

# AMAZING STORIES

## QUARTERLY

WINTER 1933



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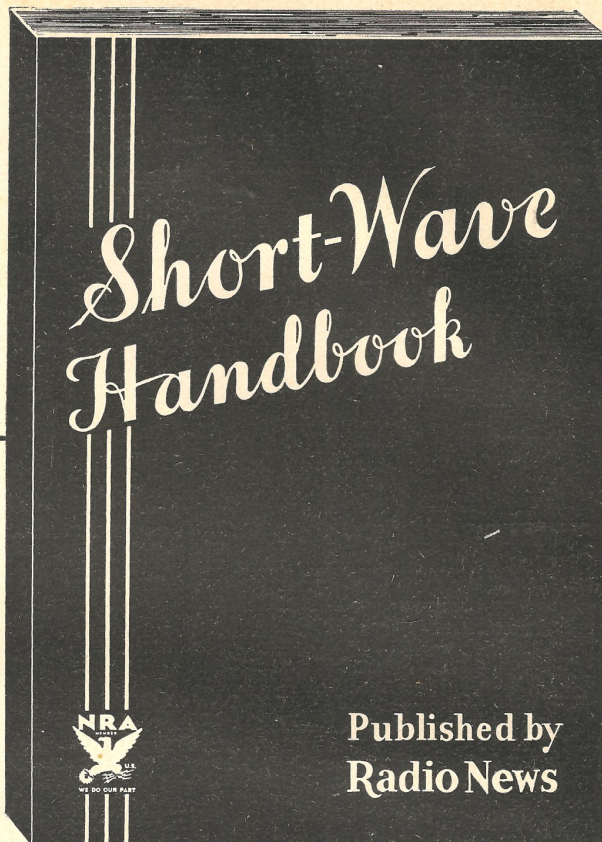
**The  
Second Deluge**  
by Garrett P. Serviss

**A Winter  
Amid the Ice**  
by Jules Verne



# In Tune With Our Times

RADIO NEWS presents the *Short-Wave Handbook*, a handy volume of 136 pages, containing the information needed by every short-wave enthusiast. With RADIO NEWS and the *Short-Wave Handbook* as your guide you can travel the world over on the short waves. Seated in a comfortable living-room chair you can hear news-flashes from Cuba—delight in the atmosphere of a German waltz—thrill to the splendor of the opera from Rome—twist the dials and hear Big Ben toll the hour in London—listen to the chatter of busy American amateurs—and pick up the terse police reports.



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## **Radio News**

**222 West 39th St.**

**New York, N. Y.**



VOL. 7—NO. 1  
WINTER, 1933

# AMAZING STORIES

*Quarterly*

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### Our Cover

The cover design depicts a scene  
from "The Second Deluge,"  
by Garrett P. Serviss.

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# The Second Deluge

By Garrett P. Serviss

*THE late Professor Garrett P. Serviss needs no introduction to you after you have read "A Columbus of Space," but here the well-known scientist-author hits upon the effects which would be produced on humanity by a second deluge. It is an impressive tale, and not a whit more improbable than the first Noachian deluge of Biblical days. Only the setting is modern, and the second great ark is, of course, vastly different from that used by Noah. Then, of course, there are a great many other things in "The Second Deluge" that Noah never even dreamt of, and that surely never happened to him. What these things are you will find out by reading this entrancing classic.*

## Introduction

**AUTHOR'S NOTE**—What is here set down is the fruit of long and careful research among disjointed records left by survivors of the terrible events described. The writer wishes frankly to say that, in some instances, he has followed the course which all historians are compelled to take by using his imagination to round out the picture. But he is able conscientiously to declare that in the substance of his narrative, as well as in every detail which is specifically described, he has followed faithfully the accounts of eye-witnesses, or of those who were in a position to know the truth of the wonderful events which they related.

## CHAPTER I

### Cosmo Versál

**A**N undersized, lean, wizened-faced man, with an immense bald head, as round and smooth and shining as a giant soap-bubble, and a pair of beady black eyes, set close together, so that he resembled a gnome of amazing brain capacity and prodigious power of concentration, sat bent over a writing desk with a huge sheet of cardboard before him, on which he was swiftly drawing geometrical and trigonometrical figures. Compasses, T-squares, rulers, protractors, and ellipsographs obeyed the touch of his fingers as if inspired with life.

The room around him was a jungle of terrestrial and celestial globes, chemists' retorts, tubes, pipes, and all the indescribable apparatus that modern science has invented, and which, to the uninitiated, seems as incomprehensible as the ancient paraphernalia of alchemists and astrologers. The walls were lined with book shelves, and adorned along the upper portions with the most extraordinary photographs and drawings. Even the ceiling was covered with charts, some representing the sky, while many others were geological and topographical pictures of the face of the earth.

Beside the drawing-board lay a pad of paper, and occasionally the little man nervously turned to this, and, grasping a long pencil, made elaborate calculations, covering the paper with a sprinkling of mathematical symbols that looked like magnified animalcules. While he worked, under a high light from a single window placed well up near the ceiling, his forehead

contracted into a hundred wrinkles, his cheeks became feverous, his piercing eyes glowed with inner fire, and drops of perspiration ran down in front of his ears. One would have thought that he was laboring to save his very soul and had but a few seconds of respite left.

Presently he threw down the pencil, and with astonishing agility let himself rapidly, but carefully, off the stool on which he had been sitting, keeping the palms of his hands on the seat beside his hips until he felt his feet touch the floor. Then he darted at a book-shelf, pulled down a ponderous tome, flapped it open in a clear space on the floor, and dropped on his knees to consult it.

After turning a leaf or two he found what he was after, read down the page, keeping a finger on the lines, and, having finished his reading, jumped to his feet and hurried back to the stool, on which he mounted so quickly that it was impossible to see how he managed it without an upset. Instantly he made a new diagram, and then fell to figuring furiously on the pad, making his pencil gyrate so fast that its upper end vibrated like the wing of a dragon-fly.

At last he threw down the pencil, and, encircling his knees with his clasped arms, sank in a heap on the stool. The lids dropped over his shining eyes, and he became buried in thought.

When he reopened his eyes and unbent his brows, his gaze happened to be directed toward the row of curious big photographs which ran like a pictured frieze round the upper side of the wall of the room. A casual observer might have thought that the little man had been amusing himself by photographing the explosions of fireworks on a Fourth of July night; but it was evident by his expression that these singular pictures had no connection with civic pyrotechnics, but must represent something of a most pronounced fatal and stupendous import.

The little man's face took on a rapt look, in which wonder and fear seemed to be blended. With a sweep of his hand he included the whole series of photographs in a comprehensive glance, and then, setting his gaze upon a particularly bizarre object in the center,



he began to speak aloud, although there was nobody to listen to him.

"My God!" he said. "That's it! That Lick photograph of the Lord Rosse nebula is its very image, except that there's no electric fire in it. The same great whirl of outer spirals, and then comes the awful central mass—and we're going to plunge straight into it. Then quintillions of tons of water will condense on the earth and cover it like a universal cloudburst. And then good-by to the human race—unless—unless—I, Cosmo Versál, inspired by science, can save a remnant to repeople the planet after the catastrophe.

Again, for a moment, he closed his eyes, and puckered his hemispherical brow, while, with drawn-up knees, he seemed perilously balanced on the high stool. Several times he slowly shook his head, and when his eyes reopened their fire was gone, and a reflective film covered them. He began to speak, more deliberately than before, and in a musing tone:

"What can I do? I don't believe there is a mountain on the face of the globe lofty enough to lift its head above that flood. Hum, hum! It's no use thinking about mountains! The flood will be six miles deep—six miles from the present sea-level; my last calculation proves it beyond all question. And that's only a minimum—it may be miles deeper, for no mortal man can tell exactly what'll happen when the earth plunges into a nebula like that.

"We'll have to float; that's the thing. I'll have to build an ark. I'll be a second Noah. I'll advise the whole world to build arks.

"Millions might save themselves that way, for the flood is not going to last forever. We'll get through the nebula in a few months, and then the waters will gradually recede, and the high lands will emerge again. But it'll be an awful long time; I doubt if the earth will ever be just as it was before. There won't be much room, except for fish—but there won't be many inhabitants for what dry land there is."

ONCE more he fell into silent meditation, and while he mused there came a knock at the door. The little man started up on his seat, alert as a squirrel, and turned his eyes over his shoulder, listening intently. The knock was repeated—three quick sharp raps. Evidently he at once recognized them.

"All right," he called out, and, letting himself down, ran swiftly to the door and opened it.

A tall, thin man, with bushy black hair, heavy eyebrows, a high narrow forehead, and a wide clean shaven mouth, wearing a solemn kind of smile, entered and grasped the little man by both hands.

"Cosmo," he said, without wasting any time on preliminaries, "have you worked it out?"

"I have just finished."

"And you find the worst?"

"Yes, worse than I ever dreamed it would be. The waters will be six miles deep."

"Phew!" exclaimed the other, his smile fading. "That is indeed serious. And when does it begin?"

"Inside of a year. We're within three hundred million miles of the watery nebula now, and you know that the earth travels more than that distance in twelve months."

"Have you seen it?"

"How could I see it—haven't I told you it is invisible? If it could be seen all these stupid astronomers would have spotted it long ago. But I'll tell you what I have seen."

Cosmo Versál's voice sank into a whisper, and he shuddered slightly as he went on:

"Only last night I was sweeping the sky with the

telescope when I noticed, in Hercules and Lyra, and all that part of the heavens, a dimming of some of the fainter stars. It was like the shadow of the shroud of a ghost. Nobody else would have noticed it, and I wouldn't if I had not been looking for it. It's knowledge that clarifies the eyes and breeds knowledge, Joseph Smith. It was not truly visible, and yet I could see that it was there. I tried to make out the shape of the thing—but it was too indefinite. But I know very well what it is. See here"—he suddenly broke off—"Look at the photograph." (He was pointing at the Lord Rosse nebula on the wall). "It's like that, only it's coming edgewise toward us. We may miss some of the outer spirals, but we're going to smash into the center."

With fallen jaw, and black brows contracted, Joseph Smith stared at the photograph.

"It doesn't shine like that," he said at last.

The little man snorted contemptuously.

"What have I told you about its invisibility?" he demanded.

"But how, then, do you know that it is of a watery nature?"

Cosmo Versál threw up his hands and waved them in an agony of impatience. He climbed upon his stool to get nearer the level of the other's eyes, and fixing him with his gaze, exclaimed:

"You know very well how I know it. I know it because I have demonstrated with my new spectroscope, which analyzes extra-visual rays, that all those dark nebulae that were photographed in the milky way years ago are composed of watery vapor. They are far off, on the limits of the universe. This one is one right at hand. It's a little one compared with them—but it's enough, yes, it's enough! You know that more than two years ago I began to correspond with astronomers all over the world about this thing, and not one of them would listen to me. Well, they'll listen when it's too late perhaps.

"They'll listen when the flood-gates are opened and the inundation begins. It's not the first time that this thing has happened. I haven't a doubt that the flood of Noah, that everybody pretends to laugh at now, was caused by the earth passing through a watery nebula. But this will be worse than that; there weren't two thousand million people to be drowned then as there are now."

For five minutes neither spoke. Cosmo Versál swung on the stool, and played with an ellipsograph; Joseph Smith dropped his chin on his breast and nervously fingered the pockets of his long vest. At last he raised his head and asked, in a low voice:

"What are you going to do, Cosmo?"

"I'm going to get ready," was the short reply.

"How?"

"Build an ark."

"But will you give no warning to others?"

"I'll do my best. I'll telephone to all the officials, scientific and otherwise, in America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. I'll write in every language to all the newspapers and magazines. I'll send out circulars. I'll counsel everybody to drop every other occupation and begin to build arks—but nobody will heed me. You'll see. My ark will be the only one, but I'll save as many in it as I can. And I depend upon you, Joseph, to help me. From all appearances, it's the only chance that the human race has of survival.

"If I hadn't made this discovery they would all have been wiped out like miners in a flooded pit. We may persuade a few to be saved—but what an awful thing it is that, when the truth is thrust into their faces, people won't believe, won't listen, won't see, won't be



helped, but will die like dogs in their obstinate ignorance and blindness."

"But they will, they must, listen to you," said Joseph Smith eagerly.

"They *won't*, but I must *make* them," replied Cosmo Versál. "Anyhow, I must make a few of the best of them hear me. The fate of a whole race is at stake. If we can save a handful of the best blood and brain of mankind, the world will have a new chance, and perhaps a better and higher race will be the result. Since I can't save them all, I'll pick and choose. I'll have the flower of humanity in my ark. I'll at least snatch that much from the jaws of destruction."

The little man was growing very earnest and his eyes were aglow with the fire of enthusiastic purpose. As he dropped his head on one side, it looked too heavy for the stemlike neck, but it conveyed an impression of immense intellectual power. Its imposing contour lent force to his words.

"The flower of humanity," he continued after a slight pause. "Who composes it? I must decide that question. Is it the billionaires? Is it the kings and rulers? Is it the men of science? Is it the society leaders? Bah! I'll have to think on that. I can't take them all, but I'll give them *all* a chance to *save themselves* though I know they won't act on the advice."

Here he paused.

"Won't the existing ships do—especially if more are built?" Joseph Smith suddenly asked, interrupting Cosmo's train of thought.

"Not at all," was the reply. "They're not suited to the kind of navigation that will be demanded. They're not buoyant enough, nor manageable enough, and they haven't enough carrying capacity for power and provisions. They'll be swamped at the wharves, or if they should get away they'd be sent to the bottom inside a few hours. Nothing but specially constructed arks will serve. And *there's* more trouble for me—I must devise a new form of vessel. Heavens, how short the time is! Why couldn't I have found this out ten years ago? It's only to-day that I have myself learned the full truth, though I have worked on it so long."

"How many will you be able to carry in your ark?" asked Smith.

"I can't tell yet. That's another question to be carefully considered. I shall build the vessel of this new metal, levium, half as heavy as aluminum and twice as strong as steel. I ought to find room without the slightest difficulty for a round thousand in it."

"Surely many more than that!" exclaimed Joseph Smith. "Why, there are ocean-liners that carry several times as many."

"You forget," replied Cosmo Versál, "that we must have provisions enough to last for a long time, because we cannot count on the immediate reemergence of any land, even the most mountainous, and the most compressed food takes space when a great quantity is needed. It won't do to overcrowd the vessel, and invite sickness. Then too, I must take many animals along."

"Animals," returned Smith. "I hadn't thought of that. But is it necessary?"

"Absolutely. Would you have less foresight than Noah? I shall not imitate him by taking male and female of every species, but I must at least provide for restocking such land as eventually appears above the waters with the animals most useful to man. Then, too, animals are essential to the life of the earth. Any agricultural chemist would tell you that. They play an indispensable part in the vital cycle of the soil. I must also take certain species of insects and birds. I'll telephone Professor Hergeschmitberger at Berlin to learn precisely what are the capitally important

species of the animal kingdom."

"And when will you begin the construction of the ark?"

"Instantly. There's not a moment to lose. And it's equally important to send out warnings broadcast immediately. There you can help me. You know what I want to say. Write it out at once; put it as strong as you can; send it everywhere; put it in the shape of posters; hurry it to the newspaper offices. Telephone, in my name, to the Carnegie Institute, to the Smithsonian Institution, to the Royal Society, to the French, Russian, Italian, German, and all the other Academies and Associations of Science to be found anywhere on earth.

"Don't neglect the slightest means of publicity. Thank Heaven, the money to pay for all this is not lacking. If my good father, when he piled up his fortune from the profits of the original Trans-continental Aerian Company, could have foreseen the use to which his son would put it for the benefit—what do I say, for the benefit? nay, for the *salvation*—of mankind, he would have rejoiced in his work."

"Ah, that reminds me," exclaimed Joseph Smith. "I was about to ask, a few minutes ago, why airships would not do for this business. Couldn't people save themselves from the flood by taking refuge in the atmosphere?"

COSMO VERSÁL looked at his questioner with an ironical smile.

"Do you know," he asked, "how long a dirigible can be kept afloat? Do you know for how long a voyage the best airplane types can be provisioned with power? There's not an airship of any kind that can go more than two weeks at the very uttermost without touching solid earth, and then it must be mighty sparing of its power. If we can save mankind now, and give it another chance, perhaps the time will come when power can be drawn out of the ether of space, and men can float in the air as long as they choose.

"But as things are now, we must go back to Noah's plan, and trust to the buoyant power of water. I fully expect that when the deluge begins people will flock to the highlands and the mountains in airships—but alas! that won't save them. Remember what I have told you—this flood is going to be six miles deep!"

The second morning after the conversation between Cosmo Versál and Joseph Smith, New York was startled by seeing, in huge red letters, on every blank wall, on the bare flanks of towering skyscrapers, on the lofty stations of airplane lines, on billboards, fences, advertising-boards along suburban roads, in the Subway stations, and fluttering from strings of kites over the city, the following announcement:

THE WORLD IS TO BE DROWNED!

Save Yourself While It Is Yet Time!

Drop Your Business: It Is of No Consequence!

Build Arks: It Is Your Only Salvation!

The Earth Is Going To Plunge into a Watery Nebula:

There's No Escape!

Hundreds of Millions Will Be Drowned: You Have Only a Few Months To Get Ready!

For Particulars Address: Cosmo Versál,  
3000 Fifth Avenue

## CHAPTER II

### Mocking at Fate

WHEN New York recovered from its first astonishment over the extraordinary posters, it indulged in a loud laugh. Everybody knew who Cosmo Versál was. His eccentricities had filled many



readable columns in the newspapers. Yet there was a certain respect for him, too. This was due to his extraordinary intellectual ability and unquestionable scientific knowledge. But his imagination was a free as the winds, and it often led him upon excursions in which nobody could follow him, and which caused the more steady-going scientific brethren to shake their heads. They called him able but flighty. The public at times called him brilliant and amusing.

His father, who had sprung from some unknown source in southeastern Europe, and, beginning as a newsboy in New York, had made his way to the front in the financial world, had left his entire fortune to Cosmo. The latter had no taste for finance or business, but a devouring appetite for science, to which, in his own way, he devoted all his powers, all his time, and all his money. He never married, was never seen in society, and had very few intimates—but he was known by sight, or reputation, to everybody. There was not a scientific body or association of any consequence in the world of which he was not a member. Those which looked askance at his bizarre ideas were glad to accept pecuniary aid from him.

The notion that the world was to be drowned had taken possession of him about three years before the opening scene of this narrative. To work out the idea, he built an observatory, set up a laboratory, invented instruments, including his strange spectroscope (which was scoffed at by the scientific world).

Finally, submitting the results of his observations to mathematical treatment, he proved, to his own satisfaction, the absolute correctness of his thesis that the well-known "proper motion of the solar system" was about to result in an encounter between the earth and an invisible watery nebula, which would have the effect of inundating the globe. As this startling idea gradually took shape, he communicated it to scientific men in all lands, but failed to find a single disciple, except his friend Joseph Smith, who, without being able to follow all his reasonings, accepted on trust the conclusions of Cosmo's more powerful mind. Accordingly, at the end of his investigation, he enlisted Smith as secretary, propagandist, and publicity agent.

New York laughed a whole day and night at the warning red letters. They were the talk of the town. People joked about them in cafés, clubs, at home, in the streets, in the offices, in the exchanges, in the street-cars, on the Elevated, in the Subways. Crowds gathered on corners to watch the flapping posters aloft on the kite lines. The afternoon newspapers issued specials which were all about the coming flood, and everywhere one heard the cry of the newsboys: "*Extra-a-a! Drowning of a Thousand Million People! Cosmo Versál predicts the End of the World!*" On their editorial pages the papers were careful to discount the scare lines, and terrific pictures, that covered the front sheets, with humorous jibes at the author of the formidable prediction.

The *Owl*, which was the only paper that put the news in half a column of ordinary type, took a judicial attitude, called upon the city authorities to tear down the posters, and hinted that "this absurd person, Cosmo Versál, who disgraces a once honored name with his childish attempt to create a sensation that may cause untold harm among the ignorant masses," had laid himself open to criminal prosecution.

In their latest editions, several of the papers printed an interview with Cosmo Versál, in which he gave figures and calculations that, on their face, seemed to offer mathematical proof of the correctness of his forecast. In impassioned language, he implored the public to believe that he would not mislead them, spoke of the

instant necessity of constructing arks of safety, and averred that the presence of the terrible nebula that was so soon to drown the world was already manifest in the heavens.

Some readers of these confident statements began to waver, especially when confronted with mathematics which they could not understand. But still, in general, the laugh went on. It broke into boisterousness in one of the largest theaters where a bright-witted "artist," who always made a point of hitting off the very latest sensation, got himself up in a lifelike imitation of the well-known figure of Cosmo Versál, topped with a bald head as big as a bushel, and sailed away into the flies with a pretty member of the ballet, whom he had gallantly snatched from a tumbling ocean of green baize, singing at the top of his voice until they disappeared behind the proscenium arch:

"Oh, th' Nebula is coming  
To drown the wicked earth,  
With all his spirals humming  
'S he waltzes in his mirth.

*Chorus.*

"Don't hesitate a second,  
Get ready to embark,  
And skip away to safety  
With Cosmo and his ark.

5

"Th' Nebula's a direful bird  
'S he skims the ether blue!  
He's angry over what he's heard,  
'N's got his eye on you.

*Chorus.*

"Don't hesitate a second, etc.  
  
"When Nebulas begin to pipe  
The bloomin H<sub>2</sub>O  
Y'bet yer life the time is ripe  
To think what you will do.

*Chorus.*

"Don't hesitate a second, etc.  
  
"He'll tip th' Atlantic o'er its brim,  
And swamp the mountains tall;  
He'll let the broad Pacific in  
And leave no land at all.

*Chorus.*

"Don't hesitate a second, etc.  
  
"He's got an option on the spheres;  
He's leased the milky way;  
He's caught the planets in arrears,  
'N's bound to make 'em pay.

*Chorus.*

"Don't hesitate a second, etc.

The roars of laughter and applause with which this effusion of vaudeville genius was greeted, showed the cheerful spirit in which the public took the affair. No harm seemed to have come to the "ignorant masses" yet.

But the next morning there was a suspicious change



in the popular mind. People were surprised to see the new posters in place of the old ones, more lurid in letters and language than the original. The morning papers had columns of description and comment, and some of them seemed disposed to treat the prophet and his prediction with a certain degree of seriousness.

The savants who had been interviewed overnight, did not talk very convincingly, and made the mistake of flinging contempt on both Cosmo and "the gullible public."

Naturally, the public wouldn't stand for that, and the pendulum of opinion began to swing the other way. Cosmo helped his cause by sending to every newspaper a carefully prepared statement of his observations and calculations, in which he spoke with such force of conviction that few could read his words without feeling a thrill of apprehensive uncertainty. This was strengthened by published despatches which showed that he had forwarded his warnings to all the well-known scientific bodies of the world, which, while decrying them, made no effective response.

And there was a note of positive alarm in a double-leaded bulletin from the new observatory at Mount McKinley, which affirmed that during the preceding night a *singular obscurity* had been suspected in the northern sky, seeming to veil many stars below the twelfth magnitude. It was added that the phenomenon was unprecedented, but that the observation was both difficult and uncertain.

Nowhere was the atmosphere of doubt and mystery, which now began to hang over the public, so remarkable as in Wall Street. The sensitive currents there responded like electric waves to the new influence, and, to the dismay of hard-headed observers, the market dropped as if it had been hit with a sledge-hammer. Stocks went down five, ten, in some cases twenty points in as many minutes.

The speculative issues slid down like wheat into a bin when the chutes are opened. Nobody could trace the exact origin of the movement, but selling-orders came tumbling in until there was a veritable panic.

From London, Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Leningrad, flashed dispatches announcing that the same unreasonable slump had manifested itself there, and all united in holding Cosmo Versál solely responsible for the foolish break in prices. Leaders of finance rushed to the exchanges trying by arguments and expostulations to arrest the downfall, but in vain.

In the afternoon, however, reason partially resumed its sway; then a quick recovery was felt, and many who had rushed to sell all they had, found cause to regret their precipitancy. The next day all was on the mend, as far as the stock market was concerned, but among the people at large the poison of awakened credulity continued to spread, nourished by fresh announcements from the fountain head.

Cosmo issued another statement to the effect that he had perfected plans for an ark of safety, which he would begin at once to construct in the neighborhood of New York, and he not only offered freely to give his plans to any who wished to commence construction on their own account, but he urged them, in the name of Heaven, to lose no time. This produced a prodigious effect, and multitudes began to be infected with a nameless fear.

MEANWHILE an extraordinary scene occurred, behind closed doors, at the headquarters of the Carnegie Institute in Washington. Joseph Smith, acting under Cosmo Versál's direction, had forwarded an elaborate *précis* of the latter's argument, accompanied with full mathematical details, to the head of

the Institute. The character of this document was such that it could not be ignored. Moreover, the savants composing the council of the most important scientific association in the world were aware of the state of the public mind, and felt that it was incumbent upon them to do something to allay the alarm. Of late years a sort of supervisory control over scientific news of all kinds had been accorded to them, and they appreciated the fact that a duty now rested upon their shoulders.

Accordingly, a special meeting was called to consider the communication from Cosmo Versál. It was the general belief that a little critical examination would result in complete proof of the fallacy of all his work, proof which could be put in a form that the most uninstructed would understand.

But the papers, diagrams, and mathematical formulæ had no sooner been spread upon the table under the knowing eyes of the learned members of the council, than a chill of conscious impuissance ran through them. They saw that Cosmo's mathematics were unimpeachable. His formulæ were accurately deduced, and his operations absolutely correct.

They could do nothing but attack his fundamental data, based on the alleged revelations of his new kind of spectroscope, and on telescopic observations which were described in so much detail that the only way to combat them was by the general assertion that they were illusory. This was felt to be a very unsatisfactory method of procedure, as far as the public was concerned, because it amounted to no more than attacking the credibility of a witness who pretended to describe only what he himself had seen—and there is nothing so hard as to prove a negative.

Then, Cosmo had on his side the whole force of that curious tendency of the human mind which habitually gravitates toward whatever is extraordinary, revolutionary, and mysterious.

But a yet greater difficulty arose. Mention has been made of the strange bulletin from the Mount McKinley observatory. That had been incautiously sent out to the public by a thoughtless observer who was more intent upon describing a singular phenomenon than upon considering its possible effect on the popular imagination. He had immediately received an expostulatory despatch from headquarters which henceforth shut his mouth—but he had told the simple truth, and how embarrassing that was became evident when, on the very table around which the savants were now assembled, three despatches were laid in quick succession from the great observatories of Mount Hekla in Iceland, the North Cape, and Kamchatka, all corroborating the statement of the Mount McKinley observer, that an inexplicable veiling of faint stars had manifested itself in the boreal quarter of the sky.

WHEN the president read the despatches—which the senders had taken the precaution to mark "confidential"—the members of the council looked at one another with no little dismay. Here was the most unprejudiced corroboration of Cosmo Versál's assertion that the great nebula was always within the range of observation. How could they dispute such testimony, and what were they to make of it?

Two or three of the members began to be shaken in their convictions.

"Upon my word," exclaimed Professor Alexander Jones, "but this is very curious! And suppose the fellow should be right, after all?"

"Right!" cried the president, Professor Pludder, disdainfully. "Who ever heard of a watery nebula? The thing's absurd!"

"I don't see that it's absurd," replied Prof. Jones.



"There's plenty of proof of the existence of hydrogen in some of the nebulae."

"So there is," chimed in Prof. Abel Able, "and if there's hydrogen, there may be oxygen, and there you have all that's necessary. It's not the idea that a nebula may consist of watery vapor that's absurd, but it is that a watery nebula, large enough to drown the earth by condensation upon it could have approached so near as this one must now be without sooner betraying its presence."

"How so?" demanded a voice.

"By its attraction. Cosmo Versál says it is already less than three hundred million miles away. If it is massive enough to drown the earth, it ought long ago to have been discovered by its disturbance of the planetary orbits."

"Not at all," exclaimed Professor Jeremiah Moses. "If you stick to that argument you'll be drowned sure. Just look at these facts. The earth weighs six and a half sextillions of tons, and the ocean one and a half quintillions. The average depth of the oceans is two and one-fifth miles. Now—if the level of the ocean were raised only about 1,600 feet, practically all the inhabited parts of the world would be flooded. To cause that increase in the level of the oceans only about one-eighth part would have to be added to their total mass, or say, one-seventh part, allowing for the great surface to be covered. That would be one thirty-thousandth of the weight of the globe, and if you suppose that only one-hundredth of the entire nebula were condensed on the earth, the whole mass of the nebula would not need to exceed one three-hundredth of the weight of the earth, or a quarter that of the moon—and nobody here will be bold enough to say that the approach of a mass no greater than that would be likely to be discovered through its attraction when it was three hundred million miles away."

Several of the astronomers present shook their heads at this, and Professor Pludder irritably declared that it was absurd.

"The attraction would be noticeable when it was a thousand million miles away," he continued.

"Yes, 'noticeable' I admit," replied Professor Moses, "but all the same you wouldn't notice it, because you wouldn't be looking for it unless the nebula were visible first, and even then it would require months of observation to detect the effects. And how are you going to get around those bulletins? The thing is beginning to be visible now, and I'll bet that if, from this time on, you study carefully the planetary motions, you will find evidence of the disturbance becoming stronger and stronger. Versál has pointed out that very thing, and calculated the perturbations. This thing has come like a thief in the night."

"You'd better hurry up and secure a place in the ark," said Professor Pludder sarcastically.

"I don't know but I shall, if I can get one," returned Professor Moses. "You may not think this is such a laughing matter a few months hence."

"I'm surprised," pursued the president, "that a man of your scientific standing should stultify himself by taking seriously such balderdash as this. I tell you the thing is absurd."

"And I tell you, *you* are absurd to say so!" retorted Professor Moses, losing his temper. "You've got four of the biggest telescopes in the world under your control; why don't you order your observers to look for this thing?"

Professor Pludder, who was a very big man, reared up his rotund form, and, bringing his fist down upon the table with a resounding whack, exclaimed:

"I'll do nothing so ridiculous! These bulletins have

undoubtedly been influenced by the popular excitement. There has possibly been a little obscurity in the atmosphere—cirrus clouds, or something—and the observers have imagined the rest. I'm not going to insult science by encouraging the proceedings of a mountebank like Cosmo Versál. What we've got to do is to prepare a despatch for the press reassuring the populace and throwing the weight of this institution on the side of common sense and public tranquility. Let the secretary indite such a despatch, and then we'll edit it and send it out."

Professor Pludder, naturally dictatorial, was sometimes a little overbearing, but being a man of great ability, and universally respected for his high rank in the scientific world, his colleagues usually bowed to his decisions. On this occasion his force of character sufficed to silence the doubters, and when the statement intended for the press had received its final touches it contained no hint of the seeds of discord that Cosmo Versál had sown among America's foremost savants. The next morning it appeared in all the newspapers as follows:

#### *Official statement from the Carnegie Institute.*

In consequence of the popular excitement caused by the sensational utterances of a notorious pretender to scientific knowledge in New York, the council of this Institute authorizes the statement that it has examined the alleged grounds on which prediction of a great flood, to be caused by a nebula encountering the earth, is based, and finds, as all real men of science knew beforehand, that the entire matter is simply a canard.

The nebulae are not composed of water; if they were composed of water they could not cause a flood on the earth; the report that some strange, misty object is visible in the starry heavens is based on a misapprehension; and finally, the so-called calculations of the author of this inexcusable hoax are baseless and totally devoid of scientific validity.

The public is earnestly advised to pay no further attention to the matter. If there were any danger to the earth—and such a thing is not to be seriously considered—astronomers would know it long in advance, and would give due and official warning.

Unfortunately for the popular effect of this pronouncement, on the very morning when it appeared in print, thirty thousand people were crowded around the old aviation field at Mineola, excitedly watching Cosmo Versál, with five hundred workmen, laying the foundation of a huge platform, while about the field were stretched sheets of canvas displaying the words:

#### THE ARK OF SAFETY.

Earnest Inspection Invited for All.

Attendants will Furnish Gratis Plans for Similar Constructions.

Small Arks Can Be Built for Families.

Act While There Is Yet Time.

The multitude saw at a glance that here was a work that would cost millions, and the spectacle of this immense expenditure, the evidence that Cosmo was backing his words with his money, furnished a silent argument which was irresistible. In the midst of all, flying about among his men, was Cosmo, impressing every beholder with the feeling that intellect was in charge.

Like the gray coat of Napoleon on a battle-field, the sign of that mighty brow bred confidence.



## CHAPTER III

## The First Drops of the Deluge

THE utterances of the Carnegie Institute indeed fell flat, and Cosmo Versál's star reigned in the ascendent. He pushed his preparations with amazing speed, and not only politics, but even the war, that had just broken out in South America, were swallowed up in the newspapers by endless descriptions of the mysterious proceedings at Mineola. Cosmo still found time every day to write articles and to give out interviews; and Joseph Smith was kept constantly on the jump, running for street-cars or trains, or leaping, with his long coat flapping, into and out of elevators on ceaseless missions to the papers, the scientific societies, and the meetings of learned or unlearned bodies which had been persuaded to investigate the subject of the coming flood. Between the work of preparation and that of proselytism it is difficult to see how Cosmo found sleep.

Day by day the Ark of Safety rose higher upon its great platform, its huge metallic ribs and broad, bulging sides glinting strangely in the unbroken sunshine—for, as if imitating the ominous quiet before an earthquake, the July sky had stripped itself of all clouds. No thunder-storms broke the serenity of the long days, and never had the overarching heavens seemed so spotless and motionless in their cerulean depths.

All over the world, as the news despatches showed, the same strange calm prevailed. Cosmo did not fail to call attention to this unparalleled repose of nature as a sure prognostic of the awful event in preparation.

The heat became tremendous. Hundreds were stricken down in the blazing streets. Multitudes fled to the seashore, and lay panting under umbrellas on the burning sands, or vainly sought relief by plunging into the heated water, which, rolling lazily in with the tide, felt as if it had come from over a boiler.

Still, perspiring crowds constantly watched the workmen, who struggled with the overpowering heat, although Cosmo had erected canvas screens for them and installed a hundred immense electric fans to create a breeze.

Beginning with five hundred men, he had, in less than a month, increased his force to nearer five thousand, many of whom, not engaged in the actual construction, were preparing the materials and bringing them together. The Ark was being made of pure levium, the wonderful new metal which, although already employed in the construction of airplanes and the framework of dirigible balloons, had not before been used for shipbuilding, except in the case of a few small boats, and these only in the navy.

For mere raw material Cosmo must have expended an enormous sum, and his expenses were quadrupled by the fact that he was compelled, in order to save time, practically to lease several of the largest steel plants in the country. Fortunately levium was easily rolled into plates, and the supply was sufficient, owing to the discovery two years before of an expeditious process of producing the metal from its ores.

The radio, telegraph and telephone offices were besieged by correspondents eager to send inland, and all over Europe and Asia, the latest particulars of the construction of the great ark. Nobody followed Cosmo's advice or example, but everybody was intensely interested and puzzled.

At last the government officials found themselves forced to take cognizance of the affair. They could no longer ignore it after they discovered that it was seriously interfering with the conduct of public busi-

ness. Cosmo Versál's pressing orders, accompanied by cash, displaced or delayed orders of the government commanding materials for the navy and the air fleet. In consequence, about the middle of July he received a summons to visit the President of the United States. Cosmo hurried to Washington on the given date, and presented his card at the White House. He was shown immediately into the President's reception-room, where he found the entire Cabinet in presence. As he entered he was the focus of a formidable battery of curious and not too friendly eyes.

President Samson was a large, heavy man, more than six feet tall. Every member of the Cabinet was above the average in avoirdupois, and the heavy-weight president of the Carnegie Institute, Professor Pludder, who had been specially invited, added by his presence to the air of ponderosity that characterized the assemblage. All seemed magnified by the thin white garments which they wore on account of the oppressive heat. Many of them had come in haste from various summer resorts, and were plainly annoyed by the necessity of attending at the President's command.

COSMO VERSÁL was the only cool man there, and his diminutive form presented a striking contrast to the others. But he looked as if he carried more brains than all of them put together.

He was not in the least overawed by the hostile glances of the statesmen. On the contrary, his lips perceptibly curled, in a half-disdainful smile, as he took the big hand which the President extended to him. As soon as Cosmo Versál had sunk into the embrace of a large easy chair, the President opened the subject.

"I have directed you to come," he said in a majestic tone, "in order the sooner to dispel the effects of your unjustifiable predictions and extraordinary proceedings on the public mind—and, I may add, on public affairs. Are you aware that you have interfered with the measures of this government for the defense of the country? You have stepped in front of the government, and delayed the beginning of four battle-ships which Congress has authorized in urgent haste on account of the threatening aspect of affairs in the East? I need hardly say to you that we shall, if necessary, find means to set aside the private agreements under which you are proceeding, as inimical to public interests, but you have already struck a serious blow at the security of your country."

The President pronounced the last sentence with oratorical unction, and Cosmo was conscious of an approving movement of big official shoulders around him. The disdain deepened on his lips.

After a moment's pause the President continued:

"Before proceeding to extremities I have wished to see you personally, in order, in the first place, to assure myself that you are mentally responsible, and then to appeal to your patriotism, which should lead you to withdraw at once an obstruction so dangerous to the nation. Do you know the position in which you have placed yourself?"

Cosmo Versál got upon his feet and advanced to the center of the room like a little David. Every eye was fixed upon him. His voice was steady, but intense with suppressed nervousness.

"Mr. President," he said, "you have accused me of obstructing the measures of the government for the defense of the country. Sir, I am trying to save *the whole human race* from a danger in comparison with which that of war is infinitesimal—a danger which is rushing down upon us with appalling speed, and which will strike every land on the globe simultaneously.



Within seven months not a warship or any other existing vessel will remain afloat."

The listeners smiled, and nodded significantly to one another, but the speaker only grew more earnest.

"You think I am insane," he said, "but the truth is you are hoodwinked by official stupidity. *That man*," pointing to Professor Pludder, "who knows me well, and who has had all my proofs laid before him, is either too thick-headed to understand a demonstration or too pig-headed to confess his own error."

"Come, come," interrupted the President sternly, while Professor Pludder flushed very red, "this will not do! Indulge in no personalities here. I have strained the point in offering to listen to you at all, and I have invited the head of the greatest of our scientific societies to be present, with the hope that here, before us all, he might convince you of your folly, and thus bring the whole unfortunate affair promptly to an end."

"*He convince me!*" cried Cosmo Versál disdainfully. "He is incapable of understanding the ABC of my work. But let me tell you this, Mr. President—there are men in his own council who are not so blind. I know what occurred at the recent meeting of that council, and I know that the ridiculous announcement put forth in its name to deceive the public was whipped into shape by *him*, and does not express the real opinion of many of the members."

Professor Pludder's face grew redder than ever.

"Name one!" he thundered.

"Ah," said Cosmo sneeringly, "that hits hard doesn't it? You want me to name *one*; well I'll name *three*. What did Professor Alexander Jones and Professor Abel Able say about the existence of watery nebulae, and what was the opinion expressed by Professor Jeremiah Moses about the actual approach of one out of the northern sky, and what it could do if it hit the earth? What was the unanimous opinion of the entire council about the correctness of my mathematical work? And what," he continued, approaching Professor Pludder and shaking his finger up at him—"what have you done with those three despatches from Iceland, the North Cape, and Kamchatka, which absolutely confirmed my announcement that the nebula was already visible?"

Professor Pludder began stammering:

"Some spy—"

"Ah," cried Cosmo, catching him up, "*a spy*," hey? Then, you admit it! Mr. President, I beg you to notice that he admits it. Sir, this is a conspiracy to conceal the truth. Great Heavens, the world is on the point of being drowned, and yet the pride of officialdom is so strong in this plodder—Pludder—and others of his ilk that they'd sooner take the chance of letting the human race be destroyed than recognize the truth!"

Cosmo Versál spoke with such tremendous concentration of mental energy, and with such evident sincerity of conviction, and he had so plainly put Professor Pludder to rout, that the President, no less than the other listening statesmen, was thrown into a quandary.

There was a creaking of heavily burdened chairs, a ponderous stir all round the circle, while a look of perplexity became visible on every face. Professor Pludder's conduct helped to produce the change of moral atmosphere. He had been so completely surprised by Cosmo's accusation, based on facts which he had supposed were known only to himself and the council, that he was unable for a minute to speak at all, and before he could align his faculties his triumphant little opponent renewed the attack.

"Mr. President," he said, laying his hand on the arm of Mr. Samson's big chair, which was nearly on a level with his breast and speaking with persuasive earnestness,

"you are the executive head of a mighty nation—the nation that sets the pace for the world. It is in your power to do a vast, an incalculable, service to humanity. One official word from you would save millions upon millions of lives. I implore you, instead of interfering with my work, to give instant order for the construction of as many arks, based upon the plans I have perfected, as the navy yard can possibly turn out. Issue a proclamation to the people, warning them that this is their only chance of escape."

By a curious operation of the human mind, this speech cost Cosmo nearly all the advantage that he had previously gained. His ominous suggestion of a great nebula rushing out of the heavens to overwhelm the earth had immensely impressed the imagination of his hearers, and his uncontradicted accusation that Professor Pludder was concealing the facts had almost convinced them that he was right. But when he mentioned "arks," the strain was relieved, and a smile broke out on the broad face of the President. He shook his head, and was about to speak, when Cosmo, perceiving that he had lost ground, changed his tactics.

"Still you are incredulous!" he exclaimed. "But the proof is before you! Look at the blazing heavens! The annals of meteorology do not record another such summer as this. The vanguard of the fatal nebula is already upon us. The signs of disaster are in the sky. But, note what I say—this is only the *first* sign. There is another following on its heels which may be here at any moment. To heat will succeed cold, and as we rush through the tenuous outer spirals the earth will alternately be whipped with tempests of snow and sleet, and scorched by fierce outbursts of solar fire. For three weeks the sun has been feeding its furnaces with invisible vapor—but look out, I warn you, for the change that is impending!"

These extraordinary words, pronounced with the wild air of a prophet, completed the growing conviction of the listeners that they really had a madman to deal with, and Professor Pludder, having recovered his self-command, rose to his feet.

"Mr. President," he began, "the evidence which we have just seen of an unbalanced mind—"

He got no further. A pall of darkness suddenly dropped upon the room. An inky curtain seemed to have fallen from the sky. At the same time the windows were shaken by tremendous blasts of wind, and, as the electric lights were hastily turned on, huge snowflakes, intermingled with rattling hailstones, were seen careening outside. In a few seconds several large panes of glass were broken, and the chilling wind, sweeping round the apartment, made the teeth of the thinly clad statesmen chatter, while the noise of the storm became deafening. The sky lighted, but at the same moment dreadful thunder-peals shook the building. Two or three trees in the White House grounds were struck by the bolts, and their broken branches were driven through the air and carried high above the ground by the whirling winds, and one of them was thrown against the building with such force that for a moment it seemed as if the wall had been shattered.

After the first stunning effect of this outbreak of the elements had passed, everybody rushed to the windows to look out—everybody except Cosmo Versál, who remained standing in the center of the room.

"I told you!" he said; but nobody listened to him. What they saw outside absorbed every faculty. The noise was so stunning that they could not have heard him.

We have said that the air lightened after the passage of the first pall of darkness, but it was not the reappearance of the sun that caused the brightening. It



was an awful light, which seemed to be born out of the air itself. It had a menacing, coppery hue, continually changing in character. The whole upper atmosphere was choked with dense clouds, which swirled and tumbled, and twisted themselves into great vortical rolls, spinning like gigantic mill-shafts. Once, one of these vortexes shot downward, with projectile speed, rapidly assuming the terrible form of the trombe of a tornado, and where it struck the ground it tore everything to pieces—trees, houses, the very earth itself, were ground to powder and then whirled aloft by the resistless suction.

**O**CCASIONALLY the darkness returned for a few minutes, as if a cover had been clapped upon the sky, and then, again, the murk would roll off, and the reddish gleam would reappear. These swift alternations of impenetrable gloom and unearthly light shook the hearts of the dumfounded statesmen even more than the roar and rush of the storm.

A cry of horror broke from the onlookers when a man and a woman suddenly appeared trying to cross the White House grounds to reach a place of comparative safety, and were caught up by the wind clinging desperately to each other, and hurled against a wall, at whose base they fell in a heap.

Then came another outburst of lightning, and a vicious bolt descended upon the Washington Monument, and, twisting round it, seemed to envelop the great shaft in a pulsating corkscrew of blinding fire. The report that instantly followed made the White House dance upon its foundations, and, as if that had been a signal, the flood-gates of the sky immediately opened, and rain so dense that it looked like a solid cataract of water poured down upon the earth. The raging water burst into the basement of the building, and ran off in a shoreless river toward the Potomac.

The streaming rain, still driven by the wind, poured through the broken windows, driving the President and the others to the middle of the room, where they soon stood in rills of water soaking the thick carpet.

They were all as pale as death. Their eyes sought one another's faces in dumb amazement. Cosmo Versal alone retained perfect self-command. In spite of his slight stature he looked their master. Raising his voice to the highest pitch, in order to be heard, he shouted:

"These are the first drops of the Deluge! Will you believe now?"

## CHAPTER IV

### The World Swept with Terror

**T**HE tempest of hail, snow, lightning, and rain, which burst so unexpectedly over Washington, was not a local phenomenon. It leveled the antennæ of the radio systems all over the world, cutting off communication everywhere. Only the submarine cables remained unaffected, and by them was transmitted the most astonishing news of the ravages of the storm. Rivers had careered over their banks, low-lying towns were flooded, the swollen sewers of cities exploded and inundated the streets, and gradually news came in from country districts showing that vast areas of land had been submerged, and hundreds drowned.

The downfall of rain far exceeded everything that the meteorological bureaus had ever recorded.

The vagaries of the lightning, and the frightful power that it exhibited, were especially terrifying.

In London the Victoria Tower was partly dismantled by a bolt.

In Moscow the ancient and beautiful Church of St.

Basil was nearly destroyed. The celebrated Leaning Tower of Pisa, the wonder of centuries, was flung to the ground.

The vast dome of St. Peter's at Rome was said to have been encased during three whole minutes with a blinding armor of electric fire, though the only harm done was the throwing down of a statue in one of the chapels.

But, strangest freak of all, in New York a tremendous bolt, which seems to have entered the Pennsylvania tunnel on the Jersey side, followed the rails under the river, throwing two trains from the tracks, and emerging in the great station in the heart of the city, expanded into a rose-colored sphere, which exploded with an awful report, and blew the great roof to pieces. And yet, although the fragments were scattered a dozen blocks away, hundreds of persons who were in the stations suffered no other injury than such as resulted from being flung violently to the floor, or against the walls.

Cosmo Versal's great ark seemed charmed. Not a single discharge of lightning occurred in its vicinity, a fact which he attributed to the dielectric properties of levium. Nevertheless, the wind carried away all his screens and electric fans.

If this storm had continued the predicted deluge would unquestionably have occurred at once, and even its prophet would have perished through having begun his preparations too late. But the disturbed elements sank into repose as suddenly as they had broken out with fury. The rain did not last, in most places more than twenty-four hours, although the atmosphere continued to be filled with troubled clouds for a week. At the end of that time the sun reappeared, as hot as before, and a spotless dome once more over-arched the earth; but from this time the sky never resumed its former brilliant azure—there was always a strange coppery tinge, the sight of which was appalling, although it gradually lost its first effect through familiarity.

The indifference and derision with which Cosmo's predictions and elaborate preparations had hitherto been regarded now vanished, and the world, in spite of itself, shivered with vague apprehension. No reassurances from those savants who still refused to admit any validity in Cosmo Versal's calculations and deductions had any permanent effect upon the public mind.

With amusing inconsequence people sold stocks again, until all the exchanges were once more swept with panic—and then put the money in their strong boxes, as if they thought that the mere possession of the lucre could protect them. They hugged the money and remained deaf to Cosmo's reiterated advice to build arks with it.

After all, they were only terrified, not convinced, and they felt that, somehow, everything would come out right, now that they had their possessions well in hand.

For, in spite of the scare, nobody really believed that an actual deluge was coming. There might be great floods, and great suffering and loss, but the world was not going to be drowned! Such things only occurred in early and dark ages.

Some nervous persons found comfort in the fact that when the skies cleared after the sudden downpour brilliant rainbows were seen. Their hearts bounded with joy.

"The 'Bow of Promise'!" they cried, "Behold the unvarying assurance that the world shall never again be drowned."

Then a great revival movement was set on foot, starting in the Mississippi valley under the leadership of an eloquent exhorter.



Cosmo Versál made a definite announcement. "I have established all my facts by *mathematical proofs*. The most expert mathematicians of the world have been unable to detect any error in my calculations. They try to dispute the data, but the data are already before you for your own judgment. The heavens are so obscured that only the brightest stars can now be seen." (This was a fact which had caused bewilderment in the observatories.) "The recent outburst of storms and floods was the second sign of the approaching end, and the third sign will not be long delayed—and after that the deluge!"

It is futile to try to describe the haunting fear and horror which seized upon the majority of the millions who read these words. Business was paralyzed, for men found it impossible to concentrate their minds upon ordinary affairs. Every night the twin comets, still very bright, although they were fast retreating, brandished their fiery scimitars in the sky—more fearful to the imagination now, since Cosmo Versál had declared that it was the nebula that stimulated their energies. And by day the sky was watched with anxious eyes striving to detect signs of a deepening of the menacing hue, which, to an excited fancy, suggested a tinge of blood.

Now, at last, Cosmo's warnings and entreaties bore practical fruit. Men began to inquire about places in his ark, and to make preparations for building arks of their own.

He had not been interfered with after his memorable interview with the President of the United States, and had pushed his work at Mineola with redoubled energy, employing night gangs of workmen so that progress was continuous throughout the twenty-four hours.

Standing on its platform, the ark, whose hull was approaching completion, rose a hundred feet into the air. It was 800 feet long and 250 broad—proportions which practical ship-builders ridiculed, but Cosmo, as original in this as in everything else, declared that, taking into account the buoyancy of levium, no other form would answer as well. He estimated that when its great engines were in place, its immense stores of material for producing power, its ballast, and its supplies of food stowed away, and its cargo of men and animals taken aboard, it would not draw more than twenty feet of water.

Hardly a day passed now without somebody coming to Cosmo to inquire about the best method of constructing arks. He gave the required information, in all possible detail, with the utmost willingness. He drew plans and sketches, made all kinds of practical suggestions, and never failed to urge the utmost haste. He inspired every visitor at the same time with alarm and a resolution to go to work at once.

Some did go to work. But their progress was slow, and as days passed, and the comets gradually faded out of sight, and then the dome of the sky showed a tenency to resume its natural blueness, the enthusiasm of Cosmo's imitators weakened, together with their confidence in his prophetic powers.

They concluded to postpone their operations until the need of arks should become more evident.

As to those who had sent inquiries about places in Cosmo's ark, now that the danger seemed to be blowing away, they did not even take the trouble to acknowledge the very kind responses that he had made.

It is a singular circumstance that not one of these anxious inquiries seemed to have paid particular attention to a very significant sentence in his reply. If they had given it a little thought, it would probably

have set them pondering, although they might have been more puzzled than edified. The sentence ran as follows:

"While assuring you that my ark has been built for the benefit of my fellow men, I am bound to tell you that I reserve absolutely the right to determine who are truly representative of *homo sapiens*."

The fact was that Cosmo had been turning over in his mind the great fundamental question which he had asked himself when the idea of trying to save the human race from annihilation had first occurred to him, and apparently he had fixed upon certain principles that were to guide him.

Since, when the mind is under great strain through fear, the slightest relaxation, caused by an apparently favorable change, produces a rebound of hope, as unreasoning as the preceding terror, so on this occasion, the vanishing of the comets, and the fading of the disquieting color of the sky, had a wonderful effect in restoring public confidence in the orderly procession of nature.

Cosmo Versál's vogue as a prophet of disaster was soon gone, and once more everybody began to laugh at him. People turned again to their neglected affairs with the general remark that they "guessed the world would manage to wade through."

Those who had begun preparations to build arks looked very sheepish when their friends geyed them about their childish credulity.

Then a feeling of angry resentment arose, and one day Cosmo Versál was mobbed in the street, and the gamins threw stones at him.

People forgot the extraordinary storm of lightning and rain, the split comet, and all the other circumstances which, a little time before, had filled them with terror.

But they were making a fearful mistake!

With eyes blindfolded, they were walking straight into the jaws of destruction.

Without warning, and as suddenly almost as an explosion, the *third sign* appeared, and on its heels came a veritable Reign of Terror!

## CHAPTER V

### The Third Sign

IN the middle of the night, at New York, hundreds of thousands simultaneously awoke with a feeling of suffocation.

They struggled for breath as if they had suddenly been plunged into a steam bath.

The air was hot, heavy, and terribly oppressive.

The throwing open of windows brought no relief. The outer air was as stifling as that within.

It was so dark that, on looking out, one could not see his own doorsteps. The arc lamps in the street flickered with an ineffective blue gleam which shed no illumination round about.

House lights, when turned on, looked like tiny candles enclosed in thick blue globes.

Frightened men and women stumbled around in the gloom of their chambers trying to dress themselves.

Cries and exclamations rang from room to room; children wailed; hysterical mothers ran wildly hither and thither, seeking their little ones. Many fainted, partly through terror and partly from the difficulty of breathing. Sick persons, seized with a terrible oppression of the chest, gasped, and never rose from their beds.

At every window, and in every doorway, through-



out the vast city, invisible heads and forms were crowded, making their presence known by their voices—distracted householders striving to peer through the strange darkness, and to find out the cause of these terrifying phenomena.

Some managed to get a faint glimpse of their watches by holding them close against lamps, and thus noted the time. It was two o'clock in the morning.

Neighbors, unseen, called to one another, but got little comfort from the replies.

"What is it? In God's name, what has happened?"

"I don't know. I can hardly breathe."

"It is awful! We shall all be suffocated."

"Is it a fire?"

"No! No! It cannot be a fire."

"The air is full of steam. The stones and the window-panes are streaming with moisture."

"Great Heavens, how stifling it is!"

Then, into thousands of minds at once leaped the thought of *the flood!*

The memory of Cosmo Versál's reiterated warnings came back with overwhelming force. It must be the *third sign* that he had foretold. *It had come!*

Those fateful words—"the flood" and "Cosmo Versál"—ran from lip to lip, and the hearts of those who spoke, and those who heard, sank like lead in their bosoms.

He would be a bold man, more confident in his powers of description than the present writer, who should attempt to picture the scenes in New York on that fearful night.

The gasping and terror-stricken millions waited and longed for the hour of sunrise, hoping that then the Stygian darkness would be dissipated, so that people might, at least, see where to go and what to do. Many, oppressed by the almost unbreathable air, gave up in despair, and no longer even hoped for morning to come.

In the midst of it all a collision occurred directly over Central Park between two air-expresses, one coming from Boston and the other from Albany. (The use of small airplanes within the city limits had, for sometime, been prohibited on account of the constant danger of collisions, but the long-distance lines were permitted to enter the metropolitan district, making their landings and departures on specially constructed towers.) These two, crowded with passengers, had, as it afterward appeared, completely lost their bearings—the strongest electric lights being invisible a few hundred feet away, while the wireless signals were confusing—and, before the danger was apprehended, they crashed together.

The collision occurred at a height of a thousand feet, on the Fifth Avenue side of the park. Both of the air-ships had their air foils smashed and their decks crumpled up, and the unfortunate crews and passengers were hurled through the impenetrable darkness to the ground.

Only four or five, who were lucky enough to be entangled with the lighter parts of the wreckage, escaped with their lives. But they were too much injured to get upon their feet, and there they lay, their sufferings made tenfold worse by the stifling air, and the horror of their inexplicable situation, until they were found and humanely relieved, more than ten hours after their fall.

The noise of the collision had been heard in Fifth Avenue, and its meaning was understood, but amid the universal terror no one thought of trying to aid the victims. Everybody was absorbed in wondering what would become of himself.

When the long awaited hour of sunrise approached, the watchers were appalled by the absence of even the

slightest indication of the reappearance of the orb of day. There was no lightening of the dense cloak of darkness, and the great city seemed dead.

For the first time in its history it failed to awake after its regular period of repose, and to send forth its myriad voices. It could not be seen; it could not be heard! it made no sign. As far as any outward indication of its existence was concerned the mighty capital had ceased to be.

It was this frightful silence of the street, and of all the outer world, that terrified the people, cooped up in their houses and in their rooms, by the walls of darkness, more than almost any other circumstance. It gave such an overwhelming sense of the universality of the disaster, whatever that disaster might be. Except where the voices of neighbors could be heard, one could not be sure that the whole population, outside his own family, had not perished.

As the hours passed, and yet no light appeared, another intimidating circumstance manifested itself. From the start everybody had noticed the excessive humidity of the dense air. Every solid object that the hands came in contact with in the darkness was wet, as if a thick fog had condensed upon it. This supersaturation of the air (a principal cause of the difficulty experienced in breathing) led to a result which would quickly have been foreseen if people could have had the use of their eyes, but which, coming on invisibly, produced a panic fear when at last its presence was strikingly forced upon the attention.

The moisture collected on all exposed surfaces—on the roofs, the walls, the pavements—until its quantity became sufficient to form little rills, which sought the gutters, and there gathered force and volume. Presently the streams became large enough to create a noise of flowing water that attracted the attention of the anxious watchers at the open windows. Then cries of dismay arose. If the water had been visible it would not have been terrible.

But, to the overstrained imagination, the bubbling and splashing sound that came out of the darkness was magnified into the rush of a torrent. It seemed to grow louder every moment. What was but a murmur on the ear-drum became a roar in the excited brain-cells.

Once more were heard the ominous word, "The flood!"

Panic spread from room to room, and from house to house. The wild scenes that had attended the first awakening were tame in comparison with what now occurred. Self-control, reason—everything—gave way to panic.

If they could have *seen* what they were about!

But *then* they would not have been about it. Then their reason would not have been dethroned.

Darkness is the microscope of the imagination, and it magnifies a million times!

Some timorously descended their doorsteps, and feeling a current of water in the gutter, recoiled with cries of horror, as if they had slipped down the bank of a flooded river. As they retreated they believed that the water was rising at their heels.

Others made their way to the roofs, persuaded that the flood was already inundating the basements and the lower stories of their dwellings.

Women wrung their hands and wept, and children cried, and men pushed and stumbled about, and shouted, and would have done something if only they could have seen what to do. That was the pity of it! It was as if the world had been stricken blind, and then the trump of an archangel had sounded, crying:

"Fly! Fly! for the Avenger is on your heels!"

How could they fly?



This awful strain could not have lasted. It would have needed no deluge to finish New York if that maddening pall of darkness had remained unbroken a few hours longer. But, just when thousands had given up in despair, there came a rapid change.

At the hour of noon light suddenly broke overhead. Beginning in a round patch enclosed in an iridescent halo, it spread swiftly, seeming to melt its way down through the thick, dark mass that choked the air, and in less than fifteen minutes New York and all its surroundings emerged into the golden light of noonday.

People who had expected at any moment to feel the water pitilessly rising about them looked out of their windows, and were astonished to see only tiny revulets which were already shriveling out of sight in the gutters. In a few minutes there was no running water left, although the dampness on the walls and walks showed how great the humidity of the air had been.

At the same time the oppression was lifted from the respiratory apparatus, and everybody breathed freely once more, and felt courage returning with each respiration.

The whole great city seemed to utter a vast sigh of relief.

And then its voice was heard, as it had never been heard before, rising higher and louder every moment. It was the first time that morning had ever broken at midday.

The streets became filled, with magical quickness, by hundreds of thousands, who chattered, and shouted, and laughed, and shook hands, and asked questions, and told their experiences, and demanded if anybody had ever heard of such a thing before, and wondered what it could have been, and what it meant, and whether it would come back again.

Telephones of all kinds were kept constantly busy. Women called up their friends, and talked hysterically; men called up their associates and partners, and tried to talk business.

There was a rush for the Elevated, for the Subways, for the street auto-cars. The great arteries of traffic became jammed, and the noise rose louder and louder.

Belated aero-expresses arrived at the towers from East and West, and their passengers hurried down to join the excited multitudes below.

In an incredibly brief time the newsboys were out with extras. Then everybody read with the utmost avidity what everybody knew already.

But before many hours passed there was real news, come by radio, and by submarine telephone and telegraph, telling how the whole world had been swept by the marvelous cloak of darkness.

In Europe it had arrived during the morning hours; in Asia during the afternoon.

The phenomenon had varied in different places. In some the darkness had not been complete, but everywhere it was accompanied by extraordinary humidity, and occasionally by brief but torrential rains. The terror had been universal, and all believed that it was the Third Sign predicted by Cosmo Versál.

Of course, the latter was interviewed, and he gave out a characteristic manifesto.

"One of the outlying spirals of the nebula has struck the earth," he said. But do not be deceived. It is *nothing* in comparison with what is coming. And it is the *LAST WARNING that will be given!* You have obstinately shut your eyes to the truth, and you have thrown away your lives!"

This together with the recent awful experience, produced a great effect. Those who had begun to lay foundations for arks thought of resuming the work. Those who had before sought places with Cosmo called

him up by telephone. But only the voice of Joseph Smith answered, and his words were not reassuring.

"Mr. Versál," he said, "directs me to say that at present he will allot no places. He is considering whom he will take."

The recipients of this reply looked very blank. But at last one of them, a well-known broker in Wall Street, was more angered than frightened:

"Let him go to the deuce!" he growled; "him and his flood together!"

Then he resolutely set out to bull the market.

It seems incredible—but such is human nature—that a few days of bright sunshine should once more have driven off the clouds of fear that had settled so densely over the popular mind. Of course, not everybody forgot the terrors of the *Third Sign*—they had struck too deep, but gradually the strain was relaxed, and people in general accepted the renewed assurances of the savants of the Pludder type that nothing that had occurred was inexplicable by the ordinary laws of nature. The great darkness, they averred, differed from previous occurrences of the kind only in degree, and it was to be ascribed to nothing more serious than atmospheric vagaries, such as that which produced the historic Dark Day in New England in 1780.

But more nervous persons noticed, with certain misgivings, that Cosmo Versál pushed on his operations, if possible, more energetically than before. And there was a stir of renewed interest when the announcement came out one day that the ark was finished. Then thousands hurried to Mineola to look upon the completed work.

The extraordinary massiveness of the ark was imposing. Towering ominously on its platform, which was so arranged that when the waters came they should lift the structure from its cradle and set it afloat without any other launching, it seemed in itself a prophecy of impending disaster.

Overhead it was roofed with an oblong dome of levium, through which rose four great metallic chimneys, placed above the mighty engines. The roof sloped down to the vertical sides, to afford protection from in-bursting waves. Rows of portholes, closed with thick glass, indicated the location of the superposed decks. On each side four gangways gave access to the interior, and long, sloping approaches offered means of entry from the ground.

Cosmo had a force of trained guards on hand, but everybody who wished was permitted to enter and inspect the ark. Curious multitudes constantly mounted and descended the long approaches, being kept moving by the guards.

Inside they wandered about astonished at what they saw.

The three lower decks were devoted to the storage of food and of fuel for the electric generators, all of which Cosmo Versál had been accumulating for months.

Above these three were decks, which the visitors were informed would be occupied by animals, and by boxes of seeds, and prepared roots of plants, with which it was intended to restore the vegetable life of the planet after the water should have sufficiently receded.

The five remaining decks were for human beings. There were roomy quarters for the commander and his officers, others for the crew, several large saloons, and five hundred sets of apartments of various sizes to be occupied by the passengers whom Cosmo should choose to accompany him. They had all the convenience of the most luxurious staterooms of the transoceanic liners. Many joking remarks were exchanged by the visitors as they inspected these rooms.



Cosmo ran about among his guests, explaining everything, showing great pride in his work, pointing out a thousand particulars in which his foresight had been displayed—but, to everybody's astonishment, he uttered no more warnings, and made no appeals. On the contrary, as some observant persons noticed, he seemed to avoid any reference to the fate of those who should not be included in his ship's company.

Some sensitive souls were disturbed by detecting in his eyes a look that seemed to express deep pity and regret. Occasionally he would draw apart, and gaze at the passing crowds with a compassionate expression, and then, slowly turning his back, while his fingers worked nervously, would disappear, with down-cast head, into his private room.

The comparatively few who particularly noticed this conduct of Cosmo's were deeply moved—more than they had been by all the enigmatic events of the past months. One man, Amos Blank, a rich manufacturer, who was notorious for the merciless methods that he had pursued in eliminating his weaker competitors, was so much disturbed by Cosmo Versál's change of manner that he sought an opportunity to speak to him privately. Cosmo received him with a reluctance that he could not but notice, and which, somehow, increased his anxiety.

—"I—thought," said the billionaire hesitatingly, "that I ought—that is to say, that I might, perhaps, inquire—might inform myself—under what conditions one could, supposing the necessity to arise, obtain a passage in your—in your ark. Of course the question of cost does not enter in the matter—not with me."

Cosmo gazed at the man coldly, and all the compassion that had recently softened his steely eyes disappeared. For a moment he did not speak. Then he said, measuring his words and speaking with an emphasis that chilled the heart of his listener.

"Mr. Blank, the necessity has arisen."

"So you say—so you say—" began Mr. Blank.

"So I say," interrupted Cosmo sternly, "and I say further that this ark has been constructed to save those who are worthy of salvation, in order that all that is good and admirable in humanity may not perish from the earth."

