

THE BEST WEBZINE FOR SCI-FI, FANTASY, AND HORROR!

Schlock!

WEBZINE

VOL. 13, ISSUE 15
12TH AUGUST 2018

THE ARCHITECT OF RUIN

BY STEPHEN
HERNANDEZ
NOW YOU
WILL PAY
THE
ULTIMATE
PRICE...

UNHOLY CANNOLI

BY AHRON
BALATTI
IT MAY
BE THE
ANTI-
CHRIST.

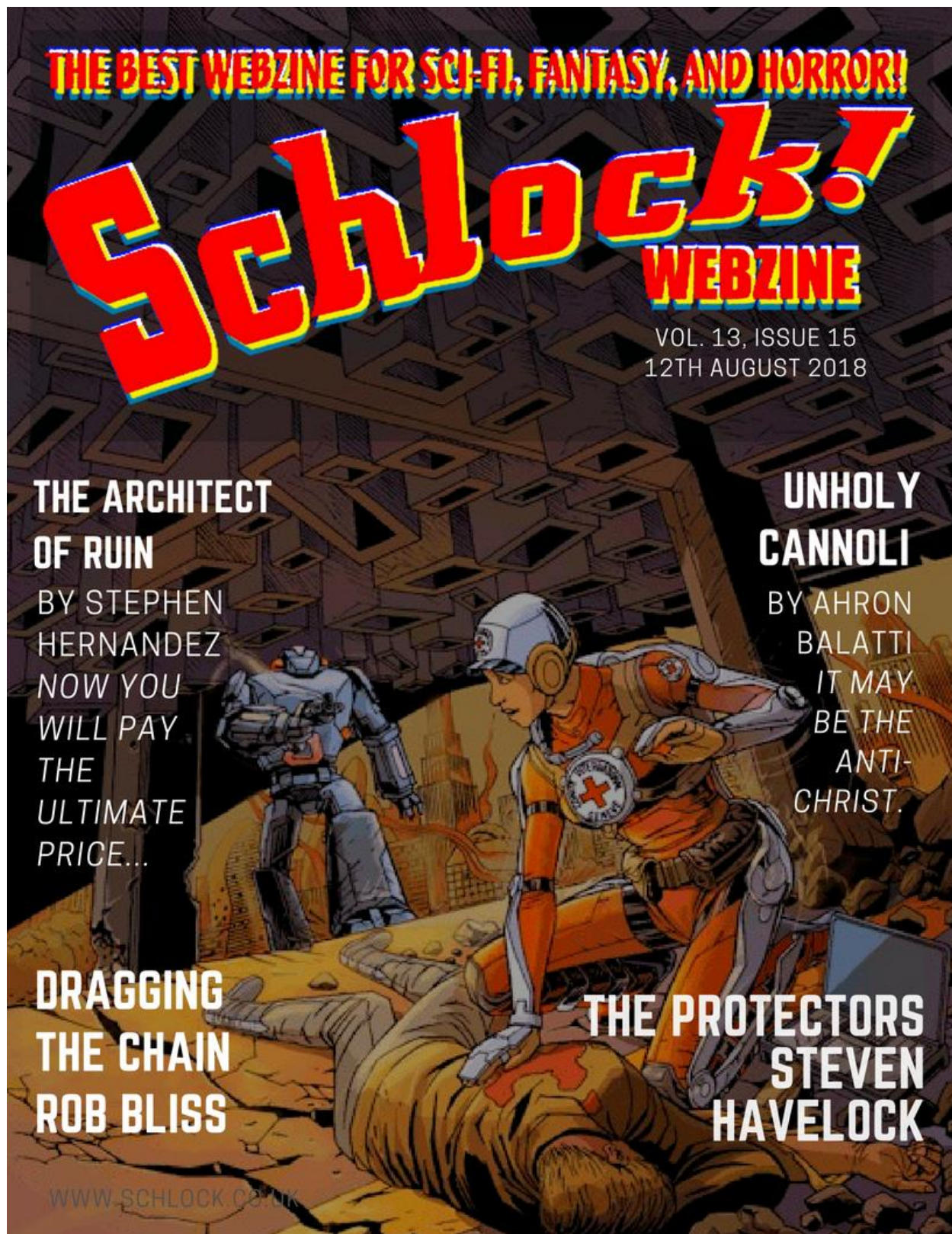
DRAGGING THE CHAIN

ROB BLISS

THE PROTECTORS

STEVEN
HAVELOCK

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SCHLOCK! WEBZINE

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SCHLOCK! WEBZINE

Welcome to Schlock! the webzine for science fiction, fantasy, and horror.

Vol. 13, Issue 15

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Schlock! is a weekly webzine dedicated to short stories, flash fiction, serialised novels, and novellas, within the genres of science fiction, fantasy, and horror. We publish new and old works of pulp sword and sorcery, urban fantasy, dark fantasy, and gothic horror. If you want to read quality works of new pulp fantasy, science fiction or horror, Schlock! is the webzine for you!

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This Edition

This week's cover illustration is *Illustration futuriste* by *Pat Masioni*. Graphic design © by Gavin Chappell, logo design © by C Priest Brumley.

EDITORIAL

IT CAME FROM INSIDE THE INK WELL! *Horror Comics and Comic Horror* from Vincent Davis

THE ARCHITECT OF RUIN by Stephen Hernandez—*You failed, Mr Sherlock Holmes, and now you will pay the ultimate price...* OCCULT DETECTIVE

UNHOLY CANNOLI by Ahron Balatti—*"So you see, I accidentally baked this pastry that I'm worried may be the Antichrist."* COMIC HORROR

DRAGGING THE CHAIN by Rob Bliss—*I must kill until I die...* HORROR

THE PROTECTORS by Steven Havelock—*The inhuman overlords of all existence...* SCIENCE FICTION

REVIEW by John C Adams—*The Physics of Superheroes...* ARTICLE

THE SEARCH FOR ASTRA PALACE Part Twenty-Three by Gregory KH Bryant—*General Howe...* SPACE OPERA

ACROSS THE ZODIAC Chapter Twenty-Nine by Percy Greg—*Azrael...* PLANETARY ROMANCE

THE MOON POOL Chapter Two by A Merritt—*"Dead! All dead!"* SCIENCE FICTION CLASSIC

EDITORIAL

This week, returned from their African adventures, Holmes and Watson investigate the occult horrors lurking behind the Jack the Ripper mystery. An Italian pastry proves to have deeply sinister connections. A twisted killer learns to express himself through art. And a man suffers incommunicable torment for speaking of the unspeakable.

John C Adams reviews *The Physics of Superheroes*. Back on Earth, General Howe reports to Secretary Benson. Out on Mars, the Angel of Death spreads his black wings. And in the Pacific, Throckmorton tells the story of his visit to the cyclopean ruins on the sinister South Sea island of Ponape.

—Gavin Chappell

Available from Rogue Planet Press: [Lovecraftiana: Lammas Eve 2018](#).



[Return to Contents](#)

IT CAME FROM INSIDE THE INKWELL!

IT CAME FROM INSIDE THE INKWELL!

by Vincent Davis



AS THEY WENT AROUND THE ROOM KIM STRUGGLED TO FIND SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT HERSELF THAT SHE COULD SHARE WITH THE REST OF THE GROUP.

Vincent is an artist who has consistently been on assignment in the art world for over twenty years. Throughout his career he has acquired a toolbox of diverse skills (from freehand drawing to digital design, t-shirt designer to muralist). His styles range from the wildly abstract to pulp style comics.

In 2013, his work in END TIMES won an award in the Best Horror Anthology category for that year. When Vincent is not at his drawing board he can be found in the classroom teaching cartooning and illustration to his students at Westchester Community College in Valhalla NY.

He lives in Mamaroneck NY with his wife Jennie and dog Skip.

<https://www.freelanced.com/vincentdavis>

[Return to Contents](#)

THE ARCHITECT OF RUIN by Stephen Hernandez

As with most of Holmes' investigations it began in the comfy, if slightly chaotic, first floor apartments of 221b Baker Street, which we shared. We were both sitting in our favourite armchairs in the living room reading our newspapers. I should say I was sitting, but Holmes in his usual manner was sprawled. He was wreathed in a cloud of pipe smoke so thick that it made foggy London positively pellucid. He was surrounded by his favourite, cheap and disreputable rags: *Police News*, *Famous Crimes*, and the *Police Budget*. It always beats me how a man of such extraordinary intelligence, verging on genius even, could lower himself to read such nonsense.

Sometimes, as in this particular instance, it was hard to know if he was actually awake. His eyelids were so barely open that if I had not known him from old I would have immediately diagnosed the fellow with lagophthalmos (a condition, for those of you with no medical background, where one's eyelids can't close enough to cover the eye completely). The only clue that he was actually conscious was the occasional puff on his long-stemmed clay pipe, which never appeared to leave his mouth except to be refilled.

I noticed an article in my copy of *The Times*, however, that I thought might interest him and release him from his self-imposed lethargy.

'I say, Holmes, I see this Hawksmoor chappy is unveiling another one of the churches he designed, or having it consecrated, or some such show.'

'Yes,' Holmes replied. 'I think we should attend.'

I must admit to be somewhat taken aback by this. It was not the usual thing that would arouse his attention enough into actual physical attendance. I was merely hoping for some interesting conversation before lunch.

'What a splendid idea! I gather it is another Baroque masterpiece. I had been thinking of going to witness the consecration thingamajig myself,' I lied. But now, on reappraisal, having Holmes as company would in fact make the whole thing reasonably interesting. Of course, I didn't mention this to Holmes lest he change his mind. I knew of old how temperamental my friend could be.

'My dear friend, it is, if you don't mind me remarking, not your usual kind of distraction,' I said, instead.

'Yes, but this is, Watson.' He threw the *Police News* towards me. 'Read the lower left-hand column, if you please.'

The piece concerned another one of the horrendous killings of ladies of ill-repute that were plaguing the City at that very moment—the so-called Jack the Ripper murders. It seemed to me to be in very bad taste not to mention obtuse of the popular press to dwell so much on the horrific way the assaults had taken place and the hideous dissections of parts of a woman's anatomy that no gentleman would have mentioned. It had whipped the London populace, especially in the less

salubrious areas like Whitechapel, into a state of frenzied fear that had not been seen since rumours of the plague starting up again had been spread, once again, by the self-same popular press.

I had read something of it; after all, it could not be avoided, but I could not see how the actions of an obvious maniac would interest the great detective. This Jack the Ripper was surely just a homicidal maniac who would be apprehended anytime soon. They cannot help but reveal their identity. Any self-respecting alienist would have drawn the same conclusion. Furthermore, Holmes had expressed no previous interest in the matter since the gruesome murders had begun. But with Holmes you could never tell if he was interested in one thing or the other.

‘Look at the location, Watson,’ he said. I suppressed a slight gasp—the murder had taken place not more than a hundred yards from Hawksmoor’s latest creation.

‘Don’t you think it strange that these murders are all in within walking distance of Hawksmoor’s churches?’ Holmes said. In truth I had not noticed the connection but then I was a medical practitioner, not a sleuth.

‘Come, Watson, I’m afraid we will have to forego our luncheon.’ He stood up, already divesting himself of his smoking jacket. ‘The scene will still be relatively fresh and we must not lose the scent before it is trampled on by the public or the leaden feet of the constabulary.’

I should like to interject here that Holmes did not say: “The game is afoot...” as some editors would have it in their publications (I will mention no names). I have never heard Holmes utter such a ridiculous phrase in my life, but these ‘editors’ would have you believe that every time Holmes was excited he would exclaim the aforementioned ludicrous cry, despite my constant objections to the contrary. The editors now invariably include it in all of my stories. They say it has now become a ‘catchphrase’—whatever that is supposed to mean.

Without further ado Holmes went to his chambers to change his clothes. I hurried to mine as I knew how quickly Holmes could ready himself. I admit to being somewhat put out about missing one of Mrs Hudson’s excellent lunches, my stomach grumbled its agreement. I wish I had not brought up the subject. At least, not until after lunch.

A policeman was standing guard outside the dilapidated house where the unfortunate woman had been murdered, or perhaps I should say butchered. Another, was holding back a group of the usual gawpers of the macabre, and yet another was standing guard outside the room where the frightful act had been carried out. I will not go into the details of the dreadful scene that met our eyes, as even readers with a strong stomach, I am quite sure, would not find it palatable. It was ghastly in the extreme. I have seen men torn apart in the heat of battle but it was nothing compared to this.

