteen hands high. These creatures fed together in perfect amity; nor did they show any great indications of terror when Nobs and I approached. They moved out of our way and kept

their eyes upon us until we had passed; then they resumed their feeding.

The path led straight across the clearing into another forest, lying upon the verge of which I saw a bit of white. It appeared to stand out in marked contrast and incongruity to all its surroundings, and when I stopped to examine it, I found that it was a small strip of muslin—part of the hem of a garment.

At once I was all excitement, for I knew that it was a sign left by Lys that she had been carried this way; it was a tiny bit torn from the hem of the undergarment that she wore in lieu of the night-robes she had lost with the sinking of the liner. Crushing the bit of fabric to my lips, I pressed

TO try to give you any idea of the second installment in a few lines would be a task akin to giving a resumé of the history of ancient Rome in several paragraphs. It can not be done. Burroughs has such a tremendous imagination, and so many different things happen on almost every page, that he leaves you bewildered at the richness of his imaginative outpouring.

Perhaps the outstanding feature in this installment is the depiction of evolution, which, although it taxes our credulity, nevertheless is not wholly impossible, and it gives us a pretty good insight into a subject that has been much discussed, but which has not made much headway thus far.

on even more rapidly than before, because I now knew that I was upon the right trail and that up to this point at least, Lys still had lived.

I made over twenty miles that day, for I was now hardened to fatigue and accustomed to long-distance walking, having spent considerable time hunting and exploring in the immediate vicinity of camp. A dozen times that day was my life threatened by fearsome creatures of the earth or sky, though I could not but note that the farther north I traveled, the fewer were the great dinosaurs, though they still persisted in lesser numbers. On the other hand, the quantity of ruminants and the variety and frequency of carnivorous animals increased. Each square mile of Caspak harbored its terrors.

At intervals along the way I found bits of muslin, and often they reassured me when otherwise I should have been doubtful of the trail to take where two crossed or where there were forks, as occurred at several points. And so, as night was drawing on, I came to the southern end of a line of cliffs loftier than any I had seen before, and as I approached them, there was wafted to my nostrils the pungent aroma of wood-smoke. What could it mean? There could, to my mind, be but a single solution: man abided close by, a higher order of man than we had as yet seen, other than Ahm, the Neanderthal man. I wondered again as I had so many times that day if it had not been Ahm who stole Lys.

Cautiously I approached the flank of the cliffs, where they terminated in an abrupt escarpment as though some all powerful hand had broken off a great section of rock and set it upon the surface of the earth. It was now quite dark, and as I crept around the edge of the cliff, I saw at a little distance a great fire around which were many figures—apparently human figures. Cautioning Nobs to silence, and he had learned many lessons in the value of obedience since we had entered Caspak, I slunk forward, taking advantage of whatever cover I could find, until from behind a bush I could distinctly see the creatures assembled by the fire. They were human and yet not human. I should say that they were a little higher in the scale of evolution than Ahm, possibly occupying a plane of evolution between that of the Neanderthal man and what is known as the Grimaldi race. Their features were distinctly negroid, though their skins were white. A considerable portion of both torso and limbs was covered with short hair, and their physical proportions were in many respects apelike, though not so much so as were Ahm's. They carried themselves in a more erect position, although their arms were considerably longer than those of the Neanderthal man. As I watched them, I saw that they possessed a language, that they had knowledge of fire and that they carried besides the wooden club of Ahm a thing which resembled a crude stone hatchet. Evidently they were very low in the scale of humanity, but they were a step upward from those I had previously seen in Caspak.

Lys Is Found—An Attack and a Deadly Shot

BUT what interested me most was the slender figure of a dainty girl, clad only in a thin bit of muslin which scarce covered her knees—a bit

of muslin torn and ragged about the lower hem. It was Lys, and she was alive and so far as I could see, unharmed. A huge brute with thick lips and prognathous jaw stood at her shoulder. He was talking loudly and gesticulating wildly. I was close enough to hear his words, which were similar to the language of Ahm, though much fuller, for there were many words I could not understand. However, I caught the gist of what he was saying—which in effect was that he had found and captured this Galu, that she was his and that he defied anyone to question his right of possession. It appeared to me, as I afterward learned was the fact, that I was witnessing the most primitive of marriage ceremonies. The assembled members of the tribe looked on and listened in a sort of dull and perfunctory apathy, for the speaker was by far the mightiest of the clan. There seemed no one to dispute his claims when he said, or rather shouted, in stentorian tones: "I am Tsa. This is my she. Who wishes her more than Tsa?"

"I do," I said in the language of Ahm, and I stepped out into the firelight before them. Lys gave a little cry of joy and started toward me, but Tsa grasped her arm and dragged her back.

"Who are you?" shrieked Tsa. "I kill! I kill! I kill!"

"The she is mine," I replied, "and I have come to claim her. I kill if you do not let her come to me." And I raised my pistol to a level with his heart. Of course, the creature had no conception of the purpose of the strange little implement which I was poking toward him. With a sound that was half human and half the growl of a wild beast, he sprang toward me. I aimed at his heart and fired, and as he sprawled headlong to the ground, the others of his tribe, overcome by fright at the report of the pistol, scattered toward the cliffs—while Lys, with outstretched arms, ran toward me.

As I crushed her to me, there rose from the black night behind us and then to our right and to our left a series of frightful screams and shrieks, bellowings, roars and growls. It was the night-life of this jungle world coming into its own—the huge, carnivorous nocturnal beasts which make the nights of Caspak hideous. A shuddering sob ran through Lys' figure. "O God," she cried, "give me the strength to endure, for his sake!" I saw that she was upon the verge of a breakdown, after all that she must have passed through of fear and horror that day, and I tried to quiet and reassure her as best I might; but even to me the future looked most unpromising, for what chance of life had we against the frightful hunters of the night who even now were prowling closer to us?

Now I turned to see what had become of the tribe, and in the fitful glare of the fire I perceived that the face of the cliff was pitted with large holes into which the man-things were clambering. "Come," I said to Lys, "we must follow them. We cannot last a half-hour out here. We must find a cave." Already we could see the blazing green eyes of the hungry carnivora. I seized a brand from the fire and hurled it out into the night, and there came back an answering chorus of savage and rageful protest; but the eyes vanished for a short time. Selecting a burning branch for each of us,

we advanced toward the cliffs, where we were met by angry threats.

"They will kill us," said Lys. "We may as well keep on in search of another refuge."

"They will not kill us so surely as will those others out there," I replied. "I am going to seek shelter in one of these caves; nor will the man-things prevent." And I kept on in the direction of the cliff's base. A huge creature stood upon a ledge and brandished his stone hatchet. "Come and I will kill you and take the she," he boasted.

"You saw how Tsa fared when he would have kept my she," I replied in his own tongue. "Thus will you fare and all your fellows if you do not permit us to come in peace among you out of the dangers of the night."

"Go north," he screamed. "Go north among the Galus, and we will not harm you. Some day will we be Galus; but now we are not. You do not belong among us. Go away or we will kill you. The she may remain if she is afraid, and we will keep her; but the he must depart."

"The he won't depart," I replied, and approached still nearer. Rough and narrow ledges formed by nature gave access to the upper caves. A man might scale them if unhampered and unhindered, but to clamber upward in the face of a belligerent tribe of half-men and with a girl to assist was beyond my capability.

"I do not fear you," screamed the creature. "You were close to Tsa; but I am far above you. You cannot harm me as you harmed Tsa. Go away!"