"Exactly, exactly," responded the other smiling, and rubbing his hands. "You are quite right to make a proper choice. If your flood is going to cause a general destruction of mankind of course you are bound to select the best, the most advanced, those who have pushed to the front, those who have means, those with the strongest resources. The masses, who possess none of these qualifications and claim——"

Again Cosmo Versál interrupted him, more coldly than before:

"It costs *nothing* to be a passenger in this ark. Ten million dollars, a hundred millions, would not purchase a place in it! Did you ever hear the parable of the camel and the needle's eye? The price of a ticket here is an *irreproachable record!*"

With these astonishing words Cosmo turned his back upon his visitor and shut the door in his face.

The billionaire staggered back, rubbed his head, and then went off muttering:

"An idiot! A plain idiot! There will be no flood!"

## CHAPTER VI

### Selecting the Flower of Mankind

AFTER a day or two, during which the ark was left open for inspection, and was visited by many thousands, Cosmo Versál announced that no more visitors would be admitted. He placed sentinels at all

entrances, and began the construction of a shallow ditch, entirely enclosing the ground. Public curiosity was intensely excited by this singular proceeding, especially when it became known that the workmen were stringing copper wires the whole length of the ditch.

"What the deuce is he up to now?" was the question on everybody's lips.

But Cosmo and his employees gave evasive replies to all inquiries. A great change had come about in Cosmo's treatment of the public. No one was any longer encouraged to watch the operations.

When the wires were all placed and the ditch was finished, it was covered up so that it made a broad flat-topped dyke encircling the field.

Speculation was rife for several days concerning the purpose of the mysterious ditch and its wires, but no universally satisfactory explanation was found.

One enterprising reporter worked out an elaborate scheme, which he ascribed to Cosmo Versál, according to which the wired ditch was to serve as a cumulator of electricity, which would, at the proper moment, launch the ark upon the waters, thus avoiding all danger of a fatal detention in case the flood should rise too rapidly.

This seemed so absurd on its face that it went far to quiet apprehension by reawakening doubts of Cosmo's sanity—the more especially since he made no attempt to contradict the assertion that the scheme was his.

Nobody guessed what his real intention was; if people had guessed, it might have been bad for their peace of mind.

The next move of Cosmo Versál was taken without any knowledge or suspicion on the part of the public. He had now established himself in his apartment in the ark, and was never seen in the city.

One evening, when all was quiet about the ark, night work being now unnecessary, Cosmo and Joseph Smith sat facing one another at a square table lighted by a shaded lamp. Smith had a pile of writing paper before him, and was evidently prepared to take notes.

Cosmo's great brow was contracted with thought, and he leaned his cheek upon his hand. It was clear that his meditations were troublesome. For at least ten minutes he did not open his lips, and Smith watched him anxiously. At last he said, speaking slowly:

"Joseph, this is the most trying problem that I have had to solve. The success of all my work depends upon my not making a mistake now.

"The burden of responsibility that rests on my shoulders is such as no mortal has ever borne. It is too great for human capacity—and yet how can I cast it off?

"I am to decide *who shall be saved!* I, I alone, I Cosmo Versál, hold in my hands the fate of a race numbering two thousand million souls!—the fate of a planet which, without my intervention, would become simply a vast tomb. It is for me to say whether the *genus homo* shall be perpetuated, and in *what form* it shall be perpetuated. Joseph, this is terrible! These are the functions of deity, not of man."

Joseph Smith seemed no longer to breathe, so intense was his attention. His eyes glowed under the dark brows, and his pencil trembled in his fingers. After a slight pause Cosmo Versál went on:

"If I felt any doubt that Providence has foreordained me to do this work, and given me extraordinary faculties, and extraordinary knowledge, to enable me to perform it, I would this instant blow out my brains.

Again he was silent, the secretary, after fidgeting about, bending and unbending his brows, and tapping nervously upon the table, at last said, solemnly:



"Cosmo, you *are* ordained; you must *do the work*."

"I must," returned Cosmo Versál, "I know that; and yet the sense of my responsibility sometimes covers me with a cloud of despair. The other day, when the ark was crowded with curiosity seekers, the thought that not one of all those tens of thousands could escape, and that hundreds of millions of others must also be lost, overwhelmed me. Then I began to reproach myself for not having been a more effective agent in warning my fellows of their peril. Joseph, I have miserably failed. I ought to have produced universal conviction, and I have not done it."

"It is not your fault, Cosmo," said Joseph Smith, reaching out his long arm to touch his leader's hand. "It is an unbelieving generation. They have rejected even the signs in the heavens. The voice of an archangel would not have convinced them."

"It is true," replied Cosmo. "And the truth is the more bitter to me because I spoke in the name of science, and the very men who represent science have been my most determined opponents, blinding the people's eyes—after wilfully shutting their own."

"You say you have been weak," interposed Smith, "which you have not been; but you would be weak if you now shrank from your plain duty."

"True!" cried Cosmo, in a changed voice. "Let us then proceed. I had a lesson the other day. Amos Blank came to me, puffed with his pillaged millions. I saw then what I had to do. I told him plainly that he was not among the chosen. Hand me that book."

The secretary pushed a large volume within Cosmo's reach. He opened it. It was a "Year-Book of Science, Politics, Sociology, History, and Government."

Cosmo ran over its pages, stopping to read a few lines here and there, seeming to make mental notes. After a while he pushed the book aside, looked at his companion thoughtfully, and began:

"The trouble with the world is that morally and physically it has for thousands of years grown more and more corrupt. The flower of civilization, about which people boast so much, nods over the stagnant waters of a moral swamp and draws its perilous beauty from the poisons of the miasma."

"The nebula, in drowning the earth, brings opportunity for a new birth of mankind. You will remember, Joseph, that the same conditions are said to have prevailed in the time of Noah. There was no science then, and we do not know exactly on what principles the choice was made of those who should escape; but the simple history of Noah shows that he and his friends represented the best manhood of that age."

"But the seeds of corruption were not eliminated, and the same problem recurs today."

"I have to determine whom I will save. I attack the question by inquiring who represent the best elements of humanity? Let us first consider men by classes."

"And why not by races?" asked Smith.

"I shall not look to see whether a man is black, white or yellow; whether his skull is brachycephalic or dolichocephalic," replied Cosmo. "I shall look inside. No race has ever shown itself permanently the best."

"Then by classes you mean occupations?"

"Well, yes, for the occupation shows the tendency, the quintessence of character. Some men are born rulers and leaders; others are born followers. Both are necessary, and I must have both kinds."

"You will begin perhaps with the kings, the presidents?"

"Not at all. I shall begin with men of science. They are the true leaders."

"But they have betrayed you—they have shut their

eyes and blindfolded others," objected Joseph Smith.

"You do not understand me," said Cosmo, with a commiserating smile. "If my scientific brethren have not seen as clearly as I have, the fault lies not in science but in lack of comprehension. Nevertheless, they are on the right track; they have the gist of the matter in them; they are trained in the right method. If I should leave them out, the regenerated world would start a thousand years behind time. Besides, many of them are not so blind; some of them have got a glimpse of the truth."

"Not such men as Pludder," said Smith.

"All the same, I am going to save Pludder," said Cosmo Versál.

Joseph Smith fairly jumped with astonishment.

"You—are—going—to—save—Pludder," he faltered. "But he is the worst of all."

"Not from my present view-point. Pludder has a good brain; he can handle the tools; he is intellectually honest; he has done great things for science in the past. And, besides, I do not conceal from you the fact that I should like to see him convicted out of his own mouth."

"But," persisted Smith, "I have heard you say that he was——"

"No matter what you have heard me say," interrupted Cosmo impatiently. "I say now that he shall go with us. Put down his name at the head of the list."

Dumfounded and muttering under his breath, Smith obeyed.

"I can take exactly one thousand individuals, exclusive of the crew," continued Versál, paying no attention to his confidant's repeated shaking of his head. "Good Heavens, think of that! One thousand out of two thousand millions! But so be it. Nobody would listen to me, and now it is too late. I must fix the number for each class."

"There is one thing—one curious question—that occurs to me," put in Smith hesitatingly. "What about families?"

"There you've hit it!" cried Cosmo. "That's exactly what bothers me. There must be as many women as men—that goes without saying. Then, too, the strongest moral element is in the women, although they don't weigh heavily for science. But the aged people and the children—there's the difficulty. If I invite a man who possesses unquestionable qualifications, but has a large family, what am I to do? I can't crowd out others as desirable as he for the sake of carrying all of his stirps. The principle of eugenics demand a wide field of selection."

Cosmo Versál covered his eyes, rested his big head on his hands, and his elbows on the table. Presently he looked up with an air of decision.

"I see what I must do," he said. "I can take only four persons belonging to any one family. Two of them may be children—a man, his wife, and two children—no more."

"But that will be very hard lines for them——" began Joseph Smith.

"Hard lines!" Cosmo broke in. "Do you think it is easy lines for *me*? Good Heavens, man! I am *forced* to this decision. It rends my heart to think of it, but I can't avoid the responsibility."

Smith dropped his eyes, and Cosmo resumed his reflections. In a little while he spoke again.

"Another thing that I must fix is an age limit. But that will have to be subject to certain exceptions. Very aged persons in general will not do—they could not survive the long voyage, and only in the rare instances where their experience of life might be valuable would they serve any good purpose in re-establishing the race."



Children are indispensable—but they must not be too young—infants in arms would not do at all. Oh, this is sorry work! But I must harden my heart.”

Joseph Smith looked at his chief, and felt a twinge of sympathy, tempered by admiration, for he saw clearly the terrible contest in his friend’s mind and appreciated the heroic nature of the decision to which the inexorable logic of facts had driven it.

Cosmo Versál was again silent for a long time. Finally he appeared to throw off the incubus, and, with a return of his ordinary decisiveness, exclaimed: “Enough. I have settled the general principle. Now to the choice.”

Then, closing his eyes, as if to assist his memory, he ran over a list of names well known in the world of science, and Smith set them down in a long row under the name of “Abiel Pludder,” with which he had begun.

At last Cosmo Versál ceased his dictation. “There,” he said, “that is the end of that category. I may add to or subtract from it later. According to probability, making allowance for bachelors, each name will represent three persons; there are seventy-five names, which means two hundred and twenty-five places reserved for science. I will now make a series of other categories and assign the number of places for each.” He seized a sheet of paper and fell to work, while Smith looked on, drumming with his fingers and contorting his huge black eyebrows. For half an hour complete silence reigned, broken only by the scratching of Cosmo Versál’s pencil. At the end of that time he threw down the pencil and held out the paper to his companion. “Of course,” he said, “this is not a complete list of human occupations. I have set down the principal ones as they occurred to me. There will be time to correct any oversight. Read it.”

Smith, by force of habit, read it aloud:

Occupation	No. of Names.	Probable No. of Places.
Science (already assigned) .....	75	225
Rulers .....	15	45
Statesmen .....	10	30
Business magnates .....	10	30
Philanthropists .....	5	15
Artists .....	15	45
Religious teachers .....	20	60
School-teachers .....	20	60
Doctors .....	30	90
Lawyers .....	1	3
Writers .....	6	18
Editors .....	2	6
Players .....	14	42
Philosophers .....	1	3
Musicians .....	12	36
Special reservations.....		13
“Society” .....	0	0
Agriculture and mechanics.....	90	270
Totals .....	329	987
Special reservations .....		13
Grand total, places .....		1,000

Several times while Joseph Smith was reading he raised his eyebrows, as if in surprise or mental protest, but made no remark. “Now,” resumed Cosmo when the secretary had finished, “let us begin with the rulers. I do not know them as intimately as I know the men of science, but I am sure I have given them places enough. Suppose you take this book and call them over to me.” Smith opened the “year-book” and began:

“George Washington Samson, President of the United States.”

“He goes. He is not intellectually brilliant, but he has strong sense and good moral fiber. I’ll save him if for no other reason than his veto of the Antarctic Continent grab bill.”

“Shen Su, Son of Heaven, Emperor of China.” “Put him down. I like him. He is a true Confucian.”

Joseph Smith read off several other names at which Cosmo shook his head. Then he came to:

“Richard Edward, by the grace of God, King of Great——”

“Enough,” broke in Cosmo; “we all know him—the man who has done more for peace by putting half the British navy out of commission than any other ruler in history. I can’t leave him out.”

“Achille Dumont, President of the French republic. “Will you take him?”

“Admitted, for he has at last done his part to get the war microbe out of the human system.”

Then followed a number of rulers who were not lucky enough to meet with Cosmo Versál’s approval.

The selection was continued until fifteen names had been obtained, including that of the new, dark-skinned president of Liberia, and Cosmo declared that he would not add another one.

Then came ten statesmen who were chosen with utter disregard to racial and national lines.

In selecting his ten business magnates, Cosmo stated his rule:

“I exclude no man simply because he is a billionaire. I consider the way he made his money. The world must always have rich men. How could I have built the ark if I had been poor?”

“Philanthropists,” read Smith.

“I should have taken a hundred if I could have found them,” said Cosmo. “There are plenty of candidates, but these five—naming them—are the only genuine ones, and I am doubtful about several of them. But I must run some chances, philanthropy being indispensable.”

For the fifteen representatives of art Cosmo confined his selection largely to architecture.

“The building instinct must be preserved,” he explained. “One of the first things we shall need after the flood recedes is a variety of all kinds of structures. But it’s a pretty bad lot at the best. I shall try to reform their ideas during the voyage. As to the other artists, they, too, will need some hints that I can give them, and that they can transmit to their children.”

UNDER the head of religious teachers, Cosmo remarked that he had tried to be fair to all forms of genuine faith that had a large following. The school teachers represented the principal languages, and Cosmo selected the names from a volume on “The Educational Systems of the World,” remarking that he ran some risk here, but it could not be avoided.

“Doctors—they get a rather liberal allowance, don’t they?” asked Smith.

“Not half as large as I’d like to have it,” was the response. “The doctors are the salt of the earth. It breaks my heart to have to leave out so many whose worth I know.”

“And only one lawyer!” pursued Joseph. “That’s curious.”

“Not in the least curious. Do you think I want to scatter broadcast the seeds of litigation in a regenerated world? Put down the name of Chief Justice Good of the United States Supreme Court. He’ll see that equity prevails.”

“And only six writers?” continued Smith.



"And that's probably too many," said Cosmo. "Set down under that head Peter Inkson, whom I will engage to record the last scenes of the drowning earth; James Henry Blackwitt, who will tell the story of the voyage; Jules Bourgeois, who can describe the personnel of the passengers; Sergius Narishkoff, who will make a study of their psychology; and Nicolao Ludolfo, whose description of the ark will be an invaluable historic document a thousand years hence."

"But you have included no poets," remarked Smith. "Not necessary," responded Cosmo. "Every human being is a poet at bottom."

"And no novelists," persisted the secretary.

"They will spring up thicker than weeds before the waters are half gone—at least, they would if I let one aboard the ark."

"Editors—two?"

"That's right. And two too many perhaps. I'll take Jinks of the *Thunderer*, and Bullock of the *Owl*."

"But both of them have persistently called you an idiot."

"For that reason I want them. No world could get along without some real idiots."

"I am rather surprised at the next entry, if you will permit me to speak of it," said Joseph Smith. "Here are forty-two places reserved for players."

"That means twenty-eight adults, and probably some youngsters who will be able to take parts," returned Cosmo, rubbing his hands with a satisfied smile. "I have taken as many players as I conscientiously could, not only because of their future value, but because they will do more than anything else to keep up the spirits of everybody in the ark. I shall have a stage set in the largest saloon."

Joseph Smith scowled, but held his peace. Then glancing again at the paper, he remarked that there was but one philosopher to be provided for.

"It is easy to name him," said Cosmo. "Kant Jacobi Leergeschwätz."

"Why he?"

"Because he will harmlessly represent the metaphysical *genus*, for nobody will ever understand him."

"Musicians twelve?"

"Chosen for the same reason as the players," said Cosmo, rapidly writing down twelve names because they were not easy to pronounce, and handing them to Smith, who duly copied them off."

When this was done Cosmo himself called out the next category—"speculative geniuses."

"I mean by that," he continued, "not Wall Street speculators, but foreseeing men who possess the gift of comprehending the 'seeds of time,' but who never get a hearing in their own day, and are hardly ever remembered by future ages which enjoy the fruits whose buds they recognized."

Cosmo mentioned two names which Joseph Smith had never heard, and told him they ought to be written in golden ink.

"They are *sui generis*, and alone in the world. They are the most precious cargo I shall have aboard," he added.

Smith shrugged his shoulders and stared blankly at the paper, while Cosmo sank into a reverie. Finally the secretary said, smiling with evident approval this time:

"Society zero."

"Precisely for what does 'society' represent except its own vanity?"

"And then comes agriculture and mechanics."

For this category Cosmo seemed to be quite as well prepared as for that of science. He took from his

pocket a list already made out and handed it to Joseph Smith. It contained forty names marked "cultivators, farmers, gardeners," and fifty "mechanics."

"At the beginning of the twentieth century," he said, "I should have had to reverse that proportion—in fact, my entire list would then have been top-heavy, and I should have been forced to give half of all the places to agriculture. But thanks to our scientific farming, the personnel employed in cultivation is now reduced to a minimum while showing maximum results. I have already stored the ark with seeds of the latest scientifically developed plants, and with all the needed implements and machinery."

"There yet remain thirteen places 'specially reserved,'" said Smith, referring to the paper.

"I shall fill those later," responded Cosmo, and then added with a thoughtful look, "I have some humble friends."

"The next thing," he continued, after a pause, "is to prepare the letters of invitation. But we have done enough for to-night. I will give you the form to-morrow."

And all this while half the world had been peacefully sleeping, and the other half going about its business, more and more forgetful of recent events, and if it had known what those two men were about it would probably have exploded in a gust of laughter.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Waters Begin to Rise

COSMO VERSAL had begun the construction of his ark in the latter part of June. It was now the end of November. The terrors of the Third Sign had occurred in September. Since then the sky had nearly resumed its normal color, there had been no storms, but the heat of summer had not relaxed. People were puzzled by the absence of the usual indications of autumn, although vegetation had shriveled on account of the persistent high temperature and constant sunshine.

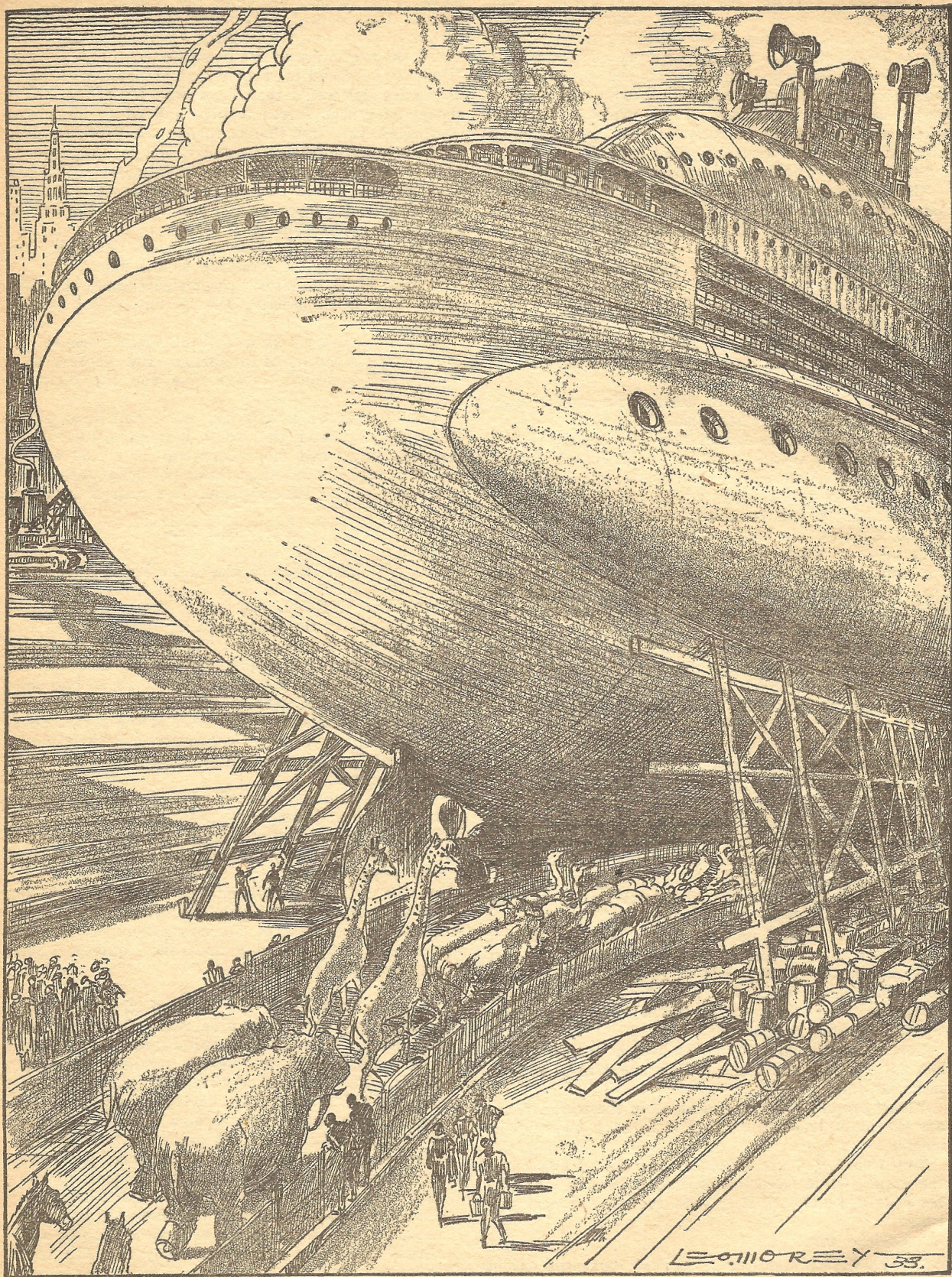
"An extraordinary year," admitted the meteorologists, "but there have been warm autumns before, and it is simply a question of degree. Nature will restore the balance and in good time, and probably we shall have a severe winter."

On the 30th of November, the brassy sky at New York showed no signs of change, when the following dispatch, which most of the newspapers triple-lead and capped with stunning head-lines, quivered down from Churchill, Keewatin:

During last night the level of the water in Hudson Bay rose fully nine feet. Consternation reigned this morning when ship-owners found their wharves inundated, and vessels straining at short cables. The ice-breaker "Victoria" was lifted on the back of a sandy bar, having apparently been driven by a heavy wave, which must have come from the East. There are other indications that the mysterious rise began with a "bore" from the eastward. It is thought that the vast mass of icebergs set afloat on Davis's Strait by the long-continued hot weather melting the shore glaciers, has caused a jam off the mouth of Hudson Straits, and turned the Polar current suddenly into the bay. But this is only a theory. A further rise is anticipated.

Startling as was this news, it might not, by itself, have greatly disturbed the public mind if it had not





*It was the procession of the beasts. Cosmo Versál had concluded that the time was come for housing his animals.*



been followed, in a few hours, by intelligence of immense floods in Alaska and in the basin of the Mackenzie River.

And the next day an etherogram from Obdorsk bordered on the grotesque, and filled many sensitive readers with horror.

It was said that in the vast tundra regions of Northern Siberia the frozen soil had dissolved into a bottomless slough, from whose depths uprose prehistoric mammoths, their long hair matted with mud, and their curved tusks of ivory gleaming like trumpets over the field of their resurrection. The dispatch concluded with a heart-rending account of the loss of a large party of ivory-hunters, who, having ventured too far from the more solid land, suddenly found the ground turning to black ooze beneath their feet, and, despite their struggles, were all engulfed within sight of their friends, who dared not try to approach them.

Cosmo Versál, when interviewed, calmly remarked that the flood was beginning in the north, because it was the northern part of the globe that was nearest the heart of the nebula. The motion of the earth being northward, that end of its axis resembled the prow of a ship.

"But this," he added, "is not the true deluge. The Arctic ice-cap is melting, and the frozen soil is turning into a sponge in consequence of the heat of friction developed in the air by the inrush of nebulous matter. The aqueous vapor, however, has not yet touched the earth. It will begin to manifest its presence within a few days, and then the globe will drink water at every pore. The vapor will finally condense into falling oceans."

"What would you advise people to do?" asked one of the reporters.

The reply was given in a perfectly even voice, without change of countenance:

"Commit suicide! They have practically done that already!"

It was nearly two weeks later when the first signs of a change of weather were manifested in middle latitudes. It came on with a rapid veiling of the sky, followed by a thin, misty, persistent rain. The heat grew more oppressive, but the rain did not become heavier, and after a few days there would be, for several consecutive hours, a clear spell, during which the sun would shine, though with a sickly, pallid light.

There was a great deal of mystification abroad, and nobody felt at ease. Still, the ebullitions of terror that had accompanied the earlier caprices of the elements were not renewed. People were getting used to these freaks.

In the middle of one of the clear spells a remarkable scene occurred at Mineola.

It was like a panorama of the seventh chapter of Genesis.

It was the procession of the beasts.

Cosmo Versál had concluded that the time was come for housing his animals in the ark. He wished to accustom them to their quarters before the voyage began. The resulting spectacle filled the juvenile world with irrepressible joy, and immensely interested their elders.

No march of a menagerie had ever come within sight of equaling this display. Many of the beasts were such as no one there had ever seen before. Cosmo had consulted experts, but, in the end, he had been guided in his choice by his own judgment. Nobody knew as well as he exactly what was wanted. He had developed in his mind a scheme for making the new

world that was to emerge from the waters better in every respect than the old one.

Mingled with such familiar creatures as sheep, cows, dogs, and barn-yard fowls, were animals of the past, which the majority of the onlookers had only read about or seen pictures of, or perhaps, in a few cases, had been told of in childhood, by grandfathers long since sleeping in their graves.

Cosmo had rapidly collected them from all parts of the world, but as they arrived in small consignments, and were carried in closed vans, very few persons had any idea of what he was doing.

The greatest sensation was produced by four beautiful horses, which had been purchased at an enormous price from an English duke, who never would have parted from them—for they were almost the last living representatives of the equine race left on the earth—if financial stress had not compelled the sacrifice.

These splendid animals were dapple gray, with long white tails, and flowing manes borne proudly on their arching necks, and as they were led at the head of the procession, snorting at the unwonted scene about them, their eyes bright with excitement, prancing and curvetting, cries of admiration and rounds of applause broke from the constantly growing throngs of spectators.

Those who had only known the horse from pictures and sculptures were filled with astonishment by its living beauty. People could not help saying to themselves:

"What a pity that the honking auto, in its hundred forms of mechanical ugliness, should have driven these beautiful and powerful creatures out of the world! What could our forefathers have been thinking of?"

A few elephants, collected from African zoological gardens, and some giraffes, also attracted a great deal of attention, but the horses were the favorites with the crowd.

Cosmo might have had lions and tigers, and similar beasts, which had been preserved in larger numbers than the useful horses, but when Joseph Smith suggested their inclusion, he shook his head, declaring that it was better that they should perish. As far as possible, he averred, he would eliminate all carnivores.

In some respects, even more interesting to the onlookers than the animals of the past, were the animals of the future that marched in the procession. Few of them had never been outside the experimental stations where they had been undergoing the process of artificial evolution.

There were the stately white Californian cattle, without horns, but of gigantic stature, the cows; it was said, being capable of producing twenty times more milk than their ancestral species, and of a vastly superior quality.

There were the Australian rabbits, as large as Newfoundland dogs, though short-legged, and furnishing food of the most exquisite flavor, and the Argentine sheep, great balls of snowy wool, moving smartly along on legs three feet in length.

The greatest astonishment was excited by the "grand Astoria terrapin," a developed species of diamond-back tortoise, whose exquisitely sculptured convex back, lurching awkwardly as it crawled, rose almost three feet above the ground; and the "new century turkey," which carried its beacon head and staring eyes as high as a tall man's hat.

The end of the procession was formed of animals familiar to everyone, and among them were cages of monkeys (concerning whose educational development Cosmo Versál had theories of his own) and a large



variety of birds, together with boxes of insect eggs and chrysalises.

The delight of the boys who had chased after the procession culminated when the animals began to ascend the sloping ways into the ark.

The horses shied and danced, making the metallic flooring resound like a rattle of thunder; the elephants trumpeted; the sheep baaed and crowded themselves into inextricable masses against the guard-rails; the huge new cattle moved lumberingly up the slope, turning their big white heads inquiringly about; the tall turkeys stretched their red coral necks and gobbled with Brobdingnagian voices; and the great terrapins were ignominiously attached to cables and drawn up the side of the ark, helplessly waving their immense flippers in the air.

And when the sensational entry was finished, the satisfied crowd turned away, laughing, joking, chattering, with never a thought that it was anything more than the most amusing exhibition they had ever seen!

But when they got back in the city streets they met a flying squadron of yelling newsboys, and seizing the papers from their hands read, in big black letters:

### "AWFUL FLOOD IN THE MISSISSIPPI!

Thousands of People Drowned!

### THE STORM COMING THIS WAY!"

It was a startling commentary on the recent scene at the ark, and many turned pale as they read.

But the storm did not come in the way expected. The deluging rains appeared to be confined to the Middle West and the Northwest, while at New York the sky simply grew thicker and seemed to squeeze out moisture in the form of watery dust. This condition lasted for some time, and then came what everybody, even the most skeptical, had been secretly dreading.

*The ocean began to rise!*

The first perception of this startling fact, according to a newspaper account, came in a very strange, round-about way to a man living on the outskirts of the vast area of made ground where the great city had spread over what was formerly the Newark meadows and New-ark Bay.

About three o'clock in the morning, this man, who it appears was a policeman off duty, was awakened by scurrying sounds in the house. He struck a light, and seeing dark forms issuing from the cellar, went down to investigate. The ominous gleam of water, reflecting the light of his lamp, told him that the cellar was inundated almost to the top of the walls.

"Come down here, Annie!" he shouted to his wife. "Sure, 'tis Coshmo Versál-al is invadin' the cellar with his flood. The rats are lavin' us."

Seeing that the slight foundation walls were crumbling, he hurried his family into the street, and not too soon, for within ten minutes the house was in ruins.

Neighbors, living in equally frail structures, were awakened, and soon other undermined houses fell. Terror spread through the quarter, and gradually half the city was aroused.

WHEN day broke, residents along the water-front in Manhattan found their cellars flooded, and South and West Streets swimming with water, which was continually rising. It was noted that the hour was that of flood tide, but nobody had ever heard of a tide so high as this.

Alarm deepened into terror when the time for the tide to ebb arrived and there was no ebbing. On the

contrary, the water continued to rise. The Government observer at the Highlands telephoned that Sandy Hook was submerged. Soon it was known that Coney Island, Rockaway, and all the seaside places along the south shore of Long Island were under water. The mighty current poured in through the Narrows with the velocity of a millrace. The Hudson, set backward on its course, rushed northward with a raging bore at its head that swelled higher until it licked the feet of the rock chimneys of the Palisades.

But when the terror inspired by this sudden invasion from the sea was at its height there came unexpected relief. The water began to fall more rapidly than it had risen. It rushed out through the Narrows faster than it had rushed in, and ships, dragged from their anchorages in the upper harbor, were carried out seaward, some being stranded on the sand-banks and shoals in the lower bay.

Now and again houses standing on made ground, whose foundations had been undermined, fell with a crash, and many were buried in the ruins.

Notwithstanding the immense damage and loss of life, the recession of the waters immediately had a reassuring effect, and the public, in general, was disposed to be comforted by the explanation of the weather officials, who declared that what had occurred was nothing more than an unprecedentedly high tide, probably resulting from some unforeseen disturbance out at sea.

The phenomenon had been noted all along the Atlantic coast. The chief forecaster ventured the assertion that a volcanic eruption had occurred somewhere on the line from Halifax to Bermuda. He thought that the probable location of the upheaval had been at Munn's Reef, about half-way between those points, and the more he discussed his theory the readier he became to stake his reputation on its correctness, for, he said, it was impossible that any combination of the effects of high and low pressures could have created such a surge of the ocean, while a volcanic wave, combining with the regular oscillation of the tide, could have done it easily.

But Cosmo Versál smiled at this explanation, and said in reply:

"The whole Arctic ice-cap is dissolved, and the condensation of the nebula is at hand. But there is worse behind. When the waves come back it will rise higher."

As the time for the next flood-tide grew near, anxious eyes were on the watch to see how high the water would go. There was something in the mere manner of its approach that made the nerves tingle.

It speeded toward the beaches, combing into rollers at an unwonted distance from shore; plunged with savage violence upon the sands of the shallows, as if it would annihilate them; and then, spreading swiftly, ran with terrific speed up the strand, seeming to devour everything it touched. After each recoil it sprang higher and roared louder and grew blacker with the mud that it had ground up from the bottom. Miles inland the ground trembled with the fast-repeated shocks.

Again the Hudson was hurled backward until a huge bore of water burst over the wharves at Albany. Every foot of ground in New York less than twenty foot above the mean high tide level was inundated. The destruction was enormous, incalculable. Ocean liners, moored along the wharves were, in some cases, lifted above the level of the neighboring streets, and sent crashing into the buildings along the water-front.

Etherograms told in broken sentences of similar experiences on the western coasts of Europe, and from the Pacific came the news of the flooding of San Francisco,



Los Angeles, Portland, Tacoma, Seattle, and every coast-lying town. On the western coast of South America the incoming waves broke among the foot-hills of the Andes.

It was as if the mighty basins of the world's two greatest oceans were being rocked to and fro, sending the waters spinning from side to side.

And to add to the horror of the situation, every volcano on the globe seemed to burst simultaneously into activity, probably through the effects of the invasion of sea-water into the subterranean incandescence, while the strain of the unwonted weight thrown upon the coasts broke open the tectonic lines of weakness in the earth's crust, causing the most terrible earthquakes, which destroyed much that the water could not reach.

From Alaska to Patagonia, from Kamchatka through Japan to the East Indies, from Mount Hekla to Vesuvius, Etna, and Teneriffe, the raging oceans were bordered with pouring clouds of volcanic smoke, hurled upward in swift succeeding puffs, as if every crater had become the stack of a stupendous steam-engine driven at its maddest speed; while immense rivers of lava flamed down the mountain flanks and plunged into the invading waters with reverberated roarings, hissings and explosions that seemed to shake the framework of the globe.

During the second awful shoreward heave of the Atlantic a scene occurred off New York Bay that made the stoutest nerves quiver. A great crowd had collected on the Highlands of the Navesink to watch the ingress of the tidal wave.

**S**UDDENLY, afar off, the smoke of an approaching ocean liner was seen. It needed but a glance to show that she was struggling with tremendous surges. Sometimes she sank completely out of sight; then she reappeared, riding high on the waves. Those who had glasses recognized her. Word ran from mouth to mouth that it was the great Atlantis, the mightiest of the ocean monarchs, of a hundred thousand tons register, coming from Europe, and bearing, without question, many thousand of souls. She was flying signals of distress, and filling the ether with her inarticulate calls for help, which quavered into every radiograph station within a radius of hundreds of miles.

But, at the same time, she was battling nobly for herself and for the lives of her passengers and crew. From her main peak the Stars and Stripes streamed in the tearing wind. There were many in the watching throngs who personally knew her commander, Captain Basil Brown, and who felt that if any human being could bring the laboring ship through safely, he could. Aid from land was not to be thought of.

As she swiftly drew nearer, hurled onward by the resistless surges with the speed of an express-train, the captain was recognized on his bridge, balancing himself amid the lurches of the vessel; and even at that distance, and in those terrible circumstances there was something in his bearing perceptible to those who breathlessly watched him, through powerful glasses, which spoke of perfect self-command, entire absence of fear, and iron determination to save his ship or die with her under his feet.

It could be seen that he was issuing orders and watching their execution, but precisely what their nature was, of course, could only be guessed. His sole hope must be to keep the vessel from being cast ashore. There was no danger from the shoals, for they were by this time deeply covered by the swelling of the sea.

Slowly, slowly, with a terrific straining of mechanic energies, which pressed the jaws of the watchers to-

gether with spasmodic sympathy, as if their own nervous power were cooperating in the struggle, the gallant ship bore her head round to face the driving waves. From the ten huge, red stacks columns of inky black smoke poured out as the stokers crammed the furnaces beneath. It was man against nature, human nerve and mechanical science against blind force.

It began to look as if the Atlantis would win the battle. She was now fearfully close to the shore, but her bow had been turned into the very eye of the sea, and one could almost feel the tension of her steel muscles as she seemed to spring to the encounter. The billows that split themselves in quick succession on her sharp stem burst into shooting geysers three hundred feet high.

The hearts of the spectators almost ceased to beat. Their souls were wrapped up with the fate of the brave ship. They forgot the terrors of their own situation, the peril of the coming flood, and saw nothing but the agonized struggle before their eyes. With all their inward strength they prayed against the ocean.

Such a contest could not last long. Suddenly, as the Atlantis swerved a little aside, a surge that towered above her loftiest deck rushed upon her. She was lifted like a cockleshell upon its crest, her huge hull spun around, and the next minute, with a crash that resounded above the roar of the maddened sea, she was dashed in pieces.

At the very last moment before the vessel disappeared in the whirling breakers, to be strewn in broken and twisted bits of battered metal upon the pounding sands, Captain Basil Brown was seen on the commander's bridge.

No sooner had this tragedy passed than the pent-up terror broke forth, and men ran for their lives, ran for their homes, ran to *do something*—something, but what?—to save themselves and their dear ones.

For now, at last, they *believed*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Storming the Ark

**T**HERE was to be no more respite now. The time of warnings was past. The "signs" had all been shown to a skeptical and vacillating world, and at last the fulfillment was at hand.

There was no crying of "extras" in the streets, for men had something more pressing to think of than sending and reading news about their distresses and those of their fellow men. Every newspaper ceased publication; every business place was abandoned; there was no thought but of the means of escape.

But how should they escape? And whither should they fly?

The lower lying streets were under water. The Atlantic still surged back and forth as if the ocean itself were in agony. And every time the waves poured in they rose higher. The new shores of the bay, and the new coasts of Long Island and New Jersey, receding inward hour by hour, were strewn with the wrecks of hundreds of vessels of all kinds which had been caught by the surges and pitilessly hurled to destruction.

Even if men did not yet fully believe in Cosmo Versál's theory of a whelming nebula, they were terrified to the bottom of their souls by the conviction, which nobody could resist, that the vast ice-fields of the north, the glaciers of Greenland, the icy mountains of Alaska, had melted away under the terrible down-pour of heat, and were swelling the oceans over their brims. And then a greater fear dropped like a blanket upon them. Some one thought of the *antarctic ice*.



The latest despatches that had come, before the cessation of all communication to the newspapers, had told of the prevalence of stifling heat throughout the southern hemisphere, and of the vast fleets of antarctic icebergs that filled the south sea. The mighty deposits of ice, towering to mountain heights, that stretched a thousand miles in every direction around the south pole, were melting as the arctic ice had melted, and, when the water thus formed was added to the already overflowing seas, to what elevation might not the flood attain!

The antarctic ice was known to be the principal mass of frozen water on the globe. The frigid cap of the north was nothing in comparison with it. It had long been believed that the weight of that tremendous accumulation unbalanced the globe and was the chief cause of the unsteadiness of the earth's axis of rotation.

Every fresh exploration had only served to magnify the conception of the incredible vastness of that deposit. The skirts of the Antarctic Continent had proved to be rich in minerals wherever the rocks could find a place to penetrate through the gigantic burden of ice, and the principal nations had quarreled over the possession or control of these protruding bits of wealth-crammed strata. But behind the bordering cliffs of ice, rising in places a thousand feet above the level of the sea, and towering farther inland so high that this region became, in mean elevation, the loftiest on the planet, nothing but ice could be seen.

And now that ice was dissolved and flowing into the swollen oceans, adding billions of tons of water every minute!

Men did not stop to calculate, as Cosmo Versál had done, just how much the dissolution of all the ice and permanent snow of the globe would add to the volume of the seas. He knew that it would be but a drop in the bucket—although sufficient to start the flood—and that the great thing to be feared was the condensation of the aqueous nebula, already beginning to enwrap the planet in its stifling folds.

The public could understand the melting ice, although it could not fully understand the nebula; it could understand the swelling sea, and the raging rivers, and the lakes breaking over their banks—and the terror and despair became universal.

But what should they do?

Those who had thought of building arks hurried to see if the work might not yet be completed, but most of them had begun their foundations on low land, which was already submerged.

Then a cry arose, terrible in its significance and in its consequences—one of those cries that the vanished but unconquerable god Pan occasionally sets ringing, nobody can tell how:

"Cosmo's ark! Get aboard! Storm it!"

And thereupon there was a mighty rush for Mineola. Nobody who caught the infection stopped to reason. Some of them had to wade through water, which in places was knee-deep. They came from various directions, and united in a yelling mob. They meant to carry the ark with a rush. They would not be denied. As the excited throngs neared the great vessel they saw its huge form rising like a mount of safety, with an American flag flapping above it, and they broke into a mighty cheer. On they sped, seized with the unreason of a crowd, shouting, falling over one another, struggling, fighting for places, men dragging their wives and children through the awful crush, many trampled helpless under the myriads of struggling feet—driving the last traces of sanity from one another's minds.

THE foremost ranks presently spied Cosmo Versál, watching them from an open gangway sixty feet above their heads. They were dismayed at finding the approaches gone. How should they get into the ark? How could they climb up its vertical sides?

But they would find means. They would re-erect the approaches. They would get in somehow.

Cosmo waved them off with frantic gesticulations; then, through a trumpet, he shouted in a voice audible above the din:

"Keep back for your lives!"

But they paid no attention to him; they rushed upon the raised wall, surrounding the field where Cosmo had buried his mysterious lines of wire. Then the meaning of that enigmatical work was flashed upon them.

As the first arrivals laid their hands upon the top of the low wall they fell as if shot through the brain, tumbling backward on those behind. Others pushed wildly on, but the instant they touched the wall they too collapsed. Wicked blue-green sparks occasionally flashed above the struggling mass.

The explanation was clear. Cosmo, foreseeing the probability of a despairing attack, had surrounded the ark with an impassable electric barrier. The sound of a whirring dynamo could be heard. A tremendous current was flowing through the hidden wires and transmitting its paralyzing energy to the metallic crest of the wall.

Still those behind pushed on, until rank after rank had sunk helpless at the impregnable line of defense. They were not killed—at least, not many—but the shock was so paralyzing that those who had experienced its effect made no further attempts to cross the barrier. Many lay for a time helpless upon the sodden ground.

Cosmo and Joseph Smith, who had now appeared at his side, continued to shout warnings, which began to be heeded when the nature of the obstacle became known. The rush was stopped, and the multitude stood at bay, dazed, and uncertain what to do. Then a murmur arose, growing louder and more angry and threatening, until suddenly a shot was heard in the midst of the crowd, and Cosmo was seen to start backward, while Joseph Smith instantly dodged out of sight.

A cry arose:

"Shoot him! That's right! Shoot the devil! He's a witch! He's drowning the world!"

They meant it—at least, half of them did. It was the logic of terror.

Hundreds of shots were now fired from all quarters, and heads that had been seen flitting behind the various portholes instantly disappeared. The bullets rattled on the huge sides of the ark, but they came from small pistols and had not force enough to penetrate.

Cosmo Versál alone remained in sight. Occasionally a quick motion showed that even his nerves were not steady enough to defy the whistling of the bullets passing close; but he held his ground, and stretched out his hand to implore attention.

When the fusillade ceased for a moment he put his trumpet again to his lips and shouted:

"I have done my best to save you, but you would not listen. Although I know that you must perish, I would not myself harm a hair of your heads. Go back, I implore you. You may prolong your lives if you will fly to the highlands and mountains—but here you cannot enter. *The ark is full.*"

Another volley of shots was the only answer. One broad-shouldered man forced his way to the front, took his stand close to the wall, and yelled in stentorian tones:



"Cosmo Versál, listen to me! You are the curse of the world! You have brought this flood upon us with your damnable incantations. Your infernal nebula is the seal of Satan! Here, beast and devil, here at my feet, lies my only son, slain by your hellish device. By the Eternal I swear you shall go back to the pit!"

Instantly a pistol flashed in the speaker's hand, and five shots rang in quick succession. One after another they whistled by Cosmo's head and flattened themselves upon the metal-work behind. Cosmo Versál, untouched, folded his arms and looked straight at his foe. The man, staring a moment confusedly, as if he could not comprehend his failure, threw up his arms with a despairing gesture, and fell prone upon the ground.

Then yells and shots once more broke out. Cosmo stepped back, and a great metallic door swung to, closing the gang-way.

But three minutes later the door opened, and the mob saw two machine-guns trained upon them.

Once more Cosmo appeared, with the trumpet.

"If you fire again," he cried, "I shall spray you with bullets. I have told you how you can prolong your lives. Now go!"

Not another shot was fired. In the face of the guns, whose terrible power all comprehended, no one dared to make a hostile movement.

But, perhaps, if Cosmo Versál had not set new thoughts running in the minds of the assailants by telling them there was temporary safety to be found by seeking high ground, even the terror of the guns would not have daunted them. Now their hopefulness was reawakened, and many began to ponder upon his words.

"He says we must perish, and yet that we can find safety in the hills and mountains," said one man. "I believe half of that is a lie. We are not going to be drowned. The water won't rise much higher. The flood from the south pole that they talk about must be here by this time, and then what's left to come?"

"The nebula," suggested one.

"Aw, the nebula be hanged! There's no such thing! I live on high ground; I'm going to keep a sharp outlook, and if the water begins to shut off Manhattan I'll take my family up the Hudson to the Highlands. I guess old Storm King'll keep his head above. That's where I come from—up that way. I used to hear people say, when I was a boy, that New York was bound to sink some day. I used to laugh at that then, but it looks mighty like it now, don't it?"

"Say," put in another, "what did the fellow mean by saying the ark was full? That's funny, ain't it? Who's he got inside, anyway?"

"Oh, he ain't got nobody," said another.

"Yes, he has. I seen a goodish lot through the port-holes. He's got somebody, sure."

"A lot of fools like himself, most likely."

"Well, if he's a fool, and they's fools, what are *we*, I'd like to know? What did you come here for, hey?"

It was a puzzling question, followed by the remark:

"I guess we fooled ourselves considerable. We got scared too easy."

"Maybe you'll feel scared again when you see the water climbing up the streets in New York. I don't half like this thing. I'm going to follow his advice and light out for higher ground."

SOON conversation of this sort was heard on all sides, and the crowd began to disperse, only those lingering behind who had friends or relatives that had been struck down at the fatal wall. It turned out that not more than one or two had been mortally shocked. The rest were able to limp away, and many

had fully recovered within five minutes after suffering the shock. In half an hour not a dozen persons were in sight from the ark.

But when the retreating throngs drew near the shores of the Sound, and the East River, which had expanded into a true arm of the sea, and found that there had been a perceptible rise since they set out to capture the ark, they began to shake their heads and fear once more entered their hearts.

Thousands then and there resolved that they would not lose another instant in setting out for high land, up the Hudson, in Connecticut, among the hills of New Jersey. In fact, many had already fled thither, some escaping on aeros; and hosts would now have followed but for a marvelous change that came just before night-fall and prevented them.

For some days the heavens had alternately darkened and lightened, as gushes of mist came and went, but there had been no actual rain. Now, without warning, a steady downpour began. Even at the beginning it would have been called, in ordinary times, a veritable cloudburst; but it rapidly grew worse and worse, until there was no word in the vernacular or in the terminology of science to describe it.

It seemed, in truth, that "all the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened." The water thundered upon the roofs, and poured off them in torrents. In five minutes every sloping street had become an angry river, and every level place a swelling lake. People caught out of doors were almost beaten to the ground by the force of the water falling upon them as if they had been standing under a cataract.

In a short time every cellar and every basement was filled to overflowing, and in the avenues the flood, lapping every instant higher upon the door-steps and the walls, rushed by with frightful roarings, bearing in its awful embrace pieces of furniture, clothing, bedding, washed out of ground-floor rooms—and, alas! human beings; some motionless, already mercifully deprived of life, but others struggling and shouting for aid which could not be given.

So terrible a spectacle no one had ever looked upon, no one had ever imagined. Those who beheld it were too stunned to cry out, too overwhelmed with terror and horror to utter a word. They stood, or fell into chairs or upon the floor, trembling in every limb, with staring eyes and drooping jaws, passively awaiting their fate.

As night came on there was no light. The awful darkness of the Third Sign once more settled upon the great city, but now it was not the terror of indefinite expectation that crushed down the souls of men and women—it was the weight of doom accomplished!

There was no longer any room for self-deception; every quaking heart felt now that *the nebula had come. Cosmo Versál had been right!*

After the water had attained a certain height in the street and yards, depending upon the ratio between the amount descending from the sky and that which could find its way to the rivers, the flood for the time being rose no higher. The actual drowning of New York could not happen until the Hudson and the East River should become so swollen that the waters would stand above the level of the highest buildings, and turn the whole region round about, as far as the Orange hills, the Ramapo Mountains, the Highlands, and the Housatonic Hills, into an inland sea.

But before we tell that story we must return to see what was going on at Mineola. Cosmo Versál on that awful night when New York first knew beyond the



shadow of a doubt, or the gleam of a hope, that it was doomed, presided over a remarkable assembly in the grand saloon of his ark.

## CHAPTER IX

### The Company of the Reprieved

**H**OW did it happen that Cosmo Versál was able to inform the mob when it assailed the ark that he had no room left?

Who composed his ship's company, whence had they come, and how had they managed to embark without the knowledge of the public?

The explanation is quite simple. It was all due to the tremendous excitement that had prevailed ever since the sea began to overflow. In the universal confusion people had to think of other things nearer their doors than the operations of Cosmo Versál. Since the embarkation of the animals the crowds had ceased to visit the field at Mineola, and it was only occasionally that even a reporter was sent there. Accordingly, there were many hours every day when no curiosity-seekers were in sight of the ark, and at night the neighborhood was deserted; and this state of affairs continued until the sudden panic which led to the attack that has been described.

Cosmo Versál, of course, had every reason to conceal the fact that he was carefully selecting his company. It was a dangerous game to play, and he knew it. The consequence was that he enjoined secrecy upon his invited guests, and conducted them, a few at a time, into the ark, assuring them that their lives might be in peril if they were recognized. And once under the domain of the fear which led them to accept his invitation, they were no less anxious than he to avoid publicity. Some of them probably desired to avoid recognition through dread of ridicule; for, after all, the flood might not turn out to be so bad as Cosmo had predicted.

So it happened that the ark was filled, little by little, and the public knew nothing about it.

And who composed the throng which, while the awful downpour roared on the ellipsoidal cover of the ark and shook it to its center, and while New York, a few miles away, saw story after story buried under waters, crowded Cosmo's brilliantly lighted saloon, and raised their voices to a high pitch in order to be heard?

Had all the invitations which he dictated to Joseph Smith after their memorable discussion, and which were sent forth in the utmost haste, flying to every point of the compass, been accepted, and was it the famous leaders of science, the rulers and crowded heads who had passed his critical inspection that were now knocking elbows under the great dome of levium? Had kings and queens stolen incognito under the shelter of the ark, and magnates of the financial world hidden themselves there?

It would have been well for them all if they had been there. But, in fact, many of those to whom the invitations had gone did not even take the trouble to thank their would-be savior. A few, however, who did not come in person, sent responses. Among these was the President of the United States. Mr. Samson's letter was brief but characteristic. It read:

TO COSMO VERSAL, ESQ.

Sir:

The President directs me to say that he is grateful for your invitation, and regrets that he cannot accept it. He is informed by those to whose official advice he feels bound to listen, that the

recent extraordinary events possess no such significance as you attach to them,

Respectfully,

JAMES JENKS, Secretary.

**I**T must be remembered that this letter was written before the oceanic overflow began. After that, possibly, the President and his advisers changed their opinion. But then communication by rail was cut off, and as soon as the downpour from the sky commenced the aero express lines were abandoned. The air-ships would have been deluged, and blown to destruction by the tremendous gusts which, at intervals, packed the rain-choked air itself into solid billows of water.

None of the rulers of the old world responded, but about half the men of science, and representatives of the other classes that Cosmo had set down on his list, were wise enough to accept, and they hurried to New York before the means of transit by land and sea were destroyed.

Among these were Englishmen, Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards, Germans, Austrians, Poles, people from the Balkan states, Swedes, Danes, Russians, and a few from India, China, and Japan. The clatter of their various tongues made a very Babel inside the ark, when they talked to one another in groups, but nearly all of them were able to speak English, which, after many years of experiment, has been adopted as the common language for transacting the world's affairs.

There was another letter, which Cosmo read with real regret, although hardly with surprise. It was from Professor Pludder. Instead of expressing gratitude for the invitation, as the President, trained in political blandiloquence, had done, Professor Pludder indulged in denunciation.

"You are insane," he said. "You do not know what you are talking about. Your letter is an insult to science. These inundations" (this, too, was written before the sky had opened its flood-gates) "are perfectly explicable by the ordinary laws of nature. Your talk of a nebula is so ridiculous that it deserves no reply. If any lunatic accepts your absurd invitation, and goes into your 'ark,' he will find himself in Bedlam, where he ought to be."

"I guess you were right," Cosmo remarked to Joseph Smith, after reading this outburst. "Pludder would not contribute to the regeneration of mankind. We are better off without him."

But Cosmo Versál was mistaken in thinking he had heard the last of Abiel Pludder. The latter was destined to show that he was hardly a less remarkable specimen of *homo sapiens* than the bigheaded prophet of the second deluge himself.

As soon as it became evident that there would be room to spare in the ark, Cosmo set at work to fill up the list. He went over his categories once more, but now, owing to the pressure of time, he was obliged to confine his selections to persons within easy reach. They came, nearly all, from New York, or its vicinity; and since these last invitations went out just on the eve of the events described in the last two chapters, there was no delay in the acceptances, and the invitees promptly presented themselves in person.

**C**OSMO'S warning to them of the necessity of secrecy was superfluous, for the selfishness of human nature never had a better illustration than they afforded. The lucky recipients of the invitations stole away without a word of farewell, circumspectly disappearing, generally at night, and often in disguise; and when the attack occurred on the ark, there were behind the port-holes, many anxious eyes cautiously staring out and recognizing familiar faces in the mob, while



the owners of those eyes trembled in their shoes lest their friends might succeed in forcing an entrance. After all, it was to be doubted if Cosmo Versál, with all his vigilance, had succeeded in collecting a company representing anything above the average quality of the race.

But there was one thing that did great credit to his heart. When he found that he had room unoccupied, before adding to his lists he consented to take more than two children in a family. It was an immense relief, for—it must be recorded—there were some who in order to qualify themselves, had actually abandoned members of their own families! Let it also be said, however, that many, when they found that the conditions imposed were inexorable, and that they could only save themselves by leaving behind others as dear to them as their own lives, indignantly refused, and most of these did not even reply to the invitations.

It was another indication of Cosmo's real humanity, as well as of his shrewdness, that, as far as they were known, and could be reached, the persons who had thus remained true to the best instincts of nature were the first to receive a second invitation, with an injunction to bring their entire families. So it happened that, after all, there were aged men and women, as well as children-in-arms, mingled in that remarkable assemblage.

It will be recalled that thirteen places had been specially reserved, to be filled by Cosmo Versál's personal friends. His choice of these revealed another pleasing side of his mind. He took thirteen men and women who had been, in one capacity or another, employed for many years in his service. Some of them were old family servants that had been in his father's house.

"Every one of these persons," he said to Joseph Smith, "is worth his weight in gold. Their disinterested fidelity to duty is a type of character that almost became extinct generations ago, and no more valuable haven could be introduced into the society of the future. Rather than leave them, I would stay behind myself."

Finally there was the crew. This comprised one hundred and fifty members, all of them chosen from the body of engineers, mechanics, and workmen who had been employed in the construction of the ark. Cosmo himself was, of course, the commander, but he had for his lieutenants skilled mariners, electrical and mechanical engineers, and men whom he himself had instructed in the peculiar duties that would fall to them in the navigation and management of the ark, every detail of which he had laboriously worked out with a foresight that seemed all but superhuman.

All of the passengers and crew were aboard when the baffled mob retreated from Mineola, and some, when that danger was past, wished to descend to the ground, and go and look at the rising waters, which had not yet invaded the neighborhood. But Cosmo absolutely forbade any departures from the ark. The condensation of the nebula, he declared, was likely to begin any minute, and the downpour would be so fierce that a person might be drowned in the open field.

It came even sooner than he had anticipated, with the results that we had already noted in New York. At first many thought that the ark itself would be destroyed, so dreadful was the impact of the falling water. The women and children, and some of the men, were seized with panic, and Cosmo had great difficulty in reassuring them.

"The flood will not reach us for several hours yet," he said. "The level of the water must rise at least a hundred feet more before we shall be afloat. Inside

here we are perfectly safe. The ark is exceedingly strong and absolutely tight. You have nothing to fear."

Then he ordered an ingenious sound-absorbing screen, which he had prepared, to be drawn over the great ceiling of the saloon, the effect of which was to shut out the awful noise of the water roaring upon the roof of the ark. A silence that was at first startling by contrast to the preceding din prevailed as soon as the screen was in place.

AMID a hush of expectancy, Cosmo now mounted a dais at one end of the room. Never before had the intellectual superiority of the man seemed so evident. His huge "dome of thought" surmounting his slight body, dominated the assembly like the front of Jove. Chairs near him were occupied by Professor Jeremiah Moses, Professor Abel Able, Professor Alexander Jones, and the two "speculative geniuses" whom he had named to Joseph Smith. These were Costaké Theriadé, of Rumania, a tall, dark, high-browed thinker, who was engaged in devising ways to extract and recover intra-atomic energy; and Sir Wilfred Athelstone, whose specialty was bio-chemistry, and who was said to have produced amazing results in artificial parthenogenesis and the production of new species.

As soon as attention was concentrated upon him, Cosmo Versál began to speak.

"My friends," he said, "the world around us is now sinking beneath a flood that will not be arrested until America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia have disappeared. We stand at the opening of a new age. You alone who are here assembled, and your descendants, will constitute the population of the new world that is to be.

"In this ark, which owes its existence to the foreseeing eye of science, you will be borne in safety upon the bosom of the battling waters, and we will disembark upon the first promising land that reappears, and begin the plantation and development of a new society of men and women, which I trust, will afford a practical demonstration of the principles of eugenics.

"I have, as far as possible, and as far as the pitiful blindness of mankind permitted me to go, selected and assembled here representatives of the best tendencies of humanity. You are a chosen remnant, and the future of this planet depends upon you.

"I have been fortunate in securing the companionship of men of science who will be able to lead and direct. The ark is fully provisioned for a period which must exceed the probable duration of the flood. I have taken pains not to overcrowd it, and every preparation has been made for any contingencies which may arise.

"It is inexpressibly sad to part thus with the millions of our fellow beings who would not heed the warning that were lavished upon them; but, while our hearts may be rent with the thought, it is our duty to cast off the burden of vain regrets and concentrate all our energies upon the work before us.

"I salute," he continued, raising his voice and lifting a glass of wine from the little table before him, "the world of the past—may its faults be forgotten—and the world of the future—may it rise on the wings of science to nobler prospects!"

He poured out the wine like a libation; and as his voice ceased to echo, and he sank into his seat, an uncontrollable wave of emotion ran over the assembly. Many of the women wept, and the men conversed in whispers. After a considerable interval, during which no one spoke above his breath, Professor Abel Able arose and said:

"The gratitude which we owe to this man"—indi-



ating Cosmo Versál, "can best be expressed, not in words, but by acts. He has led us thus far; he must continue to lead us to the end. We were blind, while he was full of light. It will become us hereafter to heed well whatever he may say. I now wish to ask if he can foresee where upon the re-emerging planet a foothold is first likely to be obtained. Where lies our land of promise?"

"I can answer that question," Cosmo replied, only in general terms. You are all aware that the vast table-land of Tibet is the loftiest region upon the globe. In its western part it lies from fourteen to seventeen or eighteen thousand feet above the ordinary level of the sea. Above it rise the greatest mountain-peaks in existence. Here the first considerable area is likely to be uncovered. It is upon the Pamirs, the 'Roof of the World,' that we shall probably make our landing."

"May I ask," said Professor Abel Able, "in what manner you expect the waters of the flood to be withdrawn, after the earth is completely drowned?"

"That," was the reply, "was one of the fundamental questions that I examined, but I do not care to enter into a discussion of it now. I may simply say that it is not only upon the disappearance of the waters that our hopes depend, but upon circumstances that I shall endeavor to make clear hereafter. The new cradle of mankind will be located near the old one, and the roses of the Vale of Cashmere will canopy it."

Cosmo Versál's words made a profound impression upon his hearers, and awoke thoughts that carried their minds off into strange reveries. No more questions were asked, and gradually the assemblage broke up into groups of interested talkers.

It was near midnight. Cosmo, beckoning Professor Abel Able, Professor Alexander Jones, and Professor Jeremiah Moses to accompany him, made his way out of the saloon, and, secretly opening one of the gangway doors, they presently stood, sheltering themselves from the pouring rain, in a position which enabled them to look toward New York.

Nothing, of course, was visible through the down-pour; but they were startled at hearing fearful cries issuing out of the darkness. The rural parts of the city, filled with gardens and villas, lay round within a quarter of a mile of the ark, and the sound, accelerated by the water-charged atmosphere, struck upon their ears with terrible distinctness. Sometimes, when a gust of wind blew the rain in to their faces, the sound deepened into a long, despairing wail, which seemed to be borne from afar off, mingled with the roar of the descending torrent—the death-cry of the vast metropolis!

"Merciful Heaven, I cannot endure this!" cried Professor Moses.

"Go to my cabin," Cosmo yelled in his ear, "and take the others with you. I will join you there in a little while. I wish to measure the rate of rise of the water."

They gladly left him, and fled into the interior of the ark. Cosmo procured an electric lamp; and the moment its light streamed out he perceived that the water had already submerged the great cradle in which the ark rested, and was beginning to creep up the metallic sides. He lowered a graduated tape into it, provided with an automatic register. In a few minutes he had completed his task, and then he went to rejoin his late companions in his cabin.

"In about an hour," he said to them, "we shall be afloat. The water is rising at the rate of one-thirtieth of an inch per second."

"No more than that?" asked Professor Jones with an accent of surprise.

"That is quite enough," Cosmo replied. "One thir-

tieth of an inch per second means two inches in a minute, and ten feet in an hour. In twenty-four hours from now the water will stand two hundred and forty feet above the present level, and then only the tallest structures in New York will lift their tops above it, if indeed, they are not long before overturned by undermining or by the force of the waves."

"But it will be a long time before the hills and highlands are submerged," suggested Professor Jones. "Are you perfectly sure that the flood will cover them?"

Cosmo Versál looked at his interlocutor, and slowly shook his head.

"It is truly a disappointment to me," he said at length, "to find that, even now, remnants of doubt cling to your minds. I tell you that the nebula is condensing at its maximum rate. It is likely to continue to do so for at least four months. In four months, at the rate of two inches per minute, the level of the water will rise 28,800 feet. There is only one peak in the world which is surely known to attain a slightly greater height than that—Mount Everest, in the Himalayas. Even in a single month the rise will amount to 7,200 feet. That is 511 feet higher than the loftiest mountain in the Appalachians. In one month, then, there will be nothing visible of North America east of the Rockies. And in another month they will have gone under."

Not another word was said. The three professors sat, wide-eyed and open-mouthed, staring at Cosmo Versál, whose bald head was crowned with an aureole by the electric light that beamed from the ceiling, while with a gold pocket-pencil, he fell to figuring upon a sheet of paper.

## CHAPTER X

### The Last Day of New York

WHILE Cosmo Versál was calculating, from the measured rise of the water, the rate of condensation of the nebula, and finding that it added twenty-nine trillion two hundred and ninety billion tons to the weight of the earth every minute—a computation that seemed to give him great mental satisfaction—the metropolis of the world, whose nucleus was the island of Manhattan, and every other town and city on the globe that lay near the ordinary level of the sea, was swiftly sinking beneath the swelling flood.

Everywhere, over all the broad surface of the planet, a wail of despair arose from the perishing millions, beaten down by the water that poured from the un pitying sky. Even on the highlands the situation was but little better than in the valleys. The hills seemed to have been turned into the crests of cataracts from which torrents of water rushed down on all sides, stripping the soil from the rocks and sending the stones and boulders roaring and leaping into the lowlands and the gorges. Farmhouses, barns, villas, trees, animals, human beings—all were swept away together.

Only on broad elevated plateaus, where higher points rose above the general level, were a few of the inhabitants able to find a kind of refuge. By seeking these high places, and sheltering themselves as best they could among immovable rocks, they succeeded, at least, in delaying their fate. Notwithstanding the fact that the atmosphere was filled with falling water, they could not breathe, if they kept the rain from striking directly in their faces. It was owing to this circumstance, and to some extraordinary occurrences which we shall have to relate, that the fate of the human race



was not precisely that which Cosmo Versál had predicted.

We quitted the scene in New York when the shadow of night had just fallen, and turned the gloom of the watery atmosphere into impenetrable darkness. The events of that dreadful night we shall not attempt to depict. When the hours of daylight returned, and the sun should have brightened over the doomed city, only a faint, phosphorescent luminosity filled the sky. It was just sufficient to render objects dimly visible. If the enclosing nebula had remained in a cloud-like state it would have cut off all light, but having condensed into rain-drops, which streamed down in parallel lines, except when sudden blasts of wind swept them into a confused mass, the sunlight was able to penetrate through the interstices, aided by the transparency of the water, and so a slight but variable illumination was produced.