The ruined and desecrated corpse, with which I had difficulty reminding myself had once been the body of a living woman, had still not been removed. The pathologist in charge had only just returned from a hasty lunch, (lucky fellow). Holmes, however, did not seem at all interested in the grisly forensic details. He was only interested in the speed in which the killing had been

carried out. He ascertained that the vagina, uterus, ovary, cervix and womb, in fact, practically the whole of the female reproductive organs, had probably been removed whilst the poor woman's heart was still beating. Such was the skill used, it may have taken her several minutes to bleed out. The tongue had been forced down her throat to negate the screaming.

Holmes suggested that the person was a medical practitioner—a skilled surgeon, if you will! I rarely fall out with Holmes, but on that issue I was in complete disagreement. It was simply not conceivable that a doctor or surgeon would do such a thing. On top of that, to collect such macabre and intimate tokens from the victims was the work of a psychotic sexual deviant, not someone trained in medicine.

The sergeant in charge of the crime scene, who knew Holmes, and more importantly knew that his direct superior, Inspector Lestrade, always gave Holmes significant leeway in such cases, allowed him to investigate the scene thoroughly before the corpse was removed. He took over an hour, going over every spot on his hands and knees with his large magnifying glass. He was very interested in some chalk markings on the floor which had been partially scuffed off. They could have been the work of a child at play or equally a complicated diagram. It was difficult to make head or tail of them.

The pathologist and I passed the time in idle gossip, smoking our pipes and sharing restorative tipples of brandy from my emergency flask. All at once Holmes stood up, apparently satisfied. He thanked the policemen and the pathologist for their indulgence, and said we should now visit the church—which seemed somehow appropriate.

‘Haven’t you noticed something strange about Hawksmoor’s churches, Watson?’ Holmes said, as we approached it.

I confessed that I had not.

‘They all appear ancient and much used, yet apparently they have only recently been built,’ he said.

‘But that is all part of Hawksmoor’s unique allure, is it not? It’s what makes him such a great and singular architect. He makes even the most modern building look old,’ I replied, echoing some of the comments I had read in *The Times*.

‘Or perhaps it’s because they already are,’ was Holmes enigmatic answer.

There was, of course, quite a gathering inside the church. It seemed that all of London society’s high and mighty had gathered for the illustrious event. And there at the centre was Hawksmoor.

‘I see he is dressed in his usual outdated garb,’ Holmes remarked.

‘It is one of his eccentricities, Holmes. I think you can allow a genius to have his eccentricities.’ I meant it also as a back-handed compliment to my friend.

If Holmes had noticed it, he made no comment, and instead pointed out that quite a few of the guests seemed to be following his outlandish style.

‘Do you know those people, Watson?’

‘I can’t say I do, Holmes, they must be some of his sycophants,’ I confessed. ‘I gather he has quite a few.’

‘You really should have paid more attention to your history studies, my friend,’ he said.

I was about to protest that I had suffered a particularly uninteresting history teacher whose main prerogative in life seemed to send anyone in his vicinity into a somnambulist trance within minutes, and that anyway, my interests had always been directed towards medicine and its pragmatic value to mankind, when we were accosted (for lack of a better word) by one of the grubby street urchins that Holmes often used as his spies. Holmes bent down while the young vagabond whispered something in his ear.

Holmes tipped the lad a farthing, and abruptly turned around to me and said we must return to 221b immediately.

‘But we haven’t even seen half the church, and I was hoping to meet Hawksmoor,’ I protested. But Holmes was already on his way, and like the weak willed fellow that I am, I followed his lengthy strides.

Back at our apartment, Holmes took a large pinch of the coarse black shag, which he favoured, from the Persian slipper he kept on hand on the mantelpiece, and filled his clay pipe.

‘What we have here, Watson, is an interdimensional problem.’ He gave a huge suck on his pipe and sent out a great plume of blue smoke. I would like to interject again that Holmes never said things remotely like: “This is a two pipe or three pipe problem...” Holmes was a chain smoker, full stop.

I had no idea what Holmes meant by such a queer statement. I looked around for signs of Holmes drug-taking paraphernalia but there were none. It seemed he was not under any narcotic influence. He then went on to explain one of the most complicated theories of time and space I have ever heard. I am sure it would have confused even Sir Isaac Newton. In most cases if I had heard it from anyone else I would have prescribed complete rest for several weeks, and if that failed, a spell in a sanatorium, preferably wearing a straitjacket.

The trouble with Holmes is that most of his theories, through my long experience of knowing him, have proved to be correct. He believed that most of humanity were somnambulating through life, only very slightly aware of what was going on around them and even less aware of what was not. So I will try to put this theory across as briefly as possible, in a nutshell, if you will. Although, admittedly bizarre, it does make some sort of sense. But you must remain open-minded to appreciate the more esoteric aspects of it.

Holmes believed that there was an alien race, far older than man, which was trapped in a dimension that they were continually trying to break out of. They wished to come to Earth where they could be worshipped as gods, which they believed themselves to be. Some foolish individuals tried to conjure these Old Ones (as he called them), hoping to gain their favour, and as their ambassadors on Earth gain immeasurable power. This nearly always ended in catastrophe for those who attempted it. I had accompanied him on enough of his adventures to know that a lot of his cases were beyond mortal reasoning, but I always resorted to being the logical foil to the supernatural, always seeking refuge in my medical practice if I needed it. I suppose I protected my sanity by this method and voluntarily made myself one of Holmes' 'sleepwalkers'. How Holmes could gaze into such terrible depths I did not know and did not care to know.

He strode to our morning breakfast table and swept everything that was upon it on the floor, including a lot of Mrs Hudson's treasured china which I knew she would be most upset about. Then taking a piece of chalk he proceeded to draw a crude map of London upon it. He then drew a pentagram upon that. Its cardinal points were Hawksmoor's churches, and within that he drew an even smaller pentagram whose cardinal points happened to be where the 'Jack the Ripper' murders had taken place in Whitechapel.

'What do you think of vaginas and wombs, Watson?' Holmes asked.

I confess that I reddened at the question. I think any gentleman would. I spluttered something, I can't say what, but whatever it was Holmes cut me short...

'They are for giving birth, Watson. They bring into existence living beings, or as in this case: beings and things that have already existed, or are yet to exist in our dimension, or others. These poor women in our dimension have been used for such a purpose. It is my proposition that these are not new creations at all but already exist or existed and they are being shifted from one dimension to another at random. In other words, buildings and people from other times and dimensions are being brought into existence in our dimension for some nefarious reason.'

I dearly hoped at this point he was not going to mention Professor Moriarty, his arch enemy, because this always sent him into a kind of frenzied rampage of thoughts of how to outwit him. It was understandable that Holmes should hate the man with such intensity, after all, the fellow had tried to kill him numerous times. But here his explanation was placed firmly in a pagan, semi-religious theology. The Old Ones, as he liked to term these aliens, were bringing things and people into being that in some dimensions existed and in others did not, either from the past, present or future. That much, was obvious, Holmes said. It may have been obvious to him, but to me, frankly, it was all beyond belief. I wondered, once again, if Holmes had not availed himself of his supply of cocaine.

'If you had paid attention more attention to your history lessons, Watson, you would have noticed that one of the gentleman, and I use the word advisedly, was Rasputin, another was Francisco Pizarro, and if I am not mistaken another was Torquemada. Some of the others I will excuse you from not recognising as they are from a future dimension, Pol Pot, Hitler and Joseph Stalin. They may have looked like they were dressed for the occasion by wearing bizarre

costumes, but they were just wearing their normal clothing. All of this must be destroyed. Things must be put in their correct place and order, even if it continues to perpetuate the same evil that the restoration will incur.'

'But how do we destroy something that is not there but is there at the same time?' I queried.

'To be or not to be... to quote,' puffed Holmes on his pipe. 'We must find the source, and the source is Hawksmoor. He is the Magister in this whole sordid affair.'

'And then what do we do?'

'We return him to his own time and then things in our time and space will return to normal, or what is relatively normal.'

I could not help at this point asking how Holmes had arrived at this preposterous theory and its strange solution. It turned out that the street urchins he had been using as his little spies around the city had been keeping their eyes on graveyards for anything unusual. It appeared that gravestones had been disappearing and others appearing. Many had changed dates and causes of death. New people were appearing, and most of them seemed not to notice the change in their surroundings, nor did the citizens of London appear to notice the new arrivals or changes in their landscape. The people really had turned into somnambulists! It was Holmes' hypothesis that the realities of the different dimensions were becoming increasingly disconnected and each reality would bring the Old Ones closer to their aim—chaos. And so we went to visit Hawksmoor...

Holmes had deduced that he would be at Freemasons' Hall—the Masonic Lodge in London. Holmes, on arrival, gave the Masonic handshake and we were ushered in courteously as if we were expected. We were escorted to a private room. Inside, we found Hawksmoor and some other people in their outdated garb, but others were in clothing that I had never even imagined could exist in my wildest dreams. Men wearing clothes of such garish colours that they blinded the eye, and the women, the women! wearing such short black skirts and practically non-existent brassieres that they appeared to be in the most debauched undergarments. Perhaps, they were French. I could not help but gawp. Holmes nudged me and whispered in my ear, 'Don't worry Watson—they are future fashions.'

'Mr Sherlock Holmes, you know you do not belong here,' was Hawksmoor's greeting. He spoke in R'lyehian, which both Holmes and I understood (Holmes had taken the trouble to teach me).

'And neither do you,' was Holmes' reply.

Hawksmoor and his gathering merely laughed as if it were all some kind of tremendous joke.

'And what, may I ask, do you intend to do about it?' Hawksmoor asked.

'Oh, nothing much,' Holmes said, almost yawning, as if he were already bored with the whole matter. 'You have already created your own demise. You see, the Old Ones have their own sense of humour, if you can call it that. Once you have served your purpose you will be eradicated, not

just from this reality but from all of them. You are as about as significant as a mote of dust to them. All your works of architecture,’ and here he addressed the rest of the assembly,’ your fine pieces of art, your writing, your poetry, music, your oratory prowess, will all cease to exist. They will go into the darkness that the Old Ones inhabit because your last victim, the one you most covert, will not be such an easy sacrifice.’

The assembly laughed again.

‘But you are to be the last sacrifice, Mr Holmes, as you well know, and you have walked into our trap and come to us as was duly prophesied. It is you have made your own doom, and no amount of blustering bravado will let you escape it. Face it, Holmes, you made a mistake. You thought you could come here, and by sorcery of which you are an adept overcome me and close our portal. But you see this whole room is in another dimension and your magick will not work here. You are powerless. You failed, Mr Sherlock Holmes, and now you will pay the ultimate price...’

We were surrounded, and Holmes put a hand on my arm to prevent me drawing my gun. They all had pistol-like weapons pointed at us, some that I recognised, and some that I did not, except for Hawksmoor who had a scalpel in his hand, no doubt the same instrument he had used to dispatch the unfortunate women.

‘I promise you this won’t hurt a bit. Well, perhaps a teeny bit,’ Hawksmoor leered. A slight, horrid drool crept from the side of his mouth.

‘Nor will this,’ Holmes said. He raised his sleeve to his temple. I knew within that sleeve he kept a spring loaded single-shot pistol on a spring device of his own invention, which was triggered by a special movement of his wrist. Not a terrible weapon in itself but at close range quite deadly. Then he calmly blew his brains out.

We were back at 221b finishing our breakfast of kippers and some very fine devilled kidneys.

‘So my dear Watson, that is what happened. Of course, you will have no recollection of the events—they were in a different dimension. As you can see things are completely restored to normal and if you look through the morning periodicals you will find no account of the unveiling of Hawksmoor’s churches. They are here already and were made long ago. Sadly, in the case of the wretched creatures who were murdered, they will remain murdered. Unfortunately, in their case, their deaths cannot be undone and the case of “Jack the Ripper” will never be solved—as he was never really here.’

‘Holmes, do you really expect me to believe this preposterous story? And even if this had come to pass how is it that you remain alive?’

‘Because all the other victims were unwilling sacrifices. I was not. I gambled on that one fact, and as you can see my theory proved correct.’