Cave Dwellers

I PLACED a foot upon the lowest ledge and clambered upward, reaching down and pulling Lys to my side. Already I felt safer. Soon we would be out of danger of the beasts again closing in upon us. The man above us raised his stone hatchet above his head and leaped lightly down to meet us. His position above me gave him a great advantage, or at least so he probably thought, for he came with every show of confidence. I hated to do it, but there seemed no other way, and so I shot him down as I had shot down Tsa.

"You see," I cried to his fellows, "that I can kill you wherever you may be. A long way off I can kill you as well as I can kill you near by. Let us come among you in peace. I will not harm you if you do not harm us. We will take a cave high up. Speak!"

"Come, then," said one. "If you will not harm us, you may come. Take Tsa's hole, which lies above you."

The creature showed us the mouth of a black cave, but he kept at a distance while he did it, and Lys followed me as I crawled in to explore. I had matches with me, and in the light of one I found a small cavern with a flat roof and floor which followed the cleavage of the strata. Pieces of the roof had fallen at some long-distant date, as was evidenced by the depth of the filth and rubble in which they were embedded. Even a superficial examination revealed the fact that nothing had ever been attempted that might have improved the habitability of the cave; nor, should I judge, had it ever been cleaned out. With considerable difficulty I loosened some of the larger

pieces of broken rock which littered the floor and placed them as a barrier before the doorway. It was too dark to do more than this. I then gave Lys a piece of dried meat, and sitting inside the entrance, we dined as must have some of our ancient forbears at the dawning of the age of man, while from below the open diapason of the savage night rose weird and horrifying to our ears. In the light of the great fire still burning we could see huge, skulking forms, and in the blacker background countless flaming eyes.

Lys shuddered, and I put my arm around her and drew her to me; and thus we sat throughout the hot night. She told me of her abduction and of the fright she had undergone, and together we thanked God that she had come through unharmed, because the great brute had not dared to pause along the danger-infested way. She said that they had but just reached the cliffs when I arrived, for on several occasions her captor had been forced to take to the trees with her to escape the clutches of some hungry cave-lion or saber-tooth tiger, and that twice they had been obliged to remain for considerable periods before the beasts had retired.

Nobs, by dint of much scrambling and one or two narrow escapes from death, had managed to follow us up the cliff and was now curled between me and the doorway, having devoured a piece of the dried meat, which he seemed to relish immensely. He was the first to fall asleep; but I imagine we must have followed suit soon, for we were both tired. I had laid aside my ammunition-belt and rifle, though both were close beside me; but my pistol I kept in my lap beneath my hand. However, we were not disturbed during the night, and when I awoke, the sun was shining on the tree-tops in the distance. Lys' head had drooped to my breast, and my arm was still about her.

Shortly afterward Lys awoke, and for a moment she could not seem to comprehend her situation. She looked at me and then turned and glanced at my arm about her, and then she seemed quite suddenly to realize the scantiness of her apparel and drew away, covering her face with her palms and blushing furiously. I drew her back toward me and kissed her, and then she threw her arms about my neck and wept softly in mute surrender to the inevitable.

The Bathers

IT was an hour later before the tribe began to stir about. We watched them from our "apartment," as Lys called it. Neither men nor women wore any sort of clothing or ornaments, and they all seemed to be about of an age; nor were there any babies or children among them. This was, to us, the strangest and most inexplicable of facts, but it recalled to us that though we had seen many of the lesser developed wild people of Caspak, we had never yet seen a child or an old man or old woman.

After a while they became less suspicious of us and then quite friendly in their brutish way. They picked at the fabric of our clothing, which seemed to interest them, and examined my rifle and pistol and the ammunition in the belt around my waist. I showed them the thermos-bottle, and when I poured a little water from it, they were delighted,

thinking that it was a spring which I carried about with me—a never-failing source of water supply.

One thing we both noticed among their other characteristics: they never laughed or smiled; and then we remembered that Ahm had never done so, either. I asked them if they knew Ahm; but they said they did not.

One of them said: "Back there we may have known him." And he jerked his head to the south.

"You came from back there?" I asked. He looked at me in surprise.

"We all come from there," he said. "After a while we go there." And this time he jerked his head toward the north. "Be Galus," he concluded.

Many times now had we heard this reference to becoming Galus. Ahm had spoken of it many times. Lys and I decided that it was a sort of original religious conviction, as much a part of them as their instinct for self-preservation—a primal acceptance of a hereafter and a holier state. It was a brilliant theory, but it was all wrong. I know it now, and how far we were from guessing the wonderful, the miraculous, the gigantic truth which even yet I may only guess at—the thing that sets Caspak apart from all the rest of the world far more definitely than her isolated geographic position or her impregnable barrier of giant cliffs. If I could live to return to civilization, I should have meat for the clergy and the layman to chew upon for years—and for the evolutionists, too.

After breakfast the men set out to hunt, while the women went to a large pool of warm water covered with a green scum and filled with billions of tadpoles. They waded in to where the water was about a foot deep and lay down in the mud. They remained there from one to two hours and then returned to the cliff. While we were with them, we saw this same thing repeated every morning; but though we asked them why they did it we could get no reply which was intelligible to us. All they vouchsafed by way of explanation was the single word *Ata*. They tried to get Lys to go in with them and could not understand why she refused. After the first day I went hunting with the men, leaving my pistol and Nobs with Lys, but she never had to use them, for no reptile or beast ever approached the pool while the women were there—nor, so far as we know, at other times. There was no spoor of wild beast in the soft mud along the banks, and the water certainly didn't look fit to drink.

This tribe lived largely upon the smaller animals which they bowled over with their stone hatchets after making a wide circle about their quarry and driving it so that it had to pass close to one of their number. The little horses and the smaller antelope they secured in sufficient numbers to support life, and they also ate numerous varieties of fruits and vegetables. They never brought in more than sufficient food for their immediate needs; but why bother? The food problem of Caspak is not one to cause worry to her inhabitants.

Lost in Caspak A Recent Grave

THE fourth day Lys told me that she thought she felt equal to attempting the return journey on the morrow, and so I set out for the hunt in

high spirits, for I was anxious to return to the fort and learn if Bradley and his party had returned and what had been the result of his expedition. I also wanted to relieve their minds as to Lys and myself, as I knew that they must already have given us up for dead. It was a cloudy day, though warm, as it always is in Caspak. It seemed odd to realize that just a few miles away winter lay upon the storm-tossed ocean, and that snow might be falling all about Caprona; but no snow could ever penetrate the damp, hot atmosphere of the great crater.

We had to go quite a bit farther than usual before we could surround a little bunch of antelope, and as I was helping drive them, I saw a fine red deer a couple of hundred yards behind me. He must have been asleep in the long grass, for I saw him rise and look about him in a bewildered way, and then I raised my gun and let him have it. He dropped, and I ran forward to finish him with the long thin knife, which one of the men had given me; but just as I reached him, he staggered to his feet and ran on for another two hundred yards—when I dropped him again. Once more was this repeated before I was able to reach him and cut his throat; then I looked around for my companions, as I wanted them to come and carry the meat home; but I could see nothing of them. I called a few times and waited, but there was no response and no one came. At last I became disgusted, and cutting off all the meat that I could conveniently carry, I set off in the direction of the cliffs. I must have gone about a mile before the truth dawned upon me—I was lost, hopelessly lost.

The entire sky was still completely blotted out by dense clouds; nor was there any landmark visible by which I might have taken my bearings. I went on in the direction I thought was south but which I now imagine must have been about due north, without detecting a single familiar object. In a dense wood I suddenly stumbled upon a thing which at first filled me with hope and later with the most utter despair and dejection. It was a little mound of new-turned earth sprinkled with flowers long since withered, and at one end was a flat slab of sandstone stuck in the ground. It was a grave, and it meant for me that I had at last stumbled into a country inhabited by human beings. I would find them; they would direct me to the cliffs; perhaps they would accompany me and take us back with them to their abodes—to the abodes of men and women like ourselves. My hopes and my imagination ran riot in the few yards I had to cover to reach that lonely grave and stoop that I might read the rude characters scratched upon the simple headstone. This is what I read:

HERE LIES JOHN TIPPET
ENGLISHMAN
KILLED BY TYRANNOSAURUS
10 SEP., A. D. 1916
R. I. P.

