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Our Cover

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A mighty space it was, with gigantic machines here and there within it, huge mounds of material and strange shelter places. And, scattered about, some in their over-turned war-machines, some in the now rigid Handling Machines, and a dozen of them stark and silent and laid in a row, were the Martians—dead!
In his travels, the planet Mars gets within thirty-five million miles of the Earth—a very minute celestial distance—and the inhabitants of the little planet undertake to invade the earth. The astronomers were greatly interested in observing some strange phenomena occurring on this nearby planet, if we may so call it; a strange light and peculiar markings are seen and presently, as Mars gets nearer and nearer in his travels, there is a huge outbreak of tremendous gas upon the planet. And presently it turns out that Mars is bombarding the earth, and a great cylinder lands, burying itself half-way or more in the soil, near London. Naturally, the people come out to look at the strange visitor and while they are watching it, the top begins to move, as if unscrewing. It comes off and a terrible form with oily brown skin and long tentacles and something unspeakably terrible in its movements, emerges, almost helpless, from the cylinder and falls into the pit. Others come out of the cylinder, all provided with destructive mechanisms.

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

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

The War of the Worlds

By H. G. Wells

CHAPTER XVI

The Exodus From London

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

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

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

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