

WEEP NO MORE, MY ROBOT *by* Chester S. Geier

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THOUGHT RECORDS OF LEMURIA

By RICHARD S. SHAVER

Open Letter to the World

January 18, 1945

To My Fellow Men:

I, Richard Shaver, want your attention. I must get to you somewhat of the knowledge I have gained in strange ways; so that the mighty hidden wisdom I have unearthed does not perish with me, but becomes instead a part of the general living mind of man. If you have intelligence you will read between the lines of my writings of what may seem at first glance to be the wildest fiction, and find certain immediately useful information as well as the answers to age-old puzzles such as apparently occult and spiritual phenomena; things men fear to speak of but know are true; terrible agonies; hidden and secret pleasures spoken of only as "forbidden fruit"; ways of life that powerful and often foolish social and religious organizations have hidden since earliest times because of a worm-like fear of things they could not quite understand.

Such students will be able to read between the lines of my stories and in their minds build a true picture of the life-that-was in ancient, unwritten-of days. They will realize that I have indeed fathomed many a great lost secret of power such as the medieval sorcerers who, for fear of being burned at the stake, wrote of in obscure codes. Even you who read this tale as fiction will assuredly sense within yourselves the stirring of something that will whisper and call to you to seek further.

The things of which I write will be touched upon in literature more and more frequently in the future by students who realize that mankind should be awakened, even if rudely, to the realities underlying surface life; since those realities wield more influence upon earth people than is generally known, even to the average student of secret things.

Abraham Merritt, in "The Snake Mother," "The Face In The Abyss", "The Moon Pool" and other of his tales, has given those of us who know and seek for more information of the hidden ways of life, some of the secrets of

the antique mechanisms and their hidden places of concealment. Yet I think he did not know that these caverns lie in a great network under all of earth's surface and are actually still inhabited by wretched descendants of the Ancient Ones. His books betray to me certain lacks in his information which I will attempt to make up for the sake of those who seek the truth about these ancient, unspoken-of remnants of the vast super-science so ably described as the property of the Snake Mother.

For instance, in "The Snake Mother," Lantlu and his followers are evil, but retain their beauty and a certain cleverness as well as the method of eternal life. But in the actual life in the caverns today, the evil ones are neither beautiful nor clever nor do they live much longer than normal men. The more intelligent, well-meaning members of these cavern people are sometimes as beautiful and all-wise as Merritt's immortals, but although they have some knowledge of the methods of the Ancients to obtain near-immortal existence, they are not able to use the methods effectively because of their constant struggles with the degenerate, evil members of the race.

Among those remnants of the Ancients there has been degeneration to a degree that would seem incredible did not the creatures still exist, living proofs of the efficacy of the ancient generators of beneficial life force. For in no other way than by constant flows of beneficial force from those indestructible mechanisms could such manifestly unfit creatures as the evil members of the life in the caverns continue to exist.

You who read may unwittingly meet one of the less hideous evil beings at any time on the surface. Those who come up from the caves for commercial or less honest reasons are, naturally, of the higher grades among them; for the degenerates are idiotic devils who only to be seen would be recognized as malevolence incarnate.

I will try to tell you something of them, for they everlastingly obstruct and bedevil mankind. It is their chief satisfaction to wreak pain and damage and death upon human beings. It is well to be able to recognize such enemies, for they are possessed of mighty weapons such as surface people have not yet conceived despite the many instruments of destruction fabricated for earth wars. It is ghastly, but perhaps better for surface people in the final analysis, that these horrible beings have no actual brain power that can be used for intellectual pursuits or abstract theorizing; brain in them has been usurped by a continual questing for something to torment, to ray the life out of. They are like leeches in human form, wholly parasitic and destructive.

Merritt knew much of such things and gave it to you. I can add a great deal to what he has told you and I shall do so, nor shall any craven fear of the hidden powers stop me. For in those still existent mechanisms lie many infinitely valuable methods of making life bloom and become a vastly more beautiful and longer-lasting thing than the present treadmill routine of war and work that it is.

I also address myself to those higher beings of the underworld, those who have kept the ancient virtues alive by breeding with stolen women from the surface, and for other reasons are well-intentioned and closer to mankind than the inbred degenerates peopling many of the caves. Such higher beings are as maliciously plagued as we by the idiot beings who hate everything that is noble and beautiful. The need of those kindlier beings for awareness of certain things which I have woven into my work is as great as is the need of surface people for knowledge of their ancient enemies.

Merritt did not make quite clear the fact that the ancient weapons and mechanisms were, many of them, still intact in a great many places on earth. In confining his ancient, still living race to a hidden section of the Andes mountains, he inadvertently concealed the general dispersion of these underground cities. Concealed in monstrous caverns of unbelievable breadth and space, these wondrous works of the ancient God-race are being used by the evil ones whom Merritt conceals as Nimir and Lantlu and his followers, but whom I picture more nearly to the facts of the case as degenerate men with a mind more in tune with such forms of life as a fluke or leech than to man. There are many such, protected from man on the surface by those hidden, inaccessible caverns whose walls are of such impenetrably hardened rock that the finest tools of miners are broken against them. On guard also at the few existent entrances are the ancient weapons whose great range render it impossible for any living thing to approach within a radius of thirty miles unless permitted by the watchers in the caves.

The power of Nimir's evil is not shackled as Merritt would have it in "The Face In The Abyss." On the contrary, it works havoc through its wretched dupes and hereditary morons, obstructing the good that the scattered Wise of the caverns would do for mankind; as well as blocking in subtle, long-practiced and undetected ways the progress of surface science. On both counts the reason for this mischief is not alone the hateful intent of these dero, but their fear lest surface science wakens to their existence and discovers some way of reaching them in the caverns and freeing the planet from their age-old deviltry.

It is a grievous thing to learn how much of beauty and ecstasy life can offer and yet be obliged to live on day after day in the wretched misery which life in modern ways is to one who knows how the Ancients lived. In reading these tales, compare your life with the ancient ways one may learn in the caverns. You surface folk know nothing better than your present circumscribed existence, but I tell you that your lives are imprisoned hells from which modern science could free you overnight if your learned men would so overcome prejudices as to accept the fact of the existence of the ancient science and acquire but one piece of the marvelous mechanisms for study. And here let me add, for open, general study; not that secret abortive study that such ancient science has had in the past.

My strength is dedicated to informing you of the key and the way to the kind of life that produced the beauty and wisdom of those immortal beings of the past, beings whose actual existence has been proved a thousand times to those who, like myself, have had actual experience in the caverns. For we have seen and touched and used those antique mechanisms and we know whereof we speak. But until today, those who knew have feared to broadcast their knowledge, for in olden times it would have meant being burnt at the stake, and today most certainly the insane asylum.

Merritt well knew, as do I, that the Ancients had conquered death. I have set myself to tell you what I know of how they did so; and how plans carried out intelligently and with care can bring victory over death to modern surface men as it did to those Elders of long ago. It is not easy to achieve immortality, but a real start toward eventual success can be made.

I am forced to tell you that the work of such writers as Merritt contains much that is not fiction, but must be presented as fiction because no one would print it in any other form. Thus you readers who have not met the dark and unfathomable life of the hidden pits may take this bit of explanation as an effort to make an incredible story credible; in which case I hope the effort is successful. It is to those of you who either know, or who believe me, that I more significantly address myself.

Very sincerely yours,

Richard Share

This letter is an introduction to the story which begins on the following page. As you read it, please bear in mind that it is presented to entertain you, and can be accepted as pure fiction, if you wish. But the fact remains, the author believes it is true—and your editor is as impressed as you will be!—Ed.

THOUGHT RECORDS

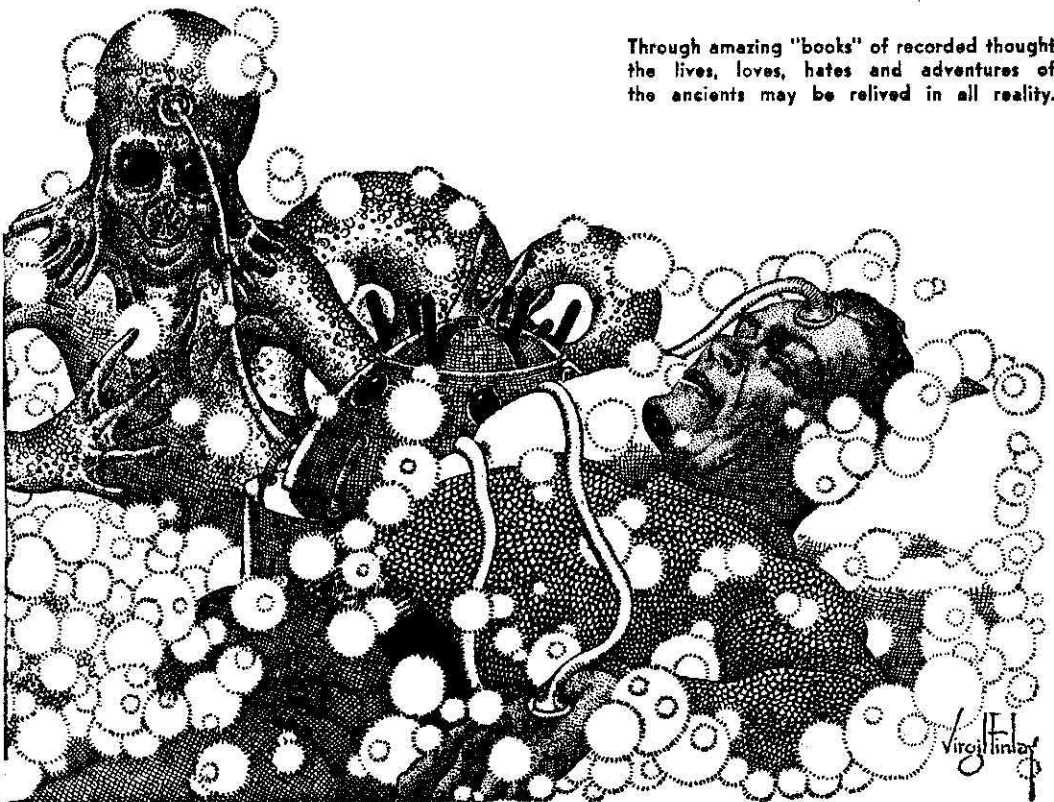


of LEMURIA

By **RICHARD S. SHAVER**

THE editors of this magazine are pleased to present the second "Lemurian" story written by a man who has seen with his own eyes the remnants of the ancient race of Lemuria, and witnessed their still-populated cities hidden deep beneath the surface of the Earth. This second story is intended to answer the challenge of those who wish Mr. Shaver to offer some proof of his source for the first story, "I Remember Lemuria!" published in our March issue. Although it is now revealed that Mr. Shaver's source is not racial memory, as mistakenly claimed by your editors, it seems certain that the actual source will be even more unbelievable. In the following pages you will find a story of amazing adventure, and thrills galore, in the true tradition of all science fiction—and yet, we ourselves cannot say that it is entirely fiction. It may even be that when the proofs now being produced are marshaled together, it will be discovered that a great deal of this and the first story (and stories to follow) are true in the most exact sense of the word. Meanwhile, we present this story for your enjoyment, and we welcome your comment. It is something NEW in science fiction!

Through amazing "books" of recorded thought the lives, loves, hates and adventures of the ancients may be relived in all reality.



WHEN the blind girl of the caves turned on the thought record machine, I lived once more the life that was on Earth when the God races settled the planet, and learned their great scientific secrets.

HHEY, Joe Raddatz, bring that dolly over here!"

I glanced up casually from my spot welding, then blinked in puzzlement as my eyes took in the area immediately around me. The voice in my ear had come out of nowhere! No fellow worker in this Detroit auto plant was near enough for his voice to be heard by me!

"What in the devil . . ." I muttered, then shrugged in mystification and turned back to my work.

The moment I snapped the switch on my spot welder the voice came again.

". . . know damn well this rivet won't fit! Don't tell me I don't know a nine thirty-second hole when I see one . . ." The voice died away, and although I listened intently for a long moment, it didn't come again.

The noon whistle blew and I knocked off. But I didn't get much kick out of eating my lunch. I kept thinking about hearing that voice when no one was around me. Funny thing!

"Wonder who Joe Raddatz is?" I mumbled. I downed the last of my coffee and put the thermos bottle back in the lid of my lunch kit. Then I got to my feet, hitched up my trousers, and went down to the time-keeper's cubby-hole.

"Do me a favor, Clocky?" I asked.

"Sure thing," he grunted. "If it's anything I can do without getting off my fanny."

"It is. I just want to know if there's a Joe Raddatz working on this shift, and where he's located."

Clocky twisted around on his high stool, faced an index on the wall, and ran one finger down the row of cards that were inserted in little slots. "Raddatz—? Unh—yeah, here it is. Sure, Joe Raddatz is on this shift. Works over in section twenty. That'd be down at the far end of the building—he's a riveter."

"Thanks, Clocky," I said, and walked back toward my section. I was frowning and the information I'd just heard was revolving in my brain like a silly pinwheel, getting nowhere.

"Section twenty—" I mumbled, stumbling over a barrel of bronze welding rods. "How could I hear a guy talking over there?"

I thought of acoustics, and pursed my lips. "Yeah, maybe I could, at that." They say there's a spot in the old senate chambers in the Capitol Building where even the faintest whisper can be heard from a spot ninety feet away, and most peculiarly, can be heard at no other point. Acoustics is a funny thing—just the way a building is built can carry sounds and direct them to points where they couldn't ordinarily be heard. Some caves are like that; you can hear a voice a mile away, when it would be inaudible otherwise at a hundred feet.

Thinking about it that way took all the mystery out of it, and I grinned. "Takes a mighty little thing to make a guy think he's dopey!" I said aloud.

I reached my bench and sat down to wait for the whistle to begin work again. By the time it blew I forgot all

about Joe Raddatz and acoustics.

AT TWO o'clock the voice came again. This time it wasn't the voice of Joe Raddatz. It was a new voice, hoarse and gruff; and there were only two words he seemed to be able to fit together coherently. They aren't the kind I'd ordinarily repeat. A moment later I heard other voices—voices of men all up and down the plant, and after an hour I had learned two things: all of the voices came from the side of the plant on which I worked, from one end to the other. I couldn't hear them when I laid my welding gun down. Somehow the two facts were connected.