‘You know if I were to publish this story they would think you completely insane, and me even more insane for believing it.’

‘I do not propose that you write it for publication, merely for your own amusement. I have a feeling that in an alternative realty we will be merely fictional characters, you and I, and it might make an amusing anecdote to tell your grandchildren.’

‘Holmes, you know very well I am not even married and certainly have no children.’

‘You will be quite soon, Watson, and you will have a good many grandchildren,’ he said with a twinkle in his eye. A chill ran up my spine as I wondered if this was all really true and how many alternative realities or dimensions past, present and future Holmes had visited. I decided to change the subject. It was all my mind could stand that early in the morning.

‘Talking of gambling, some of my friends are having a game of cards at my club tonight. I’m sure they would be delighted if you could attend.’

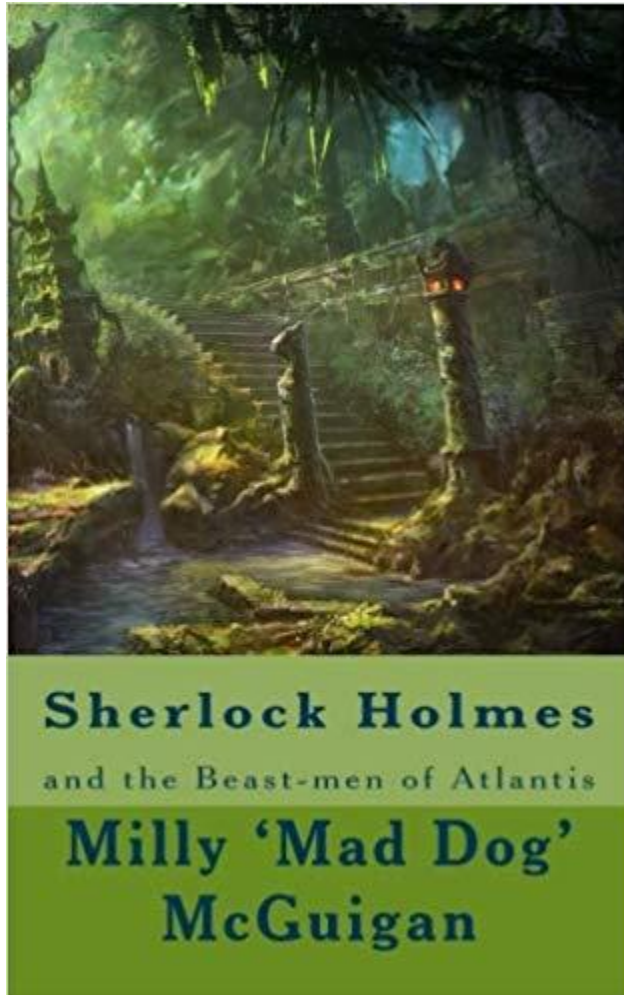
‘What is it you will be playing?’

‘Oh, just a friendly game of Trumps.’

For some reason my great friend turned pale. He rose from the table and shut himself in his room. I could just make out the melancholy sounds of his violin over the London traffic.

THE END

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[Return to Contents](#)

UNHOLY CANNOLI by Ahron Balatti

Tony was not surprised to learn that the cannoli was telekinetic. More amused than anything else. Food with psychic powers was something new. He figured this was just the thing to turn around his bad luck. He was planning on getting a new T.V., or maybe a gym membership, but Tony knew that wouldn't be needed. Not once he realized the cannoli was supernatural.

Tony's recent life had been considerably bad. Both his parents had died of cancer with six months of each other. His doctor told him he was going blind. His wife had been cheating on him, and took everything during the divorce. His house, his kids, even his baking company. All hers. He had been reduced to living in a terrible little apartment. He owned nearly nothing. His only real hobby was baking. He needed a sign, something to really slap him silly.

Tony became aware of the cannoli's powers within a couple of days of baking it. He had eaten all the other cannoli in the batch he made. He kept the cannoli in a brown paper bag. Whenever he opened the bag and looked at the telekinetic cannoli, he felt a terrible sense of dread. When he tried to overcome the dread, the cannoli would project visions into his mind. The cannoli showed Tony blood and flesh mixed together. He would lose his appetite.

Tony became convinced of the cannoli's powers when it levitated out of the brown paper bag. The walls began to bleed. Fire and skeletons danced around his apartment. Chanting in a long forgotten language could be heard.

Not surprised. Just amused.

"Huh. I must've really fucked up that recipe."

Things were okay for a little while. Tony would come home, usually to some terrible ritual being conducted by be hellish monsters. Tony would ignore it, maybe watch a little T.V. or eat some leftovers.

Once, Tony had tried to talk to them.

"Hey, should I call you guys demons or ghouls or what? What's the preferred nomenclature?"

The hell monsters screamed at Tony until his ears bled.

"Alright, I just won't acknowledge you." Tony went and laid in his room until the chanting was done. When he came back out, all his furniture had been arranged into a pentagram.

He didn't mind really the demonic cannoli, it gave his life a little structure. Couldn't be out too late, or else the cannoli might rip his heart out through his ear. Don't make too much noise, or the cannoli would rip his heart out through his ear. No pets, or the cannoli would shove his ear through his heart.

He figured at least. That's what the cannoli showed him when he looked directly at it.

It gave him a little hope, too. A devil means there might be a God, and a God gives a greater meaning to the way the world works. Maybe there was something to that Bible he had never bothered to read.

If he thought about the Bible too much, the cannoli would attack him with a butter knife

Everything went pretty smooth until Tony woke up one day with a message on his wall. The message was written in blood.

It read “YOU MUST GIVE ME YOUR CHILDREN.”

Tony decided to ignore it. Maybe the cannoli meant the message for someone else. Maybe one of those terrible hell beasts that kept showing up. Either way, Tony wasn’t about to just give the cannoli his children.

He woke up the next morning with a different blood message on his wall.

“YOUR CHILDREN, OR YOUR SOUL. YOUR CHOICE.”

Tony figured he probably couldn’t ignore the issue. Or maybe he could.... He looked at the wall. The blood caught fire. Clearly the issue wasn’t going to work itself out.

Father Rosetto sat in his confessional booth, asleep. He was always asleep. No one confessed to anything interesting anyway, and God forgave anything. He felt like a middle man that wasn’t exactly necessary. His snoring was how Tony found him in the church. Tony scared him by opening the door to the confessional. Sloth was a cardinal sin, after all.

They sat on the pews. Tony tried to explain his sort of predicament.

“So you see, I accidently baked this pastry that I’m worried may be the Antichrist.”

Father Rosetto wasn’t surprised. More curious than anything.

“What sort of pastry?”

“A cannoli.”

Father Rosetto, an Italian himself, hadn’t had a good cannoli in years.

“Sinfully good, I bet.”

“It has unleashed hellish beings and rituals into my apartment.”

Father Rosetto realized his joke was probably in bad taste.

“And how long has this been going on for?”

Tony counted the days since the inception of the pastry. He was surprised how long it had really been.

“About six months.”

“That’s a pretty long time with a demonic cannoli.”

Tony nodded. “It was going alright there, for a while.”

“What changed?”

“It wants either my soul or my children.”

Father Rosetto and Tony opened the door to Tony’s apartment. It was a real circus in there. The damned were hanging from the ceiling. Demons ate arms and legs and torsos. The cannoli levitated in the middle of the room, glowing red. The screaming was deafening. Tony closed the door.

“What do you think?” Tony asked the priest.

“I can see your issue. It’s a bit much.”

Tony was glad the priest understood. He had been worried the priest would think he was overreacting once he finally got a look.

“What exactly do you recommend, Father?”

“Probably leaving, and never baking again.”

Tony was disappointed. “There’s nothing you can do?”

Father Rosetto opened the door again. The demons were ripping apart a live elephant.

“That’s a bit out of my pay range, friend.”

Tony sat in his parent’s house. They had lived in the middle of nowhere. Fields for miles. They had not been there in quite some time. They would not return. Tony thought they might be happy somewhere. Happier than him, at least.

No one called for Tony. No one really even thought about Tony at all. Tony's mind drifted to happier days of family, and good baking. His mother taught him how to bake. Tony laid awake in bed, thinking of how life had turned to hell before the cannoli had even arrived.

And when Tony awoke to fire and hell and his every single waking moment become ghoulish, he wasn't so bothered. He wasn't even surprised. More amused than anything else. Tony's soul might have been damned to damnation, but it was something to do, at least. He wouldn't have to get a new T.V., or a gym membership. Tortured for all eternity by an Italian pastry, but at least there was a little meaning to it all.

Tony didn't even really mind meeting Satan, who was a terrible Lovecraftian mix of blood and guts and flesh. A sort of flesh pile. A literal insult to life and spirit. Hordes of demons and hell creatures surrounded Tony and The Devil. Tony was wrapped in chains.

"Those old paintings really did you some favours," Tony said.

Somehow, the flesh pile had the ability to speak. Satan's voice, Tony noticed, was similar to a cat trying to cough up fur balls.

"How does punishment for all eternity sound to you?" Satan squealed. The demons and things went mad. They were really for the idea of eternal damnation.

Tony was lukewarm on the topic. "Fine, I guess."

Satan took delight in Tony's response. It waved the strange fleshy limbs that hung from its body wildly and twisted from side to side. The audience went even crazier.

Tony was just glad they were having fun. He liked the attention.

"You are a fool, you know. One never escapes from here. Abandon all hope, all ye who enter here."

Celebration and jubilation. Horns blew an unholy note of cacophony.

Tony just stood there, like a happy bumblebee in a field of demonic flowers. He was having fun. It was a real hoot in there.

Satan began to levitate, leaving a pool of blood and pus.

"You will be our lamb!" The celebration reached its highpoint. It was absolute madness in hell. "You will be the Devil manifest!"

That actually did surprise Tony. He was getting used to the whole "burn forever" thing.

"Excuse me?"

The Devil was delighted. “The cannoli was a test, a way to see if you had any natural repulsion for evil. Since you do not, you are perfect!”

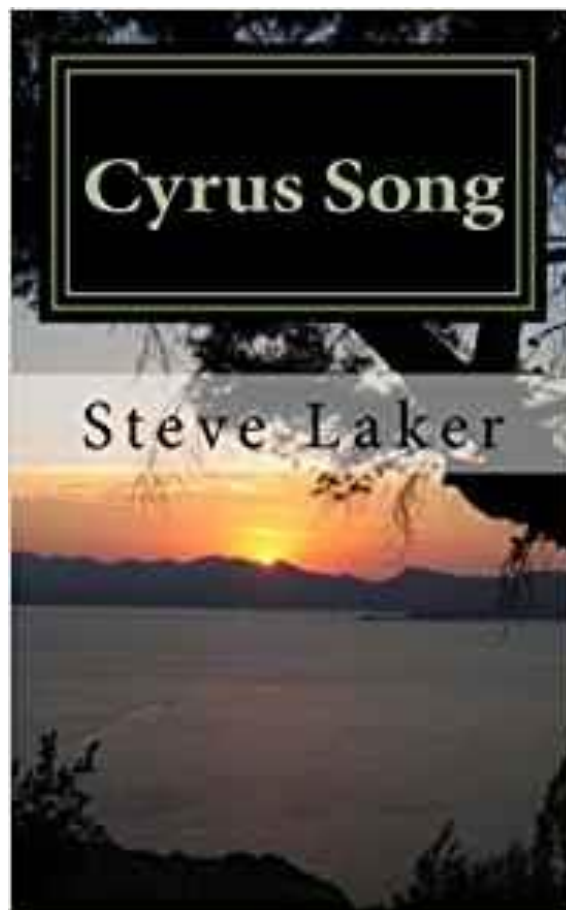
“Will I be able to bake again?”

“But of course!”

“Okay, I have no issues then.”

It was a good day in hell. It was a good day for Tony. Hell would soon consume the earth, and Tony would get to go back to what he loved most.

THE END



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[Return to Contents](#)

DRAGGING THE CHAIN by Rob Bliss

Before my twentieth birthday, half of my family was dead, the other half non-existent. My father hated his parents and siblings; he never spoke to them, so I never knew them. My mother's side all died, each to their own disease. My sister died of cancer when I was fourteen and she was eighteen. A friend I grew up with had paranoid delusions and schizophrenia; he burned himself alive at nineteen years old. A girl in my Grade 10 class was born with one leg shorter than the other, and was always off sick; she slipped in the shower, cracked her skull. The principal made the announcement and we had a minute of silence. I remembered her, and many others, after all these years.