Tippet! It seemed incredible. Tippet lying here in this gloomy wood! Tippet dead! He had been a good man, but the personal loss was not what affected me. It was the fact that this silent grave gave evidence that Bradley had come this

far upon his expedition and that he too probably was lost, for it was not our intention that he should be long gone. If I had stumbled upon the grave of one of the party, was it not within reason to believe that the bones of the others lay scattered somewhere near?

CHAPTER IX

AS I stood looking down upon that sad and lonely mound, wrapped in the most dismal of reflections and premonitions, I was suddenly seized from behind and thrown to earth. As I fell, a warm body fell on top of me, and hands grasped my arms and legs. When I could look up, I saw a number of giant figures pinioning me down, while others stood about surveying me. Here again was a new type of man—a higher type than the primitive tribe I had just quitted. They were a taller people, too, with better-shaped skulls and more intelligent faces. There were less of the ape characteristics about their features, and less of the negroid, too. They carried weapons, stone-shod spears, stone knives, and hatchets—and they wore ornaments and breechcloths—the former of feathers worn in their hair and the latter made of a single snake-skin cured with the head on, the head depending to their knees.

Of course I did not take in all these details upon the instant of my capture, for I was busy with other matters. Three of the warriors were sitting upon me, trying to hold me down by main strength and awkwardness, and they were having their hands full in the doing, I can tell you. I don't like to appear conceited, but I may as well admit that I am proud of my strength and the science I have acquired and developed in the directing of it—that and my horsemanship I always have been proud of. And now, that day, all the long hours that I had put into careful study, practice and training brought me in two or three minutes a full return upon my investment. Californians, as a rule, are familiar with ju-jitsu, and I especially had made a study of it for several years, both at school and in the gym of the Los Angeles Athletic Club, while recently I had had, in my employ, a Jap who was a wonder at the art.

It took me just about thirty seconds to break the elbow of one of my assailants, trip another and send him stumbling backward among his fellows, and throw the third completely over my head in such a way that when he fell his neck was broken. In the instant that the others of the party stood in mute and inactive surprise, I unslung my rifle—which, carelessly, I had been carrying across my back; and when they charged, as I felt they would, I put a bullet in the forehead of one of them. This stopped them all temporarily—not the death of their fellow, but the report of the rifle, the first they had ever heard. Before they were ready to attack me again, one of them spoke in a commanding tone to his fellows, in a language similar to but still more comprehensive than that of the tribe to the south, as theirs was more complete than Ahm's. He commanded them to stand back and then he advanced and addressed me.

He asked me who I was, from whence I came and what my intentions were. I replied that I was a stranger in Caspak, that I was lost and that my

only desire was to find my way back to my companions. He asked where they were and I told him toward the south somewhere, using the Caspakian phrase which, literally translated, means "toward the beginning." His surprise showed upon his face before he voiced it in words. "There are no Galus there," he said. "You have lied. The Galus have turned you out."

"I tell you," I said angrily, "that I am from another country, far from Caspak, far beyond the high cliffs. I do not know who the Galus may be; I have never seen them. This is the farthest north I have been. Look at me—look at my clothing and my weapons. Have you ever seen a Galu or any other creature in Caspak who possessed such things?"

He had to admit that he had not, and also that he was much interested in me, my rifle and the way I had handled his three warriors. Finally he became half convinced that I was telling him the truth and offered to aid me if I would show him how I had thrown the man over my head and also make him a present of the "bang-spear," as he called it. I refused to give him my rifle, but promised to show him the trick he wished to learn if he would guide me in the right direction. He told me that he would do so tomorrow, that it was too late today and that I might come to their village and spend the night with them. I was loath to lose so much time; but the fellow was obdurate, and so I accompanied them. The two dead men they left where they had fallen, nor gave them a second glance—thus cheap is life upon Caspak.

Tracing the Evolution of the Races of Man

THESE people also were cave-dwellers, but their caves showed the result of a higher intelligence that brought them a step nearer to civilized man than the tribe next "toward the beginning." The interiors of their caverns were cleared of rubbish, though still far from clean, and they had pallets of dried grasses covered with the skins of leopard, lynx, and bear, while before the entrances were barriers of stone and small, rudely circular stone ovens. The walls of the cavern to which I was conducted were covered with drawings scratched upon the sandstone. There were the outlines of giant red deer, of mammoths, of tigers and other beasts. Here, as in the last tribe, there were no children or any old people. The men of this tribe had two names, or rather names of two syllables, and their language contained words of two syllables; whereas in the tribe of Tsa the words were all of a single syllable, with the exception of a very few like *Atis* and *Galus*. The chief's name was To-jo, and his household consisted of seven females and himself. These women were much more comely, or rather less hideous than those of Tsa's people; one of them, even, was almost pretty, being less hairy and having a rather nice skin, with high coloring.

They were all much interested in me and examined my clothing and equipment carefully, handling and feeling and smelling of each article. I learned from them that their people were known as Band-lu, or spear-men; Tsa's race was called Sto-lu—hatchet-men. Below these in the scale of evolution came the Bo-lu, or club-men, and then the

Alus, who had no weapons and no language. In that word I recognized what to me seemed the most remarkable discovery I had made upon Caprona, for unless it were mere coincidence, I had come upon a word that had been handed down from the beginning of spoken language upon earth, been handed down for millions of years, perhaps, with little change. It was the sole remaining thread of the ancient woof of a dawning culture which had been woven when Caprona was a fiery mount upon a great land-mass teeming with life. It linked the unfathomable then to the eternal now. And yet it may have been pure coincidence; my better judgment tells me that it is coincidence that in Caspak the term for speechless man is *Alus*, and in the outer world of our own today it is *Alalus*, borrowed from the Greek by Haeckel.

The comely woman of whom I spoke was called So-ta, and she took such a lively interest in me that To-jo finally objected to her attentions, emphasizing his displeasure by knocking her down and kicking her into a corner of the cavern. I leaped between them while he was still kicking her, and obtaining a quick hold upon him, dragged him screaming with pain from the cave. There I made him promise not to hurt the she again, upon pain of worse punishment. So-ta gave me a grateful look; but To-jo and the balance of his women were sullen and ominous.

Later in the evening So-ta confided to me that she was soon to leave the tribe.

"So-ta soon be Kro-lu," she confided in a low whisper. I asked her what a Kro-lu might be, and she tried to explain, but I do not yet know if I understood her. From her gestures I deduced that the Kro-lus were a people who were armed with bows and arrows, had vessels in which to cook their food and huts of some sort in which they lived, and were accompanied by animals. It was all very fragmentary and vague, but the idea seemed to be that the Kro-lus were a more advanced people than the Band-lus. I pondered a long time upon all that I had heard, before sleep came to me. I tried to find some connection between these various races that would explain the universal hope which each of them harbored that some day they would become Galus. So-ta had given me a suggestion; but the resulting idea was so weird that I could scarce even entertain it; yet it coincided with Ahm's expressed hope, with the various steps in evolution I had noted in the several tribes I had encountered and with the range of type represented in each tribe. For example, among the Band-lu were such types as So-ta, who seemed to me to be the highest in the scale of evolution, and To-jo, who was just a shade nearer the ape, while there were others who had flatter noses, faces more prognathous and hairier bodies. The question puzzled me. Possibly in the outer world the answer to it is locked in the bosom of the Sphinx. Who knows? I do not.