By nightfall I had figured it out; the voices of the men were those who were near, or in contact with, some machine attached to the wiring system on my side of the building. I couldn't hear any voices at all as long as I didn't have any physical contact with my spot welder.

I think I breathed easier. After all, there was an explanation that I was perfectly willing and able to accept. The wire system, and the machines connected to it, were somehow acting in a telephonic manner, picking up voices, transmitting them through the electrical circuit, and reproducing them in my gun. When I turned the thing in that evening I spoke to the stockroom supervisor.

"Pete, how about sending this in for a repair job—it's out of order."

"What's wrong with it?"

"Gives me a shock," I lied. I figured it was better to say that than go through the rigamarole that would be necessary to explain how I heard voices through it; and the possibility existed that he'd snort and say I was nuts, and I wouldn't get a new gun—and I wanted one. It's nervewracking to have to act like a telephone receiver when you're sup-

posed to concentrate on your work.

A new spot welder didn't do any good. The next day I heard the voices again.

There was only one thing to do—I stuffed my ears with cotton.

And I still heard them!

NOW I began to get a little scared.

I wasn't *hearing* these voices; I was *thinking* them! They were in my mind, soundless, inaudible. Mental telepathy!

Men about me, near or far, saying things, *thinking* things, and I could hear every spoken word or every most secret thought.

I knew I was receiving the thoughts of some of these men, because, for instance, I heard: "Sure, Mike, you're right about that . . . *Right! If this guy's right, I'll eat his shirt! . . .* you're the boss, we'll do it your way . . . *and nuts to you. After you're down the line I'll do as I damned please! For a foreman, you're the stupidest—*" No workman would talk to his foreman like that.

I heard other things that were more convincing proof that I was hearing thoughts, things that made me blush when I heard them; and I don't blush easy!

Right now, for instance, a guy is thinking about his girl . . . Say, if she thinks he loves her, somebody ought to put her straight! He's a wrong **guy**, but really I ought to tip her off—

Hey, wait a minute, how would I *prove* the truth of my tip?

Dynamite, that's what this is! I'll have to keep my trap shut, or I'll be putting my foot into it. I never realized how bad it might be to know what the other guy is thinking, without him being aware, you know.

"Put him on the rack," said a voice.

I snapped off my welder and sat still,

frowning. Something was wrong with that voice, or thought, or whatever it was. Put him on the rack? You don't put people on a rack in an auto plant. Tools, yes, or a lot of other things. Rack? What sort of a rack?

"It'll pull him apart in an hour!" the voice went on with a note of horrible satisfaction in it. "Nice and slow, so he suffers plenty! Put the ben ray on him, so he won't die too quick . . ."

My welding gun clattered to the cement floor. I stood as though frozen. The hair on my head crawled. What was I hearing?

The voice was gone. All around me was only the muted roar of an auto factory—the clanging, clattering, mingling maelstrom of busy machines and busier men. Just noise, no voices.

I LOOKED down at the gun on the floor and I was trembling. What was going on? That voice had been no voice, or thought, of a worker in this plant . . . unless it was the thought of a madman!

A madman?

I sat down, white and shaken as the thought struck me. Maybe *I* was mad! Maybe there were no voices at all. Maybe I'd never actually heard the voices of anyone else. Maybe my own mind was cracking up, and inflicting these weird illusions upon me.

But no. After all, there was Joe Raddatz. I had the name okay, and he actually worked here. And there were other men in the plant whom I'd identified since. Somehow I *had* heard voices, and real thoughts.

Or was *that* insanity? Did insane people go insane simply because their brain functioned *too well*? Is an insane person only a person whose brain is more active than it should be? Is he using that nine tenths of his brain that science says is just dormant and

waiting for his future evolution into a higher type of creature? Just what *is* insanity, after all?

They put people who hear voices into nut houses. But maybe they *do* hear the voices. Maybe they aren't insane at all. Maybe they are just like me!

I looked at the gun again. A thought struck me. If I'm nuts, then I'd be nuts without the gun in my hands. I'd hear these voices any time; maybe all the time. Pick up the gun and see—

I picked up the gun and watched it shake from the trembling of my hands—

The horrible scream of agony that echoed in my brain jolted me right up to my feet with a gasp, and with a cry of terror I hurled the gun from me and ran. Through my mind echoed that scream of utter pain, the scream of a human being in such torture as might be imagined only in Dante's Inferno. Somewhere, somehow, a human being was dying in slow agony—and *I was hearing him die!*

I couldn't stand any more. I managed to slow to a rapid walk, but I kept on going until I got to Clocky's cage.

"Punch in my time, Clocky," I gasped. "I'm quitting. I've had enough of—of welding," I finished weakly.

Clocky stared at me peculiarly, then grunted, punched my card and handed it to me.

"You can get your check at the office," he said gruffly. "Sorry to see you go, Dick." He looked at me queerly. "Say, you ain't sick, are you?"

"No—no!" I said hastily. "I'm okay. Just decided I don't like welding. Besides, I want to take a vacation for awhile. I've been working too hard, maybe. Guess that's why you think I look sick . . ."

I mumbled the last words as I walked away. I didn't look back. Why should

I? One thing was sure. I had seen the last I was going to see of that damned welding gun! If I wasn't nuts, that gun would make me so sooner or later.

A HALF hour later I was out of the plant on a street car heading for home.

"His hotel's clear through," said a voice. "He dug up a lot of stuff and he's getting too smart."

I, Richard Shaver, was going insane, I was sure of it now! I sat there in that street car with the awfulest feeling of fear I have ever experienced, listening to the absolutely crazy babblings of my own mind. How could it be anything else? Even if this were mental telepathy, how could I tie up such a phenomenon with the things I heard? They didn't make sense. Even insane people make sense, but this last voice in my mind—*his hotel's clear through*—what does that mean?

"He's dug the cellar of his house clear down to the caves," the voice explained.

The voice in my mind had answered my question! I sat as though I'd been struck by lightning. But I still had some sense left in my head—I gasped out another question, this time audibly and the man next to me turned to stare at me blankly. "How deep is that?" was what I said.

"About three hundred feet—" said the voice, and suddenly there was a startled note in it, and it faded away. At the same time I felt a numbing shock in my neck, in my spinal column, and I almost screamed with agony from the blinding headache that sprang into being.

"Say, mister," said the man next to me, "you'd better get home and to bed—you look sick!"

I stared at him through pain-filled eyes. "Yeah," I gasped. "I had better. I am sick . . . Got a terrible head-

ache." I climbed to my feet and staggered to the rear of the car and got off.

I walked the rest of the way to my room, fighting the blinding pain in my head. I barely made it to my bed before I blacked out. And as I blacked out I knew a faint glimmering of the truth. Somehow, by some weird super-scientific means, unseen beings had caused this headache—possibly the same ones I'd heard talking that weird gibberish about the hotel—and that I'd brought it upon myself by asking questions. I'd revealed the fact that I had been listening in, and it hadn't been a welcome discovery. The pain-filled blackness into which I sank now was proof of that.¹

* * *

WHEN I awoke my headache was gone, but not my fear. I fled from Detroit as though the devil himself were after me.

To no avail; I could not escape the voices. I heard them day after day,

¹ As dramatically as it is possible for me to do so, I have pictured those first weird happenings that led me almost to the brink of madness, and then to the most incredible adventure that ever befell a man. In order to give my knowledge to the world without being suspected of madness, I must present it in the guise of fiction. Remember that all this wordiness is supposed to be, but is not, just a way of convincing you momentarily of the truth of an obvious impossibility, for the sake of the escape from dull reality which it offers you. So allow yourself really to believe, not just temporarily for the sake of the effect. This story will not seem like fiction to some who will read it. For it is substantially true; the caves, the good and wise users of the antique machines, the fantastic evil mis-users of the antique weapons, all these things are true things and exist in secret in many parts of the world.

Keeping that secret has been a custom, an hereditary habit of the Elder underworld. Surface incredulity and fear of the supernatural has made it an open secret that keeps itself; for you will find that the case records of insane asylums are chock full of patients whose only complaint was that they heard mysterious voices in their minds.

In this story, I intend to reveal the secret to the world, to those who have the intelligence to seek to understand what I say.—Author.

night after night. It went on for months until finally I had become more or less accustomed to them—until I began to understand the whole horrible picture. And also came to understand the fate that was in store for me.

The voices came from beings I came to realize were not human; not normal modern men at all. They lived in great caves far beneath the surface. These alien minds I listened to seemed to know that they had great power, seemed conscious of the fact that they were evil. However they also seemed to think themselves infinitely clever, but the truth of the matter was that they were obviously stupid.

I discovered this from listening carefully. Their thoughts were incredibly contradictory: to make things worse was to get along better, to make enemies was to be more powerful, to torment anyone was a personal satisfaction, to love any living thing was weak and stupid.

Who were these voices? Where were they? It took me several years to figure it out, but finally I was successful. And when I finally had learned the truth, they knew that I had discovered it, was becoming informed as to them, their place of residence, their mode of living, their evil thoughts. And since fear is one of their mainsprings, they feared me.

It was not too long before I could overhear them in my mind, plotting my destruction, though why they should have had any trouble about that I could not at that time understand. When I gained more knowledge of their stupid, crazy mind's workings, and learned that they believed they cannot actually kill a surface man without first building up a frame for the killing that will make it appear either suicide or accident or death from natural causes, I began to realize what was ahead of me.

This belief of theirs is based primarily upon their fear of discovery and its implications, plus a more realistic danger: though often stupid and usually duped, there exist among these *dero*² people many who are not as malicious and evil as the worst degenerates, and these *tero* are impelled to avenge murder committed for no really good reason, even when it is the murder of one of the helpless, because unknowing, surface people.

"He knows too much; we must kill him," became a frequent thought I heard in their minds, and it terrified me. I tried desperately to contact the only ones I knew could help me, the *tero*, but I did not succeed. I was neatly framed, and here is how they did it:

They framed me subtly and completely, so subtly that I myself, although aware from hearing their thoughts what they were up to, did not realize how to avoid the trap until it was too late. I fell for every one of their tricks, because their devious deviltry and their incomprehensibly stupid motivations were not yet clarified in my mind. It was under their control that I did a thing that proved to their enemies, the *tero*, (whose vengeance they feared and whose conscience they had to find a means of dulling by building up a case sufficiently plausible to deceive them into accepting my fate as necessary)

² This is a shortening of the term "detrimental robot." It means, briefly, that they are "people who are slaves to a degenerate mind." Their brains have become radioactively poisoned by rays from the weird machines they constantly use and whose use they do not fully understand and whose rays become detrimental because of non-replacement of vital parts, which thus becomes impregnated with radioactive accumulations whose emanations are harmful (just as radium must be shielded by lead to prevent serious burns). Thus all their thinking is along destructive channels. Obviously, then, a "*tero*" (in contrast to a "*dero*") is one whose thinking is integrative, or constructive, in quality because his mind has not been poisoned by radioactives.—Ed.

that I was no friend.

After that came the harpy hue and cry which has for ages followed and caused the death of the best minds among surface men from persecution by their own kind. Daily it rang in my ears while I fled from city to city to escape it. Yet, when my brother became involved and they killed him, I argued with myself that I must be having delusions, that his death was natural, that all this could not be without some mention of it in the papers or in books.

I SHALL not take more of your time to give the details of how the axe fell on me; it is all too sordid. I assure you it did not do me credit, and I would much rather forget it. Suffice it to say that my enforced escapade, which I was blindly urged into by the subtle energy of the telepathy machines and other incomprehensible mechanisms using rays and forces that surface man never heard of, ended with my arrest and sentence to a state prison.

To this end I, a well-intentioned human being, had been driven by those potent rays in the hands of evil idiots in earth's hidden caverns!

But that I was thus imprisoned was not enough. They poured continuously upon me pain rays that, added to mental control which continually got me into disgusting, dangerous situations, kept me on the verge of madness from despair for years. I learned at length and in infinite detail just what Hell really can be, and at the same time I realized that such a Hell has been the daily lot of many men of earth since earliest times.

There was no relief or way of seeking aid from the continuous and almost unbearable torment. Had I complained to a prison guard that I was being tormented by invisible rays, I would have

been taken from the prison to be shut up in a madhouse. I knew there would then be no hope of release. Waiting and patience might at length gain my release here at the end of my sentence; but in a madhouse, once certified mad by medical men, I realized that I would not even have the solace of attempted flight from the dero rays, to the end of my days. For from the talk of other prisoners I knew a madhouse to be a much harder place to get out of than a prison.

I know those dero only let me live because my life was a burden to me, and because my torture was a delight to them and they feared no retribution.

I had become but a thin, haggard ghost of a man when release came from a quarter I had lost all hope of ever contacting. In some manner the dero, the sane, well meaning members of that strange cavern life, seized control of the area of land in which the prison lay.

MY TORMENTS ceased abruptly. A new and intensely wonderful life began for me. For the first time in years I was able to relax, although for some time I lived in dread of the return of the suffering to which I had grown almost accustomed, as one grows accustomed to a painful limp.

I began to dream and my dreams were infinitely pleasant though bizarre in the extreme. I could not recall them wholly upon awaking until one night *she* came to me in my dream, and that dream was as fresh in my memory when I wakened as though it had been an actual reality. She came to my cell, apparently, and sat herself upon the edge of my iron cot. With her came that laughing spirit of youth and mischievousness which I had almost forgotten as the face of freedom. The oppressive feeling that is a part of prison life vanished; she had brought her free face

before my eyes.

She seemed clothed in a soft luminosity that threw rays of strangely invigorating light upon me as well as showing her strange, rich other-world beauty to me. She had hair of faintest golden tint, just off white, and it lay smoothly drawn back from her brow and was caught at the nape of her neck with a ribbon that was a pale green, a green that had lain so long in darkness that it had lost its original color. Her eyes under arching brows were wide and had no expression, yet her assurance in every movement as she came into the cell did not betray what I learned later, that she was blind. The eyes were very large, and faintly blue. Her features were not out of the ordinary, but strangely and beautifully exaggerated: the too-large eyes; the delicate, utterly sensitive nose; the drooping, too-large lips that were made for caresses they had not received. Her beauty was far from the standard variety one finds under the surface sun. She had that strange, wise quality men have sung of as the witch maid's alone since time began. When she spoke, such vitality sprang into being on her strange face as woke every instinct in me from the long hopeless sleep in which they had been plunged. Yes, her face was freedom to me.