In this unearthly light many tall structures of the metropolis, which had as yet escaped the effects of undermining by the rushing torrents in the streets, towered dimly toward the sky, shedding streams of water from every cornice. Most of the buildings of only six or eight stories had already been submerged, with the exception of those that stood on high grounds in the upper part of the island, and about Spuyten Duyvil.

In the towers and upper stories of the lofty buildings still standing in the heart of the city, crowds of unfortunates assembled, gazing with horror at the spectacles around them, and wringing their hands in helpless despair. When the light brightened they could see below them the angry water, creeping every instant closer to their places of refuge, beaten into foam by the terrible downpour, and sometimes, moved by a mysterious impulse, rising in sweeping waves which threatened to carry everything before them.

Every few minutes one of the great structures would sway, crack, crumble, and go down into the seething flood, the cries of the perishing being swallowed up in the thunder of the fall. And when this occurred within sight of neighboring towers yet intact, men and women could be seen, some with children in their arms, madly throwing themselves from windows and ledges, seeking quick death now that hope was no more!

STRANGE and terrible scenes were enacted in the neighborhood of what had been the water-fronts. Most of the vessels moored there had been virtually wrecked by the earlier invasion of the sea. Some had been driven upon the shore, others had careened and been swamped at their wharves. But a few had succeeded in cutting loose in time to get fairly afloat. Some tried to go out to sea, but were wrecked by running against obstacles, or by being swept over the Jersey flats. Some met their end by crashing into the submerged pedestal of the State of Liberty. Others steered up the course of the Hudson River, but that had become a narrow sea, filled with floating and tossing débris of every sort, and all landmarks being invisible, the luckless navigators lost their way, and perished, either through collisions with other vessels, or by driving upon a rocky shore.

The fate of the gigantic building containing the offices of the municipal government, which, for a century, had stood near the ancient City Hall, and which had been the culminating achievement of the famous epoch of "sky-scrapers," was a thing so singular, and at the same time dramatic, that in a narrative dealing with less extraordinary events than we are obliged to record it would appear altogether incredible.

With its two-score lofty stories, and its massive

base, this wonderful structure rose above the lower quarter of the city, and dominated it, like a veritable Tower of Babel, made to defy the flood. Many thousands of people evidently regarded it in that very light, and they had fled from all quarters, as soon as the great downpour began, to find refuge within its mountainous flanks. There were men—clerks, merchants, brokers from the downtown offices, and women and children from neighboring tenements.

By good chance, but a few weeks before, this building had been fitted with a newly invented system of lighting, by which each story was supplied with electricity from a small dynamo of its own, and so it happened that now the lamps within were all aglow, lightening the people's hearts a little with their cheering radiance.

Up and up they climbed, the water ever following at their heels, from floor to floor, until ten of the great stages were submerged. But there were more than twice as many stages yet above, and they counted them with unexpiring hope, telling one another, with the assurance of desperation, that long before the flood could attain so stupendous an altitude the rain would surely cease, and the danger, as far as they were concerned, would pass away.

"See! See!" cries one. "It is stopping! It is coming no higher! I've been watching that step, and the water has stopped! It hasn't risen for ten minutes!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" yells the crowd behind and above. And the glad cry is taken up and reverberated from story to story until it bursts wildly out into the rain-choked air at the very summit.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! We are saved! The flood has stopped!"

Men madly embrace each other. Women burst into tears and hug their children to their breasts, filled with a joy and thankfulness that can find no words.

"You are wrong," says another man, crouched beside him who first spoke. "It has not stopped—it is still rising."

"What! I tell you it *has* stopped," snaps the other. "Look at that step! It stopped right below it."

"*You've been watching the wrong step. It's rising!*"

"You fool! Shut your mouth! I say it has *stopped*."

"No, it has not."

"*It has! It has!*"

"Look at *that* step, then! See the water just now coming over it."

The obstinate optimist stares a moment, turns pale, and then, with an oath, strikes his more clear-headed neighbor in the face! And the excited crowd behind, with the blind instinctive feeling that, somehow, he has robbed them of the hope which was but now a breath of life to them, strike him and curse him, too.

But he had seen only too clearly.

With the steady march of fate—two inches a minute, as Cosmo Versál had accurately measured it—the water still advances and climbs upward.

In a little while they were driven to another story, and then to another. But hope would not down. They could not believe that the glad news, which had so recently filled them with joy, was altogether false. The water *must* have stopped rising *once*; it had been *seen*. Then, it would surely stop *again*, stop to rise no more.

Poor deluded creatures! With the love of life so strong within them, they could not picture, in their affrighted minds, the terrible consummation to which they were being slowly driven, when, jammed into the narrow chambers at the very top of the mighty structure, their remorseless enemy would seize them at last.



With the return of the pallid light, at what should have been daybreak, Cosmo and his navigator were again at their post. In fact, the former had not slept at all, keeping watch through the long hours, with Captain Arms within easy call.

As the light became stronger, Cosmo said to the captain:

"Steer toward New York. I wish to see if the last of the tall buildings on the upper heights have gone under."

"It will be very dangerous to go that way," objected Captain Arms. "There are no landmarks, and we may strike a snag."

"Not if we are careful," replied Cosmo. "All but the highest ground is now buried very deep."

"It is taking a fool's risk," growled Captain Arms, but nevertheless he obeyed.

It was true that they had nothing to go by. The air was too thick with water, and the light too feeble for them to be able to lay their course by sighting the distant hills of New Jersey which yet remained above the level of the flood. Still, by a kind of seaman's instinct, Captain Arms made his way, until he felt that he ought to venture no farther. He had just turned to Cosmo Versál with the intention of voicing his protest, when the Ark careened slightly, shivered from stern to stern, and then began a bumping movement that nearly threw the two men from their feet.

"We are aground!" cried the captain, and instantly turned a knob that set in motion automatic machinery which cut off the engines from the propellers, and at the same time slowed down the engines themselves.

## CHAPTER XI

### "A Billion for a Share"

THE Ark had lodged on the loftiest part of the Palisades. It was only after long and careful study of their position, rendered possible by occasional glimpses of the Orange Hills and high points further up the course of the Hudson, that Cosmo Versál and Captain Arms were able to reach that conclusion. Where New York had stood nothing was visible but an expanse of turbid and rushing water.

But suppose the hard trap rocks had penetrated the bottom of the Ark! It was a contingency too terrible to be thought of. Yet the facts must be ascertained at once.

Cosmo, calling Joseph Smith, and commanding him to go among the frightened passengers and assure them, in his name, that there was no danger, hurried, with the captain and a few trusty men, into the bowels of the vessel. No aperture and no indentation was to be found.

But, then, the bottom was double, and the outer plates might have been perforated. If this had happened the fact would reveal itself through the leakage of water into the intervening space. To ascertain if that had occurred it was necessary to unscrew the covers of some of the manholes in the inner skin of levium.

It was an anxious moment when they cautiously removed one of these covers. At the last turn of the screw the workman who handled it instinctively turned his head aside, and made ready for a spring, more than half expecting that the cover would be driven from his hands, and a stream of water would burst in.

But the cover remained in place after it was completely loosened, and until it had been lifted off. A

sign of relief broke from every breast. No water was visible.

"Climb in there, and explore the bottom," Cosmo commanded.

There was a space of eighteen inches between the two bottoms, which were connected and braced by the curved ribs of the hull. A man immediately disappeared in the opening and began the exploration. Cosmo ordered the removal of other covers at various points, and the exploration was extended over the whole bottom. He himself passed through one of the manholes and aided in the work.

At last it was determined, beyond any doubt, that even the outer skin was uninjured. Not so much as a dent could be found in it.

"By the favor of Providence," said Cosmo Versál, as his head emerged from a manhole, "the Ark has touched upon a place where the rocks are covered with soil, and no harm has come to us. In a very short time the rising water will lift us off."

"And, with my consent, you'll do no more navigation over hills and mountains," grumbled Captain Arms. "The open sea for the sailor."

The covers were carefully replaced, and the party, in happier spirits, returned to the upper decks, where the good news was quickly spread.

The fact was that while the inspection was under way the Ark had floated off, and when Cosmo and the captain reached their bridge the man who had been left in charge reported that the vessel had swung half-way round.

"She's headed for the old Atlantic," sung out Captain Arms. "The sooner we're off the better."

But before the captain could signal the order to go ahead, Cosmo Versál laid his hand on his arm and said:

"Wait a moment; listen."

Through the lashing of the rain a voice penetrated with a sound between a call and a scream. There could be no doubt that it was human. The captain and Cosmo looked at one another in speechless astonishment. The idea that any one outside the Ark could have survived, and could now be afloat amid this turmoil of waters, had not occurred to their minds. They experienced a creeping of the nerves. In a few minutes the voice came again, louder than before, and the words that it pronounced being now clearly audible, the two listeners could not believe their ears.

"Cosmo Versál!" it yelled. "Cosm-o-o Ver-sa-al! A billion for a share! A *billion*, I say, a *bil-li-on* for a share!"

Then they perceived, a little way off to the left, something which looked like the outline of a boat, sunk to the gunwales, washed over by every wave, and standing in it, up to their knees in water, were four men, one of whom was gesticulating violently, while the others seemed dazed and incapable of voluntary movement.

It was the boat of levium that had been thrown out of the wreckage when the battleship ran down the Municipal tower, and we must now follow the thread of its adventures up to the time of its encounter with the Ark.

As the boat was driven westward from the drowned site of Madison Square it gradually freed itself from the objects floating around, most of which soon sunk, and in an hour or two its inmates were alone—the sole survivors of a population of many millions.

ALONE they were in impenetrable darkness, for, as we have said, night had by this time once more fallen. They floated on, half drowned,



chilled to the bone, not trying to speak, not really conscious of one another's presence. The rain beat down upon them, the waves washed over them, the unsinkable boat sluggishly rose and fell with the heaving of the water, and occasionally they were nearly flung overboard by a sudden lurch—and yet they clung with desperate tenacity to the thwarts, as if life were still dear, as if they thought that they might yet survive, though the world was drowned.

Thus hours passed, and at last a glimmer appeared in the streaming air, and a faint light stole over the face of the water. If they saw one another, it was with unrecognizing eyes. They were devoured with hunger, but they did not know it.

Suddenly one of them—it was he who had been so miraculously thrown into the boat when it shot out of the tangle of falling beams and walls—raised his head and threw up his arms, a wild light gleaming in his eyes.

In a hoarse, screaming voice he yelled:

"Cosmo Versál!"

No other syllables that the tongue could shape would have produced the effect of that name. It roused the three men who heard it from their lethargy of despair, and thrilled them to the marrow. With amazed eyes they stared at their companion. He did not look at them, but gazed off into the thick rain. Again his voice rose in a minuscule shriek:

"Cosmo Versál! Do you hear me? Let me in! A billion for a share!"

The men looked at each other, and even in their desperate situation, felt a stir of pity in their hearts. They were not too dazed to comprehend that their companion had gone mad. One of them moved to his side, and laid a hand upon his shoulder, as if he would try to soothe him.

But the maniac threw him off, nearly precipitating him over the side of the submerged boat, crying:

"What are you doing in my boat? Over-board with you! I am looking for Cosmo Versál! He's got the biggest thing afloat! Securities! Securities! Gilt-edged! A billion, I tell you Here I have them—look! Gilt-edged, every one!" and he snatched a thick bundle of papers from his pocket and waved them wildly until they melted into a pulpy mass with the down-pour.

The others now shrank away from him in fear. Fear? Yes, for still they loved their lives, and the staggering support beneath their feet had become as precious to them as the solid earth. They would have fought with the fury of madmen to retain their places in that half-swamped shell. They were still capable of experiencing a keener fear than that of the flood. They were as terrified by the presence of this maniac as they would have been on encountering him in their homes.

But he did not attempt to follow them. He still looked off through the driving rain, balancing himself to the sluggish lurching of the boat, and continued to rave, and shout, and shake his soaked bundle of papers, until, exhausted by his efforts, and half-choked by the water that drove in his face, he sank helpless upon a thwart.

Then they fell back into their lethargy, but in a little while he was on his feet again, gesticulating and raging—and thus hours passed on, and still they were afloat, and still clinging to life.

Suddenly, looming out of the strange gloom, they perceived the huge form of the Ark, and all struggled to their feet, but none could find voice but the maniac.

As soon as he saw the men, Cosmo Versál had run down to the lowest deck, and ordered the opening of a gangway on that side. When the door swung back

he found himself within a few yards of the swamped boat, but ten feet above its level. Joseph Smith, Professor Moses, Professor Jones, Professor Able, and others of the passengers, and several of the crew, hurried to his side, while the rest of the passengers crowded as near as they could get.

The instant that Cosmo appeared the maniac redoubled his cries.

"Here they are," he yelled, shaking what remained of his papers. "A billion—all gilt-edged! Let me in. But shut out the others. They're only little fellows. They've got no means. They can't float an enterprise like this. Ah, you're a bright one! You and me, Cosmo Versál—we'll squeeze 'em all out. I'll give you the secrets. We'll own the earth! I'm Amos Blank!"

Cosmo Versál recognized the man in spite of the dreadful change that had come over him. His face was white and drawn, his eyes staring, his head bare, his hair matted with water, his clothing in shreds—but it was unmistakably Amos Blank, a man whose features the newspapers had rendered familiar to millions, a man who had for years stood before the public as the unabashed representative of the system of remorseless repression of competition, and shameless corruption of justice and legislation. After the world, for nearly three generations, had enjoyed the blessings of the reforms in business methods and social ideals that had been inaugurated by the great uprising of the people in the first quarters of the twentieth century, Amos Blank, and lesser men of his ilk, had swung back the pendulum, and reestablished more firmly than ever the reign of monopoly and iniquitous privilege.

THE water-logged little craft floated nearer until it almost touched the side of the Ark directly below the gangway. The madman's eyes glowed with eagerness, and he reached up his papers, continually yelling his refrain: "A billion! Gilt-edged! Let me in! Don't give the rabble a show!"

Cosmo made no reply, but gazed down upon the man and his bedraggled companions with impassive features, but thoughtful eyes. Any one who knew him intimately, as Joseph Smith alone did, could have read his mind. He was asking himself what he ought to do. Here was the whole fundamental question to be gone over again. To what purpose had he taken so great pains to select the flower of mankind? Here was the head and chief of the offense that he had striven to eliminate appealing to him to be saved under circumstances which went straight to the heart and awoke every sentiment of humanity.

Presently he said in as low a voice as could be made audible:

"Joseph, advise me. What should I do?"

"You were willing to take Professor Pludder," replied Smith evasively, but with a plain leaning to the side of mercy.

"You know very well that that was different," Cosmo returned irritably. "Pludder was not morally rotten. He was only mistaken. He had the fundamental scientific quality, and I'm sorry he threw himself away in his obstinacy. But this man—"

"Since he is alone," broke in Joseph Smith with a sudden illumination, "he could do no harm."

Cosmo Versál's expression instantly brightened.

"You are right!" he exclaimed. "By himself he can do nothing. I am sure there is no one aboard who would sympathize with his ideas. Alone, he is innocuous. Besides, he's insane, and I can't leave him to drown in that condition. And I must take the others, too. Let down a landing stage," he continued in a louder voice, addressing some members of the crew.



In a few minutes all four of the unfortunates, seeming more dead than alive, were helped into the Ark.

Amos Blank immediately precipitated himself upon Cosmo Versál, and, seizing him by the arm, tried to lead him apart, saying in his ear, as he glared round upon the faces of the throng which crowded every available space:

"Hist! Overboard with 'em! What's all this trash? Shovel 'em out! They'll want to get in with us; they'll queer the game!"

Then he turned furiously upon the persons nearest him, and began to push them toward the open gangway. At a signal from Cosmo Versál, two men seized him and pinioned his arms. At that his mood changed, and, wrenching himself loose, he once more ran to Cosmo, waving his bedraggled bundle, and shouting:

"A billion! Here's the certificates—gilt-edge! But," he continued, with a cunning leer, and suddenly thrusting the sodden papers into his pocket, "you'll make out the receipt first. I'll put in *five* billions to make it a sure go, if you won't let in another soul."

Cosmo shook off the man's grasp, and again calling the two members of the crew who had before pinioned his arms, told them to lead him away, at the same time saying to him:

"You go with these men into my room. I'll see you later."

Blank took it in the best part, and willingly accompanied his conductors, only stopping a moment to wink over his shoulder at Cosmo, and then he was led through the crowd, which regarded him with unconcealed astonishment, and in many cases with no small degree of fear. As soon as he was beyond earshot, Cosmo directed Joseph Smith to hurry ahead of the party and conduct them to a particular apartment, which he designated at the same time, saying to Smith:

"Turn the key on him as soon as he's inside."

Amos Blank, now an insane prisoner in Cosmo Versál's Ark, had been the greatest financial power in the world's metropolis, a man of iron nerve and the clearest of brains, who always kept his head and never uttered a foolish word. It was he who had stood over the flight of steps in the Municipal Building, coolly measuring with his eye the rise of the water, exposing the terrible error that sent such a wave of unreasoning joy through the hearts of the thousands of refugees crowded into the doomed edifice, and receiving blows and curses for making the truth known.

He had himself taken refuge there, after visiting his office and filling his pockets with his most precious papers. How, by a marvelous stroke of fate, he became one of the four persons who alone escaped from New York after the downpour began is already known.

The other men taken from the boat were treated like rescued mariners snatched from a wreck at sea. Every attention was lavished upon them, and Cosmo Versál did not appear to regret, as far as they were concerned, that his ship's company had been so unexpectedly recruited.

## CHAPTER XII

### Submergence of the Old World

WE now turn our attention for a time from the New World to the Old. What did the thronging populations of Europe, Africa, and Asia do when the signs of coming disaster chased one another, when the swollen oceans began to burst their bonds, and when the windows of the firmament were opened?

The picture that can be drawn must necessarily be very fragmentary, because the number who escaped

was small and the records that they left are few.

The savants of the older nations were, in general, quite as incredulous and as set in their opposition to Cosmo Versál's extraordinary outgivings as those of America. They decried his science and denounced his predictions as the work of a fool or a madman. The president of the Royal Astronomical Society of Great Britain proved to the satisfaction of most of his colleagues that a nebula could not possibly contain enough water to drown an asteroid, let alone the earth.

"The nebulae," said this learned astronomer, amid the plaudits of his hearers, "are infinitely rarer in composition than the rarest gas left in the receiver of an exhausted air-pump. I would undertake to swallow from a wine-glass the entire substance of any nebula that could enter the space between the earth and the sun, if it were condensed into the liquid state."

It might be intoxicating," called out a facetious member.

"Will the chair permit me to point out," said another with great gravity, "that such a proceeding would be eminently rash, for the nebulous fluid might be highly poisonous." ("Hear! Hear!" and laughter.)

"What do you say of this strange darkness and these storms?" asked an earnest-looking man. (This meeting was held after the terrors of the "Third Sign" had occurred.)

"I say," replied the president, "that that is the affair of the Meteorological Society, and has nothing to do with astronomy. I dare say that they can account for it."

"And I dare say they can't," cried a voice.

"Hear! Hear!" "Who are you?" "Put him out!" "I dare say he's right!" "Cosmo Versál!" Everybody was talking at once.

"Will this gentleman identify himself?" asked the president. "Will he please explain his words!"

"That I will," said a tall man with long whiskers, rising at the rear end of the room. "I am pretty well known. I—"

"It's Jameson, the astrologer," cried a voice. "What's he doing here?"

"Yes," said the whiskered man, "it's Jameson, the astrologer, and he has come here to let you know that Cosmo Versál was born under the sign Cancer, the first of the watery triplicity, and that Berosus, the Chaldean, declared—"

An uproar immediately ensued; half the members were on their feet at once; there was a scuffle in the back part of the room, and Jameson, the astrologer, was hustled out, shouting at the top of his voice:

"Berosus, the Chaldean, predicted that the world would be drowned when all the planets should assemble in the sign Cancer—and where are they now? Blind and stupid dolts that you are—where are they now?"

It was some time before order could be restored, and a number of members disappeared, having followed Jameson, the astrologer, possibly through sympathy, or possibly with a desire to learn more about the prediction of Berosus, the father of astrology.

When those who remained, and who constituted the great majority of the membership, had quieted down, the president remarked that the interruption which they had just experienced was quite in line with all the other proceedings of the disturbers of public tranquillity who, under the lead of a crazy American charlatan, were trying to deceive the ignorant multitude. But they would find themselves seriously in error if they imagined that their absurd ideas were going to be "taken over" in England.

"I dare say," he concluded, "that there is some scheme behind it all."



"Another American 'trust'!" cried a voice.

The proceedings were finally brought to an end, but not before a modest member had risen in his place and timidly remarked that there was one question that he would like to put to the chair—one thing that did not seem to have been made quite clear—"Where *were* the planets now?"

A volley of hoots, mingled with a few "hears!" constituted the only reply.

Scenes not altogether unlike this occurred in the other great learned societies—astronomical, meteorological, and geological. The official representatives of science were virtually unanimous in condemnation of Cosmo Versál, and in persistent assertion that nothing that had occurred was inexplicable by known laws. But in no instance did they make it clear to anybody precisely what were the laws that they invoked, or how it happened that Cosmo Versál had been able to predict so many strange things which everybody knew really had come to pass, such as the sudden storms and the great darkness.

We are still, it must not be forgotten, dealing with a time anterior to the rising of the sea.

The Paris Academy of Sciences voted that the subject was unworthy of serious investigation, and similar action was taken in Berlin, Leningrad, Vienna, and elsewhere.

But among the people at large universal alarm prevailed, and nothing was so eagerly read as the despatches from New York, detailing the proceedings of Cosmo Versál, and describing the progress of his great levium ark. In England many procured copies of Cosmo's circulars, in which the proper methods to be pursued in the construction of arks were carefully set forth. Some set to work to build such vessels; but, following British methods of construction, they doubted the weight of everything, with the result that, if Cosmo had seen what they were about he would have told them that such arks would go to the bottom faster than to the top.

**I**N Germany the balloon idea took full possession of the public mind. Germany had long before developed the greatest fleet of dirigibles in existence, preferring them to every other type of flying apparatus. It was reported that if worst came to worst the best manner of meeting the emergency would be by the multiplication of dirigibles and the increase of their capacity.

The result was that a considerable number of wealthy Germans began the construction of such vessels. But when interviewed they denied that they were preparing for a flood. They said that they simply wished to enlarge and increase the number of their pleasure craft. All this was in contemptuous defiance of the warning which Cosmo Versál had been careful to insert in his circulars, that "balloons and aeros of all kinds will be of no use whatever; the only safety will be found in arks, and they must be provisioned for at least five years."

The most remarkable thing of all happened in France. It might naturally have been expected that a Frenchman who thought it worth his while to take any precautions against the extinction of the human race, when it was a question of a flood, would have turned to the aero, for from the commencement of aerial navigation French engineers had maintained an unquestionable superiority in the construction and perfection of that kind of machine.

Their aeros could usually fly longer and carry more dead weight than those of any other nation. In the transoceanic aero races which occasionally took place

the French furnished the most daring and the most frequently successful competitors.

Then, too, the French mind is masterly in appreciation of details, and Cosmo Versál's reasons for condemning the aero and the balloon as means of escaping the flood were promptly divined. In the first place it was seen that no kind of airship could be successfully provisioned for a flight of indefinite length, and in the second place the probable strength of the winds, or the crushing weight of the descending water, in case, as Cosmo predicted, a nebula should condense upon the earth, would either sweep an aero or a balloon to swift destruction, or carry it down into the waves like a water-soaked butterfly.

**A**CCORDINGLY, when a few Frenchmen began seriously to consider the question of providing a way of escape from the flood—always supposing, for the sake of argument, that there would be a flood—they got together, under the leadership of an engineer officer named Yves de Beauxchamps, and discussed the matter in all its aspects. They were not long in arriving at the conclusion that the best thing that could possibly be done would be to construct a *submarine*.

In fact, this was almost an inevitable conclusion for them, because before the abandonment of submarines in war on account of their *too* great powers of destruction—a circumstance which had also led to the prohibition of the use of explosive bombs in the aerial navies—the French had held the lead in the construction and management of submersible vessels, even more decisively than in the case of aeros.

"A large submarine," said de Beauxchamps, "into whose construction a certain amount of levium entered, would possess manifest advantages over Versál's Ark. It could be provisioned to any extent desired, it would escape the discomforts of the waves, winds, and flooding rain, and it could easily rise to the surface whenever that might be desirable for change of air. It would have all the amphibious advantages of a whale."

The others were decidedly of de Beauxchamps's opinion, and it was enthusiastically resolved that a vessel of this kind should be begun at once.

"If we don't need it for a flood," said de Beauxchamps, "we can employ it for a pleasure vessel to visit the wonders of the deep. We will then make a reality of that marvelous dream of our countryman of old, that prince of dreamers, Jules Verne."

"Let's name it for him!" cried one.

"Admirable! Charming!" they all exclaimed "*Vie le 'Jules Verne'!*"

Within two days, but without the knowledge of the public, the keel of the submersible "*Jules Verne*" was laid. But we shall hear of that remarkable craft again.

While animated, and in some cases violent, discussions were taking place in the learned circles of Europe, and a few were making ready in such manner as they deemed most effective for possible contingencies, waves of panic swept over the remainder of the Old World. There were yet hundreds of millions in Africa and Asia to whom the advantages of scientific instruction had not extended, but who, while still more or less under the dominion of ignorance and superstition, were in touch with the *news* of the whole planet.

The rumor that a wise man in America had discovered that the world was to be drowned was not long in reaching the most remote recesses of the African forests and of the boundless steppes of the greater continent, and, however it might be ridiculed or received with skeptical smiles in the strongholds of civilization, it met with ready belief in less enlightened minds.



The Atlantic poured through the narrow pass of the Strait of Gibraltar, leaving only the Lion Rock visible above the waves.

At length the ocean found its way into the Desert of Sahara, large areas of which had been reclaimed and were inhabited by a considerable population of prosperous farmers. Nowhere did the sudden coming of the flood cause greater consternation than here—strange as that statement may seem. The people had an undefined idea that they were protected by a sort of barrier from any possible inundation.

It had taken so many years and such endless labor to introduce into the Sahara sufficient water to transform its potentially rich soil into arable land that the thought of any sudden superabundance of that element was far from the minds of the industrious agriculturists. They had heard of the inundations caused by the melting of the mountain snows elsewhere, but there were no snow-clad mountains near them to be feared.

Accordingly, when a great wave of water came rushing upon them, surmounted, where it swept over yet unredeemed areas of the desert, by immense clouds of whirling dust, that darkened the air and recalled the old days of the simoon, they were taken completely by surprise. But as the water rose higher they tried valiantly to escape.

### CHAPTER XIII

#### Strange Freaks of the Nebula

**W**HE return to follow the fortunes of Cosmo Versál's Ark.

After he had so providentially picked up the crazed billionaire, Amos Blank, and his three companions, Cosmo ordered Capt. Arms to bear away south-eastward, bidding farewell to the drowned shores of America, and sailing directly over the lower part of Manhattan, and western Long Island. The navigation was not easy, and if the ark had not been a marvelously buoyant vessel it would not long have survived. At the beginning the heavy and continuous rain kept down the waves, and the surface of the sea was comparatively smooth, but after a while a curious phenomenon began to be noticed; immense billows would suddenly appear, rushing upon the ark now from one direction and now from another, canting it over at a dangerous angle, and washing almost to the top of the huge ellipsoid of the dome. At such times it was difficult for anybody to maintain a footing, and there was great terror among the passengers. But Cosmo, and stout Capt. Arms, remained at their post, relieving one another at frequent intervals, and never entrusting the sole charge of the vessel to any of their lieutenants.

Cosmo Versál himself was puzzled to account for the origin of the mighty billows, for it seemed impossible that they could be raised by the wind notwithstanding the fact that it blew at times with hurricane force. But at last the explanation came of itself.

Both Cosmo and the captain happened to be on the bridge together when they saw ahead something that looked like an enormous column as black as ink, standing upright on the surface of the water. A glance showed that it was in swift motion, and, more than that, was approaching in a direct line toward the Ark. In less than two minutes it was upon them.

The instant that it met the Ark a terrific roaring deafened them, and the rounded front of the dome beneath their eyes disappeared under a deluge of descending water so dense that the vision could not penetrate it. In another half minute the great vessel seemed to have been driven to the bottom of the sea. But for the peculiar construction of the shelter of the bridge its

occupants would have been drowned at their post. As it was they were as if they had been plunged overboard. Impenetrable darkness surrounded them.

But the buoyant vessel shook itself, rolled from side to side, and rose with a staggering motion until it seemed to be poised on the summit of a watery mountain. Immediately the complete darkness passed, the awful downpour ceased, although the rain still fell in torrents, and the Ark began to glide downward with sickening velocity, as if it were sliding down a liquid slope.

It was a considerable time before the two men, clinging to the supports of the bridge, were able to maintain their equilibrium sufficiently to render it possible to utter a few connected words. As soon as he could speak with reasonable comfort Cosmo exclaimed:

"Now I see what it is that causes the billows, but it is a phenomenon that I should never have anticipated. It is all due to the nebula. Evidently there are irregularities of some kind in its constitution which cause the formation of almost solid masses of water in the atmosphere—suspended lakes, as it were—which then plunge down in a body as if a hundred thousand Niagaras were pouring together from the sky.

"These sudden accessions of water raise stupendous waves which sweep off in every direction, and that explains the billows that we have encountered."

"Well, this nebular navigation beats all my experience," said Capt. Arms, wiping the water out of his eyes. "I was struck by a waterspout once in the Indian ocean, and I thought that that capped the climax, but it was only a catspaw to this. Give me a clear offing and I don't care how much wind blows, but blow me if I want to get under any more lakes in the sky."

"We'll have to take whatever comes," retorted Cosmo, "but I don't think there is much danger of running directly into many of these downpours as we did into this one. Now that we know what they are, we can, perhaps, detect them long enough in advance to steer out of their way. Anyhow, we've got a good vessel under our feet. Anything but an ark of levium would have gone under for good, and if I had not covered the vessel with the dome there would have been no chance for a soul in her."

As a matter of fact, the Ark did not encounter any more of the columns of descending water, but the frequent billows that were met showed that they were careering over the face of the sea in every direction.

**B**UT there was another trouble of a different nature. The absence of sun and stars deprived them of the ordinary means of discovering their place. They could only make a rough guess as to the direction in which they were going. The compasses gave them considerable assistance, and they had perfect chronometers, but these latter could be of no use without celestial observations of some kind.

At length Cosmo devised a means of obtaining observations that were of sufficient value to partially serve their purpose. He found that while the disk of the sun was completely hidden in the watery sky, yet it was possible to determine its location by means of the varying intensity of the light.

Where the sun was, a concentrated glow appeared, shading gradually off on all sides. With infinite pains Cosmo, assisted by the experience of the captain, succeeded in determining the center of maximum illumination, and, assuming that to represent the true place of the sun, they got something in the nature of observations for altitude and azimuth, and Capt. Arms even drew on his chart "Sumner lines" to determine the position of the Ark, although he smiled at the thought



of their absurd inaccuracy. Still, it was the best they could do, and was better than nothing at all.

They kept a log going also, although, as the captain pointed out, it was not of much use to know how fast they were traveling, since they could not know the precise direction, within a whole point of the compass, or perhaps several points.

"Besides," he remarked, "what do we know of the currents? This is not the old Atlantic. If I could feel the Gulf Stream I'd know whereabouts I was, but these currents come from all directions, and a man might as well try to navigate in a tub of boiling water."

"But we can, at least, keep working eastward," said Cosmo. "My idea is first to make enough southing to get into the latitude of the Sahara Desert, and then run directly east, so as to cross Africa where there are no mountains, and where we shall be certain of having plenty of water under our keel."

"Then, having got somewhere in the neighborhood of Suez, we can steer down into the region of the Indian ocean, and circle round south of the Himalayas. I want to keep an eye on those mountains, and stay around the place where they disappear, because that will be the first part of the earth to emerge from the flood and it is there that we shall ultimately make land."

"Well, we're averaging eight knots," said the captain, "and at that rate we ought to be in the longitude of the African coast in about twenty days. How high will the water stand then?"

"My gages show," replied Cosmo, "that the regular fall amounts to exactly the same thing as at the beginning—two inches a minute. Of course the spouts increase the amount locally, but I don't think that they add materially to the general rise of the flood. Two inches per minute means 4,800 feet in twenty days. That'll be sufficient to make safe navigation for us all the way across northern Africa. We'll have to be careful in getting out into the Indian Ocean area, for there are mountains on both sides that might give us trouble, but the higher ones will still be in sight, and they will serve to indicate the location of the lower ranges already submerged, but not covered deeply enough to afford safe going over them."

"All right," said Captain Arms, "you're the commodore, but if we don't hang our timbers on the Mountain of the Moon, or the Alps, or old Ararat, I'm a porpoise. Why can't you keep circling round at a safe distance, in the middle of the Atlantic, until all these reefs get a good depth of water on 'em?"

"Because," Cosmo replied, "even if we keep right on now it will probably take two months, allowing for delays in getting around dangerous places, to come within sight of the Himalayas, and in two months the flood will have risen nearly 15,000 feet, thus hiding many of the landmarks. If we should hold off here a couple of months before starting eastward nothing but the one highest peak on the globe would be left in sight by the time we arrived there, and that wouldn't be anything more than a rock, so that with the uncertainty of our navigation we might not be able to find it at all. I must know the spot where Tibet sinks, and then manage to keep in its neighborhood."

That ended the argument.

"Give me a safe port, with lights and bearings and I'll undertake to hit it anywhere in the two hemispheres, but blow me if I fancy steering for the top of the world by dead reckoning, or no reckoning at all," Capt Arms said.

At night, of course, they had not even the slight advantage that their observations of the probable place of the sun gave them when it was above the horizon. Then they had to go solely by the indications of the

compass. Still, they forged steadily ahead, and when they got into what they deemed the proper latitude, they ran for the site of the drowned Sahara.

After about a week the billowing motion caused by the descent of the "lakes in the sky" ceased entirely, to their great delight, but the lawless nebula was now preparing another surprise for them.

On the ninth night after their departure from their lodgment on the Palisades Cosmo Versál was sleeping in his bunk close by the bridge, where he could be called in an instant, dreaming perhaps of the glories of the new world that was to emerge out of the deluge, when he was abruptly awakened by the voice of Capt. Arms, who appeared to be laboring under uncontrollable excitement.

"Tumble up quicker'n you ever did in your life!" he exclaimed. "The flood's over!"

Cosmo sprang out of bed and pulled on his coat in a second.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Look for yourself," said the captain, pointing overhead.

Cosmo Versál glanced up and saw the sky blue with stars! The rain had entirely ceased. The surface of the sea was almost as smooth as glass, though rising and falling slowly, with a long, rolling motion. The Ark rode steadily, shivering, like an ocean liner, under the impulses of its engines, and the sudden silence, succeeding the ceaseless roar of the downpour, which had never been out of their ears from the start of the voyage, seemed supernatural.

"When did this happen?" he demanded.

"It began not more than five minutes ago. I was just saying to myself that we ought to be somewhere near the center of the old Atlantic as it used to be, and wondering whether we had got our course laid right to go fairly between the Canaries and the Cape de Verde, for I didn't want to be harpooned by Gogo or the Peak of Teneriffe, when all of a sudden there came a lightening in the nor'east and the stars broke out there."

"I was so set aback that I didn't do anything for two or three minutes but stare at the stars. Then the rain stopped and a curtain seemed to roll off the sky, and in a minute more it was clear down to the horizon all round. Then I got my wits together and ran to call you."

Cosmo glanced around and above, seeming to be as much astonished as the captain had been. He rubbed his huge bald dome and looked all round again before speaking. At last he said:

"It's the nebula again. There must be a hole in it."

"Its whole bottom's knocked out, I reckon," said the captain. "Maybe it's run out of water—sort o' squeezed itself dry."

Cosmo shook his head.

"We are not yet in the heart of it," he said. "It is evident to me now that what I took for the nucleus was only a close-coiled spiral, and we've run out of that, but the worst is yet to come. When we strike the center, then we'll catch it, and there'll be no more intermissions."

"How long will that be?" asked Captain Arms.

"It may be a week and it may be a month, though I hardly think it will be so long as that. The earth is going about twelve miles a second—that's more than a million miles a day—directly toward the center of the nebula. It has taken ten days to go through the spiral that we have encountered, making that about ten million miles thick. It's not likely that the gap between this spiral and the nucleus of the nebula is more than thirty million miles across, at the most; so you see we'll prob-



ably be in the nucleus within a month, and possibly much less than a month."

Captain Arms took a chew of tobacco.

"We can get our bearings now," he remarked. "Look, there's the moon just rising, and on my word, she is going to occult Aldebaran within an hour. I'll get an observation for longitude, and another on Polaris for latitude. No running on submerged mountains for us now."

The captain was as good as his word, and when his observations had been made and the calculations completed he announced that the position of the Ark was: Latitude, 16 degrees 10 minutes north; longitude, 42 degrees 28 minutes west.

"Lucky for us," he exclaimed, "that the sky cleared. If we'd kept on as we were going we'd have struck the Cape de Verde, and if that had happened at night we'd probably have left our bones on a drowning volcano. We ought to have been ten or twelve degrees farther north to make a safe passage over the Sahara. What's the course now? Are you still for running down the Himalaya mountains?"

"I'll decide later what to do," said Cosmo Versál. "Make your nothing, and then we'll cruise around a little and see what is best to be done."

When day came on, brilliant with sunshine, and the astonished passengers, hurrying out of their bunks, crowded about the now opened gangways and the port holes, which Cosmo had also ordered to be opened, and gazed with delight upon the smooth blue sea, the utmost enthusiasm took possession of them.

The flood was over!

They were sure of it, and they shook hands with one another and congratulated themselves and hurrahed, and gave cheers for the Ark and cheers for Cosmo Versál. Then they began to think of their drowned homes and of their lost friends, and sadness followed joy. Cosmo was mobbed by eager inquirers wherever he made his appearance.

Was it all over for good? Would the flood dry up in a few days? How long would it be before New York would be free of water? Were they going right back there? Did he think there was a chance that many had escaped in boats and ships? Couldn't they pick up the survivors if they hurried back?

Cosmo tried to check the enthusiasm.

"It's too early for rejoicing," he assured them. "It's only a break in the nebula. We've got a respite for a short time, but there's worse coming. The drowning of the world will proceed. We are the only survivors, except perhaps some of those who inhabited the highlands. Everything less than 2,400 feet above the former level of the sea is now under water. When the flood begins again it will keep on until it is six miles deep over the old sea margins."

"Why not go back and try to rescue those who you say may have found safety on the highlands?" asked one.

"I have chosen my company," he said, "and I had good reasons for the choice I made. I have already added to the number, because simple humanity compelled me, but I can take no more. The quantity of provisions aboard the Ark is not greater than will be needed by ourselves. If the rest of the world is drowned it is not my fault. I did my best to warn them. Besides, we could do nothing in the way of rescue, even if we should go back for that purpose. We could not approach the submerged plateaus. We would be aground before we got within sight of them."

These words went far to change the current of feeling among the passengers. When they learned that there would be danger for themselves in the course

that had been proposed their humanity proved to be less strong than their desire for self-preservation. Nevertheless, as we shall see, the Ark ultimately went back to America, though not for any reason that had yet been suggested.

Meanwhile the unexpected respite furnished by the sudden cessation of the downpour from the sky had other important results, to which we now turn.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Escape of the President

WHEN Professor Abiel Pludder indited his savage response to Cosmo Versál's invitation to become one of the regenerators of mankind by embarking in the Ark, he was expressing his professional prejudice rather than his intellectual conviction. As Cosmo had remarked, Pludder had a good brain and great scientific acuteness, and, although he did not believe in the nebular theory of a flood, and was obstinately opposed to everything that was not altogether regular and according to recognized authority in science, yet he could not shut his eyes to the fact that something was going wrong in the machinery of the heavens. But it annoyed him to find that his own explanations were always falsified by the event, while Cosmo Versál seemed to have a superhuman foreglimpse of whatever happened.

His pride would not allow him to recede from the position that he had taken, but he could not free himself from a certain anxiety about the future. After he had refused Cosmo Versál's invitation, the course of events strengthened this anxiety. He found that the official meteorologists were totally unable to account for the marvelous vagaries of the weather.

Finally, when the news came of tremendous floods in the north, and of the overflowing of Hudson Bay, he secretly determined to make some preparations of his own. He still rejected the idea of a watery nebula, but he began to think it possible that all the lowlands of the earth might be overflowed by the sea, and by the melting of mountain snows and glaciers, together with deluging rainfall. After what had passed, he could not think of making any public confession of his change of heart, but his sense of humanity compelled him to give confidential warning to his friends that it would be well to be prepared to get on high ground at a moment's notice.

He was on the point of issuing, but without his signature, an official statement cautioning the public against unprecedented inundations, when the first tidal wave arrived on the Atlantic coast and rendered any utterance of that kind unnecessary. People's eyes were opened, and now they would look out for themselves.

Pludder's private preparations amounted to no more than the securing of a large express aero, in which, if the necessity for suddenly leaving Washington should arise, he intended to take flight, together with President Samson, who was his personal friend, and a number of other close friends, with their families. He did not think that it would be necessary, in any event, to go farther than the mountains of Virginia.

The rising of the sea, mounting higher at each return, at length convinced him that the time had come to get away. Hundreds of air craft had already departed westward, not only from Washington, but from New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Boston, and other seaboard cities before Professor Pludder assembled his friends by telephone on the Capitol grounds, where his aero was waiting.



The lower streets of the city were under water from the overflow of the Potomac, which was backed up by the influx of the Atlantic into Chesapeake Bay, and the most distressing scenes were enacted there, people fleeing in the utmost disorder toward higher ground, carrying their children and some of their household goods, and uttering doleful cries. Many, thinking it the best way to escape, embarked in frail boats on the river, which was running upstream with frightful velocity, and rising perceptibly higher every second. Most of these boats were immediately overturned or swamped.

If the start had been delayed but a little longer, the aero would have been mobbed by the excited people, who uttered yells of disappointment and rage when they saw it rise from its tower and sail over the city. It was the last air-ship that left Washington, and it carried the last persons who escaped from the national capital before the downpour from the atmosphere began which put an end to all possibility of getting away.

There were on board, in addition to a crew of three, twenty-two persons. These included President Samson, with his wife and three children, seven other men with their families, making, together, sixteen persons, and Professor Pludder, who had no family.

More because they wished to escape from the painful scenes beneath them than because they deemed that there was any occasion for particular haste, they started off at high speed, and it was probably lucky for them that this speed was maintained after they had left Washington out of sight. They rapidly approached the Blue Ridge in the neighborhood of Luray, and Pludder was about to order a landing there, as night was approaching, when with great suddenness the sky filled with dense clouds and a tremendous downpour began. This was the same phenomenon which has already been described as following closely the attack at New York on Cosmo Versál's Ark.

The aero, luckily, was one of the best type, and well covered, so that they were protected from the terrible force of the rain, but in the tumult there could be no more thought of descending. It would have been impossible to make a landing in the midst of the storm and the pouring water, which rushed in torrents down the mountainside. Professor Pludder was a brave man and full of resources when driven into a corner. Being familiar with the construction and management of aeros, for he had been educated as an engineer, he now took charge of the airship.

WITHIN twenty minutes after the sky had opened its batteries—for the rain had almost the force of plunging shot—a mighty wind arose, and the aero, pitching, tossing, and dipping like a mad thing, was driven with frightful speed eastward. This wild rush continued for more than an hour. By this time it was full night, and the pouring rain around them was as impenetrable to the sight as a black wall.

They had their electric lamps inside, and their search-lights, but it was impossible to tell where they were. Pludder turned the search-light downward, but he could not make out the features of the ground beneath them. It is likely that they were driven at least as far as Chesapeake Bay, and they may have passed directly over Washington.

At last, however, the wind slewed round, and began to blow with undiminished violence from the northeast. Plunging and swerving, and sometimes threatened with a complete somersault, the aero hurried away in its crazy flight, while its unfortunate inmates clung to one another, and held on by any object within reach, in the

endeavor to keep from being dashed against the metallic walls.

The crew of the aero were picked men, but no experience could have prepared them for the work which they now had to do. Without the ready brain of Professor Pludder to direct their efforts, and without his personal exertions, their aerial ship would have been wrecked within a quarter of an hour after the storm struck it. He seemed transformed into another person. Hatless and coatless and streaming with water, he worked like a demon. He was ready at each emergency with some advice which, under his direction, had the effect of magic.

A hundred times the aero plunged for the ground, but was saved and turned upward again just as it seemed on the point of striking. Up and down, right and left, it ran and pitched and whirled, like a cork in a whirlpool. Sometimes it actually skimmed the ground, plowing its way through a torrent of rushing water, and yet it rose again and was saved from destruction.

This terrible contest lasted another hour after the turning of the wind, and then the latter died out. Relieved from its pressure, the aero ran on with comparative ease. Professor Pludder, suspecting that they might now be getting into a mountainous district, made every effort to keep the craft at a high elevation, and this, notwithstanding the depressing force of the rain, they succeeded in doing. After the dying out of the wind they kept on, by the aid of their propellers, in the same direction in which it had been driving them, because, in the circumstances, one way was as good as another.

The terrible discomfort of the President and his companions in the cabin of the aero was greatly relieved by the cessation of the wind, but still they were in a most unfortunate state. The rain, driven by the fierce blasts, had penetrated through every crevice, and they were drenched to the skin. No one tried to speak, for it would have been almost impossible to make oneself heard amid the uproar. They simply looked at one another in dismay and prayed for safety.

Professor Pludder, not now compelled to spend every moment in the management of the craft, entered the cabin occasionally, pressed the hand of the President, smiled encouragingly on the women and children, and did all he could, in pantomime, to restore some degree of confidence. Inside, the lights were aglow, but outside it was as dark as pitch, except where the broad finger of the search-light, plunging into the mass of tumbling water, glittered and flashed.

The awful night seemed endless, but at last a pale illumination appeared in the air, and they knew that day had come. The spectacle of the sky deluge was now so terrible that it struck cold even to their already benumbed hearts. The atmosphere seemed to have been turned into a mighty cataract thundering down upon the whole face of the earth. Now that they could see as well as hear, the miracle of the preservation of the aero appeared incredible.

As the light slowly brightened, Professor Pludder, constantly on the outlook, caught a glimpse of a dark, misty object ahead. It loomed up so suddenly, and was already so close, that before he could sufficiently alter the course of the aero, it struck with such violence as to crush the forward end of the craft and break one of the planes. Everybody was pitched headforemost, those inside falling on the flooring, while Pludder and the three men of the crew were thrown out upon a mass of rocks. All were more or less seriously injured, but none was killed or totally disabled.

Pludder sprang to his feet, and, slipping and plunging amid the downpour, managed to get back to the



wreck and aid the President and the others to get upon their feet.

"We're lodged on a mountain!" he yelled. "Stay inside, under the shelter of the roof!"

The three men who, together with the professor, had been precipitated out among the rocks, also scrambled in, and there they stood, or sat, the most disconsolate and despairing group of human beings that ever the eye of an overseeing Providence looked down upon.

The President presented the most pitiable sight of all. Like the rest, his garments were sopping, his eyes were bloodshot, his face was ghastly, and his tall silk hat, which he had jammed down upon his brow, had been softened by the water and crushed by repeated blows into the form of a closed accordion. Of the women and children it is needless to speak; no description could convey an idea of their condition.

In these circumstances, the real strength of Professor Abiel Pludder's mind was splendidly displayed. He did not lose his head, and he comprehended the situation, and what it was necessary to do, in a flash. He got out some provisions and distributed them to the company, in some cases actually forcing them to eat. With his own hands he prepared coffee, with the apparatus always carried by express aeros, and made them drink it.

When all had thus been refreshed he approached President Samson and shouted in his ear:

"We shall have to stay here until the downpour ceases. To guard against the effects of a tempest, if one should arise, we must secure the aero in its place. For that I need the aid of every man in the party. We have, fortunately, struck in a spot on the mountain where we are out of the way of the torrents of water that are pouring down through the ravines on either side. We can make our lodgment secure, but we must go to work immediately."

Stimulated by his example, the President and the others set to work, and with great difficulty, for they had to guard their eyes and nostrils from the driving rain, which, sometimes, in spite of their precautions, nearly smothered them, they succeeded in fastening the aero to the rocks by means of metallic cables taken from its stores. When this work was finished they returned under the shelter of the cabin roof and lay down, exhausted. So worn out were they that all of them quickly fell into a troubled sleep.

It would be needless to relate in detail the sufferings, mental and physical, that they underwent during the next ten days. While they were hanging there on the mountain the seaboard cities of the world were drowned, and Cosmo Versál's Ark departed on the remarkable voyage that has been described in a former chapter. They had plenty of provisions, for the aero had been well stored, but partly through precaution and partly because of lack of appetite they ate sparingly. The electric generators of the aero had not been injured in the wreck of the craft, and they were able to supply themselves with sufficient heat and with light inside the cabin at night.

Once they had a strange visitor—a half-drowned bear, which had struggled up the mountain from its den somewhere below—but that was the only living creature beside themselves that they saw. After gazing wistfully at the aero from the top of a rock the poor bear stumbled into one of the torrents that poured furiously down on each side, and was swept from their sight.

**F**ORTUNATELY, the wind that they had anticipated did not come, but frequently they saw or heard the roaring downpours of solid watery columns like those that had so much astonished Cosmo Versál and

Captain Arms in the midst of the Atlantic, but none came very near them.

Professor Pludder ventured out from time to time, clambering a little way up and down the projecting ridge of the mountain on which they were lodged, and at length was able to assure his companions that they were on the northwestern face of Mount Mitchell, the highest peak of the Appalachian range. With the aid of his pocket aneroid, making allowance for the effect of the lifting of the whole atmosphere by the flood, and summoning his knowledge of the locality—for he had explored, in former years, all the mountains in this region—he was elevated about four thousand feet above the former level of the sea.

At first their range of vision did not allow them to see the condition of the valleys below them, but as the water rose higher it gradually came into view. It crept steadily up the slopes beneath, which had already been stripped of their covering of trees and vegetation by the force of the descending torrents, until on the tenth day it had arrived almost within reach. Since, as has just been said, they were four thousand feet above the former level of the sea, it will be observed that the water must have risen much more rapidly than the measurements of Cosmo Versál indicated. Its average rate of rise had been three instead of two inches per minute, and the world was buried deeper than Cosmo thought. The cause of his error will be explained later.

The consternation of the little party when they thus beheld the rapid drowning of the world below them, and saw no possibility of escape for themselves if the water continued to rise, as it evidently would do, cannot be depicted. Some of them were driven insane, and were with difficulty prevented by those who retained their senses from throwing themselves into the flood.

Pludder was the only one who maintained a command over his nerves, although he now at last *believed in the nebula*. He recognized that there was no other possible explanation of the flood than that which Cosmo Versál had offered long before it began. In his secret heart he had no expectation of ultimate escape, yet he was strong enough to continue to encourage his companions with hopes which he could not himself entertain.

When, after nightfall on the tenth day, the water began to lap the lower parts of the aero, he was on the point of persuading the party to clamber up the rocks in search of some shelter above, but as he stepped out of the door of the cabin to reconnoiter the way, with the aid of the search-light which he had turned up along the ridge, he was astonished to find the rain rapidly diminishing in force; and a few minutes later it ceased entirely, and the stars shone out.

The sudden cessation of the roar upon the roof brought everybody to his feet, and before Professor Pludder could communicate the good news all were out under the sky, rejoicing and offering thanks for their delivery. The women were especially affected. They wept in one another's arms, or convulsively clasped their children to their breasts.

At length the President found his voice.

"What has happened?" he asked.

Professor Pludder, with the new light that had come to him, was as ready with an explanation as Cosmo Versál himself had been under similar circumstances. "We must have run out of the nebula."

"The nebula!" returned Mr. Samson in surprise. "Has there been a nebula, then?"

"Without question," was the professor's answer. "Nothing but an encounter with a watery nebula could have had such a result."

"But you always said—" began the President.



"Yes," Pludder broke in, "but one may be in error sometimes."

"Then, Cosmo Versál——"

"Let us not discuss Cosmo Versál," exclaimed Professor Pludder, with a return of his old dictatorial manner.

## CHAPTER XV

### Professor Pludder's Device

**D**AY dawned brilliantly on Mount Mitchell and revealed to the astonished eyes of the watchers an endless expanse of water, gleaming and sparkling in the morning sunlight. It was a spectacle at once beautiful and fearful, and calculated to make their hearts sink with pity no less than with terror. But for a time they were distracted from the awful thoughts which such a sight must inspire by anxiety concerning themselves. They could not drive away the fear that, at any moment, the awful clouds might return and the terrible downpour be resumed.

But Professor Pludder, whose comprehension of the cause of the deluge was growing clearer the more he thought about it, did not share the anxiety of the President and the others.

"The brightness of the sky," he said, "shows that there is no considerable quantity of condensing vapor left in the atmosphere. If the earth has run out of the nebula, that is likely to be the end of the thing. If there is more of the nebulous matter in surrounding space we may miss it entirely, or, if not, a long time would elapse before we came upon it.

"The gaps that exist in nebulae are millions of miles across, and the earth would require days and weeks to go such distances, granting that it were traveling in the proper direction. I think it altogether probable that this nebula, which must be a small one as such things go, consists of a single mass, and that, having traversed it, we are done with it. We are out of our troubles."

"Well, hardly," said the President. "Here we are, prisoners on a mountain, with no way of getting down, the whole land beneath being turned into a sea. We can't stay here indefinitely. For how long a time are we provisioned?"

"We have compressed food enough to last this party a month," replied Professor Pludder; "that is to say, if we are sparing of it. For water we cannot lack, since this that surrounds us is not salt, and if it were we could manage to distill it. But, of course, when I said we were out of our troubles I meant only that there was no longer any danger of being swallowed up by the flood. It is true that we cannot think of remaining here. We must get off."

"But how? Where can we go?"

Professor Pludder thought a long time before he answered this question. Finally he said, measuring his words:

"The water is four thousand feet above the former level of the sea. There is no land sufficiently lofty to rise above it this side of the Colorado plateau."

"And how far is that?"

"Not less than eleven hundred miles in an air line."

The President shuddered.

"Then, all this vast country of ours from here to the feet of the Rocky Mountains is now under water thousands of feet deep!"

"There can be no doubt of it. The Atlantic Coast States, the Southern States, the Mississippi Valley, the region of the Great Lakes, and Canada are now a part of the Atlantic Ocean."

"And all the great cities—gone! Merciful Father! What a thought!"

The President mused for a time, and gradually a frown came upon his brow. He glanced at Professor Pludder with a singular look. Then his cheek reddened, and an angry expression came into his eyes. Suddenly he turned to the professor and said sternly:

"You said you did not wish to discuss Cosmo Versál. I should not think you would! Who predicted this deluge? Did *you*?"

"I——" began Professor Pludder, taken aback by the President's manner.

"Oh, yes," interrupted the President, "I know what you would say. You didn't predict it because you didn't see it coming. But *why* didn't you see it? What have we got observatories and scientific societies for if they can't *see* or comprehend anything? Didn't Cosmo Versál warn you? Didn't he tell you where to look, and what to look for? Didn't he show you his proofs?"

"We thought they were fallacious," stammered Professor Pludder.

"You *thought* they were fallacious—well, *were* they fallacious? Does this spectacle of a nation drowned look 'fallacious' to you? Why didn't you study the matter until you understood it? Why did you issue officially, and with my ignorant sanction—may God forgive me for my blindness!—statement after statement, assuring the people that there was no danger—statements that were even abusive towards him who alone should have been heard?"

"And yet, as now appears, you knew nothing about it. Millions upon millions have perished through your obstinate opposition to the truth. They might have saved themselves if they had been permitted to listen to the reiterated warnings of Cosmo Versál.

"Oh, if I had only listened to him, and issued a proclamation as he urged me to do! But I followed *your* advice—you, in whose learning and pretended science I put blind faith! *Abiel Pludder, I would not have upon my soul the weight that now rests on yours for all the wealth that the lost world carried down into its watery grave!*"

As the President ceased speaking he turned away and sank upon a rock, pressing his hands upon his throat to suppress the sob that broke forth despite his efforts. His form shook like an aspen.

The others crowded around excitedly, some of the women in hysterics, and the men not knowing what to do or say. Professor Pludder, completely overwhelmed by the suddenness and violence of the attack, went off by himself and sat down with his head in his hands. After a while he arose and approached the President, who had not moved from his place on the rock.

"George," he said—they had known each other from boyhood—"I have made a terrible mistake. And yet I was not alone in it. The majority of my colleagues were of my opinion, as were all the learned societies of Europe. No such thing as a watery nebula has ever been known to science. It was inconceivable."

"Some of your colleagues did not think so," said the President, looking up.

"But they were not really convinced, and they were aware that they were flying in the face of all known laws."

"I am afraid," said the President dryly, "that science does not know all the laws of the universe yet."

"I repeat," resumed Professor Pludder, "that I made a fearful mistake. I have recognized the truth too late. I accept the awful burden of blame that rests upon me, and I now wish to do everything in my power to retrieve the consequences of my error."



The President arose and grasped the professor's hand.

"Forgive me, Abiel," he said, with emotion, "if I have spoken too much in the manner of a judge pronouncing sentence. I was overwhelmed by the thought of the inconceivable calamity that has come upon us. I believe that you acted conscientiously and according to your best lights, and it is not for any mortal to judge you for an error thus committed. Let us think only of what *we* must do now."

"To that thought, responded Professor Pludder, returning the pressure of the President's hand, "I shall devote all my energy. If I can save only this little party I shall have done something in the way of atonement."

IT was a deep humiliation for a man of Professor Pludder's proud and uncompromising nature to confess that he had committed an error more fearful in its consequences than had ever been laid at the door of a human being, but Cosmo Versál had rightly judged him when he assured Joseph Smith that Pludder was morally sound, and, in a scientific sense, had the root of the matter in him. When his mental vision was clear, and unclouded by prejudice, no one was more capable of high achievements.

He quickly proved his capacity now, as he had already proved it during the preceding adventures of the President's party. It was perfectly plain to him that their only chance was in getting to Colorado at the earliest possible moment. The eastern part of the continent was hopelessly buried, and even on the high plains of the Middle West the fury of the downpour might have spread universal disaster and destroyed nearly all the vegetation; but, in any event, it was there alone that the means of prolonging life could be sought.

With the problem squarely before his mind, he was not long in finding a solution. His first step was to make a thorough examination of the aero, with the hope that the damage that it had suffered might be repairable. He had all the tools that would be needed, as it was the custom for express aëros to carry a complete equipment for repairs; but unfortunately one of the planes of the aero was wrecked beyond the possibility of repair. He knew upon what delicate adjustments the safety of the modern airship depended, and he did not dare undertake a voyage with a lame craft.

Then the idea occurred to him of trying to escape by water. The aero was a machine of the very latest type, and made of levium, consequently it would float better than wood.

If the opposition of ship-builders, incited and backed by selfish interests, had not prevented the employment of levium in marine construction, millions of lives might now have been saved; but, as we have before said, only a few experimental boats of levium had been made.

Moreover, like all aëros intended for long trips, this one had what was called a boat-bottom," intended to enable it to remain afloat with its burden in case of an accidental fall into a large body of water. Pludder saw that this fact would enable him to turn the wreck into a raft.

It would only be necessary to reshape the craft a little, and this was the easier because the aero was put together in such a manner with screw-bolts and nuts that it could be articulated or disarticulated as readily as a watch. He had entire confidence in his engineering skill, and in the ability of the three experienced men of the crew to aid him. He decided to employ the planes for outriders, which would serve to increase the buoyancy and stability.

As soon as he had completed his plan in his mind he explained his intentions to the President. The latter and the other members of the party were at first as much startled as surprised by the idea of embarking on a voyage of eleven thousand miles in so questionable a craft, but Professor Pludder assured them that everything would go well.

"But how about the propulsion?" asked Mr. Samson. "You can't depend on the wind, and we've got no sails."

"I have thought that all out," said Pludder. "I shall use the engine, and rearrange one of the aerial screws so that it will serve for a propeller. I do not expect to get up any great speed, but if we can make only as much as two miles an hour we shall arrive on the borders of the Colorado upland, five thousand feet above sea, within about twenty-three days. We may be able to do better than that."

Nobody felt much confidence in this scheme except its inventor, but it appeared to be the only thing that could be done, and so they all fell to work, each aiding as best he could, and after four days of hard work the remarkable craft was ready for its adventurous voyage.

Professor Pludder had succeeded even better than he anticipated in transforming one of the aerial screws into a propeller. Its original situation was such that it naturally, as it were, fell into the proper place when the "hull" was partly submerged, and, the blades being made of concentric rows of small plates, there was no difficulty in reducing them to a manageable size. The position of the engine did not need to be changed at all.

The "outriders," made up of the discarded foils, promised to serve their purpose well, and the cabin remained for a comfortable "deck-house." A rudder had been contrived by an alteration of the one which had served for guiding the aero in its flights.

The water was close to their feet, and there was no great difficulty in pushing the affair off the rocks and getting it afloat. The women and children were first put aboard, and then the men scrambled in, and Pludder set the motors going. The improvised propeller churned and spluttered, but it did its work after a fashion, and, under a blue sky, in dazzling sunshine, with a soft southerly breeze fanning the strange sea that spread around them, they soon saw the bared rocks and deeply scored flanks of Mount Mitchell receding behind them.

They were delighted to find that they were making, at the very start, no less than three miles an hour. Pludder clapped his hands and exclaimed:

"This is capital! In but little over two weeks we shall be safe on the great plains. I have good hope that many have survived there, and that we shall find a plenty of everything needed. With the instruments that were aboard the aero I can make observations to determine our position, and I shall steer for the Pike's Peak region."

When the party had become accustomed to their situation, and had gained confidence in their craft by observing how buoyantly it bore them, they became almost cheerful in their demeanor. The children gradually lost all fear, and, with the thoughtless joy of childhood in the pleasures and wonders of the present moment, amused themselves in the cabin, and about the deck, which had been surrounded with guard lines made of wire cable.

The water was almost waveless, and, if no storm should arise, there appeared to be no reason for anxiety concerning the outcome of their adventure. But as they drove slowly on over the submerged range of the Great Smokies, and across the valleys of Eastern Tennessee, and then over the Cumberland range, and so out above the lowlands, they could not keep their



thoughts from turning to what lay beneath that fearful ocean. And occasionally something floated to the surface that wrenched their heart-strings and caused them to avert their faces.

Professor Pludder kept them informed of their location. Now they were over central Tennessee; now Nashville lay more than three thousand feet beneath their keel; now they were crossing the valley of the Tennessee River; now the great Mississippi was under them, hidden deep beneath the universal flood; now they were over the highlands of southern Missouri; and now over those of Kansas.

"George," said Professor Pludder one day, addressing the President, with more emotion than was often to be detected in his voice, "would you like to know what is beneath us now?"

"What is it, Abiel?"

"Our boyhood home—Wichita."

The President bowed his head upon his hands and groaned.

"Yes," continued Professor Pludder musingly, "there it lies, three thousand feet deep. There is the Arkansas, along whose banks we used to play, with its golden waters now mingling feebly with the mighty flood that covers them. There is the school house and the sandy road where we ran races barefoot in the hot summer dust. There is your father's house, and mine, and the homes of all our early friends—and where are *they*? Would to God that I had not been so blind!"

"But there was another not so blind," said the President, with something of the condemnatory manner of his former speech.

"I know it—I know it too well now," returned the professor. "But do not condemn me, George, for what I did not foresee and could not help."

"I am sorry," said the President sadly, "that you have awakened those old memories. But I do not condemn you, though I condemn your science—or your lack of science. But we can do nothing. Let us speak of it no more."

The weather was wonderful, considering what had so recently occurred. No clouds formed in the sky, there was only a gentle breeze stirring, at night, the heavens glittered with starry gems, and by day the sun shone so hotly that awnings were spread over those whose duties required them to be employed outside the shelter of the cabin. The improvised propeller and rudder worked to admiration, and some days they made as much as eighty miles in the twenty-four hours.

At length, on the fourteenth day of their strange voyage, they caught sight of a curiously shaped "pike" that projected above the horizon far to the west. At the same time they saw, not far away, toward the north and toward the south, a low line, like a sea-beach.

"We are getting into shallow water now," said Professor Pludder. "I have been following the course of the Arkansas in order to be sure of a sufficient depth, but now we must be very careful. We are close to the site of Las Animas, which is surrounded with land rising four thousand feet above sea level. If we should get aground there would be no hope for us. That peak in the distance is Pike's Peak."

"And what is that long line of beach that stretches on the north and south?" asked the President.

"It is the topographic line of four thousand feet," replied the professor.

"And we shall encounter it ahead."

"Yes, it makes a curve about Las Animas, and there the land lies at an average elevation of four thousand feet, until it takes another rise beyond Pueblo."

"But we cannot sail across this half-submerged area," said the President.

"There are depressions," Professor Pludder responded, "and I hope to be able to follow their traces until we reach land that still lies well above the water."

NEAR nightfall they got so close to the "beach" that they could hear the surf, not a thundering sound, but a soft, rippling wash of the slight waves. The water about them was ruddy with thick sediment. Professor Pludder did not dare to venture farther in the coming darkness, and he dropped overboard two of the aero's grapples, which he had heavily weighted and attached to wire cables. They took the ground at a depth of only ten feet. There was no wind and no perceptible current, and so they rode all night at anchor off this strangest of coasts.