Thinking the thoughts of a lunatic or a dope-fiend, I fell asleep; and when I awoke, my hands and feet were securely tied and my weapons had been taken from me. How they did it without awakening me I cannot tell you. It was humiliating, but it was true. To-jo stood above me.

The early light of morning was dimly filtering into the cave.

A Prisoner and an Escape

"TELL me," he demanded, "how to throw a man over my head and break his neck, for I am going to kill you, and I wish to know this thing before you die."

Of all the ingenuous declarations I have ever heard, this one copped the proverbial bun. It struck me as so funny that, even in the face of death, I laughed. Death, I may remark here, had, however, lost much of its terror for me. I had become a disciple of Lys' fleeting philosophy of the valuelessness of human life. I realized that she was quite right—that we were but comic figures hopping from the cradle to the grave, of interest to practically no other created thing than ourselves and our few intimates.

Behind To-jo stood So-ta. She raised one hand with the palm toward me—the Caspakian equivalent of a negative shake of the head.

"Let me think about it," I parried, and To-jo said that he would wait until night. He would give me a day to think it over; then he left, and the women left—the men for the hunt, and the women, as I later learned from So-ta, for the warm pool where they immersed their bodies as did the shes of the Sto-lu. "Ata," explained So-ta, when I questioned her as to the purpose of this matutinal rite; but that was later.

I must have lain there bound and uncomfortable for two or three hours when at last So-ta entered the cave. She carried a sharp knife—mine, in fact, and with it she cut my bonds.

"Come!" she said. "So-ta will go with you back to the Galus. It is time that So-ta left the Band-lu. Together we will go to the Kro-lu, and after that the Galus. To-jo will kill you tonight. He will kill So-ta if he knows that So-ta aided you. We will go together."

"I will go with you to the Kro-lu," I replied, "but then I must return to my own people toward the beginning."

"You cannot go back," she said. "It is forbidden. They would kill you. Thus far have you come—there is no returning."

"But I must return," I insisted. "My people are there. I must return and lead them in this direction."

She insisted, and I insisted; but at last we compromised. I was to escort her as far as the country of the Kro-lu and then I was to go back after my own people and lead them north into a land where the dangers were fewer and the people less murderous. She brought me all my belongings that had been filched from me—rifle, ammunition, knife, and thermos bottle, and then hand in hand we descended the cliff and set off toward the north.

For three days we continued upon our way, until we arrived outside a village of thatched huts just at dusk. So-ta said that she would enter alone; I must not be seen if I did not intend to remain, as it was forbidden that one should return and live after having advanced this far. So she left me. She was a dear girl and a staunch and true comrade—more like a man than a woman. In her simple

barbaric way she was both refined and chaste. She had been the wife of To-jo. Among the Kro-lu she would find another mate after the manner of the strange Caspakian world; but she told me very frankly that whenever I returned, she would leave her mate and come to me, as she preferred me above all others. I was becoming a ladies' man after a lifetime of bashfulness!

At the outskirts of the village I left her without even seeing the sort of people who inhabited it, and set off through the growing darkness toward the south. On the third day I made a detour westward to avoid the country of the Band-lu, as I did not care to be detained by a meeting with To-jo. On the sixth day I came to the cliffs of the Sto-lu, and my heart beat fast as I approached them, for here was Lys. Soon I would hold her tight in my arms again; soon her warm lips would merge with mine. I felt sure that she was still safe among the hatchet people, and I was already picturing the joy and the love-light in her eyes when she should see me once more as I emerged from the last clump of trees and almost ran toward the cliffs.

Another Grave

IT was late in the morning. The women must have returned from the pool; yet as I drew near, I saw no sign of life whatever. "They have remained longer," I thought; but when I was quite close to the base of the cliffs, I saw that which dashed my hopes and my happiness to earth. Strewn along the ground were a score of mute and horrible suggestions of what had taken place during my absence—bones picked clean of flesh, the bones of manlike creatures, the bones of many of the tribe of Sto-lu; and in no cave was there sign of life.

Closely I examined the ghastly remains fearful each instant that I should find the dainty skull that would shatter my happiness for life; but though I searched diligently, picking up every one of the twenty-odd skulls, I found none that was not the skull of a creature but slightly removed from the ape. Hope, then, still lived. For another three days I searched north and south, east and west for the hatchet-men of Caspak; but never a trace of them did I find. It was raining most of the time now, and the weather was as near cold as it ever seems to get on Caprona.

At last I gave up the search and set off toward Fort Dinosaur. For a week—a week filled with the terrors and dangers of a primeval world—I pushed on in the direction I thought was south. The sun never shone; the rain scarcely ever ceased falling. The beasts I met with were fewer in number but infinitely more terrible in temper; yet I lived on until there came to me the realization that I was hopelessly lost, that a year of sunshine would not again give me my bearings; and while I was cast down by this terrifying knowledge, the knowledge that I never again could find my Lys, I stumbled upon another grave—the grave of William James, with its little crude headstone and its scrawled characters recording that he had died upon the 13th of September—killed by a saber-tooth tiger.

I think that I almost gave up then. Never in my life have I felt more hopeless or helpless or alone.

I was lost. I could not find my friends. I did not even know that they still lived; in fact, I could not bring myself to believe that they did. I was sure that Lys was dead. I wanted myself to die, and yet I clung to life—useless and hopeless and harrowing a thing as it had become. I clung to life because some ancient, reptilian forbear had clung to life and transmitted to me through the ages the most powerful motive that guided his minute brain—the motive of self-preservation.

At last I came to the great barrier-cliffs; and after three days of mad effort—of maniacal effort—I scaled them. I built crude ladders; I wedged sticks in narrow fissures; I chopped toe-holds and finger-holds with my long knife; but at last I scaled them. Near the summit I came upon a huge cavern. It is the abode of some mighty winged creature of the Triassic—or rather it was. Now it is mine. I slew the thing and took its abode. I reached the summit and looked out upon the broad gray terrible Pacific of the far-southern winter. It was cold up there. It is cold here today; yet here I sit watching, watching, watching for the thing I know will never come—for a sail.

CHAPTER X

ONCE a day I descend to the base of the cliff and hunt, and fill my stomach with water from a clear cold spring. I have three gourds which I fill with water and take back to my cave against the long nights. I have fashioned a spear and a bow and arrow, that I may conserve my ammunition, which is running low. My clothes are worn to shreds. Tomorrow I shall discard them for leopard-skins which I have tanned and sewn into a garment strong and warm. It is cold up here. I have a fire burning, and I sit bent over it while I write; but I am safe here. No other living creature ventures to the chill summit of the barrier cliffs. I am safe, and I am alone with my sorrows and my remembered joys—but without hope. It is said that hope springs eternal in the human breast; but there is none in mine.

I am about done. Presently I shall fold these pages and push them into my thermos bottle. I shall cork it and screw the cap down tight, and then I shall hurl it as far out into the sea as my strength will permit. The wind is off-shore; the tide is running out; perhaps it will be carried into one of those numerous ocean-currents which sweep perpetually from pole to pole and from continent to continent, to be deposited at last upon some inhabited shore. If fate is kind and this does happen, then, *for God's sake, come and get me!*

It was a week ago that I wrote the preceding paragraph, which I thought would end the written record of my life upon Caprona. I had paused to put a new point on my quill and stir the crude ink (which I made by crushing a black variety of berry and mixing it with water) before attaching my signature, when faintly from the valley below came an unmistakable sound which brought me to my feet, trembling with excitement, to peer eagerly downward from my dizzy ledge. How full of meaning that sound was to me you may guess when I tell you that it was the report of a firearm! For a moment my gaze traversed the landscape beneath until it was caught and held by four figures near

the base of the cliff—a human figure held at bay by three hyaenodons, those ferocious and blood-thirsty wild dogs of the Eocene. A fourth beast lay dead or dying near by.