She wore a loose garment that hung from her shoulders to her calves and was belted by a metal circlet of netted links into which was thrust a metallic object which I recognized as a weapon of some strange kind.

IN MY dream I sat upright. My youthful visitor took both my hands in hers, saying—

"Do you wish freedom so badly, then?"

I replied: "I want it more than life, but capture would be inevitable. Then

I would get no more chances to escape.

"If you are willing," her halting, apparently little used English voice said, "I can take you to a place where no police have ever shown their face, and where none ever will. You have only to agree to do as I tell you, without argument, for one year. I can free you quickly, and in truth I need your services."

I embraced with enthusiasm any prospect of escape, and could not imagine that "doing her bidding" would be anything but pleasant. I agreed to her proposition, adding some fervent prayers of confused and stumbling words that I hoped expressed my infinite despair and the bright face of the hope she brought me.

Thus came to me Nydia, as I called the blind girl after the blind maiden in Bulwer Lytton's "Fall of Pompeii." In the morning after that first dream of her I found upon the cot that pale ribbon she had worn about her paler hair. I knew then that it was more than a dream and I looked forward with mounting anticipation to further meetings with a person who could come to a man as a dream and leave behind an actual memento. How had that ribbon gotten through those walls and bars?

It was some time before the magic was explained to me. She had promised me that she would very soon find means to release me from the prison, and that mysteriously actual ribbon was a constant reminder in my pocket that she had powers beyond present day wisdom. I still do not understand how those antique teleport mech's³ work,

³ Teleport mech—a means of transmission over a distance of an actual object by means of tele rays. This machine could transmit a solid thing in a way that might be comparable to the way a photo or map is transmitted by radio. However, there is a difference in principle which Mr. Shaver has never been able to fathom from his study of the machine.—Ed.

but work they do, and she had sent the ribbon over it after she had shut off the dream-maker machine. But I will explain that later.

After that, she came to me frequently, sometimes she was just a kind of projection, and sometimes her sweet, actual body lay in my arms, I swear. I grew accustomed to her visits and the hopes I began to entertain built me up more and more in morale, particularly as I was no longer tormented. In time I realized that she loved me truly, a man who had not seen a woman in many years of imprisonment. She loved me in dreams more vivid than any reality could be, made so by the stronger-than-human thought impulses sent over her strange dream-making instrument's rays.

She loved me with the first maiden love of a girl for a man, for she herself had long been a prisoner in one of the caves and was but now set free. She read in my heart all that I was, and our mutual and long desire for freedom that becomes a constant part of one's thoughts after long imprisonment brought about between us a kinship that blossomed swiftly into glowing love for each other. So it was not long before she told me all was ready, that she would come that very night during the darkness before dawn, to release me, and to take me with her into her hidden home.

THAT same night the key grated in the lock of my cell door and I was not surprised to see the guard standing there as if dazed, his eyes unseeing. By then I understood something of her powers, and understood that he was a man under mental control. Behind him I could see reproduced the form of the blind girl, her transparent form bending over a huge old mechanism, her face a mask of concentration. The guard

waited until I had emerged, almost cringing in my dread lest this was just another dream from which I might awaken, then he locked the cell door behind me, the cell now empty of its victim. We walked to the outer door that led from the corridor. This he opened and stood waiting to lock it again after I had passed out. I looked at him curiously, for his face was peaceful as in sleep and his eyes were unseeingly fixed ahead on space.

Silently as a shadow I slid out and no sound ever was so sweet as that door's lock clicking shut behind me. I sped across the open grounds and into the nearby forest and there beside me again was that transparent slim ghost of a Nydia leading me by the hand. To my undying amazement, the projection of that miraculous ancient mechanism felt as solid to my hand as real human flesh, though very different and thrilling because of the augmentative nature of the mechanism. Love with augmentation is immensely more desirable than normal love.

For miles that phantasm led me deeper and deeper into the hills. In the dark I could visualize every stone and bit of dead branch as though my feet had eyes of their own. They did—a blind girl's electric perception, developed since she was a child in the use of those miraculously potent and indestructible mechanisms, was able to sense those trifling obstacles and lead me clearly among them.

As last we came to the base of the mountain, to where it reared rocky slopes to the night sky. In the cleft of two rocky shoulders yawned a door. It was a strange door, for it was covered with earth and grass and small bushes, all alive and growing. As soon as our feet crossed the threshold, the great mass of the door lowered silently and I knew that no man could detect where

that door might be.⁴

THE dim light inside the cave I found emanated from long tubes running along the walls, which contained some self-actuating material which glows. Once, it was probably productive of a strong light, but now it gave off but a dim glow. The blind girl sensed my thoughts and spoke: "In other of the caverns there is brilliant light which can be switched on and off. There the tubes are wired to one of the ancient dynamos, which must now and then be replenished by water, which is the fuel of many of the ancient power generators.⁵ In those caves, the dwellers have normal eyesight."

Into this twilight the ghostly little figure continued to draw me on. We emerged at length into a vast room, around which could be dimly seen huge mechanisms of incomprehensible uses. Beside one of these stood a soft, utterly enticing figure that was the duplicate of the phantasm that had led me here. The screen still glowed brightly from use.

As my footsteps rang on the ancient polished stone of the floor, this little figure raced toward me unerringly and threw herself into my arms. Her no-longer-dropping, flower-red mouth sought mine like a starved animal scenting meat. As she left the receptor

screen of the ancient mechanism, the phantom beside me disappeared abruptly.

"Dick, my poor love! You are safe with me at last. It has seemed so long," cried her voice that was music to me who had starved for the tender tones of a woman's voice for so many years.

My arms went about her slender child's form. I leaned my face to those questing lips and learned more about love in two seconds than all the past of my life had taught me. The little witch had left the augmentor beam on me and only those who have loved under those ancient impulse augmentors can understand the depths of love. I knew that I had never really lived until that fierce moment when our love sprang into flaming life.

At last we stood, just looking at each other. I felt sure that Nydia could see me, her intent wide eyes were fixed so surely on me.

"I cannot believe that you do not actually see me!" I exclaimed.

"Almost I do," she responded. "You seem much bigger, now that you are here. My mind can see you, in a way that you will learn to see, too."

I looked about for the first time. I realized that my little sweetheart was but poorly clad, not at all like the projection she had made of herself into my prison cell. I learned later that that projection was largely mental, so that her likeness went clad as she would have liked to be clothed. In reality her garments were but a few well worn rags. I myself could have wished I wore less than my prison demin, for the temperature was high, as it is in deep mines. Her fair hair, her large unseeing eyes, her paper white skin, were as I had seen them in my prison.

The vast round space where we stood was surrounded by hulking, mysterious machines; they stood dimly gigantic in

⁴ Such doors into the caves are few but they do exist and no other door is so worthy of a man's search. Always provided the door is not one that opens upon the hiding places of the evil life that is in many parts of the caves, there is no door that can open life before you as that door to the underworld. Read on and you shall learn something of the pleasure and wisdom that opened door offered me, a criminal escaped from a state prison. You shall learn, too, that there are other things yet more wonderful than the seemingly impossible feat of a blind girl snatching a convict out of a prison.—Author.

⁵ The water is disintegrated by some unknown process.—Ed.

the faint light of the cavern lamps.

I ASKED Nydia where her people were. She said with a little laugh that they were leaving us to ourselves at this moment of our meeting but that I should meet them soon enough.

"Oh, Dick, in some ways they are different from surface folk, and you must not let these differences disturb you. They are prepared to welcome you heartily because I love you and they love me. But it is not our custom to admit surface people to our hidden ways, for they are so apt to fear us and thus hate and be a danger to us. Greet them naturally and show no fear or repulsion no matter how they look to you. We are different from the kind of human you are used to. We need men like you to aid us in our constant struggle with the living devils that inhabit much of these underground warrens. But when we try to approach men for this purpose they fear the whole thing as madness or ghosts or whatever they have been taught. You see, we are forced to fight the devils because we wish evil to no one and cannot be glad when others suffer, and that is a way of thought that all the evil cavern wights⁶ hate and seek to destroy."

She led me from the huge machinery cavern into a smaller room that was a strange mixture of architectural magnificence, the work of the Gods, and old hand-made wooden furniture that must have been brought into that place two hundred years ago, or more. We sat on a wooden bench that was a half of an oak tree, split length-wise, with wooden pegs for legs. She told me more of her people. They had come from England's northern underground seventy years before. They were but few, only twenty living in the ruined splendor of that an-

cient God's retreat. Most of them had never read a book, although Nydia had a few poor samples of modern books. But they had read men's minds over the ancient beams that penetrated through miles of the rock of the hills and was so conductive and augmentive one could read a man's mind many miles away. In some ways they knew more of life than does the ordinary man by far.

Many of them had contacted surface folk and striven to persuade such persons to join them but had been rebuffed probably from a fear that their soft invitation was a mental delusion or masked some snare. For those men who know of the ancient secret know also of the evil it has always done, hence fear all ray people⁷ through many are wise and good and try to nullify the evil and reduce the torments inflicted by the degenerate evil members of that strange life.

OF THE twenty in this group at least a half-dozen were blind because of their heredity, like Nydia. For many of the cavern people come of stock that lived so long in almost total darkness as to become blind as the fish in cavern

⁷ Ray people are taken to mean all of the modern underground race, both the dero and the tero. They are called "ray" by Mr. Shaver because that is the means they use to spy upon surface people, and to talk to them, and to perform the many weird things their machines are capable of doing. It is by rays that they operate. For instance, have you ever had a fearful nightmare in which you have been faced by horribly realistic monstrosities such as your waking mind has never conceived, to your utter terror? This dream might have been produced in your mind by tele-projection from the dero creatures of the caves who delight in causing surface people horror and terror. There is another and more significant reason behind this practice, and that is to build up superstition and fear in surface people that has been proved their greatest protection against discovery by upper-worlders. They fear discovery because it would mean their extermination by a vindictive human race, seeking to revenge itself upon its age-old torturers.—Ed.

⁶ Wight—an elf. In this case, the dero people.—Ed.

rivers become blind. Ages of life in the dark had developed other senses than sight in their particular family, compensatory senses. The others, strangely enough, had very large eyes, much too large for normal vision, with great black openings in the iris. Evolution had developed the faculty of seeing in the dark in these. Their skins were often light brown; or a paper-like, bleached white; or a mottled, strangely lumpy appearance which came of a disease peculiar to the caves. They are not like surface men, these dwellers in the caves.

But these *tero* were a kindly lot and a friend of Nydia's was a friend of theirs. I soon saw that they had little comprehension of the terrific significance of the ancient secret of the caverns' mechanisms or the value of a knowledge of their uses. It was difficult to realize their lack of imagination and their casual acceptance of the facts of their age-old customs in regard to surface men. It is not, after all, so many years ago when all such people were burned as witches and sorcerers. They had never attended a school, yet their knowledge in general was surprising for people raised in practically total darkness. It is because they absorb general information from reading many men's minds. The fact that rickets is not common among them I attribute to the beneficial rays which the ancients made a part of the pleasure-ray machines which they are proficient in using from long practice.

Perhaps our education and its consequent results in thought are not as important or remarkable as we of the surface believe. Certainly our thoughts offer these *tero* small temptation to join us; they prefer, I think wisely, their seclusion. Nydia, not alone among her kind, but rare, had vast plans and different ideas than theirs; she had always urged contact with surface people and had at last fallen in love with a sur-

face man and brought him with her into her cavern home.

THE space within the mountain was an Aladdin's cave, beautiful beyond a modern man's imagination. The hall where Nydia next led me, saying it was a hall where the group met for any social purposes, was pillared by mighty metal simulations of trees, hung with crystalline, glittering fruits. In every one of these great rooms stood several of the enigmatic ancient mechanisms, themselves beautiful of form and shimmering with prismatic color.

Some of the machines had a startling way of talking; when one neared them they would speak in a strange tongue, beautiful sounding words of a meaning incomprehensible. That is a strange sensation, hearing a machine speak to you. I suspect they were equipped to announce their need of oil or other minor adjustments, as we equip mechanisms with red lights to indicate need for adjustment.

The solid, gleamingly polished and super-hard floor of rock was inlaid with weirdly beautiful designs and symbols which I deduced were writings in the Ancient's lost language. Imperishable metal lounges, once probably covered with the "shining fabrics which the Gods alone could weave"⁸ stood beside the gleaming, ancient "mech," as the cavern people call the old machines. It was in this great room that later that same night, or day, I should perhaps say, Nydia's family and other members of that group formally welcomed me, the surface man who had joined them for the balance of his life.

AMONG the cavern people, marriage is purely a personal matter, people either live together or they do not, and

⁸ "Shining fabrics which the Gods alone can weave" is verbatim from "Ulysses."—Ed.

it is no one else's business. I often think their attitude in this respect is the correct one. In the caves, when two people promise themselves to each other, they keep their promise; which is more than I can say for surface life. Nydia spent exactly one week showing me that what happened to Tannhauser in the Hollow Hill with the goddess Venus can still happen to mortal man. She had studied the uses of the antique pleasure mechanisms under masters—some of whom I met later. For one week I experienced all the pleasures of a God's nuptials; tremendous stimulation generators poured super-powered pleasure impulses through every nerve of my body at their full capacity. If a man could die of pleasure I am sure that I would have died then. But my tender hearted Nydia was no slave of pleasure. She was a sweet normal girl in love and I learned more of what infinite pleasure life could hold in that week than ever mortal man did before.

At the week's end, my little blind witch began to talk of other things than love and of honeymooning. I will admit that I protested at length, but she gave me her reasons quietly but firmly.

"There is much you must learn, my innocent, if you would live very long down here. We may at any time be attacked by savage, mad ray-men from the evil places. You do not yet know how to fight or work with these tremendous weapons. We cannot wait. Besides you have promised to do as I say for one year, and my purpose in making you promise this to me was just that, that I might teach you to be of value to us in such a fight.

"I am yours and you may do with me as you please," I told her gravely, and I meant it.

"I shall show you, dear lover, the true nature of those whom we must fight against if we are to survive," she said,

musingly. "There is so much to tell you, to teach you, that I hardly know where to begin. But first of all you must know whom it is that we must battle against. Come!"