At daybreak they pulled up their anchors, and went in search of the depressions of which the professor had spoken. So accurate was his topographic knowledge and so great his skill, that late in the afternoon they saw a tall chimney projecting above the water a little ahead.

"There's all that remains of Pueblo," said Professor Pludder.

They anchored again that night, and then next day, cautiously approaching a bluff that arose precipitously from the water, their hearts were gladdened by the sight of three men, standing on a bluff, excitedly beckoning to them, and shouting at the top of their voices.

## CHAPTER XVI

### Mutiny in the Ark!

WE left Cosmo Versál and his Ark full of the flower of mankind in the midst of what was formerly the Atlantic Ocean, but which had now expanded over so many millions of square miles which had once been the seats of vast empires, that to an eye looking at it with a telescope from Mars it would have been unrecognizable.

All of eastern North America, all of South America to the feet of the Andes, all but the highest mountains of Europe, nearly all of Africa, except some of the highlands of the south, all of northern and southwestern Asia, as well as the peninsula of India, all of China and the adjacent lands and islands except the lofty peaks, the whole of Australia, and the archipelagoes of the Pacific, had become parts of the floor of a mighty ocean which rolled unbroken from pole to pole.

The Great Deep had resumed its ancient reign, and what was left of the habitable globe presented to view only far separated islands and the serrated tops of such ranges as the Alps, the Caucasus, the Himalayas, and the Andes. The astonished inhabitants of the ocean depths now swam over the ruins of great cities, and brushed with their fins the chiseled capitals of columns that had supported the proudest structures of human hands.

We have seen how the unexpected arrest of the flood had left Cosmo uncertain as to the course that he ought to pursue. But he did not long remain in doubt. He was sure that the downpour would be resumed after an interval which at the most could not exceed a few weeks, and he resolved to continue his way toward the future land of promise in Asia.

But he thought that he would have time to turn his prow in the direction of Europe, for he felt a great desire to know by actual inspection to what height the water had attained. He was certain that it could not be less than he had estimated—the indications of his rain-gage had been too unvarying to admit of doubt on that point—but he had no means of direct measurement



since he could not sound the tremendous depths beneath the Ark.

After long meditation on the probable effects of the descending columns of water which he had seen, he concluded that they might have added more rapidly than he first supposed to the increase of the general level. Besides, he reflected that there was no proof that the general downpour might not have been greater over some parts of the earth than others. All these doubts could be dissipated if he could get a good look at some lofty mountain range, such as the Sierra Nevada of Spain, or the Pyrenees, or, if he could venture within sight of them, the Alps.

So he said to Captain Arms:

"Steer for the coast of Europe."

THE fine weather had produced a good effect upon the spirits of the company. Not only were the ports and the gangways all open, but Cosmo ordered the temporary removal of rows of adjustable plates on the sides of the vessel, which transformed the broad outer gangways, running its whole length, into delightful promenaded decks. There, in cozy chairs, and protected with rugs, the passengers sat, fanned by a refreshing breeze, and dazzled by the splendor of the ocean.

They recalled, by their appearance, a ship-load of summer tourists bound for the wonders and pleasures of foreign parts. This likeness to a pleasure cruise was heightened by the constant attentions of the crew, under Cosmo's orders, who carried about refreshing drinks and lunches, and conducted themselves like regular ocean "stewards."

It seemed impossible to believe that the world had been drowned, and some almost persuaded themselves that the whole thing was a dream.

It must not be supposed that the thousand-odd persons who composed this remarkable ship's company were so hard-hearted, so selfish, so forgetful, so morally obtuse, that they never thought of the real horror of their situation, and of the awful calamity that had overwhelmed so many millions of their fellow creatures. They thought of all that only too seriously and in spite of themselves. The women especially were overwhelmed by it. But they did not wish to dwell upon it, and Cosmo Versál did not wish that they should.

At night he had musicians play in the grand saloon; he distributed books among the passengers from a large library which he had selected; and at last he had the stage set, and invited his friends, the players, to entertain the company.

But he would have no plays but those of Shakespeare.

There were, probably, not half a dozen persons in the Ark who had even seen representations of these great dramas, and very few who had read them, so that they had the advantage of complete novelty.

The play selected for the first representation was the tragedy of "King Lear," a strange choice, it would, at first sight, seem, but Cosmo Versál had a deep knowledge of human nature. He knew that only tragedy would be endured there, and that it must be tragedy so profound and overmastering that it would dominate the feelings of those who heard and beheld it. It was the principle of immunizing therapeutics, where poison paralyzes poison.

It turned out as he anticipated. These people, unused to such depth of dramatic passion, for the plays to which they had been used had been far from the Shakespearean standard, were wholly absorbed in the development of the tragedy. It was a complete revelation to them, and they were carried out of themselves, and found in the sympathy awakened by this heart-crushing

spectacle of the acme of human woe an unconscious solace for their own moral anguish.

Afterward Cosmo put upon the stage "Hamlet," and "Othello," and "Macbeth," and "Coriolanus," and "Julius Cæsar," but he avoided, for the present the less tragic dramas. And all of them, being new to the hearers, produced an enormous effect.

On alternate nights he substituted music for the drama, and, as this was confined to the most majestic productions of the great masters of the play, many of whose works, like some of Shakespere's, had long been neglected if not forgotten, the power over the spirits of the company was, perhaps, even more pronounced.

Cosmo Versál was already beginning the education of his chosen band of race regenerators, while he mused upon the wonders that the science of eugenics would achieve after the world should have re-emerged from the waters.

One of the most singular effects of the music was that produced upon the insane billionaire, Amos Blank. He had been confined in the room that Cosmo had assigned to him, and was soothed, whenever Cosmo could find time to visit him, with pretended acquiescence in his crazed notion that the trip of the Ark was part of a scheme to "corner" the resources of the world.

Cosmo persuaded him that the secret was unknown except to themselves, and that it was essential to success that he (Blank) should remain in retirement, and accordingly the latter expressed no desire to leave his place of imprisonment, which he regarded as the headquarters of the combination, passing hours in covering sheets of paper with columns of figures, which he fancied represented the future profits of the enterprise.

One night when a symphony of Beethoven was to be played, Cosmo led Amos Blank through the crowded saloon and placed him near the musicians. He resisted at first, and when he saw the crowd he drew back, exclaiming:

"What? Not overboard yet?"

But Cosmo soothed him with some whispered promise, and he took his seat, glancing covertly around him. Then the instruments struck up, and immediately fixed his attention. As the musical theme developed his eyes gradually lost their wild look, and a softened expression took its place. He sank lower in his seat, and rested his head upon his hand. His whole soul seemed, at last, to be absorbed in the music. When it was finished Blank was a changed man. Then Cosmo clearly explained to him all that had happened.

After the first overwhelming effect of his reawakening to the realities of his situation had passed, the billionaire was fully restored to all his faculties. Henceforth he mingled with the other passengers and, as if the change that had come over his spirit had had greater results than the simple restoration of sanity, he became one of the most popular and useful members of Cosmo Versál's family of pilgrims.

Among the other intellectual diversions which Cosmo provided was something quite unique, due to his own mental bias. This consisted of "conferences," held in the grand saloon, afternoons, in the presence of the entire company, at which the principal speakers were his two "speculative geniuses," Costaké Theriade and Sir Wilfrid Athelstone. They did not care very much for one another and each thought that the time allotted to the other was wasted.

Theriade wished to talk continuously of the infinite energy stored up in the atoms of matter, and of the illimitable power which the release of that energy, by the system that he had all but completed, would place at the disposition of man; and at the same time. Sir Athelstone could with difficulty be held in leash while



he impatiently awaited an opportunity to explain how excessively near he had arrived to the direct production of protoplasm from inanimate matter, and the chemical control of living cells, so that henceforth man could people or unpeople the earth as he liked.

One evening, when everybody not on duty was in bed, Captain Amos entered Cosmo's cabin, where the latter was dictating to Joseph Smith, and softly approaching his chief, with a furtive glance around the room, stooped and whispered something in his ear. A startled, though incredulous, expression appeared on Cosmo's face, and he sprang to his feet, but before speaking he obeyed a sign from the captain and told Smith to leave the room. Then he locked the door and returned to his table, where he dropped into a chair, exclaiming in a guarded voice:

"GREAT Heaven, can this be possible! Have you not made a mistake?"

"No," returned the captain in a tridulous whisper, "I have made no mistake. I'm absolutely sure. If something is not done instantly we are lost!"

"This is terrible!" returned Cosmo, taking his head in his hands. "You say it is that fellow Campo? I never liked his looks."

"He is the ringleader," replied the captain. "The first suspicion of what he was up to came to me through an old sailor who has been with me on many a voyage. He overheard Campo talking with another man and he listened. Trust an old sea-dog to use his ears and keep himself out of notice."

"And what did they say?"

"Enough to freeze the marrow in your bones! Campo proposed to begin by throwing 'old Versál' and me into the sea, and then he said, with us gone, and nobody but a lot of muddle-headed scientists to deal with, it would be easy to take the ship; seize all the treasure in her; make everybody who would not join the mutiny walk the plank, except the women, and steer for some place where they could land and lead a jolly life."

"You see," says Campo, "this flood is a fake. There ain't going to be no more flood; it's only a shore wash. But there's been enough of it to fix things all right for us. We've got the world in our fist! There's millions of money aboard this ship, and there's plenty of female beauty, and we've only got to reach out and take it."

Cosmo Versál's brow darkened as he listened, and a look that would have cowed the mutineers if they could have seen it, came into his eyes. His hand nervously clutched a paper-knife which broke in his grasp, as he said in a voice trembling with passion:

"They don't *know* me—you don't know me. Show me the proofs of this conspiracy. Who are the others? Campo and his friend can't be alone."

"Alone!" exclaimed the captain, unconsciously raising his voice. "There's a dozen as black-handed rascals in it as ever went unswung."

"Do you know them?"

"Jim Waters does."

"Why haven't you told me sooner? How long has it been going on?"

"Almost ever since the deluge stopped, I think; but it was only last night that Waters got on the track of it, and only now that he told me. This fellow that Waters heard Campo talking to is plainly a new recruit. I say there are a dozen, because Waters has found out that number; but I don't know but that there may be a hundred."

"How did these wretches get aboard?" demanded Cosmo, fiercely opening and shutting his fists.

"Excuse me," said the captain, "but that is up to you to say."

"So it is," replied Cosmo, with a grim look; "and it's 'up to me' to say what'll become of them. I see how it is, they must have got in with the last lot that I took—under assumed names very likely. I've been more than once on the point of calling that man Campo up and questioning him. I was surprised by his hangdog look the first time I saw him. But I have been so busy."

"You'll have to get busy in another sense if you mean to save this ship and your life," said the captain earnestly.

"So I shall. Are you armed? No? Then take these—and use 'em when I give the word."

He handed the captain two heavy automatic pistols, and put a pair in his own sidepockets.

"Now," he continued, "the first thing is to make sure that we've got the right men—and *all of them*. Call in Joseph Smith."

The captain went to the door, and as he approached it there was a knock. He turned the key and cautiously opened a crack to look out. The door was instantly jerked open in his face. Six men rushed in, with Campo, a burly, black-browed fellow, at their head. Three of the men threw the captain on his back, and pinioned his hands, before he could draw a weapon, while Campo and the others sprang toward Cosmo Versál, Campo pointing a pistol at his head.

"It's all up, Mr. Versál!" cried Campo with a sneer. "I'll take command of this ship, and you'll go fish for nebulas."

Cosmo had one advantage; he was behind his desk, and it was a broad and long one, and placed almost against the wall. They could not get at him without getting round the desk. Campo did not fire, though he might have shot Cosmo in his tracks; but evidently he was nourishing the idea of making him walk the plank. With a sign he commanded his co-conspirators to flank the desk at each end, while he kept Cosmo covered with his pistol.

But with a lightning movement, Cosmo dropped under the desk, and, favored by his slight form and his extreme agility, darted like a cat past Campo's legs, and, almost before the latter could turn round, was out of the open door. Campo fired at the retreating form, but the bullet went wide of the mark. The pistol was practically noiseless, and the sound reached no ears in the staterooms.

It happened that a switch controlling the lights in the gangway was on the wall by Cosmo's door, and in passing he swiftly reached up and turned it off. Thus he was in complete darkness, and when Campo darted out of the door he could not see the fugitive. He could hear his footsteps, however, and with two of his companions he rushed blindly after him, firing two or three shots at random. But Cosmo had turned at the first cross passage, and then at the next, this part of the Ark being a labyrinth of corridors, and the pursuers quickly lost all trace of him.

Campo and his companions made their way back to Cosmo's cabin, where their fellows were guarding Captain Arms. They found the switch in the passage and turned on the light. They were almost immediately joined by several other conspirators conducting Joseph Smith, bound and gagged. They held a short consultation, and Campo, with many curses, declared that Cosmo Versál must be caught at all hazards.

"The big-headed fiend!" he cried, gnashing his teeth. "Let me get my grippers on him, and I'll squelch him like a bug!"

They threw Joseph Smith into the room beside the helpless captain, after taking the latter's pistols, locked the door from the outside, and hurried off on their



search. In the passages they encountered several more of their friends. They now numbered fifteen, all armed. This may seem a small number to undertake to capture the Ark; but it must be remembered that among the thousand-odd inmates, exclusive of the crew, only about one in three was a man, and the majority of these were peaceable scientists who, it was to be presumed, had no fight in them.

At any rate, Campo, with the reckless courage of his kind, felt confident that if he could get Cosmo Versál, with the captain and Joseph Smith out of the way, he could easily overmaster the others. He had not much fear of the crew, for he knew that they were not armed, and he had succeeded in winning over three of their number, the only ones he had thought at all dangerous, because he had read their character. More than half the crew were employed about the engines or on the animal deck, and most of the others were simply stewards who would not stand before the pistols.

But, while the mutineers were hurriedly searching the corridors, Cosmo had run straight to the bridge, where he found two of his men in charge, and whence he sent an electric call to all the men employed in the navigation of the vessel. They came running from various directions, but a dozen of them were caught in the passages by the mutineers and bound before they could comprehend what had happened. Seven, however, succeeded in reaching the bridge, and among these was Jim Waters.

"There's a mutiny," said Cosmo. "We've got to fight for our lives. Have you got arms?"

Not one had a weapon except Waters, who displayed a pistol half as long as his arm.

"Here, Peterson, take this," said Cosmo, handing a pistol to one of the two mariners who had been on the bridge. "They will be here in a minute. If Campo had been a sailor, he'd have had possession here the first thing. I'll turn off all lights."

With that he pressed a button which put out every lamp in the Ark. But there was a full moon, and they concealed themselves in the shadows.

Presently they heard the mutineers approaching, stumbling and cursing in the darkness. Cosmo directed Peterson and Waters to place themselves at his side, and told them to fire when he gave the word.

The next instant four men appeared crossing a moonlit place at the foot of the steps on the outside of the dome.

"Wait," whispered Cosmo. "The pistols go at a pull. We can sweep down a dozen in ten seconds. Let them all get in sight first."

Half a minute later there were twelve men climbing the steps and cautiously looking up.

"Fire!" cried Cosmo, setting the example, and three streams of flame poured from the bridge. The sound of the bullets striking made more noise than the explosions.

Five or six of the men below fell, knocking down their comrades, and a loud curse burst from the lips of Campo, who had a bullet through his arm.

The mutineers tumbled in a heap at the bottom, and instantly Cosmo, switching on all lights, led the way down upon them. His men, who had no arms, seized anything they could get their hands on that would serve to strike a blow, and followed him.

The conspirators were overwhelmed by the suddenness and fury of the attack.

Four of them were killed outright and five were wounded, one so severely that he survived only a few hours.

Cosmo's quick and overwhelming victory was due to the fact that the mutineers, in mounting the steps, could not see him and his men in the shadows, and when the automatic weapons, which fired three shots per second by repeated pressure of the trigger, from a chamber containing twenty-one cartridges, once opened on them, they could do nothing in the hail of missiles, especially when crowded together on the steps.

Campo was the only one who had any fight left in him. He struck Cosmo a blow on the head that felled him, and then darted out upon the forepart of the dome, running on the cleats, and made his way to the top.

Cosmo was on his feet in a second and rushing in pursuit, closely followed by Jim Waters. The fugitive ran for the ratlines leading to the lookout on the central mast. He climbed them like a squirrel, and the man in the cro-nest, amazed at the sight below him, stared at the approaching mutineer, unable to utter a cry. Campo, who, as the moonbeams showed, now had a knife in his teeth, rapidly approached, and the lookout shrank in terror. But before Campo could reach the cro-nest, a blinding light dazzled his eyes. Cosmo had shouted an order to Peterson to run back to the bridge and turn a searchlight upon the mast. Then Campo heard a thundering voice below him:

"Take another step and I'll blow you into the sea!"

He glanced below, and saw Cosmo and Waters covering him with their pistols.

"Not another step!" roared Cosmo again. "Come down, and I'll give you a trial for your life."

Campo hesitated; but, seeing that he could be shot down, and finding a gleam of hope in Cosmo's words, he turned and came slowly down. The moment he touched the bottom he was seized by Waters and another man, and, under Cosmo's directions, his hands were bound behind his back.

Ten minutes later the members of the crew who had been caught by the mutineers in the gangways were all unbound, and then Cosmo broke open the door of his cabin, the key having been lost or thrown away by Campo, and the captain and Joseph Smith were released.

"Well, we've got 'em," said Cosmo grimly to the captain. "The mutiny is at an end, and there'll never be another."

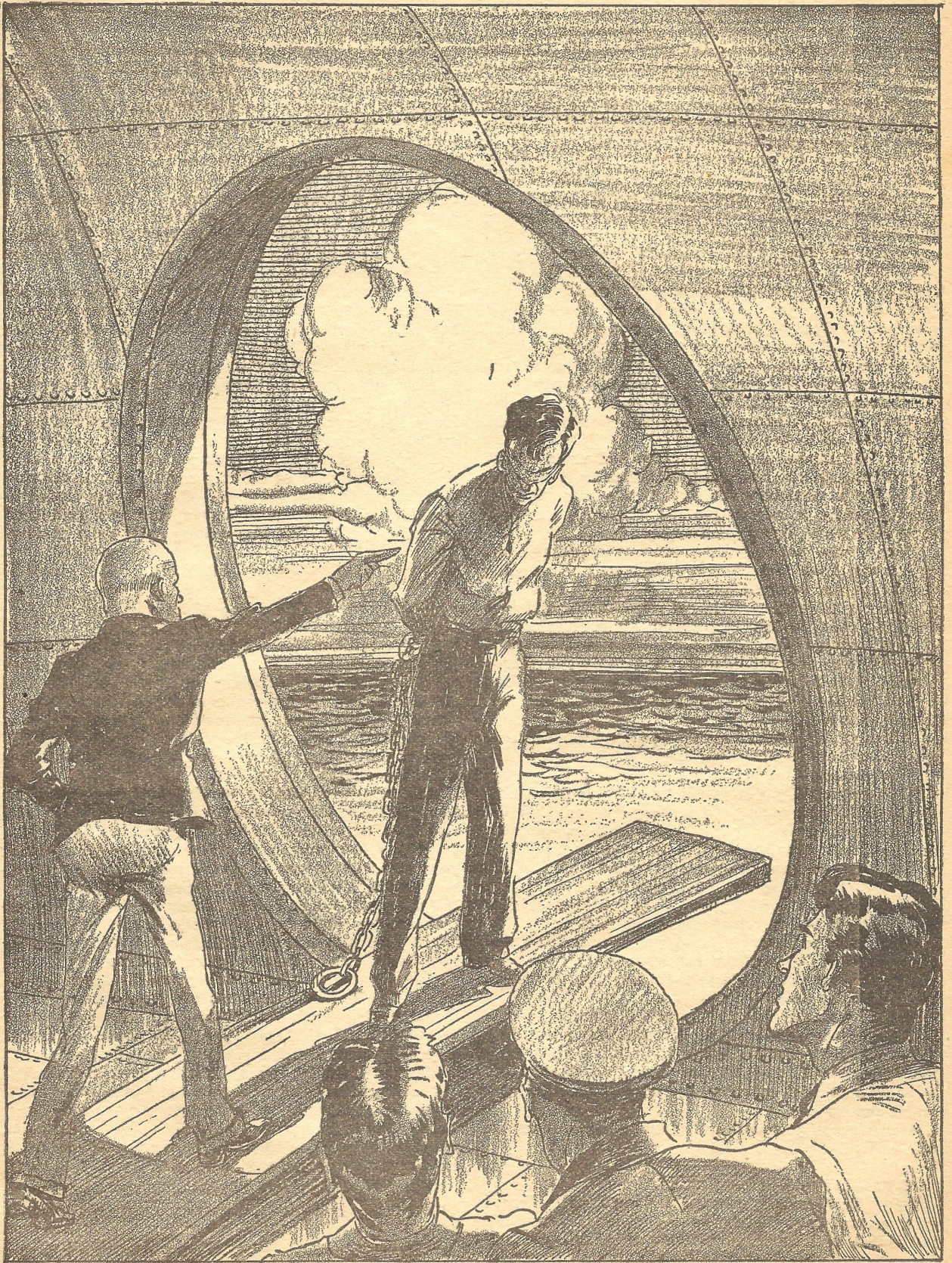
In the meantime many of the passengers had been aroused by the unaccustomed noises, although the pistols had not made enough sound to be heard from the place where they were fired. Nightcapped heads appeared on all sides, and some, in scanty clothing, were wandering in the passageways, demanding what the trouble was. Cosmo, the captain, and Joseph Smith reassured them, saying that there was no danger, and that something had happened which would be explained in the morning.

The prisoners—and the whole fifteen were finally captured—were locked up in a strong-room, and a surgeon was sent to dress their wounds. Cosmo Versál and the captain resumed their accustomed places on the bridge, where they talked over the affair, and Cosmo explained his plans for the morrow.

"I'll give him his trial, as I promised," Cosmo said in conclusion, "and you'll see what it will be. *Mutiny aboard this Ark!*" And he struck the rail a violent blow with his fist.

The next morning directly after breakfast Cosmo called all passengers and crew into the grand saloon, where many wondering looks were exchanged and many puzzling questions asked. When the mutineers, with their hands tied behind their backs, and their many bandages on arms and legs, were led in, exclamations of astonishment were heard, and some of the timid ones shrank away in fear.





"Walk!" said Cosmo firmly. To everybody's surprise Campo, with blinded eyes, started immediately up the plank.



Cosmo lost no time with preliminaries.

"These men," he said, taking his stand upon the platform, "have mutinied and tried to capture the Ark. This fellow"—pointing to Campo—"was the concocter and leader of the plot. He intended to throw me and Captain Arms, and all of you whom he did not wish to retain for his fiendish purposes, into the sea. But Heaven has delivered them into our hands. I have promised them a trial, and they shall have it. But it will be a trial in which justice shall not be cheated. I find that a moral poison has stolen into this selected company, and I will eliminate it for once and all."

The expression of amazement and alarm redoubled in intensity.

"Professor Abel Able, Professor Jeremiah Moses, Sir Wilfred Athelstone, Cossaké Theriade," Cosmo continued, "you will please come forward to act as members of the jury, of which I name myself also a member. I shall be both judge and juror here, but I will hear what the rest of you may have to say."

The men named stepped forward with some evidences of embarrassment, and Cosmo gravely gave them seats beside him. Then he commanded that the prisoners should confront the jury, and heavily guarded, they were led to the front.

The brutishness of Campo's face had never struck the passengers who had seen him before as it did now. He looked a veritable jailbird. At the same time he was evidently in terror for his life. He muttered something which nobody understood.

Cosmo, who had informed himself of all the circumstances from Waters, and by privately questioning the others, had satisfied himself that the entire scheme of the mutiny was of Campo's contrivance, and that they had been led into it solely by his persuasion and threats, ordered Waters to speak. The seaman told a straight story of what he had heard and seen. Cosmo himself then related the events of the night. When he had finished he turned to Campo and demanded what he had to say.

Campo again muttered under his breath, but made no attempt to defend himself, simply saying:

"You promised me a trial."

"And haven't I given you a trial?" demanded Cosmo with flashing eyes. "You thought you held the world in your grasp. It is *I* that hold it in *my* grasp and *you*, too! You were going to make us 'walk that plank.' It is *you* who are going to walk it! Is that the verdict?" (turning to the four jurymen.)

Some of them nodded, some simply stared at Cosmo, surprised by the vehemence of his manner.

"Enough," he said. "As to you," addressing the other prisoners, "you have had your lesson; see that you don't forget it! Release them, and lead Campo to the promenade deck."

Nobody thought that Cosmo would literally execute his threat to make the mutineer walk the plank, but, as he had told Captain Arms, they didn't know him. They were about to see that in Cosmo Versál they had not only a prophet, a leader, and a judge, but an inexorable master also.

A plank was prepared and placed sloping from the rail.

"**WALK!**" said Cosmo firmly.

To everybody's surprise Campo, with blinded eyes, started immediately up the plank, followed its full length with quick, unfaltering step, and plunging from the end, disappeared in the sea.

Many had turned away, unable to look, but many also saw the tragedy to the end. Then a profound sigh was heard from the whole company of the spectators. As they turned away, talking in awed voices,

they felt, as never before, that the world had shrunk to the dimensions of the Ark, and that Cosmo Versál was its dictator.

That same afternoon Cosmo arranged one of his "conferences," and nobody dared to be absent, although all minds were yet too much excited to follow the discussions which few could understand. But at length Costaké Theriade concentrated their attention by a wild burst of eloquence about the wonders of the inter-atomic forces. Sir Athelstone, unable to endure the applause that greeted his rival, abruptly sprang to his feet, his round face red with anger, and shouted:

"I say, you know, this is twaddle!"

"Will the Englishman interrupt not?" cried Theriade, with his eyes ablaze. "Shall I project not the Sir Englishman to the feeshes?"

He looked as if he were about to try to execute his threat, but Sir Athelstone assumed a boxing attitude; but before hostilities could begin a loud shout from the deck, followed by cries and exclamations, caused everybody to rush out of the saloon.

Those who succeeded in getting a glimpse over the shoulders of the members of the crew, who were already lined up along the only portion of the bulwarks available for seeing the part of the ocean on which attention seemed to be fixed, stared open-mouthed at a round-backed mass of shining metal, with a circular aperture on the top, the cover of which was canted to one side, and there stood a man, waving a gold-laced red kepi, and bowing and smiling with great civility.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### The Jules Verne

**T**HE swell of the sea caused the strange looking craft to rise and sink a little, and sometimes the water ran bubbling all around the low rim of the aperture, in the center of which the red-capped man stood, resting on some invisible support, repeating his salutations and amicable smiles, and balancing his body to the rocking of the waves with the unconscious skill of a sailor.

The Ark was running slowly, but it would very soon have left the stranger in its wake if he had not also been in motion. It was evident that the object under his feet must be a submersible vessel of some kind, although it was of a type which Captain Arms, standing beside Cosmo on the bridge, declared that he had never set eyes on before. It lay so low in the water that nothing could be seen of its motive machinery, but it kept its place alongside the Ark with the ease of a dolphin, and gradually edged in closer.

When it was so near that he could be heard speaking in a voice hardly raised above the ordinary pitch, the man, first again lifting his cap with an elegant gesture, addressed Cosmo Versál by name, using the English language with a scarcely perceptible accent:

"M. Versál, I offer you my felicitations upon the magnificent appearance of your Ark, and I present my compliments to the ladies and gentlemen of your company."

And then he bowed once more to the passengers, who were almost crowding each other over the side in their eagerness to both see and hear.

"Thank you," responded Cosmo, "but who are you?"

"Capitaine Ives de Beauxchamps, of the French army."

"Where's the navy, then?" blurted out Captain Arms.

De Beauxchamps glanced at the speaker a little disdainfully and then replied gravely:

"Alas! At the bottom of the sea—with all the other navies."



"And how have you escaped?" demanded Cosmo Versál.

"As you see, in a submersible."

"Can it be possible!" exclaimed Cosmo. "And you have been in the sea ever since the beginning of the flood?"

"Since the first rise of the ocean on the coast of Brest."

"Have you no companions?"

"Six—in truth seven."

"Astonishing!" said Cosmo Versál. "But I heard nothing of the preparation of a submersible. In fact, the idea of such a thing never occurred to me. You must have made your preparations secretly."

"We did. We did not share your certainty, M. Versál, concerning the arrival of a deluge. Even when we embarked we were not sure that it would be more than an affair of the coasts."

"But you must be on the point of starvation by this time. The flood has only just begun. This cessation is but for a time, while we are passing a gap in the nebula. You will come aboard the Ark. I have chosen my company, but your gallant escape, and the ability that you have shown, prove that you are worthy to aid in the reestablishment of the race, and I have no doubt that your companions are equally worthy."

The Frenchman bowed politely, and with a slight smile replied:

"I believe, M. Versál, that the *Jules Verne* is as safe and comfortable, and proportionately as well provisioned, as your *Ark*."

"So you call it the *Jules Verne*?" returned Cosmo, smiling in his turn.

"We were proud to give it that name, and its conduct has proved that it is worthy of it."

"But you will surely come aboard and shake hands, and let us offer you a little hospitality," said Cosmo.

"I should be extremely happy to pay my compliments to the ladies" responded de Beauxchamps, "but I must postpone that pleasure for the present. In the meantime, however, I should be glad if you would lower a landing stage, and permit me to send aboard the seventh member of our party, who, I venture to think, may find the *Ark* a more comfortable abode than our submersible"

"And who may that person be?"

"**T**HE King of England."

"Yes," resumed the Frenchman, "we picked up His Majesty the first day after the deluge began to descend from the sky."

Exclamations of surprise and wonder were heard on all sides.

"I will lower a ladder at once," Cosmo called out, and immediately ran down to the lowest deck, commanding his men to make haste.

The *Jules Verne* was skillfully brought close up to the side of the *Ark*, so that the visible part of her rounded back was nearly in contact with the bottom of the companion-ladder when it was lowered. The sea was so calm that there was little difficulty in executing this maneuver. De Beauxchamps disappeared in the depths of the submersible, and after a few minutes re-emerged into sight, supporting on his arm a stout, rather short man, whose face, it was evident, had once been full and ruddy, but now it was pale and worn.

"It is he!" exclaimed an English member of Cosmo's company to some of his fellow countrymen who had forced their way to the front.

"It is the king!"

And then occurred a singular thing, inspired by the marvelous circumstances of this meeting of the sovereign of a drowned kingdom, upon the bosom of

the waters that had destroyed it, with the mere handful that remained alive out of all the millions of his subjects.

These loyal English people bared their heads (and there were three women among them) and sang, with a pathos that surely the old hymn had never expressed before, their national anthem: "God Save the King."

The effect was immense. Every head aboard the *Ark* was immediately uncovered. De Beauxchamps removed his cap, and one or two bared heads could be seen peering out of the interior of the submarine below him. As the king was steadied across to the bottom of the companion-ladder, the voices of the singers rose louder, and many of the other passengers, moved by sympathy, or carried away by epidemic feeling, joined in the singing. Never had any monarch a greeting like that! Its recipient was moved to the depths of his soul, and but for the aid given him would have been unable to ascend the swaying steps.

As he was assisted upon the deck, the song ceased and a great cheer broke forth. There were tears in his eyes, and he trembled in every limb, when he returned the welcoming pressure of Cosmo Versál's hand.

The moment he saw that the king was safely aboard the *Ark*, de Beauxchamps, with a farewell salutation, disappeared into the interior of the *Jules Verne*, and the submersible sank out of sight as gently as if it had been a huge fish that had come to the top of the sea to take a look about.

After the sensation caused by the arrival of the English monarch aboard the *Ark* had somewhat quieted down, and after His Majesty had had an opportunity to recover himself, Cosmo Versál invited his new guest to tell the story of his escape. They were seated in Cosmo's cabin, and there were present Joseph Smith, Professor Jeremiah Moses, Professor Abel Able, and Amos Blank, besides several other members of the ship's company, including two of the loyal Englishmen who had been the first to strike up the national anthem on seeing their rescued king.

Richard Edward, or Richard IV as he was officially entitled, was one of the best kings England ever had. He was popular not only because of his almost democratic manners and the simplicity of his life, but more because he was a great lover of peace. We have already seen how he was chosen, solely on that account, to be of the number of the rulers invited to go in the *Ark*. He had not even replied to Cosmo's invitation, but that was simply because, like everybody about him in whom he placed confidence, he regarded Cosmo Versál as a mere mountebank, and thought that there was no more danger of a universal flood than of the fall of the moon out of the sky.

Before responding to Cosmo's request he made a gracious reference to the indifference with which he had formerly treated his present host.

"I am sorry, Mr. Versál," he said, with a deprecatory smile, "that I did not sooner recognize the fact that your knowledge surpassed that of my scientific advisers."

"Your Majesty was not alone," replied Cosmo gravely, turning with his fingers a small globe that stood on his desk. "From all these deep-sunken continents," (waving his hand toward the globe), "if the voices once heard there could now speak, there would arise a mighty sound of lament for that error."

The King looked at him with an expression of surprise. He glanced from Cosmo's diminutive figure to his great overhanging brow, marked with the lines of thought, and a look of instinctive deference came into his eyes.

"But," continued Cosmo Versál, "it is bootless to speak of these things now. I beg that your Majesty



will condescend to enlighten us concerning the fate of that great kingdom, of ancient renown, over which you so worthily reigned."

An expression of deepest pain passed across the face of Richard Edward. For some moments he remained buried in a mournful silence, and many sighs came from his breast. All looked at him with profound commiseration. At last he raised his head and said, sorrowfully and brokenly:

"My kingdom is drowned—my subjects have perished, almost to the last soul—my family—my gracious consort, my children—all, all—gone!"

HERE he broke down, and could speak no more. Not a word was spoken, for a time, and the two Englishmen present wept for their unfortunate king.

Cosmos Versál was no less deeply moved than the others. He sat, for a while, in complete silence. Then he arose and, going to the king, put his hand upon his shoulder, and talked to him long, in a low, consoling voice. At last the broken-spirited monarch was able to suppress his emotions sufficiently to recite, but with many interruptions while he regained mastery of his feelings, the story of his woes and of his marvelous escape.

"Sir Francis Brook," he said, "prepared a barge, when the water invaded London, and in that barge we escaped—Her Royal Majesty, our children, and a number of members of the Royal household—the barge was the only vessel of levium that existed in England. Sir Francis had furnished and provisioned it well, and we did not think that it would be necessary to go farther than to some high point in the interior. Sir Francis was of the opinion that Wales would afford a secure refuge.

"It was a terrible thing to see the drowning of London, the sweeping of the awful bore that came up the Thames from the sea, the shipping wrecked by the tearing waves, the swirl of the fast-rising water around the immense basin in which the city lay, the downfall of the great buildings—Westminster Abbey was one of the first that succumbed—the overturned boats, and even great vessels floating on their sides, or bottom up, the awful spectacle of the bodies of the drowned tossing in the waves—all these sights were before our horrified eyes while the vast eddy swept us round and round until the water rose so high that we were driven off toward the southwest.

"That we should have escaped at all was a miracle of miracles. It was the wonderful buoyancy of the levium barge that saved us. But the terrors of that scene can never fade from my memory. And the fearful sufferings of the queen! And our children—but I cannot go on with this!"

"Calm yourself, Your Majesty," said Cosmo sympathetically. "The whole world has suffered with you. If we are spared and are yet alive, it is through the hand of Providence—to whom we must bow."

"We must have passed over Surrey and Hampshire," the king resumed, "the invasion of the sea having buried the hills."

"I am surprised at that," said Cosmo. "I did not think that the sea had anywhere attained so great an elevation before the nebula condensed. At New York the complete drowning of the city did not occur until the downpour from the sky began."

"Oh! that deluge from the heavens!" cried the king. "What we had suffered before seemed but little in comparison. It came upon us after night; and the absolute darkness, the awful roaring, the terrific force of the falling water, the sense of suffocation, the rapid filling of the barge until the water was about our necks—these things drove us wild with despair.

"I tried to sustain my poor queen in my arms, but she struggled to seize the children and hold them above the water, and in her efforts she escaped from my hands, and thenceforth I could find her no more. I stumbled about, but it was impossible to see; it was impossible to be heard. At last I fell unconscious face downward, as it afterward appeared, upon a kind of bench at the rear of the barge, which was covered with narrow metallic roofing, and raised above the level of the bulwarks. It was there that I had tried to shelter the queen and the children.

In some way I must have become lodged there, under the awning, in such a position that the pitching of the barge failed to throw me off. I never regained consciousness until I heard a voice shouting in my ear, and felt some one pulling me, and when I had recovered my senses, I found myself in the submersible."

"And all your companions were gone?" asked Cosmo, in a voice shaking with pity.

"Yes, oh Lord! All! They had been swept overboard by the waves—and would that I had gone with them!"

The poor king broke down again and sobbed. After a long pause Cosmo asked gently:

"Did the Frenchman tell you how he came upon the barge?"

"He said that in rising to the surface to find out the state of things there the submersible came up directly under the barge, canting it in such a way that I was rolled out and he caught me as I was swept close to the opening.

"But how was it that the downpour, entering the submersible, when the cover was removed, did not fill it with water?"

"He had the cover so arranged that it served as an almost complete protection from the rain. Some water did enter, but not much."

"A wonderful man, that Frenchman," said Cosmo. "He would be an acquisition for me. What did he say his name was? Oh, yes, de Beauxchamps—I'll make a note of that. I shouldn't wonder if we heard of him again."

Cosmo Versál was destined to encounter Ives de Beauxchamps and his wonderful submersible *Jules Verne* sooner, and under more dramatic circumstances than he probably anticipated.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### Navigating Over Drowned Europe

AFTER the English king had so strangely become a member of its company the Ark resumed its course in the direction of what had once been Europe. The spot where the meeting with the *Jules Verne* had occurred was west of Cape Finisterre and, according to the calculations of Captain Arms, in longitude fifteen degrees, four minutes west, latitude forty-four degrees, nine minutes north.

Cosmo decided to run into the Bay of Biscay, skirting its southern coast in order to get a view of the Cantabrian Mountains, many of whose peaks, he thought, ought still to lie well above the level of the water.

"There are the Peaks of Europa," said Captain Arms, "which lie less than twenty miles directly back from the coast. The highest point is eight thousand six hundred and seventy feet above sea level, or what used to be sea level. We could get near enough to it, without any danger, to see how high the water goes."

"Do you know the locality?" demanded Cosmo.

"As well as I know a compass-card!" exclaimed the captain. "I've seen the Europa peaks a hundred times.



I was wrecked once on that coast, and being of an inquiring disposition, I took the opportunity to go up into the range and see the old mines—and a curious sight it was, too. But the most curious sight of all was the shepherdesses of Tresvido, dressed just like the men, in homespun breeches that never wore out. You'd meet 'em any where on the slopes of the Pico del Ferro, cruising about with their flocks. And the cheese they made! There never was any such cheese!"

"Well, if you know the place so well," said Cosmo, "steer for it as fast as you can. I'm curious to find out just how high this flood has gone, up to the present moment."

"Maybe we can rescue a shepherdess," returned the captain, chuckling. "She'd be an ornament to your new Garden of Eden."

They kept on, until, as they approached longitude five degrees west, they began to get glimpses of the mountains of northern Spain. The coast was all under deep water, and also the foot-hills and lower ranges, but some of the peaks could be made out far inland. At length, by cautious navigation, Captain Arms got the vessel quite close to the old shore line of the Asturias, and then he recognized the Europa peaks.

"There they are," he cried. "I'd know 'em if they'd emigrated to the middle of Africa. There's the old Torre de Cerredo and the Peña Santa."

"How high did you say the main peak is?" asked Cosmo.

"She's eight thousand six hundred and seventy feet."

"From your knowledge of the coast do you think it safe to run in closer?"

"Yes, if you're sure the water is not less than two thousand four hundred feet above the old level we can get near enough to see the water-line on the peaks, from the cro-nest, which is two hundred feet high."

"Go ahead, then."

THEY got closer than they had imagined possible, so close that, from the highest lookout on the Ark, they were able with their telescopes to see very clearly where the water washed the barren mountainsides at what seemed to be a stupendous elevation.

"I'm sorry about your shepherdesses," said Cosmo, smiling. "I don't think you'd find any there to rescue if you could get to them. They must all have been lost in the torrents that poured down those mountains."

"More the pity," said Captain Arms. "That was a fine lot of women. There'll be no more cheese like what they made at Tresvido."

Cosmo inquired if the captain's acquaintance with the topography of the range enabled him to say how high that water was. The captain, after long inspection, declared that he felt sure that it was not less than four thousand feet above the old coast line.

"Then," said Cosmo, "if you're right about the elevation of what you call the Torre de Cerredo there must be four thousand six hundred and seventy feet of its upper part still out of water. We'll see if that is so."

Cosmo made the measurements with his instruments and announced that the result showed the substantial accuracy of Captain Arms' guess.

"I suspected as much," he muttered. "Those tremendous downpours, which may have been worse elsewhere than where we encountered them, have increased the rise nearly seventy per cent above what my gages indicated. Now that I know this," he continued, addressing the captain: "I'll change the course of the Ark. I'm anxious to get into the Indian Ocean as soon as possible. It would be a great waste of time to go back in order to cross the Sahara, and with this increase of level it isn't necessary. We'll just set out

across southern France, keeping north of the Pyrenees, and so down into the region of the Mediterranean."

Captain Arms was astonished by the boldness of this suggestion, and at first he strongly objected to their taking such a course.

"There's some pretty high ground in southern France," he said. "There's the Cevennes mountains, which approach a good long way toward the Pyrenees. Are you sure the depth of water is the same everywhere?"

"What a question for an old mariner to ask?" returned Cosmo. "Don't you know that the level of the sea is the same everywhere? The flood doesn't make any difference. It seeks its level like any other water."

"But it may be risky steering between those mountains," persisted the captain.

"Nonsense! As long as the sky is clear you can get good observations, and you ought to be navigator enough not to run on a mountain."

Cosmo Versál, as usual, was unalterable in his resolution—he only changed when he had reasons of his own—and the course of the Ark was laid, accordingly, for the old French coast of the Landes, so low that it was now covered with nearly four thousand feet of water. The feelings of the passengers were deeply stirred when they learned that they were actually sailing over buried Europe, and they gazed in astonishment at the water beneath them, peering down into it as if they sought to discover the dreadful secrets that it hid, and talking excitedly in a dozen languages.

The Ark progressed slowly, making not more than five or six knots, and on the second day after they dropped the Peñas de Europa they were passing along the northern flank of the Pyrenees and over the basin in which had lain the beautiful city of Pau. The view of the Pyrenees from this point had always been celebrated as one of the most remarkable in the world.

Now it had lost its beauty, but gained in spectacular grandeur. All of France, as far as the eye extended, was a sea, with long oceanic swells slowly undulating its surface. This sea abruptly came to an end where it met the mountains, which formed for it a coast unlike any that the hundreds of eyes which wonderingly surveyed it from the Ark had ever beheld.

Beyond the drowned vales and submerged ranges, which they knew lay beneath the watery floor, before them, rose the heads of the Pic du Midi, the Pic de Ger, the Pic de Bigorre, the Massif du Gabizos, the Pic Monné and dozens of other famous eminences, towering in broken ranks like the bear-skins of "forlorn hope," resisting to the last, in pictures of old-time battles.

Here, owing to the configuration of the drowned land it was possible for the Ark to approach quite close to some of the wading mountains, and Cosmo seized the opportunity to make a new measure of the height of the flood, which he found to be surely not less than his former estimates had shown.

Surveying with telescopes the immense shoulders of the Monné, the Vicos, the d'Ardiden, and the nearer heights, when they were floating above the valley of Lourdes, Cosmo and the captain saw the terrible effects that had been produced by the torrents of rain, which had stripped off the vegetation whose green robe had been the glory of the high Pyrenees on the French side.

Presently their attention was arrested by some moving objects, and at a second glance they perceived that they were human beings.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed Cosmo Versál. "There are survivors here. They have climbed the mountains, and found shelter among the rocks. I should not have thought it possible."

"And there are women among them," said Captain



Arms, lowering his telescope. "You will not leave them there!"

"But what can I do?"

"Lower away the boats," replied the captain. "We've got plenty of them."

"There may be thousands there," returned Cosmo, musing. "I can't take them all."

"Then take as many as you can. By gad, sir, I'll not leave 'em!"

By this time some of the passengers who had powerful glasses had discovered the refugees on the distant heights, and great excitement spread throughout the Ark. Cries arose from all parts of the vessel:

"Rescue them!" "Go to their aid!" "Don't let them perish!"

Cosmo Versál was in a terrible quandary. He was by no means without humanity, and was capable of deep and sympathetic feeling, as we have seen, but he already had as many persons in the Ark as he thought ought to be taken, considering the provision that had been made, and, besides, he could not throw off, at once, his original conviction of the necessity of carefully choosing his companions. He remained for a long time buried in thought, while the captain fumed with impatience, and at last declared that if Cosmo did not give the order to lower away the boats he would do it himself.

AT length Cosmo, yielding rather to his own humane feelings than to the urging of others, consented to make the experiment. Half a dozen levium launches were quickly lowered and sent off, while the Ark, with slowed engines, remained describing a circle as near the mountains as it was safe to go. Cosmo himself embarked in the leading boat.

The powerful motors of the launches carried them rapidly to the high slopes where the unfortunates had sought refuge, and as they approached, and the poor fugitives saw that deliverance was at hand, they began to shout, and cheer, and cry, and many of them fell on their knees upon the rocks and stretched their hands toward the heavens.

The launches were compelled to move with great caution when they got near the ragged sides of the submerged mountains (it was the Peyre Dufau on which the people had taken refuge), but the men aboard them were determined to effect the rescue, and they regarded no peril too closely. At last Cosmo's launch found a safe landing, and the others quickly followed it.

When Cosmo sprang out on a flat rock a crowd of men, women, and children, weeping, crying, sobbing, and uttering prayers and blessings, instantly surrounded him. Some wrung his hand in an ecstasy of joy, some embraced him, some dropped on their knees before him and sought to kiss his hands. Cosmo could not restrain his tears, and the crews of the launches were equally affected.

Many of these people could only speak the patois of the mountains, but some were refugees from the resorts in the valleys below, and among these were two English tourists who had been caught among the mountains by the sudden rising of the flood. They exhibited comparative *sang froid*, and served as spokesmen for the others.

"Bah Jove!" exclaimed one of them, "but you're welcome, you know! This has been a demnition close call! But what kind of a craft have you got out there?"

"I'm Cosmo Versál."

"Then that's the Ark we've heard about! 'Pon honor, I should have recognizied you, for I've seen your

picture often enough. You've come to take us off, I suppose?"

"Certainly," replied Cosmo. "How many are there?"

"All that you see here; about a hundred I should say. No doubt there are others on the mountains around. There must have been a thousand of us when we started, but most of them perished, overcome by the downpour, or swept away by the torrents. Lord Swansdown (indicating his companion, who bowed gravely and stiffly) and myself—I'm Edward Whistlington—set out to walk over the Pyrenees from end to end, after the excitement about the great darkness died out, and we got as far as the Marboré, and then running down to Gavarnie we heard news of the sea rising, but we didn't give much credit to that, and afterward, keeping up in the heights, we didn't hear even a rumor from the world below.

"The sky opened on us like a broadside from an aerial squadron, and how we ever managed to get here I'm sure I can hardly tell. We were actually *carried* down the mountainsides by the water, and how it failed to drown us will be an everlasting mystery. Somehow, we found ourselves among these people, who were trying to go *up*, assuring us that there was nothing but water below. And at last we discovered some sort of shelter here—and here we've been ever since."

"You cannot have had much to eat," said Cosmo.

"Not *too* much, I assure you," replied the Englishman, with a melancholy smile. "But these people shared with us what little they had, or could find—anything and everything that was eatable. They're a devilish fine lot, I tell you!"

"When the terrible rain suddenly ceased and the sky cleared," he resumed, "we managed to get dry, after a day or two, and since then we've been chewing leather until there isn't a shoe or a belt left. We thought first of trying to build rafts—but then where could we go? It wasn't any use to sail out over a drowned country, with nothing in sight but the mountains around us, which looked no better than the one we were barely existing on."

"Then I must get you aboard the Ark before you starve," said Cosmo.

"Many have died of starvation already," returned Whistlington. "You can't get us off too quickly."

Cosmo Versál had by this time freed himself of every trace of the reluctance which he had at first felt to increasing the size of his ship's company by adding recruits picked up at random. His sympathies were thoroughly aroused, and while he hastened the loading and departure of the launches, he asked the Englishmen, who, with the impassive endurance of their race, stayed behind to the last, whether they thought that there were other refugees on the mountains whom they could reach.

"I dare say there are thousands of the poor devils on these peaks around us, wandering among the rocks," replied Edward Whistlington, "but I fancy you couldn't reach 'em."

"If I see any I'll try," returned Cosmo, sweeping with his telescope all the mountain flanks within view.

At last, on the slopes of the lofty Mont Aigu across the submerged valley toward the south, he caught sight of several human figures, one of which was plainly trying to make signals, probably to attract attention from the Ark. Immediately, with the Englishmen and the remainder of those who had been found on the Peyre Dufau, he hastened in his launch to the rescue.

They found four men and three women, who had escaped from the narrow valley containing the *bains de Gazost*, and who were in the last stages of starvation. There were taken aboard, and then, no more being in



sight, Cosmo returned to the Ark, where the other launches had already arrived.

And these were the last that were rescued from the mighty range of the Pyrenees, in whose deep valleys had lain the famous resorts of Caunterets, the Eaux Bonnes, the Eaux Chaudes, the Bagnières de Luchon, the Bagnières de Bigorre, and a score of others. No doubt, as the Englishmen had said, thousands had managed to climb the mountains, but none could now be seen, and those who may have been there were left to perish.

There was great excitement in the Ark on the arrival of the refugees. The passengers overwhelmed them with kind attentions, and when they had sufficiently recovered, listened with wonder and the deepest sympathy to their tales of suffering and terror.

Lord Swansdown and Edward Whistlington were amazed to find their king aboard the Ark, and the English members of the company soon formed a sort of family party, presided over by the unfortunate monarch. The rescued persons numbered, in all, one hundred and six.

The voyage of the Ark was now resumed, skirting the Pyrenees, but at an increasing distance. Finally Captain Arms announced that, according to his observations, they were passing over the site of the ancient and populous city of Toulouse. This recalled to Cosmo Versál's memory the beautiful scenes of the fair and rich land that lay so deep under the Ark, and he began to talk with the captain about the glories of its history.

He spoke of the last great conqueror that the world had known, Napoleon, and was discussing his marvellous career, and referring to the fact that he had died on a rock in the midst of that very ocean which had now swallowed up all the scenes of his conquests, when the lookout telephoned down that there was something visible on the water ahead.

In a little while they saw it—a small moving object, which rapidly approached the Ark. As it drew nearer both exclaimed at once:

"The *Jules Verne*! Here comes the *Jules Verne*!"

There could be no mistaking it. It was riding with its back just above the level of the sea; the French flag was fluttering from a small mast, and already they could see the form of de Beauxchamps, standing in his old attitude, with his feet below the rim of the circular opening at the top. Cosmo ordered the Stars and Stripes to be displayed in salute, and, greatly pleased over the encounter, hurried below and had the companion-ladder made ready.

"He's got to come aboard this time, anyhow!" he exclaimed. "I'll take no refusal. I want to know that fellow better."

But this time de Beauxchamps had no thought of refusing the hospitalities of the Ark. As soon as he was within hearing he called out:

"My salutations to M. Versál and his charming fellow voyagers. May I be permitted to come aboard and present myself in person? I have something deeply interesting to tell."

Everybody in the Ark who could find a standing-place was watching the *Jules Verne* and trying to catch a glimpse of its gallant captain, and to hear what he said; and the moment his request was preferred a babel of voices arose, amid which could be distinguished such exclamations as:

"Let him come!" "A fine fellow!" "Welcome, de Beauxchamps!" "Hurrah for the *Jules Verne*!"

King Richard was in the fore rank of spectators, waving his hand to his preserver.

"Certainly you can come aboard," cried Cosmo heart-

ily, at the same time hastening the preparations for lowering the ladder. "We are all glad to see you. And bring your companions along with you."

## CHAPTER XIX

### To Paris Under the Sea

DE BEAUXCHAMPS accepted Cosmo Versál's invitation to bring his companions with him into the Ark. The submersible was safely moored alongside, where she rode easily in company with the larger vessel, and all mounted the companion-ladder. The Frenchman's six companions were dressed, like himself, in the uniform of the army.

"Curious," muttered Captain Arms in Cosmo's ear, "that these *soldiers* should be the only ones to get off—and in a vessel, too. What were the seamen about?"

"What were *our* seamen about?" returned Cosmo. "How many of *them* got off? I warned them that ships would not do. But it was a bright idea of this de Beauxchamps and his friends to build a submersible. It didn't occur to me, or I would have advised their construction everywhere for small parties. But it would never have done for us. A submersible would not have been capacious enough for the party I wanted to take."

By this time the visitors were aboard, and Cosmo and the others who could get near enough to grasp them by the hand greeted them effusively. King Richard received de Beauxchamps with emotion, and thanked him again and again for having saved his life; but in the end, he covered his face and said in a broken voice:

"M. de Beauxchamps, my gratitude to you is very deep—but, oh, the queen—the queen—and the children! I should have done better to perish with them."

Cosmo and de Beauxchamps soothed him as well as they could, and the former led the way into the grand saloon, in order that as many as possible might see and greet their visitors, who had come so mysteriously up out of the sea.

All of the Frenchmen were as affable as their leader, and he presented them in turn. De Beauxchamps conversed almost gaily with such of the ladies as had sufficient command of their feelings to join the throng that pressed about him and his companions. He was deeply touched by the story of the recent rescue of his countrymen from the Pyrenees, and he went among them, trying to cheer them up, with the *élan* that no *misfortune can eradicate from the Gallic nature*. . . .

At length Cosmo reminded him that he had said that he had some interesting news to communicate.

"Yes," said de Beauxchamps, "I have just come from a visit to Paris."

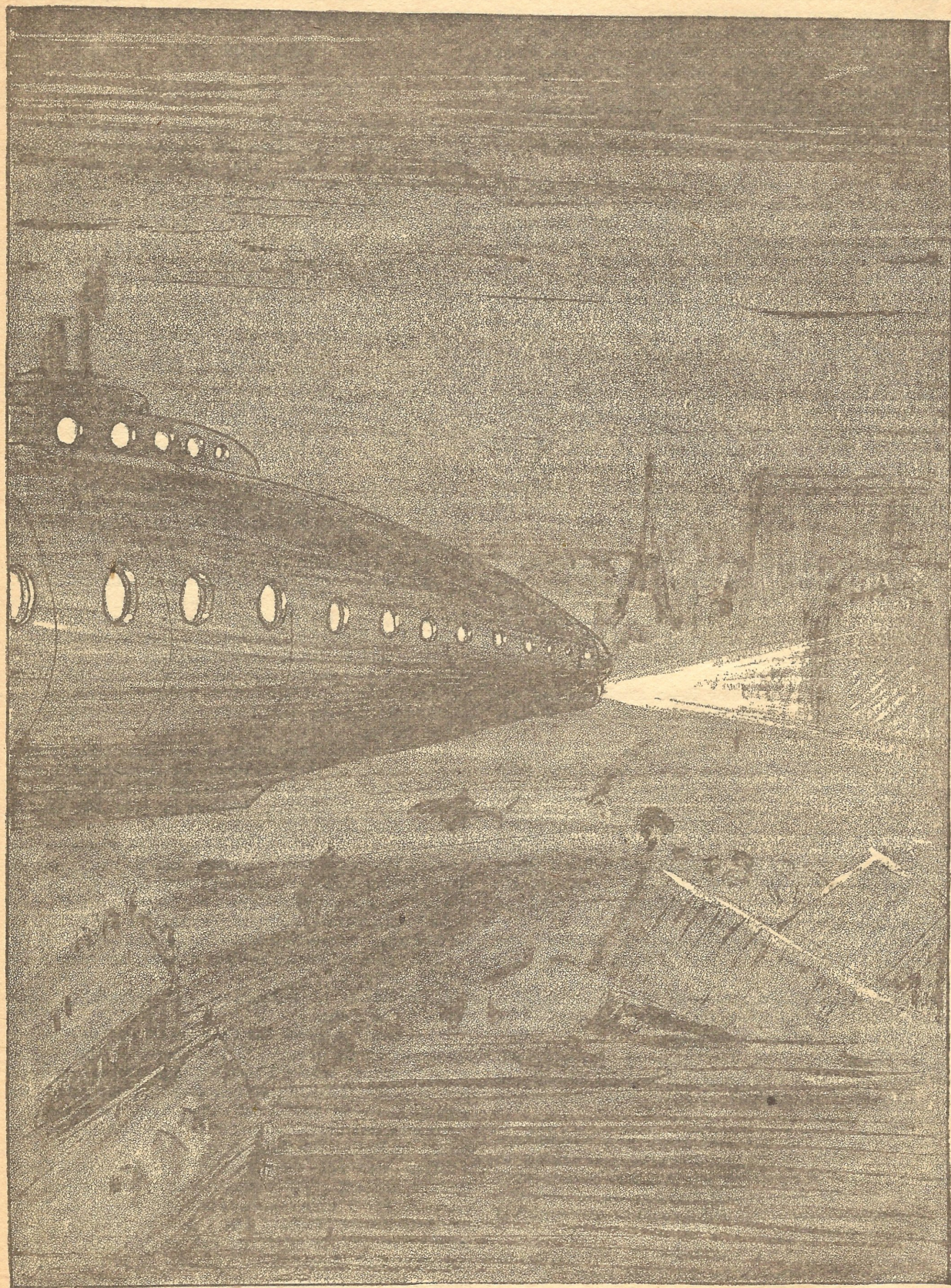
Exclamations of amazement and incredulity were heard on all sides.

"It is true," resumed the Frenchman, though now his voice lost all its gaiety. "I had conceived the project of such a visit before I met the Ark and transferred His Majesty, the King of England, to your care. As soon as that was done I set out to make the attempt."

"But tell me first," interrupted Cosmo, "how you succeeded in finding the Ark again?"

"That was not very difficult," replied de Beauxchamps, smiling. "Of course, it was to some extent accidental, for I didn't *know* that you would be here, navigating over France; but I had an idea that you *might* come this way if you had an intention of seeing what had happened to Europe. It is my regular custom to rise frequently to the surface to take a look around and make surer of my bearings, and you know that the Ark makes a pretty large point on the waters. I saw it long before you caught sight of me."





*The light readily penetrated the water and revealed sights which I have no power to describe, and some—reminders of the immense population of human beings which had there met its end.*



"Very well," said Cosmo. "Please go on with your story. It must, indeed, be an extraordinary one."

"I was particularly desirous of seeing Paris again, deep as I knew her to lie under the waves," resumed de Beauxchamps, "because it was my home, and I had a house in the Champs Elysées. You cannot divorce the heart of a Frenchman from his home, though you should bury it under twenty oceans."

"Your family were lost?"

"Thank God, I had no family. If I had had they would be with me. My companions are all like myself in that respect. We have lost many friends, but no near relatives. As I was saying, I started for France, poor drowned France, as soon as I left you. With the powerful search-light of the *Jules Verne* I could feel confident of avoiding obstructions; and, besides, I knew very closely the height to which the flood had risen, and having the topography of my country at my fingers' ends, as does every officer of the army, I was able to calculate the depth at which we should run in order to avoid the hilltops."

"But surely," said Cosmo, "it is impossible—at least, it seems so to me—that you can descend to any great depth—the pressure must be tremendous a few hundred feet down, to say nothing of possible thousands."

"All that," replied the Frenchman, "has been provided for. You probably do not know to what extent we had carried experiments in France on the deep submersion of submarines before their general abandonment when they were prohibited by international agreement in war. I was myself perhaps the leader in those investigations, and in the construction of the *Jules Verne* I took pains to improve on all that had hitherto been done.

Without going into any description of my devices, I may simply remind you that nature has pointed out ways of avoiding the consequences of the inconceivable pressures which calculation indicates at depths of a kilometer, or more, in her construction of the deep-sea fishes. It was by a study of them that I arrived at the secret of both penetrating to depths that would theoretically have seemed entirely impossible and of remaining at such depths."

"MARVELOUS!" exclaimed Cosmo; "marvelous beyond belief!"

"I may add," continued de Beauxchamps, smiling at the effect that his words had had upon the mind of the renowned Cosmo Versál, "that the peculiar properties of levium, which you so wisely chose for your Ark, aided me in quite a different way. But I must return to my story.

"We passed over the coast of France near the point where I knew lay the mouth of the Loire. I could have found my way by means of the compass sufficiently well; but since the sky was clear I frequently came to the surface in order, for greater certainty, to obtain sights of the sun and stars.

"I dropped down at Tours and at Blois, and we plainly saw the walls of the old château in the gleam of the searchlight below us. There were monsters of the deep, such as the eye of man never beheld, swimming slowly about them, many of them throwing a strange luminosity into the water from their phosphorescent organs, as if they were inspecting these novelties of the sea-bottom.

"Arriving over Orleans, we turned in the direction of Paris. As we approached the site of the city I sank the submersible until we almost touched the higher hills. My search-light is so arranged that it can be directed almost every way—up, down, to this side, and to that—and swept it around us in every direction.

"The light readily penetrated the water and revealed

sights which I have no power to describe, and some—reminders of the immense population of human beings which had there met its end—which I would not describe if I could. To see a drowned face suddenly appear outside the window, almost within touch—ah, that was too horrible!

"We passed over Versailles, with the old palace still almost intact; over Sevres, with its porcelain manufactory yet in part standing—the tidal waves that had come up the river from the sea evidently caused much destruction just before the downpour began—and finally we 'entered' Paris.

"We could see the embankments of the Seine beneath us as we passed up its course from the Point du Jour. From the site of the Champ de Mars I turned northward in search of the older part of the Champs Elysées, where my house was, and we came upon the great Arc de Triomphe, which, you remember, dates from the time of Napoleon.

"It was apparently uninjured, even the huge bronze groups remaining in their places, and the search-light, traversing its face, fell upon the heroic group of the Marseillaise on the east facade. You must have seen that, M. Versál?"

"Yes, many a time," Cosmo replied. "The fury in the face of the female figure representing the spirit of war, chanting the 'Marseillaise,' and, sword in hand, sweeping over the heads of the soldiers, is the most terrible thing of human making that I ever looked upon."

"IT was not so terrible as another thing that our startled eyes saw there," said de Beauxchamps. "Coiled round the upper part of the Arch, with its head resting directly upon that of the figure of which you speak, was a monstrous, ribbon-shaped creature, whose flat, reddish body, at least a meter in width and apparently thirty meters long, and bordered with a sort of floating frill of a pinkish color, undulated with a motion that turned us sick at heart.

"But the head was the most awful object that the fancy of a madman could conceive. There were two great round, projecting eyes, encircled with what I suppose must have been phosphorescent organs, which spread around in the water a green light that was absolutely horrifying.

"I turned away the search-light, and the eyes of that creature stared straight at us with a dreadful, stony look; and then the effect of the phosphorescence, heightened by the absence of the greater light, became more terrible than before. We were unmanned, and I hardly had nerve enough to turn the submersible away and hurry from the neighborhood.

"I had not supposed," said Cosmo, "that creatures of such a size could live in the deeper parts of the sea."

"I know," returned de Beauxchamps, "that many have thought that the abysmal creatures were generally of small size, but they knew nothing about it. What could one have expected to learn of the secrets of life in the ocean depths from the small creatures which alone the trawls brought to the surface? The great monsters could not be captured in that way. But we have *seen* them—seen them taking possession of beautiful, drowned Paris—and *we know* what they are."

The fascinated hearers who had crowded about to listen to the narrative of de Beauxchamps shuddered at this part of it, and some of the women turned away with exclamations of horror.

"I see that I am drawing my picture in too fearful colors," he said, "and I shall refrain from telling of the other inhabitants of the abyss that we found in pos-



session of what I, as a Frenchman, must call the most splendid capital that the world contained.

"Oh, to think that all that beauty, all those great palaces filled with the masterworks of art, all those proud architectural piles, all that scene of the most joyous life that the earth contained, is now become the dwelling-place of the terrible *fauna* of the deep, creatures that never saw the sun; that never felt the transforming force of the evolution which had made the face of the globe so glorious; that never quitted their abysmal homes until this awful flood spread their empire over the whole earth!"

There was a period of profound silence while de Beauxchamps's face worked spasmodically under the influence of emotions, the sight of which would alone have sufficed to convince his hearers of the truth of what he had been telling. Finally Cosmo Versál, breaking the silence, asked:

"Did you find your home?"

"Yes. It was there. I found it out. I illuminated it with the search-light. I gazed into the broken windows, trying to peer through the watery medium that filled and darkened the interior. The roof was broken, but the walls were intact. I thought of the happy, happy years that I had passed there when I *had* a family, and when Paris was an Eden, the sunshine of the world. And then I wished to see no more, and we rose out of the midst of that sunken city and sought the daylight far above.

"I had thought to tell you," he continued, after a pause, "of the condition in which we found the great monuments of the city—of the Pantheon, yet standing on its hill with its roof crushed in; of Notre Dame—a wreck, but the towers still standing proudly; of the old palace of the Louvre, through whose broken roofs and walls we caught glimpses of the treasures washed by the water within—but I find that I have not courage to go on. I had imagined that it would be a relief to speak of these things, but I do not find it so."

"After leaving Paris, then, you made no other explorations?" said Cosmo.