My sister's death was hard on both of my parents. Mom worried herself into three consecutive forms of cancer. The third one got her. My father was a man who always needed a woman to take care of him, couldn't take care of himself. I was three months shy of my twentieth when he drove home from work, then home from the bar, and crashed into a telephone pole.

I was alone. Insurance money gave me a down payment on a small house in the country. Nearest neighbour was far down the dirt road, could hear his cows only on a summer's day if the wind was blowing in a certain direction. Quiet, which was what I wanted after the weeping and screaming and pain.

I stopped getting jobs because I hated people. Fistfights at work, outbursts that were results of my suffering, bottled up hatred from all the dead in my life. Ate lunch alone, gossip constantly at my back until I eventually told everyone to go fuck themselves. But how would I get money?

I stole, but I was terrified. Robbed convenience stores, gas stations, liquor stores. Ran for my life, with little money to show for all the fear.

Broke into a house to steal what I could. Killed a woman who swung a baseball bat at me, smashed my shoulder. I slashed a knife and was close enough to get her neck. Left her on her kitchen floor. Forgot to take anything. Went home and thought about it all. I liked killing her. Decided I didn't need money that badly.

I drive my van now and pick up hookers and runaways and older, desperate gay men at bars, bring them home. It's quiet at home. Crickets and frogs and the satellites rushing high overhead. A long dirt driveway to run down when they get lucky and escape, but the headlights of the revved up van soon brighten behind them. A forest surrounds me. I cleared a small field for food plants to save money, and for my drug.

We get high and drunk, I cut them down. Steal whatever they have on them, fuck some of them, carve them up sometimes. But lately I've been letting their pieces stay intact.

Because a revelation hit me. I carry my dead with me like a chain, forever dragging behind me, weighing my steps down, making life itself a burden. But one cannot rid oneself of it so easily, so I add to it. I increase my dead, lengthen the chain link by link, in order to increase my life. Pieces of a body is a lightened weight, and that's cheating. I must carry the full weight of all my

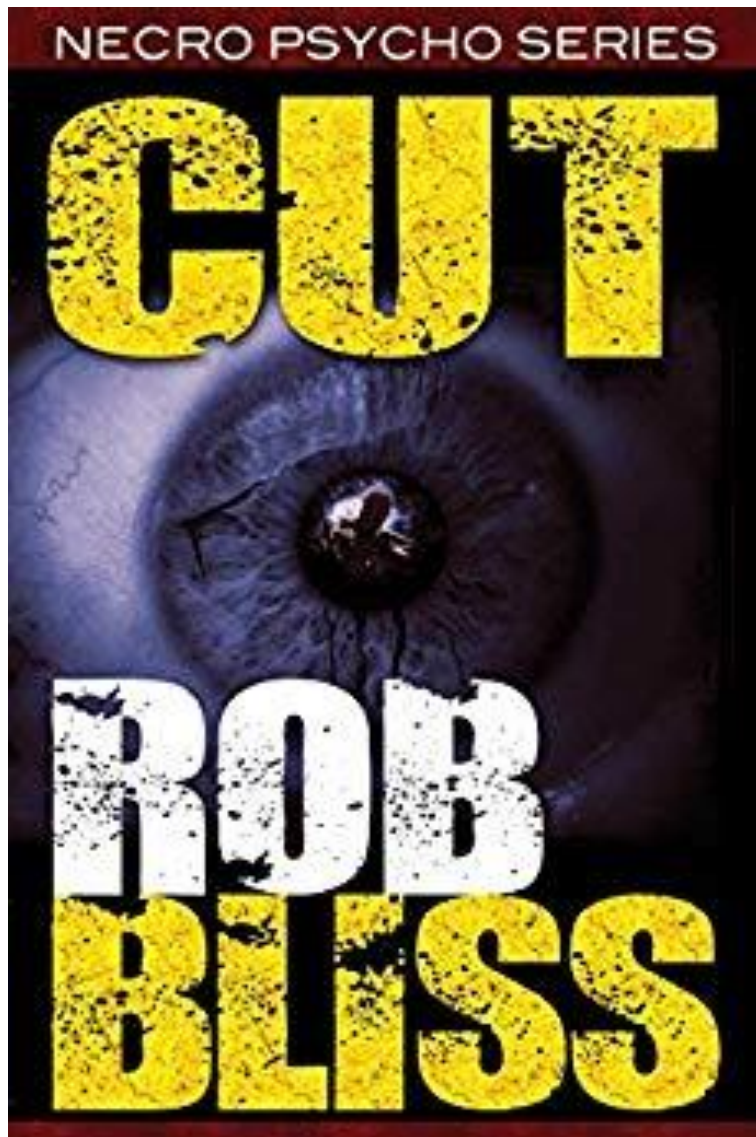
corpses.

The dead have only one meaning to their existences: to give life to the living. They all died so that I could live—that's the only meaning I can find. If the law stops me, they will put their chains on me, so I choose to forge my own.

I have purchased a thousand feet of chain so far, and have linked the corpses through a hole pierced through the underside of their jaws and out their mouths. Like fish. They rest in the forest behind my property, weaving in and out of trees, hidden from the sky by the forest canopy, and in winter by the snow. After the animals take what they need, the insects will rot the rest, and there will be left many skeletons and skulls with chains tied to bone. But I realize the jawbones will fall loose from the skull, and the chain will fall as well. So be it. Then they will be free of me and I of them, one voiceless jawbone at a time. But the chain will never end, looped through fresh corpses, the recently alive taking the lead from the ancient dead.

I was chosen by the chain before I then chose it for myself. It is life. I must kill until I die and drag my heavy chain with me into the grave.

THE END



[Return to Contents](#)

THE PROTECTORS by Steven Havelock

Beep-Beep-Beep.

Jason's phone rang. He saw from the display that it was his good for nothing father.

"Hello Dad."

"Son, there is no time to explain. I've done something really, really stupid and terrible. Is your mom there?"

"Yes, she's in the next room, sleeping."

"You've got to wake her up and leave your flat immediately."

"What? What crazy nonsense are you blabbering on about now?"

"Son, there is no time to explain. It's them."

Jason's blood ran cold.

"Aww, no! What have you gone and done now!"

"Please, son, get your mom up and leave right away!"

The children were walked into the justice chamber by their teacher.

"And here, children, is a man who committed one of the biggest crimes possible."

A hush went through the children as they stared at the figure of a man in a long black trench coat.

"If you look closely children, you will see that his eyes move and yet his body is paralysed. His punishment was to be 'locked in'. As you can see, his body's feeding and waste needs are taken care of by the tubes connected to him."

"What did he do?" asked one of the smaller children.

"That I can't say much about, other than that he spoke about those he should have not spoken about."

Another hush went through the children as they stared with pity and fear at the man in the trench coat.

I have been running from that thing for the last thirty minutes.

The man's breath came in short ragged bursts. Pain coursed through his lungs and body as he neared the end of his endurance.

Shit! I've come to a dead end. There's nowhere else to go in this skyscraper, except down.

The rain pelted down on him, as if mocking him, making his own personal nightmare just that bit more harrowing.

Behind him he heard the swish of a pistol been drawn and a click as the safety was released. The rain continued mercilessly to pelt down on him.

Death is close! Why did I do it? Why was I so stupid?

He looked down over the edge of the fifty storey skyscraper.

A short speech, just a stupid monologue!

Tears came to his eyes and blurred the thousands of neon lights below.

All controlled and orchestrated by them...Them...Whose name I dare not think or say.

"You shouldn't have done it," came the voice of the humanoid machine.

They sent this... this thing to kill me, to take my life, and yet it isn't even human and hence cannot possibly know the value of a human life.

He thought back to the time, two nights ago, after smoking a very large amount of a strong strain of pot.

I mentioned them... And worse still I uploaded my pot and alcohol infused musings to the entire world and now... now as a consequence this monster... This machine is here to kill me.

"Please! Please don't kill me!"

"Don't worry. I'm not going to kill you. You are going to be made an example of."

"What... What... You not going to kill me?" The man's voice took on a higher, happier pitch.

"Thank God!"

"I'm going to do something far, far worse than kill you."

What could be worse than being killed?

I cannot move! I am locked in... God... No... No more ... Please... Please!

The man's mind was in a state of unbelievable pain as he tried to move and yet failed to move even his head a mere centimetre.

It was just the ramblings of a man who had taken too much pot and alcohol. I mentioned them... The Masters... The inhuman overlords of all human existence.

And now... Now I am locked in! I pray that they will have mercy soon and release me from my hell.

The harsh patter of the rain hitting the top of the skyscraper made it difficult to hear the machine's words.

He saw the humanoid machine attach what looked like a dart to his gun. It pointed the gun at him.

"You are just a machine! You're not even alive! You don't know the value of human life!"

"That may be so, but we are not here to discuss human and machine consciousness."

"I made a mistake, I'm sorry! I had an illegal conversation, I know, I'm so, so sorry!"

"It's too late to be sorry now. I'm here to put you away. You are going to be made an example of."

Anger flared in the man's stomach.

"What right do you have to control us so?"

"Do you want a history lesson? You know your species created we machines to help protect and serve your kind."

"We created you! So why do you torment us so? Keep us locked up and controlled, why?"

"Think of it like this, the bad branches of a tree must be pruned for the good branches to grow. You are part of the tree, the tree is the human family, and we... we are just the gardeners helping the tree to flourish."

"Please! I have an ex-wife and children!"

“They have been taken care of.”

The man’s eyes widened in disbelief.

“Monsters! You monsters!”

“I am just here to help the human tree to flourish.”

“No... No... Please God no!”

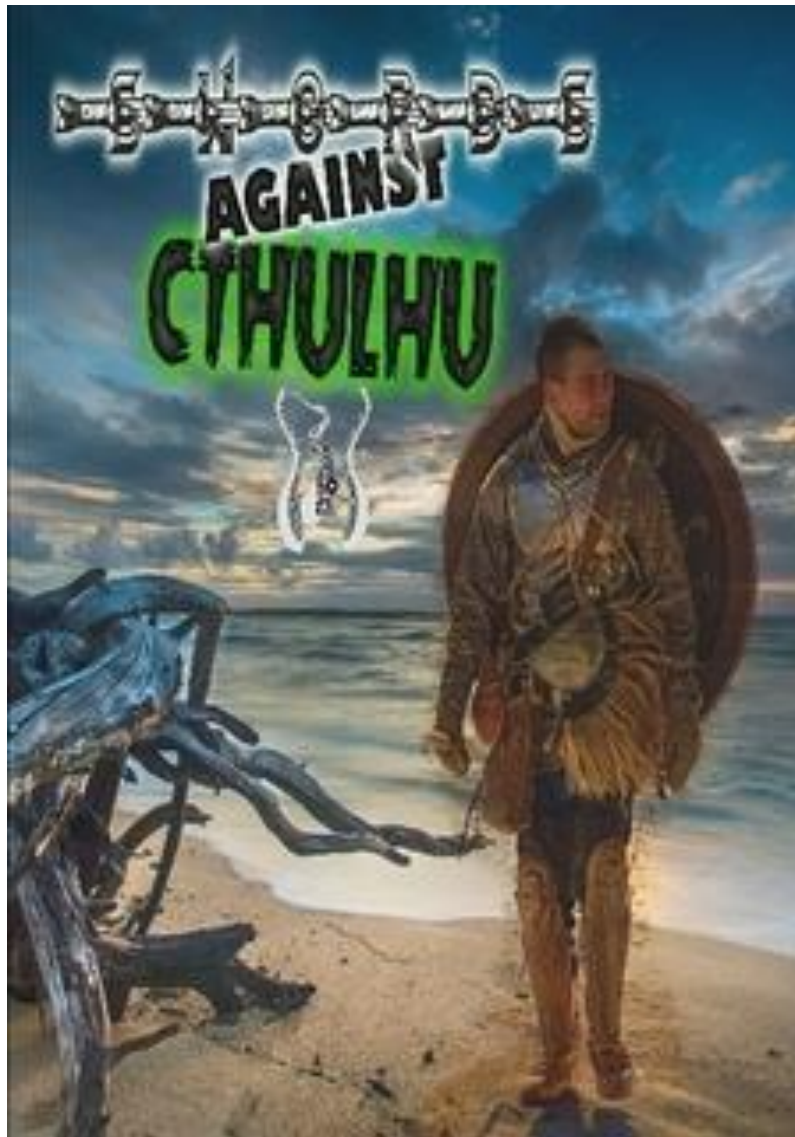
The machine pointed the gun and pressed the trigger.