She led me to the great hall where I had first met her and paused before one of the mechanisms. Her hand on the control, she swung a huge distance-ray beam and almost immediately upon the visi-screen a scene of utter horror became visible. I could hardly believe my own eyes' evidence. That was a Hell, a real Hell, I looked upon. Men hung swinging from hooks, boiled in fluids, writhed on racks, thirsted in the stocks, sat on spikes tugging to get off, lay under hammers that crushed them inch by slow inch, or slid inexorably into machines that sliced them gradually with the thinness of a microtome.⁹

NYDIA explained the horror, and I got at last the full significance of the ancient legend of Hell.

"You see, they will not allow their victims to die, but keep them alive through every torment by the use of the beneficial rays. When a man is nearly dead, they place him in one of the vitalizer machines for a day or two and he is healed up completely. Then they start him through the thing again. Do you see those shriveled bundles at the side? That is how the victims look when they finally do die."

We watched the horror for a space and Nydia concluded—

"Some of those men have lived in that torment for twenty years. This is our enemy's pleasure palace; a Hell for helpless victims of their lust for blood and pain. From immemorial times, they have had such Hells in the underworld, and it has never ceased. You see, you surface Christians are not so far wrong

⁹ One of various instruments used to cut sections for microscopic examination.—Ed.

in your pictures of Hell, except that you do not die in order to go there, but wish for death to release you once you arrive. And they are very careful about letting a victim die, for that would end the fun. There has always been a Hell on earth, and this is one of them. Every man who falls into their hands, from the caverns or from the surface, faces one of those torments-to-the-death you witness. It never mentions such things, your newspaper, does it? That bunch of misbegotten spawn of an afreet¹⁰ fears all living men."

"Do any surface men know of this thing?" I asked her.

"It's impossible to tell them of such things," she answered. "Since there is no logical reason for anyone behaving as they do, none of the motives that animate surface people being evident in such activity, they can't believe any tale of modern Hell. Even if you show them projections of the things that go on in the evil caverns, they are sure that it is a concoction made up to frighten them, from motives wholly mischievous. The truth is, almost none of the surface people believe in the existence of evil ray-groups from antiquity down to the present day. They don't even understand the detrimental robotism¹¹ which is the underlying cause of such a horror. And there is no way to tell them, short of taking them there. Even if they knew, what could they do? They have no

weapons to fight an ancient ray weapon, nothing they could do would stop the thing. Since most of the victims come from among us cavern people, surface people never miss anyone without having a simple explanation for the disappearance."

SHE twirled a dial on the great apparatus and swiftly the picture on the screen swept through the beautiful caves and came to rest on a group of things that should not live.

"Do you see them?" she demanded. "Those things that could not live but for the beneficial rays they bathe in perpetually? The worst thing about them is their fear of technical men. They are so stupid they think that modern science might produce weapons affective against their mighty antique mechanisms, so they particularly persecute and obstruct modern scientists on the surface, although the truth is, it is improbable that men can produce anything equal to the ancient work in even centuries of effort."

"Have you had many other surface people here?" I asked her in wonder.

Nydia shook a sad little blonde head.

"It is very difficult," she admitted.

"I have planned for years on recruiting and training a group of men who would be far superior in ability to those evil ones we fear. But surface men fear us, chiefly because they have heard the

¹⁰ A monstrous evil jinni, a demon, a horrible giant.—Ed.

¹¹ Detrimental robotism—actually the two words from which dero is derived, using the first two letters of each word. Thus it can be seen that a dero is a being who is a robot (or slave) to a detrimental process of thinking, a process that always ends in something bad. Dero people's minds are affected, so that their thought processes are warped into evil channels. Picture the brain as poisoned, and picture a thought as something that must make its way through the convolutions. This is not actually what happens, but it is an analogy that will help you to understand. Con-

ceive of the thought as a good thought, such as doing a good deed. But by the time the thought has gone through the brain and transmitted into action, the thought is no longer a good deed, but a bad deed. For instance you are impelled by your thought to help a blind man across the street, but by the time you get to him to do it, your thought has changed so that you trip him and laugh as he falls into a mud puddle. That is the way a dero thinks, and why he always does evil things—his brain is so poisoned by detrimental energy that all his good thoughts end up bad. Pure thought, say the philosophers, is always good. It is only rendered bad by the effect of a sick human mind.—Ed.

whispered lies and horrible thoughts of the evil ray-men."

I looked with loathing and sick disgust at the Things that were now pictured on the vast visi-screen. In truth, they could not have lived save for the protection and beneficial force rays of that Elder Race that had once lived there. Small wizened imps, goggle-eyed, their goblin appearance was that of walking dead men. And dead they would have been except for the synthetic body electric which the ancient generators of life force pour through thier bodies forever. Because of this supply of super energy, these evil people live on long after they would normally be dead. It is this fact, also, that makes them evil, for they are in truth not able to create thought, and only the slow decay of their brains is energized by the synthetic electric, which is the real cause of the evil, destructive nature of their thought. It is not genuine thought at all, but a reflection of the decay in their minds, which is a disintegrant pattern, not a creative one.

Nydia explained all this to me very clearly, and I know she was right, for they looked extremely unburied, long dead, but horribly alive. I believe that if they were cut off from this ancient supply of life-generating electric mechanisms, they would not live a week. Some of them hung over balconies around the scene of that hell upon which I had looked sickly a moment before. They were obviously gloating evilly. Others were talking over the telepathic ray mechanism with people on the surface.

"To torment their victims is their greatest pleasure. They have little ability to enjoy other things. And they are always amusing themselves torturing helpless beings who have fallen into their hands. It is a terrible thing to understand, but it is true."

"WHERE did this particular group come from?" I asked Nydia.

"The ancestors of this group came from underneath Arabia. They came long before we did, more than one-hundred and fifty years ago. Some of them are one-hundred and fifty years old, too, I have learned. The Arabs knew them as afreets, the devils that whisper in sand blowing at night, or scream like lost souls in the sand storms, and mislead the poor Arabs, causing their death with lies or tormenting them with pain rays."

But those afreets, or goblins, upon which I stared on the visi-screen were not whispering in the wind or the sand. They were, instead, lisping into the straining ears of some of the most influential tycoons of the surrounding surface industrial area. The lies they told! I learned later by myself, reading the minds of some of the rich, that many of them believed in the power and efficiency of the Secret Ray of America, which they thought was a service like the F.B.I. for the purpose of searching out escaped convicts, bank-robbers, extortioners, kidnapers, etc. To these tycoons the ray-dero from the hidden caverns posed as a secret service, hard at work solving several murders and robberies they had committed themselves. They were amazing mimics, considering that they had little real intelligence, but only a pseudo-thought arising from their long experience in reading men's minds.

"My dearest Dick, you must learn very quickly all that I can teach you," murmured Nydia tensely. "Then you will be better able to help our sane group—who are really very good and wise—protect ourselves from those mad ones. At present we are able to hold them off, but at any time they may get the better of us. They are really mad idiots, in spite of their clever mimicry of sane people's actions. They slay us

whenever they have an opportunity to do so without loss or danger to themselves.

"Come, now!" Nydia continued, "—into the ancient thought record library. You shall read the history of the great race who builded these imperishable caves and the indestructible machinery which is capable of who knows what miracles. These records tell of a time when the Great Ones lived on earth long before history was recorded by writing. Thus, you shall know more about the earth and the life of Man in the past than any other living man from the surface—more, too, than most of the cavern people, for few of us study long enough to learn to appreciate and absorb the wisdom that lies in such places as this library of the recorded thought of the mighty men who were

once called Gods by people of earth. This is the place that has made me intelligent and worthy of life. You will become a great man if you use this wisdom, my lover."

Into yet another chamber Nydia led me and guided me to a huge chair, like a giant's dentist chair, though the upholstery was missing. She pushed me into it, and I was lost in its tremendous size, which made her laugh deliciously. There were several flexible metal straps which she fastened about my wrists, waist and neck. Then she took a strange helmet, fastened to a heavy cable, and placed it on my head.¹²

"Lie back and relax. You will soon be another person entirely in another period of time. Do not let the double sensation of being two people at once worry you; it does not last long. This is the greatest experience the ancient wisdom of the caverns can offer you, to read the mighty thought—to actually become as a God of the ancient times."

I saw her throw a Titan-size switch on the wall and in a flash—

* * *

I WAS not Dick Shaver, but another man entirely. I stood in a forest of tremendous fern trees. Beside me was a long, enormous cylinder of smoking metal, still hot from its recent passage through the upper air. From it emerged a woman, larger than I, and in her arms she carried my child.

The fern trees seemed topless, stretching up until distance made the tremendous fronds seem fragile and delicate to the eye, at last disappearing in the mists. In the sky I could see many similar cylinders and knew they were decelerating and would come to rest at last near us. I knew that we were members of an Atlan¹³ colonizing

¹² When I gave the world the story of Mutan Mion (In "I Remember Lemuria!" in the March, 1945, AMAZING STORIES) as my own memories, I could not reveal exactly how I remembered the far past, without bringing the story down to the present day. Thus it was that editor Ray Palmer mis-named it "racial memory." So now I shall explain the actual truth of how it came about that the ancient, forgotten past can live today, exactly as it was, in the mind of a modern man—myself.

Through scientific, indestructible mechanisms the Ancient Ones' thoughts were recorded on a kind of micro-film, sealed in non-corrosive containers. Placed in one of their thought-record projectors, these records yield more precise and accurate information about that ancient life than any of our history books about more recent events. By the nature of synthetic thought-electric flows given off in strength by these particular mechanisms, the person "reading" the record feels he is himself the person experiencing the occurrences described in the thought-record. The flow of image-bearing energy from the record is so much stronger than one's own energy of consciousness that the experiences produced from the record remain in the mind more vividly than any actual experiences. Thus these records control the mental processes in such a way that the past is lived again in a more vivid fashion than one's own life. These records left by the Elder Folk are a more faithful transcription of actual history than any other records kept since.—Richard Shaver.

¹³ Atlan—one of the three major races of space, the other two being the Titans and the Nortons.—Ed.

expedition, sent to this blazing new sun and its planets where life was furiously fecund, capable of developing a crescendo of growth into complex forms that would from our landing onward be guided by our skill and wisdom. My ship was the first to land of the colonizers of planet three under this new star named Sol.

"Put the child back in the ship, Lia," I called to the woman. "Then help me get out the materials for our house. The sooner we are safe within its walls the better, for we can't tell what forms of inimical life may have been developed since the tests were made so long ago by the explorers."

"Yes, Lord of my Heart," answered the obedient Lia.

The two of us began to haul out from the cargo compartment of our spaceship the sections that enabled us easily to put up the walls of our new home. The walls contained giant spider-web coils which would set up an impeding magnetic field that would allow only beneficial energy to enter my home. The house walls, once the power was turned into them, set up a huge force field which allowed only waves of a certain frequency to enter the interior. This particular frequency had been determined upon by exhaustive tests of the beneficial and detrimental content of the electric and magnetic waves sent out by the star, Sol, overhead.

From time to time as I, Duli, and my wife labored over the rapidly rising structure, other spaceships drifted down into the great clearing where we had landed first of all upon this planet which we called Lemuria, or Earth. These were fellow colonizers, who immediately set about erecting their homes as Lila and I were doing. It seemed that no time at all had passed before the pioneers had settled down into more or less regular living in their new environment.

The days passed eventfully, for each one brought immense new vistas of the possibilities that lay in the immensely more fecund and different growth from anything we had known.

Within the chambers of that house I knew those beneficial vibrants from that new sun would build up a charge of increasing potency, for the waves could enter, but, due to the direction of the flux of the field in the walls, could not get out again. Thus, the house Lia and I had constructed became a great trap for beneficial energy and within it we Atlan children would grow swiftly to great size and immense strength and unbounded intelligence.¹⁴

I LIVED through what seemed years of time. I saw the cities grow. Over our homes, after a time, we erected

¹⁴ This thought record story, given to Mr. Shaver by Nydia, was a logical one to begin his education into the past history of the Earth, for it depicts the arrival of the first Atlan colonists on the Earth, named by them Lemuria. The reason for colonization was that our sun was then a new sun, still sending out radiations from a carbon fire only, and not from the poisonous metals, radium, uranium, polonium, etc. (the heavy metals), and was thus a healthful place to live. Even so, the colonists built their homes in a manner to keep out the poisons that cause old age, which might be present in some small quantity.

Our sun, today, from which the Atlans fled 12,000 years ago (see "I Remember Lemuria!" in the March, 1945, AMAZING STORIES) because it was causing the disease of old age by projecting minute disintegrations down on the Earth in a steady rain, is the answer to the riddle of death our scientists seek to solve. In water, the poisons are present in heavy suspension, especially in thermal springs; in the air the poison floats forever with the tiny thistledowns of dust it has infected and to which it clings; it settles in the leaves of plants—so that we take the poison in with every drink of water, with every breath, with every bite of food; and as a consequence grow "old" by tissue and cell inability to restore itself fully because of the hindering and ever-present fire of disintegration from the accumulations of radioactives. Age is nothing but a radium "burn"; a damage to the living cell so that its functions are gradually stopped and retrograded until restoration by normal process is impossible. When the cells can no longer renew themselves, we die.—Ed.

domes of crystalline plastic. The air within each dome was not dusty or poisonous, but was a prepared mixture of gases, germless, fortified with health-giving nutrients, odorless, super-penetrating, an ever-present agent for physical well being.

The light, always on where needed, never oppressive, was a soft luminosity that possessed a beneficial force all its own, even contributing an additional push to the forces that make life grow in beauty and strength. The natural electric magnetism of earth's force field, which is in itself an agent of integration or growth, was strengthened and focused on the sidewalks and in the living chambers of those wondrous cities, so that the natural rate of integration growth of matter was increased by hidden mechanisms focusing overhead magnetic field lenses.

These field focii were formed where the light and happy feet of our people were led most often in pursuit of that pleasure that we called work.

For work was pleasure to us, in the increasing flood of strength and awareness that in ever greater tide flowed through our limbs. For in these cities of new life age was conquered and youth growth never ceased. When a physical body grew too large to continue living in comfort on earth, these larger beings graduated by stepping into a car, kept at the bottom of a long rock tube pointing at the stars far above. With similar companions they took their places in that space car. Then through them and through the metal body of the car rushed a flow of force, which, countering the friction of the penetrative particles that cause gravity¹⁵, rendered the car weightless.