"None. I would have had no heart for more. I had seen enough. And yet I do not regret that I went there. I should never have been content not to have seen my beautiful city one more, even lying in her watery shroud. I loved her living; I have seen her dead. It is finished. What more is there, M. Versál?" With a sudden change of manner: "You have predicted all this, and perhaps you know more. Where do *we* go to die?"

"We shall *not* die," replied Cosmo Versál forcefully. "The Ark and your *Jules Verne* will save us."

"To what purpose?" demanded the Frenchman, his animation all gone. "Can there be any pleasure in floating upon or beneath the waves that cover a lost world? Is a brief prolongation of such a life worth the effort of grasping for?"

"Yes," said Cosmo with still greater energy. "We may still *save the race*. I have chosen most of my companions in the Ark for that purpose. Not only may we save the race of man, but we may lead it up upon a higher plane; we may apply the principles of eugenics as they have never yet been applied. You, M. de Beauxchamps, have shown that you are of the stock that is required for the regeneration of the world."

"But where can the world be regenerated?" asked de Beauxchamps with a bitter laugh. "There is nothing left but mountain-tops."

"Even they will be covered," said Cosmo.

"Do you mean that the deluge has not yet reached its height?"

"Certainly it has not. We are in an open space in the enveloping nebula. After a little we shall enter the nucleus, and then will come the worst."

"And yet you talk of saving the race!" exclaimed the Frenchman with another bitter laugh.

"I do," replied Cosmo, "and it will be done."

"But how?"

"Through the reemergence of land."

"That recalls our former conversation," put in Professor Abel Able. "It appears to me impossible that, when the earth is once covered with a universal ocean, it can ever disappear or materially lower its level. Geological ages would be required for the level of the water to be lowered even a few feet by the escape of vapor into space."

"No," returned Cosmo Versál, "I have demonstrated that that idea is wrong. Under the immense pressure of an ocean rising six miles above the ancient sea level the water will rapidly be forced into the interstices of the crust, and thus a material reduction of level will be produced within a few years—five at the most. That will give us a foothold. I have no doubt that even now the water around us is slightly lowering through that cause.

"But in itself that will not be sufficient. I have gone all over this ground in my original calculations. The intrusion of the immense mass of ocean water into the interior of the crust of the earth will result in a grand geological upheaval. The lands will reemerge above the new sea level as they emerged above the former one through the internal stresses of the globe."

The scientific men present listened with breathless interest, but some of them with many incredulous shakings of the head.

"You must be aware," continued Cosmo, addressing them particularly, "that it has been demonstrated that the continents and the great mountain ranges are buoyed up, and, as it were, are floating somewhat like slags on the internal magma. The mean density of the crust is less under the land and the mountains than under the old seabeds. This is especially true of the Himalayan region.

"That uplift is probably the most recent of all, and it is there, where at present the highest land of the globe exists, that I expect that the new upheaval will be most strongly manifested. It is for that reason, and not merely because it is now the highest part of the earth, that I am going with the Ark to Asia."

"But," said Professor Jeremiah Moses, "the upheaval of which you speak may produce a complete revolution in the surface of the earth, and if new lands are upthrust they may appear at unexpected points."

"Not at all," returned Cosmo. "The tectonic features of the globe were fixed at the beginning. As Asia has hitherto been the highest and the greatest mass of land, it will continue to be so in the future. It is there, believe me, that we shall replant the seed of humanity."

"Do you not think," asked Professor Alexander Jones, "that there will be a tremendous outburst of volcanic energy, if such upheavals occur, and may not that render the reemerging lands uninhabitable?"

"No doubt," Cosmo replied, "every form of plutonic energy will be immensely reenforced. You remember the recent outburst of all the volcanoes when the sea burst over the borders of the continents. But these forces will be mainly expended in an effort of uplifting. Unquestionably there will be great volcanic spasms, but they will not prevent the occupation of the broadening areas of land which will not be thus affected."

"Upon these lands," exclaimed Sir Wilfred Athelstone, in a loud voice, "I will develop life from the barren minerals of the crust. The age of chemical parthenogenesis will then have dawned upon the earth, and man will have become a creator."

"Will the Sir Englishman give me room for a word!" cried Costaké Theriade, raising his tall form on his



toes and agitating his arms in the air. "He will create not anything! It is *I* that will unloose the energies of the atoms of matter and make of the new man a new god."

Cosmo Versál quieted the incipient outbreak of his jealous "speculative geniuses," and the discussion of his theory was continued for some time. At length de Beauxchamps, shrugging his shoulders, exclaimed, with a return of his habitual gaiety:

"*Très bien! Vive* the world of Cosmo Versál! *I* salute the new Eve that is to come!"

## CHAPTER XX

### The Adventures in Colorado

WHEN Professor Pludder, the President and their companions on the aircraft, saw the three men on the bluff motioning and shouting to them, they immediately sought the means of bringing their craft to land. This did not prove to be exceedingly difficult, for there was a convenient rock with deep water around it on which they could disembark.

The men ran down to meet them, and to help them ashore, exhibiting the utmost astonishment at seeing them there.

"Whar in creation did *you* come from?" exclaimed one, giving the professor a pull up the bank. "Meb-be you're Cosmo Versál, and that's yer Ark."

"I'm Professor Pludder, and this is the President of the United States."

"The President of the Un—. See here, stranger, I'll take considerable from you, considering the fix yer in, but you don't want to go too fur."

"It's true," asseverated the Professor. "This gentleman is the President, and we've escaped from Washington. Please help the ladies."

"I'll help the ladies all right, but I'm blamed if I believe yer yarn. How'd you *git* here? You couldn't hev floated across the continent on that thing."

"We came on the raft that you see," interrupted Mr. Samson. "We left the Appalachian Mountains two weeks ago."

"Well, hy—it must be true!" muttered the man. "They couldn't hev come from anywhar else in that direction. I reckon the hull blamed continent is under water."

"So it is," said Professor Pludder, "and we made for Colorado knowing that it was the only land left above the flood."

All finally got upon the bluff, rejoiced to feel solid ground once more beneath their feet. But it was a desolate prospect that they saw before them. The face of the land had been scoured and gullied by the pouring waters, the vegetation had been stripped off, except where in hollows it had been covered with new-formed lakes, some of which had drained off after the downpour ceased, the water finding its way into the enveloping sea.

They asked the three men what had become of the other inhabitants, and whether there was any shelter at hand.

"We've be'n wiped out," said the original spokesman. "Cosmo Versál has done a pretty clean job with his flood. There's a kind of a cover that we three hav built, a ways back yonder, out o' timber o' one kind and another that was lodged about. But it wouldn't amount to much if there was another cloudburst. It wouldn't stand a minute. It's good to sleep in."

"Are you the only survivors in this region?" asked the President.

"I reckon you see all thet's left of us. The' ain't one out o' a hundred that's left alive in these parts."

"What became of them?"

"Swept off!" replied the man, with an expressive gesture—"and drowned right out under the sky."

"And how did you and your company escape?"

"By gitting up amongst some rocks that was higher'n the average."

"How did you manage to live—what did you have to eat?"

"We didn't eat much—we didn't hev much time to think o' eatin. We had one hoss with us, and he served, when his time came. After the sky cleared we skirmished about and dug up something that we could manage to eat, lodged in gullies where the water had washed together what had been in houses and cellars. We've got a gun and a little ammunition, and once in a while we could kill an animal that had contrived to escape somehow."

"And you think that there are no other human beings left alive anywhere around here?"

"I *know* th' ain't. The's probably some up in the foot-hills, and around the Pike. They had a better chance to git among rocks. We hed jest made up our minds to go hunting for 'em when we ketched sight o' you, and then we concluded to stay and see who you was."

"I'm surprised that you didn't go sooner."

"We couldn't. There was a roarin' torrent coming down from the mountains that cut us off. It's only last night that it stopped."

"Well, it's evident that we cannot stay here," said Professor Pludder. "We must go with these men toward the mountains. Let us take what's left of the compressed provisions out of the raft, and then we'll eat a good meal and be off."

The three men were invited to share the repast, and they ate with an appetite that would have amused their hosts if they had not been so anxious to reserve as much as possible of their provisions for future necessities.

The meal finished, they started off, their new friends aiding to carry provisions, and what little extra clothing there was. The aspect of the country they traversed affrighted them. Here and there were partially demolished houses or farm structures, or cellars, choked with débris of what had once been houses.

Farm implements and machinery were scattered about and half buried in the torrent-furrowed land. In the wreck of one considerable village through which they passed they found a stone church, and several stone houses of considerable pretensions, standing almost intact as to walls, but with roofs, doors and windows smashed and torn off.

It was evident that this place, which lay in a depression of the land, had been buried by the rushing water as high as the top stories of the buildings. From some of the sights that they saw they shrank away, and afterward tried to forget them.

Owing to the presence of the women and children their progress was slower than it might otherwise have been. They had great difficulty in crossing the course of the torrent which their companions had described as cutting them off from the foot-hills of the Pike's Peak range.

The water had washed out a veritable cañon, a hundred or more feet deep in places, and with ragged, precipitous walls and banks, which they had to descend on one side and ascend on the other. Here the skill and local knowledge of their three new-found friends stood them in good stead. There was yet enough water



in the bottom of the great gully to compel them to wade, carrying the women and children.

But, just before nightfall, they succeeded in reaching a range of rocky heights, where they determined to pass the night. They managed to make a fire with brush that had been swept down the mountain flanks and had remained wedged in the rocks, and thus they dried their soaked garments, and were able to do some cooking, and to have a blaze to give them a little heat during the night, for the air turned cold after the disappearance of the sun.

When the others had sunk into an uneasy slumber, the President and Professor Pludder sat long, replenishing the fire, and talking of their future course.

"I think," said the professor, "that we shall find a considerable population alive among the mountains. There is nothing in Colorado below four thousand feet elevation, and not much below five thousand. The great inner 'parks' were probably turned into lakes, but they will drain off, as the land around us here has done already.

"Those who managed to find places of comparative shelter will now descend into the level lands and try to hunt up the site of their homes. If only some plants and grain have been preserved they can, after a fashion, begin to cultivate the soil."

"But there is no soil," said the President, shuddering at the recollection of the devastation he had witnessed. It has all been washed off."

"No," replied the professor, "there's yet a good deal in the low places, where the water rested."

"But it is now the middle of winter."

"Reckoned by the almanac it is, but you see that the temperature is that of summer, and has been such for months. I think that this is due in some way to the influence of the nebula, although I cannot account for it. At any rate it will be possible to plant and sow.

"The whole body of the atmosphere having been raised four thousand feet, the atmospheric conditions here now are virtually the same as at the former sea-level. If we can find the people and reassure them, we must take the lead in restoring the land to fertility, and also in the reconstruction of homes."

"Suppose the flood should recommence?"

"There is no likelihood of it."

"Then," said the President, putting his face between his hands and gazing sadly into the fire, "here is all that remains of the mightiest nation of the world, the richest, the most populous—and we are to build up out of this remnant a new fatherland."

"THIS is not the only remnant," said Professor Pludder. "One-quarter, at least, of the area of the United States is still above sea-level. Think of Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada, the larger part of California, Wyoming, a part of Montana, two-thirds of Idaho, a half of Oregon and Washington—all above the critical level of four thousand feet and all except the steepest mountain-sides can be reclaimed.

"There is hope for our country yet. Remember that the climate of this entire region will now be changed, since the barometric isobars have been lifted up, and the line of thirty inches pressure now meets the edge of the Colorado plateau. There may be a corresponding change in the rainfall and in all the conditions of culture and fertility."

"Yes," sighed the President, "but I cannot, I cannot withdraw my mind from the thought of the millions, millions, millions who have perished!"

"I do not say that we should forget them," replied Professor Pludder; "Heaven forbid! But I do say

that we must give our attention to those that remain, and turn our faces steadily toward the future."

"Abiel," returned the President, pressing the professor's hand, "you are right. My confidence in you was shaken, but now I follow you again."

Thus they talked until midnight, and then got a little rest with the others. They were up and off at break of day, and as they mounted higher they began to encounter immense rocks that had come tumbling down from above.

"How can you talk of people escaping toward the mountains if they had to encounter these?" demanded the President.

"Some of these rocks have undoubtedly been brought down by the torrents," Professor Pludder replied, "but I believe that the greater number fell earlier, during the earthquakes that accompanied the first invasions of the sea."

"But those earthquakes may have continued all through."

"I do not think so. We have felt no trembling of the earth. I believe that the convulsions lasted only for a brief period, while the rocks were yielding to the pressure along the old sea-coast. After a little the crust below adjusted itself to the new conditions. And even if the rocks fell while people were trying to escape from the flood below, they must, like the water, have followed the gorges and hollow places, while the fugitives would, of course, keep upon the ridges."

Whatever perils they may have encountered, people had certainly escaped as the professor had averred. When the party, in the middle of the day, were seated at their lunch, on an elevated point from which they could see far over the strange ocean that they had left behind them, while the southern buttresses of Pike's Peak rose steeply toward the north, they discovered the first evidence of the existence of refuges in the mountains. This was a smoke rising over an intervening ridge, which their new companions declared could be due to nothing less than a large camp-fire.

They hastened to finish their meal, and then climbed the ridge. As soon as they reached it they found themselves looking down into a broad, shallow cañon, where there were nearly twenty rudely constructed cabins, with a huge fire blazing in the midst of the place, and half a dozen red-shirted men busy about it, evidently occupied in the preparation of the dinner of a large party.

Their friends recognized an acquaintance in one of the men below and hailed him with delight. Instantly men, women and children came running out of the huts to look at them, and as they descended into this improvised village they were received with a hospitality that was almost hilarious.

The refugees consisted of persons who had escaped from the lower lands in the immediate vicinity, and they were struck dumb when told that they were entertaining the President of the United States and his family.

The entire history of their adventures was related on both sides. The refugees told how, at the commencement of the great rain, when it became evident that the water would inundate their farms and buildings, they loaded themselves with as many provisions as they could carry, and, in spite of the suffocating downpour that filled the air, managed to fight their way to the ridge overhanging the deep cut in which they were now encamped.

Hardly a quarter of those who started arrived in safety. They sheltered themselves to the number of about thirty, in a huge cavern, which faced down the mountain, and had a slightly upward sloping floor, so



that the water did not enter. Here, by careful economy, they were able to eke out their provisions until the sky cleared, after which the men, being used to outdoor labor and hunting, contrived to supply the wants of the forlorn little community.

They managed to kill a few animals, and found the bodies of others recently killed, or drowned. Later they descended into the lowlands, as the water ran off, and searching among the ruins of their houses found some remnants of supplies in the cellars and about the foundations of the barns. They were preparing to go down in a body and seek to reestablish themselves on the sites of their old homes, when the President's party came upon them.

The meeting with these refugees was but the first of a series of similar encounters on the way along the eastern face of the Pike's Peak range. In the aggregate they met several hundred survivors who had established themselves on the site of Colorado Springs, where a large number of houses, standing on the higher ground, had escaped.

They had been soaked with water, descending through the shattered roofs and broken windows, and pouring into the basements and cellars; the fugitives came from all directions, some from the caverns on the mountains, and some from the rocks toward the north and east. A considerable number asserted that they had found refuge in the Garden of the Gods.

As near as could be estimated, about a quarter of the population remained alive. The strong points of Professor Pludder now, once more, came out conspicuously. He proved himself an admirable organizer. He explored all the country round, and enheartened everybody, setting them to work to repair the damage as much as possible.

Some horses and cattle were found which, following their instincts, had managed to escape the flood. In the houses and other buildings yet standing a great deal of food and other supplies was discovered, so that there was no danger of a famine. As he had anticipated, the soil had not all been washed away from the flat land, and he advised the inhabitants to plant quick-growing seeds at once.

He utilized the horses to send couriers in all directions, some going even as far as Denver. Everywhere virtually the same conditions were found—many had escaped and were alive, only needing the guidance of a quicker intelligence, and this was supplied by the advice which the professor instructed his envoys to spread among the people. He sought to cheer them still more by the information that the President was among them, and looking out for their welfare.

One thing which his couriers at last began to report to him was a cause of surprise. They said that the level of the water was rapidly falling. Some who had gone far toward the east declared that it had gone down hundreds of feet. But the professor reflected that this was impossible, because evaporation could not account for it, and he could not persuade himself that so much water could have found its way into the interior of the crust.

He concluded that his informants had allowed their hopes to affect their eyesight, and, strong as usual in his professional dogmas, he made no personal examination. Besides, Professor Pludder was beginning to be shaken in his first belief that all trouble from the nebula was at an end. Once having been forced to accept the hypothesis that a watery nebula had met the earth, he began to reflect that they might not be through with it.

In any event, he deemed it wise to prepare for it if it *should* come back. Accordingly he advised that the

population that remained should concentrate in the stronger houses, built of stone, and that every effort should be made to strengthen them further and to make the roof as solid as possible. He also directed that no houses should be occupied that were not situated on high ground, surrounded with slopes that would give ready flow to the water in case the deluging rain should recommence.

He had no fixed conviction that it would recommence, but he was uneasy, owing to his reflections, and wished to be on the safe side. He sent similar instructions as far as his horsemen could reach.

The wisdom of his doubts became manifest about two weeks after the arrival of the President's party. Without warning, the sky, which had been perfectly blue and cloudless for a month, turned a sickly yellow. Then mists hid the head, and in a little while the entire outline of Pike's Peak, and after that a heavy rain began.

Terror instantly seized the people, and at first nobody ventured out of doors. But as time went on and the rain did not assume the proportions of the former *débâcle*, although it was very heavy and continuous, hope revived. Everybody was on the watch for a sudden clearing up.

**I**NSTEAD of clearing, however, the rain became very irregular, gushing at time in torrents which were even worse than the original downpour, but these tremendous gushes were of brief duration, so that the water had an opportunity to run off the higher ground before the next downpour occurred.

This went on for a week, and then the people were terrified at finding that water was pouring up through all the depressions of the land, cutting off the highlands from Pike's Peak with an arm of the sea. It was evident that the flood had been rapidly rising, and if it should rise but little higher they would be caught in a trap. The inland sea, it was clear, had now invaded the whole of Colorado to the feet of the mountains, and was creeping up on them.

Just as this time a series of earthquakes began. They were not severe, but were continuous. The ground cracked open in places, and some houses were overturned, but there were no wall-shattering shocks—only a continual and dreadful trembling, accompanied by awful subterranean sounds.

This terrible state of affairs had lasted for a day before a remarkable discovery was made, which filled many hearts with joy, although it seemed to puzzle Professor Pludder as much as it rejoiced him.

The new advance of the sea was arrested! There could be no question of that, for too many had anxiously noted the points to which the water had attained.

We have said that Professor Pludder was puzzled. He was seeking, in his mind, a connection between the seismic tremors and the cessation of the advance of the sea. Inasmuch as the downpour continued, the flood ought still to rise.

He rejected as soon as it occurred to him the idea that the earth could be drinking up the waters as fast as they fell, and the idea that the trembling was an accompaniment of this gigantic deglutition.

Sitting in a room with the President and other members of the party from Washington, he remained buried in his thoughts, answering inquiries only in monosyllables. Presently he opened his eyes very wide and a long-drawn "A-ah!" came from his mouth. Then he sprang to his feet and cried out, but only as if uttering a thought aloud to himself:

"*The batholite!*"



## CHAPTER XXI

## "The Father of Horror"

AT the time when the President of the United States and his companions were beginning to discover the refugees around Pike's Peak, Cosmo Versál's Ark accompanied by the *Jules Verne*, whose commander had decided to remain in touch with his friends, was crossing the submerged hills and valleys of Languedoc under a sun as brilliant as that which had once made them a land of gold. De Beauxchamps remained aboard the Ark much of the time.

Cosmo liked to have him with himself and Captain Arms on the bridge, because there they could talk freely about their plans and prospects, and the Frenchman was a most entertaining companion.

Meanwhile, the passengers in the saloons and on the promenade decks formed little knots and coteries for conversation, for reading, and for mutual diversion, or strolled about from side to side, watching the endless expanse of waters for the occasional appearance of some inhabitant of the deep that had wandered over the new ocean's bottom.

These seemed to be coming to the surface to get bearings. Every such incident reminded them of what lay beneath the waves, and led them to think and talk of the awful fate that had overwhelmed their fellow men, until the spirits of the most careless were subdued by the pervading melancholy.

King Richard, strangely enough, had taken a liking for Amos Blank, who was frequently asked to join the small and somewhat exclusive circle of compatriots that continually surrounded the fallen monarch. The billionaire and the king often leaned elbow to elbow over the rail, and put their heads companionably together while pointing out some object on the sea. Lord Swansdown felt painfully cut by this, but, of course, he could offer no objection.

Finally Cosmo invited the king to come upon the bridge, from which passengers were generally excluded, and the king insisted that Blank should go, too. Cosmo consented, for Blank seemed to him to have become quite a changed man, and was sometimes full of practical suggestions.

So it happened that when Captain Arms announced that the Ark was passing over the ancient city of Carcassonne, Cosmo, the king, de Beauxchamps, Amos Blank, and the captain were all together on the bridge. When Captain Arms mentioned their location, King Richard became very thoughtful. After musing for a time he said:

"Ah! how all these names, Toulouse, Carcassonne, Languedoc, bring back to me the memory of my namesake of olden times, Richard I of England. This, over which we are floating, was the land of the Troubadours, and Richard was the very Prince of Troubadours. With all his faults England never had a king like him!"

"Knowing your devotion to peace, which was the reason why I wished you to be of the original company in the Ark, I am surprised to hear you say that," said Cosmo.

"Ah! But Cœur de Lion was a true Englishman, even in his love of fighting. What would he say if he knew where England lies to-day? What would he say if he knew the awful fate that had come upon this fair and pleasant land, from whose poets and singers he learned the art of minstrelsy?"

"He would say, 'Do not despair,'" returned Cosmo. "Show the courage of an Englishman, and fight for your race if you cannot for your country."

"But may not England, may not all these lands,

emerge again from the floods?" asked the king.

"Not in our time, not in our children's time," replied Cosmo Versál, thoughtfully shaking his head. "In the remote future, yes—but I cannot tell how remote. Tibet was once an appanage of your crown, before China taught the West what war meant, and in Tibet you may help to found a new empire, but I must tell you that it will not resemble the empires of the past. Democracy will be its corner-stone, and science its law."

"Then I devote myself to democracy and science," responded King Richard.

"Good!" Admirable!" exclaimed Amos Blank and de Beauxchamps simultaneously, while Captain Arms seemed on the point of patting the king on the back. But his attention, together with that of the others, was distracted by a huge whale blowing almost directly in the course of the Ark.

"Blessed if I ever expected to see a sight like that in these parts!" exclaimed the captain. "This lifting the ocean up into the sky is upsetting the order of nature. I'd as soon expect to sight a cachalot on top of the Rocky Mountains."

"They'll be there, too, before long," said Cosmo.

"I wonder what he's looking for," continued Captain Arms. "He must have come down from the north. He couldn't have got in through the Pyrenees or the Sierra Nevada. He's just navigated right over the whole country, straight down from the channel."

The whale sounded at the approach of the Ark, but in a little while he was blowing again off toward the south, and then the passengers caught sight of him, and there was great excitement.

He seemed to be of enormous size, and he sent his fountain to an extraordinary height in the air. On he went, appearing and disappearing, steering direct for Africa, until only with glasses, could they see his white plume blowing on the horizon.

Not even the reflection that they themselves were sailing over Europe impressed some of the passengers with so vivid a sense of their situation as the sight of this monstrous inhabitant of the ocean taking a view of his new domain.

At night Cosmo continued the concerts and the presentation of the Shakespearian dramas, and for an hour each afternoon he had a "conference" in the saloon, at which Theriade and Sir Athelstone were almost the sole performers.

Their disputes, and Cosmo's efforts to keep the peace, amused for a while, but at length the audiences diminished until Cosmo himself, with his constant companions, the Frenchman, the king, Amos Blank, the three professors from Washington, and a few other savants were the only listeners.

But the music and the plays always drew immensely. Joseph Smith was kept busy most of the time in Cosmo's cabin, copying plans for the regeneration of mankind.

When they knew that they had passed over the borders of France and were sailing above the Mediterranean Sea, it became necessary to lay their course with considerable care. Cosmo decided that the only safe plan would be to run south of Sardinia, and then keep along between Sicily and Tunis, and so on toward lower Egypt.

There he intended to seek a way over the mountains north of the Sinai peninsula into the Syrian desert, from which he could reach the ancient valley of the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf. He would then pass down the Arabian Sea, swing round India, and Ceylon, and, by way of the Bay of Bengal and the plains of the Ganges and Brahmaputra, approach the Himalayas.



Captain Arms was rather inclined to follow the Gulf of Suez and the depression of the Red Sea, but Cosmo was afraid that they would have difficulty in getting the Ark safely through between the Mt. Sinai peaks and the Jebel Gharib range.

"Well, you're the commodore," said the captain at the end of the discussion, "but hang me if I'd not rather follow a sea, where I know the courses, than go navigating over mountains and deserts in the land of Shinar. We'll land on top of Jerusalem yet, you'll see!"

Feeling sure of plenty of water under keel, they now made better speed, and de Beauchamps retired into the *Jules Verne*, and detached it from the Ark, finding that he could distance the latter easily with the submersible running just beneath the surface of the water.

"Come up to blow, and take a look around from the bridge, once in a while," the captain called out to him as he disappeared and the cover closed over him. The *Jules Verne* immediately sank out of sight.

They passed round Sardinia, and between the old African coast and Sicily, and were approaching the Malta Channel, when their attention was drawn to vast smoke far off toward the north.

"It's Etna in eruption," said Cosmo to the captain.

"A magnificent sight!" exclaimed King Richard, who happened to be on the bridge.

"Yes, and I'd like to see it nearer," remarked Cosmo, as a wonderful column of smoke, as black as ink, seemed to shoot up to the very zenith.

"You'd better keep away," Captain Arms said warningly. "There's no good comes of fooling round volcanoes in a ship."

"Oh, it's safe enough," returned Cosmo. "We can run right over the southeastern corner of Sicily and get as near as we like. There is nothing higher than about three thousand feet in that part of the island, so we'll have a thousand feet to spare."

"But maybe the water has lowered somewhat."

"Not more than a foot or two," said Cosmo. "Go ahead."

The captain plainly didn't fancy the adventure, but he obeyed orders, and the Ark's nose was turned northward, to the delight of many of the passengers who had become greatly interested when they learned that the tremendous smoke that they saw came from Mount Etna. Some of them were nervous.

The more adventurous spirits heartily applauded Cosmo Versál's design to give them a closer view of so extraordinary a spectacle. Even from their present distance the sight was one that might have filled them all with terror if they had not already been through adventures which had hardened their nerves. The smoke was truly terrific in appearance.

It did not spread low over the sea, but rose in an almost vertical column, widening out at a height of several miles, until it seemed to canopy the whole sky toward the north.

It could be seen spinning in immense rolling masses, the outer part of which were turned by the sunshine to a dingy brown color, while the main stem of the column, rising directly from the great crater, was of pitchy blackness.

An awful roaring was audible, sending a shiver through the Ark. At the bottom of the mass of smoke, through which gleams of fire were seen to shoot as they drew nearer, appeared the huge conical form of the mountain, whose dark bulk still rose nearly seven thousand feet above the sea that covered the great, beautiful, and historic island beneath it.

They had got within about twenty miles of the base of the mountain, when a shout was heard by those on the bridge, and Cosmo and the captain, looking for its source, saw the *Jules Verne*, risen to the surface, a

little to starboard, and de Beauchamps excitedly signaling to them. They just made out the words, "Sheer off!" when the Ark, with a groaning sound, took ground, and they were almost precipitated over the rail of the bridge.

"A GROUND again, by—!" exclaimed Captain Arms, instantly signaling all astern. "I told you not to go fooling round a volcano."

"This beats me!" cried Cosmo Versál. "I wonder if the island has begun to rise."

"More likely the sea has begun to fall," growled Captain Arms.

"Do you know where we are?" asked Cosmo.

"We can't be anywhere but on the top of Monte Lauro," replied the captain.

"But that's only three thousand feet high."

"It's exactly three thousand two hundred and thirty feet," said the captain. "I haven't navigated the old Mediterranean a hundred times for nothing."

"But even then we should have near seven hundred and fifty feet to spare, allowing for the draft of the Ark, and a slight subsidence of the water."

"Well, you haven't allowed enough, that's plain," said the captain.

"But it's impossible that the flood can have subsided more than seven hundred feet already."

"I don't care how impossible it is—here we are! We're stuck on a mountain-top, and if we don't leave our bones on it I'm a porpoise."

By this time the *Jules Verne* was alongside, and de Beauchamps shouted up:

"I was running twenty feet under water, keeping along with the Ark, when my light suddenly revealed the mountain ahead. I hurried up and tried to warn you, but it was too late."

"Can't you go down and see where we're fast?" asked Cosmo.

"Certainly; that's just what I was about to propose," replied the Frenchman, and immediately the submersible disappeared.

After a long time, during which Cosmo succeeded in allaying the fears of his passengers, the submersible reappeared, and de Beauchamps made his report. He said that the Ark was fast near the bow on a bed of shelly limestone.

He thought that by using the utmost force of the *Jules Verne*, whose engines were very powerful, in pushing the Ark, combined with the backing of her own engines, she might be got off.

"Hurry up, then, and get to work," cried Captain Arms. "This flood is on the ebb, and a few hours more will find us stuck here like a ray with his saw in a whale's back."

De Beauchamps's plan was immediately adopted. The *Jules Verne* descended, and pushed with all her force, while the engines of the Ark were reversed, and within fifteen minutes they were once more afloat.

Without waiting for a suggestion from Cosmo Versál, the Frenchman carefully inspected with his search-light the bottom of the Ark where she had struck, and when he came to the surface he was able to report that no serious damage had resulted.

"There's no hole," he said, "only a slight denting of one of the plates, which will not amount to anything."

Cosmo, however, was not content until he had made a careful inspection by opening some of the manholes in the inner skin of the vessel. He found no cause for anxiety, and in an hour the Ark resumed its voyage eastward, passing over the site of ancient Syracuse.

By this time a change of the wind had sent the smoke from Etna in their direction, and now it lay thick upon the water, and rendered it, for a while, im-



possible to see twenty fathoms from the bridge.

"It's old Etna's dying salute," said Cosmo. "He won't have his head above water much longer."

"But the flood is going down," exclaimed Captain Arms.

"Yes, and that puzzles me. There must have been an enormous absorption of water into the interior, far greater than I ever imagined possible. But wait until the nucleus of the nebula strikes us! In the mean time, this lowering of the water renders it necessary for us to make haste, or we may not get over the mountains round Suez before the downpour recommences."

As soon as they escaped from the smoke of Etna they ran full speed ahead again, and, keeping well south of Crete, at length, one morning they found themselves in the latitude and longitude of Alexandria.

The weather was still superb, and Cosmo was very desirous of getting a line on the present height of the water. He thought that he could make a fair estimate of this from the known height of the mountains about Sinai. Accordingly they steered in that direction, and on the way passed directly over the site of Cairo.

Then the thought of the pyramids came to them all, and de Beauxchamps, who had come aboard the Ark, and who was always moved by sentimental considerations, proposed that they should spend a few hours here, while he descended to inspect the condition in which the flood had left those mighty monuments.

Cosmo not only consented to do this, but he even offered to be a member of the party. The Frenchman was only too glad to have his company. Cosmo Versál descended into the submersible after instructing Captain Arms to hover in the neighborhood.

The passengers and crew of the Ark, with expressions of anxiety that would have pleased their subject if he had heard them, watched the *Jules Verne* disappear into the depths beneath.

The submersible was gone so long that the anxiety of those aboard the Ark deepened into alarm, and finally became almost panic. They had never before known how much they depended upon Cosmo Versál.

He was their only reliance, their only hope. He alone had known how to keep up their spirits, and when he had assured them, as he so often did, that the flooding would surely recommence, they had hardly been terrified because of their unexpressed confidence that, let come what would, his great brain would find a way out for them.

Now he was gone, down into the depths of this awful sea, where their imaginations pictured a thousand unheard of perils, and perhaps they would never see him again! Without him they knew themselves to be helpless. Even Captain Arms almost lost his nerve.

The strong good sense of Amos Blank alone saved them from the utter despair that began to seize them as hour after hour passed without the reappearance of the *Jules Verne*.

His experience had taught him how to keep a level head in an emergency, and how to control panics. With King Richard always at his side, he went about among the passengers and fairly laughed them out of their fears.

Without discussing the matter at all, he convinced them, by simple force of his own apparent confidence, that they were worrying themselves about nothing.

He was, in fact, as much alarmed as any of the others, but he never showed it. He started a rumor, after six hours had elapsed, that Cosmo himself had said that they would probably require ten or twelve hours for their exploration.

Cosmo had said nothing of the kind, but Blank's

prevarication had its intended effect, and, fortunately, before the lapse of another six hours, there was news from under the sea.

And what was happening in the mysterious depths below the Ark? What had so long detained the submersible?

The point where the descent was made had been so well chosen that the *Jules Verne* almost struck the apex of the Great Pyramid as it approached the bottom. The water was somewhat muddy from the sands of the desert, and the search-light streamed through a yellowish medium, recalling the "golden atmosphere" for which Egypt had been celebrated. But, nevertheless, the light was so powerful that they could see distinctly at a distance of several rods.

The pyramid appeared to have been but little injured, although the tremendous tidal wave that had swept up the Nile during the invasion of the sea before the downpour began had scooped out the sand down to the bed-rock on all sides.

Finding nothing of particular interest in a circuit of the pyramid, they turned in the direction of the Great Sphinx.

This, too, had been excavated to its base, and it now stood up to its full height, and a terrible expression seemed to have come into its enigmatic features.

Cosmo wished to get a close look at it, and they ran the submersible into actual contact with the forepart of the gigantic statue, just under the mighty chin.

While they paused there, gazing out of the front window of the vessel, a bursting sound was heard, followed by a loud crash, and the *Jules Verne* was shaken from stem to stern. Every man of them threw himself against the sides of the vessel, for the sound came from overhead, and they had an instinctive notion that the roof was being crushed down upon them.

A second resounding crash was heard, shaking them like an earthquake, and the little vessel rolled partly over upon its side.

"WE are lost!" cried de Beauxchamps. "The Sphinx is falling upon us! We shall be buried alive here!"

A third crash came over their heads, and the submersible seemed to sink beneath them as if seeking to avoid the fearful blows that were rained upon its roof.

Still, the stout curved ceiling, strongly braced within, did not yield, although they saw, with affright, that it was bulged inward, and some of the braces were torn from their places. But no water came in.

Stunned by the suddenness of the accident, for a few moments they did nothing but cling to such supports as were within their reach, expecting that another blow would either force the vessel completely over or break the roof in.

But complete silence now reigned, and the missiles from above ceased to strike the submersible. The search-light continued to beam out of the fore end of the vessel, and following its broad ray with their eyes, they uttered one cry of mingled amazement and fear, and then stared without a word at such a spectacle as the wildest imagination could not have pictured.

The front of the Sphinx had disappeared, and the light, penetrating beyond the place where it had stood, streamed upon the face and breast of an enormous black figure, seated on a kind of throne, and staring into their faces with flaming eyes which at once fascinated and terrified them.

To their startled imaginations the eyes seemed to roll in their sockets, and flashes of fire to dart from them. Their expression was menacing and terrifying



beyond belief. At the same time the aspect of the face was so majestic that they cowered before it.

The cheek bones were high and massive and polished until they shone in the light; the nose and chin were powerful in their contours; and the brow wore an intimidating frown. It seemed to the awed on-lookers as if they had sacrilegiously burst into the sanctuary of an offended god.

But, after a minute or two of stupefaction, they thought again of the desperateness of their situation, and turned from staring at the strange idol to consider what they should do.

The fact that no water was finding its way into the submersible somewhat reassured them, but the question now arose whether it could be withdrawn from its position.

They had no doubt that the front of the Sphinx, saturated by the water after the thousands of years that it had stood there, exposed to the desiccating influences of the sun and the desert sands, had suddenly disintegrated, and fallen upon them, pinning their vessel fast under the fragments of its huge chin.

De Beauxchamps tried the engines and found that they had no effect in moving the *Jules Verne*. He tried again and again to disengage the vessel, by reversing but it would not stir. Then they debated the only other means of escape.

"Although I have levium life-suits," said the Frenchman, "and although the top can probably be opened, for the door seems not to have been touched, yet the instant it is removed the water will rush in, and it will be impossible to pump out the vessel."

"Are your life-suits so arranged that they will permit of moving the limbs?" demanded Cosmo.

"Certainly they are."

"And can they be weighted so as to remain at the bottom?"

"They are arranged for that," responded de Beauxchamps.

"And can the weights be detached from within by the inmates without permitting the entrance of water?"

"It can be done, although a very little water might enter during the operation."

"Then," said Cosmo, "let us put on the suits, open the door, take out the ballast so that, if released, the submersible will rise to the surface through its own buoyancy, and then see if we cannot loosen the vessel from outside."

It was a suggestion whose boldness made even the owner and constructor of the *Jules Verne* stare for a moment, but evidently it was the only possible way in which the vessel might be saved; and knowing that, in case of failure, they could themselves float to the surface after removing the weights from the bottom of the suits, they unanimously decided to try Cosmo Versál's plan. It was terribly hard work getting the ballast out of the submersible, working as they had to do under water, which rushed in as soon as the door was opened, and in their awkward suits, which were provided with apparatus for renewing the supply of oxygen; but at last they succeeded.

Then they clambered outside, and labored desperately to release the vessel from the huge fragments of stone that pinned it down. Finally, exhausted by their efforts, and unable to make any impression, they gave up.

De Beauxchamps approached Cosmo, and motioned to him that it was time to ascend to the surface and leave the *Jules Verne* to her fate. But Cosmo signaled back that he wished first to examine more closely the strange statue that was gazing upon them in the still unextinguished beam of the search-light with what they might now have regarded as a look of mockery.

The others, accordingly, waited while Cosmo Versál,

greatly impeded by his extraordinary garment, clambered up to the front of the figure. There he saw something which redoubled his amazement.

On the broad breast he saw a representation of a world overwhelmed with a deluge, and encircling it was what he instantly concluded to be the picture of a nebula. Underneath, in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, with which Cosmo was familiar, was an inscription in letters of gold, which could only be translated thus:

I Come Again—

At the End of Time.

"GREAT Heavens!" he said to himself. "It is a prophecy of the Second Deluge!"

He continued to gaze, amazed, at the figure and the inscription, until de Beauxchamps clambered to his side and indicated to him that it was necessary that they should ascend without further delay, showing him by signs that the air-renewing apparatus would give out.

With a last lingering look at the figure, Cosmo imitated the others by detaching the weights from below his feet, and a minute later they were all shooting rapidly toward the surface of the sea, de Beauxchamps, as he afterward declared, uttering a prayer for the repose of the *Jules Verne*.

The imaginary time which Amos Blank had fixed as the limit set by Cosmo for the return from the depths was nearly gone, and he was beginning to cast about for some other invention to quiet the rising fears of the passengers, when it came in a visible form, which made the eyes of Captain Arms, the first to catch sight of it, start from their sockets. He rubbed them, and looked again—but there it was!

A huge head, human in outline, with bulging, glassy eyes, popped suddenly out of the depths, followed by the upper part of a gigantic form which was no less suggestive of a monstrous man, and which immediately began to wave its arms!

Before the captain could collect his senses another shot to the surface, and then another and another, until there were seven of them floating and awkwardly gesticulating within a radius of a hundred fathoms on the starboard side of the vessel.

The whole series of apparitions did not occupy more than a quarter of a minute in making their appearance.

By the time the last had sprung into sight Captain Arms had recovered his wits, and he shouted an order to lower a boat, at the same time running down from the bridge to superintend the operation. Many of the crew and passengers had in the mean time seen the strange objects, and they were thrown into a state of uncontrollable excitement.

"It's them!" shouted the captain over his shoulder, in response to a hundred inquiries all put at once, and forgetting his grammar in the excitement. "They've come up in diving-suits."

Amos Blank comprehended the situation at once; and while the captain was attending to getting out the boat, he explained matters to the crowd.

"The submersible must be lost," he said quietly, "but the men have escaped, so there is no great harm done. It does great credit to that Frenchman that he should have been prepared for such an emergency. Those are levium suits, and I've no doubt that he has got hydrogen somewhere inside to increase their buoyancy."

Within a quarter of an hour all the seven had been picked up by the boat, and returned to the Ark. The strange forms were lifted aboard with tackle to save time; and as the first one reached the deck, it staggered about on its big limbs for a moment.

Then the metallic head opened, and the features of de Beauxchamps were revealed within.



Before anybody could assist him he had freed himself from the suit, and immediately began to aid the others. In ten minutes they all stood safe and sound before the astonished eyes of the spectators. Cosmo had suffered the most from the confinement, and he sank upon a seat, but de Beauxchamps seemed to be the most affected. With downcast look he said, sadly shaking his head:

"The poor *Jules Verne*! I shall never see her again."

"What has happened?" demanded Captain Arms.

"It was the Father of Horror," muttered Cosmo Versál.

"The Father of Horror—what's that?"

"Why, the Great Sphinx," returned Cosmo, gradually recovering his breath. "Didn't you know that that was what the Arabs always called the Sphinx?"

"It was that which fell upon the submersible—split right open and dropped its great chin upon us as we were sailing round it, and pinned us fast. But the sight that we saw when the Sphinx fell apart! Tell them de Beauxchamps."

The Frenchman took up the narrative, while, with breathless attention, passengers and crew crowded about to listen to his tale.

"When we got to the bottom," he said, "we first inspected the Great Pyramid, going all round it with our search-light. It was in good condition, although the tide that had come up the Nile with the invasion of the sea had washed away the sands to a great depth all about. When we had completed the circuit of the pyramid, we saw the Sphinx, which had been excavated by the water so that it stood up to its full height.

"We ran close around it, and when we were under the chin the whole thing, saturated by the water, which no doubt caused an expansion within—you know how many thousand years the gigantic idol had been desiccated by the sun and the desert winds—dropped apart.

"The submersible was caught by the falling mass, and partly crushed. We labored for hours and hours to release the vessel, but there was little that we could do. It almost broke my heart to think of leaving the *Jules Verne* there, but it had to be done.

"At last we put on the levium floating-suits, opened the cover at the top, and came to the surface. The last thing I saw was the search-light, still burning, and illuminating the most marvelous spectacle that human eyes ever gazed upon."

"Oh, what was it? What was it?" demanded a score of voices in chorus.

"It is impossible to describe it. It was the secret of old Egypt revealed at last—at the end of the world!"

"But what was it like?"

"Like a glimpse into the remotest corridors of time," interposed Cosmo Versál, with a curious look in his eyes.

"Some of you may have heard that long ago holes were driven through the Sphinx in the hope of discovering something hidden inside, but they missed the secret. The old god kept it well until his form fell apart. We were pinned so close to it that we could not help seeing it, even in the excitement of our situation.

"It had always been supposed that the Sphinx was the symbol of something—it *was*, and more than a symbol! The explorers away back in the nineteenth century who thought that they had found something mysterious in the Great Pyramid went wide of the mark when they neglected the Sphinx."

"But what did you see?"

"We saw the prophecy of the *Second Deluge*," said Cosmo, rising to his feet, his piercing eyes aflame. "In the heart of the huge mass, approachable, no doubt, by some concealed passage in the rock beneath, known only

to the priests, stood a gigantic idol, carved out of black marble.

"It had enormous eyes of some gem that blazed in the electric beam from the search-light, with huge golden ears and beard, and on its breast was a representation of a drowning world, with a great nebula sweeping over it."

"It might have been a history instead of a prophecy," suggested one of the listening savants. "Perhaps it only told what had once happened."

"No," replied Cosmo, shaking his big head. "It was a prophecy. Under it, in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphics, which I recognized, was an inscription which could only be translated by the words, 'I come again—at the end of time!'"

There was a quality in Cosmo Versál's voice which made the hearers shudder with horror.

"Yes," he added. "It comes again! The prophecy was hidden, but science had its means of revelation, too, if the world would but have listened to its voice. Even without the prophecy I have saved the flower of mankind."

## CHAPTER XXII

### The Terrible Nucleus Arrives

WHEN the company in the Ark had recovered from the astonishment produced by the narratives of de Beauxchamps and Cosmo Versál, and particularly the vivid description given by the latter of the strange idol concealed in the breast of the "Father of Horror," and the inferences which he drew concerning its prophetic character, the question again arose as to their future course.

Captain Arms was still for undertaking to follow the trough of the Red Sea, but Cosmo declared that this course would be doubly dangerous now that the water had lowered and that they no longer had the *Jules Verne* to act as a submarine scout, warning them of hidden perils.

They must now go by their own soundings, and this would be especially dangerous in the close neighborhood of half submerged mountains, whose buttresses and foot-hills might rise suddenly out of the depths with slopes so steep that the lead would afford no certain guidance.

It was first necessary to learn if possible the actual height of the water, and whether it was still subsiding. It was partly for this purpose that they had passed over Egypt instead of keeping directly on toward the coast of lower Palestine.

But now Cosmo abandoned his purpose of taking his measurement by the aid of Mount Sinai or some of its neighboring peaks, on account of the dangerous character of that rugged region. If they had been furnished with deep-sea sounding apparatus they might have made a direct measurement of the depth in Egypt, but that was one of the few things which Cosmo Versál had overlooked in furnishing the Ark, and such an operation could not be undertaken.

He discovered that there was a mountain north of the Gulf of Akaba having an elevation of 3,450 feet, and since this was 220 feet higher than Monte Lauro, in Sicily, on which the Ark had grounded, he counted on it as a gage which would serve his purpose.

So they passed almost directly over Suez, and about 120 miles farther east they found the mountain they sought, rising to the west of the Wadi el Araba, a continuation of the depression at whose deepest point lay the famous "Dead Sea," so often spoken of in the books of former times.



Here Cosmo was able to make a very accurate estimate from the height of the peak above the water, and he was gratified to find that recession had not continued. The level of the water appeared to be exactly the same as when they made their unfortunate excursion in the direction of smoking Etna.

"It's all right," he said to Captain Arms. "We can get over into the Syrian desert without much danger, although we must go slowly and carefully until we are well past these ranges that come down from the direction of the Dead Sea. After that I do not see that there is anything in our way until we reach the ancient plains of Babylon."

King Richard, who was full of the history of the Crusades, as well as of Bible narratives, wished to have the Ark turn northward, so that they might sail over Jerusalem, and up the Valley of the Jordan within sight of Mount Hermon and the Lebanon range.

Cosmo had had enough of that kind of adventure, while Captain Arms declared that he would resign on the spot if there was to be any more "fool navigating on mountain tops." But there were many persons in the Ark who were immensely interested.

The feelings of some were deeply stirred when they learned that they were now crossing the lower end of Palestine, and that the scenes of so many incidents in the history of Abraham, Moses and Joshua lay buried beneath the blue water, whose almost motionless surface was marked with a broad trail of foaming bubbles in the wake of the immense vessel.

Cosmo greatly regretted the absence of the submersible when they were picking their way over this perilous region, but they encountered no real difficulty, and at length found, by celestial observations, that they were beyond all dangers and safely arrived over the deeply submerged desert.

They kept on for several days toward the rising sun, and then Captain Arms announced that the observations showed that they were over the site of Babylon.

This happened just at the time of the midday dinner, and over the desert Cosmo seized the opportunity to make a little speech, which could be heard by all in the saloon.

"WE are now arrived," he said, "over the very spot where the descendants of Noah are said to have erected a tower, known as the Tower of Babel, and which they have intended to build so high that it would afford a secure refuge in case there should be another deluge.

"How vain were such expectations, if they were ever entertained, is sufficiently shown by the fact that, at this moment, the water rolls more than three thousand feet deep over the place where they put their tower, and before the present deluge is over it will be thirty thousand feet deep.

"More than half a mile beneath our feet lie the broad plains of Chaldea, where tradition asserts that the study of astronomy began. It was Berosus, a Chaldean, who predicted that there would come a second deluge.

"It occurs to me, since seeing the astounding spectacle disclosed by the falling apart of the Sphinx, that these people may have had an infinitely more profound knowledge of the secrets of the heavens than tradition has assigned to them.

"On the breast of the statue in the Sphinx was the figure of a crowned man, encircled by a huge ring, and having behind him the form of a boat containing two other human figures. The boat was represented as floating in a flood of waters.

"Now, this corresponds exactly with figures that have been found among the most ancient ruins in Chaldea. I regard that ring as symbolical of a nebula enveloping the earth, and I think that the second deluge, which we have lived to see, was foretold here thousands of years ago."

"Who foretold it first, then, the people who placed the statue in the Sphinx, or these astronomers of Chaldea?" asked Professor Abel Able.

"I believe," Cosmo replied, "that the knowledge originated here, beneath us, and that it was afterwards conveyed to the Egyptians, who embodied it in their great symbolical god."

"Are we to understand," demanded Professor Jeremiah Moses, "that this figure was all that you saw on the breast of the statue, and that you simply *inferred* that the ring represented a nebula?"

"Not at all," Cosmo replied. "The principal representation was that of a world overwhelmed with a flood, and of a nebula descending upon it."

"How do you know that it was intended for a nebula?"

"Because it had the aspect of one, and it was clearly shown to be descending from the high heavens."

"A cloud," suggested Professor Moses.

"No, not a cloud. Mark this, which is a marvel in itself: It had the form of a spiral nebula. It was unmistakable."

At this point the discussion was interrupted by a call to Cosmo Versal from Captain Arms on the bridge. He hastily left the table and ascended to the captain's side.

He did not need to be told what to look for. Off in the north the sky had become a solid black mass, veined with the fiercest lightning. The pealing of the thunder came in a continuous roll, which soon grew so loud as to shake the Ark.

"Up with the side-plates!" shouted Cosmo, setting twenty bells ringing at once. "Close tight every opening! Screw down the port shutters!"

The crew of the Ark was, in a few seconds, running to and fro, executing the orders that came in swift succession from the commander's bridge, and the passengers were thrown into wild commotion. But nobody had time to attend to them.

"It is upon us!" yelled Cosmo in the captain's ear, for the uproar had become deafening. "The nucleus is here!"

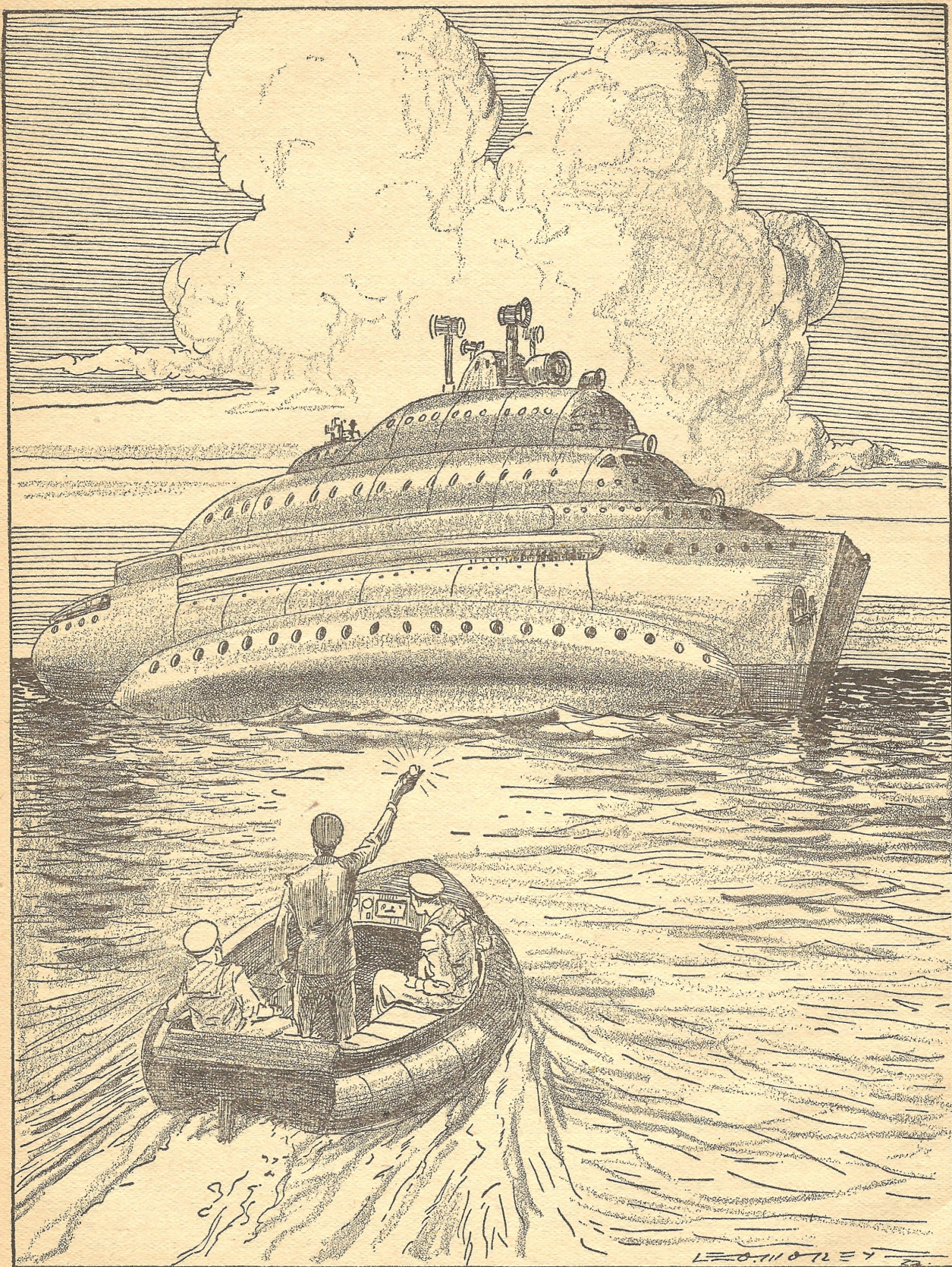
The open promenade decks had not yet all been turned into inner corridors when the downpour began upon the Ark. A great deal of water found its way aboard, but the men worked with a will, as fearful for their own safety as for that of others, and in a little while everything had been made snug and tight.

In a short time a tremendous tempest was blowing, the wind coming from the north, and the Ark, notwithstanding her immense breadth of beam, was canted over to leeward at an alarming angle. On the port side the waves washed to the top of the great elliptical dome and broke over it, and their thundering blows shook the vessel to her center, causing many to believe that she was about to founder.

The disorder was frightful. Men and women were flung about like tops, and no one could keep his feet. Crash after crash, that could be heard amid the howling of the storm, the battering of the waves, and the awful roar of the deluge descending on the roof, told the fate of the table-ware and dishes that had been hastily left in the big dining saloon.

Chairs recently occupied by the passengers on what had been the promenade decks, and from which they had so serenely, if often sorrowfully, looked over the





*As the boat approached the Ark, another volley of cheers broke forth, and the Frenchman, standing up to his full height, waved with triumphant air something that sparkled in the sunshine.*



broad, peaceful surface of the waters, were now darting, rolling, tumbling, and banging about intermingled with rugs, hats, coats and other abandoned articles of clothing.

The pitching and rolling of the Ark were so much worse than they had been during the first days of the cataclysm, that Cosmo became very solicitous about his collection of animals.

He hurried down to the animal deck, and found, indeed, that things were in a lamentable shape. The trained keepers were themselves so much at the mercy of the storm that they had all they could do to save themselves from being trampled to death.

The animals had been furnished with separate pens, but during the long continued calm the keepers, for the sake of giving their charges greater freedom and better air, had allowed many of them to go at large in the broad central space round which the pens were placed, and the tempest had come so unexpectedly that there had been no time to separate them and get them back into their lodgings.

When Cosmo descended, the scene that met his eyes caused him to cry out in dismay, but he could not have been heard if he had spoken through a trumpet. The noise and uproar were stunning, and the spectacle was indescribable. The keepers had taken refuge on a kind of gallery running round the central space, and were hanging on there for their lives.

**A**ROUND them, on the railings, clinging with their claws, wildly flapping their wings and swinging with every roll of the vessel, were all the fowls and every winged creature in the Ark except the giant turkeys, whose power of wing was insufficient to lift them out of the mêlée.

But all the four-footed beasts were rolling, tumbling and struggling in the open space below. With every lurch of the Ark they were swept across the floor in an indistinguishable mass.

The elephants wisely did not attempt to get upon their feet, but allowed themselves to slide from side to side, sometimes crushing the smaller animals, and sometimes, in spite of all their efforts, rolling upon their backs, with their titanic limbs swaying above them, and their trunks wildly grasping whatever came within their reach.

The huge California cattle were in no better case, and the poor sheep presented a pitiable spectacle as they were tumbled in woolly heaps from side to side.

Strangest sight of all was that of the great Astoria turtles. They had been pitched upon their backs and were unable to turn themselves over, and their big carapaces served admirably for sliders.

They glided with the speed of logs in a chute, now this way, now that, shooting like immense projectiles through the throng of struggling beasts, cutting down those that happened to be upon their feet, and not ending their course until they had crashed against the nearest wall.

As one of the turtles slid toward the bottom of the steps on which Cosmo was clinging it cut under the legs of one of the giant turkeys, and the latter making a super-phasianidæan effort, half leaped, half flapped its way upon the steps to the side of Cosmo Versál embracing him with one of its stumpy wings, while its red neck and head, with bloodshot eyes, swayed high above his bald dome.

The keepers gradually made their way around the gallery to Cosmo's side, and he indicated to them by signs that they must quit the place with him, and wait for a lull of the tempest before trying to do anything for their charges.

A few hours later the wind died down, and then they collected all that remained alive of the animals in their pens and secured them as best they could against the consequences of another period of rolling and pitching.

The experiences of the passengers had been hardly less severe, and panic reigned throughout the Ark. After the lull came, however, some degree of order was restored, and Cosmo had all who were in a condition to leave their rooms assemble in the grand saloon, where he informed them of the situation of affairs, and tried to restore their confidence. The roar on the roof, in spite of the sound-absorbing cover which had been reerected, compelled him to use a trumpet.

"I do not conceal from you," he said in conclusion, "that the worst has now arrived. I do not look for any cessation of the flood from the sky until we shall have passed through the nucleus of the nebula. But the Ark is a stout vessel, we are fully provisioned and we shall get through.

"All your chambers have been specially padded, as you may have remarked, and I wish you to remain in them, only issuing when summoned for assembly here.

"I shall call you out whenever the condition of the sea renders it safe for you to leave your rooms. Food will be regularly served in your quarters, and I beg you to have perfect confidence in me and my assistants."

But the confidence which Cosmo Versál recommended to the others was hardly shared by himself and Captain Arms. The fury of the blast which had just left them had exceeded everything that Cosmo had anticipated, and he saw that, in the face of such hurricanes, the Ark would be practically unmanageable.

One of the first cares was to ascertain the rate at which the downpour was raising the level of the water. This, too, surprised him. His gages showed, time after time, that the rainfall was at the rate of about four inches per minute. Sometimes it amounted to as much as six!

"The central part of the nebula," he said to the captain, through the speaking-tube which they had arranged for their intercommunications on the bridge, "is denser than I had supposed. The condensation is enormous, but it is irregular, and I think it very likely that it is more rapid in the north, where the front of the globe is plunging most directly into the nebulous mass.

"From this we should anticipate a tremendous flow southward, which may sweep us way in that direction. This will not be a bad thing for a while, since it is southward that we must go in order to reach the region of the Indian Ocean. But, in order not to be carried too rapidly that way, I think it would be well to point the Ark toward the northwest."

"How am I to know anything about the points in this blackness?" growled the captain.

"You must go the best you can by the compass," said Cosmo.

Cosmo Versál, as subsequently appeared, was right in supposing that the nucleus of the nebula was exceedingly irregular in density. The condensation was not only much heavier in the north, but it was very erratic.

Some parts of the earth received a great deal more water from the opened flood-gates above than others, and this difference, for some reason that has never been entirely explained, was especially marked between the eastern and western hemispheres.

We have already seen that when the downpour recommenced in Colorado it was much less severe than during the first days of the flood. This difference continued. It seems that all the denser parts of the nucleus happened to encounter the planet on its eastern side.



This may have been partly due to the fact that as the earth moved on its eastward motion around the sun the comparatively dense masses of the nebula were always encountered at the times when the eastern hemisphere was in advance. The fact, which soon became apparent to Cosmo, that the downpour was always the most severe in the morning hours, bears out this hypothesis.

It accords with what has been observed with respect to meteors, viz., that they are more abundant in the early morning. But then it must be supposed that the condensed masses in the nebula were relatively so small that they became successively exhausted, so to speak, before the western hemisphere had come fairly into the line of fire.

Of course the irregularity in the arrival of the water did not, in the end, affect the general level of the flood, which became the same all over the globe, but it caused immense currents, as Cosmo had foreseen.

But there was one consequence which he had overlooked. The currents, instead of sweeping the Ark continually southward, as he had anticipated, formed a gigantic whirl, set up unquestionably by the great ranges of the Himalayas, the Hindoo Koosh, and the Caucasus.

This tremendous maelstrom formed directly over Persia and Arabia, and, turning in the direction of the hands of a watch, its influence extended westward beyond the place where the Ark now was.

The consequence was that, in spite of all their efforts, Cosmo and the captain found their vessel swept resistlessly up the course of the valley containing the Euphrates and the Tigris.

They were unable to form an opinion of their precise location, but they knew the general direction of the movement, and by persistent logging got some idea of the rate of progress.

Fortunately the wind seldom blew with its first violence, but the effects of the whirling current could be but little counteracted by the utmost engine power of the Ark.

Day after day passed in this manner although, owing to the density of the rain, the difference between day and night was only perceptible by the periodical changes from absolute blackness to a faint illumination when the sun was above the horizon.

The rise of the flood, which could not have been at a less rate than six hundred feet every twenty-four hours, lifted the Ark above the level of the mountains of Kurdistan by the time that they arrived over the upper part of the Mesopotamian plain, and the uncertain observations which they occasionally obtained of the location of the sun, combined with such dead reckoning as they were able to make, finally convinced them that they must be approaching the location of the Black Sea and the Caucasus range.

"I'll tell you what you're going to do," yelled Captain Arms. "You're going to make a smash on old Ararat, where your predecessor, Noah, made his landfall."

"*Très bien!*" shouted de Beauxchamps, who was frequently on the bridge, and whose Gallic spirits nothing could daunt. "That's a good omen! M. Versál should send out one of his turkeys to spy a landing place."

They were really nearer Ararat than they imagined, and Captain Arms' prediction narrowly missed fulfillment. Within a couple of hours after he had spoken a dark mass suddenly loomed through the dense air directly in their track.

Almost at the same time, and while the captain was making desperate efforts to sheer off, the sky lightened a little, and they saw an immense heap of rock within a hundred fathoms of the vessel.

"Ararat, by all that's good!" yelled the captain. "Sta'board! Sta'board, I tell you! Full power ahead!"

THE Ark yielded slowly to her helm, and the screws whirled madly, driving her rapidly past the rocks, so close that they might have tossed a biscuit upon them. The set of the current also aided them, and they got past the danger.

"Mountain navigation again!" yelled the captain. "Here we are in a nest of these sky-shoals! What are you going to do now?"

"It is impossible to tell," returned Cosmo, "whether this is Great or Little Ararat. The former is over 17,000 feet high, and the latter at least 13,000. It is now twelve days since the flooding recommenced.

"If we assume a rise of 600 feet in twenty-four hours, that makes a total of 7,200 feet, which, added to the 3,300 that we had before, gives 10,500 feet for the present elevation. This estimate may be considerably out of the way.

"I feel sure that both the Ararats are yet well above the water line. We must get out of this region as quickly as possible. Luckily the swirl of the current is now setting us eastward. We are on its northern edge. It will carry the Ark down south of Mount Demavend and the Elburz range, and over the Persian plateau, and if we can escape from it, as I hope, by getting away over Beluchistan, we can go directly over India and skirt the southern side of the Himalayas. Then we shall be near our goal."

"Bless me!" said the captain, staring with mingled admiration and doubt at Cosmo Versál, "if you couldn't beat old Noah round the world, and give him half the longitude. But I'd rather *you'd* navigate this hooker. The ghost of Captain Sumner itself couldn't work a traverse over Beluchistan."

"You'll do it all right," returned Cosmo, "and the next time you drop your anchor it will probably be on the head of Mount Everest."

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Robbing the Crown of the World

NOW that they were going with the current instead of striving to stem it, the Ark made much more rapid way than during the time that it was drifting toward the Black Sea.

They averaged at least six knots, and, with the aid of the current, could have done much better, but they thought it well to be cautious, especially as they had so little means of guessing at their exact location from day to day. The water was rough.

There was, most of the time, little wind, and often a large number of passengers assembled in the saloon.

The noise of the deluge on the roof was so much greater than it had been at the start that it was difficult to converse, but there was plenty of light, and they could, at least, see one another, and communicate by signs if not very easily by the voice. Cosmo's library was well selected, and many passed hours in reading stories of the world they were to see no more!

King Richard and Amos Blank imitated Cosmo and the captain by furnishing themselves with a speaking-tube, which they put alternately to their lips and their ears, and thus held long conversations, presumably exchanging with one another the secrets of high finance and kingly government.

Both of them had enough historical knowledge and sufficient imagination to be greatly impressed by the fact that they were drifting, amidst this terrible storm,



over the vast empire that Alexander the Great had conquered.

They mused over the events of the great Macedonian's long marches through deserts and over mountains, and the king, who loved the story of these glories of the past, though he had cultivated peace in his own dominions, often sighed while they recalled them to one another. Lord Swansdown and the other Englishmen aboard seldom joined their king since he had preferred the company of an untitled American to theirs.