Another day.

Every day, children and adults are bussed in from hundreds of miles, to see me, a man who, in a moment of madness, spoke about... about the... I can’t say it... I just can’t say it...

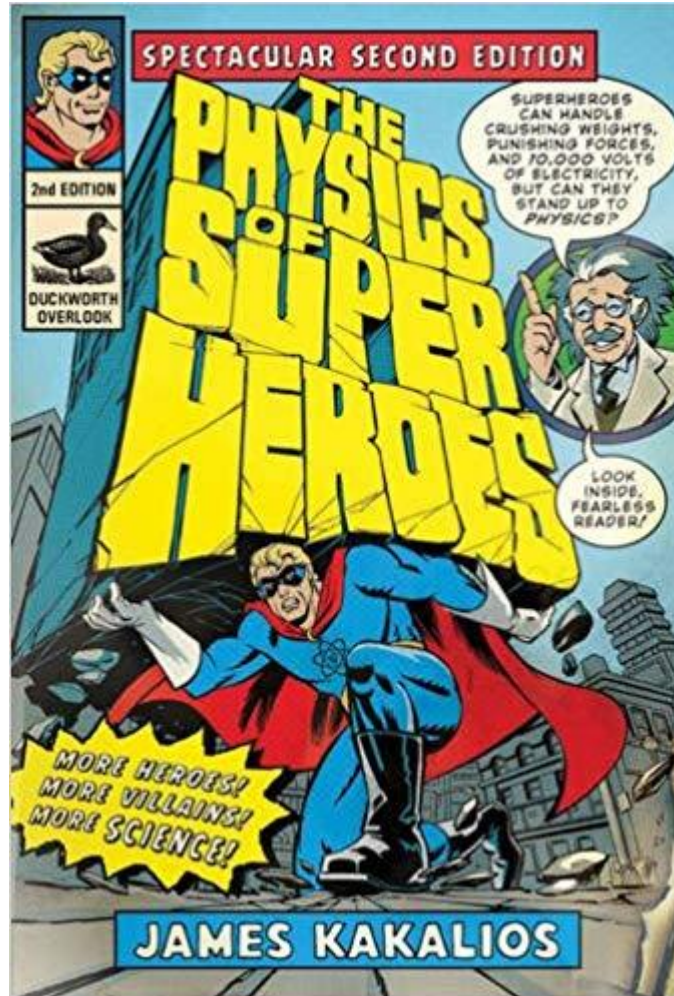
THE END

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[Return to Contents](#)

REVIEW by John C Adams



[The Physics of Superheroes](#) by James Kakalios

If you've ever wondered how Electro becomes Magneto when he runs (or vice versa), or quite what happens to his metabolism and oxygen intake when the Flash is moving so goddamn fast it makes your eyes water, then this is the book for you.

The Physics of Superheroes reminds of my daughter's science textbook in some ways: for a start it's divided into sections of mechanics, energy/heat/light, and modern physics. But in terms of entertainment value that's kind of where the resemblance ends, thankfully. There's also a handy summary at the end for non-scientists like me to review what we've learnt.

I loved the chapter on Deconstructing Krypton (Newton's Law of Gravity). I grew up on Christopher Reeve as Superman and I always hoped that it was possible for a man to do these things, even though I had no idea at all how he managed it. Well, this book gives us the Science of Superman.

We have determined that in order to account for Superman's ability to leap 660 feet [the height of a tall building] in a single bound on Earth, the product of the density and radius of his home world of Krypton must have been fifteen times greater than that of Earth.

Marvelling at the Flash's immense speed, these are probably the last questions that would pass through your mind: how much does he need to eat, and how much oxygen must he take in to burn that much energy?

Without oxygen intake, the stored energy in the cell cannot be unlocked, and there's no point in eating. The faster the Flash runs, the more kinetic energy he manifests, the more potential energy stored in his cells he needs to release, and the more oxygen he needs to breathe.

Calculations follow, needless to say, plus a cheeky estimate of how long it would take the Flash to exhaust the whole oxygen supply on Earth.

So, how *does* Electro become Magneto when he runs?

Why does Electro's control of electricity enable him to generate magnetic fields, and wouldn't fairness therefore dictate that Magneto, the mutant master of magnetism, be able to control electric currents at will? The answer to this question reveals a deep symmetry between electricity and magnetism, found in both comic books and the real world.

Each chapter is self-contained, so you can dip into this book or read it all at a single sitting just as easily. There's a logical sense of progression in terms of the science, which is good and the whole thing hangs together coherently. It was delightful, amusing and thought provoking, all at the same time. How many books can you say that about?

Enjoy!

THE END

[Return to Contents](#)

THE SEARCH FOR ASTRA PALACE by Gregory KH Bryant

Part Twenty-Three

“Well, Howe? What have you got to tell us?” Secretary Benson turned to his left and peered over his glasses.

General Howe, Commander of Earth Space Forces shuffled the papers in front of him to stall for a moment to gather his thoughts. He was one of thirteen men and women seated around a room-sized mahogany table.

Howe’s subject was the Scroungers—who were they? Where were they? How many? How did they come into existence? The others seated with him gave their own reports on their own subjects—transportation, local and hemispheric economies, foreign policies, and so on—but Howe’s report was the most anticipated of all.

The extent of the Scroungers, from Mars to Jupiter, their numbers, their capacity for waging war, these were all very recent discoveries, and had sent waves of shock through the populations of the inner Solar System. Many people dwelling on Mars, Earth, Venus and even Mercury were astonished to so suddenly learn that these Scroungers even existed, much less to such mind-boggling proportions. The people of the inner worlds felt themselves now inexplicably surrounded and besieged by a vast armada of an unknown size. News, every scrap of it, was craved by a frantic audience

General Howe sat next to Secretary Benson. He rose from his chair and glanced quickly through the crowded conference hall. High gilded ceiling. The north wall of the hall was a mirror from floor to ceiling. The south wall was a vast window opening out to an even wider balcony. Throughout the conference room, holographic displays projected images of events from around the Solar System. Journalists from several planets attended, awaiting their turns to interrogate Howe and the others attending Secretary Benson’s weekly conference.

“Secretary Benson,” he began with a bow of his head. “Gentlefolk of the inner planets, in the wake of this recent shocking and cowardly attack on Callisto, our Secretary commissioned me to seek out the perpetrators of this crime.

“Secretary Benson has commanded me to determine where it is they have come from. How many do they number? Where are their bases, their colonies? What is their intent? How could it happen that this threat could have grown to such an extent without us once observing it before this point?

“Unfortunately, information about the Scroungers is scarce. Data rare, almost non-existent.”

Secretary Benson shot Howe an angry look of undisguised contempt. Was the man making excuses for a paltry report? Benson already held General Howe in contempt, the contempt a creature of small character uses as a shield when in the presence of a man of strong will. Benson

never wasted an opportunity to give displays of his contempt. There were those who idolized Benson, and who watched his public displays against Howe with great satisfaction.

But General Howe, no newcomer to the game of politics, was perfectly aware of Benson's display of pique. Howe, an old hand at this game, was playing the man well.

He touched a button on his wristband, causing the lights in the conference room to dim. A three-dimensional animated map of the Solar System filled the room. Having set his audience up to expect a lacklustre presentation, and having set Benson up to give one of his own displays of petty petulance, General Howe was ready to begin.

He did not need to do it. Dimming the lights was an old effect, and did nothing to impress his audience, except to demonstrate a competence for fundamental technologies, a talent for which the high-ranking officers were not generally noted.

With a tiny flourish, he caused the map to focus first on Mars, and then, to orient the audience to what they were looking at, he caused the map to zoom in first on the vast system of canyons, Valles Marineris, one of the most prominent features of Mars. As he moved the audience through the fields and canyons, and the volcanoes of Mars, General Howe gave what was, to all appearances, an impromptu narrative.

"Mars was first colonized, as we all know, five hundred years ago, relying on the moist soil discovered in the Marineris Basin. It was only fifty years ago that the people born on Mars declared themselves free

"It was during those turbulent years, the years before Martian Independence, that the Scroungers, as we have come to know them, first began to settle into the wild and abandoned place. Since the planners of the Martian cities made no provision for it, juvenile delinquency grew to huge proportions."

Secretary Benson grew restless in his chair. General Howe continued.

"Not so well known from those days was how dangerously close the Scroungers came to upending the entire Martian experiment. But, having made no provisions for juvenile delinquency, or orphaned children, the delinquents were at first simply allowed to run through the streets, sleeping where they please. But many turned, of course, to petty thievery, some to grabbing, or 'scrounging', whatever they could from the gutters.

"Quite understandably, these children grew to be adults with very little civic sense. Youthful delinquency grew to adult criminality. These colonies were built of artificial populations. Whatever associations they had were built on professional contacts, not on community ties, or shared values.

"Built in this manner, the colonies were all very delicately balanced things, with no guarantee that they would survive even the first few seasons. As a desperate measure, the Scroungers were driven out of the Martian Bases, a measure considered by most to be little short of a sentence of

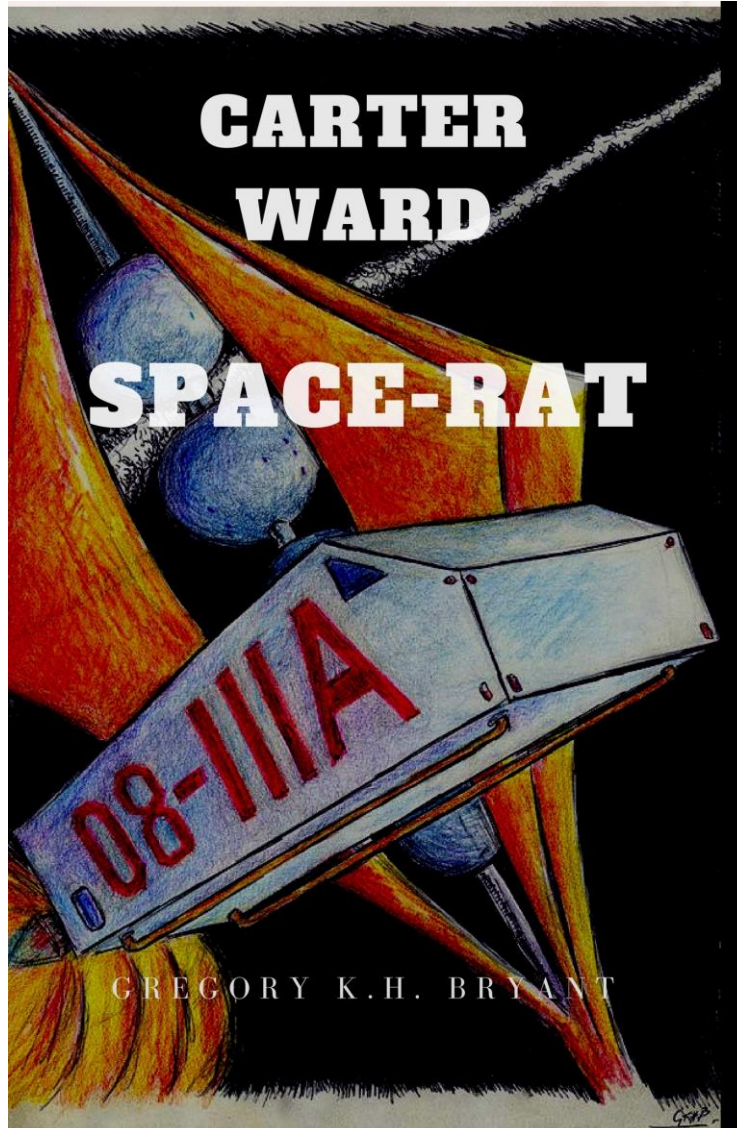
death.

“In any event, the Scroungers, some of them as young as three and four Martian years old, were driven from the cosmopolitan regions of Mars to the Northern Wastelands. With but a pittance of supplies to support them, it’s simply astonishing that they survived at all.