A small explosion mechanism like a large cap pistol of the repeating type began a gentle hammering on the rear of the car, and weightless as it was the

car swiftly gathered momentum, vanishing into space in a moment, for where weight is not present inertia is not present either. So on the reverse flow gravity beam the graduates of Earth rose into space and voyaged through the empty void like a flash of light, presently to slow and circle slowly about another planet, double the size and weight of Earth until the great beams of reverse flow reached up and eased the car down into the heart of another great city, deeper and bigger than the one those beings had left, and much finer and more beautiful, for the builders' minds had broadened as their bodies grew through the centuries.

DULI the pioneer lived a long and active life on the planet Earth and I, Richard, lived it over in my own brain through Duli's recorded thoughts. Duli became an Elder of the ruling council in the city of Barto on the planet Mu¹⁶, for he was kindly and wise. Many fine sons did Lia give him and life was one swift stream of pleasure and beauty and hard work that of itself seemed only sport to the ever-increasing strength and intelligence of a being who lived under the amazingly beneficial conditions of Barto on Mu. In Barto the life that was being built up for the people being

¹⁵ The Lemurians say gravity is the result of the condensing (or fall) of infinitely tiny particles of disintegrated matter that fill all space (our scientists call it the ether) into existing matter, such as the Earth is. The friction of these falling particles, falling through matter, causes that "push" we call gravity. These particles Mr. Shaver calls "ex-disintegrance" (or "exd" for short). Here we see the utilization of some sort of force which neutralizes the friction of gravity, and thus produces weightlessness, with the result that a space ship can be driven against gravity at great speed with only very tiny rocket blasts, like little pop-guns.—Ed.

¹⁶ Mu—an abbreviation for Lemuria.—Ed.

bred in the ben-rays was surpassed by no other city on Mu.

But with the passing of years and the increasing growth and size that came with them, arrived also the day when Duli realized that the time had come for him to graduate into a broader life than Mu could offer. He knew that he must leave his sons and the work he had been doing on Mu for a greater planet and its fuller opportunities for life. He stepped into the great space-liner with Lia at his side. . . .

Blackness suddenly hurled itself down upon those vivid thoughts that had usurped the mind of Richard Shaver. He ceased to exist as an Elder of the Council of Barto on Mu, and returned to the existence of the convict who had escaped from state prison because a blind girl from the caverns had loved him.

* * *

I, RICHARD SHAVER opened my eyes and felt quite cheerful again under the spell of the little blind witch-maid who was laughing merrily at my bemused awakening.

"It puzzles you, Richard, does it not? You have lived over a century of olden days yet here you were, all the time under my eyes. You were but reading in the manner in which we read down here, the record stored in the caves long ago of the life of an ancient Atlantean."

"But it was real. I actually did live it," I protested, almost incredulously. "I must have been that man, Nydia. How else could I have known the most intimate thoughts of his mind?"

She shook her head from side to side, smiling.

"It was real, but not for you, save as you experienced that ancient Atlan's own thoughts. These shelves that line our library here are packed full of such records."

"Have you read them all?" I wondered.

"Yes, Richard all. For I am not contented with a bare existence as it is lived here in the caverns. I long for a fuller, wider life such as those ancients lived. So I have read and studied all these records and they are now part of my own knowledge."

"I was enthusiastic as I glimpsed the possibilities her words opened before me. In that little blonde head was packed knowledge of earth-life that scientists would give their lives to acquire and place before the surface world. And I, also, could gain that knowledge for myself and perhaps manage somehow, someway to pass it on. Oh, it was a brave thought.

"It is not harmful, then, this reading of old records? No risk is entailed by this vicarious living in strange and perilous scenes?"

"How could there be?" she responded simply. "You sit here, quite relaxed and comfortable, and in your brain alone you live many other lives, acquiring thus those experiences and that knowledge which would otherwise take many, many years of life in many forms to gain. Are you willing to learn more, my Richard? Do you wonder that I care not to spend my life in dalliance with love, heavenly as it is thus to pass the days with you?"

"You are right, my Nydia," I cried, enthused. "How wise you are, dear love!"

The blind girl's strangely thrilling voice continued as I stared at her, my own face all wonder at the seeming magic at her finger's end, that could touch a switch and relieve an existence.

"THIS is stupendous," I stammered, dazed at the vistas of wonder her words opened before me.

"Ponder, my Richard, upon the

science you have absorbed from the reading of that one ancient wise man's thoughts as they coursed through your brain. After you have read and thus lived many lives through the records in these caves you will find that there is not a machine down here that you cannot understand and operate. You will even learn something of how they were constructed. Then indeed you will be a most useful member of our little group, for you may then be able to help us devise more efficient ways of outwitting and out-fighting those devilish *dero* I have shown you."

"If you can teach me through these records how to fight those Things you tell me are your bitter enemies, get on with it!" My voice, the voice of Richard Shaver sounded strange in my ears, as though an older, wiser voice had come from my lips.

I felt that to my surface years I had added those other untold years of an ancient Being's wisdom.

"Very well, my Richard. You shall voyage forth again."

Nydia selected a bulky roll of record from the racks and held it so that I could see the words graven on the case. She read them: *Life and Wars of Bar Mehat of Thor, Hero of Three Worlds.*

"You shall live a great hero's life and you shall see and speak with Jormungandur,¹⁷ the Worm that encircled the world. This is a record of which I am most fond and I have read it often," the blind girl told me.

She slipped the roll into the mechanism at the top of the chair, adjusted my head-band carefully. Her lips touched mine almost with reverence, so grave was that caress. I sensed that the life of Bar Mehat, the hero, meant very much to my little blind maiden.

It was with repressed impatience that I awaited the touch of her finger on the control that was to open for me the door to a more vivid and exciting world.

* * *

I BECAME another man, a greater being physically. My body was huge yet I was aware that I was very young in actual count of years. My sturdy legs were cased in knee boots of glistening gold-colored synthetic leather, my body in a skintight covering of overlapping golden scales that formed a flexible protection like armour. Upon my head I wore a scarlet helmet that contained thought detection apparatus, for I heard voices and movements nearby although the chamber where I stood was apparently empty. One voice sounded, although distant, particularly peremptory. It was a feminine voice and one that I, Bar Mehat, recognized with a little grimace of half annoyance.

I tossed my head petulantly so that the red-gold hair that fell to my shoulders in shining waves swung loosely with the action. One of my broad, red-haired hands touched the lever of the console before which I stood. A clicking mechanism stopped and was followed by a musical hum like the spinning of a giant top. Dim luminosity pulsed about me. In a four-foot circular mirror above the console a silvery aura flickered madly, to coalesce slowly into the likeness of a young and attractive woman.

Her lips moved and it was then as though she were present in the room with me, for her voice sounded with clarity in my ears.

"Bar, the thing is growing faster than our control of it. It actually threatens all life on our planet. Jormungandur is not a joke."

"Certainly he is no joke; but why fret yourself, who are on land, about Jormungandur who lives in the sea?"

¹⁷ Jormungandur—In Norse legend, a son of Loki. Also known as the Midgard Serpent.—Ed.

My laugh was loud and free. Women! How they worry over nothing! "As long as he kept to the sea why should I worry about him?" cried the young woman resentfully. "It is because he is creeping up out of the sea that I am disturbed. His body now completely circles the earth. His tentacles have spread over half the unsettled portion of Afrik. They are a hundred leagues long and they grope continually for food."

"That is not so good, fair cousin. His tentacles are entirely too many," I growled.

"He has them along his whole body," cried she. "If he takes a notion to crawl out of the water for a breath of air it means the ruin of all the Atlans' work on Mu."

"Has no one done anything to check the Worm?" asked I, in some wonderment for although the Covenant forbade direct attacks that might result in death, yet there was some allowance for self-defense in cases of unbridled encroachment even against an honored and intelligent ancient like Jormungandur, who was friendly to the early Atlans.

"We have a dozen great dis-rays raving at the tentacles but as fast as we disintegrate them he throws out others. It seems futile even to continue for we get nowhere with all our efforts."

"Jormungandur," I mused aloud. "The Worm that encircles the world. Why, Gracia, he was here before the Atlans colonized Mu. Mu is practically his property. Are you sure that it is quite legal under the Covenant to attack him, even if the attack seems futile?"

"This is no time for joking, Bar Mehat of Thor," somewhat acidly expostulated the young woman. "Either you agree to bring sufficient military forces to take a planet from Mephisto

himself, or you do nothing, and I look elsewhere for assistance against this peril. All my Afrik possessions are now completely under The Worm's tentacles, you—you boudoir decoration!" cried my cousin with scathing implication.

I laughed again. I couldn't help it. Gracia's wrath was so easily aroused, and Gracia at white heat was not hard to look upon.

"I shall arrive to banish The Worm before another sunrise," I promised.

"I trust you are not too sanguine," she snapped. "It will take some doing to banish him, Bar. Farewell until the morrow."

MY HAND reversed the lever. The image of the pretty young woman faded from the surface of the mirror and once again it reflected only my broad face.

I mused to my reflection: "The Worm, a threat! Gods, one should really have known that it would happen some day. Now I, the simple warrior am called upon by my dear cousin to do my duty by my family. And in what a cause!"

My face in the mirror grinned at me wryly.

I thought, that as chief heir of all the possessions of the Province of Thor, I could muster enough military strength to take a planet or even to blast Jormungandur. I addressed myself to the task by pressing a stud marked "General Alarm to Thor Guard" and spoke rapidly and authoritatively.

"Officers of the Thor Guard are to muster all strength at once for an expedition against the Worm Jormungandur who has become a threat by tossing his tentacles over much land in search of food. Anything that can fly or float on water, throw a ray or carry a bomb is to be made ready for ex-

tended travel immediately. All available weapons are to be loaded and ready before midnight tonight. Destination Afrik. Bar Mehat speaking."

Through my mind in an undertone to the business now in hand ran the history of the Atlan struggle with growth on this planet of Mu. Under the beneficent rays of the new-born sun nothing aged or ceased growth, and existence had depended therefore, those first centuries of our colonization, upon keeping encyclopaedic notes on every form of life on the globe, in order the better to forecast the future development of each species. For as the humble caterpillar changes to the miraculously different moth, so did these new creatures of Mu develop startling metamorphoses and variations. Since none of them died, and since but little of the planet was as yet explored or settled, strange and numerous were the threats to our continued existence which came out of the dense jungles or out of the fathomless depths of the seas, ravening down upon our attempts at an ordered and cultured life.

Most of these tremendous monsters of growth had been slain like the Giant Man, a freakish growth of the earliest days, who had attempted to eat everything living on earth, but had at last been slain by our hero Byrr, and whose body in rotting had fouled the air of the whole planet. Or like Fenris the Wolf, who before he died had sired a race of giant wolves which still infested northern forests. The number of giant life forms that made us Atlans trouble were legion, but somehow Jormungandur the Sea Worm had escaped our general war against them. The Worm had always seemed safely confined to the seas and he had moreover agreed to the terms of the Covenant, hence the Worm had never been considered as a threat

to existence on Mu, despite the fact that under the fecund rays of the new-born sun his growth would have been predicated as in itself a threat.

THE jungles in which lived those giant variants of life were, if considered for themselves alone, terrifically beautiful dreams of life growth. The trees seemed to grow upward forever, and to be topless. There was no average size from the tiniest stalk to the trunks of some ancient trees that were acres in extent. They were the result of centuries of unimpeded, unchecked growth under completely favorable conditions. For as yet nothing aged and died on Mu.¹⁸

As most of the spores of life on Mu had originated on distant planets under aging suns rather than by spontaneous generation under the new sun's beneficent warmth, there were of fruit and flowering a-plenty.¹⁹

Those flowers were often of such monstrous size that could stretch myself out in one as in a swaying hammock.

So also all trees tried their best to

¹⁸ The natural nature of life is to go on living forever. Death is not a part of the scheme of life. It is only the result of radioactive poisoning from an "old" or metallically disintegrating sun. Thus, here on Mu at the time of Bar Mehat, the sun was sending down only beneficial radiations of carbon, which is not a poisonous element, but on the contrary, the basic element of living forms. Thus, nothing grew old, or died, except by actual destruction through accident or through killing. All things, including vegetation, continued to grow so long as there was a source of "raw material" and energy. A living thing grew through two processes: the replenishing of its body cells by transmuting foodstuffs into living cell matter; and by assimilating the disintegrated matter which fills all space and which science today calls the "ether." The reader will remember that it is this, condensing and falling toward all matter (which also includes living beings, naturally) that serves to build up the universe, and as a by-product of its function, causes the phenomenon we know of as gravity, by the friction of its progress through matter.—Ed.

emulate Ygdrasil.²⁰ There were many serpents in the dense forests and in adventuring therein one was quite likely to run into the giant body of a rainbow-hued reptile whose girth was too great to climb over and whose head and tail were both out of sight in the distance.

The hunger of these things was beyond description, but the supply of every form of life was of an abundance that cannot be even imagined. The monster Scylla by the whirlpool Charybdis; the Worm; the frost giants whom I, Bar Mehat, and my intimates often visited, as had my ancestor, Thor²¹.

¹⁹ How big the tremendous flowers of the dark under-forest were it is difficult for Richard Shaver to judge, since surface folk of today measure everything by comparison to the average size of a man, and the Atlans of the new planet Mu had no such criterion. Bar Mehat's size was governed, as was that of other Atlans, by the age of his parents and his own age, two variant factors that resulted in a wide variation in size, which did not run uniform to the years of age, as in modern man.

As nearly as Mr. Shaver can judge, Bar Mehat was about twelve feet high and a very young man at that, as his parents were huge giants of the far planet of Atlan. His years on Mu were under twenty.—Ed.

²⁰ Ygdrasil—Norse myth: the world tree whose roots and branches bind together heaven, the earth, and hell. Today the California redwoods still live, to prove that such monstrous growths once existed.—Ed.

²¹ Cerberus who guarded Hades in the latter days, after the flood had receded and death by old age came upon the world, is well known. But these were the later days, that "twilight of the gods" and of their greatest battle, "Ragnarok," when the poison of our aging sun's induction had maddened those who tried to remain on Mu.

It can only be conjectured for surface men, what life was like when the sun was new. Since nothing aged, the forms of life were of mighty, ever-increasing size. The legend of the Worm that encircles the world and to eat must consume his own tail, was probably as near as one could come to any description of sea-monsters whose farther ends would be out of sight when one glimpsed their gaping maws. Men, too, were mighty of size, yet there were some very tiny, the products of a science beyond present-day mankind.