The first named could not often have made a member of the party if he had wished, for he kept to his room most of the time, declaring that he had never been so beastly seasick in his life. He thought that such an abominable roller as the Ark should never have been permitted to go into commission, don't you know.

On the morning of the twelfth day after they left the neighborhood of Mount Ararat Captain Arms averred that their position must be somewhere near longitude 69 degrees east, latitude 26 degrees north.

"Then you have worked your traverse over Beluchistan very well," said Cosmo, "and we are now afloat above the valley of the River Indus. We have the desert of northwestern India ahead, and from that locality we can continue right down the course of the Ganges. In fact it would be perfectly safe to turn northward and skirt the Himalayas within reach of the high peaks. I think that's what I'll do."

"If you go fooling round any more peaks," shouted Captain Arms, in a foghorn voice, "you'll have to do your own steering! I've had enough of that kind of navigation!"

Nevertheless when Cosmo Versál gave the order the captain turned the prow of the Ark toward the presumable location of the great Himalayan range. They were now entirely beyond the influence of the whirl that had at first gotten them into trouble, and then helped them out of it, in western Asia.

Behind the barrier of the ancient "Roof of the World" the sea was relatively calm, although, at times, they felt the effect of currents pouring down from the north, which had made their way through the lofty passes from the Tibetan side.

Cosmo calculated from his estimate of the probable rate of rise of the flood and from the direction and force of the currents that all but the very highest of the Pamirs must already be submerged.

It was probable, he thought, that the water had attained a level of between seventeen and eighteen thousand feet. This, as subsequent events indicated, was undoubtedly an underestimate. The downfall in the north must have been far greater than Cosmo supposed, and the real height of the flood was considerably in excess of what he supposed.

If they could have seen some of the gigantic peaks as they approached the mountains in the eastern Punjab, south of Cashmere, they would have been aware of the error.

As it was, owing to the impossibility of seeing more than a short distance even when the light was brightest, they kept farther south than was really necessary, and after passing, as they believed, over Delhi, steered south by east, following substantially the course that Cosmo had originally named along the line of the Ganges valley.

They were voyaging much slower now, and after another ten days had passed an unexpected change came on. The downpour diminished in severity, and at times the sun broke forth, and for an hour or two the rain would cease entirely, although the sky had a

coppery tinge, and at night small stars were not clearly visible.

Cosmo was greatly surprised at this. He could only conclude that the central part of the nebula had been less extensive, though more dense, than he had estimated. It was only thirty-four days since the deluge had recommenced, and unless present appearances were deceptive, its end might be close at hand.

Captain Arms seized the opportunity to make celestial and solar observations which delighted his seaman's heart, and with great glee he informed Cosmo that they were in longitude 88 degrees 20 minutes east, latitude 24 degrees 15 minutes north, and he would stake his reputation as a navigator upon it.

"Almost exactly the location of Moorshedabad, in Bengal," said Cosmo, consulting his chart. "The mighty peak of Kunchinjunga is hardly more than two hundred miles toward the north, and Mount Everest, the highest point in the world, is within a hundred miles of that!"

"But you're not going skimming around *them*!" cried the captain with some alarm.

"I shall if the sky continues in its present condition, go as far as Darjeeling," replied Cosmo. "Then we can turn eastward and get over upper Burmah and so on into China. From there we can turn north again."

"I think we can manage to get into Tibet somewhere between the ranges. It all depends upon the height of the water, and that I can ascertain exactly by getting a close look at Kunchinjunga. I would follow the line of the Brahmaputra River if I dared, but the way is too beset with perils."

"I think you've made a big mistake," said the captain. "Why didn't you come directly across Russia, after first running up to the Black Sea from the Mediterranean, and so straight into Tibet?"

"I begin to think that that's what I ought to have done," responded Cosmo, thoughtfully, "but when we started the water was not high enough to make me sure of that route, and after we got down into Egypt I didn't want to run back. But I guess it would have been better."

"Better a sight than steering among these five-mile peaks," growled Captain Arms. "How high does Darjeeling lie? I don't want to run aground again."

"Oh, that's perfectly safe," responded Cosmo. "Darjeeling is only about 7350 feet above the old sea-level. I think we can go almost to the foot of Kunchinjunga without any danger."

"Well, the name sounds dangerous enough in itself," said the captain, "but I suppose you'll have your way. Give me the bearings and we'll be off."

They took two days to get to the location of Darjeeling, for at times the sky darkened and the rain came down again in tremendous torrents. But these spells did not last more than two or three hours, and the weather cleared between them.

As soon as they advanced beyond Darjeeling, keeping a sharp outlook for Kunchinjunga, Cosmo began to perceive the error of his calculation of the height of the flood.

The mountain should still have projected more than three thousand feet above the waves, allowing that the average rise during the thirty-six days since the recommencement of the flood had been six hundred feet a day.

But, in fact, they did not see it at all, and thought at first that it had been totally submerged. At last they found it, a little rocky island, less than two hundred feet above the water, according to Cosmo's careful measure, made from a distance of a quarter of a mile.

"This is great news for us," he exclaimed, as soon as he had completed the work. "This will save us a long



journey around. The water must now stand at about 27,900 feet, and although there are a considerable number of peaks in the Himalayas approaching such an elevation, there are only three or four known to reach or exceed it, of which Kunchinjunga is one.

"We can, then, run right over the roof of the world, and there we'll be, in Tibet. Then we can determine from what side it is safest to approach Mount Everest, for I am very desirous to get near that celebrated peak and, if possible, see it go under."

"But the weather isn't safe yet," objected Captain Arms. "Suppose we should be caught in another downpour, and everything black about us! I'm not going to navigate this ship by search-light among mountains twenty-eight thousand feet tall, when the best beam that ever shot from a mirror won't show an object a hundred fathoms away."

"Very well," Cosmo replied, "we'll circle around south for a few days and see what will happen. I think myself that it's not quite over yet. The fact is, I hope it isn't for now that it has gone so far, I'd like to see the top-knot of the earth covered."

"Well, it certainly couldn't do any more harm if it got up as high as the moon," responded the captain.

THEY spent four days sailing to and fro over India, and during the first three of those days there were intermittent downpours. But the whole of the last period of twenty-four hours was entirely without rain, and the color of the sky changed so much that Cosmo declared he would wait no longer.

"Everest," he said, "is only 940 feet higher than Kunchinjunga, and it may be sunk out of sight before we can get there."

"Do you think the water is still rising?" asked de Beauxchamps, while King Richard and Amos Blank listened eagerly for the reply, for now that the weather had cleared, the old company was all assembled on the bridge.

"Yes, slowly," said Cosmo. "There is a perceptible current from the north which indicates that condensation is still going on there. You'll see that it'll come extremely close to the six miles, I predicted, before it's all over."

By the time they had returned to the neighborhood of the mountains the sky had become blue, with only occasionally a passing sunshower, and Cosmo ordered the promenades to be thrown open, and the passengers, with great rejoicings, resumed their daily lounging and walking on deck.

It required a little effort of thought to make them realize their situation, but when they did it grew upon them until they could not sufficiently express their wonder.

There they were, on an almost placid sea, with tepid airs blowing gently in their faces, and a scorching sun overhead, whose rays had to be shielded off, floating over the highest pinnacles of the roof of the world, the traditional "Abode of Snow!"

All around them, beneath the rippled blue surface, lined here and there with little white windrows of foam stood submerged peaks, 24,000, 25,000, 26,000, 27,000, 28,000 feet in elevation! They sailed over their summits and saw them not.

All began now to sympathize with Cosmo's desire to find Everest before it should have disappeared with its giant brothers. Its location was accurately known from the Indian government surveys, and Captain Arms had every facility for finding the exact position of the Ark. They advanced slowly toward the northwest, a hundred glasses eagerly scanning the horizon ahead.

Finally, at noon on the third day of their search, the welcome cry of "Land ho!" came down from the

crow's nest. Captain Arms immediately set his course for the landfall, and in the course of a little more than an hour had it broad abeam.

"It's Everest, without question," said Cosmo. "It's the crown of the world."

But how strange was its appearance! A reddish-brown mass of rock, rising abruptly out of the blue water, really a kind of crown in form, but not more than a couple of square rods in extent, and about three feet high at its loftiest point.

There was no snow, of course, for that had long since disappeared, owing to the rise of temperature, and no snow would have fallen in that latitude now, even in mid-winter, because the whole base of the atmosphere had been lifted up nearly six miles.

Sea-level pressures were prevailing where the barometric column would once have dropped almost to the bottom of its tube. It was all that was left of the world!

NORTH of them, under the all-concealing ocean, lay the mighty plateau of Tibet; far toward the east was China, deeply buried with its 500,000,000 of inhabitants; toward the south lay India, over which they had so long been sailing; northwestward the tremendous heights of the Pamir region and of the Hindu-Kush were sunk beneath the sea.

"When this enormous peak was covered with snow," said Cosmo, "its height was estimated at 29,002 feet, or almost five and three-quarter miles. The removal of the snow has, of course, lowered it, but I think it probable that this point, being evidently steep on all sides, and of very small area, was so swept by the wind that the snow was not very deep upon it."

"The peak is certainly sinking," said de Beauxchamps at last. "I believe it has gone down three inches in the last fifteen minutes."

"Keep your eyes fixed on some definite point," said Cosmo to the others who were looking, "and you will easily note the rise of the water."

They watched it until nobody felt any doubt. Inch by inch the crown of the world was going under. In an hour Cosmo's instruments showed that the highest point had settled to a height of but two feet above the sea.

"But when will the elevation that you have predicted begin?" asked one.

"Its effects will not become evident immediately," Cosmo replied. "It may possibly already have begun, but if so, it is masked by the continued rise of the water."

"And how long shall we have to wait for the re-emergence of Tibet?"

"I cannot tell, but it will be a long time. But do not worry about that. We have plenty of provisions, and the weather will continue fine after the departure of the nebula."

They circled about until only a foot or so of the rock remained above the reach of the gently washing waves. Suddenly de Beauxchamps exclaimed:

"I must have a souvenir from the crown of the disappearing world. M. Versál, will you permit me to land upon it with one of your boats?"

De Beauxchamps's suggestion was greeted with cheers, and twenty others immediately expressed a desire to go.

"No," said Cosmo to the eager applicants, "it is M. de Beauxchamps's idea; let him go alone. Yes," he continued, addressing the Frenchman, "you can have a boat, and I will send two men with you to manage it. You'd better hurry, or there will be nothing left to land upon."

The necessary orders were quickly given, and in five



minutes de Beauxchamps, watched by envious eyes, was rapidly approaching the disappearing rock. They saw him scramble out upon it, and they gave a mighty cheer as he waved his hand at them.

He had taken a hammer with him, and with breathless interest they watched him pounding and prying about the rock. They could see that he selected the very highest point for his operations.

While he worked away, evidently filling his pockets, the interest of the onlookers became intense.

"Look out" they presently began to shout at him, "you will be caught by the water."

But he paid no attention, working away with feverish rapidity. At last he was standing to his shoe-tops in water, and many exclamations of dismay came from the Ark. But he now gave over his work, and, with apparent reluctance, entered the boat, which was rowed close up to the place where he was standing.

As the boat approached the Ark, another volley of cheers broke forth, and the Frenchman, standing up to his full height, waved with a triumphant air something that sparkled in the sunshine.

"I congratulate you, M. de Beauxchamps," cried Cosmo, as the adventurer scrambled aboard. "You have stood where no human foot has ever been before, and I see that you have secured your souvenir of the world that was."

"Yes," responded de Beauxchamps exultantly, "and see what it is—a worthy decoration for the crown of the earth!"

He held up his prize, amid exclamations of astonishment and admiration from those who were near enough to see it.

"The most beautiful specimen of amethyst I ever beheld!" cried a mineralogist enthusiastically, taking it from de Beauxchamps's hand. "What was the rock?"

"Unfortunately, I am no mineralogist," replied the Frenchman, "and I cannot tell you, but these gems were abundant. I could have almost filled the boat if I had had time."

"The amethyst," he added gaily, "is the traditional talisman against intoxication, but, although these adorned her tiara, the poor old world has drunk her fill."

"But it's only water," said Cosmo, smiling.

"Too much, at any rate," returned the Frenchman.

"I should have said," continued the mineralogist, "that the rock was some variety of syenite, from its general appearance."

"I know nothing of that," replied de Beauxchamps, "but I have the jewels of the terrestrial queen, and," he continued, with a polite inclination, "I shall have the pleasure of bestowing them upon the ladies."

He emptied his pockets, and found that he had enough to give every woman aboard the Ark a specimen, with several left over for some of the men, Cosmo, of course, being one of the recipients.

"There," said de Beauxchamps, as he handed the stone to Cosmo, "there is a memento from the Gaurisankar."

"I beg your pardon—Mount Everest, if you please," interposed Edward Whistlington, who, it will be remembered, was the Englishman rescued with Lord Swansdown from the Pyrenees.

"No," responded the Frenchman, "it is the Gaurisankar. Why will you English persist in renaming everything in the world? Gaurisankar is the native name, and, in my opinion, far more appropriate and euphonic than Everest."\*

This discussion was not continued, for now everybody became interested in the movements of the Ark.

\* They are two distinct mountains.

Cosmo had decided that it would be safe to approach close to the point where the last peak of the mountain had disappeared.

Cautiously they drew nearer and nearer, until, looking through the wonderfully transparent water, they caught sight of a vast precipice descending with frightful steepness, down and down, until all was lost in the profundity beneath.

The point on which de Beauxchamps had landed was now covered so deep that the water had ceased to swirl about it, but lay everywhere in an unbroken sheet, which was every moment becoming more placid and refulgent in the sunshine.

The world was drowned at last! As they looked abroad over the convex surface, they thought, with a shudder, that now the earth, seen from space, was only a great, glassy ball, mirroring the sun and the stars.

But they did not know what had happened far in the west!

## CHAPTER XXIV

### The Batholite!

AFTER the disappearance of Mt. Everest, Cosmo Versál made a careful measurement of the depth of water on the peak, which he found to be forty feet, and then decided to cruise eastward with the Ark, sailing slowly, and returning after a month to see whether by that time there would be any indications of the reappearance of land which he anticipated.

No part of his extraordinary theory of the deluge was more revolutionary, or scientifically incredible, than this idea that the continents would gradually emerge again, owing to internal stresses set up in the crust of the earth.

This would be caused by the tremendous pressure of the water, which must be ten or twelve miles deep over the greatest depressions of the old ocean-bottoms, and partly by the geological movements which he expected would attend the intrusion of the water into subterranean cavities and the heated magma under volcanic regions.

He often debated the question with the savants aboard the Ark, and, despite their incredulity, he persisted in his opinion. He could not be shaken, either, in his belief that the first land to emerge would be the Himalayas, the Pamirs, and the plateau of Tibet.

"We may have to wait some years before any considerable area is exposed," he admitted, "but it must not be forgotten that what land does first appear above the water will lie at the existing sea-level, and will have an oceanic climate, suitable for the rapid development of plants."

"We have aboard all things needed for quick cultivation, and in one season we could begin to raise crops."

"But at first," said Professor Jeremiah Moses, "only mountain tops will emerge, and how can you expect to cultivate them?"

"There is every probability," replied Cosmo, "that even the rocks of a mountain will be sufficiently friable after their submergence to be readily reduced to the state of soil, especially with the aid of the chemical agents which I have brought along, and I have no fear that I could not, in a few weeks, make even the top of Everest fertile."

"I anticipate, in fact, that it will be on that very summit that we shall begin the reestablishment of the race. Then, as the plateaus below come to the surface, we can gradually descend and enlarge the field of our operations."

"Suppose Everest should be turned into a volcano?"

"That cannot happen," said Cosmo. "A volcano is built up by the extrusion of lava and cinders from be-



low, and these cannot break forth at the top of a mountain already formed, especially when that mountain has no volcanic chimney and no crater, and Everest had neither."

"If the lowering of the flood that caused our stranding on a mountain top in Sicily was due to the absorption of water into the interior of the crust, why may not that occur again, and thus bring the Himalayas into view, without any rising on their part?"

"I think," said Cosmo, "that all the water that could enter the crust has already done so, during the time that the depression of level which so surprised us was going on. Now we must wait for geologic changes, resulting from the gradual yielding of the internal mass to the new forces brought to bear upon it."

"As the whole earth has gained in *weight* by the condensation of the nebula upon it, its plastic crust will proportionally gain in *girth* by internal expansion, which will finally bring all the old continents to the surface, but Asia first of all."

Whether Cosmo Versál's hypotheses were right or wrong, he always had a reply to any objection, and the prestige which he had gained by his disastrously correct theory about the watery nebula gave him an advantage so enormous that nobody felt enough confidence in himself to stand long against anything that he might advance.

Accordingly, everybody in the Ark found himself looking forward to the reemergence of Mount Everest almost as confidently as did Cosmo Versál.

They began their waiting voyage by sailing across the plateau of Tibet and the lofty chain of the Yungling Mountains out over China.

"It was by this way that I intended to get into Tibet," said Cosmo, "if the unexpectedly rapid rise of the flood had not offered us a shorter and quicker route."

The interest of all aboard was excited to the highest degree when they found themselves sailing over the mighty domains of the Chinese emperor, who had developed an enormous power, making him the ruler of the whole eastern world.

He, with his half-billion or more of subjects, now reposed at the bottom of an ocean varying from three to five or six miles in depth. Deep beneath them lay the broad and once populous valleys of the Yang-tse-Kiang and the Hoang-Ho the "Scourge of China."

Then they swung round northward and reentered the region of Tibet, seeking once more the drowned crown of the world. In the meantime Cosmo had had the theatrical exhibitions and the concerts resumed in the evenings, and sometimes there was music, and even dancing on the long promenades, open to the outer air.

Let not that be a matter of surprise or blame, for the spirit of joy in life is unconquerable, as it should be if life is worth while. So it happened that, not infrequently, and not with any blameworthy intention, or in any spirit of heartless forgetfulness, this remarkable company of world-wanderers drifted, in the moonlight, above the universal watery grave of the drowned millions, with the harmonies of stringed instruments stealing out upon the rippling waves, and the soft sound of swiftly shuffling feet tripping over the smooth decks.

Costaké Theriade and Sir Wilfred Athelstone resumed their stormy efforts to talk each other down, but now even Cosmo was seldom a listener, except when he had to interfere to keep the peace.

King Richard and Amos Blank, however, usually heard them out, but it was evident from their expressions that they enjoyed the prospective fisticuffs rather more than the exposition of strange scientific doctrines.

Perhaps the happiest man aboard was Captain Arms.

At last he could make as many and as certain observations as he chose, and he studied the charts of Asia until he declared that now he knew the latitude and longitude of the mountains better than he did those of the seaports of the old oceans.

He had not the least difficulty in finding the location of Mount Everest again, and when he announced that they were floating over it, Cosmo immediately prepared to make another measurement of the depth of water on the peak. The result was hardly gratifying. He found that it had diminished but four inches. He said to Captain Arms:

"The range is rising, but less rapidly than I hoped. Even if the present rate should be doubled it would require five years for the emergence of the highest point. Instead of remaining in this part of the world we shall have an abundance of time to voyage round the earth, going leisurely, and when we get back again perhaps there will be enough land visible to give us a good start."

"Mr. Versál," said the captain, "you remember that you promised me that I should drop my anchor on the head of Mount Everest if I worked a traverse across Beluchistan."

"Certainly I remember it; and also that you were not much disposed to undertake the task. However, you did it well, and I suppose that now you want me to fulfil the bargain?"

"Exactly," replied the captain. "I'd just like to get a mud-hook in the top-knot of the earth. I reckon that that'll lay over all the sea yarns ever spun."

"Very well," returned Cosmo. "Try it, if you've got cable enough."

"Enough and to spare," cried the captain, "and I'll have the Gaurisankar, as the Frenchman calls it, hooked in a jiffy."

This was an operation which called everybody to the rails to watch. Hundreds of eyes tried to follow the anchor as it descended perpendicularly upon the mountain-top, nearly forty feet beneath. Through the clear water they could dimly see the dark outline of the summit below, and they gazed at it with wonder, and a sort of terror.

Somehow they felt that never before had they fully appreciated the awful depths over which they had been floating. The anchor steadily dropped until it rested on the rock.

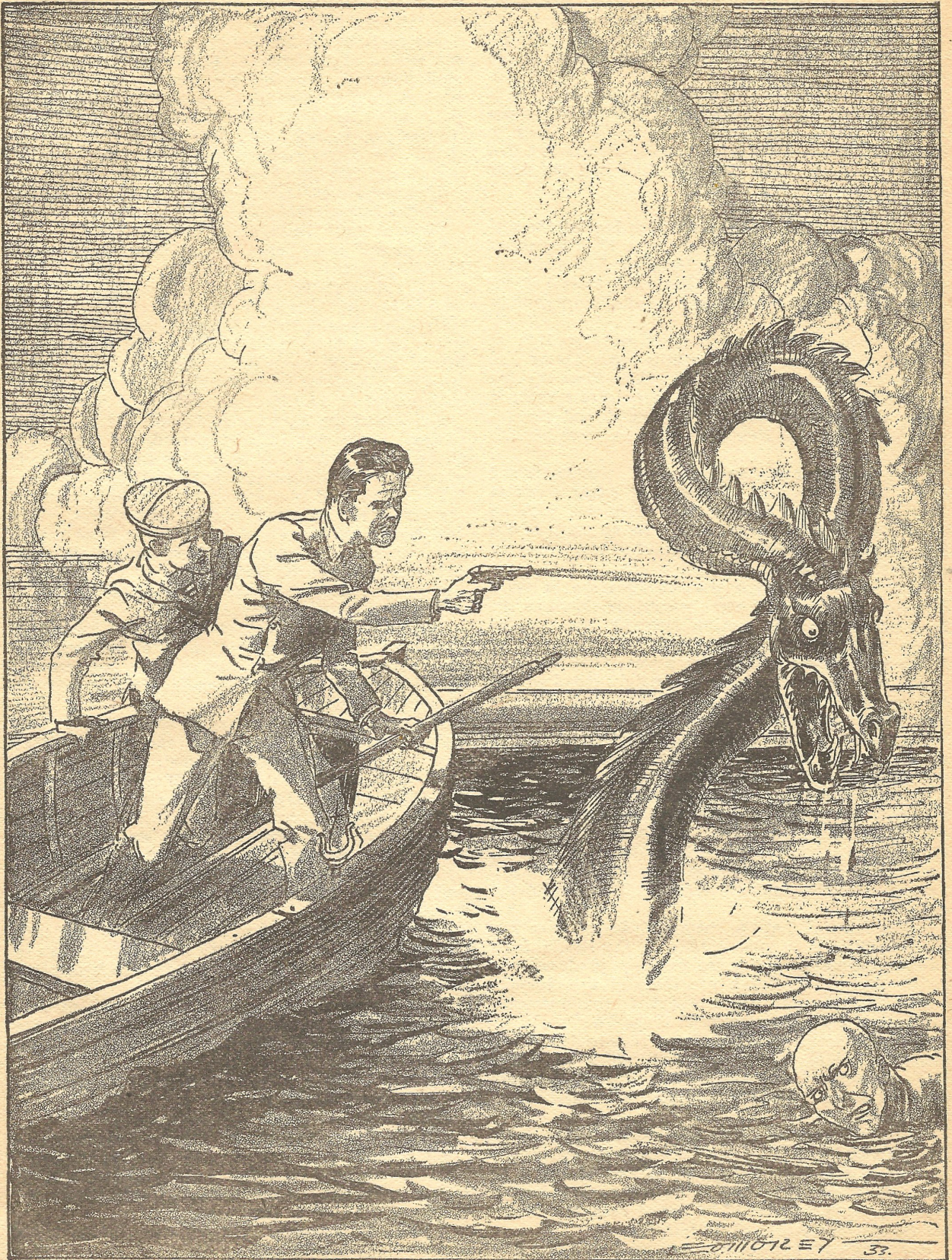
It got a hold finally, and in a few minutes the great vessel was swinging slowly round, held by a cable whose grasp was upon the top of the world! When the sensation had been sufficiently enjoyed the anchor was tripped, and the nose of the Ark was turned north-westward.

The news of what they were about to do was both welcome and saddening to the inmates of the vessel. They wished to pass once more over the lands where they had first seen the light, and at the same time they dreaded the memories that such a voyage would inevitably bring back into their minds with overwhelming force. But, at any rate, it would be better than drifting for years over Tibet and China.

They ran slowly, for there was no hurry, and the Ark had now become to them as a house and a home—their only foothold on the whole round earth, and that but a little floating island of buoyant metal. They crossed the Pamirs and the Hindu-Kush, the place where the Caspian Sea had been swallowed up in the universal ocean, and ran over Ararat, which three months before had put them into such fearful danger, but whose loftiest summit now lay twelve thousand feet beneath their keel.

At length, after many excursions toward the north and toward the south, in the halcyon weather that sel-





The awful head rose higher, as if to make sure of the prey, and was about to drop upon Cosmo, whose bald head seemed a pitiful mouthful for those mighty jaws, when a blue beam shot from the Captain's outstretched hand. . . .



dom failed since the withdrawal of the nebula, they arrived at the place (or above it) which had stood during centuries for a noon-mark on the globe.

It was midday when Captain Arms, having made his observations, said to Cosmo and the others on the bridge:

"Noon at Greenwich, and noon on the Ark. Latitude, fifty-one degrees thirty minutes. That brings you as nearly plumb over the place as you'd be likely to hit it. Right down there lies the old observatory that set the chronometer for the world, and kept the clocks and watches up to their work."

KING RICHARD turned aside upon hearing the captain's words. They brought a too vivid picture of the great capital, six miles under their feet, and a too poignant recollection of the disastrous escape of the royal family from overwhelmed London seven months before.

As reckoned by the almanac, it was the 15th of August, more than fifteen months since Cosmo had sent out his first warning to the public, when the Ark crossed the meridian of seventy-four degrees west, in about forty-one degrees north latitude, and the adventurers knew that New York was once more beneath them.

There was great emotion among both passengers and crew, for the majority of them had either dwelt in New York or been in some way associated with its enterprises and its people, and, vain as must be the hope of seeing any relic of the buried metropolis, every eye was on the alert.

They looked off across the boundless sea in every direction, interrogating every suspicious object on the far horizon, and even peering curiously into the blue abyss, as if something might suddenly appear there which would speak to them like a voice from the past.

But they saw only shafts of sunlight running into bottomless depths, and occasionally some oceanic creature floating lazily far below. The color of the sea was wonderful. It had attracted their attention after the submergence of Mount Everest, but at that time it had not yet assumed its full splendor.

At first, no doubt, there was considerable suspended matter in the water, but gradually this settled, and the sea became bluer and bluer—not the deep indigo of the old ocean, but a much lighter and more brilliant hue—and here, over the site of New York, the waters were of a bright, luminous sapphire, that dazzled the eye.

Cosmo declared that the change of the sea-color was undoubtedly due to some quality in the nebula from whose condensation the water had been produced, but neither his own analyses, nor those of the chemists aboard the Ark, were able to detect the subtle element to whose presence the peculiar tint was due.

But whatever it may have been, it imparted to the ocean an ethereal, imponderous look, which was sometimes startling. There were moments when they almost expected to see it expand back into the nebulous form and fly away.

On the afternoon of the second day, after they again left the vicinity of New York, Cosmo went out on the rear of the Ark, and, leaning over the rail, seemed to be watching intently something in the water a considerable distance astern. Suddenly he leaned over, and losing his balance, plunged headlong into the sea.

A cry rose from those who had been watching him from a distance, and a rush was made by Joseph Smith for the bridge. There he shouted the terrible news to Captain Arms. The latter knew what to do when there was a "man overboard." Instantly he signaled to stop

the ship and to lower boats. Two were got into the water inside of three minutes, for fortunately the sea was calm and the Ark was running slowly.

The captain and Smith tumbled into the first boat and set out at full speed to find Cosmo, who, being a good swimmer, was keeping himself afloat without much difficulty. Presently they spied him, battling manfully with the slight waves, and they shouted encouragement to him. But they had a long distance to row, for there had been no time to lower an auto-launch, and they bent to their work like madmen.

They had got within five rods of the struggling man, when the captain uttered a cry of dismay.

"Look at that!" he yelled. "Gee—he's lost!"

"A shark!" cried Smith, almost dropping his oar in his excitement.

"No," shouted the captain over his shoulder as he bent to his oar, "it's a sea-serpent!"

By this time Cosmo had heard a great thrashing of water behind him, and his face looked white as he lifted it above the waves in a supreme effort to increase his speed. He must have seen the monster behind him as it raised its horrible head, with huge jaws agape.

Far behind the head the affrighted captain and his companion, who was all but unnerved, saw the surface of the water churned into foam by a long, sinuous body whose coils rose and fell with swift motion.

*The awful head rose higher, as if to make surer of the prey, and was about to drop upon Cosmo, whose bald head seemed a pitiful mouthful for those mighty jaws, when a blue beam shot from the captain's outstretched hand and the "ruh—ruh—ruh" of a big automatic pistol, discharging its fire in an unintermitted stream of projectiles, was heard.*

Captain Arms had dropped his oar and leveled the weapon almost at a single motion. The huge creature's head dropped to one side, but still the jaws made a swooping snap at Cosmo, who avoided them by a desperate leap in the water.

The captain seized his oar again and dashed the boat forward, unaided by Smith, who was now completely overcome with terror and excitement. But before they could reach him Cosmo had been thrown under water by a blow from one of the thrashing coils.

Still the captain pressed on, shouting to Smith to help him, and in a moment the boat was itself in the midst of the terrible coils. The head of the monster lay upon the water, staining it red; but life was by no means extinct, and the coils continued to churn the sea into foam.

One of them came down upon the boat and overturned it, pitching out the two men. But it was of levium and continued to float, and they both managed to scramble aboard.

By this time the struggles of the sea-serpent were becoming feeble, but where was Cosmo Versál? The captain gazed hastily round on all sides but could see nothing of him.

"Drowned," he muttered. "Killed by that blasted serpent! Now, what'll we do?"

Meanwhile, the second boat had arrived.

"Look for the commodore!" shouted Captain Arms. "Look with all your blasted eyes! He's gone down!"

At that moment there was a gurgling sound at the captain's side, and a hand reached up out of the water and grasped his water-filled boat.

It was Cosmo Versál. He had been perhaps a full minute under water, and he could not speak. They hauled him over the thwart and laid him down. As they did so a loud cheer saluted their ears, and they saw that the Ark, which, under the conduct of the mariner whom the captain had left in charge, had



rounded about, was nearing the scene of the struggle, with hundreds of eager faces staring over the bulwarks.

"Cheer—you! Cheer!" yelled the captain. "You've got good reason!"

And he added a "tiger" himself to the renewed outburst from the Ark.

When they reached the Ark they could see the long body of the sea-monster undulating like an enormous black-and-white ribbon afloat upon the waves. Some of the captain's projectiles must have gone through its brain.

Cosmo was not seriously hurt by the blow he had received, and after an hour or two of rest in his cabin he came out smiling and bowing to the congratulations that were showered upon him.

Before night he seemed to have forgotten all about his adventure; but the passengers talked of nothing else, tormenting themselves with imagining what would have become of them if the sea-serpent had seized his prey.

Cosmo did not refer to the incident again until, at night, he and the captain were alone on the bridge. Then he said suddenly:

"Captain Arms, I owe you my life. I could not have been spared at this time. But you are the stuff that is needed to reestablish the empire of man over the earth."

"The old world was good enough for me," responded the captain. "But who would ever have dared to spin a yarn like this? I've heard times enough about the sea-serpent, but I'd have taken a marlinespike to the seaman who ventured to tell me that the time was coming when I'd kill one skimming over America. I wonder if there's any more of 'em nosing around the Alleghany Mountains down below?"

"The earth," said Cosmo, "has gone back to its youth. The flood has brought the creatures of the primeval ocean out of their lurking-places in the great deeps, and they are beginning to explore their new possessions."

Recalling memories of the past, vivid and so innumerable now that they had no more heart for the diversions of the Ark which had so long distracted them, the passengers hung over the railings of the deck, and talked in low tones, while day after day the great vessel forged slowly toward the west.

It was three weeks after they had left the vicinity of New York, and the observations showed that they must be nearing the eastern border of the Colorado plateau, when one day a bird alighted on the railing of the bridge, close beside Cosmo and Captain Arms.

"A bird!" cried Cosmo. "But it is incredible that a bird should be here! How can it ever have kept itself afloat? It surely could not have remained in the air all this time, and it could not have rested on the waves during the downpour from the sky! Its presence here is absolutely miraculous!"

The poor bird, evidently exhausted by a long journey, remained upon the rail, and permitted Cosmo to approach closely before taking flight to another part of the Ark. Cosmo at first thought that it might have escaped from the aviary below.

But close inspection satisfied him that it was of a different species from any that he had taken into the Ark, and the more he thought of the strangeness of its appearance here the greater was his bewilderment.

While he was puzzling over the subject the bird was seen by many of the passengers, flitting from one part of the vessel to another, and they were as much astonished as Cosmo had been, and all sorts of conjectures were made to account for the little creature's escape from the flood.

But within an hour or two Cosmo and the captain, who were now much oftener alone upon the bridge than they had been during their passage over the eastern continents, had another, and an incomparably greater, surprise.

It was the call of "Land, ho!" from the lookout. "Land!" exclaimed Cosmo. "Land! How can there be any land?"

Captain Arms was no less incredulous, and he called the lookout down, accused him of having mistaken a sleeping whale for a landfall, and sent another man aloft in his place. But in a few minutes the same call of "Land, ho!" was repeated.

The captain got the bearings of the mysterious object this time, and the Ark was sent for it at her highest speed. It rose steadily out of the water until there could be no possibility of not recognizing it as the top of a mountain.

When it had risen still higher, until its form seemed gigantic against the horizon, Captain Arms, throwing away his tobacco with an emphatic gesture, and striking his palm on the rail, fairly shouted:

"The Pike! By—the old Pike! There she blows!"

"Do you mean Pike's Peak?" demanded Cosmo.

"Do I mean Pike's Peak?" cried the captain, whose excitement had become uncontrollable. "Yes, I mean Pike's Peak, and the deuce to him! Wasn't I born at his foot? Didn't I play ball in the Garden of the Gods? And look at him, Mr. Versál! There he stands! No water-squirting pirate of a nebula could succeed in downing the old Pike!"

The excitement of everybody else was almost equal to the captain's, when the grand mass of the mountain, with its characteristic profile, came into view from the promenade-decks.

De Beauxchamps, King Richard, and Amos Blank hurried to the bridge, which they were still privileged to invade, and the two former in particular asked questions faster than they could be answered. Meanwhile, they were swiftly approaching the mountain.

King Richard seemed to be under the impression that they had completed the circuit of the world ahead of time, and his first remark was to the effect that Mount Everest appeared to be rising faster than they had anticipated.

"That's none of your pagodas!" exclaimed the captain disdainfully; "that's old Pike; and if you can find a better crown for the world, I'd like to see it."

The king looked puzzled, and Cosmo explained that they were still near the center of the American continent, and that the great peak before them was the sentinel of the Rocky Mountains.

"But," replied the king, "I understood you to say that the whole world was covered, and that the Himalayas would be the first to emerge."

"That's what I believed," said Cosmo, "but the facts are against me."

"So you thought you were going to run over the Rockies!" exclaimed the captain gleefully. "They're no Gaurisankars, hey, M. de Beauxchamps?"

"Vive les Rockies! Vive le Pike!" cried the Frenchman, catching the captain's enthusiasm.

"But how do you explain it?" asked King Richard.

"It's the batholite," responded Cosmo, using exactly the same phrase that Professor Pludder had employed some months before.

"And pray explain to me what is a batholite?"

Before Cosmo Versal could reply there was a terrific crash, and the Ark, for the third time in her brief career, had made an unexpected landing. But this time the accident was disastrous.



## CHAPTER XXV

## The End of the Ark

ALL on the bridge of the Ark, including Captain Arms, who should surely have known the lay of the land about his childhood's home, had been so interested in their talk that before they were aware of the danger the great vessel had run her nose upon a projecting buttress of the mountain.

She was going at full speed, too. Not a person aboard but was thrown from his feet, and several were severely injured.

The prow of the Ark was driven high upon a sloping surface of rock, and the tearing sounds showed only too clearly that this time both bottoms had been penetrated, and that there could be no hope of saving the huge ship or getting her off.

Perhaps at no time in all their adventures had the passengers of the Ark been so completely terrorized and demoralized, and many members of the crew were in no better state. Cosmo and the captain shouted orders, and ran down into the hold to see the extent of the damage. Water was pouring in through the big rents in torrents.

There was plainly nothing to be done but to get everybody out of the vessel and upon the rocks as rapidly as possible.

The forward parts of the promenade-deck directly overhung the rocks upon which the Ark had forced itself, and it was possible for many to be let down that way. At the same time boats were set afloat, and dozens got ashore in them.

While everybody was thus occupied with things immediately concerning their safety, nobody paid any attention to the approach of a boat, which had set out from a kind of bight in the face of the mountain.

Cosmo was at the head of the accommodation-ladder that was being let down on the starboard side, when he heard a shout, and, lifting his eyes from his work, was startled to see a boat containing, beside the rowers, two men whom he instantly recognized—President Samson and Professor Pludder.

Their sudden appearance here astonished him as much as that of Pike's Peak itself had done. He dropped his hands and stared at them as their boat swiftly approached. The ladder had just been gotten ready, and the moment the boat touched its foot Professor Pludder mounted to the deck of the Ark as rapidly as his great weight would permit.

He stretched out his hand as his foot met the deck, and smilingly said:

"Versál, you were right about the nebula."

"Pludder," responded Cosmo, immediately recovering his aplomb, and taking the extended hand of the professor, "you know the truth when you see it."

Not another word was exchanged between them for the time, and Professor Pludder instantly set to work aiding the passengers to descend the ladder. Cosmo waved his hand in greeting to the President, who remained in the boat, and politely lifted his tall, but sadly battered, hat in response.

The Ark had become so firmly lodged that, after the passengers had all got ashore, Cosmo decided to open a way through the forward end of the vessel by removing some of the plates, so that the animals could be taken ashore direct from their deck by simply descending a slightly sloping gangway.

This was a work that required a whole day, and while it was going forward under Cosmo's directions the passengers, and such of the crew as were not needed, found their way, led by the Professor and the

President, round a bluff into a kind of mountain lap, where they were astonished to see many rough cottages, situated picturesquely among the rocks, and small cultivated spaces, with grass and flowers, surrounding them.

Here dwelt some hundreds of people, who received the shipwrecked company with Western hospitality, after the first effects of their astonishment had worn off. It appears that, owing to its concealment by a projecting part of the mountain, the Ark had not been seen until just at the moment when it went ashore.

Although it was now the early part of September, the air was warm and balmy, and barn-yard fowls were clucking and scratching about the rather meager soil around the houses and outbuildings.

There was not room in this place for all the newcomers, but Professor Pludder assured them that in many of the neighboring hollows, which had formerly been mountain gorges, there were similar settlements, and that room would be found for all.

Parties were sent off under the lead of guides, and great was the amazement, and, it may be added, joy, with which they were received in the little communities that clustered about the flanks of the mountain.

About half of Cosmo's animals had perished, most of them during the terrible experiences attending the arrival of the nucleus, which have already been described, but those that remained were in fairly good condition, and with the possible exception of the elephants, they seemed glad to feel solid ground once more under their feet.

The elephants had considerable difficulty in making their way over the rocks to the little village, but finally all were got to a place of security. The great Californian cattle caused hardly less trouble than the elephants, but the Astorian turtles appeared to feel themselves at home at once.

COSMO, with King Richard, de Beauxchamps, Amos Blank, Captain Arms, and Joseph Smith, became the guests of Professor Pludder and the President in their modest dwellings, and as soon as a little order had been established explanations began. Professor Pludder was the first spokesman, the scene being the President's "parlor."

He told of their escape from Washington and of their arrival on the Colorado plateau.

"When the storm recommenced," he said, "I recognized the complete truth of your theory, Mr. Versál—I had partially recognized it before—and I made every preparation for the emergency."

"The downfall, upon the whole, was not as severe here as it had been during the earlier days of the deluge, but it must have been far more severe elsewhere."

"The sea around us began to rise, and then suddenly the rise ceased. After studying the matter I concluded that a batholite was rising under this region, and that there was a chance that we might escape submergence through its influence."

"Pardon me," interrupted King Richard, "but Mr. Versál has already spoken of a 'batholite.' What does that mean?"

"I imagine," replied the professor, smiling, "that neither Mr. Versál nor I have used the term in a strictly technical sense. At least we have vastly extended and modified its meaning in order to meet the circumstances of our case."

"Batholite is a word of the old geology, derived from a language which was once widely cultivated, Greek, and meaning, in substance, stone, or rock, 'from the depths.'



"The conception underlying it is that of an immense mass of plastic rock rising under the effects of pressure from the interior of the globe, forcing, and in part melting its way to the surfaces, or lifting up the superincumbent crust.

"Geologists had discovered the existence of many great batholites that had risen in former ages, and there were some gigantic ones known in this part of America."

"That," interposed Cosmo, "was the basis of my idea that the continents would rise again, only I supposed that the rise would first manifest itself in the Himalayan region.

"However, since it has resulted in the saving of so many lives here, I cannot say that my disappointment goes beyond the natural mortification of a man of science upon discovering that he has been in error."

"I believe," said Professor Pludder, "that at least a million have survived here in the heart of the continent through the uprising of the crust. We have made explorations in many directions, and have found that through all the Coloradan regions people have succeeded in escaping to the heights.

"Since the water, although it began to rise again after the first arrest of the advance of the sea, never attained a greater elevation than about 7,500 feet as measured from the old sea-level contours, there must be millions of acres, not to say square miles, that are still habitable.

"I even hope that the uprising has extended far through the Rocky Mountain region."

Professor Pludder then went on to tell how they had escaped from the neighborhood of Colorado Springs when the readvance of the sea began, and how at last it became evident that the influence of the underlying "batholite" would save them from submergence.

In some places, he said, violent phenomena had been manifested, and severe earthquakes had been felt, but upon the whole, he thought, not many had perished through that cause.

As soon as some degree of confidence, that they were, after all, to escape the flood, had been established, they had begun to cultivate such soil as they could find, and now, after months of fair weather, they had become fairly established in their new homes.

When Cosmo, on his side, had told of the adventures of the Ark, and of the disappearance of the crown of the world in Asia, and when de Beauxchamps had entertained the wondering listeners with his account of the submarine explorations of the *Jules Verne*, the company at last broke up.

From this point—the arrival of the Ark in Colorado, and its wreck on Pike's Peak—the literature of our subject becomes abundant, but we cannot pause to review it in detail.

The reemergence of the Colorado mountain region continued slowly, and without any disastrous convulsions, and the level of the water receded year by year as the land rose, and the sea lost by evaporation into space and by chemical absorption in the crust.

In some other parts of the Rockies, as Professor Pludder had anticipated, an uprising had occurred, and it was finally estimated that as many as three million persons survived the deluge.

It was not the selected band with which Cosmo Versál had intended to regenerate mankind, but from the Ark he spread a leaven which had its effect on the succeeding generations.

He taught his principles of eugenics, and implanted

deep the germs of science, in which he was greatly aided by Professor Pludder, and, as all readers of this narrative know, we have every reason to believe that our new world, although its population has not yet grown to more than ten millions, is far superior, in every respect, to the old world that was drowned.

As the dry land spread wider, extensive farms were developed, and for a long time there was almost no other occupation than that of cultivating the soil. President Samson became a scientific farmer.

Amos Blank, returning to his old methods, soon became the greatest farmer of them all, buying out the others until Cosmo Versál sternly interfered and compelled him to relinquish everything but five hundred acres of ground.

But on this Blank developed a most surprising collection of domestic animals, principally from the stocks that Cosmo had saved in the Ark.

The elephants died, and the Astorian turtles did not reproduce their kind, but the gigantic turkeys and the big cattle and sheep did exceedingly well, and many other varieties previously unknown were gradually developed with the aid of Sir Wilfred Athelstone, who found every opportunity to apply his theories in practise.

King Richard also became a farmer, but on a very moderate scale, and he never ceased to mourn for his lost dominions, recalling the time when it had been said that the beat of the British drum accompanied the rising sun round the world.

Of Cosaké Theriade, and the interatomic force, it is only necessary to remind the reader that the marvelous mechanical powers which we possess to-day, and which we draw directly from the hidden stores of the protons and electrons, trace their origin to the brain of the "speculative genius" from Roumania, whom Cosmo Versál had the insight to save from the great deluge.

All of these actors long ago passed from the scene, but while they remained Cosmo Versál continued to be their guiding star, and his genius gave an impulse that has never since been lost.

At his death all of New America mourned, and afterward was carved, high on the brow of the great mountain on which his voyage ended, in gigantic letters, cut deep in the living rock, and covered with shining, incorrodible levium, an inscription that will transmit his fame to the remotest posterity:

HERE RESTED THE ARK OF

COSMO VERSÁL!

*He Foresaw and Prepared for the Second Deluge,  
And Although Nature*

*Aided Him in Unexpected Ways,*

*Yet, but for Him, His Warnings, and His Example  
The World of Man Would Have Ceased  
To Exist.*

*Postscriptum.*

While these words are being written, news comes of the return of an aero, driven by interatomic energy, from a voyage of exploration round the earth.

It appears that the Alps are yet deeply buried, but that Mount Everest now lifts its head more than ten thousand feet above the sea, and that some of the loftiest plains of Tibet are beginning to re-emerge.

Thus Cosmo Versál's prediction is verified, though he has not lived to see its fulfillment and missed seeing the emergence of Tibet from the flood.



# A Winter Amid the Ice or The Cruise of the *Jeune-Hardie*

By Jules Verne

*A STORY by Jules Verne, one of the fathers of science fiction, is always welcomed by our readers. The great explorer Byrd is preparing to investigate the world of ice and his supply ships will soon be on their way to the Antarctic. So the story is very timely and will make very interesting reading to make a comparison between Jules Verne's fiction, which is often prophetic, and the latest up-to-date methods of exploration.*

Illustrated by MOREY

## CHAPTER I

### The Black Flag

**T**HE curé of the ancient church of Dunkirk rose at five o'clock on the 12th of May, 18—, to say, according to his custom, low mass for a few pious sinners.

Attired in his priestly robes, he was ready for the altar, when a man entered the sacristy, at once joyous and frightened. He was a sailor of some sixty years, but still vigorous and sturdy, with an open, honest countenance.

"Monsieur the curé," said he, "stop a moment, please."

"What do you want so early in the morning, Jean Cornbutte?" asked the curé.

"Want? Why, to embrace you in my arms, i' faith!"

"Well, after the mass at which you are going to be present——"

"The mass?" returned the old sailor, laughing. "Do you think you are going to say your mass now, and that I will let you do so?"

"And why should I not say my mass?" asked the curé. "Explain yourself. The third bell has sounded——"

"Whether it has or not," replied Jean Cornbutte, "it will sound many times to-day, monsieur, for you have promised me that you will bless, with your own hands, the marriage of my son Louis and my niece Marie!"

"He has arrived then," said the curé joyfully.

"It is nearly the same thing," replied Cornbutte, rubbing his hands. "Our brig was signaled from the lookout at sunrise—our brig, which you yourself christened by the good name of the '*Jeune-Hardie*'!"

"I congratulate you with all my heart, Cornbutte,"

said the curé. "I remember our agreement. The vicar will take my place, and I will put myself at your disposal against your dear son's arrival."

"And I promise you that he will not make you fast long," replied the sailor. "You have published the banns, and you will only have to absolve him from the sins he may have committed between sky and water, in the Northern Ocean. It is a grand idea, the marriage celebrated the very day he arrives, and my son Louis shall leave his ship to go at once to the church."

"Go, then, and arrange everything, Cornbutte."

"I fly, monsieur the curé. Good-morning!"

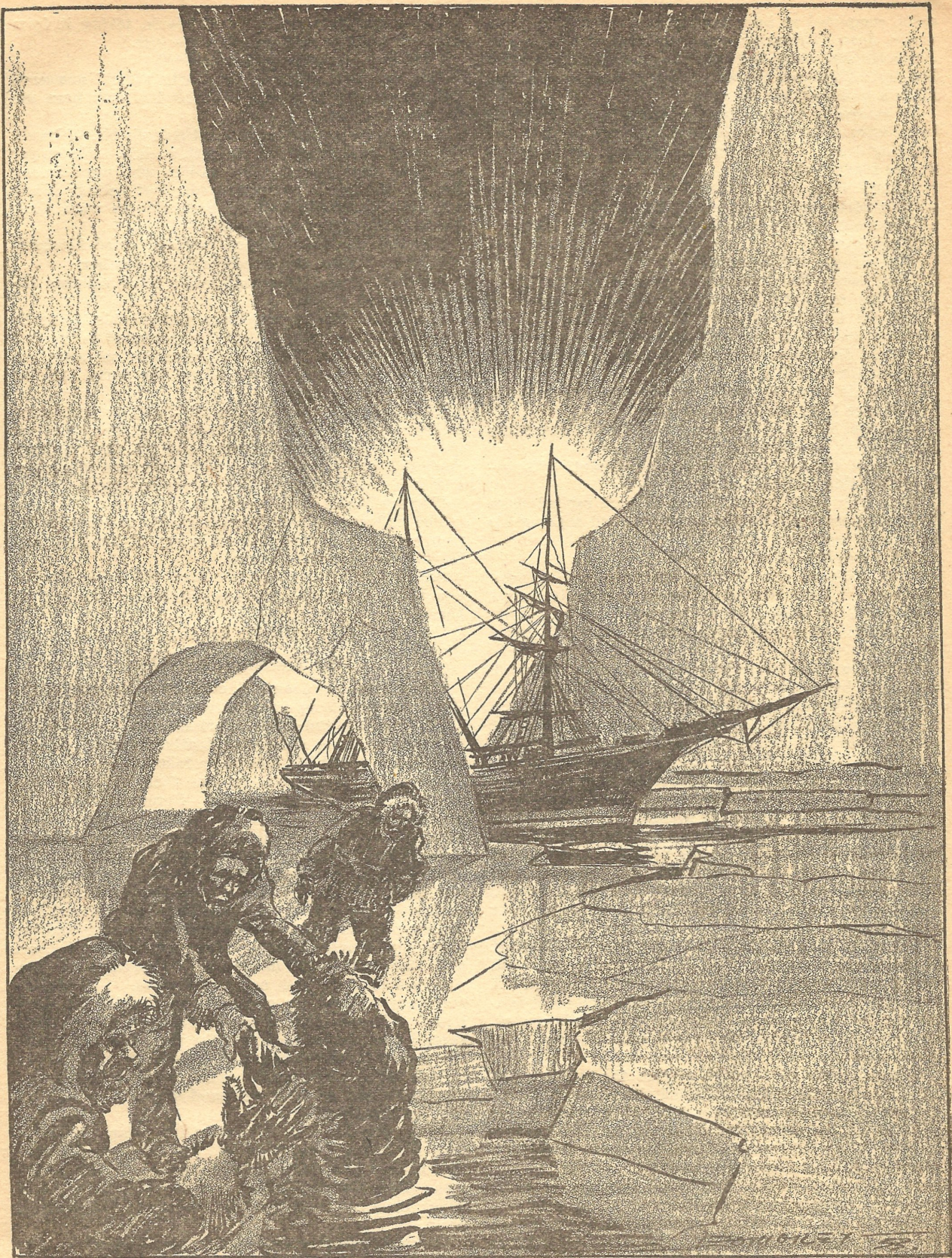
The sailor hastened with rapid steps to his house, which stood on the quay, whence could be seen the Northern Ocean, of which he seemed so proud.

Jean Cornbutte had amassed a comfortable sum at his calling. After having long commanded the vessels of a rich ship-owner of Havre, he had settled down in his native town, where he had caused the brig *Jeune-Hardie* to be constructed at his own expense. Several successful voyages had been made in the North, and the ship always found a good sale for its cargoes of wood, iron, and tar. Jean Cornbutte then gave up the command of her to his son Louis, a fine sailor of thirty, who, according to all the coasting captains, was the boldest mariner in Dunkirk.

Louis Cornbutte had gone away deeply attached to Marie, his father's niece, who found the time of his absence very long and weary. Marie was scarcely twenty. She was a pretty Flemish girl, with some Dutch blood in her veins. Her mother, when she was dying, had confided her to her brother, Jean Cornbutte. The brave old sailor loved her as a daughter, and saw in her proposed union with Louis a source of real and durable happiness.

The arrival of the ship, already signalled off the





*All hurried forward, and so imprudently that Turquette slipped into a fissure, and would have certainly perished had not Jean Cornbutte seized him by the hood.*



coast, completed an important business operation, from which Jean Cornbutte expected large profits. The *Jeune-Hardie*, which had left three months before, came last from Bodoë, on the west coast of Norway, and had made a quick voyage thence.

On returning home, Jean Cornbutte found the whole house alive. Marie with radiant face had assumed her wedding dress. "I hope the ship will not arrive before we are ready!" she said.

"Hurry, little one," replied Jean Cornbutte, "for the wind is north, and she sails well, you know."

"Have our friends been told, uncle?" asked Marie.

"They have."

"The notary, and the curé?"

"Rest easy. You alone are keeping us waiting."

At this moment Clerbaut, an old crony, came in. "Well, old Cornbutte," cried he, "here's luck! Your ship has arrived at the very moment that the government has decided to contract for a large quantity of wood for the navy!"

"What is that to me?" replied Jean Cornbutte.

"What care I for the government?"

"You see, Monsieur Clerbaut," said Marie, "one thing only absorbs us—Louis's return."

"I don't dispute that," replied Clerbaut. "But—in short—this purchase of wood——"

"And you shall be at the wedding," replied Jean Cornbutte, interrupting the merchant, and shaking his hand as if he would crush it.

"This purchase of wood——"

"And with all our friends, landmen and seamen, Clerbaut. I have already informed everybody, and I shall invite the whole crew of the ship."

"And shall we go and await them on the pier?" asked Marie.

"Indeed we will," replied Jean Cornbutte. "We will defile, two by two, with the violins at the head."

Jean Cornbutte's invited guests soon arrived. Though it was very early, not a single one failed to appear. All congratulated the honest old sailor whom they loved. Meanwhile Marie, kneeling down, changed her prayer to God into thanksgivings. She soon returned, lovely and decked out, to the company; all the women kissed her, while the men vigorously grasped her by the hand.

It was a curious sight to see this joyous group taking its way, at sunrise, towards the sea. The news of the ship's arrival had spread through the port, and many heads, in nightcaps, appeared at windows and half-opened doors. Compliments and pleasant nods came from every side.

The party reached the pier in the mist of a concert of praise and blessings. The weather was magnificent, and the sun seemed to take part in the festivity. A fresh north wind made the waves foam; and some fishing-smacks, their sails trimmed for leaving port, streaked the sea with their rapid wakes between the breakwaters.

The two piers of Dunkirk stretch far out into the sea. The wedding-party occupied the whole width of the northern pier, and soon reached a small house situated at its extremity, inhabited by the harbor-master. The wind freshened, and the *Jeune-Hardie* ran swiftly under her topsails, cross-jack, spanker, topgallants and royals. Jean Cornbutte, spyglass in hand, responded merrily to the questions of his friends.

"See my ship!" he cried: "clean and steady as if she had been rigged at Dunkirk! Not a bit of damage done—not a rope wanting!"

"Do you see your son, the captain?" asked one.

"No, not yet. Why, he's at his business!"

"Why doesn't he run up his flag?" asked Clerbaut.

"I scarcely know. He has a reason for it, I have no doubt."

"Your spy-glass, uncle?" said Marie, taking it from him. "I want to be the first to see him."

"But he is my son, mademoiselle!"

"He has been your son for thirty years," answered the young girl, laughing, "and he has only been my betrothed for two!"

The *Jeune-Hardie* was now entirely visible. Already the crew were preparing to cast anchor. The upper sails had been furled. The sailors who were among the rigging might be recognized. But neither Marie nor Jean Cornbutte had yet been able to wave their hands at the captain of the ship.

"There's the mate, André Vasling," cried Clerbaut.

"There's Fidèle, the carpenter," said another.

"And our friend Penellan," said a third, saluting the sailor named.

The *Jeune-Hardie* was only three cables' lengths from the shore, when a black flag ascended to the gaff of the brigantine. There was mourning on board the boat. A shudder of terror seized the party and the heart of the young girl.

The ship sadly swayed into port, and an icy silence reigned on its deck. Soon it had passed the end of the pier. Marie, Jean Cornbutte, and all their friends hurried towards the quay at which she was to anchor, and in a moment found themselves on board.

"My son!" said Jean Cornbutte.

The sailors, with uncovered heads, pointed to the mourning flag. Marie uttered a cry of anguish, and fell into old Cornbutte's arms.

André Vasling had brought back the *Jeune-Hardie*, but Louis Cornbutte, Marie's betrothed, was not on board.

## CHAPTER II

### Jean Cornbutte's Project

AS soon as the young girl, confided to the care of the sympathizing friends, had left the ship, André Vasling, the mate, apprised Jean Cornbutte of the dreadful event which had deprived him of his son, narrated in the ship's journal as follows:—

"Near the Mælstrom, on the 26th of April, bad weather and south-west winds. Perceived signals of distress made by a schooner to the leeward. This schooner, deprived of her mizzen-mast, was running towards the whirlpool, under bare poles. Captain Louis Cornbutte, seeing that this vessel was hastening into danger, resolved to board her. Despite the remonstrances of his crew, he had the long-boat lowered into the sea, and got into it, with the sailor Courtois and the helmsman Pierre Noquet. The crew watched them until they disappeared in the fog. Night came on. The sea became more and more boisterous. The *Jeune-Hardie* was in danger of being engulfed by the Mælstrom. She was obliged to run before the wind. For several days she hovered near the place of the disaster. The long-boat, the schooner, Captain Louis, and the two sailors did not reappear. André Vasling then called the crew together, took command of the ship, and set sail for Dunkirk."

After reading this dry narrative, Jean Cornbutte wept for a long time; if he had any consolation, it was that his son had died in attempting to save his fellow-men. Then the poor father left the ship, the sight of which made him wretched, and returned to his desolate home.

The sad news soon spread throughout Dunkirk. The many friends of the old sailor came to bring him their sincere sympathy. Then the sailors of the *Jeune-Hardie* gave a more particular account of the event, and André Vasling told Marie, at great length, of the devotion of her betrothed to the last.

When he ceased weeping, Jean Cornbutte, the next



day after the ship's arrival, said, "Are you very sure, André, that my son has perished?"

"Alas, yes, Monsieur Jean," replied the mate.

"And you made all possible search for him?"

"All, Monsieur Cornbutte. But it is unhappily but too certain that he and the two sailors were sucked down in the whirlpool of the *Maëlstrom*."

"Would you like, André, to keep the second command of the ship?"

"That will depend upon the captain, Monsieur Jean."

"I shall be the captain," replied the old sailor. "I am going to discharge the cargo with all speed, make up my crew, and sail in search of my son."

"Your son is dead!" said André obstinately.

"It is possible, André, replied Jean Cornbutte sharply, "but it is also possible that he saved himself. I am going to rummage all the ports of Norway, and when I am fully convinced that I shall never see him again, I will return here to die!"

André Vasling, seeing that this decision was irrevocable, did not insist further, but went away.

Jean Cornbutte at once told his niece of his intention, and he saw a few rays of hope glisten across her tears. It had not seemed to the young girl that her lover's death could be doubtful; but when this new hope entered her heart, she embraced it without reserve.

The old sailor determined that the *Jeune-Hardie* should put to sea without delay. The solidly built ship had no need of repairs. Jean Cornbutte gave his sailors notice that if they wished to re-embark, no change in the crew would be made. He alone replaced his son in the command of the brig. None of the comrades of Louis Cornbutte failed to respond to his call, and there were hardy tars among them—Alaine Turquette, Fidèle Misonne, the carpenter, Penellan the Breton, who replaced Pierre Nouquet as helmsman, and Gradlin, Aupic, and Gervique, courageous and well-tried mariners.

Jean again offered André Vasling his old rank on board. The first mate was an able officer, who had proved his skill in bringing the *Jeune-Hardie* into port. Yet, from what motive could not be told, André made some difficulties and asked time for reflection.

"As you will André," replied Cornbutte. "Only remember that if you accept, you will be welcome."

Jean had a devoted sailor in Penellan the Breton, who had long been his fellow-voyager. In times gone by, little Marie was wont to pass the long winter evenings in the helmsman's arms, when he was on shore. He felt a fatherly friendship for her, and she had for him an affection quite filial. Penellan hastened the fitting out of the ship with all his energy, all the more because, according to his opinion, André Vasling had not perhaps made every effort possible to find the castaways, although he was excusable from the responsibility which weighed upon him as captain.

Within a week the *Jeune-Hardie* was ready to put to sea. Instead of merchandise, she was completely provided with salt meats, biscuits, barrels of flour, potatoes, pork, wine, brandy, coffee, tea, and tobacco.

The departure was fixed for the 22nd of May. On the evening before, André Vasling, who had not yet given his answer to Jean Cornbutte, came to his house. He was still undecided, and did not know which course to take.

Jean was not at home, though the house door was open. André went into the passage, next to Marie's chamber, where the sound of an animated conversation struck his ear. He listened attentively, and recognized the voices of Penellan and Marie.

The discussion had no doubt been going on for some time, for the young girl seemed to be stoutly opposing what the Breton sailor had said.

"How old is my uncle Cornbutte?" said Marie.

"Something about sixty years," replied Penellan.

"Well, is he not going to brave dangers to find his son?"

"Our captain is still a sturdy man," returned the sailor. "He has a body of oak and muscles as hard as a spare spar. So I am not afraid to have him go to sea again!"

"My good Penellan," said Marie, "one is strong when one loves! Besides, I have full confidence in the aid of Heaven. You understand me, and will help me."

"No!" said Penellan. "It is impossible, Marie. Who knows whither we shall drift, or what we must suffer? How many vigorous men have I seen lose their lives in these seas!"

"Penellan," returned the young girl, "if you refuse me, I shall believe that you do not love me any longer."

André Vasling guessed the young girl's resolution. He reflected a moment, and his course was determined on.

"Jean Cornbutte," said he, advancing towards the old sailor, who now entered, "I will go with you. The cause of my hesitation has disappeared, and you may count upon my devotion."

"I have never doubted you, André Vasling," replied Jean Cornbutte, grasping him by the hand. "Marie, my child!" he added, calling in a loud voice.

Marie and Penellan made their appearance.

"We shall set sail to-morrow at daybreak, with the out-going tide," said Jean. "My poor Marie, this is the last evening that we shall pass together."

"Uncle!" cried Marie, throwing herself into his arms.

"Marie, by the help of God, I will bring your lover back."

"Yes, we will find Louis," added André Vasling.

"You are going with us, then?" asked Penellan quickly.

"Yes, Penellan, André Vasling is to be my first mate," answered Jean.

"Oh, oh!" ejaculated the Breton, in a singular tone.

"His advice will be useful, for he is able and enterprising."

"And yourself, captain," said André. "You will set us all a good example, for you have still as much vigor as experience."

"Well, my friends, good-by till to-morrow. Go on board and make the final arrangements. Good-by, André; good-by, Penellan."

The mate and the sailor went out together, and Jean and Marie remained alone. Many bitter tears were shed during that sad evening. Jean Cornbutte, seeing Marie so wretched, resolved to spare her the pain of separation by leaving the house on the morrow without her knowledge. So he gave her a last kiss that evening, and at three o'clock next morning was up and away.

The departure of the brig had attracted all the old sailor's friends to the pier. The curé, who was to have blessed Marie's union with Louis, came to give a last benediction on the ship. Rough grasps of the hand were silently exchanged, and Jean went on board.

The crew were all there. André Vasling gave the last orders. The sails were spread, and the brig rapidly passed out under a stiff northwest breeze, whilst the curé, upright in the midst of the kneeling spectators, committed the vessel to the hands of God. "Whither goes this ship? She follows the perilous route upon which so many castaways have been lost! She has no certain destination. She must expect every peril, and be able to brave them without hesitating. God alone knows where it will be her fate to anchor. May God guide her!"



## CHAPTER III

## A Ray of Hope

AT that time of the year the season was favorable, and the crew might hope promptly to reach the scene of the shipwreck.

Jean Cornbutte's plan was naturally traced out. He counted on stopping at the Faroë Islands, whither the north wind might have carried the castaways; then, if he was convinced that they had not been received in any of the ports of that locality, he would continue his search beyond the Northern Ocean, ransack the whole western coast of Norway as far as Bodoë, the place nearest the scene of the shipwreck; and, if necessary, farther still.

André Vasling thought, contrary to the captain's opinion, that the coast of Iceland should be explored; but Penellan observed that, at the time of the catastrophe, the gale came from the west; which, while it gave hope that the unfortunates had not been forced towards the gulf of the Maëlstrom, gave ground for supposing that they might have been thrown on the Norwegian coast.

It was determined, then, that this coast should be followed as closely as possible, so as to recognize any traces of them that might appear.

The day after sailing, Jean Cornbutte, intent upon a map, was absorbed in reflection, when a small hand touched his shoulder, and a soft voice said in his ear, "Have good courage, uncle."

He turned, and was stupefied. Marie embraced him.

"Marie, my daughter, on board!" he cried.

"The wife may well go in search of her husband, when the father embarks to save his child."

"Unhappy Marie! How wilt thou support our fatigues! Dost know thy presence may retard our search?"

"No, uncle, for I am strong."