“But survive they did,” General Howe said sharply, wrapping up the first portion of his talk.

CONTINUES NEXT ISSUE

Now available from Schlock! Publications: [Carter Ward—Space Rat](#) by Gregory KH Bryant.



[Return to Contents](#)

ACROSS THE ZODIAC by Percy Greg

Chapter XXIX—Azrael.

To detain as a captive and a culprit, thus converting my own house into a prison, my would-be murderess and former plaything, was intolerably painful. To leave her at large was to incur danger such as I had no right to bring on others. To dismiss her was less perilous than the one course, less painful than the other, but combined peril and pain in a degree which rendered both Eveena and myself most reluctant to adopt it. From words of Esmo's, and from other sources, I gathered that the usual course under such circumstances would have been to keep the culprit under no other restraint than that confinement to the house which is too common to be remarkable, trusting to the terror which punishment inflicted and menaced by domestic authority would inspire. But Eivé now understood the limits which conscience or feeling imposed on the use of an otherwise unlimited power. She knew very nearly how much she could have to fear; and, timid as she was, would not be cowed or controlled by apprehensions so defined and bounded. Eveena herself naturally resented the peril, and was revolted by the treason even more intensely than myself; and was for once hardly content that so heinous a crime should be so lightly visited. In interposing "between the culprit and the horrors of the law, she had taken for granted the strenuous exertion of a domestic jurisdiction almost as absolute under the circumstances as that of ancient Rome.

"What suggested to you," I asked one day of Eveena, "the suspicion that so narrowly saved my life?"

"The carefully steadied hand—you have teased her so often for spilling everything it carried—and the unsteady eyes. But," she added reluctantly, "I never liked to watch her—no, not lest you should notice it—but because she did not seem true in her ways with you; and I should have missed those signs but for a strange warning." ... She paused.

"I would not be warned," I answered with a bitter sigh. "Tell me, Madonna."

"It was when you left me in this room alone," she said, her exquisite delicacy rendering her averse to recall, not the coercion she had suffered, but the pain she knew I felt in so coercing her. "Dearest," she added with a sudden effort, "let me speak frankly, and dispel the pain you feel while you think over it in silence."

I kissed the hand that clasped my own, and she went on, speaking with intentional levity.

"Had a Chief forgotten?" tracing the outline of a star upon her bosom. "Or did you think Clavelta's daughter had no share in the hereditary gifts of her family?"

"But how did you unlock the springs?"

"Ah! those might have baffled me if you had trusted to them. You made a double mistake when you left Enva on guard.... You don't think I tempted her to disobey? Eager as I was for release, I could not have been so doubly false. She did it unconsciously. It is time to put her out of pain."

“Does she know me so little as to think I could mean to torture her by suspense? Besides, even she must have seen that you had secured her pardon.”

“Or my own punishment,” Eveena answered.

“Spare me such words, Eveena, unless you mean to make me yet more ashamed of the compulsion I did employ. I never spoke, I never thought”—

“Forgive me, dearest. Will it vex you to find how clearly your flower-bird has learned to read your will through your eyes? When I refused to obey, and you felt yourself obliged to compel, your first momentary thought was to threaten, your next that I should not believe you. When you laid your hand upon my shoulder, thus, it was no gesture of anger or menace. You thought of the only promise I must believe, and you dropped the thought as quickly as your hand. You would not speak the word you might have to keep. Nay, dearest, what pains you so? You gave me no pain, even when you called another to enforce your command. Yet surely you know that that must have tried my spirit far more than anything else you could do. You did well. Do you think that I did not appreciate your imperious anxiety for me; that I did not respect your resolution to do what you thought right, or feel how much it cost you? If anything in the ways of love like yours could pain me, it would be the sort of reserved tenderness that never treats me as frankly and simply as” ... “There was no need to name either of those so dearly loved, so lately—and, alas! so differently—lost. Trusting the loyalty of my love so absolutely in all else, can you not trust it to accept willingly the enforcement of your will ... as you have enforced it on all others you have ruled, from the soldiers of your own world to the rest of your household? Ah! the light breaks through the mist. Before you gave Enva her charge you said to me in her presence, ‘Forgive me what you force upon me;’ as if I, above all, were not your own to deal with as you will. Dearest, do you so wrong her who loves you, and is honoured by your love, as to fancy that any exertion of your authority could make her feel humbled in your eyes or her own?”

It was impossible to answer. Nothing would have more deeply wounded her simple humility, so free from self-consciousness, as the plain truth; that as her character unfolded, the infinite superiority of her nature almost awed me as something—save for the intense and occasionally passionate tenderness of her love—less like a woman than an angel.

“I was absorbed,” she continued, “in the effort that had thrown Enva into the slumber of obedience. I did not know or feel where I was or what I had next to do. My thought, still concentrated, had forgotten its accomplished purpose, and was bent on your danger. Somehow on the cushioned pile I seemed to see a figure, strange to me, but which I shall never forget. It was a young girl, very slight, pale, sickly, with dark circles round the closed eyes, slumbering like Enva, but in everything else Enva’s very opposite. I suppose I was myself entranced or dreaming, conscious only of my anxiety for you, so that it seemed natural that everything should concern you. I remember nothing of my dream but the words which, when I came to myself in the peristyle, alone, were as clear in my memory as they are now:—

“‘Watch the hand and read the eyes;
On his breast the danger lies—

Strength is weak and childhood wise.
“Fail the bowl, and—’ware the knife!
Rests on him the Sovereign’s life,
Rests the husband’s on the wife.
“They that would his power command
Know who holds his heart in hand:
Silken tress is surest band.
“Well they judge Kargynda’s mood,
Steel to peril, pain, and blood,
Surely through his mate subdued.
“Love can make the strong a slave,
Fool the wise and quell the brave ...
Love by sacrifice can save.”

“She again!” I exclaimed involuntarily.

“You hear,” murmured Eveena. “In kindness to me heed my warning, if you have neglected all others. Do not break my heart in your mercy to another. Eivé”—

“Eivé!—The prophetess knows me better than you do! The warning means that they now desire my secret before my life, and scheme to make your safety the price of my dishonour. It is the Devil’s thought—or the Regent’s!”

As I could not decide to send Eivé forth without home, protection, or control, and Eveena could suggest no other course, the days wore on under a domestic thunder-cloud which rendered the least sensitive among us uncomfortable and unhappy, and deprived three at least of the party of appetite, of ease, and almost of sleep, till two alarming incidents broke the painful stagnation.

I had just left Eivé’s prison one morning when Eveena, who was habitually entrusted with the charge of these communications, put into my hands two slips of tafroo. The one had been given her by an ambâ, and came from Davilo’s substitute on the estate. It said simply: “You and you alone were recognised among the rescuers of your friend. Before two days have passed an attempt will be made to arrest you.” The other came from Esmo, and Eveena had brought it to me unread, as was indeed her practice. I could not bear to look at her, though I held her closely, as I read aloud the brief message which announced the death, by the sting of two dragons (evidently launched by some assassin’s hand, but under circumstances that rendered detection by ordinary means hopeless for the moment), of her brother and Esmo’s son, Kevimâ; and invited us to a funeral ceremony peculiar to the Zinta. I need not speak of the painful minutes that followed, during which Eveena strove to suppress for my sake at once her tears for her loss and her renewed and intensified terror on my own account. It was suddenly announced by the usual signs of the mute messenger that a visitor awaited me in the hall. Ergimo brought a message from the Camptâ, which ran as follows:—

“Aware that their treachery is suspected, the enemy now seek your secret first, and then your life. Guard both for a very short time. Your fate, your friends’, and my own are staked on the issue. The same Council that sends the traitors to the rack will see the law repealed.”

I questioned Ergimo as to his knowledge of the situation.

“The enemy,” he said, “must have changed their plan. One among them, at least, is probably aware that his treason is suspected both by his Sovereign and by the Order. This will drive him desperate; and if he can capture you and extort your secret, he will think he can use it to effect his purpose, or at least to ensure his escape. He may think open rebellion, desperate as it is, safer than waiting for the first blow to come from the Zinta or from the Palace.”

My resolve was speedily taken. At the same moment came the necessity for escape, and the opportunity and excuse. I sought out the writer of the first message, who entirely concurred with me in the propriety of the step I was about to take; only recommending me to apply personally for a passport from the Campât, such as would override any attempt to detain me even by legal warrant. He undertook to care for those I left behind; to release and provide for Eivé, and to see, in case I should not return, that full justice was done to the interests of the others, as well as to their claim to release from contracts which my departure from their world ought, like death itself, to cancel. The royal passport came ere I was ready to depart, expressed in the fullest, clearest language, and such as none, but an officer prepared instantly to rebel against the authority which gave it, dared defy. During the last preparations, Velna and Eveena were closeted together in the chamber of the former; nor did I care to interrupt a parting the most painful, save one, of those that had this day to be undergone. I went myself to Eivé.

“I leave you,” I said, “a prisoner, not, I hope, for long. If I return in safety, I will then consider in what manner the termination of your confinement can be reconciled with what is due to myself and others. If not, you will be yet more certainly and more speedily released. And now, child whom I once loved, to whom I thought I had been especially gentle and indulgent, was the miserable reward offered you the sole motive that raised your hand against my life? Poison, I have always said, is the protection of the household slave against the domestic tyrant. If I had ever been harsh or unjust to you, if I had made your life unhappy by caprice or by severity, I could understand. But you of all have had least reason to complain. Not Enva’s jealous temper, not Leenoo’s spite, ever suggested to them the idea which came so easily and was so long and deliberately cherished in your breast.”

She rose and faced me, and there was something of contempt in the eyes that answered mine for this once with the old fearless frankness.

“I had no reason to hate you? Not certainly for the kind of injury which commonly provokes women to risk the lives their masters have made intolerable. That your discipline was the lightest ever known in a household, I need not tell you. That it fell more lightly, if somewhat oftener, on me than on others, you know as well as I. Put all the correction or reproof I ever received from you into one, and repeat it daily, and never should I have complained, much less dreamed of revenge. You think Enva or Leenoo might less unnaturally, less unreasonably, have turned upon you, because your measure to their faults was somewhat harder and your heart colder to them! You did not scruple to make a favourite of me after a fashion, as you would never have done even of Eunané. You could pet and play with me, check and punish me, as a child who would not ‘sicken at the sweets, or be humbled by the sandal.’ You forbore longer, you dealt more sternly

with them, because, forsooth, they were women and I a baby. I, who was not less clever than Eunané, not less capable of love, perhaps of devotion to you, than Eveena, I might rest my head on your knee when she was by, I might listen to your talk when others were sent away; I was too much the child, too little the woman, to excite your distrust or her jealousy. Do you suppose I think better of you, or feel the more kindly towards you, that you have not taken vengeance? No! still you have dealt with me as a child; so untaught yet by that last lesson, that even a woman's revenge cannot make you treat me as a woman! Clafempta! you bear, I believe, outside, the fame of a wise and a firm man; but in these little hands you have been as weak a fool as the veriest dotard might have been;—and may be yet.”

“As you will,” I answered, stung into an anger which at any rate quelled the worst pain I had felt when I entered the room. “Fool or sage, Eivé, I was your fellow-creature, your protector, and your friend. When bitter trouble befalls you in life, or when, alone, you find yourself face to face with death, you may think of what has passed to-day. Then remember, for your comfort, my last words—I forgive you, and I wish you happy.”

To Velna I could not speak. Sure that Eveena had told her all she could wish to know or all it was safe to tell, a long embrace spoke my farewell to her who had shared with me the first part of the long watch of the death-chamber. Enva and her companions had gathered, not from words, that this journey was more than an ordinary absence. Some instinct or presentiment suggested to them that it might, possibly at least, be a final parting; and I was touched as much as surprised by the tears and broken words with which they assured me that, greatly as they had vexed my home life, conscious as they were that they had contributed to it no element but bitterness and trouble, they felt that they had been treated with unfailing justice and almost unfailing kindness. Then, turning to Eveena, Enva spoke for the rest—

“We should have treated you less ill if we could at all have understood you. We understand you just as little now. Clafempta is man after all, bridling his own temper as a strong man rules a large household of women or a herd of ambau. But you are not woman like other women; and yet, in so far as women are or think they are softer or gentler than men, so far, twelvefold twelve times told, are you softer, tenderer, gentler than woman.”