I couldn't be sure, looking down from above as I was; but yet I trembled like a leaf in the intuitive belief that it was Lys, and my judgment served to confirm my wild desire, for whoever it was carried only a pistol, and thus had Lys been armed. The first wave of sudden joy which surged through me was short-lived in the face of the swift-following conviction that the one who fought below was already doomed. Luck and only luck it must have been which had permitted that first shot to lay low one of the savage creatures, for even such a heavy weapon as my pistol is entirely inadequate against even the lesser carnivora of Caspak. In a moment the three would charge! a futile shot would but tend more greatly to enrage the one it chanced to hit; and then the three would drag down the little human figure and tear it to pieces.

And maybe it was Lys! My heart stood still at the thought, but mind and muscle responded to the quick decision I was forced to make. There was but a single hope—a single chance—and I took it. I raised my rifle to my shoulder and took careful aim. It was a long shot, a dangerous shot, for unless one is accustomed to it, shooting from a considerable altitude is most deceptive work. There is, though, something about marksmanship which is quite beyond all scientific laws.

Upon no other theory can I explain my marksmanship of that moment. Three times my rifle spoke—three quick, short syllables of death. I did not take conscious aim; and yet at each report a beast crumpled in its tracks!

From my ledge to the base of the cliff is a matter of several thousand feet of dangerous climbing; yet I venture to say that the first ape from whose loins my line has descended never could have equaled the speed with which I literally dropped down the face of that rugged escarpment. The last two hundred feet is over a steep incline of loose rubble to the valley bottom, and I had just reached the top of this when there arose to my ears an agonized cry—"Bowen! Bowen! Quick, my love, quick!"

Lys Found and in Danger

I HAD been too much occupied with the dangers of the descent to glance down toward the valley; but that cry which told me that it was indeed Lys, and that she was again in danger, brought my eyes quickly upon her in time to see a hairy, burly brute seize her and start off at a run toward the near-by wood. From rock to rock, chamoislike, I leaped downward toward the valley, in pursuit of Lys and her hideous abductor.

He was heavier than I by many pounds, and so weighted by the burden he carried that I easily overtook him; and at last he turned, snarling, to face me. It was Kho of the tribe of Tsa, the hatchet-men. He recognized me, and with a low growl he threw Lys aside and came for me. "The she is mine," he cried. "I kill! I kill!"

I had to discard my rifle before I commenced the rapid descent of the cliff, so that now I was armed only with a hunting knife, and this I whipped from

its scabbard as Kho leaped toward me. He was a mighty beast, mightily muscled, and the urge that has made males fight since the dawn of life on earth filled him with blood-lust and the thirst to slay; but not one whit less did it fill me with the same primal passions. Two abysmal beasts sprang at each other's throats that day beneath the shadow of earth's oldest cliffs—the man of now and the man-thing of the earliest, forgotten then, imbued by the same deathless passion that has come down unchanged through all the epochs, periods and eras of time from the beginning, and which shall continue to the incalculable end—woman, the imperishable Alpha and Omega of life.

Kho closed and sought my jugular with his teeth. He seemed to forget the hatchet dangling by its aurochs-hide thong at his hip, as I forgot, for the moment, the dagger in my hand. And I doubt not but that Kho would easily have bested me in an encounter of that sort had not Lys' voice awakened within my momentarily reverted brain the skill and cunning of reasoning man. "Bowen!" she cried. "Your knife! Your knife!"

It was enough. It recalled me from the forgotten eon to which my brain had flown and left me once again a modern man battling with a clumsy, unskilled brute. No longer did my jaws snap at the hairy throat before me; but instead my knife sought and found a space between two ribs over the savage heart. Kho voiced a single horrid scream, stiffened spasmodically and sank to the earth. And Lys threw herself into my arms. All the fears and sorrows of the past were wiped away, and once again I was the happiest of men.

With some misgivings I shortly afterward cast my eyes upward toward the precarious ledge which ran before my cave, for it seemed to me quite beyond all reason to expect a dainty modern belle to essay the perils of that frightful climb. I asked her if she thought she could brave the ascent, and she laughed gayly in my face.

"Watch!" she cried, and ran eagerly toward the base of the cliff. Like a squirrel she clambered swiftly aloft, so that I was forced to exert myself to keep pace with her. At first she frightened me; but presently I was aware that she was quite as safe here as I was. When we finally came to my ledge and I again held her in my arms, she recalled to my mind that for several weeks she had been living the life of a cave-girl with the tribe of hatchet-men. They had been driven from their former caves by another tribe which had slain many and carried off quite half the females, and the new cliffs to which they had flown had proven far higher and more precipitous, so that she had become, through necessity, a most practiced climber.

She told me of Kho's desire for her, since all his females had been stolen and of how her life had been a constant nightmare of terror as she sought by night and by day to elude the great brute. For a time Nobs had been all the protection she required; but one day he disappeared—nor has she seen him since. She believes that he was deliberately made away with; and so do I, for we both are sure that he never would have deserted her. With her means of protection gone, Lys was now at the mercy of the hatchet-man; nor was it many

hours before he had caught her at the base of the cliff and seized her; but as he bore her triumphantly aloft toward his cave, she had managed to break loose and escape him.

"For three days he has pursued me," she said, "through this horrible world. How I have passed through in safety I cannot guess, or how I have always managed to outdistance him; yet I have done it, until just as you discovered me. Fate was kind to us, Bowen."

I nodded my head in assent and crushed her to me. And then we talked and planned as I cooked antelope-steaks over my fire, and we came to the conclusion that there was no hope of rescue, that she and I were doomed to live and die upon Caprona. Well, it might be worse! I would rather live here always with Lys than to live elsewhere without her; and she, dear girl, says the same

of me; but I am afraid of this life for her. It is a hard, fierce, dangerous life, and I shall pray always that we shall be rescued from it—for her sake.

That night the clouds broke, and the moon shone down upon our little ledge; and there, hand in hand, we turned our faces toward heaven and plighted our troth beneath the eyes of God. No human agency could have married us more sacredly than we are wed. We are man and wife, and we are content. If God wills it, we shall live out our lives here. If He wills otherwise, then this manuscript which I shall now consign to the inscrutable forces of the sea shall fall into friendly hands. However, we are each without hope. And so we say good-bye in this, our last message to the world beyond the barrier cliffs.

(Signed) BOWEN J. TYLER, JR.
LYS LA R. TYLER.

Book II

THE PEOPLE THAT TIME FORGOT

The Adventures of Thomas Billings

CHAPTER I

I AM forced to admit that even though I had traveled a long distance to place Bowen Tyler's manuscript in the hands of his father, I was still a trifle skeptical as to its sincerity, since I could not but recall that it had not been many years since Bowen had been one of the most notorious practical jokers of his alma mater. The truth was that as I sat in the Tyler library at Santa Monica I commenced to feel a trifle foolish and to wish that I had merely forwarded the manuscript by express instead of bearing it personally, for I confess that I do not enjoy being laughed at. I have a well-developed sense of humor—when the joke is not on me.

Mr. Tyler, Sr., was expected almost hourly. The last steamer in from Honolulu had brought information of the date of the expected sailing of his yacht *Toreador*, which was now twenty-four hours overdue. Mr. Tyler's assistant secretary, who had been left at home, assured me that there was no doubt but that the *Toreador* had sailed as promised, since he knew his employer well enough to be positive that nothing short of an act of God would prevent his doing what he had planned to do. I was also aware of the fact that the sending apparatus of the *Toreador's* wireless equipment was sealed, and that it would only be used in event of dire necessity. There was, therefore, nothing to do but wait, and I waited.