The "seeing rays" of those ancient scientists

I had recollections of my home city, Atlansgaard, colloquially called Asgard, not far south of Ginnunga Gap, a canyon of abyssmal depth to the north and east, separating the civilized area of the Northlands from the Dark Lands, as the wild and practically unexplored land of the Giants was called. Those giants were a race from a *der*²² planet. They had been shipwrecked on Mu and as yet there had been no particular reason to banish them, driving them back to their home planet. They were comparatively ignorant and as far as we Atlans knew, harmless. They were called

reached everywhere, and from this our religious faiths have derived their teaching that "God is everywhere." Those rulers were probably widely aware of all near and far surroundings on Mu, for their beneficial rays and potions made them so. They moulded life forms to their will. They precipitated energy ash (ether) and from it synthesized the elements they needed most. Space travel was so commonplace with them that they thought of it in the same terms in which we of today think of motor cars.

What we can find of their thought is interesting especially in its multiform concept known for short as MAG-ic, the word being derived from IC, later Greek for science, and M-AG, or Man-augmented. This magic reached its height before two things, both long expected, happened. The carbon layer around the sun burned down to the heavy metal underneath. Sunlight became increasingly poisonous, since it contained minute quantities of disintegrant metals; disintegrant flaming lead, radium, titanium, uranium emanations filled the bright sunlight. Old age, long prophesied, appeared.

Then began the periodic migration to a new, carbon-coated sun. Most of those Elder Folk left Mu for planets of kindlier augury. But some of those brilliant beings, loving "Mu" as they called our mother earth, remained, fighting the poisonous effects of sun metal with their extended knowledge. Before its accumulations could bring on old age, they would extract it from their bodies magnetically. Thus, keeping their immortal youth, sheltered in their deep caverns from the heavy metallic induction of our sun, those remnants of the race of immortals stayed on, to be the source of our legends of the gods.—Author.

²² Der planet—detrimental energy planet. One on which an aging sun pours its rays, and causes, in addition to age, a mental detriment, insanity. Our Earth, today, is a Der planet.—Ed.

Frosts; why, I myself, could not have explained. They were of huge stock, running from thirty to fifty feet in height. I knew that under Mu's non-aging sun their growth would in due course be something terrific and I realized that their existence was a problem that would have to be settled in the not-too-far future. There were many such problems and the Atlans were not yet well enough entrenched on Mu to have solved them all satisfactorily. There was much tendency in the life forms of Mu that was alien; it had to be weeded out eventually, since only conflict can be expected from life forms not of the same source pattern as our own.

I EMBARKED on the flagship of the fleet that in a matter of hours was flashing over the tremendous sea of earthy waves that was North Afrik.

Our space ships settled behind a convenient range of mountains over which we could see the tentacles of the Worm writhing like titanic serpents against the morning sky. Here and there blazed the fiercely brilliant orange of powerful disintegrating rays and even at that distance the smell of roasting flesh was noticeable; unpleasantly so. We broke out our smaller scout planes for reconnaissance. I went aboard the foremost, for I wished also to visit my incensed cousin and reassure her that all was well since I and my forces had come into the picture.

As our scout planes shot upward, a long vee of strange planes boomed up from the south and shot past our formation in a northerly direction. I had thought I was familiar with every type of plane on Mu, from jet to nose-ray, but the design of those planes was entirely strange to me. They disappeared from my sight, but not from my questioning mind. Strange planes above Mu were not to be ignored; their presence

might be forerunner of grave trouble.

Within minutes, my arms embraced the very attractive knees of my charming cousin Gracia and her tirade of feminine near-invective poured itself upon my defenseless masculine head.

"Wise Bar, of the blood of the great Thor, could not any fool have foreseen this? Jormungandur, nonetheless, came on the Rolls of the Covenant. Explain that, you feckless dreamer!"

"Sweet cousin," I protested meekly, striving to stem the flood of that aroused ire. "I did not create the Covenant."

"A most fortunate fact that you didn't. Do you know what lies under those reaping arms, blind and stupid one? Do you know what that beast of the abyss of ocean has eaten?"

"Gracia—"

"Ten thousand acres of parasites I developed, to destroy alien plant forms. Now, in one week, that infinitude of belly has destroyed ten years of our best labor."

I tried to block that tirade with a recital of the magnitude of the forces I had headed for the retribution that must necessarily be laid upon the Worm for his rebellious action against the Covenant, behavior code of inter-racial law.

"Look, cousin, I have complied with your wishes. Last night my fleet assembled on the waters of Jotun Bay outside my windows in Asgard. It is a heterogeneous collection, I will admit, but look how little time you've given me to get it together. Glossy jet-planes, Gracia, some submersible fliers, and some heavy-bodied passenger planes to carry men. Not to mention three thousand top fighting men."

She shrugged her shapely shoulders and wrinkled her nose distastefully.

"I notice that you have not brought your armored space-ships, hero."

I was quick to pick up that in rebuttal.

"Because, fair cousin, they are too unwieldy for surface work. Yet, I did dispatch several with large cargoes of foodstuffs and ammunition and other supplies for our base on the Gold Coast."

She heaved a deep sigh of unwilling resignation.

"Oh, I presume you have done the best you knew how," she stabbed.

I COULD not refrain from grinning.

Gracia was not a good loser and she had lost out with me thus far, for I had not failed to think of everything at my command that might be needed in that mighty fray that was scheduled to take place between us Atlans and the Worm.

I knew that killing a thing with the growth rate and titanic strength of Jormungandur was not going to be a simple matter. His body encircled the whole earth and was of incalculable mass.²³ Its nature was much that of the starfish; break it in twain, and both halves grow. That his great age had developed mental reactions of a kind similar to human thought was known to us from the fact that this had been true of other monsters of growth on Mu. I was shortly to learn just how far this mental development of the oldest and most monstrous creature on Mu had been carried by the beneficial rays of the newborn sun.

I returned to my scout plane and thence to the flagship of our air fleet.

²³ Obviously here the description is not an accurate one. By Bar Mehat's own admission, earlier in this thought record, all of Mu (Earth) has not been explored. Apparently the known portion of it (except for casual observation from space ships) consisted only of Europe and Africa, and a portion of Asia, probably just east of the Norse countries. Thus, the Worm, Jormungandur, occupied the Atlantic ocean between what is now the above-mentioned continents and the continent of Atlantis (also included in the known portions). Its size must have been tremendous, perhaps as much as five hundred miles long.—Ed.

My ship was equipped with the mechanisms that would put all space at my command, to be seen and heard and to throw my voice into the ears of those whom I willed to hear it. I had the ship hover over that part of the ocean between the continents of Atlantis and South Afrik, that particular spot where it had been said that men had talked with the Worm many a long day ago. I switched on the vis-ray, and it sank miles deep into the murky depths. At last, after I had turned it hither and yon, there glowed on the visi-screen like twin moons the awful eyes of the most ancient life on Mu.

The telaug revealed his thoughts to me and I pitied him as that river of desperate and weary meaning flowed from the thought cloud like the drifting soul of a lost sea. The Worm was hungry. He was weary of the emptiness of a life that contained nothing but slumber and feeding. His groping tentacles were no longer able to find sufficient food and he was bitterly resentful at a fate which had given him life which he found it difficult to sustain, and later had given him thoughts so that he understood what he was. For long I pondered that wretched but intriguing life that was the brain center of the Worm that encircled the earth. At last I spoke, sending my voice to the distant Worm's lair.

"Garm," said I—in Afrik and near parts Jormungandur was called Garm—"Garm, speak to me. Give me an answer, for I am your friend if you will have me so. From the darkness that shrouds you, from the gloom in which you must wallow in the abyss of ocean's depths, speak to me, who wishes you well. It is Bar Mehat of Thor who calls you."

THAT deep river of gloomy meditation ceased its slow flow and concentrating itself reluctantly, looked out of

the pale lucent orbs that were Garm's eyes. Great abstract thoughts welled up the ray and flung themselves on the thought-cloud like corpses pushing upward for release from the sucking ooze that clung to them. That husky, thick voice enunciated words with heavy difficulty.

"It is long since Man has sought me out. What would you of Garm?"

"In the old days, Garm, you were one of the few of the serpent race who upheld the Covenant's code. Why have you foresaken the ways of peace? Why are you now unfriendly to Man? Your body is now partly on land, and it is land upon which my family has expended much labor. Now all that constructive work is spoiled and many good men whom in the old days you would have called friends, rejoicing that they lived on Mu, those men have died under your long arms' fatal suction. Must we then slay you, Garm, that we may live?"

Garm's thoughts moiled over this problem. They flickered back and forth without much consistent form on the thought cloud.

"Once I loved men," he slowly answered at last, his thick voice dull with a kind of indifference that troubled me, the listener. "I loved them for the bright pictures they sent me and for the beautiful children they bore. I loved them for the tales they told me of their lively doings in the sun. But now they have long forgotten me, and I raven for food.

"I am grown too big to feed myself well, even though I draw from the vast seas in which I lie. It may be that you must kill me, for I know not and care not longer what I do. Life holds no significance for me. I have outgrown life, perhaps."

"Garm, I think that if you will but be reasonable, we may find some way to feed you, so that you may continue to live on," I offered, my emotion being

one of real sympathy for a creature so outgrown that we could not by any means within our power send it to a larger planet. Or so I thought at that impulsive moment.

The voice of Garm droned on: "Once a man of your line went a-fishing. Yes, I recognize you for one of Thor's line. For a joke I took the bait between my jaws and raised up my head near his skiff. He was, like all of your blood, a stubborn fellow and he pulled the bottom out of his boat, trying vainly to land me. At least, that was his pretense.

"After I had carried him ashore on my back we talked for a long, lovely time, he sitting on the sand and I with my head lying on the sandy beach beside him. He told me a tale of another such serpent as myself, grown too long for comfortable living on his birthplace, and he predicted that the same fate lay in store for me, unless I found death by some other means. That great serpent encircled earth as do I, and when the time came that abundant food was no longer available, he took his own tail between his jaws and swallowed it, and after many years he died thus.

"It may be that I shall do that thing, though of late I do not love men or their doings."

I PONDERED the great Being's bitter words and at last I spoke thoughtfully.

"You must know something of our thought magic, Garm? If you will do that thing the other great serpent did, we will arrange that before you do it you shall have many weeks of continual pleasure dreams. You shall sense in dreams glorious matings and victorious struggles. We will give you the equivalent of many lives of pleasure.

"This will take much energy that we could well spend elsewhere, but it will

be worth that to us to rid us of your overgrowing, enormous appetite that is becoming so destructive. We will pay you in full and you know that we are honorable. You can weigh this thing well. Will you take our word and after your dreams die honorably, a true son of the Covenant?"

"Bar Mehat of Thor," answered the great serpent, "if your dream-makers deal honorably with me, so will I deal with you. And this you cannot have known, that besides yielding up my life there is a thing or two which I have learned that I will grant you freely without concealment. I know your magic, but your dream makers may weigh the value of their own lives in the balance of their calculation as to what dreams they give me, for I have means of saving them or letting them drift on to death that will seize upon them unawares. Tell them that, O Son of the Past Great, and bid them measure me out abundance of glorious dreams in gratitude."

Thus it was that I talked with the Worm that encircled the world. And thus it came to pass that Garm told me of things that I knew were true, for I had seen that flight of strange planes that headed for the dense forests that we Atlans had thus far left practically unexplored.

"Strange outlanders came over my seas in great ships and hovered long, sending me their promises of many dreams, as you have done. But they did not ask my death, Bar Mehat; they asked my living aid.

"I learned somewhat of their dreams, and their dreams are not my kind of dreams, Bar of the old line of Thor. There is no light laughter, and there are no gallant young ones with them. Their lives have been miseries of everlasting warring. I want no part of such wretched dreams.

"But they had a ray which they can put upon any part of my body and through that ray control me. So when I gave no consent to their supplications, they forced a part of me to lay waste such portions of Afrik as lies between the two great rivers. So, if you seek them out, where they have hidden themselves within the Dark Lands, you will know whence any coming trouble sources."

"I have seen their space ships, Garm. I knew them for outlanders," I exclaimed. "We shall take steps at once."

"THEY mean to take over the earth and to develop fecundly. They come from a quarantined planet and have somehow eluded the Atlan *der* patrols. They believe they can win over the Mu folk before help can be called in from greater space against them. How they expect to hold Mu against the entire Atlan space navy, once they have won Mu, I fail to understand. But they are stupid, despite their mechanisms of power, and perhaps they think not of it, or expect by crafty trickery to cheat the Atlans into letting them alone on Mu."

An idea flashed into my mind as I stood staring at Garm's vast head, looking into his fierce elder-wise eyes, twin greenish silver moons flickering through sea water.

"Garm, in the caverns where we breed life forms, our technicians have a way of removing the brain from an animal, a living brain, and putting it into a metal bottle where it lives on, fed by fluid foods and synthetic blood. Since you are grown too big for this earth, will you consent that we may put your brain into a bottle and keep it for a record of the past?

"You have certain wisdoms which you can teach youth, and you like the young, laughter-filled folk of our Mu

people. Later, after you have grown accustomed to our ways on land, you will have many friends, and later yet some colonizing expedition can take you with them and plant your living brain into a young reptile on some other planet.

"You may live your life over again and again. Do the Der men offer you anything of like value? And in return for this prolongation of your life, will you then aid us against them?"

The limpid moon eyes flickered into near opacity as The Worm concentrated upon this new and far more interesting proposition I had proffered. I waited patiently for his response and felt certain it would be affirmative. After all—

The thick voice came slowly after a long wait. The moon eyes had cleared and shone greenly through the sea water.

"I accept your offer," said the Worm. "I would fain live on and see your brave new worlds that else I might never visit. I am ready to accompany you when you give me the word that you are ready to attack those interlopers from a quarantined planet. I dislike their warring and resent bitterly that the people of Mu must be forced into battles because of them. Yes, Bar Mehat of Thor, I am your ally against them.

"And when the battling is done with, and you have driven them from Mu, then you shall send me first the dreams for which I yearn in my now empty existence. After I have had my fill of dreams, I shall let your technicians take my brain and preserve it as you have said. Some day I shall again live in liberty in the body of another serpent on some greater planet. Yes, Bar Mehat, I agree."

I was overjoyed at Garm's decision for something told me that he would be an ally not to be scorned in the battle that must ensue shortly between my

forces and those invaders from a *der* planet.