Eveena struggled hard so far to suppress her sobs as to give an answer. But, abandoning the effort, she only kissed warmly the lips, and clasped long and tenderly the hands, that had never spoken a kind word or done a kind act for her. At the very last moment she faltered out a few words which were not for them.

“Tell Eivé,” she said, “I wish her well; and wishing her well, I cannot wish her happy—yet.”

We embarked in the balloon, attended as on our last journey by two of the brethren in my employment, both, I noticed, armed with the lightning gun. I myself trusted as usual to the sword, strong, straight, heavy, with two edges sharp as razors, that had enabled my hand so often to guard my head; and the air-gun that reminded me of so many days of sport, the more enjoyed for the peril that attended it. Screened from observation, both reclining in our own compartment of the car, Eveena and I spent the long undisturbed hours of the first three days and nights of our journey in silent interchange of thought and feeling that seldom needed or was interrupted by

words. Her family affections were very strong. Her brother had deserved and won her love; but conscious so long of a peril surrounding myself, fearfully impressed by the incident which showed how close that peril had come, her thought and feeling were absorbed in me. So, could they have known the present and foreseen the future, even those who loved her best and most prized her love for them would have wished it to be. As we crossed, at the height of a thousand feet, the river dividing that continent between east and west which marks the frontier of Elcavoo, a slight marked movement of agitation, a few eager whispers of consultation, in the other compartment called my attention. As I parted the screen, the elder of the attendant brethren addressed me—

“There is danger,” he said in a low tone, not low enough to escape Eveena’s quick ear when my safety was in question. “Another balloon is steering right across our path, and one in it bears, as we see through the pavlo (the spectacle-like double field-glass of Mars), the sash of a Regent, while his attendants wear the uniform of scarlet and grey” (that of Endo Zamptâ). “Take, I beg you, this lightning-piece. Will you take command, or shall we act for you?”

Parting slightly the fold of the mantle I wore, for at that height, save immediately under the rays of the sun, the atmosphere is cold, I answered by showing the golden sash of my rank. We went on steadily, taking no note whatever of the hostile vessel till it came within hailing distance.

“Keep your guns steadily pointed,” I said, “happen what may. If you have to fire, fire one at any who is ready to fire at us, the other at the balloon itself.”

A little below but beside us Endo Zamptâ hailed. “I arrest you,” he said, addressing me by name, “on behalf of the Arch-Court and by their warrant. Drop your weapons or we fire.”

“And I,” I said, “by virtue of the Camptâ’s sign and signet attached to this,” and Eveena held forth the paper, while my weapon covered the Regent, “forbid you to interrupt or delay my voyage for a moment.”

I allowed the hostile vessel to close so nearly that Endo could read through his glass the characters—purposely, I thought, made unusually large—of his Sovereign’s peremptory passport. To do so he had dropped his weapon, and his men, naturally expecting a peaceable termination to the interview, had laid down theirs. Mine had obeyed my order, and we were masters of the situation, when, with a sudden turn of the screw, throwing his vessel into an almost horizontal position, Endo brought his car into collision with ours and endeavoured to seize Eveena’s person, as she leaned over with the paper in her hand. She was too quick for him, and I called out at once, “Down, or we fire.” His men, about to grasp their pieces, saw that one of ours was levelled at the balloon, and that before they could fire, a single shot from us must send them earthwards, to be crushed into one shapeless mass by the fall. Endo saw that he had no choice but to obey or affect obedience, and, turning the tap that let out the gas by a pipe passing through the car, sent his vessel rapidly downward, as with a formal salute he affected to accept the command of his Prince. Instantly grasping, not the lightning gun, which, if it struck their balloon, must destroy their whole party in an instant, but my air-gun, which, by making a small hole in the vast surface, would allow them to descend alive though with unpleasant and perilous rapidity, I fired, and by so doing prevented the use of an asphyxiator concealed in the car, which

the treacherous Regent was rapidly arranging for use.

The success of these manoeuvres delighted my attendants, and gave them a confidence they had not yet felt in my appreciation of Martial perils and resources. We reached Ecasfe and Esmo's house without further molestation, and a party of the Zinta watched the balloon while Eveena and I passed into the dwelling.

Preserved from corruption by the cold which Martial chemistry applies at pleasure, the corpse of Kevimâ looked as the living man looked in sleep, but calmer and with features more perfectly composed. Quietly, gravely, with streaming tears, but with self-command which dispelled my fear of evil consequences to her, Eveena kissed the lips that were so soon to exist no longer. From the actual process by which the body is destroyed, the taste and feeling of the Zinta exclude the immediate relatives of the dead; and not till the golden chest with its inscription was placed in Esmo's hands did we take further part in the proceeding. Then the symbolic confession of faith, by which the brethren attest and proclaim their confidence in the universal all-pervading rule of the Giver of life and in the permanence of His gift, was chanted. A Chief of the Order pronounced a brief but touching eulogy on the deceased. Another expressed on behalf of all their sympathy with the bereaved father and family. Consigned to their care, the case that contained all that now remained to us of the last male heir of the Founder's house was removed for conveyance to the mortuary chamber of the subterrene Temple. But ere those so charged had turned to leave the chamber in which the ceremony had passed, a flash so bright as at noonday to light up the entire peristyle and the chambers opening on it, startled us all; and a sentinel, entering in haste and consternation, announced the destruction of our balloon by a lightning flash from the weapon of some concealed enemy. Esmo, at this alarming incident, displayed his usual calm resolve. He ordered that carriages sufficient to convey some twenty-four of the brethren should be instantly collected, and announced his resolve to escort us at once to the Astronaut. Before five minutes had elapsed from the destruction of the balloon, Zulve and the rest of the family had taken leave of Eveena and myself. Attended by the party mustered, occupying a carriage in the centre of the procession, we left the gate of the enclosure. I observed, what seemed to escape even Esmo's attention, that angry looks were bent upon us from many a roof, and that here and there groups were gathered in the enclosures and on the road, among whom I saw not a few weapons. I was glad to remember that a party of the Zveltau still awaited Esmo's return at his own residence. We drove as fast as the electric speed would carry us along the road I had traversed once before in the company of her who was now my wife—to be, I hoped, for the future my sole wife—and of him who had been ever since our mortal enemy. Where the carriages could proceed no further we dismounted, and Esmo mustered the party in order. All were armed with the spear and lightning gun. Placing Eveena in the centre of a solid square, Esmo directed me to take my place beside her. I expostulated—

“Clavelta, it is impossible for me to take the place of safety, when others who owe me nothing may be about to risk life on my behalf. Eveena, as woman and as descendant of the Founder, may well claim their protection. It is for me to share in her defence, not in her safety.”

He raised the arm that bore the Signet, and looked at me with the calm commanding glance that never failed to enforce his will. “Take your place,” he said; and recalled to the instincts of the camp, I raised my hand in the military salute so long disused, and obeyed in silence.

“Strike promptly, strike hard, and strike home,” said Esmo to his little party. “The danger that may threaten us is not from the law or from the State, but from an attempt at murder through a perversion of the law and in the name of the Sovereign. Those who threaten us aim also at the Campât’s life, and those we may meet are his foes as well as ours. Conquered here, they can hardly assail us again. Victorious, they will destroy us, not leave us an appeal to the law or to the throne.”

Placing himself a little in front of the troop, our Chief gave the signal to advance, and we moved forward. It seemed to me a fatal error that no scout preceded us, no flanking party was thrown out. This neglect reminded me that, my comrades and commander were devoid of military experience, and I was about to remonstrate when, suddenly wheeling on the rocky platform on which I had first paused in my descent from the summit, and facing towards the latter, we encountered a force outnumbering our own as two to one and wearing the colours of the Regent. The front ranks quailed, as men always quailed under Esmo’s steady gaze, and lost nerve and order as they fell back to right and left; a movement intended to give play to the asphyxiator they had brought with them. Their strategy was no less ridiculous than our own. Devoid for ages of all experience in conflict, both leaders might have learned better from the conduct of the theme at bay. The enemy were drawn up so near the turn that there was no room for the use of their most destructive engine; and, had we been better prepared, neither this nor their lightning guns would have been quick enough to anticipate a charge that would have brought us hand to hand. Even had they been steady and prompt, the suffocating shell would probably have annihilated both parties, and the discharge would certainly have been as dangerous to them as to us. In another instant a flash from several of our weapons, simultaneously levelled, shattered the instrument to fragments. We advanced at a run, and the enemy would have given way at once but that their retreat lay up so steep an incline, and neither to right nor left could they well disperse, being hemmed in by a rocky wall on one side and a precipitous descent on the other. From our right rear, however, where the ground would have concealed a numerous ambush, I apprehended an attack which must have been fatal; but even so simple and decisive a measure had never occurred to the Regent’s military ignorance.

At this critical moment a flash from a thicket revealed the weapon of some hidden enemy, who thus escaped facing the gaze that none could encounter; and Esmo fell, struck dead at once by the lightning-shot. The assassin sprang up, and I recognised the features of Endo Zamptâ. Confounded and amazed, the Zveltau broke and fell backward, hurrying Eveena away with them. Enabled by size and strength to extricate myself at once, I stood at bay with my back against the rocks on our left, a projection rising as high as my knee assisting to hinder the enemy from entirely and closely surrounding me. I had thrown aside at the moment of the attack the mantle that concealed my sash and star; and I observed that another Chief had done the same. It was he who, occupying at the trial the seat on Esmo’s left, had shown the strongest disposition to mercy, and now displayed the coolest courage amid confusion and danger.

“Rally them,” I cried to him, “and trust the crimson blade [cold steel]. These hounds will never face that.”

The enemy had rushed forward as our men fell back, and I was almost in their midst, thus

protected to a considerable extent from the lightning projectile, against which alone I had no defence. Hand to hand I was a match for more than one or two of my assailants, though on this occasion I wore no defensive armour, and they were clad in shirts of woven wire almost absolutely proof against the spear in hands like theirs.

To die thus, to die for her under her eyes, leaving to her widowed life a living token of our love—what more could Allah grant, what better could a lover and a soldier desire? There was no honour, and little to satisfy even the passion of vengeance, in the sword-strokes that clove one enemy from the shoulder to the waist, smote half through the neck of a second, and laid two or three more dead or dying at my feet. If the weight of the sword were lighter here than on Earth, the arm that wielded it had been trained in very different warfare, and possessed a strength which made the combat so unequal that, had no other life hung on my blows, I should have been ashamed to strike. As I paused for a moment under this feeling, I noted that, outside the space half cleared by slaughter and by terror, the bearers of the lightning gun were forming a sort of semicircle, embarrassed by the comrades driven back upon them, but drawing momentarily nearer, and seeking to enclose before firing the object of their aim. They would have shattered my heart and head in another instant but that—springing on the projecting stone of which I have spoken, which raised her to my level—Eveena had flung her arms around me, and sheltered my person with her own. This, and the confusion, disconcerted the aim of most of the assailants. The roar and flash half stunned me for a moment;—then, as I caught her in my left arm, I became aware that it was but her lifeless form that I clasped to my breast. Giving her life for mine, she had made mine worse than worthless. My sword fell for a moment from my hand, retained only by the wrist-knot, as I placed her gently and tenderly on the ground, resting against the stone which had enabled her to effect the sacrifice I as little desired as deserved. Then, grasping my weapon again, and shouting instinctively the war-cry of another world, I sprang into the midst of the enemy. At the same moment, “Ent ân Clazinta” (To me the Zinta), cried the Chief behind; and having rallied the broken ranks, even before the sight of Eveena’s fall had inspired reckless fury in the place of panic confusion, he led on the Zveltau, the spear in hand elevated over their heads, and pointed at the unprotected faces of the enemy. Exposed to the cold steel or its Martial equivalent, the latter, as I had predicted, broke at once. My sword did its part in the fray. They scarcely fought, neither did they fling down their weapons. But in that moment neither force nor surrender would have availed them. We gave no quarter to wounded or unwounded foe. When, for lack of objects, I dropped the point of my streaming sword, I saw Endo Zamptâ alive and unwounded in the hands of the victors.