We discussed the manuscript and hazarded guesses concerning it and the strange events it narrated. The torpedoing of the liner upon which Bowen J. Tyler, Jr., had taken passage for France to join the American Ambulance was a well-known fact, and I had further substantiated by wire to the New York office of the owners, that a Miss La Rue had been booked for passage. Further, neither she nor Bowen had been mentioned among the list of survivors; nor had the body of either of them been recovered.

Their rescue by the English tug was entirely probable; the capture of the enemy *U-33* by the tug's

crew was not beyond the range of possibility; and their adventures during the perilous cruise which the treachery and deceit of Benson extended until they found themselves in the waters of the far South Pacific with depleted stores and poisoned water-casks, while bordering upon the fantastic, appeared logical enough as narrated, event by event, in the manuscript.

Caprona has always been considered a more or less mythical land, though it is vouched for by an eminent navigator of the eighteenth century; but Bowen's narrative made it seem very real, however many miles of trackless ocean lay between us and it. Yes, that narrative had us guessing. We were agreed that it was most improbable; but neither of us could say that anything which it contained was beyond the range of possibility. The weird flora and fauna of Caspak were as possible under the thick, warm atmospheric conditions of the superheated crater as they were in the Mesozoic era under almost exactly similar conditions, which were then probably world-wide. The assistant secretary had heard of Caproni and his discoveries but admitted that he never had taken much stock in the one or the other. We were agreed that the one statement most difficult of explanation was that which reported the entire absence of human young among the various tribes with which Tyler had had intercourse. This was the one irreconcilable statement of the manuscript. A world of adults! It was impossible.

Planning a Rescue from the Island

WE speculated upon the probable fate of Bradley and his party of English sailors. Tyler had found the graves of two of them; how many more might have perished! And Miss La Rue—could a young girl long have survived the horrors of Caspak after having been separated from all of her own kind? The assistant secretary wondered if Nobs still was with her, and then we both smiled at this tacit acceptance of the truth of the whole uncanny tale.

might have any other she among the Galus; but Ajor—no!

The poor child was heartbroken; and as for me, I was slowly realizing the hold that Ajor had upon my heart and wondering how I should get along without her. As I held her in my arms that last night, I tried to imagine what life would be without her, for at last there had come to me the realization that I loved her—loved my little barbarian; and as I finally tore myself away and went to my own hut to snatch a few hours' sleep before we set off upon our long journey on the morrow, I consoled myself with the thought that time would heal the wound and that back in my native land I should find a mate who would be all and more to me than little Ajor could ever be—a woman of my own race and my own culture.

Morning came more quickly than I could have wished. I rose and breakfasted, but saw nothing of Ajor. It was best, I thought, that I go thus without the harrowing pangs of a last farewell. The party formed for the march, an escort of Galu warriors ready to accompany us. I could not even bear to go to Ace's corral and bid him farewell. The night before, I had given him to Ajor, and

(To be concluded)

now in my mind the two seemed quite inseparable.

And so we marched away, down along the street flanked with its stone houses and out through the wide gateway in the stone wall which surrounds the city and on across the clearing toward the forest through which we must pass to reach the northern boundary of Galu, beyond which we would turn south. At the edge of the forest I cast a last backward glance at the city which held my heart, and beside the massive gateway I saw that which brought me to a sudden halt. It was a little figure leaning against one of the great upright posts upon which the gates swing—a crumpled little figure; and even at this distance I could see its shoulders heave to the sobs that racked it. It was the last straw.

Bowen was near me. "Good-bye, old man," I said. "I'm going back."

He looked at me in surprise. "Good-bye, old man," he said, and grasped my hand. "I thought you'd do it in the end."

And then I went back and took Ajor in my arms and kissed the tears from her eyes and a smile to her lips while together we watched the last of the Americans disappear into the forest.

Discussions

In this department we shall discuss, every month, topics of interest to all of our readers. The editors invite correspondence on all subjects directly or indirectly related to the stories appearing in this magazine. Only letters of interest to all of our readers will be published, and discussed by the editors. Due to the great influx of mail it is impossible to answer all letters personally, and in case a special personal answer is required, a nominal fee of 25c to cover time and postage is required.

Critics Criticized

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have read the January issue of AMAZING STORIES, and certainly enjoyed all the stories, as I did in all the previous issues.

I couldn't resist writing you on the attitude of some of your readers who criticize your methods.

An editor certainly has some job, with the "gimme this," and "gimme that." It's a wonder the magazines don't go to ruin, and the publishers to an asylum.

Now if a correspondent would only consider the other readers as he does himself he could not find fault with your magazine, but no, only he himself enjoys reading to his ideal.

If a reader doesn't like a story why shouldn't he pass it over, and read the next one. The one he almost hates brings joy and an idea to someone else. As an example we may take "The Moon Hoax," if he stopped to realize that the public will pick up everything but "scientific truth," he would see that the "Moon Hoax," truly believed by many, showed the psychology of the many.

Some do not like funny stories. Well as for me, I like a mixture, comic, sober, exciting, spiritualistic, mysterious, gruesome; and your magazine, the one great magazine of scientific literature, has satisfied all these desires.

Fosdick's electroplating story hit me so hard that I immediately coated rats with graphite and plated them with copper, and also insects were coated in the same manner.

Dr. Ox's experiment also hit me hard. I have been constructing a small yard which will be almost airtight, and small animals and insects will be experimented on. These two stories are comic, yet I found an idea in each.

"Station X" I certainly think is a wonderful masterpiece, and I put 15 dollars in a low wave transmitter so I could have a friend of mine, who is a physician and pretty good hypnotist, hypnotize a subject, the experiment failed this once, but I'm going to try again.

If a person would follow the "Science and Invention" motto, "If you do not go beyond fact you rarely get as far as fact," and stop to consider his fellow readers, he would find no fault with your magazine. Am I right?

There were only two stories I really didn't enjoy in the magazine since the first issue, but I soon found out that they were much admired in some circles. Now if I put up my personal objection, how could you please me and them? If I don't like a story I let it pass to the next reader, and I certainly wish the others felt the same.

I can truthfully say that there are seven stories I derived no idea from, but from the rest I got real good and even tried experiments based on them.

But how do I know what emotions these seven stories may have caused in other brains and hearts?

I trust you will be able to publish your flawless magazine, twice a month.

ANTONIO G. O. GELINEAU,
Burlington, Vt.

[Here is a letter that pleases the Editor more, perhaps, than many others that have come in. Here we have at least something constructive to show where a man's imagination was aroused to such a degree that he went out and did things, which is as it should be. This is the fulfillment of our highest hopes, namely, that AMAZING STORIES will fire the imagination to achieve things in this world. In the editorial of the October, 1926, issue, the Editor stated as follows:

"An author, in one of his fantastic scientific stories, may start some one thinking along the suggested lines which the author had in mind, whereas the inventor in the end will finish up with something totally different, and perhaps much more important. But the fact remains that the author provided the stimulus in the first place, which is a most important function to perform."

This is a healthy sign. We hope to hear more from readers who have thus been stimulated.—EDITOR.]

From a Young Reader

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I am sixteen years old, it is true, but just the same I can't resist praising your magazine. There is something in it which grips the imagination and sends it to regions higher than any to which it could be sent by the ordinary type of fiction. I find it hard to wait a month for the issues; this month I secured a February copy at your offices in Park Place several days before the magazine appeared on the newsstands. I reiterate, with many of your readers, that AMAZING STORIES should be published twice a month. I would surely purchase it every two weeks; and many of my friends to whom I have recommended it would unhesitatingly do so also.