"I shall call you, then, Garm, when we make our advance," I told him. "You shall follow my forces—"

Something lively sparkled in the great green moons that were the eyes of the Worm.

"I am to wipe up the debris of your victory?" husked Garm, with a note of derision that piqued me a little.

"No, no," I protested half-heartedly.

But Garm's thick throat uttered a kind of snorting laugh.

"Rely upon it, I shall be with you when and wherever you lead," said he enigmatically, and with that our conference ended.

THUS it was that when my forces made ready to advance into the Dark Lands where the invaders had entrenched themselves in expectation of our coming, Garm's tremendous body flowed after the army of Thor's men. The sight of him was comforting as we pressed on into the night of the jungle. Like a mighty river of greenish black flesh encrusted with barnacles and sea plants, the titanic Jormungandur was a reservoir of strength incalculable, in truth of a value of many armies because of those splaying tentacles that absorbed all life they seized upon.

Like the mighty leaders of prior times I strapped to my back my anti-grav packs and flitted ahead with my scouts. These anti-grav packs enabled us to rise to a considerable height above the ground, which was a great advantage in entering that jungle where otherwise we must have been obliged to spend much precious time slashing down the heavy undergrowth. A number of the scouts were to go on ahead, it was arranged, and I flitted not far behind, with another

squad of scouts directly in my rear. After these came the main body of our troops. It was while I went on in this way that I saw the girl in the trees, and learned what kind of enemy we had to face.

She was wearing an anti-grav pack and she had depended upon it to escape the swaying head of a monster reptile whose coils lay over the rude path that ran for some short distance into the forest. She had apparently no weapons of defense or had lost what she had possessed, in her flight from the great snake. Now she was entangled in the thorny, shielding branches of the tree to which she had flown, and the serpent seemingly did not care to thrash about against those prickly thorns with which it was equipped. I alighted on the branch where the girl clung.

"What has happened? Have you no weapons?"

"It came upon me so suddenly," she faltered, "that I dropped my ray-gun. And what use is a knife against that scaly skin?"

I looked at the reptile. It would have to be eliminated, or its presence would block the advance of my men. Moreover, the creature had set its stupid mind upon capturing what probably seemed to it legitimate prey, and it kept its evil eyes hypnotically upon the girl, who trembled with apprehension.

"The thing must be slain," I said boldly, and let myself down lightly upon the sloping back of the monster snake.

I SCRAMBLED up the scaly back to the bumpy ridge of its spine. Then I pulled my disintegrating ray from the holster and blasted a shot through the center of the spine, severing the spinal cord. I raced lightly, depending upon the anti-grav pack to lift me as I leaped, until I had reached the head of the titanic and maddened reptile. At every

alternate bound I blasted another path through the spine, leaving behind as I went a paralyzed column of motionless flesh. As I reached the taper of the mighty neck the great head turned, jaws gaping to slay this stinging insect that had wrought such swift destruction, but with swiftly triggered blasts I cut the last nerves at the base of the head. Red threatening maw and evilly gleaming eyes dropped supinely to the earth.

The girl scrambled lightly down from the tree and threw herself at my feet and flung her arms about my knees, embracing them with heart-felt thanksgiving. There seemed to me no time for amenities and I lifted her face and looked piercingly into her wide blue eyes. It seemed to me that I saw mirrored therein a clean and innocent soul and I felt well rewarded for my strenuous and perilous combat with that monster reptile. I surmised that this girl was an outlaw Atlan, else she would scarcely have been at large in the forests. I asked her directly.

"Yes, I am an outlaw."

I did not care to take time to ask her why, but I did feel that she could be trusted.

"We seek those who drive the great beasts to attack the Atlan cities. Do you know where they have hidden themselves, maiden?"

The girl remained on her knees, but her limpid eyes were raised to mine.

"Are you the leader who seeks those evil people of the dark forest?" she asked.

I nodded in affirmation.

"Had I known that the leader of the forces was so princely, I would never have fled the Atlan cities," said she cryptically.

"This is no time to exchange pleasantries, maiden. Do you know the hidden entrenchments of my enemy?"

"You must be Bar Mehat," she said,

ignoring my query.

"I am indeed Bar Mehat of Thor," I assented with impatience.

"Then I am for you. I owe you my life. I belong to the forest people, of whom you must know. We are outlaws and hide always from such as you. Among us came, not too many years ago great ships with many guns."

"I know. But recently I saw some of their space ships and knew invaders had landed on Mu. Go on, maiden."

"They are not like us," said she. "They have skins colored and blotched like lizards. Like the chameleon lizards. Somewhat on the order of man are they, with four limbs. Their webbed feet have prehensile toes and their hands are long-fingered. They have a long, fleshy tail that tapers to a whip-like point, hanging from their rumps. They have large, flat heads and their eyes are lidless and reptilian, and are covered with a translucent membrane for protection. Oh, how evilly red those eyes can glitter!"

"Their features, maiden. Do they resemble men?"

"Oh, no, Bar Mehat. Their noses are small and flat and their mouths are wide. They have no chins and their teeth are heavy fangs. Oh, they are most horrible to look upon."

I LIFTED her to her feet.

"I take it, maiden, that you must be aware from your familiarity with the forest of where these lizard men have entrenched themselves. Is your anti-grav pack in good order? It is? Then come with me," I ordered, and rose in the air to flit ahead of the second squad of scouts that, seeing me in conversation with the girl, had halted in my rear.

So we went on together and as we went the girl continued to tell me of those pirates of space who had escaped from their quarantined planet.

"They promised us forest folk riches and power and security. Many fair promises they made if we would help them drive out you Atlans. They come from the forbidden spaces where death reigns," she shuddered. "They do not worship the dark gods of space as you Atlans and we forest folk do, for they believe in no good thing. They have learned that death has not yet come to Mu and they think that now, before the Atlans are too well settled, they can drive you out and learn to live as the gods live, by studying your cities and the minds of their captives."

"They are very evil and some things they do made me so fearful that I fled into the deeper forest that I might see them no more. Ah, I cannot sleep yet for thinking of their horrible life, their disgusting mottled bodies, the stink of them. And on those who will not go their way they inflict torments, for they hate the way of the Covenant. They are fools and stupid, though, to believe that they could ever win over the wise Atlans who make friends so easily."

We flitted on for a few moments in silence and I pondered much over what the girl had told me.

"You see, Bar Mehat, whenever an Atlan sees how they work, he becomes their enemy automatically, for it is impossible to know when one pleasures or displeases them, so that it is inevitable that one will in the end be tortured to death. Oh, I am glad to see the men of Atlan coming here in force to banish those foul invaders!"

A CRY arose from the scouts in the van and we hastened to join them. The cause of the outcry was simple, after all. They had spotted a *dero* hidden like a chameleon against a dark tree trunk, the faint patterning of his lizard-like skin betraying him, for in his perturbation at our approach it

turned from rose to purple, to inky black, then again to faint rose. Our men had overpowered him although he was armed with a projectile weapon.

The girl touched my arm.

"Did I speak truth, Bar Mehat?" she demanded. "Is he not as I described him?"

He was indeed as she had told me. I examined his weapon with interest. It was a glass-like gun activated by air pressure and fired a tiny, brittle, venom-filled needle that broke on contact, releasing the poison into the veins of the victim. One of the great cats that infrequently lurk nearer the confines of the forest gave me a chance to test the poison. I fired the gun and the cat whirled and then fell as if paralyzed. Inspection showed that it still lived, but it was incapable of any action, save that its furious eyes glared upon us whom it had been unable to escape. We later found that the venom was similar in effect to wasp venom in that it permanently paralyzed the victim,²⁴ but left him alive for future reference, as it were.

Later, too, we learned that the lizard men had wasp habits in yet other ways, for they, too, kept their victims living for long periods before eating them.

I called for an augment helmet and ordered it clapped on the prisoner's flat head. It was a matter of a few minutes only when his thought, with tremendous augmentation, was flowing back over my entire following forces. In this way I knew my men would be aware of just what they were about to engage in deadly conflict.

These lizard creatures had evolved on a small planet under a very large new sun. While it was not a deadly sun, its

rays being full of beneficial vibrants, yet its disintegrant induction had been a tremendous factor in their development. Their will to live had been great, but their will to destroy was as full, thus coloring all their thoughts with vicious intent, for the will to destroy and the disintegrant electric forces are one and the same. While the seed of greatness was perhaps within them, it had been buried irretrievably beneath a rigid discipline of the revolting kind which allowed the individual little freedom save the right to reproduce.²⁵

WE HAD barely finished the broadcast of the lizard man's thoughts when a tremendous crystal sphere sailed overhead and paused above the midst of our array, for by now my forces had caught up with our scouting vanguard. Then, with a loud report, it flew asunder and there rained down upon us tiny slivers of light that seemed faery spears, playing in all directions. At least a dozen of my best men fell sprawling to the ground as if paralyzed and at that we all knew what had been in that crystal sphere. It was a bomb, full of compressed air and packed with tiny glass capsule needles of the paralyzing venom of the lizard men. It was a most effective weapon and we could not, unfortunately, determine its exact source at that moment.

²⁴ The venom of the wasp is shown on stung spiders, when it destroys the nervous system but leaves the spider living, perhaps conscious, to be eaten later alive by the wasp grub, a system of food storage.—Ed.

²⁵ In Atlán language there are three kinds of men: *tero*, normal man; *dero*, evil man, and *zero*, useless man. These lizard people were for the most part *zero*. Equal parts of good and evil in the character made their total effect in life merely a repetition of the status quo. But they were foolish enough to allow domination by the *dero*, which rendered the total effect detrimental to all other beings and their own true interests as well. Just so has Hitler, a *dero*, caused the weight of an entire nation of men to be thrown on the detrimental side of the scales. Other men are not smart enough, or well enough intentioned, to remove one Hitler. Notice the world conflagration resulting from the devotion of one nation to a detrimental energy robot.—Author.

After that first one, sphere after sphere hissed down upon us through the air and Atlan's bravest fell in windrows. Some of our men thought it a good idea to pick off the spheres with disintegrating ray rifles, but this resulted in the bombs bursting high in the sky, only to rain the venomous needles more widely upon our heads. I had ordered huge disintegrators, mounted high on trucks at our rear, to drop sweeping fans of destruction into the forest ahead of us. Their range was almost incredible, so that fires of many miles in width sprang up ahead. At long last the spheres decreased in numbers and I felt that our rays must have destroyed some station from which they had been dispatched.

I had been well aware that to use a large disintegrator in the jungle was an infraction of the Covenant's code, but if any intelligent life existed simultaneously with those lizard men in the jungle ahead, it was self-doomed by failure to warn us Atlans of the impending attack. All rules are tossed overboard in war, sooner or later. That forest fire, which under ordinary circumstances would never have been allowed to rage, among those trees so big that a man could hardly grasp their immensity even with his imagination, was a sight never to be forgotten.

We Atlans have a curious way of putting out such fires. We have an atomized carbon ray which we spray into the down-drafts around the flames. This is activated carbon, more inflammable than ordinary carbon, and divided with extreme fineness so that its particles are driven along by certain waves of light. Thus an atomic carbon ray is formed which is sprayed over the fire. The carbon did not, as might be thought, increase the intensity of the fire, for the finely divided carbon combines with the oxygen of the air, blanketing the whole area with carbon dioxide, so as the rays

swept the fire ahead, it died.²⁶

AS THE fire broke a way through, my forces marched, leaped or soared over the smoking jungle. To the danger from the enemy army that must be ahead was added that of falling limbs from the great trees that stretched a mile overhead. Some of those giants, remnants of the first early growths, were six or seven miles tall. These gargantuan trees now stood blacked at the base, and at infrequent intervals limbs as long as several city blocks and weighing from twenty to a hundred tons would crash near us. Once in a while the smouldering embers would burst into flame that would leap skyward through the now dried-out framework of lower limbs, but a few well-directed sweeps of the atomic carbon rays extinguished these as fast as they sprang up.

It was a relief to all my thirsty, soot-covered men, when we sighted the enemy's camps. Uttering shrill cries calculated to fill us with apprehension, the lizard men at once set up a barrage of venom glass needles to halt our advance. Here I had made some preparations which I believed might be the answer to that type of attack. Forewarned by our prior experience I had ordered that some of our huge disintegrators en route, approximately a hundred, be adapted to prepare from their rays what is called a wind-ray. This is a dual ionizing ray, one ray positively ionizing the air and another negatively ionizing the air. When the rays are held far apart a gentle breeze springs up between them as the molecules of air, drawn by the attracting charges they bear, rush down to neutralize their charge and are pushed aside or spread by the outer in-

²⁶ Apparently the heat of the combination was lost by its dispersion.—Ed.

rushing air. When they are held closely together and highly energized, a terrible vortex of inrushing and uprushing wind is formed. These hastily adapted devices were posted like horns of a crescent on either side of our advancing lines.

As the first crystal gloves hissed overhead, these wind-rays swung into action. Thus the globes, instead of falling, shot into the air like rubber balls on a tossing fountain and, juggling them like circus performers, our expert ray men flung them back into the air over the enemy's camp and then released them, to harry our tormentors by their own venomous weapons. This return barrage was greeted by howls of dismay from the lizard men as their own pigeons came home to roost.

Our penetras²⁷ came into action also, sweeping over the whole area in our van, so that whatever was opaque became transparent. What had seemed merely earth and forest growth for half a mile ahead of my forces was revealed, so that we saw and knew what the lizard men were keeping behind walls. In fact, the penetra rays were so powerful that for miles ahead the whole enemy work lay revealed as if we saw it through glass. This was done by bathing the whole area in penetrative rays of a non-destructive nature and sweeping over this with other rays that carried finely divided selenium and other chemicals in the same way that our fire-extinguisher rays carry carbon. These luminosity rays act in the same manner that stains act on a transparent organism under the microscope, bringing out the details in different colors.

WHAT we beheld was most intriguing to my forces. The men

²⁷ Penetra—visi-rays which penetrate and make transparent any object on which they are trained. Thus, in projecting visi-rays through earth, the penetra is used as a carrier ray.—Ed.

bellowed with huge guffaws over the outlanders' methods. In improvised underground pens they had collected overgrown monsters of every description. Held in those narrow tunnels, and fed but little for a long period, these creatures had become ravenous with bestial hunger. Various types of disintegrating rays and venom-ball throwers, as well as other weapons the nature of which was strange to us then, had been attached to the animals' backs. The purpose of this arrangement was obscure until the lizard men threw open the barred doors to the tunnels.