"Who knows whither we shall be forced to go, Marie? Look at this map. We are approaching places dangerous even for us sailors hardened through we are to the difficulties of the sea. And thou, a frail child?"

"But, uncle, I come from a family of sailors. I am used to stories of combats and tempests. I am with you and my old friend Penellan!"

"Penellan! It was he who concealed you on board?"

"Yes, uncle; but only when he saw I was determined to come without his help."

"Penellan!" cried Jean. Penellan entered.

"It is not possible to undo what you have done, Penellan; but remember that you are responsible for Marie's life."

"Rest easy, captain," replied Penellan. "The little one has strength and courage, and will be our guardian angel. And then, captain, you know it is my theory, that all in this world happens for the best."

The young girl was installed in a cabin, which the sailors soon got ready for her, and which they made as comfortable as possible.

A week later the *Jeune-Hardie* stopped at the Faroë Islands, but the most minute search was fruitless. No wreck, or fragments of a ship had come upon these coasts. The brig resumed its voyage, after a stay of ten days, about the 10th of June. The sea was calm, and the winds were favorable. The ship sped rapidly towards the Norwegian coast, which it explored without better result.

Jean Cornbutte determined to proceed to Bodoë. Perhaps he would there learn the name of the shipwrecked schooner to succor which Louis and the sailors had sacrificed themselves.

On the 30th of June the brig cast anchor in that port.

The authorities of Bodoë gave Jean Cornbutte a bottle found on the coast, which contained a document bearing these words: "This 26th April, on board the *Froërn*, after being accosted by the long-boat of the *Jeune-Hardie*, we were drawn by the currents towards the ice. God have pity on us!"

Jean Cornbutte's first impulse was to thank Heaven. He thought himself on his son's track. The *Froërn* was a Norwegian sloop of which there had been no news, but which had evidently been drawn northward.

Not a day was to be lost. The *Jeune-Hardie* was at once put in condition to brave the perils of the polar seas. Fidèle Misonne, the carpenter, carefully examined her, and assured himself that her solid construction might resist the shock of the ice-masses.

Penellan, who had already engaged in whale-fishing in the arctic waters, took care that woolen and fur coverings, many sealskin moccasins, and wood for the making of sledges with which to cross the ice-fields were put on board. The amount of provisions was increased, and spirits and charcoal were added; for it might be that they would have to winter at some point on the Greenland coast. They also procured, with much difficulty and at a high price, a quantity of lemons, for preventing or curing the scurvy, that terrible disease which decimates crews in the icy regions. The ship's hold was filled with salt meat, biscuits, brandy, etc., as the steward's room no longer sufficed. They provided themselves, also, with a large quantity of "pemmican," an Indian preparation which concentrates much nutrition within a small volume.

By order of the captain, some saws were put on board for cutting the ice-fields, as well as picks and wedges for separating them. The captain determined to procure some dogs to be used for drawing the sledges on the Greenland coast.

The whole crew was engaged in these preparations, and displayed great activity. The sailors Aupic, Ger-vique, and Gradlin zealously obeyed Penellan's orders; and he admonished them not to accustom themselves to woolen garments, though the temperature in this latitude, situated just beyond the polar circle, was very low.

Penellan, though he said nothing, narrowly watched every action of André Vasling. This man was Dutch by birth, came from no one knew whither, but was at least a good sailor, having made two voyages on board the *Jeune-Hardie*. Penellan would not as yet accuse him of anything, unless it was that he kept near Marie too constantly, but he did not let him get out of his sight.

Thanks to the energy of the crew, the brig was equipped by the 16th of July, a fortnight after its arrival at Bodoë. It was then the favorite season for attempting explorations in the Arctic Seas. The thaw had been going on for two months, and the search might be carried farther north. The *Jeune-Hardie* set sail, and directed her way towards Cape Brewster, on the eastern coast of Greenland, near the 70th degree of latitude.

## CHAPTER IV

## In the Passes

ABOUT the 23rd of July a reflection, raised above the sea, announced the presence of the first icebergs, which, emerging from Davis's Straits, advanced into the ocean. From this moment a vigilant watch was ordered to the look-out men, for it was important not to come into collision with these enormous masses.

The crew was divided into two watches. The first



was composed of Fidèle Misonne, Gradlin, and Gervique; and the second of André Vasling, Aupic, and Penellan. These watches were to last only two hours, for in those cold regions a man's strength is diminished one-half. Though the *Jeune-Hardie* was not yet beyond the 63rd degree of latitude, the thermometer already stood at nine degrees centigrade below zero.

Rain and snow often fell abundantly. On fair days, when the wind was not too violent, Marie remained on deck, and her eyes became accustomed to the uncouth scenes of the Polar Seas.

On the 1st of August she was talking with her uncle, Penellan, and André Vasling. The ship was then entering a channel three miles wide, across which broken masses of ice were rapidly descending southwards.

"When shall we see land?" asked the young girl.

"In four days at the latest," replied Jean Cornbutte.

"But shall we find there fresh traces of Louis?"

"Perhaps so, my daughter; but I fear that we are still far from the end of our voyage. It is to be feared that the *Froöern* was driven farther northward."

"That may be," added André Vasling, "for the gale which separated us from the Norwegian coast lasted three days, and in three days a ship makes good headway when it is no longer able to resist the wind."

"Permit me to tell you Monsieur Vasling," replied Penellan, "that that was in April, that the thaw had not then begun, and that therefore the *Froöern* must have been soon arrested by the ice."

"And no doubt dashed into a thousand pieces," said the mate, "as her crew could not manage her."

"But these ice-fields," returned Penellan, "gave her an easy means of reaching land, from which she could not have been far distant."

"Let us hope so," said Jean Cornbutte, interrupting the discussion, which was daily renewed between the mate and the helmsman. "I think we shall see land before long."

"There it is!" cried Marie. "See those mountains!"

"No, my child," replied her uncle. "Those are mountains of ice, the first we have met with. They would shatter us like glass if we got entangled between them. Penellan and Vasling, overlook the men."

These floating masses, more than fifty of which now appeared at the horizon, came nearer and nearer to the brig. Penellan took the helm, and Jean Cornbutte, mounted on the gallant, indicated the route to take.

Towards evening the brig was entirely surrounded by these moving rocks, the crushing force of which is irresistible. It was necessary, then, to cross this fleet of mountains, for prudence prompted them to keep straight ahead. Another difficulty was added to these perils. The direction of the ship could not be accurately determined, as all the surrounding points constantly changed position, and thus failed to afford a fixed perspective. The darkness soon increased with the fog. Marie descended to her cabin, and the whole crew, by the captain's orders, remained on deck. They were armed with long boat-poles, with iron spikes, to preserve the ship from collision with the ice.

The ship soon entered a strait so narrow that often the ends of her yards were grazed by the drifting mountains, and her booms seemed about to be driven in. They were even forced to trim the mainyard so as to touch the shrouds. Happily these precautions did not deprive the vessel of any of its speed, for the wind could only reach the upper sails, and these sufficed to carry her forward rapidly. Thanks to her slender hull, she passed through these valleys, which were filled with whirlpools of rain, whilst the icebergs crushed against each other with sharp cracking and splitting.

Jean Cornbutte returned to the deck. His eyes could not penetrate the surrounding darkness. It became

necessary to furl the upper sails, for the ship threatened to ground, and if she did so she was lost.

"Cursed voyage!" growled André Vasling among the sailors, who, forward, were avoiding the most menacing ice-blocks with their boat-hooks.

"Truly, if we escape we shall owe a fine candle to Our Lady of the Ice!" replied Aupic.

"Who knows how many floating mountains we have got to pass through yet?" added the mate.

"And who can guess what we shall find beyond them?" replied the sailor.

"Don't talk so much, prattler," said Gervique, "and look out on your side. When we have got by them, it'll be time to grumble. Look out for your boat-hook!"

At this moment an enormous block of ice, in the narrow strait through which the brig was passing, came rapidly down upon her, and it seemed impossible to avoid it, for it barred the whole width of the channel, and the brig could not heave-to.

"Do you feel the tiller?" asked Cornbutte of Penellan.

"No, captain. The ship does not answer the helm."

"*Ohé*, boys!" cried the captain to the crew; "don't be afraid, brace your hooks against the gunwale."

The block was nearly sixty feet high, and if it threw itself upon the brig she would be crushed. There was an undefinable moment of suspense, and the crew retreated backward, abandoning their posts despite the captain's orders.

But at the instant when the block was not more than half a cable's length from the *Jeune-Hardie*, a dull sound was heard, and a veritable waterspout fell upon the bow of the vessel, which then rose on the back of an enormous billow.

The sailors uttered a cry of terror; but when they looked before them the block had disappeared, the passage was free, and beyond an immense plain of water, illuminated by the rays of the declining sun, assured them of an easy navigation.

"All's well!" cried Penellan. "Let's trim our top-sails and mizzen!"

An incident very common in those parts had just occurred. When these masses are detached from one another in the thawing season, they float in a perfect equilibrium; but on reaching the ocean, where the water is relatively warmer, they are speedily undermined at the base, which melts little by little, and which is also shaken by the shock of other ice-masses. A moment comes when the center of gravity of these masses is displaced, and then they are completely overturned. Only, if this block had turned over two minutes later, it would have fallen on the brig and carried her down in its fall.

## CHAPTER V

### Liverpool Island

ON the 3rd of August the brig confronted immovable and united ice-masses. The passages seldom more than a cable's length in width, the ship was forced to make many turnings, which sometimes placed her heading the wind.

Penellan watched over Marie with paternal care, and, despite the cold, prevailed upon her to spend two or three hours every day on deck, for exercise had become one of the indispensable conditions of health.

Marie's courage did not falter. She even comforted the sailors with her cheerful talk, and all of them became warmly attached to her. André Vasling showed himself more attentive than ever, and seized every occasion to be in her company; but the young girl, with a sort of presentiment, accepted his services with some coldness. It may be easily conjectured that André's



conversation referred more to the future than to the present, and that he did not conceal the slight probability there was of saving the castaways. He was convinced that they were lost, and the young girl ought thenceforth to confide her existence to someone else.

Marie had not as yet comprehended André's designs, for, to his great disgust, he could never find an opportunity to talk long with her alone. Penellan had always an excuse for interfering, and destroying the effect of André's words by the hopeful opinions he expressed.

Marie, meanwhile, did not remain idle. Acting on the helmsman's advice, she set to work on her winter garments; for it was necessary that she should completely change her clothing. The cut of her dresses was not suitable for these cold latitudes. She made, therefore, a sort of furred pantaloons, the ends of which were lined with seal-skin; and her narrow skirts came only to her knees, so as not to be in contact with the layers of snow with which the winter would cover the ice-fields. A fur mantle, fitting closely to the figure and supplied with a hood, protected the upper part of her body.

In the intervals of their work, the sailors, too, prepared clothing with which to shelter themselves from the cold. They made a quantity of high seal-skin boots, with which to cross the snow during their explorations. They worked thus all the time that the navigation in the straits lasted.

André Vasilg, who was an excellent shot, several times brought down aquatic birds with his gun; innumerable flocks of these were always careering about the ship. A kind of eider-duck provided the crew with very palatable food, which relieved the monotony of the salt meat.

At last the brig came in sight of Cape Brewster. A long-boat was put to sea. Jean Cornbutte and Penellan reached the coast, which was entirely deserted.

The ship at once directed its course towards Liverpool Island, discovered in 1821 by Captain Scoresby, and the crew gave a hearty cheer when they saw the natives running along the shore. Communication was speedily established with them, thanks to Penellan's knowledge of a few words of their language, and some phrases which the natives themselves had learnt of the whalers who frequented those parts.

These Greenlanders were small and squat; they were not more than four feet ten inches high; they had red, round faces, and low foreheads; their hair, flat and black, fell over their shoulders; their teeth were decayed, and they seemed to be affected by the sort of leprosy which is peculiar to ichthyophagous tribes.

In exchange for pieces of iron and brass, of which they are extremely covetous, these poor creatures brought bear furs, the skins of sea-calves, sea-dogs, sea-wolves, and all the animals generally known as seals. Jean Cornbutte obtained these at a low price, and they were certain to become most useful.

The captain then made the natives understand that he was in search of a shipwrecked vessel, and asked them if they had heard of it. One of them immediately drew something like a ship on the snow, and indicated that a vessel of that sort had been carried northward three months before: he also managed to make it understood that the thaw and breaking up of the ice-fields had prevented the Greenlaiders from going in search of it; and, indeed, their very light canoes, which they managed with paddles, could not go to sea at that time.

This news, though meager, restored hope to the hearts of the sailors, and Jean Cornbutte had no difficulty in persuading them to advance further in the polar seas.

Before quitting Liverpool Island, the captain purchased a pack of six Esquimaux dogs, which were soon acclimatized on board. The ship weighed anchor on the morning of the 10th of August, and sailed north under a brisk wind.

The longest days of the year had now arrived; that is, the sun, in these high latitudes, did not set, and reached the highest point of the course which it described above the horizon. This total absence of night was not, however, very apparent, for the fog, rain, and snow sometimes enveloped the ship in real darkness.

Jean Cornbutte, who was resolved to advance as far as possible, began to take measures of health. The space between decks was securely enclosed, and every morning care was taken to ventilate it with fresh air. The stoves were installed, and the pipes so disposed as to yield as much heat as possible. The sailors were advised to wear only one woolen shirt over their cotton shirts, and to hermetically close their seal cloaks. The fires were not yet lighted, for it was important to reserve the wood and charcoal for the most intense cold. Warm beverages, such as coffee and tea, were regularly distributed to the sailors morning and evening; and as it was important to live on meat, they shot ducks and teal, which abounded in these parts.

Jean Cornbutte also placed at the summit of the main-mast a "crow's nest," a sort of cask open at one end, in which a look-out remained constantly, to observe the ice-fields.

Two days after the brig had lost sight of Liverpool Island the temperature became suddenly colder under the influence of a dry wind. Some indications of winter were perceived. The ship had not a moment to lose, for soon the way would be entirely closed to her. She advanced across the straits, among which lay ice-plains thirty feet thick.

On the morning of the 3rd of September the *Jeune-Hardie* reached the head of Gaël-Hamkes Bay. Land was then thirty miles to the leeward. It was the first time that the brig had stopped before a mass of ice which offered no outlet, and which was at least a mile wide. The saws must now be used to cut the ice. Penellan, Aupic, Gradlin, and Turquette were chosen to work the saws, which had been carried outside the ship. The direction of the cutting was so determined that the current might carry off the pieces detached from the mass. The whole crew worked at this task for nearly twenty hours. They found it very painful to remain on the ice, and were often obliged to plunge into the water up to their middle; their seal-skin garments protected them but imperfectly from the damp.

Moreover, all excessive toil in those high latitudes is soon followed by an overwhelming weariness; for the breath soon fails, and the strongest are forced to rest at frequent intervals. At last the navigation became free, and the brig was towed beyond the mass which had so long obstructed her course.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Quaking of the Ice

FOR several days the *Jeune-Hardie* struggled against formidable obstacles. The crew were almost all the time at work with the saws, and often powder was used to blow up the enormous blocks of ice which closed the way.

On the 12th of September the sea consisted of one solid plain, without outlet or passage, surrounding the vessel on all sides, so that she could neither advance nor retreat. The temperature remained at an average of sixteen degrees below zero. The winter season had



come on, with its sufferings and dangers. The *Juene-Hardie* was at this time near the 21st degree of longitude west and the 76th degree of latitude north, at the entrance of Gaël-Hamkes Bay.

Jean Cornbutte made his preliminary preparations for wintering. He first searched for a creek whose position would shelter the ship from the wind and breaking up of the ice. Land, which was probably thirty miles west, could alone offer him secure shelter, and he revolved to attempt to reach it.

He set out on the 12th of September, accompanied by André Vasling, Penellan, and the two sailors Gradlin and Turquette. Each man carried provisions for two days, for it was not likely that their expedition would occupy a longer time, and they were supplied with skins on which to sleep.

Snow had fallen in great abundance and was not yet frozen over; and this delayed them seriously. They often sank to their waists, and could only advance very cautiously, for fear of falling into crevices. Penellan, who walked in front, carefully sounded each depression with his iron-pointed staff.

About five in the evening the fog began to thicken, and the little band was forced to stop. Penellan looked about for an iceberg which might shelter them from the wind, and after refreshing themselves, with regrets that they had no warm drink, they spread their skins on the snow, wrapped themselves up, lay close to each other, and soon dropped asleep from sheer fatigue.

The next morning Jean Cornbutte and his companions were buried beneath a bed of snow more than a foot deep. Happily their skins, perfectly impermeable, had preserved them, and the snow itself had aided in retaining their heat, which it prevented from escaping.

The captain gave the signal of departure, and about noon they at last descried the coast, which at first they could scarcely distinguish. High ledges of ice, cut perpendicularly, rose on the shore; their variegated summits, of all forms and shapes, reproduced on a large scale the phenomena of crystallization. Myriads of aquatic fowl flew about at the approach of the party, and the seals, lazily lying on the ice, plunged hurriedly into the depths.

"I' faith!" said Penellan, "we shall not want for either furs or game!"

"Those animals," returned Cornbutte, "give every evidence of having been already visited by men; for in places totally uninhabited they would not be so wild."

"None but Greenlanders frequent these parts," said André Vasling.

"I see no trace of their passage, however; neither any encampment nor the smallest hut," said Penellan, who had climbed up a high peak. "O captain!" he continued, "come here! I see a point of land which will shelter us splendidly from the northeast wind."

"Come along, boys!" said Jean Cornbutte.

His companions followed him, and they soon rejoined Penellan. The sailor had said what was true. An elevated point of land jutted out like a promontory, and curving towards the coast, formed a little inlet of a mile in width at most. Some moving ice-blocks, broken by this point, floated in the midst, and the sea, sheltered from the colder winds, was not yet entirely frozen over.

This was an excellent spot for wintering, and it only remained to get the ship thither. Jean Cornbutte remarked that the neighboring ice-field was very thick, and it seemed very difficult to cut a canal to bring the brig to its destination. Some other creek, then, must be found; it was in vain that he explored northward. The coast remained steep and abrupt for a long distance, and beyond the point it was directly exposed to

the attacks of the east wind. The circumstance disconcerted the captain all the more because André Vasling used strong arguments to show how bad the situation was. Penellan, in his dilemma, found it difficult to convince himself that all was for the best.

But one chance remained—to seek a shelter on the southern side of the coast. This was to return on their path, but hesitation was useless. The little band returned rapidly in the direction of their ship, as their provisions had begun to run short. Jean Cornbutte searched for some practical passage, or at least some fissure by which a canal might be cut across the ice-fields, all along the route, but in vain.

Towards evening the sailors came to the same place where they had encamped over night. There had been no snow during the day, and they could recognize the imprint of their bodies on the ice. They again disposed themselves to sleep with their furs.

Penellan, much disturbed by the bad success of the expedition, was sleeping restlessly, when, at a waking moment, his attention was attracted by a dull rumbling. He listened attentively, and the rumbling seemed so strange that he nudged Jean Cornbutte with his elbow.

"What is that?" said the latter, whose mind, according to a sailor's habit, was awake as soon as his body.

"Listen, captain."

The noise increased with perceptible violence.

"It cannot be thunder, in so high a latitude," said Cornbutte, rising.

"I think we have come across some white bears," replied Penellan.

"The devil! We have not seen any yet."

"Sooner or later, we must have expected a visit from them. Let us give them a good reception."

Penellan, armed with a gun, lightly crossed the ledge which sheltered them. The darkness was very dense; he could discover nothing; but a new incident soon showed him that the cause of the noise did not proceed from around them.

Jean Cornbutte rejoined him, and they observed with terror that this rumbling which awakened their companions, came from beneath them.

A new kind of peril menaced them. To the noise, which resembled peals of thunder, was added a distinct undulating motion of the ice-field. Several of the party lost their balance and fell.

"Attention!" cried Penellan.

"Yes!" someone responded.

"Turquette! Gradlin! where are you?"

"Here I am!" responded Turquette, shaking off the snow with which he was covered.

"This way, Vasling," cried Cornbutte to the mate. "And Gradlin?"

"Present, captain."

"But we are lost!" shouted Gradlin, in fright.

"No!" said Penellan. "Perhaps we are saved!"

Hardly had he uttered these words when a frightful crackling noise was heard. The ice-field broke clear through, and the sailors were forced to cling to the block which was quivering just by them. Despite the helmsman's words, they found themselves in a most perilous position, for an ice-quake had occurred. The ice masses had just "weighed anchor," as the sailors say. The movement lasted nearly two minutes, and it was to be feared that the crevice would yawn at the very feet of the unhappy sailors. They anxiously awaited daylight in the midst of continuous shocks, for they could not, without risk of death, move a step, and had to remain stretched out at full length to avoid being engulfed.

As soon as it was daylight a very different aspect presented itself to their eyes. The vast plain, a compact mass the evening before, was now separated in a thou-



sand places, and the waves, raised by some submarine commotion, had broken the thick layer which sheltered them.

The thought of his ship occurred to Cornbutte's mind.

"My poor brig!" he cried. "It must have perished!"

The deepest of despair began to overcast the faces of his companions. The loss of the ship inevitably preceded their own deaths.

"Courage, friends," said Penellan. "Reflect that this night's disaster has opened us a path to cross the ice, which will enable us to bring our ship to the bay for wintering! and, stop! I am not mistaken. There is the *Juene-Hardie*, a mile nearer to us!"

All hurried forward, and so imprudently, that Turquette slipped into a fissure and would have certainly perished, had not Jean Cornbutte seized him by his hood. He got off with a rather cold bath.

The brig was indeed floating two miles away. After infinite trouble, the little band reached her. She was in good condition; but her rudder, which they had neglected to lift, had been broken by the ice.

## CHAPTER VII

### Settling for the Winter

PENELLAN was once more right; all was for the best, and this ice-quake had opened a practical channel for the ship to the bay. The sailors had only to make skillful use of the currents to conduct her thither.

On the 19th of September the brig was at last moored in her bay for wintering, two cables' lengths from the shore, securely anchored on a good bottom. The ice began the next day to form around her hull; it soon became strong enough to bear a man's weight, and they could establish a communication with land.

The rigging, as is customary in arctic navigation, remained as it was; the sails were carefully furled on the yards and covered with their casings, and the "crow's-nest" remained in place, as much to enable them to make distant observations as to attract attention to the ship.

The sun now scarcely rose above the horizon. Since the June solstice, the path which it had described descended lower and lower; and it would very soon disappear altogether.

The crew hastened to make the necessary preparations. Penellan supervised the whole. The ice was soon thick around the ship, and it was to be feared that its pressure might become dangerous; but Penellan waited until, by reason of the going and coming of the floating ice-masses and their adherence, it had reached a thickness of twenty feet; he then had it cut around the hull, so that it joined under the ship, the form of which it assumed; thus enclosed in a mould, the brig had no longer to fear the pressure of the ice, which could make no movement.

The sailors then elevated along the walls to the height of the nettings, a snow wall five or six feet thick, which soon froze as hard as a rock. This envelope did not allow the interior heat to escape outside. A canvas tent, covered with skins and hermetically closed, was stretched over the whole length of the deck, and formed a sort of walk for the sailors.

They also constructed on the ice a storehouse of snow, in which articles which embarrassed the ship were stowed away. The partitions of the cabins were taken down, so as to form a single vast apartment forward, as well as aft. This single room, besides, was more easy to warm, as the ice and damp found fewer corners in which to take refuge. It was also less diffi-

cult to ventilate it, by means of canvas funnels which opened without.

Each sailor exerted great energy in these preparations, and about the 25th of September they were completed. André Vasling had not shown himself the least active in this task. He devoted himself with equal zeal to the young girl's comfort, and if she, absorbed in thoughts of her poor Louis, did not perceive this, Jean Cornbutte did not fail soon to remark it. He spoke of it to Penellan; he recalled several incidents which completely enlightened him regarding his mate's intentions; André Vasling loved Marie, and reckoned on asking her uncle for her hand, as soon as it was proved beyond doubt that the castaways were irrevocably lost; they would return then to Dunkirk, and André Vasling would be well satisfied to wed a rich and pretty girl, who would then be the sole heiress of Jean Cornbutte.

But André, in his impatience, was often imprudent. He had several times declared that the search for the castaways was useless, when some new trace contradicted him, and enabled Penellan to exult over him. The mate, therefore, cordially detested the helmsman, who returned his dislike heartily. Penellan only feared that André might sow seeds of dissension among the crew, and persuade Jean Cornbutte to answer him evasively on the first occasion.

The sky, always gloomy, filled the soul with sadness. A thick snow, lashed by violent winds, added to the horrors of their situation. The sun would soon altogether disappear. Had the clouds not gathered in masses above their heads, they might have enjoyed the moonlight, which was about to become really their sun during the long polar night; but, with the west winds, the snow did not cease to fall. Every morning it was necessary to clear off the sides of the ship, and to build a new stairway in the ice to enable them to reach the ice-field. Penellan had a hole cut in the ice, not far from the ship. Every day the new crust which formed over its top was broken, and the water which was drawn thence, from a certain depth, was less cold than at the surface.

All these preparations occupied about three weeks. It was then time to go forward with the search. The ship was imprisoned for six or seven months, and only the next thaw could open a new route across the ice. It was wise, then, to profit by this delay, and extend their explorations northward.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Plan of the Explorations

ON the 9th of October, Jean Cornbutte held a council to settle the plan of his operations, to which, that there might be union, zeal, and courage on the part of everyone, he admitted the whole crew. Map in hand, he clearly explained their situation.

The eastern coast of Greenland advances perpendicularly northward. The discoveries of the navigators have given the exact boundaries of those parts. In the extent of five hundred leagues, which separates Greenland from Spitzbergen, no land has been found. An island (Shannon Island) lay a hundred miles north of Gaël-Hamkes Bay, where the *Juene-Hardie* was wintering.

If the Norwegian schooner, as was most probable, had been driven in this direction, supposing that she could not reach Shannon Island, it was here that Louis Cornbutte and his comrades must have sought for a winter asylum.

This opinion prevailed, despite André Vasling's opposition; and it was decided to direct the explorations on the side towards Shannon Island. If Louis Cornbutte



and his comrades were still in existence, it was not probable that they would be able to resist the severities of the arctic winter. They must therefore be saved beforehand, or all hope would be lost. André Vasling knew all this better than anyone. He therefore resolved to put every possible obstacle in the way of the expedition.

The preparations for the journey were completed about the 20th of October. It remained to select the men who should compose the party. The young girl could not be deprived of the protection of Jean Cornbutte or of Penellan; neither of these could, on the other hand, be spared from the expedition.

The question, then, was whether Marie could bear the fatigues of such a journey. She had already passed through rough experiences without seeming to suffer from them, for she was a sailor's daughter, used from infancy to the fatigues of the sea, and even Penellan was not dismayed to see her struggling in the midst of this severe climate, against the dangers of the polar seas.

It was decided, therefore, after a long discussion, that she should go with them, and that a place should be reserved for her, at need, on the sledge, on which a little wooden hut was constructed, closed in hermetically. As for Marie, she was delighted, for she dreaded to be left alone without her two protectors.

The expedition was thus formed: Marie, Jean Cornbutte, Penellan, André Vasling, Aupic, and Fidèle Misonne were to go. Alaine Turquette remained in charge of the brig, and Gervique and Gradlin stayed behind with him. New provisions of all kinds were carried; for Jean Cornbutte, in order to carry the exploration as far as possible, had resolved to establish depots along the route, at each seven or eight days' march. When the sledge was ready it was at once fitted up, and covered with a skin tent. The whole weighed some seven hundred pounds, which a pack of five dogs might easily carry over the ice.

On the 22nd of October, as the captain had foretold, a sudden change took place in the temperature. The sky cleared, the stars emitted an extraordinary light, and the moon shone above the horizon, no longer to leave the heavens for a fortnight. The thermometer descended to twenty-five degrees below zero. The departure was fixed for the following day.

## CHAPTER IX

### The House of Snow

ON the 23rd of October, at eleven in the morning, in a fine moonlight, the caravan set out. Jean Cornbutte followed the coast, and ascended northward. The steps of the travelers made no impression on the hard ice. Jean was forced to guide himself by points which he selected at a distance; sometimes he fixed upon a hill bristling with peaks; sometimes on a large iceberg which pressure had raised above the plain.

At the first halt, after going fifteen miles, Penellan prepared to encamp. The tent was erected against an ice-block. Marie had not suffered seriously with the extreme cold, for luckily the breeze had subsided, and was much more bearable; but the young girl had several times been obliged to descend from her sledge to avert numbness from impeding the circulation of her blood. Otherwise, her little hut, hung with skins, afforded her all the comfort possible under the circumstances.

When night, or rather sleeping-time, came, the little hut was carried under the tent, where it served as a bed-room for Marie. The evening repast was composed

of fresh meat, pemmican, and hot tea. Jean Cornbutte, to avert danger of the scurvy, distributed to each of the party a few drops of lemon-juice. Then all slept under God's protection.

But the sailors soon began to suffer one discomfort—that of being dazzled. Ophthalmia betrayed itself in Aupic and Misonne. The moon's light, striking on these vast white plains, burnt the eyesight, and gave the eyes insupportable pain. There was thus produced a very singular effect of refraction. As they walked, when they thought they were about to put foot on a hillock, they stepped down lower, which often occasioned falls, happily so little serious that Penellan made them occasions for bantering. Still, he told them never to take a step without sounding the ground with the feruled staff with which each was equipped.

About the 1st of November, ten days after they had set out, the caravan had gone fifty leagues to the northward. Weariness pressed heavily on all. Jean Cornbutte was painfully dazzled and his sight sensibly changed. Aupic and Misonne had to feel their way: for their eyes, rimmed with red, seemed burnt by the white reflection. Marie had been preserved from this misfortune by remaining within her hut, to which she confined herself as much as possible. Penellan, sustained by an indomitable courage, resisted all fatigue. But it was André Vasling who bore himself best, and upon whom the cold and dazzling seemed to produce no effect. His iron frame was equal to every hardship; and he was secretly pleased to see the most robust of his companions becoming discouraged, and already foresaw the moment when they would be forced to retreat to the ship again.

On the 1st of November it became absolutely necessary to halt for a day or two. As soon as the place for the encampment had been selected, they proceeded to arrange it. It was determined to erect a house of snow, which should be supported against one of the rocks of the promontory. Misonne at once marked out the foundations, which measured fifteen feet long by five wide. Penellan, Aupic, and Misonne, by aid of their knives, cut out great blocks of snow, which they carried to the chosen spot and set up, as masons would have built stone walls. The sides of the foundation were soon raised to a height and thickness of about five feet; for the materials were abundant, and the structure was intended to be sufficiently solid to last several days. The four walls were completed in eight hours; an opening had been left on the southern side, and the canvas of the tent, placed on these four walls, fell over the opening and sheltered it. It only remained to cover the whole with large blocks, to form the roof of this temporary structure.

After three more hours of hard work, the house was done; and they all went into it, overcome with weariness and discouragement. Jean Cornbutte suffered so much that he could not walk, and André Vasling so skillfully aggravated his gloomy feelings, that he forced from him a promise not to pursue his search farther in those frightful solitudes. Penellan did not know which saint to invoke. He thought it unworthy and craven to give up the search for reasons which had little weight, and tried to upset them; but in vain.

Meanwhile, though it had been decided to return, rest had become so necessary that for three days no preparations for departure were made. On the 4th of November, Jean Cornbutte began to bury on a point of the coast the provisions for which there was no use. A stake indicated the place of the deposit, in the improbable event that new explorations should be made in that direction. Every day since they had set out similar deposits had been made, so that they were assured of



ample sustenance on the return, without the trouble of carrying them on the sledge.

The departure was fixed for ten in the morning, on the 5th. The most profound sadness filled the little band. Marie with difficulty restrained her tears, when she saw her uncle so completely discouraged. So many useless sufferings! so much labor lost! Penellan himself became ferocious in his ill-humor; he consigned everybody to the nether regions, and did not cease to wax angry at the weakness and cowardice of his comrades, who were more timid and tired, he said, than Marie, who would have gone to the end of the world without complaint.

André Vasling could not disguise the pleasure which this decision gave him. He showed himself more attentive than ever to the young girl, to whom he even held out hopes that a new search should be made when the winter was over; knowing well that it would then be too late!

## CHAPTER X

### Buried Alive

THE evening before the departure, just as they were about to take supper, Penellan was breaking up some empty casks for firewood, when he was suddenly suffocated by a thick smoke. At the same instant the snow-house was shaken as if by an earthquake. The party uttered a cry of terror, and Penellan hurried outside.

It was entirely dark. A frightful tempest—for it was not a thaw—was raging, whirlwinds of snow careered around, and it was so exceedingly cold that the boatswain felt his hands rapidly freezing. He was obliged to go in again, after rubbing himself violently with snow.

"It is a tempest," said he. "May heaven grant that our house may withstand it, for if the storm should destroy it, we should be lost!"

At the same time with the gusts of wind a noise was heard beneath the frozen soil; icebergs, broken from the promontory, dashed away noisily, and fell upon one another; the wind blew with such violence that it seemed sometimes as if the whole house moved from its foundation; phosphorescent lights, inexplicable in that latitude, flashed across the whirlwinds of the snow.

"Marie! Marie!" cried Penellan, seizing the girl's hands.

"We are in a bad case!" said Misonne.

"I know not if we shall escape," replied Aupic.

"Let us quit this snow-house!" said André Vasling.

"Impossible!" returned Penellan. "The cold outside is terrible; perhaps we can bear it by staying here."

"Give me the thermometer," demanded Vasling.

Aupic handed it to him. It showed ten degrees below zero inside the house, though the fire was lighted. Vasling raised the canvas which covered the opening, and pushed it aside hastily; for he would have been lacerated by the fall of ice which the wind hurled around, and which fell in a perfect hail-storm.

"Well, Vasling," said Penellan, "will you go out, then? You see that we are more safe here."

"Yes," said Jean Cornbutte; "and we must use every effort to strengthen the house in the interior."

"But a still more terrible danger menaces us," said Vasling.

"What?" asked Jean.

"The wind is breaking the ice against which we are propped, just as it has that of the promontory, and we shall be either driven out or buried!"

"That seems doubtful," said Penellan, "for it is

freezing hard enough to ice over all liquid surfaces. Let us see what the temperature is."

He raised the canvas so as to pass out his arm, and with difficulty found the thermometer again, in the midst of the snow; but he at last succeeded in seizing it, and, holding the lamp to it, said, "Thirty-two degrees below zero! It is the coldest we have seen here yet!"

"Ten degrees more," said Vasling, "and the mercury will freeze!"

A mournful silence followed this remark.

About eight in the morning Penellan essayed a second time to go out to judge of their situation. It was necessary to give an escape to the smoke, which the wind had several times driven into the hut. The sailor wrapped his cloak tightly about him, made sure of his hood by fastening it to his head with a handkerchief, and then raised the canvas.

The opening was entirely obstructed by a resisting snow. Penellan took his staff, and succeeded in plunging it into the compact mass; but terror froze his blood when he perceived that the end of the staff was not free, and was checked by a hard body!

"Cornbutte," said he to the captain, who had come up to him, "we are buried under this snow!"

"What say you?" cried Jean Cornbutte.

"I say that the snow is massed and frozen around us and over us, and that we are buried alive!"

"Let us make an effort to clear the snow away," replied the captain.

The two friends buttressed themselves against the obstacle which obstructed the opening, but they could not move it. The snow formed an iceberg more than five feet thick, and had become literally a part of the house. Jean could not suppress a cry, which awoke Misonne and Vasling. An oath burst from the latter, whose features contracted. At this moment the smoke, thicker than ever, poured into the house, for it could not find an issue.

"Malediction!" cried Misonne. "The pipe of the stove is sealed up by the ice!"

Penellan resumed his staff, and took down the pipe, after throwing snow on the embers to extinguish them, which produced such a smoke that the light of the lamp could scarcely be seen; then he tried with his staff to clear out the orifice, but he only encountered a rock of ice! A frightful end, preceded by a terrible agony, seemed to be their doom! The smoke, penetrating the throats of the unfortunate party, caused an insufferable pain, and air would soon fail them altogether.

Marie here rose, and her presence, which inspired Cornbutte with despair, imparted some courage to Penellan. He said to himself that it could not be that the poor girl was destined to so horrible a death.

"Ah!" said she, "you have made too much fire. The room is full of smoke!"

"Yes, yes," stammered Penellan.

"It is evident," resumed Marie, "for it is not cold, and it is long since we have felt too much heat."

No one dared to tell her the truth.

"See, Marie," said Penellan bluntly, "help us get breakfast ready. It is too cold to go out. Here is the chafing-dish, the spirit, and the coffee. Come, you others, a little pemmican first, as this wretched storm forbids us from hunting."

These words stirred up his comrades.

"Let us first eat," added Penellan, "and then we shall see about getting off."

Penellan set the example and devoured his share of the breakfast. His comrades imitated him, and then drank a cup of boiling coffee, which somewhat restored their spirits. Then Jean Cornbutte decided energeti-



cally that they should at once set about devising means of safety.

André Vasling now said, "If the storm is still raging, which is probable, we must be buried ten feet under the ice, for we can hear no noise outside."

Penellan looked at Marie, who now understood the truth, and did not tremble. The boatswain first heated, by the flame of the spirit, the iron point of his staff, and successfully introduced it into the four walls of ice, but he could find no issue in either. Cornbutte then resolved to cut out an opening in the door itself. The ice was so hard that it was difficult for the knives to make the least impression on it. The pieces which were cut off soon encumbered the hut. After working hard for two hours, they had only hollowed out a space three feet deep.

Some more rapid method, and one which was less likely to demolish the house, must be thought of; for the farther they advanced the more violent became the effort to break off the compact ice. It occurred to Penellan to make use of the chafing-dish to melt the ice in the direction they wanted. It was a hazardous method, for, if their imprisonment lasted long, the spirit, of which they had but little, would be wanting when needed to prepare the meals. Nevertheless, the idea was welcomed on all hands, and was put in execution. They first cut a hole three feet deep by one in diameter, to receive the water which would result from the melting of the ice; and it was well that they took this precaution, for the water soon dripped under the action of the flames, which Penellan moved about under the mass of ice. The opening widened little by little, but this kind of work could not be continued long, for the water covering their clothes, penetrated to their bodies here and there. Penellan was obliged to pause in a quarter of an hour, and to withdraw the chafing-dish in order to dry himself. Misonne then took his place, and worked sturdily at the task.

In two hours, though the opening was five feet deep, the points of the staffs could not yet find an issue through the ice.

"It is not possible," said Jean Cornbutte, "that snow could have fallen in such abundance. It must have been gathered on this point by the wind. Perhaps we had better think of escaping in some other direction."

"I don't know," replied Penellan; "but if it were only for the sake of not discouraging our comrades, we ought to continue to pierce the wall where we have begun. We must find an issue ere long."

"Will not the spirit fail us?" asked the captain.

"I hope not. But let us, if necessary, dispense with coffee and hot drinks. Besides, that is not what most alarms me."

"What is it, then, Penellan?"

"Our lamp is going out, for want of oil, and we are fast exhausting our provisions."

The time for rest had come, and when Penellan had added one more foot to the opening, he lay down beside his comrades.

## CHAPTER XI

### A Cloud of Smoke

THE next day, when the sailors awoke, they were surrounded by complete darkness. The lamp had gone out. Jean Cornbutte roused Penellan to ask him for the tinder-box, which was passed to him. Penellan rose to light the fire, but in getting up, his head struck against the ice ceiling. He was horrified, for on the evening before he could still stand upright, The chafing-dish being lighted up by the dim rays of

the spirit, he perceived that the ceiling was a foot lower than before.

Penellan resumed work with desperation.

Marie, by the light which the chafing-dish cast upon Penellan's face, saw that despair and determination were struggling in his rough features for the mastery. She went to him, took his hands, and tenderly pressed them.

"She cannot, must not die thus!" he cried.

He took his chafing-dish, and once more attacked the narrow opening. He plunged in his staff, and felt no resistance. Had he reached the soft layers of the snow? He drew out his staff, and a bright ray penetrated to the house of ice!

"Here, my friends!" he shouted.

He pushed back the snow with his hands and feet. With the rays of light, a violent cold entered the cabin and seized upon everything moist, to freeze it in an instant. Penellan enlarged the opening with his cutlass, and at last was able to breathe the free air. He fell on his knees to thank God, and was soon joined by Marie and his comrades.

A magnificent moon lit up the sky, but the cold was so extreme that they could not bear it. They re-entered their retreat; but Penellan first looked about him. The promontory was no longer there, and the hut was now in the midst of a vast plain of ice. Penellan thought he would go to the sledge, where the provisions were. The sledged had disappeared!

The cold forced him to return. He said nothing to his companions. It was necessary, before all, to dry their clothing, which was done with the chafing-dish. The thermometer, held for an instant in the air, descended to thirty degrees below zero.

An hour after, Vasling and Penellan resolved to venture outside. They wrapped themselves up in their still wet garments, and went out by the opening, the sides of which had become as hard as a rock.

"We have been driven towards the northeast," said Vasling, reckoning by the stars.

"That would not be bad," said Penellan, "if our sledge had come with us."

"Is not the sledge there?" cried Vasling. "Then we are lost!"

"Let us look for it," replied Penellan.

They went around the hut, which formed a block more than fifteen feet high. An immense quantity of snow had fallen during the whole of the storm, and the wind had massed it against the only elevation which the plain presented. The entire block had been driven by the wind, in the midst of the broken icebergs, more than twenty-five miles to the northeast, and the prisoners had suffered the same fate as their floating prison. The sledge, supported by another iceberg, had been turned another way, for no trace of it was to be seen, and the dogs must have perished amid the frightful tempest.

André Vasling and Penellan felt despair taking possession of them. They did not dare to return to their companions. They did not dare to announce this fatal news to their comrades in misfortune. They climbed upon the block of ice in which the hut was hollowed, and could perceive nothing but the white immensity which encompassed them on all sides. Already the cold was beginning to stiffen their limbs, and the damp of their garments was being transformed into icicles which hung about them.

Just as Penellan was about to descend, he looked towards André. He saw him suddenly gaze in one direction, then shudder and turn pale.

"What is the matter, Vasling?" he asked.

"Nothing," replied the other. "Let us go down and



urge the captain to leave these parts at once, where we ought never to have come!"

Instead of obeying, Penellan ascended again, and looked in the direction which had drawn the mate's attention. A very different effect was produced on him, for he uttered a shout of joy, and cried, "Blessed be God!"

A light smoke was rising in the northeast. There was no possibility of deception. It indicated the presence of human beings. Penellan's cries of joy reached the rest below, and all were able to convince themselves with their eyes that he was not mistaken.

Without thinking of their want of provisions or the severity of the temperature, wrapped in their hoods, they were all soon advancing towards the spot whence the smoke arose in the northeast. This was evidently five or six miles off, and it was very difficult to take exactly the right direction. The smoke now disappeared, and no elevation served as a guiding mark, for the ice-plain was one united level. It was important, nevertheless, not to diverge from a straight line.

"Since we cannot guide ourselves by distant objects," said Jean Cornbutte, "we must use this method. Penellan will go ahead, Vasling twenty steps behind him, and I twenty steps behind Vasling. I can then judge whether or not Penellan diverges from the straight line."

They had gone on thus for half an hour, when Penellan suddenly stopped and listened. The party hurried up to him. "Did you hear nothing?" he asked.

"Nothing!" replied Misonne.

"It is strange," said Penellan. "It seemed to me I heard cries off to one side from this direction."

"Cries?" replied Marie. "Perhaps we are near our destination, then."

"That is no reason," said André Vasling. "In these high latitudes and cold regions sounds may be heard to a great distance."

"However that may be," replied Jean Cornbutte, "let us go forward, or we shall be frozen."

"No!" cried Penellan. "Listen!"

Some feeble sounds—quite perceptible, however—were heard. They seemed to be cries of distress. They were twice repeated. They seemed like cries for help. Then all became silent again.

"I was not mistaken," said Penellan. "Forward!"

He began to run in the direction whence the cries had proceeded. He went thus two miles, when, to his utter stupefaction, he saw a man lying on the ice. He went up to him, raised him, and lifted his arms to heaven in despair.

André Vasling, who was following close behind with the rest of the sailors, ran up and cried, "It is one of the cast-aways! It is our sailor Courtois!"

"He is dead!" replied Penellan. "Frozen to death!"

Jean Cornbutte and Marie came up beside the corpse, which was already stiffened by the ice. Despair was written on every face. The dead man was one of the comrades of Louis Cornbutte!

"Forward!" cried Penellan.

They went on for half an hour in perfect silence, and perceived an elevation which seemed to be land.

"It is Shannon Island," said Jean Cornbutte.

A mile farther on they saw smoke escaping from a snow-hut, closed by a wooden door. They shouted. Two men rushed out of the hut, and Penellan recognized one of them as Pierre Nouquet. "Pierre!" he cried.

Pierre stood still as if stunned, and unconscious of what was going on around him. André Vasling looked at Pierre Nouquet's companion with anxiety mingled with a cruel joy, for it was not Louis Cornbutte.

"Pierre! it is I," cried Penellan. "We are your friends!"

Pierre Nouquet recovered his senses, and fell into his old comrade's arms.

"And my son—and Louis!" cried Jean Cornbutte, in an accent of the most profound despair.

## CHAPTER XII

### The Return of the Ship

AT this moment a man, almost dead, dragged himself out of the hut and along the ice. It was Louis Cornbutte.

"My son!"

"My beloved!"

These two cries were uttered at the same time, and Louis Cornbutte fell fainting into the arms of his father and Marie, who drew him towards the hut, where their tender care soon revived him.

"My father! Marie!" cried Louis; "I shall not die without having seen you!"

"You will not die!" replied Penellan, "for all your friends are near you."

André Vasling must have hated Louis Cornbutte bitterly not to extend his hand to him, but he did not.

Pierre Nouquet was wild with joy. He embraced everybody; then he threw some wood into the stove, and soon a comfortable temperature was felt in the cabin.

There were two men there whom neither Jean Cornbutte nor Penellan recognized.

They were Jocki and Herming, the only two sailors of the crew of the Norwegian schooner who were left.

"My friends, we are saved!" said Louis. "My father! Marie! You have exposed yourselves to so many perils!"

"We do not regret it, my Louis," replied the father. "Your brig, the *Jeune-Hardie*, is securely anchored in the ice sixty leagues from here. We will rejoin her all together."

"When Courtois comes back he'll be mightily pleased," said Pierre Nouquet.

A mournful silence followed this, and Penellan apprised Pierre and Louis of their comrade's death by cold.

"My friends," said Penellan, "we will wait here until the cold decreases. Have you provisions and wood?"

"Yes; and we will burn what is left of the *Froöern*."

The *Froöern* had indeed been driven to a place forty miles from where Louis Cornbutte had taken up his winter quarters. There she was broken up by the icebergs floated by the thaw, and the castaways were carried, with a part of the débris of their cabin, to the southern shores of Shannon Island.

They were then five in number—Louis Cornbutte, Courtois, Pierre Nouquet, Jocki, and Herming. As for the rest of the Norwegian crew, they had been submerged with the long-boat at the moment of the wreck.

When Louis Cornbutte, shut in among the ice, realized what must happen, he took every precaution for passing the winter. He was an energetic man, very active and courageous; but, despite his firmness, he had been subdued by this horrible climate and when his father found him he had given up all hope of life. He had not only had to contend with the elements, but with the ugly temper of the two Norwegian sailors, who owed him their existence. They were like savages, almost inaccessible to the most natural emotions. When Louis had the opportunity to talk to Penellan, he advised him to watch them carefully. In return, Penellan told him of André Vasling's conduct. Louis could not believe it, but Penellan convinced him that after his disappearance Vasling had always acted so as to secure Marie's hand.



The whole day was employed in rest and the pleasures of reunion. Misonne and Pierre Nouquet killed some seabirds near the hut, whence it was not prudent to stray far. These fresh provisions and the replenished fire raised the spirits of the weakest. Louis Cornbutte got visibly better. It was the first moment of happiness these brave people had experienced. They celebrated it with enthusiasm in this wretched hut, six hundred leagues from the North Sea, in a temperature of thirty degrees below zero!

This temperature lasted till the end of the moon, and it was not until about the 17th of November, a week after their meeting, that Jean Cornbutte and his party could think of setting out. They only had the light of the stars to guide them; but the cold was less extreme, and even some snow fell.

Before quitting this place a grave was dug for poor Courtois. It was a sad ceremony, which deeply affected his comrades. He was the first of them who would not again see his native land.

Misonne had constructed, with the planks of the cabin, a sort of sledge for carrying the provisions, and the sailors drew it by turns. Jean Cornbutte led the expedition by the ways already traversed. Camps were established with great promptness when the times for repose came. Jean Cornbutte hoped to find his deposits of provisions again, as they had become well-nigh indispensable by the addition of four persons to the party. He was therefore very careful not to diverge from the route by which he had come.

By good fortune he recovered his sledge, which had stranded near the promontory where they had all met so many dangers. The dogs, after eating their straps to satisfy their hunger, had attacked the provisions in the sledge. These had sustained them, and they served to guide the party to the sledge, where there was a considerable quantity of provisions left. The little band resumed its march towards the bay. The dogs were harnessed to the sleigh, and no event of interest attended the return.

It was observed that Aupic, André Vasling, and the Norwegians kept aloof, and did not mingle with the others; but, unbeknown to themselves, they were narrowly watched. This germ of dissension more than once aroused the fears of Louis Cornbutte and Penellan.

About the 7th of December, twenty days after the discovery of the castaways, they perceived the bay where the *Jeune-Hardie* was lying. What was their astonishment to see the brig perched four yards in the air on blocks of ice! They hurried forward, much alarmed for their companions, and were received with joyous cries by Gervique, Turquette, and Gradlin. All of them were in good health, though they too had been subjected to formidable dangers.

The tempest had made itself felt throughout the polar sea. The ice had been broken and displaced, crushed one piece against another, and had seized the bed on which the ship rested. Though its specific weight tended to carry it under water, the ice had acquired an incalculable force, and the brig had been suddenly raised up out of the sea.

The first moments were given up to the happiness inspired by the safe return. The exploring party were rejoiced to find everything in good condition, which assured them a supportable though it might be a rough winter. The ship had not been shaken by her sudden elevation, and was perfectly tight. When the season of thawing came, they would only have to slide her down an inclined plane, to launch her, in a word, into the once more open sea.

But a bad piece of news spread gloom on the faces of Jean Cornbutte and his comrades. During the terrible gale the snow storehouse on the coast had been

quite demolished; the provisions which it contained were scattered, and it had not been possible to save a morsel of them. When Jean and Louis Cornbutte learned this, they visited the hold and steward's room, to ascertain the quantity of provisions which still remained.

The thaw would not come until May, and the brig could not leave the bay before that period. They had therefore five winter months before them to pass amid the ice, during which fourteen persons were to be fed. Having made his calculations, Jean Cornbutte found that he would at most be able to keep them alive till the time for departure, by putting each and all on half rations. Hunting for game became compulsory in order to procure food in larger quantity.

For fear that they might again run short of provisions, it was decided to deposit them no longer in the ground. All of them were kept on board, and beds were disposed for the newcomers in the common lodging. Turquette, Gervique, and Gradlin, during the absence of the others, had hollowed out a flight of steps in the ice, which enabled them easily to reach the ship's deck.

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Two Rivals

ANDRÉ VASLING had been cultivating the goodwill of the two Norwegian sailors. Aupic also made one of their band, and held himself apart, with loud disapproval of all the new measures taken; but Louis Cornbutte, to whom his father had transferred the command of the ship, and who had become once more master on board, would listen to no objections from that quarter, and in spite of Marie's advice to act gently, made it known that he intended to be obeyed on all points.

Nevertheless, the two Norwegians succeeded two days after, in getting possession of a box of salt meat. Louis ordered them to return it to him on the spot, but Aupic took their part, and André Vasling declared that the precautions about food could not be any longer enforced.

It was useless to attempt to show these men that these measures were the common interest, for they knew it well, and only sought a pretext to revolt.

Penellan advanced towards the Norwegians, who drew their knives; but, aided by Misonne and Turquette, he succeeded in snatching the weapons from their hands, and gained possession of the salt meat. André Vasling and Aupic, seeing that matters were going against them, did not interfere. Louis Cornbutte, however, took the mate aside, and said to him:

"André Vasling, you are a wretch! I know your whole conduct, and I know what you are aiming at, but as the safety of the whole crew is confided to me, if any man of you thinks of conspiring to destroy them, I will stab him with my own hand!"

"Louis Cornbutte," replied the mate, "it is allowable for you to act the master; but remember that absolute obedience does not exist here, and that here the strongest alone makes the law."

Marie had never trembled before the dangers of the polar seas; but she was terrified by this hatred, of which she was the cause, and the captain's vigor hardly reassured her.

Despite this declaration of war, the meals were partaken of in common and at the same hours. Hunting furnished some ptarmigans and white hares; but this resource would soon fail them, with the approach of the terrible cold weather. This began at the solstice, on the 22d of December, on which day the thermometer fell to thirty-five degrees below zero. The men ex-



perienced pain in their ears, noses, and the extremities of their bodies. They were seized with a mortal torpor combined with headache, and their breathing became more and more difficult.

In this state they had no longer any courage to go hunting or to take any exercise. They remained crouched around the stove, which gave them but a meager heat; and when they went away from it, they thought that their blood suddenly cooled.

Jean Cornbutte's health was seriously impaired, and he could no longer quit his lodging. Symptoms of scurvy manifested themselves in him, and his legs were soon covered with white spots. Marie was well, however, and occupied herself tending the sick ones with the zeal of a Sister of Charity. The honest fellows blessed her from the bottom of their hearts.

The 1st of January was one of the gloomiest of these winter days. The wind was violent, and the cold insupportable. They could not go out, except at the risk of being frozen. The most courageous were fain to limit themselves to walking on deck, sheltered by the tent. Jean Cornbutte, Gervique, and Gradlin did not leave their beds. The two Norwegians, Aupic, and André Vasling, whose health was good, cast ferocious looks at their companions, whom they saw wasting away.

Louis Cornbutte led Penellan on deck, and asked him how much firing was left.

"The coal was exhausted long ago," replied Penellan, "and we are about to burn our last pieces of wood."

"If we are not able to keep off this cold, we are lost," said Louis.

"There still remains a way—" said Penellan, "to burn what we can of the brig, from the barricading to the water-line; and we can even, if need be, demolish her entirely, and rebuild a smaller craft."

"That is an extreme means," replied Louis, "which it will be full time to employ when our men are well. For," he added in a low voice, "our force is diminishing, and that of our enemies seems to be increasing. That is extraordinary."

"It is true," said Penellan; "and unless we took the precaution to watch night and day, I know not what would happen to us."

"Let us take our hatchets," returned Louis, "and make our harvest of wood."

Despite the cold, they mounted on the forward barricading, and cut off all the wood which was not indispensably necessary to the ship; then they returned with this new provision. The fire was started afresh, and a man remained on guard to prevent it from going out.

Meanwhile Louis Cornbutte and his friends were soon tired out. They could not confide any detail of the life in common to their enemies. Charged with all the domestic cares, their powers were soon exhausted. The scurvy betrayed itself in Jean Cornbutte, who suffered intolerable pain. Gervique and Gradlin showed symptoms of the same disease. Had it not been for the lemon-juice, with which they were abundantly furnished, they would have speedily succumbed to their sufferings. This remedy was not spared in relieving them.

But one day, the 15th of January, when Louis Cornbutte was going down into the steward's room to get some lemons, he was stupefied to find that the barrels in which they were kept had disappeared. He hurried up and told Penellan of this misfortune. A theft had been committed, and it was easy to recognize its authors. Louis Cornbutte then understood why the health of his enemies continued so good! His friends were no longer strong enough to take the lemons away from them, though his life and that of his comrades depended on the fruit; and he now sank, for the first time, into a gloomy state of despair.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Distress

ON the 20th of January most of the crew had not strength to leave their beds. Each, independently of his woolen coverings, had a buffalo-skin to protect him against the cold; but as soon as he put his arms outside the clothes, he felt a severe pain which obliged him quickly to cover them again.

Meanwhile, Louis having lit the stove fire, Penellan, Misonne, and André Vasling left their beds and crouched around it. Penellan prepared some boiling coffee, which gave them some strength, as well as Marie, who joined them in partaking of it.

Louis Cornbutte approached his father's bedside; the old man was almost motionless, and his limbs were helpless from disease. He muttered some disconnected words, which carried grief to his son's heart.

"Louis," said he, "I am dying! I suffer! Save me!"

Louis took a decisive resolution. He went up to the mate, and, controlling himself with difficulty, said: "Do you know where the lemons are, Vasling?"

"In the steward's room, I suppose," returned the mate, without stirring.

"You know very well they are not, as you have stolen them!"

"You are master, Louis Cornbutte, and may say and do anything."

"For pity's sake, André Vasling, my father is dying! You can save him,—answer!"

"I have nothing to answer," replied André Vasling.

"Wretch!" cried Penellan, throwing himself, cutless in hand, on the mate.

"Help, friends!" shouted Vasling, retreating.

Aupic and the two Norwegian sailors jumped from their beds and placed themselves behind him. Turquette, Penellan, and Louis prepared to defend themselves. Pierre Nouquet and Gradlin, though suffering much, rose to second them.

"You are still too strong for us," said Vasling. "We do not wish to fight on an uncertainty."

The sailors were so weak that they dared not attack the four rebels, for, had they failed, they would have been lost. "André Vasling!" said Louis, in a gloomy tone, "if my father dies, you will have murdered him; and I will kill you like a dog!"

Vasling and his confederates retired to the other end of the cabin, and did not reply.

It was then necessary to renew the supply of wood, and, in spite of the cold, Louis went on deck and began to cut away a part of the barricading, but was obliged to retreat in a quarter of an hour, for he was in danger of falling, overcome by the freezing air. As he passed, he cast a glance at the thermometer left outside, and saw that the mercury was frozen. The cold, then, exceeded forty-two degrees below zero. The weather was dry, and the wind blew from the north.

On the 26th the wind changed to the northeast, and the thermometer outside stood at thirty-five degrees. Jean Cornbutte was in agony, and his son had searched in vain for some remedy with which to relieve his pain. On this day, however, throwing himself suddenly on Vasling, he managed to snatch a lemon from him which he was about to suck. Vasling made no attempt to recover it. He seemed to be awaiting an opportunity to accomplish his wicked designs.

The lemon-juice somewhat relieved old Cornbutte, but it was necessary to continue the remedy. Marie begged Vasling on her knees to produce the lemons, but he did not reply, and soon Penellan heard the wretch say to his accomplices: "The old fellow is dying. Gervique, Gradlin, and Nouquet are not much better. The others



are daily losing their strength. The time is near when their lives will belong to us!"

It was then resolved by Louis Cornbutte and his adherents not to wait, and lose the little strength still remaining to them. They determined to act the next night, and to kill these wretches, so as not to be killed by them.

The temperature rose a little. Louis Cornbutte ventured to go out with his gun in search of some game. He proceeded some three miles from the ship, and, deceived by the effects of the mirage and refraction, he went farther than he intended. It was imprudent, for recent tracks of ferocious animals were to be seen. He did not wish, however, to return without some fresh meat, and continued on his route; but he then experienced a strange feeling which turned his head. It was what is commonly called "white vertigo."

The reflection of the ice hillocks and fields affected him from head to foot, and it seemed to him that the dazzling white penetrated him and caused an irresistible nausea. His eye was attacked. His sight became uncertain. He thought he should go mad with the glare. Without fully understanding this terrible effect, he advanced on his way, and soon put up a ptarmigan, which he eagerly pursued. The bird soon fell, and in order to reach it Louis leaped from an ice-block and fell heavily; for the leap was at least ten feet, and the refraction made him think it was only two. The vertigo then seized him, and, without knowing why, he began to call for help, though he had not been injured by the fall. The cold began to take him, and he rose with pain, urged by the sense of self-preservation.

Suddenly, without being able to account for it, he smelt an odor of boiling fat. As the ship was between him and the wind, he supposed that this odor proceeded from her, and could not imagine why they should be cooking fat, this being a dangerous thing to do, as it was likely to attract the white bears.

Louis returned towards the ship, absorbed in reflections which soon inspired his excited mind with terror. It seemed to him as if colossal masses were moving on the horizon, and he asked himself if there was not another icequake. Several of these masses interposed themselves between him and the ship, and appeared to rise about its sides. He stopped to gaze at them more attentively, when to his horror he recognized a herd of gigantic bears.

These animals had been attracted by the odor of grease which had surprised Louis. He sheltered himself behind a hillock, and counted three, which were scaling the blocks on which the *Jeune-Hardie* was resting.

A terrible anguish oppressed his heart. How resist these redoubtable enemies? Would André Vasling and his confederates unite with the rest on board in the common peril? Could Penellan and the others, half-starved, benumbed with cold, resist these formidable animals, made wild by unassuaged hunger? Would they not be surprised by an unlooked-for attack?

Louis made these reflections rapidly. The bears had crossed the blocks, and were mounting to the assault of the ship. He might then quit the block which protected him; he went nearer, clinging to the ice, and could soon see the enormous animals tearing the tent with their paws, and leaping on the deck.

## CHAPTER XV

### The White Bears

AFTER Louis Cornbutte's departure, Penellan had carefully shut the cabin door, which opened at the foot of the deck steps. He returned to the stove, which he took it upon himself to watch, while

his companions regained their berths in search of a little warmth.

It was then six in the evening, and Penellan set about preparing supper. He went down into the steward's room for some salt meat, which he wished to soak in the boiling water. When he returned, he found André Vasling in his place, cooking some pieces of grease in a basin.

"I was there before you," said Penellan roughly; "why have you taken my place?"

"For the same reason that you claim it," returned Vasling: "because I want to cook my supper."

"You will take that off at once, or we shall see!"

"We shall see nothing," said Vasling; "my supper shall be cooked in spite of you."

"You shall not eat it, then," cried Penellan, rushing upon Vasling, who seized his knife, crying, "Help, Norwegians! Help, Aupic!"

These, in the twinkling of an eye, sprang to their feet, armed with pistols and daggers. The crisis had come.

Penellan precipitated himself upon Vasling, to whom, no doubt, was confided the task to fight him alone; for his accomplices rushed to the beds where lay Misonne, Turquette, and Nouquet. The latter, ill and defenceless, was delivered over to Herming's ferocity. The carpenter seized a hatchet and, leaving his berth, hurried up to encounter Aupic. Turquette and Jocki, the Norwegian, struggled fiercely. Gervique and Gradlin, suffering horribly, were not even conscious of what was passing around them.

Nouquet soon received a stab in the side, and Herming turned to Penellan, who was fighting desperately. André Vasling had seized him round the body.

At the beginning of the affray the basin had been upset on the stove, and the grease running over the burning coals, impregnated the atmosphere with its odor. Marie rose with cries of despair, and hurried to the bed of old Jean Cornbutte.

Vasling, less strong than Penellan, soon perceived that the latter was getting the better of him. They were too close together to make use of their weapons. The mate, seeing Herming, cried out, "Help, Herming!"

"Help, Misonne!" shouted Penellan, in his turn.

But Misonne was rolling on the ground with Aupic, who was trying to stab him with his knife. The carpenter's hatchet was of little use to him, for he could not wield it, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he parried the lunges which Aupic made with his knife.

Meanwhile blood flowed amid the groans and cries. Turquette, thrown down by Jocki, a man of immense strength, had received a wound in the shoulder, and he tried in vain to clutch a pistol which hung in the Norwegian's belt. The latter held him as in a vice, and it was impossible for him to move.

As Vasling was being held by Penellan close against the door, Herming rushed up. He was about to stab the Breton's back with his knife, but the latter felled him to the earth with a vigorous kick. His effort to do this enabled Vasling to disengage his right arm; but the door, against which they pressed with all their weight, suddenly yielded, and Vasling fell over.

Of a sudden a terrible growl was heard, and a gigantic bear appeared on the steps. Vasling saw him first. He was not four feet away from him. At the same moment a shot was heard, and the bear, wounded or frightened, retreated. Vasling, who had succeeded in regaining his feet, set out in pursuit of him, abandoning Penellan.

Penellan then replaced the door, and looked around him. Misonne and Turquette, tightly garrotted by their antagonists, had been thrown into a corner, and



made vain efforts to break loose. Penellan rushed to their assistance, but was overturned by the two Norwegians and Aupic. His exhausted strength did not permit him to resist these three men, and at a heavy blow he sank unconscious. Then, at the cries of the mate, his accomplices hurried on deck, thinking that Louis Cornbutte was to be encountered.

André Vasling was struggling with a bear, which he had already twice stabbed with his knife. The animal, beating the air with his heavy paws, was trying to clutch Vasling; he retiring little by little on the barricading, was apparently doomed, when a second shot was heard. The bear fell. André Vasling raised his head and saw Louis Cornbutte in the ratlines of the mizzen-mast, his gun in his hand. Louis had shot the bear in the heart, and he was dead.

Hate overcame gratitude in Vasling's breast; but before satisfying it, he looked around him. Aupic's head was broken by a paw-stroke, and he lay lifeless on deck. Jocki, hatchet in hand, was with difficulty parrying the blows of the second bear which had just killed Aupic. The animal had received two wounds, and still struggled desperately. A third bear was directing his way towards the ship's prow. Vasling paid no attention to him, but, followed by Herming, went to the aid of Jocki; but Jocki, seized by the beast's paws, was crushed, and when the bear fell under the shots of the other two men, he held a corpse in his shaggy arms.

"We are only two, now," said Vasling, with gloomy ferocity, "but if we yield, it will not be without vengeance!"