It may interest you to know that I have met with an allusion to the "Moon Hoax," which may interest you; it is from the *North American Review*, No. 89, October, 1835 (the writer is discussing Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*); "In short, our private opinion is, as we have remarked, that the whole story [i.e., *Sartor Resartus*] . . . has about as much foundation in truth as the late entertaining account of Sir John Herschel's discoveries in the moon."

As to having sequels to such stories as "A Columbus of Space," I think it advisable not to have them; first, because sequels are rarely as good as the originals; second, because it would be unwise to introduce too great a number of lengthy stories dealing with the same subject.

EDGAR EVIA, New York, N. Y.

[This is a very pleasant letter and our young correspondent, in our opinion, does himself great credit by it. It is perfectly true that many sequels have proved great failures and there is so much good material at hand, that it is hardly worth while to suggest special writing of sequels. The citation about Carlyle's "Herr Teufelsdrösch" in this story about the psychological view of clothes; "Sartor Resartus" is quite interesting. The curious thing is that the "Moon Hoax" was firmly believed by thousands.—EDITOR.]



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Discussions—

NATURAL HISTORY IN FICTION

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I wish to tell you that I have read with deep interest your various issues of AMAZING STORIES. I have always been interested in medicine and scientific subjects and your handling of these matters has proved most interesting.

The story of the "Second Deluge" was very well written and its description of the flood and the chaos which it caused in my mind rank with the best literature in its descriptive passages. "The Island of Dr. Moreau," seemed a bit horrible in spots, but of course was entertaining. I really prefer something like the "Red Dust." One can easily close his eyes and imagine himself threading these dusky forests with the people of a thousand years hence. Let us hope that civilization may go forward and not backward.

Some months ago, your article on the attack of the ants on a Brazilian gunboat aroused my curiosity and by consulting encyclopedias, I found every one of your statements correct. I think such articles with a real scientific basis and giving some true facts about natural history or science are a real help in the study of science and should prove good supplementary reading for the high school and college students who too often spend their time in reading trashy books with no real value to them. May AMAZING STORIES continue to grow as it has in the past.

HERBERT H. SMITH,
Brooklyn, N. Y.

[We agree with our correspondent that the natural history features of "Red Dust" and of the giant ant of South America are most interesting and striking. We believe that such stories as the ones cited contain valuable bits of science which can be assimilated and made a part of the equipment as well as if they came out of a dry text-book.—Editor.]

THE MOON HOAX "ROTTEN"!

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

I have just finished reading, with great interest, the discussions, in your January, 1927 number. It is not with great surprise, therefore, that I find one fault with AMAZING STORIES that I have long noticed in *Science and Invention*. I have long noticed in *Science and Invention* that I have long noticed in *Science and Invention* since it's first issue, and believe I am qualified to make this criticism. When you receive a letter praising your magazine, you unqualifiedly agree with it; while when you receive a letter criticizing the publication, you declare that the critic is wrong, but you do not say why. I will not desert the stand that I wish to take, however, and, knowing, from the experience of others that you will not agree with me, I will say, together with Mr. Spurling, of Elgin, Ill., that the "Moon Hoax" was—rotten. All it presented was a string of facts, describing an unusual phenomenon. This, in a Scientifiction magazine. True, it was fiction, in that it was a colossal hoax, but, I believe, in the manner in which Scientifiction is supposed to be interpreted, this is not exactly correct.

I would certainly like to see AMAZING STORIES in semi-monthly form, as this would afford an opportunity for Mr. A. B. Maloir's plan to be put into execution. To me, at least, Jules Verne's stories are not "old stuff," as only two or three of them are obtainable at the library that I use, and in this respect I quite disagree with R. H. Campbell, of Toledo, Ohio.

Yours for bigger and better AMAZING STORIES.

HOWARD BOWMAN,
Los Angeles, Calif.

[We are pleased to print the above, because it gives us an excellent chance to show why, for instance, the "Moon Hoax," while from Mr. Bowman's standpoint it may be rotten, still was good enough to fool hundreds and thousands of people, who actually believed the hoax in question. A bit of psychology enters into all controversies of this kind, because what one man likes the other one will condemn. Very few people ever agree on anything completely. It is, for instance, a simple matter to prove that black is not black at all, but something else. You can take a black inkspot on a sheet of white paper, which most people may call black, but when you hold it against strong sunlight it becomes grey. Consequently black is not black, but grey, and so on *ad infinitum*. Scientifiction, to our mind, is fiction plus science. Both of these requirements, we believe, were represented in a most unusual manner in "The Moon Hoax." We agree with our correspondent that regarded as a story perhaps it is not like the kind that would be written today. It is old-fashioned, as some of Jules Verne's stories are old-fashioned. Nevertheless, they are classics, and so was "The Moon Hoax."—Editor.]



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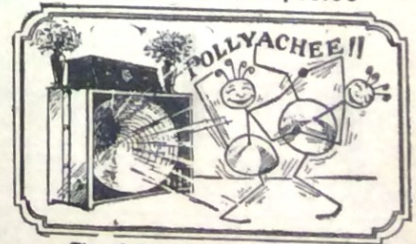
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AN INVISIBLE SPIDER WEB

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:
 I have just read, "The Man Who Could Vanish," in your January issue.

In comment, I can only repeat your own words. "It is the best story of invisibility I have ever read."

As for the possibility of material things becoming invisible, I wish to relate in as few words as possible, a crude instance of the idea.

My sister and I were walking in the Florida woods, one day, when I noticed about ten or twelve feet ahead of us, one of the large banded spiders in its beautiful web, which was stretched between the branches of a small tree; I could distinctly see the web, with its intricate tracery and its zig-zag line of heavier tissue; the spider also was in plain sight, as large as a bumble-bee.

I tried to point it out to my sister, when, to my surprise, the spider, web and all, vanished. I could see the branch where it had been, and went forward to investigate; of course, I walked right into the web, and the spider, quite visible now, ran down over my face and arm, and escaped. Perhaps you know, as I afterward learned and saw for myself, that the zig-zag line of web-tissue is a spring, which, on the approach of an enemy, the spider agitates, producing so rapid a vibration of the web that the eye cannot follow it; it becomes invisible just as the spokes of a wheel in rapid motion become invisible, and even transparent to some extent.

There is an absolutely true story of the vanishing of a living creature, house and all; perhaps it may serve as the basis of some future story of invisibility! Help yourselves, authors.

To my mind, the stories of Jules Verne, Wells, Poe and other immortals are in excellent company, when reprinted among "AMAZING STORIES."

F. B. K.

Lancaster, Wisconsin.

WHERE WILL THE FLOODS OF THE "SECOND DELUGE" GO?

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

AMAZING STORIES is a magazine that hits the spot with me as no other fiction magazine has ever done. Although I do not have any too much time to devote to reading I do manage to get through the book before the next issue comes out.

If you make it a semi-monthly I, for one, would welcome A. B. Maloir's suggestion: a complete story in one issue and a bunch of short stories in the next. I think this a very novel idea and would like to see it tried out.

Since reading "The Second Deluge" I have been asking myself repeatedly this question: "Where would a six-mile layer of water on this earth go to when it receded?" Even Cosmo Versal's explanation of it seeping into the earth's crust seems to me rather inadequate. The idea of it evaporating into space is of course impossible, once it had gathered upon the earth, because it could get no farther than our atmosphere, which would hold no more than a few inches at the most. About 25 per cent of the earth's surface is land and quite a little of that is solid rock. I doubt if even six miles of hydraulic pressure could force much water into them.