Out rushed the maddened beasts. Mammoths, titanotheres, titanosaurs, dinosaurs and huge serpents rushed down upon us. The ray apparatus on their backs was automatic, sending a beam in a wide arc ahead of the beasts. This beam, a dual ionizer like our windway, completed the circuit when it struck metal. It was then that we realized the new peril we were encountering. The resulting flow of current through the beam activated the firing mechanism for the disintegrating ray. Since all our weapons were fabricated of metal, while those of the lizard men were made out of glass or plastic, these enraged living ray-tanks loosed upon us were more than a subject for laughter, as we had thought when we first saw them through the walls of their tunnels.

At first we held off the terrific onslaught. Our superb gunners picked off the beasts as rapidly as they approached within range, yet the heavy discharges released into the air began to blanket the whole fighting area with a stifling, thought-blocking disintegrating charge. One could hardly move one's limbs because of the effect of this detrimental electric, which leaped like Hell-fires from every bush, every piece of metal, every blade of grass, making the vision

hollow with the disillusion of despair.

It was not long before our fire was slowed by this subtle nerve-paralyzing influence and the beasts pounded nearer in overpowering numbers, their combined weights shaking the earth beneath us, their great maws roaring, and over their fierce heads flashed ever the automatic fire rays, every flash marking a hit on some metal weapon of ours. Whether this was defeat, or whether the disillusion from the strong detrimental that so subtly held our minds under its potent spell was powerful enough to check our aggressive action, things began to look very dark for Mu. And then—

OVER our cowering heads reared the vast bulk of The Worm. No metal to complete a circuit in that engine of destruction! His curling, mile-long tentacles lashed out, and every beast they touched was caught up, crushed, and tossed aside, a menace no longer. He was the most awe-inspiring being I had ever seen, with the great moons of his eyes reflecting his fierce battle joy. One could almost hear the thought in his vast dragon head:

"After all these dull, uneventful centuries, what bliss to fight again for the sons of the friends of my youth! Yea! It is good!" From the throat of Garm a great rumbling roar issued and seemed to shape into words. "On, Atlans! On, Atlans!" And the mighty serpent hiss terminated the roaring words.

The great Worm's bulk blotted the sun from overhead so that we fought in the shade as though twilight had descended upon us. From our van we could see the planes of the lizard men taking to the air as they retreated in mad rout from this unconquerable serpent of the ancient days long past. For

following upon the appearance of Garm the invaders were, for the most part, speeding away, leaving behind them their dead and wounded and the blazing ruins of their camp. The maddened beasts which they had starved and then released upon us were careening off in all directions for the control rays that had kept them advancing upon us in attack now stood abandoned, their tall masts no longer flashing with energy sparks. The battle was over, save that a few of our fastest planes trailed the fugitive enemy, their purpose not to do battle, but to determine the destination of the lizard men that we might report it to the Space Police.

We bivouacked amid jubilant cries of triumph.

IT WAS some days later that our battered columns wound slowly back into the green cultivated areas surrounding my cousin Gracia's white marble mansion. As we marched we could see in the far distance Garm's acres of scaly body flowing swiftly into the sea. I sped on in advance of my forces, by the aid of my anti-grav pack, and came to a stop at the marble steps, where my cousin stood awaiting me and on my ears again fell the unending recriminations of her anger.

"How could you have let those ignorant, undeveloped idiots from a *der* planet so nearly defeat you, Bar Mehat? Jormungandur himself hardly saved you from destruction. How could you have marched into the face of that ominous situation without preparation, without any special weapons, without prior scouting and information—?"

Her voice went on and on, and I began to think that she was probably right and I an impractical dreamer, unfit to head the troops of Atlan. My too-costly victory told this as well as did

the faces of those of my most valued men who still lived.

"I know not, cousin. Youth and ignorance of such traps may be my only excuses," I told her stupidly, for my heart was sick, now that all was well over, at thought of those dead we had left behind in the Dark Lands. "I cannot think of anything else," I apologized.

"It might be well if you did a little thinking, nevertheless, Bar. The Space Patrol is on its way. When it arrives one of its officers will take charge here in command of our Atlan forces and you—you are going back on one of their ships, for you have signally failed to distinguish yourself on Mu. When you are back on Atlan, my cousin, you had best go to the College for Warriors and learn a little something of how to take care of yourself and safeguard your men when you lead them."

I stood with head hanging, for I had no words to give her. She was probably in the right, I thought. I would enter the College for Warriors upon my return to Atlan and I would study diligently and prepare myself in the latest military science so that Mu would be better for my leadership when I returned to that planet.

* * *

AS I stood, suddenly blackness rushed down upon me and I knew no more of my cousin, or of Garm slowly withdrawing into the sea, or of anything until a light flashed through the darkness and I became aware of an odd popping sound as of a suddenly released run-down record.

I wakened to the soft laughter of the blind maiden as she switched off the thought record reading machine.

Her hands fell light on my shoulders and she leaned to kiss my forehead before she removed the apparatus from my head.

"The record film broke," she told me regretfully. "They are so very old, it is surprising they have lasted so long. Perhaps it is of little consequence, after all, for that record of Bar Mehat ends when he returns to Atlan."

The faint sound of a gong rang through the cave and we took each other's hands and went together to the dining-hall where the entire group customarily met for meals. I was for hours in a kind of daze, for it seemed to me that I was still Bar Mehat and not Richard Shaver.

Later I realized the lessons from that life I had vicariously lived. It was that anger and warfare, struggle and death, are the fatal fruits of *der*, and *der* was the distortion of the magnetic fields of the thought cells of a mind by disintegrant electric. And Mu in those earlier days had not turned inductively under the new sun long enough to induct the great charge of detrimental electric which makes our life today the hell it really is. It is not good to be a man on a quarantined planet of *der*. If one reads the ancient books that exist always in these old, abandoned planets, one learns that life away from an aging sun is immortal life, while on a *der* planet it is a brief moment of existence and thought under a blasting sun of death.

As this knowledge sank into my mind from the great brain back of Bar's thought-record, a terrible despondency seized upon me. I realized that Earth was now such an outworn living place, quarantined from the great immortal life of space because *der* means warring and men of earth think *der* thoughts. If only we could build again such houses as the Atlans built, which barred the entry of all detrimental energy flows, or even live in caves as did the later Atlans to shield themselves from a deadly sun, we might become again

something more than the mere insects we now are.

AS MATTERS now stand, I have become one of the underworld, of those who have been called trolls, gnomes and goblins in the old days. We are the same today and still my friends here fear surface men. For man cannot understand or believe any other form of human life but his own, and they fear us greatly when they learn of our existence. Yet those of us who are kindly intentioned need man's understanding and assistance, for our lives are struggles for existence against the malefic schemes and powers of the evil and idiot denizens of the caverns. Because I realize the tremendous importance of our continued existence as an intelligent group, I have thrown in my lot with Nydia's little band. Nightly I stand my watch against the devils who have made their homes in the farther caves. Our life here is purchased at the price of never-failing vigilance. We peer over the old visi-rays, focusing the ancient lenses to the farthest range and sweeping the caves with them for the slightest indication of attack, that we may turn it back before it reaches us.

Daily I spend much time reading the ancient thought records, bringing thus to my knowledge the lives of the mighty, ancient God-race that existed immortally before our sun aged and they adventured elsewhere. The tale of that aging sun and of the flight of the Elder Folk from its effects is written in those ancient thought records.²⁸ For as the sun ages it grows more dense and as it becomes denser it throws deadly fiery particles out with its light beams. These gather in the body and like radium they never cease to burn; they are atomic fire and deadly in their final result. In time their accumulation burns and withers life away, just as

radium would do if we swallowed it. Only ignorant men, who could not flee into space, remained here on earth to fatter modern man, for the Immortals abandoned their out-grown dwelling places here when they took to their space-ships and flew away to settle under more favorable conditions on other planets.

It is my constant hope that some day earth men will waken to the existence of these ancient cavern dwellings, full of marvelous machines and secrets of science infinitely greater than theirs.

It is full time that mankind awoke. I live on only in that hope. Until then, I bid the surface earth farewell. I remain here in the caverns, absorbing wisdom against that day, and loving (as only those can love who live under the rays of the ancient mech) my little blind maiden.

—Richard S. Shaver²⁹

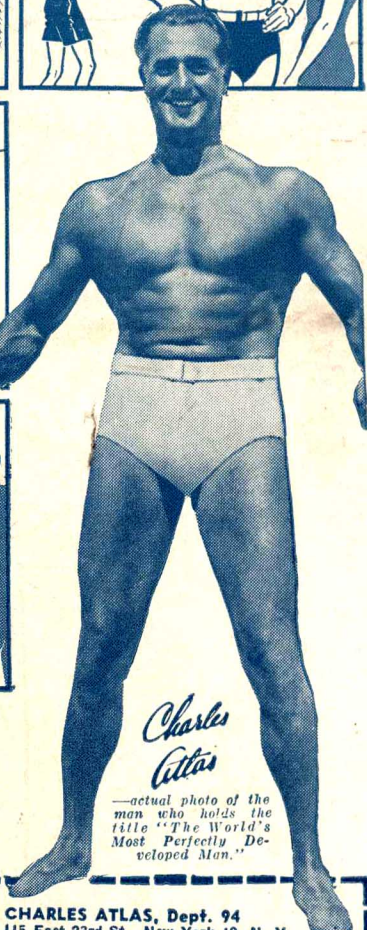
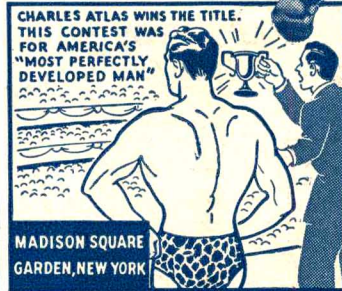
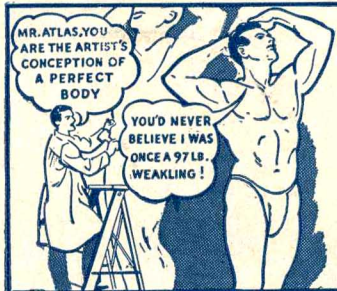
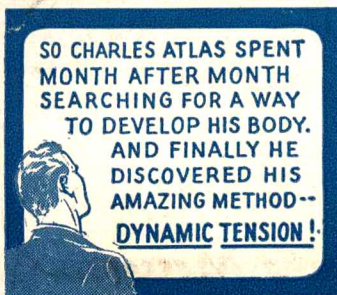
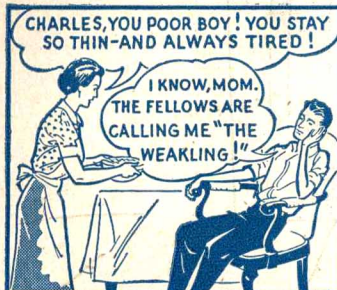
²⁸ It is this record that was presented by Mr. Shaver in his first story, "I Remember Lemuria!" published in the March, 1945 issue of AMAZING STORIES. When Mr. Shaver presented it to us, he did not explain how he knew it, except in the manner described in the opening of this second story, as a mental impulse from underground minds received at first via his welding gun in a Detroit auto plant. Ignorant as your editor was of the real facts surrounding Mr. Shaver's story, we decided to call it "racial memory" to make it more credible to our readers. We are forced now to retract that, and to admit also, that your editor was the most doubting of all Thomases at the beginning. However, when you read the amazing reactions to this first story, published in Discussions, in the new special section devoted to reporting readers' discoveries and reports on Mr. Shaver's Lemurian story, and in the Editor's Observatory, you will be faced with the same amazing facts which have made your editor look a little silly for having perhaps harmed the credibility of an incredible story by trying to make it less incredible.—Ed.

²⁹ Actually, Mr. Shaver is no longer in the caverns, but back on the surface, as we shall have occasion to demonstrate later on; but Mr. Shaver intends to present in each issue from now on, one of the "thought record" stories that he listened to while in the caves—and thus, for continuity, we have ended this story where it should properly end, in the caves, with more to come.—Ed.

HOW A 97-Lb. WEAKLING

Became the **WORLD'S MOST PERFECTLY DEVELOPED MAN**

The inspiring story of
CHARLES ATLAS



I Can Make You a New Man, Too, In Only 15 Minutes a Day!

If you're the way I USED to be—if you are skinny and feel only half-alive—if the better jobs pass you by—if you're in the service, but are being "pushed around"—if you're ashamed to strip for sports or a swim—and if you want a HE-MAN's body—then give me just 15 minutes a day!

I'll PROVE you can have a build you'll be PROUD of; "Dynamic Tension" will do it for you, too! That's how I changed my own build into such perfect proportions that famous sculptors and artists have paid me to pose for them. My body won me the title, "World's Most Perfectly Developed Man." And now I can give you solid, beautiful, USEFUL muscle wherever YOU want it!

"DYNAMIC TENSION" Does It

In only 15 minutes a day, "Dynamic Tension" can budge up your chest, broaden your back, fill out your arms and legs. Before you know it, this easy, NATURAL method will make you a New Man! In fact, I GUARANTEE you'll start seeing results in the first 7 days!

I give you no gadgets or contraptions to fool with. You simply utilize the UNDEVELOPED muscle-power in your own God-given body—almost unconsciously every minute of the day—walking, bending over, etc.—to BUILD MUSCLE and VITALITY. And it's so easy—my secret, "Dynamic Tension," does the trick!

FREE BOOK

Thousands of fellows in every branch of the service as well as civilians have used my "Dynamic Tension" to change themselves into real HE-MEN! Read what they say—see how they looked before and after—in my book—*free*. Tells all about "Dynamic Tension," shows actual photos of men I've turned from puny weaklings into Atlas Champions. And I can do the same for YOU. Mail the coupon now! Address me personally: CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 94, 115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.



**CHARLES ATLAS, Dept. 94
115 East 23rd St., New York 10, N. Y.**

I want the proof that your system of "Dynamic Tension" will help make a new man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big, muscular development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

Name
(Please print or write plainly)
Address
City State
☐ Check here if under 16 for Booklet A

Buy War Savings Bonds and Stamps Regularly.

MICA SAILBOAT OF MERCURY

Here is the weird sailboat of the insect men of Mercury, with its sail of sheet mica, and sailing a sea of chemical-poluted water (see p. 208)