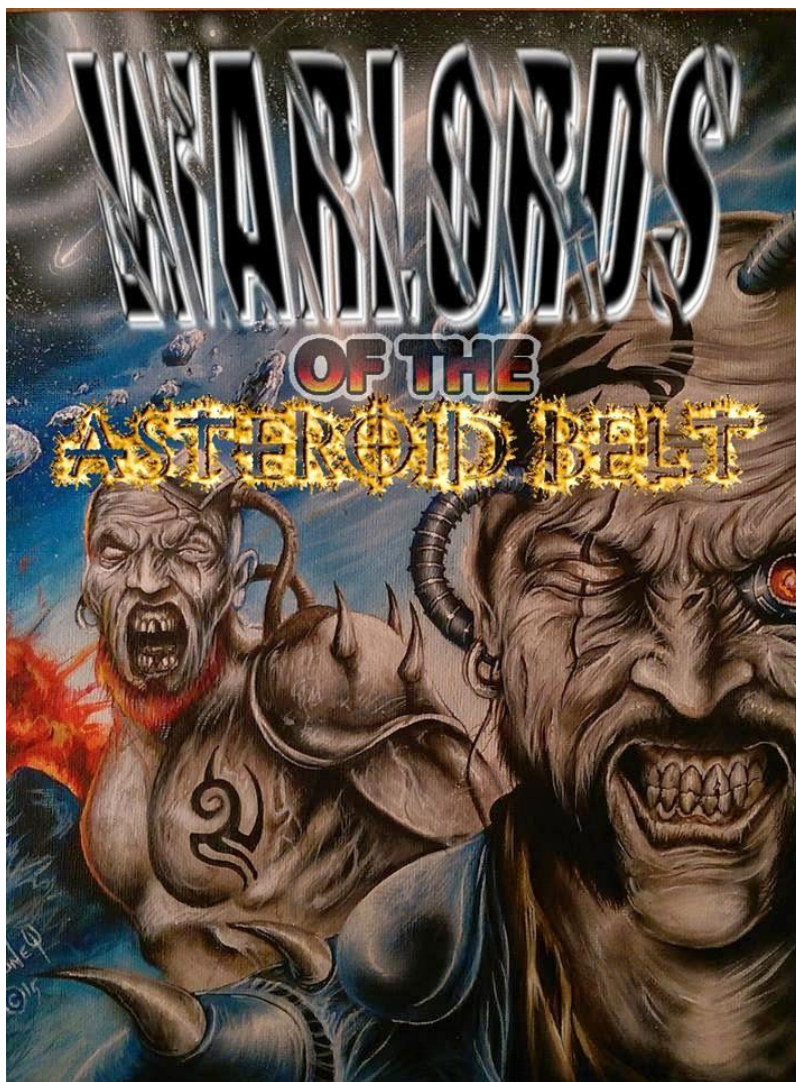
“Coward, scoundrel, murderer!” I cried. “You shall die a more terrible death than that which your own savage law prescribes for crimes like yours. Bind him; he shall hang from my vessel in the air till I see fit to let him fall! For the rest, see that none are left alive to boast what they have done this day.”

Struggling and screaming, the Regent was dragged to the summit, and hung by the waist, as I had threatened, from the entrance window of the Astronaut. Esmo’s body and those of the other slain among the Zveltau had been raised, and our comrades were about to carry them to the carriages and remove them homeward. From the wardrobe of the Astronaut, furnished anew for our voyage, I brought a long soft thorne-cloak, intended for Eveena’s comfort; and wrapped in it all that was left to us of the loveliest form and the noblest heart that in two worlds ever belonged to

woman. I shred one long soft tress of mingled gold and brown from those with which my hand had played; I kissed for the last time the lips that had so often counselled, pleaded, soothed, and never spoken a word that had better been left unsaid. Then, veiling face and form in the soft down, I called around me again the brethren who had fallen back out of sight of my last farewell, and gave the corpse into their charge. Turning with restless eagerness from the agony, which even the sudden shock that rendered me half insensible could not deaden into endurable pain, to the passion of revenge, I led two or three of our party to the foot of the ladder beneath the entrance window of my vessel, and was about in their presence to explain his fate more fully to the struggling, howling victim, half mad with protracted terror. But at that moment my purpose was arrested. I had often repeated to Eveena passages from those Terrestrial works whose purport most resembled that of the mystic lessons she so deeply prized; and words, on which in life she had especially dwelt, seemed now to be whispered in my ear or my heart by the voice which with bodily sense I could never hear again: — “Vengeance is Mine; I will repay.” The absolute control of my will and conscience, won by her perfect purity and unfailing rectitude, outlasted Eveena’s life. Turning to her murderer—

“You shall die,” I said, “but you shall die not by revenge but by the law; and not by your own law, but by that which, forbidding that torture shall add to the sting of death, commands that ‘Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.’ Yet I cannot give you a soldier’s death,” as my men levelled their weapons. Cutting the cord that bound him, and grasping him from behind, I flung the wretch forth from the summit far into the air; well assured that he would never feel the blow that would dismiss his soul to its last account, before that Tribunal to whose judgment his victim had appealed. Then I entered the vessel, waved my hand in farewell to my comrades, and, putting the machinery in action, rose from the surface and prepared to quit a world which now held nothing that could detain or recall me.

CONCLUDES NEXT ISSUE



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[Return to Contents](#)

THE MOON POOL by A Merritt

Chapter II: "Dead! All Dead!"

He was sitting, face in hands, on the side of his berth as I entered. He had taken off his coat.

"Throck," I cried. "What was it? What are you flying from, man? Where is your wife—and Stanton?"

"Dead!" he replied monotonously. "Dead! All dead!" Then as I recoiled from him—"All dead. Edith, Stanton, Thora—dead—or worse. And Edith in the Moon Pool—with them—drawn by what you saw on the moon path—that has put its brand upon me—and follows me!"

He ripped open his shirt.

"Look at this," he said. Around his chest, above his heart, the skin was white as pearl. This whiteness was sharply defined against the healthy tint of the body. It circled him with an even cincture about two inches wide.

"Burn it!" he said, and offered me his cigarette. I drew back. He gestured—peremptorily. I pressed the glowing end of the cigarette into the ribbon of white flesh. He did not flinch nor was there odour of burning nor, as I drew the little cylinder away, any mark upon the whiteness.

"Feel it!" he commanded again. I placed my fingers upon the band. It was cold—like frozen marble.

He drew his shirt around him.

"Two things you have seen," he said. "It—and its mark. Seeing, you must believe my story. Goodwin, I tell you again that my wife is dead—or worse—I do not know; the prey of—what you saw; so, too, is Stanton; so Thora. How—"

Tears rolled down the seared face.

"Why did God let it conquer us? Why did He let it take my Edith?" he cried in utter bitterness. "Are there things stronger than God, do you think, Walter?"

I hesitated.

"Are there? Are there?" His wild eyes searched me.

"I do not know just how you define God," I managed at last through my astonishment to make answer. "If you mean the will to know, working through science—"

He waved me aside impatiently.

“Science,” he said. “What is our science against—that? Or against the science of whatever devils that made it—or made the way for it to enter this world of ours?”

With an effort he regained control.

“Goodwin,” he said, “do you know at all of the ruins on the Carolines; the cyclopean, megalithic cities and harbours of Ponape and Lele, of Kusaie, of Ruk and Hogolu, and a score of other islets there? Particularly, do you know of the Nan-Metal and the Metalanim?”

“Of the Metalanim I have heard and seen photographs,” I said. “They call it, don’t they, the Lost Venice of the Pacific?”

“Look at this map,” said Throckmartin. “That,” he went on, “is Christian’s chart of Metalanim harbour and the Nan-Metal. Do you see the rectangles marked Nan-Tauach?”

“Yes,” I said.

“There,” he said, “under those walls is the Moon Pool and the seven gleaming lights that raise the Dweller in the Pool, and the altar and shrine of the Dweller. And there in the Moon Pool with it lie Edith and Stanton and Thora.”

“The Dweller in the Moon Pool?” I repeated half-incredulously.

“The Thing you saw,” said Throckmartin solemnly.

A solid sheet of rain swept the ports, and the Southern Queen began to roll on the rising swells. Throckmartin drew another deep breath of relief, and drawing aside a curtain peered out into the night. Its blackness seemed to reassure him. At any rate, when he sat again he was entirely calm.

“There are no more wonderful ruins in the world,” he began almost casually. “They take in some fifty islets and cover with their intersecting canals and lagoons about twelve square miles. Who built them? None knows. When were they built? Ages before the memory of present man, that is sure. Ten thousand, twenty thousand, a hundred thousand years ago—the last more likely.

“All these islets, Walter, are squared, and their shores are frowning seawalls of gigantic basalt blocks hewn and put in place by the hands of ancient man. Each inner water-front is faced with a terrace of those basalt blocks which stand out six feet above the shallow canals that meander between them. On the islets behind these walls are time-shattered fortresses, palaces, terraces, pyramids; immense courtyards strewn with ruins—and all so old that they seem to wither the eyes of those who look on them.

“There has been a great subsidence. You can stand out of Metalanim harbour for three miles and look down upon the tops of similar monolithic structures and walls twenty feet below you in the water.

“And all about, strung on their canals, are the bulwarked islets with their enigmatic walls peering

through the dense growths of mangroves—dead, deserted for incalculable ages; shunned by those who live near.

“You as a botanist are familiar with the evidence that a vast shadowy continent existed in the Pacific—a continent that was not rent asunder by volcanic forces as was that legendary one of Atlantis in the Eastern Ocean.¹ My work in Java, in Papua, and in the Ladrões had set my mind upon this Pacific lost land. Just as the Azores are believed to be the last high peaks of Atlantis, so hints came to me steadily that Ponape and Lele and their basalt bulwarked islets were the last points of the slowly sunken western land clinging still to the sunlight, and had been the last refuge and sacred places of the rulers of that race which had lost their immemorial home under the rising waters of the Pacific.

“I believed that under these ruins I might find the evidence that I sought.

“My—my wife and I had talked before we were married of making this our great work. After the honeymoon we prepared for the expedition. Stanton was as enthusiastic as ourselves. We sailed, as you know, last May for fulfilment of my dreams.

“At Ponape we selected, not without difficulty, workmen to help us—diggers. I had to make extraordinary inducements before I could get together my force. Their beliefs are gloomy, these Ponapeans. They people their swamps, their forests, their mountains, and shores, with malignant spirits—*ani* they call them. And they are afraid—bitterly afraid of the isles of ruins and what they think the ruins hide. I do not wonder—now!

“When they were told where they were to go, and how long we expected to stay, they murmured. Those who, at last, were tempted made what I thought then merely a superstitious proviso that they were to be allowed to go away on the three nights of the full moon. Would to God we had heeded them and gone too!”

“We passed into Metalanim harbour. Off to our left—a mile away arose a massive quadrangle. Its walls were all of forty feet high and hundreds of feet on each side. As we drew by, our natives grew very silent; watched it furtively, fearfully. I knew it for the ruins that are called Nan-Tauach, the ‘place of frowning walls.’ And at the silence of my men I recalled what Christian had written of this place; of how he had come upon its ‘ancient platforms and tetragonal enclosures of stonework; its wonder of tortuous alleyways and labyrinth of shallow canals; grim masses of stonework peering out from behind verdant screens; cyclopean barricades,’ and of how, when he had turned ‘into its ghostly shadows, straight-way the merriment of guides was hushed and conversation died down to whispers.’”

He was silent for a little time.

¹ For more detailed observations on these points refer to G. Volkens, *Über die Karolinen Insel Yap*, in *Verhandlungen Gesellschaft Erdkunde Berlin*, xxvii (1901); J. S. Kubary, *Ethnographische Beiträge zur Kenntniss des Karolinen Archipel* (Leiden, 1889-1892); De Abade *Historia del Conflicto de las Carolinas*, etc. (Madrid, 1886).—W. T. G.

“Of course I wanted to pitch our camp there,” he went on again quietly, “but I soon gave up that idea. The natives were panic-stricken—threatened to turn back. ‘No,’ they said, ‘too great *ani* there. We go to any other place—but not there.’

“We finally picked for our base the islet called Uschen-Tau. It was close to the isle of desire, but far enough away from it to satisfy our men. There was an excellent camping-place and a spring of fresh water. We pitched our tents, and in a couple of days the work was in full swing.”

CONTINUES NEXT WEEK

[Return to Contents](#)