Of course the enormous pressure of the increased depth over the old ocean beds would exert an upheaving influence to the higher ground and perhaps pop out a few mountain peaks. It seems to me there would never again be much more than 3 or 10 per cent of dry land for millions of years.

"The Man Who Could Vanish," is very good but the theory seemed rather vague. Somewhere, several years ago (I think it must have been in the *Electrical Experimenter*) I read a story in which invisibility was an issue. The principle there was mirrors and prisms reflecting and refracting the light around the object.

On the whole I enjoy every one of the stories even though there may be some little technicality occasionally, which is too much for me to grasp at once.

WESLEY A. KAUDER,
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[As to the problem of the six-mile depth of waters; it is admitted that this much water could not recede into the interior of the earth. However, it is quite possible that this condition could have prevailed, not only on this planet, but on many other like bodies somewhere in the universe. It should always be remembered that, geologically, time, as compared to human epochs, is infinite. It should furthermore be remembered that a great deal of the atmosphere, and, therefore, water in the form of vapor, is lost right along into space. The grazing meteorites are responsible for a good deal of this. Furthermore, at very high points in the atmosphere, the earth continuously loses billions of particles of air every minute. While small, during the course of a year—so small, in fact, that it would be difficult to measure it—in the course of geological time, such losses reach tremendous figures.

The latest geological time scale, based on physics, shows us that the age of mammals—that is, the Miocene and Oligocene periods—can be placed about 16,000,000 years ago. The Mesozoic age of reptiles dates back at least 150,000,000 years. The Paleozoic age of fishes and amphibians dates back at least 300,000,000 years, while the Precambrian dates back at least one billion years. During such time, the losses are, of course, tremendous, and even a sheet of water six miles deep would have vanished entirely out into space long before the passing of such a cycle. Our water supply even now is getting smaller and smaller as time goes on. The moon has lost practically all of it, and so has Mars—both of these bodies being far older than the earth.

The point about invisibility, regarding "The Man Who Could Vanish", is explained in the answer to another letter of one of our correspondents.—*Editor.*]

A SCIENTIFICALLY DISPOSED CRITIC

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

One of your writers, namely A. Hyatt Verrill, certainly does write amazing stories. I am amazed as to why his crab people should develop a semi-human mouth, a big hooked nose, steeped eyes, and big flap ears. Why should people, developed to such an extent in mental telepathy need ears like a hunting dog?

Why should a civilized people, such as those in "Through the Crater's Rim," walk on their hands, and use their feet, when animals such as rats, squirrels, kangaroos, etc., know enough to use the members nearest their head and eyes?

Why should Dr. Unsin declare that he does not intend to produce invisibility by causing a body to permit light rays passing through it? How in the world can invisibility otherwise be produced? It is true that if the reflected light cannot be seen, the object itself cannot be seen. But what of the light rays intercepted by that body? If the reflected light rays of a building are invisible, does that permit reflected light rays from a building in the next street to pass through the first building unaltered?

S. W. ELLIS,
Woodlaron, Pa.

[Our correspondent asks why Mr. Verrill's crab people should develop a semi-human mouth, a big hooked nose, steeped eyes, and big flapped ears; also why should people developed to such an extent in mental telepathy need ears like a hunting dog. To this we can only answer that if our correspondent has ever visited an aquarium or museum of natural history he will readily see that the shapes and varieties of living beings are endless and most astonishing. Some of the most fearful and amazing creatures which have been fished up or dredged from the depths of the ocean by deep sea expeditions prove this point. There are fish with a good sawlike instrument. Other fish are luminous all over, while still others have luminous eyes, characteristics which have been created by their curious environment. There are so many things in nature that we can not explain that it would be futile to try to enumerate them all. There are many organs in the human body even, such as, for instance, the appendix, for which there is no good explanation; hairs in the face of the male, which certainly are not needed these days, and many other organs, which remain for no good reason as far as we know.

The same answer might hold true about the people who walk on their hands. It is not at all impossible, though perhaps a little far-fetched, that such creatures could exist.

Regarding the invisibility—we refer to another letter published here, about an invisible spider web; as the correspondent says, truly, the spokes of a wheel can not be seen when the wheel is revolving rapidly. The same is true of the blades of an electric fan, or the propeller of an airplane which certainly are broad and solid. You can see a house or a face right through the blades, and while the object thus viewed may appear a little darker, it is still there with all its characteristics. Now take a stick and wave it too and fro rapidly. It becomes invisible. Is it such a far-fetched idea then, that by means of some apparatus, the human body, or anything, for that matter, may be vibrated at such a rapidity that, although standing stationary, it will be not seen? This is not impossible in latter-day science.—*Editor.*]

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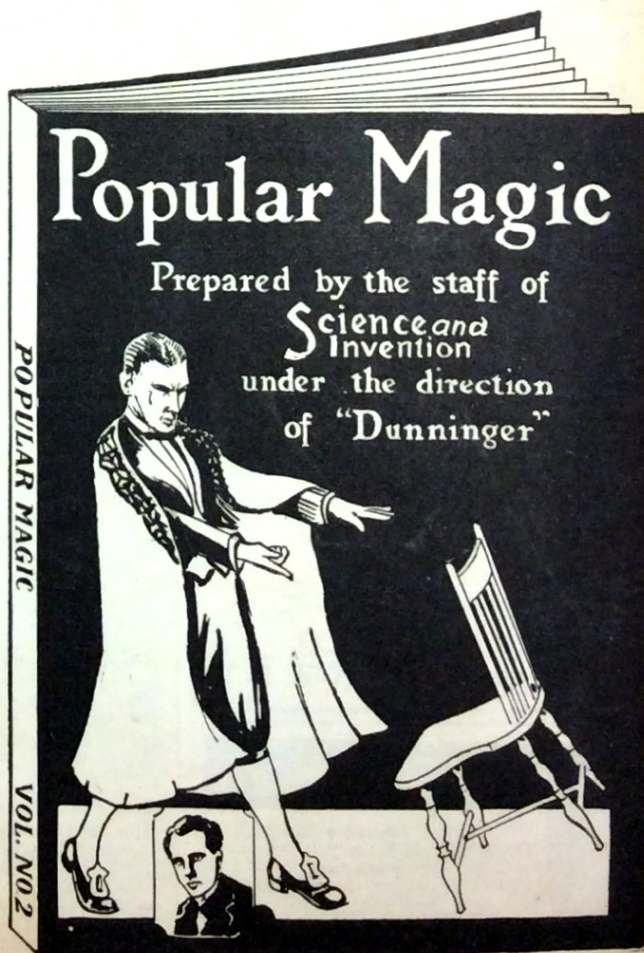
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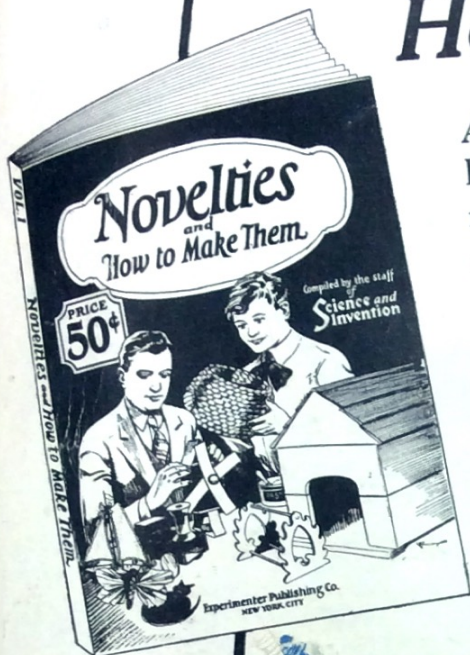
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