Herming reloaded his pistol without replying. Before all, the third bear must be got rid of. Vasling looked forward, but did not see him. On raising his eyes, he perceived him erect on the barricading, clinging to the ratlines and trying to reach Louis. Vasling let his gun fall, which he had aimed at the animal, while a fierce joy glittered in his eyes. "Ah," he cried to the bear, "you owe me that vengeance!"

Louis took refuge in the top of the mast. The bear kept mounting, and was not more than six feet from Louis, when he raised his gun and pointed it at the animal's heart.

Vasling raised his weapon to shoot Louis if the bear fell.

Louis fired, but the bear did not appear to be hit, for he leaped with a bound towards the top.

Vasling uttered a shout of exultation.

"Herming," he cried, "go and find Marie! Go and find my betrothed!"

Herming descended the cabin stairs.

Meanwhile the furious beast had thrown himself upon Louis, who was trying to shelter himself on the other side of the mast; but at the moment that his enormous paw was raised to break his head, Louis, seizing one of the backstays, let himself slip down to the deck, not without danger, for a ball hissed by his ear when he was half-way down. Vasling had shot at him, and missed him. The two adversaries now confronted each other, knives in hand.

The combat was about to become decisive. To glut his vengeance, and to have the young girl witness her lover's death, Vasling had deprived himself of Herming's aid. He could now reckon only on himself.

Louis and Vasling seized each other by the collar, and held each other with iron grip. One of them must fall. They struck each other violently. The blows were only half parried, for blood soon flowed from both. Vasling tried to clasp his adversary about the neck with his arm, to bring him to the ground. Louis, knowing that he who fell was lost, prevented him, and suc-

ceeded in grasping his two arms; but in doing this he let fall his knife.

Piteous cries now assailed his ears; it was Marie's voice. Herming was trying to drag her up. Louis was seized with a desperate rage. He stiffened himself to bend Vasling's loins; but at this moment the combatants felt themselves seized in a powerful embrace. The bear, having descended from the mast, had fallen upon the two men. Vasling was pressed against the animal's body. Louis felt his claws entering his flesh. The bear was strangling both of them.

"Help; help! Herming!" cried the mate.

"Help! Penellan!" cried Louis.

Steps were heard on the stairs. Penellan appeared, loaded his pistol, and discharged it in the bear's ear; he roared; the pain made him relax his paws for a moment, and Louis, exhausted, fell motionless on the deck; but the bear, closing his paws tightly in a supreme agony, fell, dragging down the wretched Vasling, whose body was crushed under him.

Penellan hurried to Louis Cornbutte's assistance. No serious wound endangered his life; he had only lost his breath for a moment.

"Marie!" he said, opening his eyes.

"Saved!" replied Penellan. "Herming is lying there with a knife-wound in his stomach."

"And the bears——"

"Dead, Louis; dead, like our enemies! But for those beasts we should have been lost. Truly, they came to our succor. Let us thank Heaven!"

Louis and Penellan descended to the cabin, and Marie fell into their arms.

**H**ERMING, mortally wounded, had been carried to a berth by Misonne and Turquette, who had succeeded in getting free. He was already at the last gasp of death; and the two sailors occupied themselves with Nouquet, whose wound was not, happily, a serious one.

At this unexpected blow, Louis and Marie fell into a sad despair; then they knelt at the bedside and wept, as they prayed for Jean Cornbutte's soul. Penellan, Misonne, and Turquette left them alone in the cabin, and went on deck.

Soon hunting for game became more easy and its results more abundant. The water-birds returned in large numbers. After the equinox, the sun remained constantly above the horizon. The eight months of perpetual daylight had begun. This continual sunlight, with the increasing though still quite feeble heat, soon began to act upon the ice.

Great precautions were necessary in launching the ship from the lofty layer of ice which surrounded her. She was therefore securely propped up, and it seemed best to await the breaking up of the ice; but the lower mass, resting on a bed of already warm water, descended with it. Early in April she had reached her natural level.

Twenty miles off, the ice masses, entirely separated, floated towards the Atlantic Ocean. Though the sea was not quite free around the ship, channels opened by which Louis Cornbutte wished to profit.

On the 16th of August she came in view of Dunkirk. She had been signaled by the look-out, and the whole population flocked to the jetty. The sailors of the ship were soon clasped in the arms of their friends. The old curé received Louis Cornbutte and Marie with patriarchal arms, and of the two masses which he said on the following day, the first was for the repose of Jean Cornbutte's soul, and the second to bless these two lovers, so long united in misfortune.



# The Menace

By David H. Keller, M.D.

*Author of "A Biological Experiment," "The Yeast Men," etc.*

T AINE of San Francisco had been called to New York. That, in itself, was an unusual, unheard of and unprecedented happening. For the first time in the history of the two cities, the Atlantic Metropolis had called upon the Secret Service of the Golden Gate for help. While Taine, one of the shrewdest detectives west of the Rockies, was rushing across the continent under sealed orders he considered this fact and looked forward with eager anticipation to the time when he would become acquainted with the problem, which was apparently too difficult for the Eastern operators to handle.

Arriving in the great city he at once went to the Pennsylvania Hotel, where a room had been reserved for him, and, in the privacy of that room, he opened and read his sealed orders. He did so with a growing sense of disappointment. He had expected something exciting and instead was simply directed to wait in his room till visited by an old man with puppies for sale. Of these he was to offer to buy the black one.

That was all.

To Taine it looked like an unnecessary piece of nonsense.

However, he had hardly time to unpack his baggage when the telephone rang and a voice at the other end asked whether the gentleman would like to buy a fine puppy. Taine said, "Perhaps," and told the man to come to his room. In a short time a knock at the door and a chorus of little yelps was heard. When the door was opened, in came a little, old Jewish peddler, carrying a basket, which seemed filled with dogs, little dogs of all colors. Without speaking, Taine closed and locked the door, and then started to look over the little dogs. Finally he found one that was solid black.

"I'll take this one he said. "How much?"

The Jew smiled and handed him a scrap of paper. Then he put the cover on the basket and, unlocking the door, left the room.

The man from San Francisco locked the door, hung his handkerchief over the keyhole, pulled down the shades and read the scrap of paper. It simply directed him to open an account at the First National Bank. That was all.

When Taine followed this order he was told that he would have to see the Cashier, but, when he followed the bank watchman, he found himself in the President's office, and the President of the bank was not alone.

"I suppose," said that official, "that you are Mr. Taine, the detective sent us by the city of San Francisco?"

The Westerner started to produce his identification paper.

"That is not necessary," said the Bank President, cordially. "Your selection of the black puppy was enough to make us sure you were the man we have been looking for. Now, let us get started and first let

me introduce these gentlemen. This is Mr. Tally of the United States Secret Service, who has come especially from Washington for this meeting. The next gentleman is Gray, the Chief of our city Secret Service. You probably know Smith, who is an expert on finger-prints. Next to him is Dr. Jenkins who is the medico-legal adviser to our courts, and lastly, but of equal importance is B. Bailey Biddle, President of the New York Bankers' Association. You may have thought that our precautions were unnecessary but we have had four private detectives on this matter, and every one of the four has disappeared. We feel that they have either met with foul play or have been bribed.

"That is one reason why we wanted a total stranger, one who was absolutely unknown in the city. Now, in order that you may understand the situation, I will ask each of these gentlemen to tell you briefly what he knows about it.

"Suppose we start with Smith."

"About a year ago, in a Park Avenue apartment house," said that gentleman, "a man was shot. An effort was made to hush it up by bribing the policeman who heard the shot. He was a new man and thought it was his duty to rush the man to the hospital and report the shooting at Headquarters. To make a long story short, the man died, but my Department had time to make his finger prints and take his measurements. As soon as he died he was buried by his friends, and all we had was the record we had made. We found that the prints and the measurements were identical with those of a negro criminal, well known some years ago to our Secret Service. Unfortunately for our peace of mind, the dead man was a white man. That has happened twice since then, and we had to explain it or confess that our method of identifying criminals was worthless. After the second incident in which we also lost the body, we were all on edge and when it occurred again, we held the body. It took some rather clever work but we were able to have Dr. Jenkins make a thorough examination of the corpse. He will tell you, himself, just what he found."

"I can be very brief," said Dr. Jenkins. "Talking is not my strong point. My pathologists examined that body in every way known to medical science and it was the body of a white man. The hair, however, was that of the negro race. No use going into details about it, though. We felt, when we finished, that while it looked like the body of a white man, it was somehow the body of a negro, who had in some mysterious way turned white: Of course such an idea was rather fantastic, but not impossible, so we made a full report to Chief Gray. He has been working on the problem and can tell you about it."

"I wish I could," said Gray. "If I could solve this problem I would be very happy. We put two of our best men on it and they simply dropped out of sight. Then I had a Philadelphia operator sent over and he never made a preliminary report. The Washington



man put in a call for help but by the time we arrived he was gone and that was the end of him. It was evident that we were up against a system that was as clever as we were. So I called in the United States Secret Service, and Mr. Tally has been working with me for some months. Suppose we let him tell about the international developments."

"One of the most interesting parts to that," said Tally, continuing the story, "has been the large amount of gold transferred to New York from all the Continental countries, especially from France. No definite information can be secured concerning this gold, save that it is in bulk and the property of a small group of foreigners, who are steadily buying New York real estate with their wealth. We know fairly well who these people are—that is, we know who they are now—but it has been about useless to try and find out who they were and where they secured their wealth. We believe that as a group they are the richest financiers in the world. Some of their purchases in this city have been so unusual that no one, except the parties directly concerned, know about them. We have a lot of actual facts, a few surmises and one definite conclusion. We are sure that a group of white men, from continental Europe, have moved to New York and with their great wealth have purchased large blocks of real estate. This is all adjacent to Harlem. And, as fast as it is purchased, it is being occupied by colored people. Just what this means can only be surmised. Mr. Biddle will tell you how it affects the financial interests of America's greatest city. The Government is interested in the problem, but the New York Bankers' Association, being directly concerned, is financing this investigation."

"YOU are a stranger to our city and its problems," began Mr. Biddle, in a low, impressive voice, "and so it may be well to tell you something about Harlem. It is a city within a city, and is populated entirely by the colored race. There they have their own theaters, hotels, department stores, homes and apartment houses. During the day most of them work for the white race in New York; at night they return to their own city. We have depended on them for our servants and laborers and have, to a great extent, encouraged their forming such a social and economic center. For many years it has slowly increased in size but this growth has been in strict proportion to the growth of the entire city and so has been considered normal and healthy. But the situation during the past three years has been different and has given us all reason for the greatest anxiety. In the first place there has come to New York this group of foreigners, who are so wealthy that our Association can only guess as to what their total assets really amount to. They are all well educated, and appear to be of the greatest refinement. All of our society has been attracted to them, and there have been several marriages between their young people and ours, though this has been frowned upon by our best families. These aristocrats of the financial world are buying stocks, bonds, and the control of many of our great industries. We believe they hold the larger part of several of our railroads. They have fastened tightly to the food supplies. Someone has bought all the visible wheat and we believe that they are to be found at the bottom of the firm who have quietly bought several of our largest hotels. The most peculiar thing is their real estate purchases. The property around Harlem is being sold, and as fast as it is being sold and the leases expire the tenements, both houses and apartments, are being rented to colored people. From all over the United States, Central America and Europe, in fact wherever there are mem-

bers of that race, they are steadily moving to New York, and in some way they are helped to make a living. Each day it becomes harder for a white man to secure work here, and every month a larger percent of the work in the city is being done by colored labor. That does not mean just pick and shovel work. They are going into the so-called white collar positions, and the white men are forced to either associate with them or to leave the city. Of course the rich are unaffected, but when we find the controlling shares of a bank stock in the hands of these wealthy foreigners, and one of their number elected to the Presidency of the Bank, it becomes a matter of great concern to us. During the past year the white population of Greater New York, and here I speak of all Caucasian groups in our city, has remained absolutely stationary. On the other hand, the colored population has gained five hundred per cent."

He paused long enough to wipe the beads of sweat off his face.

"Can you see what it means? If this keeps up for another ten years, New York will be a colored city. Those of us who are left here will either have to recognize the members of the race as social equals, or move out. Can you imagine the last white man in the city going through the vehicular tube in his automobile and never returning? We feel that there is something deadly and mysterious about the whole matter, and we are asking you to solve it for us. Mr. Gray, you tell him just what your plan is."

The Chief of the New York Secret Service pulled out a small memorandum book and changed his seat so that he directly faced Taine.

"Our investigation shows that your ancestors were Italian and Spanish. Your father was born in California but married a lady from Portugal. You speak French fluently and are well acquainted with Asiatic countries, like China and Hindustan. During the twenty years you have been in the San Francisco Secret Service, you have never failed to solve the problem assigned to you. You have a wife and several children. We will give you a million dollars which will become the property of your family, if you fail to return as the other four men did. We want you to go right back to California—do not even return to your hotel for your clothes. Take the first steamer for Tokio and then go down to Indo-China. There we will have you provided with papers showing you are a French citizen. You will then go to Paris and stay there some months as a wealthy French Colonial. Then you will come to New York with a reputation of being one of the richest men in France—but you are to come as a colored man. We will have you provided with letters of introduction. There will be no trouble in making the necessary contacts. Your deposits of several millions in the various Harlem Banks, will at once make you socially prominent. Stay there till you find out what is happening in this city."

"A sweet job," mused Taine. "How much can I draw on you for?"

"Any amount?" answered President Biddle. "I mean just that—any amount that you need. Twenty-five, fifty or a hundred million to be spent by you in any way you see fit without any consultation or any accounting. We feel that you are the man for the job and that the big thing after brains is money. Your finances will be provided through our Paris representatives. We want no reports until you have the last and final one."

"You will be alone in this work," resumed Chief Gray, "but we will keep in contact with you. Constantly we want you to wear, in New York, a white carnation. If you want to communicate with us change



to a pink one, and we will look after the details. We will let you out a side door and take you directly to the Pennsylvania Station. You will buy a ticket and drawing room for San Francisco, get off the train at Newark, get into an automobile driven by a red-headed Irishman with one arm and he will drive you to Montreal. There you can take the Canadian Pacific to the west. I have an idea that you may have been followed here and so you will take the usual precaution."

Taine shook hands with all the men.

"You are all as solemn as though you were attending a funeral," he said.

"I hope it will not be your funeral," replied Dr. Jenkins.

SIX months later, Mr. Morosco Acquoine sat thoughtfully in his office. Well dressed, of olive complexion, with classical features, he looked more like a college professor than a Bank President. As the head of the Harlem Commercial Bank, he occupied a specially favored position in the social and financial life of that portion of New York. His wife was one of the social leaders, in fact there were many who considered her The Social Leader. Their daughter, Florabella, just graduated from a French convent, was perfectly endowed by nature in every way to perpetuate the social standing of the New York Acquoines. All that was needed was just a little more wealth, and then?

Mr. Morosco Acquoine was thinking about a letter he had just received from Paris, telling him of the departure for New York of a very interesting person, by name Jules Gerome. He was from Indo-China, where he had amassed great wealth. No one could tell just how much he was worth. He had been warmly received by the colored colony in Paris and had entertained elegantly and lavishly. Much to the disappointment of the Parisians he had decided to make New York his permanent home, and would arrive shortly. It was hoped that he would make the Harlem Commercial Bank his chief depository. If he did, Mr. Acquoine's financial worries were at an end. Finally, it was of interest to know that he had very regular features, was very light in color and was unmarried. As far as could be ascertained, his morals were exemplary.

No wonder that the Bank President pondered over the letter. It was not at all surprising that he wondered vaguely whether such a man would by any chance become interested in his daughter, Florabella Acquoine.

A week later Mr. Jules Gerome sent in his card and asked for a few minutes of Mr. Acquoine's time. Within a very few minutes Mr. Gerome was seated in a comfortable chair, refusing a very expensive cigar.

"I do not smoke," said that young man sedately. "I found years ago that it injured the pearly lustre of my teeth. I have been through many hardships in my life, but I have always taken the best care possible of my teeth; but it is not of that I wish to confer with you. Here are some letters of introduction which I trust will be sufficient to allow me to become a depositor in your bank."

"They are not necessary, Mr. Gerome," answered the Banker, cordially.

"Perhaps not necessary, but usually a good thing. I was advised to select you, not only as my depository, but also as my fiscal agent."

"I will be pleased to serve you in any way. Do you wish to open an account today?"

"Yes, I came here direct from the steamer. Can you secure a small furnished apartment for me, with a competent valet and a cook? I want to be in my own

home by night time."

"That is a rather short time," said Mr. Acquoine, "but perhaps it can be arranged."

"I think so. My first deposit with you will be twenty million dollars. Here are letters of exchange for that amount in gold."

"I am sure that you will be in your own home before bedtime," said the Banker. "In fact, I am very sure of it. We will go up to my home for dinner. I want you to meet my family and rest from your trip, while my agents are preparing for your needs."

"I do not want to put your wife to any trouble——"

"I assure you it will be a pleasure."

At dinner that day the Banker tried to explain to his wife how very important Mr. Gerome would be in the business life of New York. The little stranger, however, assured the two women that such was not at all the case.

"I have been fortunate enough," he remarked, very quietly, "to amass in a very busy life considerable wealth. I feel that this is not mine, but is really a trust, and I am going to try and spend at least a part of it, in this city, to help uplift my less fortunate brothers and sisters. I have several ideas in my mind, like founding a day nursery and opening night schools. I want my race to rise, but while they are being elevated, they must also be helped. I would like to be remembered in New York as a philanthropist rather than a philanderer, a man of charity rather than a man of wealth. In order to learn how to help them I must first learn to know them and I am sure that Mrs. Acquoine will spend some time with me, teaching me what I ought to know about the problems of the colored race in America."

"I will be proud to help you, and so will Florabella," assented the proud matron, and while the daughter was silent, her eyes were mute but eloquent witnesses of her desire to be of assistance.

From that day on, Mr. Jules Gerome led the life appropriate to the richest bachelor in Harlem. He became interested in the hospitals, day nurseries, night schools and savings banks of the negro colony. He not only visited them but he carefully studied them and made handsome contributions, not only in cash, but in suggestions leading to their greater usefulness as well. He made no effort to become a social leader, but more and more his private suppers, for never over five guests, were becoming the talk and despair of Harlem aristocracy. There was such a great gulf between those who had been guests on these occasions and those who had not.

More and more frequently he appeared in public as the escort of Miss Florabella Acquoine. Small, with regular features and only the faintest color, she presented a type of beauty that only an expert would have refused to recognize as purest Caucasian. When the young couple first appeared together at the theater, all of Harlem was thrilled and pronounced themselves perfectly satisfied with the match, and after that hardly a day passed but Mr. Gerome needed the assistance of Miss Acquoine with his welfare work.

The Banker realized that matters were looking serious and wore a contented, perpetual smile. He and his wife had always had other plans for their daughter but, when it came to marrying millions, they felt that their own desires could be set aside. In fact, they believed that there was no need of making any change in their arrangements, simply include the wealthy Frenchman in them.

He had several lengthy interviews with the Powerful Ones in a Wall Street office and then felt ready to go over the entire matter with the man he hoped to make his son-in-law.



MR. JULES GEROME had been in New York three months, when he called, by appointment, on Mr. Moresco Acquoine. Both men were immaculately dressed. Without hesitation, the Banker opened the conversation.

"My wife tells me that you are paying more and more attention to my daughter."

"I will have to admit it," replied the smiling young man.

"Are your intentions serious?"

"I have every reason to believe that the future will show that they are."

"Suppose I should ask you to stop? What if I told you that my idea was to have her marry a white man?"

"That would be foolish. No respectable white man would marry her knowing what she was. She is a lovely child, but she has the drop of blood in her—you have the drop—so has your wife. Sooner or later her husband would find it out and divorce her."

"We can separate her from us. We can send her over the line—she can marry white and no one will ever know."

Gerome shook his head.

"Do not think of doing that. It would mean a life of isolation from all her loved ones. She may pretend to be white, but some day they will find her out. I have longed to go over the line but so far I have stood by my people. You know I could pass any day and anywhere as pure white. Now if we only were white, that would be a different matter."

"Suppose——" and the Banker hesitated to continue in a whisper. "Suppose I knew a way by which the three of us and you can actually become white. Would you join us?"

"That sounds impossible to me, but it is what I have wanted all my life. Yes, I would go with you."

"Would you marry my daughter?"

"Why—I have not even talked of love to her. She would have to be consulted—it is hard to tell about the future. But this thing you propose is a dream, a fantasy."

"No! It is real."

"I do not believe it."

"Will you promise secrecy?"

"I would promise anything to be white."

"Then listen to me. Five years ago a group of our race discovered a source of gold. You observe that I say source—and I use that word because I do not know any other to use—but, whether they found the gold or whether they made it, the fact is that they are not one of the rich groups of the world, but the richest. They made up their minds to own New York, but their color was an insuperable barrier to such ambition. Then they added to their combination a brilliant physician. He discovered something, I don't know what, not being a scientist, but it was something that turns a black man, or a brown man, white. So this group changed the color of a selected number of brilliantly educated, capable colored men and women, supplied them with unlimited funds and started them in a quiet fight to make New York a colored city. When the time comes, every negro in the world, irrespective of his brains, will be turned white. I have talked with the Powerful Ones and have received permission for the four of us to be changed. I will sell all my interests here, and then we will take the treatment and make a trip around the world. When we return, it will be with new names, new interests and new ambitions. We will be white, not just pretended white, but actually white. We will join those who for the last five years have been leaders in this movement, that will make the city of New York our city and will finally transform an entire race."

"I am astonished!" cried Mr. Jules Gerome, nervously fingering the white carnation in his lapel. "I am astonished, but not really surprised. I heard rumors of this in Indo-China. Do you suppose that I can be of any help—in any way?"

"I believe so. In fact I know that you have been under observation. No doubt you will be finally admitted to the inner circle of the Powerful Ones—after you have shown that you are worthy of trust."

Gerome appeared to be lost in deep thought. Finally he said: "They seem to have a lot of money, but just in order to show them that we are deeply interested, you tell them we will give them twenty million, five million for each of us, the day we receive the treatment. That sum ought to help a little with the work; at least it will be a proof to them of our deep sincerity."

"But can you spare that sum?"

"I can part with ten times that if I wanted to," was the nonchalant answer.

"And you will go to Paris with us—with my wife and daughter?"

"If that is what they want me to do, I see no use of protesting?"

"I shall tell them of your decision and your offer."

"Do so at once. Now that I have arrived at the decision I can hardly wait. I see now how I can make my wealth and position in life worth something. I will return to Indo-China and make that a white spot on the face of Asia."

"And you will take Florabella with you?"

"If we are married I do not see how I can keep her away from me."

The two men parted that night, each thoroughly satisfied with the way destiny was shaping his life.

HIGH above the rest of New York towered the Center Internationale. At the ground it rested on four city squares. For fifty stories it reared its colossal bulk without contraction, then it gradually became smaller for thirty more stories. From there it rose, a gorgeous spire of flashing windows and coppered frame work for twenty additional levels, ending in a golden serpent.

The lower half was tenanted by lawyers, physicians and business firms of all description. The upper half was generally supposed to be occupied by an ultra-fashionable club, concerning which there was much rumored and little known.

The battery of elevators ran from the first to the fiftieth floor. That floor was unoccupied by tenants, being merely a large lobby. Those having the right to enter the upper half evidently knew how to do so but the *modus operandi* was not apparent.

Mr. Jules Gerome, being told over the telephone that the time had come for the long anticipated meeting with the leaders of this new movement, those mysterious unknowns called by Mr. Moresco Acquoine, THE POWERFUL ONES, passed the night in writing and meditation. His correspondence consisted of a lengthy report covering his entire knowledge up to that time—and a short letter of affection to his wife and daughters. His meditation was mainly concerning his real belief in the doctrine of predestination. As a proper beginning to the new day he strolled out after breakfast and purchased two dozen red carnations. Twenty-three of these he neatly decapitated, placing the heads in his various pockets, while he put the twenty-fourth in his button-hole. Passing down the Avenue he was almost run into by a subservient, whining Serbian, who asked him if he did not want to buy a puppy. The whining of the little dogs stung his memory like a lash and he asked if the man had a jet black one.



The man had one but the breed was not suitable for an aristocratic French Colonial, so after some argument Gerome continued his walk, while the Serbian hailed a Yellow Cab and disappeared; but in his basket, under the puppies, were a red carnation and two letters.

That noon Mr. Jules Gerome lunched tête-à-tête with Miss Florabella Acquoine. The table was decorated with pink carnations, from which the dapper millionaire renewed his wilted boutonniere. He also, in an absent minded manner, pulled the stems of others of the flowers, placing the flowers in his pocket. Florabella was deliciously vivacious, while her escort was quietly adoring in his aristocratic mood. Anyone could tell, just by watching them, that they were very happy in their anticipatory dreams.

Going out to his automobile Gerome dropped the head of a red carnation. As the car passed through Harlem he tossed, now and then, a flower through the open window.

"Please stop that," pleaded Florabella. "You make me nervous. If they were only smaller they would seem like drops of blood you scatter in your path."

Mr. Jules Gerome patted her hand and told her not to worry.

He left her at her father's home, promising to call for the three of them promptly at five-thirty that evening.

At that time the four of them entered the Acquoine car, the women dressed in the height of fashion, the evening clothes of the men somber black, only accentuating the gorgeous elegance of the jewels and furs worn by their ladies. Their clothing indicated a night of pleasure, their manner an evening of apprehensive gloom. They left their car at the Center Internationale, and walked to one of the express elevators which went to the fiftieth floor without a stop. As he entered the elevator, Gerome dropped several carnations on the floor.

Leaving the elevator, the party entered the floor which marked the separation between the two parts of the building. Here long rows of marble columns separated the large floor into several plazas, the outer of which, open to the air, were being used as roof gardens, open-air restaurants and dancing pavillions. The floor was thronged with hundreds of men and women, whose dress and general manner marked them as leaders in the aristocracy of the world.

Passing into one of the restaurants, Mr. Morosco Acquoine beckoned to the head-waiter, gave him his name and stated that he had ordered supper served in a private room. The head-waiter remembered the order perfectly and led them to a small dining-room, just large enough for four. Here supper was served, and the doors closed.

None of the party seemed to have much appetite.

The conversation did not approach the brilliancy of the glassware.

As they ate, Gerome noticed, or thought he noticed, a slight shifting of the entire room. He closed his eyes and concentrated on the sensations which came to him from different parts of his body. Finally he decided that his first suspicion was correct.

The private dining room was simply a camouflaged elevator.

While they were eating their supper, they were being slowly carried upward. Gerome shrugged his shoulders and kept quiet. He did not want to have two hysterical females to care for.

Now and then the door opened and another course was served.

Finally, after the ice and coffee, the door was again opened and the same obsequious head-waiter who had

ushered them into the room, appeared to usher them out.

They walked out of the room into a different world. The two women were asked to wait in a tiny parlor; the men were asked to follow the waiter.

In a few seconds they found themselves in what seemed to be a business office. Around a small mahogany table sat five white men. There were three empty chairs.

Mr. Morosco Acquoine and Mr. Jules Gerome were given seats. The remaining chair remained unoccupied.

Cigars were passed. Acquoine took one and started to smoke in an agitated manner. Gerome refused with a blasé, but polite gesture.

"I do not smoke," he said quietly to the stranger at his side, "I found out years ago, that it injures the pearly luster of my teeth. I have been through many hardships in my life, but I have always tried to take the best care possible of my teeth. Once gone they can never be replaced."

The man he addressed looked at him as though he did not hear a word he said. Then a gong sounded in a neighboring room. Again and again it boomed with a gentle but positive rhythm. Gerome started to dig long forgotten sounds out of his sub-conscious memories. Suddenly he recalled an evening, floating down the Congo, in a native dug-out—He sat just a little straighter in his chair, saying to himself, between motionless lips: "By all that's holy! That is the tom-tom."

HE looked at the men seated around the table. Without exception they seemed to be autocrats of the business world, cultural leaders, Chesterfields; yet all of them were gently moving their heads and bodies in harmony with the rhythm of the drum-beat, and no one spoke till the throbbing waves of sound ceased to invade the deep silence of the room. Then, and then only did one of the older men speak, in perfect English, with well chosen words and a pronunciation that could only have been gained at Oxford.

"We are so glad to have you gentlemen with us this evening. It means so much to us. When Mr. Morosco Acquoine decided to join us we looked on it as the usual thing for a man of his position to do, but when you, Mr. Jules Gerome, not only threw your lot in with ours, but in addition offered us twenty million for propaganda purposes, we considered it an event. It is very unusual for a man like you, with your boundless wealth and great influence, to freely offer such a gift: in fact, Sir, it is a magnificent gesture, and one for which you will be well repaid. I am sure that nothing but the most deadly hatred of the white race could have impelled you to take such an important step. May we ask the details leading up to that hatred?"

"I will be glad to tell you about it. I was but a mere slip of a lad in Indo-China, just a bit of a boy, when I had a difference of opinion with an overseer. Unable to conquer me in a fair fight, he secured help, had me thrown to the ground and then kicked me in the face, knocking out several of my teeth. So extensive was the damage, that I have to wear a rather large upper plate, which I will now show you, as proof that the sordid tale is true." Mr. Gerome placed before them, on the polished surface of the mahogany table, an upper plate, left it there for a full minute and then replaced it.

"I felt confident," continued the first speaker, "that something like this had happened to you. I am sure that it makes us more willing than ever to admit you to our councils. As we have some moments to spend



before this other chair is occupied, I will take the opportunity of explaining to you very thoroughly just what we are doing and how we are doing it.

"You no doubt are thoroughly familiar with the effort made throughout the world to advance the interests of our race. England freed her slaves by purchase, while the United States made them free, solely as a political movement, to enable the Northern States to win the Civil War. After that war, various efforts were made by well meaning individuals and organizations to help the negro rise economically but never socially. Throughout the white world, but especially among the Nordic peoples, the Caucasians could never forget that they were white and the negro was black, just as if the matter of color made any vital difference. That was the way they felt—we produced poets, playwrights, musicians, authors of no mean ability—and while we were made much of—they could never forget that we were black. Ten years ago a few of us gave up the effort, and looked for a way of escape—not from our race—but from our color. A peculiar and fortunate combination of circumstances made some of us feel that the hand of God was in it and behind it, though no doubt our enemies more likely call it the claw of the Devil.

"We were fortunate in securing the aid of a chemist and a physician who was more of a scientist than a doctor. We pooled our finances, established, after the greatest effort, a fund of over a million dollars and handed it to these two men. Somehow they were to produce wealth and whiteness. We believed at the time that white bodies were useless without wealth and that wealth was of no avail with discolored epidermis.

"These two men toiled, but it was a labor of love. Within a year they had expended the million. We raised another million. We sold all we had, borrowed all we could, stole as we might, and then we worked. One of us was a Pullman porter, another a valet, and one even worked as a street cleaner. Living on almost nothing, we gave our combined income to the cause. At the end of three years the chemist produced a few diamonds, but the market could not absorb enough of such stones to satisfy our ambitions, and we urged him to concentrate upon gold. To our great satisfaction he succeeded, not in making it, but in extracting it. You no doubt are aware that there is gold everywhere, even in the air, but in such minute quantities as to make it commercially valueless. Our chemist invented a means of separating it from the ocean. The details are of no interest to you at this time, but we built a yacht with a twelve-inch pipe running through it to a central laboratory and then to the stern of the ship. The water simply ran through the ship, while the chemist smoked his pipe and the Captain kept one eye on the weather. Periodically they came to port and unloaded their cargo—a most interesting performance, as far as we were concerned. Of course we put the gold to work; idle wealth is useless to everyone. The money was invested and reinvested till the original source was concealed by all the changes, and then it was brought to America.

"We had no trouble in buying anything we wanted to buy. I assure you that selling a man something for actual cash and meeting him socially are two different things, especially if one man is a negro. anyway we bought stocks, bonds, real estate, and in some cases even secured control of railroads, but even though we were the owners, we could not elect the officers, or even the directors; we had to keep our activities covered.

"We spent a lot of money in education; every young man of promise, with clear complexion and regular

features was sent to Europe to be developed along some distinct line that would be of benefit to us if we ever could become white. You can easily understand that we were in a position to buy a city, even buy New York itself, if only we could become white: that is what we hoped our scientist would accomplish—and he did.

"FOR centuries there has been a disease known to dermatologists as vitiligo or leukoderma—but perhaps it would be better to let Dr. Semon tell you the story. He deserves all the credit for it—it is his discovery, and he can explain just what it means better than I can. Dr. Semon, will you kindly continue elucidating the narrative?"

"With pleasure," replied that gentleman, "and I trust that I shall be able to put it into plain language so our friend can follow the thread of the argument. You see the difference between the negro and the white is mainly a matter of pigment and the medical literature showed that now and then, very rarely it is true, but often enough to cause scientific attention, the pigment of a black man disappeared, leaving him white. Levi, the Parisian, described three such cases in 1865; Hall, of Louisville, reported a case, while many others have occurred in the West Indies. My task is to find out just what happened in such a case to take the pigment out of the skin and keep it out. Some investigators thought it was a complication of syphilis, while others considered it to be due to a disturbance of the glands of internal secretion. That was my problem—and I am happy to say that I solved it—after many sleepless nights. My first cases were of the criminal class and several of them, killed under unpleasant circumstances, attracted the attention of the Secret Service. After that we were more careful of our cases and avoided any further notoriety. To put it briefly, I developed something like a serum. The dose was rather bulky at first and the serum needed at least three months to finish its work, but now five drops, given through a hypodermic needle, turns a black man white in twenty-four hours. In the case of an octoroon with regular features, the final result is perfect—almost too perfect. I often advise several weeks at the seashore to add a coat of tan.

"When we knew that we had a treatment that we could depend upon, we were able to advance more rapidly. All of our brilliantly educated men received the serum and were at once given positions of trust in the various corporations we owned. The women we treated were married to white men and used as spies, and it is only fair to state that not one of them in any way betrayed the trust we placed in them. Over a thousand of our comrades have been white for some time.

"We built this building and called it the Center Internationale. The first fifty floors are rented to the public but, from that level on, admission is only granted to our comrades. You will be interested in the use we make of these upper fifty floors. There are offices, laboratories and store rooms, and most important, our Temple, where two thousand of our race can worship or meet in our fortnightly consultations. We run our business according to the most approved methods: for example, we have over ten million of our race in America thoroughly card indexed.

"Naturally you will want to know something of our plans for social equality. While we do not encourage it, we have not taken any definite steps against intermarriages with the white race. If one of our intelligentsia is turned white and he wants to marry a white woman, we permit the marriage. Of course they have had and will have children of mixed blood



but our physicians inject one drop of serum into the child at birth and any tendency to develop pigment is at once checked. As I told you before, our converted white women are encouraged to marry into the Caucasian race so they can become spies. As our men and women are always wealthy, they have had no difficulty in contracting suitable marriages. For example, one of our women is the daughter-in-law of Mr. B. Bailey Biddle, the President of the New York Bankers' Association. As my interest is wholly with the development and use of the serum, I will stop talking and let some one else take over the story of our plans."

The first speaker now resumed the thread of conversation.

"Now you can understand, Mr. Jules Gerome, that, with unlimited gold at our command and a positive method of destroying the pigment in the skin, the only question remaining to be solved was how far we should go and whether we should take any steps to make the entire negro race white. This has been very carefully considered by the gentlemen you have met tonight, who are known in our organization as *The Powerful Ones*. Our final decision and the plans for putting them into operation will be explained to you at this time by our Mr. Koons."

And at once a dignified looking man, seated next to Mr. Morosco Acquino, began to tell his part of the plans.

"I WAS selected for this work, Mr. Gerome, because I had had some experience as an organizer. Several negro organizations, such as the one known to white folks as *The Sons and Daughters of I Will Arise*, owed their beginning and popularity to my efforts. Naturally it was not at all hard to weld the negroes of the United States into a compact, well functioning secret society, especially when they found that there was no expense attached to membership, but finally there would come a white skin and social equality. Our organization contains practically every negro in the States, well divided into small Lodges and each Lodge has either a physician, a dentist, or a nurse capable of giving a hypodermic. After we made up our minds to extend the benefit of a white skin to the entire negro race, it became necessary to prepare over ten million hypodermics, each loaded with the five drops of serum necessary to decolorize one person. These have been packed up into small packages, each bundle containing enough doses to care for the membership of one Lodge. Each bundle is carefully labeled. Their distribution begins to-morrow morning. We will allow enough time for all the packages to be delivered; then all over the States, on the last day of the year, these hypodermics will be emptied under the skins of ten million negroes. On the next day, the first of January, in town, city and country, on sugar plantation and stock-yard, our race in this part of the world will become white. Do you see the idea of choosing that day?"

"Indeed I do!" replied Gerome, enthusiastically. "It will be a new year, the first day of a new life for the race."

"That is partly correct, but remember that it was on this day that Lincoln issued the final decree of his famous Emancipation Proclamation, giving liberty to our race. On the same day we will give them white skins. Of course we cannot at this time fully realize the disturbance that this will cause those who think they are the actual rulers of this country. No doubt they will be considerably agitated. But what can they do? They cannot kill us: in a large proportion of the cases they will not even be able to recognize us, any more than they have been able to identify the thousand

of us in New York City. We expect some trouble and are prepared for it. In fact the fifty-first floor of this building is a carefully prepared arsenal. We have enough trench mortars and high explosives there to do so much damage that just the mere threat will make the leaders of this city willing to agree to any compromise.

"Once these millions of negroes are made white, we will start them in business. With white skins, unlimited capital and boundless ambition, they will easily secure control of the commerce of the nation. We will fill Congress with them. The whites will elect a President, a white President, but he will be one of our race. If a man can be elected a Senator by spending half a million, we can elect a President by spending two hundred million. With the States in our control we will go on and conquer the world."

"It is an ambitious programme," said Jules Gerome. "I am glad that I am considered worthy of having a part in its execution."

"One more thing," said the man who, up to that time had been silent. "I am the man who planned this building. Normally there is ample communication between the upper and the lower half, but by my side is a button. I press that button and that communication is destroyed. Every stairway is blocked, every elevator out of commission. At the present time there are over a thousand of our comrades worshipping in our temple. I press this button and they stay in the upper half till I press it again. They cannot even get out through the windows. We have enough food for a prolonged stay. Of course an army could eventually conquer us, but in doing so, it would destroy the richest part of the city. The point that I wanted to make is that when I press the button, as I am doing now, no one can either enter or leave this part of the building."

"How interesting," murmured Mr. Jules Gerome.

"And now," said the first speaker, "we have confided freely to you our hopes and ambitions. What is your opinion of the programme?"

"Stupendous!"

"Are there any questions you wish to ask us?"

"Yes. Why did you go so freely into all these details? It seemed to me that you wanted me to know all about everything."

"We wanted to tell you about it, because we were sure that you would never betray us."

"Your confidence in me touches me deeply."

"We know that you will never reveal anything to any of our enemies."

"I am pleased that you think so highly of my integrity."

"I am sure that the future will show us that we were not mistaken."

"Undoubtedly."

"Then we will go on with the evening's work. As you are a new brother, we wish to present you with a bouquet of flowers. Have you any choice?"

"None at all."

The man reached under the table and handed him some flowers.

"Then in the name of our cause, we, *The Powerful Ones* present you with a dozen red carnations.

Gerome took them with a slight bow.

"I thank you," he replied. "A very appropriate selection."

"We also wish to give you a small animal, a mascot, an emblem of our race." He clapped his hands and at the signal a subservient, whining Serbian entered the room and handed him a black puppy.

Mr. Jules Gerome took the trembling puppy in his hands, and rubbed his cold nose against his cheek.



Then he put it into the warm protection of his Tuxedo pocket.

"I thank you for the little fellow," he said softly. "I have always been fond of dogs, especially little ones. And now what?"

Just then a door opened and there entered the room . . .

GEROME heard the shuffling of footsteps behind him, but he did not turn his head to see who was there. Out of the corner of his eye he saw a hand coming over his shoulder, a large hand in a kid glove, and in the hand were two envelopes. These were dropped on the table in front of him. Gerome recognized them—one his report, the other the letter to his wife.

"The game is over, Mr. Taine," whispered a velvety voice in his ear.

"I am half inclined to agree with you," replied Taine of San Francisco, putting the two envelopes in his pocket.

Then the shuffling continued—toward the direction of the empty chair.

Taine looked straight in front of him, but Mr. Morosco Acquoin collapsed, almost fainting in his chair. He had seen the occupant of the chair before that person had come into the vision of Taine.

In fact Taine was thinking so fast and so hard that for a few seconds he was not looking at anything.

Then the velvety voice broke the silence.

"Mr. Taine, will you please look at me. I want to talk to you and it is difficult to talk to anyone who does not seem to pay attention. In fact I am not used to being ignored."

Taine took a deep breath, turned his face and looked at the occupant of the chair.

"Are you not rather surprised, Mr. Taine?"

"I certainly am," replied Taine, of San Francisco, and he really was.

For in the chair sat a woman—a well formed, rather beautiful woman, in a white satin gown, embroidered with pearls and spangles. She had on long white gloves, which reached above her elbows, but the upper arms were bare.

A golden coronet set with diamonds circled her brow.

But the thing that had surprised Taine was not her sex, but her color.

She was jet black. She smiled at Taine, and for the first time in his life, Taine was afraid. Then she started to talk.

"All great organizations, Mr. Taine, must have a religion to hold their units together. We recognized this early in our history and as even the best of us were only a few hundred years from Africa, we decided that some type of Voodoo worship would appeal most to our followers. Of course nominally we are Catholics, or Episcopalians or Baptists, but when we worship in the Temple, we bow down before the serpent and I am proud to be the High Priestess. Our particular representation of the God is over thirty feet long, and at present is restless and rather hungry. It is a species of boa constrictor; you will recall that they do not bite, but slowly squeeze their morsel of food and then swallow it whole. This particular boa is very fond of detectives, having developed that taste, from the fact that fate made it possible for him to swallow four in the last two years. Naturally, with a hungry divinity, it is the duty of his Priestess to satisfy that hunger, and we will try to do so to-night. The first part of our worship is drawing to a close but there are still some ceremonies to be attended to before we show the snake to his people and appease his appetite—for detectives. We will ask you to walk

into the adjoining bathroom and remain there. When we are ready for you we will call you. You will find the window securely barred. The revolver you have in your pocket is useless, your valet having filled it to-day with blank cartridges. I trust that you will occupy your time well—you might take a bath—Ourebours always likes his food clean."

"Just one moment before I go," said Taine. "I am not a very well educated man, and I may not see this thing clearly, but I want to say a few things that happened to come to me as I sat here this evening listening to you talk. In the first place, Madam, I want to ask you a question—When you had the ability to become white, why have you stayed black?"

The woman laughed.

"Why should I want to be white—when I hate them so? I appreciate the way my brethren feel about it—perhaps I would feel that way had I a drop of white blood in my body, but as far as I know I am black—and I am so proud of that as though I were born white. I hate the white race—I want to crush them—I am willing to do all I can to make the black race white, if that is what most of them want, but personally I am perfectly satisfied with my color. I hate white people too much to be one myself."

"You need not worry, Madam," replied Taine, coolly. "Because you have shown me to-night something that I always felt, and am now sure of. Your race can change the color of their skins but they cannot change the color of their souls. No matter how white they may become, they will always remain black inside. When the tom-tom sounded a while ago these white men of education and refinement and wealth swayed in their chairs and inside them their souls fell at your feet to worship you and your snake. I have seen that sort of thing on the Congo. A sea of whitewash cannot change you. The race was made black and will stay black."

"It is not for me to say that you have not been wronged. No doubt you have, for thousands of years, but two wrongs never made a right and if you are trying to get what is due you, you are working in the wrong way to solve the problem. You are not really trying for justice, but for revenge. You may turn the black man white but ultimately he will remain—just—a—nigger."

"I ought to kill you for that last word—but I do not want to take away the pleasure my followers have looked forward to all fall. Gentlemen, see that Mr. Taine is securely locked in the bathroom, but do not tie him in any way. I want him to take a bath if he cares to."

Taine walked around the table to Mr. Acquoin.

"I am sorry your plans did not work out according to your dreams. Be sure to give my kind regards to Florabella and tell her that being a detective is a hard life, even at the best."

Then he took Dr. Semon's arm and walked to the bathroom. As he entered, he turned and looked at the black woman.

"I remember you now, Madam. Ever since I saw you I knew that I had seen you before, sometime in my past. You used to be called Ebony Kate, in the old days of San Francisco, before the fire. You were wise in not trying the serum. If they injected a barrel of it into you, they couldn't change the color of your skin or of your soul."

"I suppose," said the woman, smiling, "that you are trying to get me to kill you right now. Shoot you or strangle you. You are trying to see if you can make me mad. Well you fail. That's what you do. So shut the door and think about things while you have time and when ready, we will come for you."



Taine went into the room and they locked the door behind him.

HE walked noiselessly around the little room, apparently deep in thought but in reality making a careful examination of every detail of the room's construction. He was still occupied with this task when he saw the door open. The woman he had called Ebony Kate stood in the doorway.

"I just had to come back, Mr. Taine. I just couldn't go on with it, without giving you a chance. The other men were cowards, but you—anyone could see that you don't know what fear is. You is just the man I've been alooking for. I wants you and wants you bad. Our Doctor has another drug and we have tried it enough to know that it works. It turns a white man black—black like I am. You take the serum and come and live with me. I am tired of this game here and I'll be glad to quit. I can buy any place you want—a whole island in the Pacific if you say so—youse and I would be Gods among those islanders. That's what I came back to offer you—all the gold you want, and me."

"Why not go and buy a black man?"

"I don't want that kind. I'se want a man which has a white man's mind and a black man's skin. I has lived for three years monst these converted blacks and the dope didn't do a thing to their souls. You ought to see how they act—down in the temple—when snakey and me puts on our show. White? Why the only thing white about them is their skins. You take a shot and pull out with me."

"It is my personal opinion," replied Taine, "that you do not know what you want or what is good for you any more than the others do. The only thing I admire in you is your desire to stay as God made you—and your nerve. It must take a lot of nerve for you to pull off that kind of a show—and get away with it."

The woman turned and walked to the door of the large room, the one with the mahogany table in it. Just before she passed through the doorway, she turned.

"Quite natural for you to turn me down—but I was meaning it. Of course I might have known—after you saw that I was Ebony Kate—I might have known then that it was useless for me to come back. Still, you give me credit for trying to save your life, and I could have done it—been an easy job to pick up a white man to take your place. Make yourself comfortable. I am going to lock you in here instead of the bathroom—youse can't get out anyway. Goodbye—youse can't blame anyone for this 'cept yourself."

"Oh, that is all right. A word of advice. Why not learn to talk good English when you are excited instead of that horrible dialect?"

Instead of answering, the woman shut and locked the door.

Taine went over to the door and tested it. No doubt about it being locked. Then he went over and sat down at the table, in the chair where the main speaker of the evening had sat. Taine started to think out loud.

"Just as well that I won't make a report. No one would believe me—think I was insane. What a story! This is a great life—if you don't weaken. A lot of those thousand may be in earnest, but I judge that the leaders are a lot of high class criminals—well educated—but none the less crooks—smart, though—look at the way they played with me—told me everything and knew all the time it was perfectly safe. By the Seven Sacred Caterpillars! Here is a telephone right at my elbow. Hullo! Give me Rhinelander 100—Is this police headquarters? Hell! That was Dr. Semon

talking to me. Might have known they were just playing with me."

He looked at the table. There was something about a button. If the man pressed a button no one could leave the upper half of the building. Now if only he could press that button, and then tear the wire—he would have them all prisoners even if they did kill him—and there was—no! not one button, but ten, in a row—all alike. He looked at them carefully, moving his chair closer to the table—and as he did so, his toe struck a projection—under the thick carpet.

Pulling the carpet to one side he saw a circular plate. What he had struck with his toe was the iron handle in the center of the plate. When he lifted the plate he simply saw a hole, with sides of polished metal. It was hard to tell how deep the tube was or where it ended. It was even difficult to imagine where it ended. Taine took a silver dollar out of his pocket and tossed it in. A whining sound came from the void which grew fainter till it ended in silence.

"I think I will try it!" exclaimed Taine. "Anything is better than to stay here. But first I will load my revolver. That was a good idea to carry some cartridges in my shoe heel. . . . Now that is done. . . . I feel better. I am willing to take any chance to keep that snake from eating this poor little puppy sleeping so calmly in my pocket—I personally do not think they have a snake large enough to eat a man—but a dog—that is different. Now if only I could tell which button to press. Suppose I press them all? Press them all and then jump into the tube; and jump quick too—no telling what will happen if I press all ten. I would like to stay here and see just what does happen, but I feel that no matter what is at the other end of the tube, I am safer there—than here. I will press every button, throw the table to one side, tearing all the wires from the buttons and then Fido and I will see what is at the other end of the tube."

He pressed against each button—firmly.

Then he turned the table over, tearing the copper wires away from the buttons.

Then he went, feet first, into the polished tube.

He went down, but it was not unpleasant.

He had an idea that he was going around in a spiral.

Suddenly he dropped out on a well padded floor—into a well lighted room. It was evidently a bedroom. A mulatto girl in maid's dress sat sewing by a dressing table. Taine had her covered with his revolver a second before she saw him.

"Who lives here?" he asked, in a whisper.

"Madam Octavia," she replied, shaking with fright.

"The black woman?"

"Yes."

Making her go in front of him, he walked over to a window and ordered her to open it. He saw that they were on the second floor. Several blocks away the illumined spire of the Center Internationale rose towering in graceful bulk toward the foggy sky.

And even as he looked, a dull roar made the floor shake under Taine's feet. Fire burst out like a volcano from the middle of the hundred story building. The upper fifty stories writhed in a useless effort to leap into the air, trembled, and then fell, crumpling, twisting, turning like a tortured, dying animal—fell slowly—down—down—until it came to rest in the ruins of the buildings it crushed in its doom.

Taine shivered.

The mulatto, unconscious, lay at his feet.

The black puppy whined in the Tuxedo pocket and rubbed his wet nose against Taine's hand.

The San Francisco detective walked out of the apartment and down to the ground. As fast as he could, he



walked away from that part of the city. In fact he went back to the apartment that had been his home for all those months of life as Mr. Jules Gerome. He was not afraid of his valet—in fact he very correctly judged that he would not have any trouble with him—just now.

From the apartment, he telephoned to Mr. Biddle and to Gray, Chief of the Secret Service of the city. They came to see him, and listened to his story. As they listened, they looked at the puppy, eagerly lapping cream from a saucer of solid gold.

"And now," said Taine, finishing, "if you have no objections, I will take an express for San Francisco. I have been away so long from my family that I naturally am quite anxious to see them. You can send me a check for any sum you think the job was worth to you."

## CHAPTER II

### The Gold Ship

#### FRANCE HAS OFFERED TO PAY HER ENTIRE DEBT."

That announcement, made to the Cabinet by the President of the United States, was certainly sufficient cause for the ripple of suppressed surprise and excitement that the gentlemen of that body showed. Yet these officials remained silent, for it was evident that the President had not finished with his announcement. After a rather deliberate pause, he continued:

"IN ADDITION SHE HAS OFFERED TO ASSUME AND PAY THE ENTIRE DEBT OF ALL THE ALLIES AND OF GERMANY TO THE UNITED STATES."

And still the Cabinet remained quiet.

"IF WE ACCEPT THE PROPOSITION MADE BY FRANCE, NOT ONE NATION IN THE WORLD WILL OWE THE UNITED STATES ONE DOLLAR."

The Cabinet, now feeling at liberty, started a bombardment of questions.

"What are their conditions?" asked the Secretary of Commerce.

"Where are they going to get the money?" snapped the Attorney-General.

"There's a nigger in the woodpile!" exclaimed the Secretary of Agriculture, who was from Arkansas, and though very brilliant, reverted to the homely language of the Ozarks when he became excited.

"I am unable to answer your question," said the President. "All I know is that we have received this offer from the French Government, sent through their Ambassador, to our Secretary of State. They propose to pay the entire debt at once in gold. All they want is our statement of willingness to accept their proposition. We have communicated with Great Britain and Italy, and all we can find out is that they have agreed to let France pay their debt to us on terms and conditions that they do not care to tell us. Evidently they think that so long as we are paid, the details of the agreement between them and France are not our affair. I have called this conference for an answer. What shall we say to France? First I want the Secretary of the Treasury to tell us just what such a payment will mean to us."

The gentleman called on took his time before beginning to speak. He deliberately lit a cigarette and took several puffs before he broke the silence. At last he said:

"No one can tell what will happen when a debt of over fourteen billion is paid at one time. I say no one can tell, because it has never been done before. It is true that we were able to place the world under

such an obligation to us, but we took years to do it and much of it represents foodstuffs and munitions of war. We did not expect that debt would ever be paid. In truth, we did not really want it to be paid: merely wanted the world to remember that it owed it to us and would make an honest attempt to pay the interest. The French government proposes to pay the entire sum at one time in bar gold. Such a transaction would put practically all the gold of the world at our command. It would enable us to pay all the obligations of the government, retire all our bonds, solve the Mississippi flood problem, pay all the debt that the various states have contracted and do a few other things. It would create an age of prosperity: everyone would be able to sell all he has, either in goods or labor. And we would have to be very careful about the entire matter, so as to avert a panic, for at the end of such a panic a group of very rich and unscrupulous men would grow up over night. Personally, I cannot see how we can refuse the offer. At the same time, I am very much afraid of the consequences. It will make us the richest and at once the best hated nation in the world. No doubt our army and navy would have to be greatly enlarged."

The Cabinet talked the matter over and seemed to be able to arrive at no positive decision. Finally, the Postmaster General asked:

"The thing I want to know is, where does this gold come from?"

"I was expecting that question," replied the Secretary of the Treasury, "and to be perfectly frank, I do not know. There is a great deal of gold in the world, gold that has been buried and lost. After the Franco-Prussian War, France paid a large sum collected from the stockings of the French peasants. But no one knew that France had enough to pay the debt of the world to the United States."

"Make them tell us where they got it!" said the gentleman from Arkansas.

"That is hardly a question for one gentleman or nation to ask another," replied the President.

"No," agreed the Secretary of State. "But we could find out."

At this point, the Secretary of War stood up and asked for the undivided attention of all those present.

"Last year, you will recall, there was a terrific explosion in New York City which destroyed the largest building there and killed over a thousand of the richest citizens. I was called upon to send some troops to aid in policing the city, for the excitement, especially among the colored population, was very intense. I personally assumed charge of some of the details. I heard some very interesting things. Of course they may just have been rumors; I had no way of investigating them at that time. I do know, however, that the financiers were greatly disturbed over certain phases of the situation. There seemed to be a large amount of unexplained wealth pouring into the city. The President of the New York Bankers' Association knew the details, but he was suffering from the loss of a beloved daughter-in-law at the time and I did not want to disturb him. There may be some connection between that disturbance and this question: in each instance, there seems to be a large amount of gold from some unknown source."

"What was the final result in New York?" asked the President.

"Nobody seems to know—but in this explosion practically all the parties under suspicion were killed and their building and records destroyed. Of course the Secret Service of the Atlantic Coast took all the credit, but I understand that it was really a detective from San Francisco who deserved all the credit. In some



way he was connected with the explosion, and, while no blame was directly attached to him, still he left the city as soon as he could. In fact, he only made a verbal report, and a very short one at that. Everyone was so excited that they let him go. Of course the Secret Service knows him—"

"I WOULD suggest, Mr. President," interrupted the gentleman from Arkansas, "that we delay answering this offer till we have a chance to get the man from San Francisco to tell us what he knows about the New York affair."

Everyone agreed that this was the wise course to follow and the Cabinet adjourned. Before they left, however, the President impressed on them the necessity of keeping the entire matter strictly a secret. He was afraid that even a rumor might cause a sharp disturbance in the stock market.

So, through various channels, the message was sent to Taine.

That gentleman was somewhat gloomy when he entered the office of the Chief of the Secret Service in San Francisco.

"I have good news for you, Taine," said the Chief.

Taine started to smile, as he replied:

"Have you decided to accept my resignation?"

"Resignation nothing! Orders for you to go to Washington to see the President."

"If it has anything to do with that New York affair, I quit—right now. Nothing more than that would be needed for me to quit—pension or no pension. There was a girl there, Florabella was her name, and she used some kind of a perfume—it hung to me like a lost soul—and Mrs. Taine did not like it—that is, she liked it well enough to be hunting for it ever since for her personal use—and she did not like to think of another woman using it around me. One more perfumed woman and my happy home becomes a harpie's Hell. You let me stay here and work with the bootleggers and Chinamen. Send somebody else to Washington."

The Chief shook his head.

"Nothing doing. This telegram says that they want you and no one else. You haven't lost your morale, have you?"

"Oh! My morale is all right, but I haven't any enthusiasm left after that New York experience. I have shot gunmen in my life. They had a gun and I had a gun and I got them before they got me—but this other affair in New York was different. Of course I cannot ever be positive—that is, I cannot be sure that I killed those thousand people in the hundred story building, but I do know that I pressed those buttons and in about two minutes Hell broke out in that part of town."

"But they were going to kill you!"

"Maybe so—maybe so. We shall never know about that. Personally, I doubt that the snake was large enough to swallow a man. Of course, there might be one big enough, but how could they make the snake do it on request—before a thousand people? That part seems unreasonable. It might have been a mechanical snake. How about that?"

"Well, they are all dead now. There is nothing more to be afraid of as far as they are concerned."

"Looks that way: but perhaps the leaders escaped. None of the bodies were identified—there might have been some way of escape. That was a smart bunch of crooks, Chief, and they made me feel like a prune. Oh! They were going to kill me some way, and I don't want a second dose of their medicine."

But the Chief insisted that Taine would have to go to Washington.

And it ended in Taine's saying goodbye to his family and a little black dog. Once again he started eastward, knowing nothing about the problem except that he was to see the President of the United States.

HE was met at the Union Station by a "plain-clothes" man and from there he was taken to the White House. Soon he was ushered into the President's office and introduced to that gentleman and the Cabinet members, and seated at the President's right.

"Mr. Taine," said the Secretary of the Treasury, "we understand that you were working in New York at the time of the explosion of the Center International. In fact, it is stated that you were one of the prominent figures, perhaps the most prominent one, connected with that problem. We want you to tell us about it—just the main outline of the story now."

"There is not much to tell," said Taine, modestly. "There was a group of negroes who called themselves '*The Powerful Ones*.' It was their idea that they could turn the whole colored race white, and somehow they had enough wealth to at least think of buying the whole of New York City. I met the ringleaders the night of the explosion and they told me a good deal of what they were going to do in the future—you see they thought they were going to kill me that night, so they figured that it was perfectly safe to tell me."

"Did they tell you where they got their wealth?" asked the President.

"Yes, from the ocean. They said they had a ship with a twelve-inch tube running through it. The ocean water ran in one end and through a laboratory and out the other end, and they took the gold out of it, at least, that is what they said. It seems they had an expert chemist doing the work for them."

"That does not seem possible," replied the President. "There is no gold in sea water. Suppose we send for one of the chemists from the Department of Agriculture. We might as well settle that part of the problem now."

The chemist was sent for. In the meanwhile, he President passed the cigars around. Taine refused.

"I do not smoke, thank you," he said; "the tobacco injures the enamel of the teeth and once that is injured the teeth soon decay: then the destruction is irreparable."

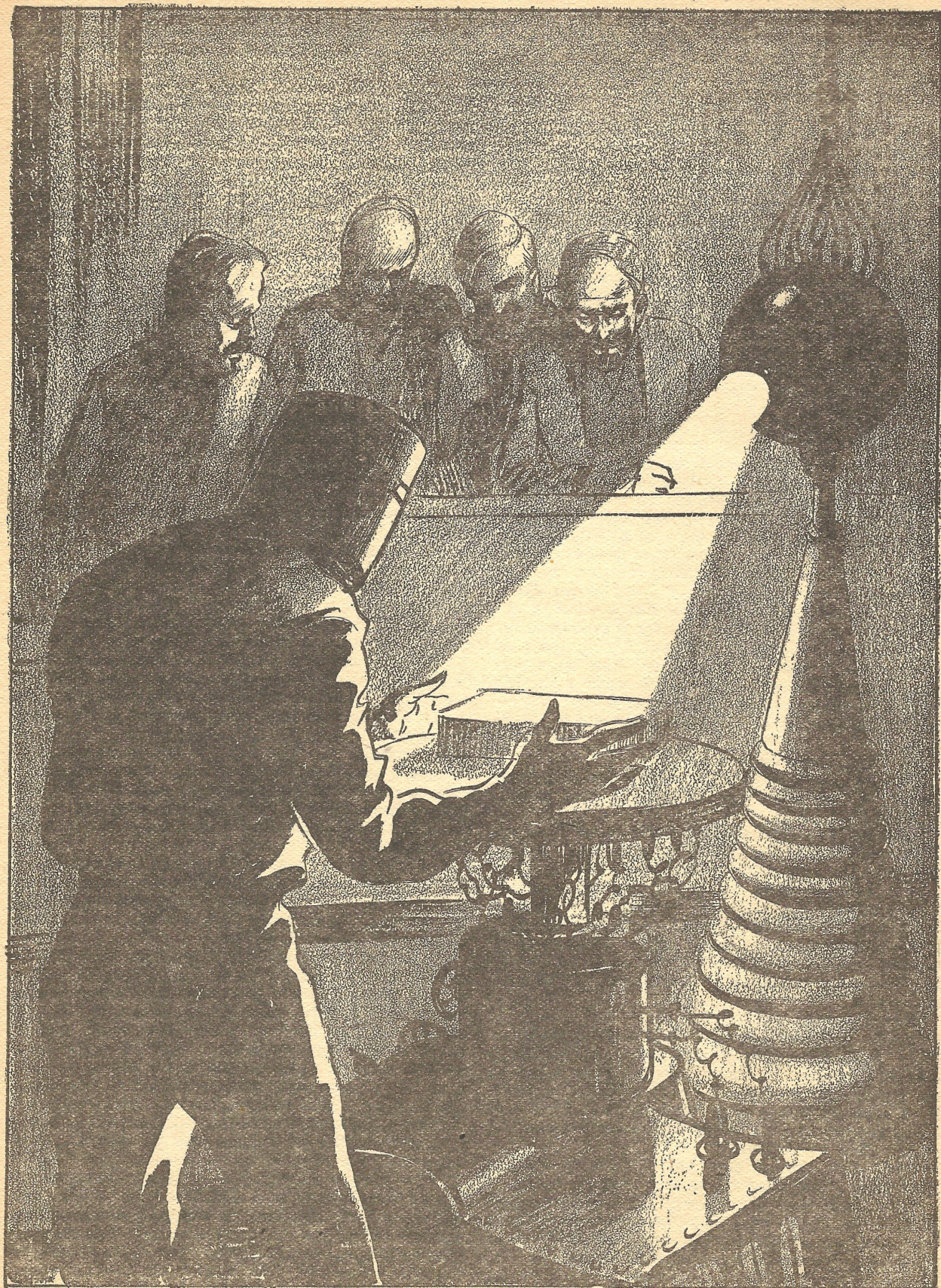
The chemist was a wrinkled old man who had spent his lifetime pouring various different reagents into test tubes in order to see and smell the results. He lost no time in answering their question, and snorted disdainfully at such ignorance.

"I thought that everybody knew there was gold in sea water. It is in the form of gold chloride and is present to the extent of one millionth of one per cent. Certainly it can be extracted by electrolysis, but it would cost five hundred dollars for every dollar's worth of gold you would get. Lots of people have tried to invent a cheap process, but it has never been done on a successful commercial basis. Anything else? If not, I'll be hurrying back to the laboratory."

"Just one minute, Professor," interrupted the Secretary of War. "Do you suppose that the time will come when man will discover how to make gold?"

"Now you are talking about something interesting," replied the old man, in a sprightly tone. "When you go into alchemy you turn an everyday chemist into a dreamer of dreams. For thousands of years chemists have been trying to do just that. Dr. Dee and Edward Kelly described the exact process in thirteen steps. Athotas the Mysterious was always able to supply his needs and taught the art of making gold to his pupil and friend Cagliostro. They either made the gold or





*Finally they made something that looked like gold, only it could be changed back to mercury and lead.  
It was amusing to watch them play with it after they once found out how to do it.*



were able to cause others to believe, they made it. The arguments pro and con are difficult—it is not a question of chemistry. It goes into metaphysics and philosophy.”

“Please, Professor, stop talking so much and tell me this: Do you think that it will ever be done? Have you ever met anyone who thought he could do it?”

“No, it will never be done—that is, I do not think it will ever be done. But I had a young man working under me some years ago who did a good deal of work in that line. In fact, he seemed to be of a rather extraordinary intelligence for a negro. He knew a lot about metals, but we had to discharge him—caught him pilfering one day—pity though, because he really was a wonderful metallurgist. I think his idea was that if he could only divide the atom into electrons and protons and then put enough of these together in the right proportion, he could make gold. He did make something that looked like gold, but it wasn’t. I tried to get his confidence, but he was suspicious of me; anyway, he left before anything definite was established. Since then, I have been so busy working with corn rust and one thing and another, that I have not had time to do any work on gold, let alone think about alchemy. Why, men go mad if they think too much about it.”

“You can return to your laboratory, Professor. Thank you very much,” said the President. After the old man had gone, the Chief Executive turned to his Cabinet.

“This has been a profitable meeting, gentlemen. I am neither a scientist nor a detective, but I believe we are beginning to see the light. There is a gold ship, but it does not take the gold out of the ocean. It is simply a floating laboratory and the chemist is no doubt the negro who was discharged for stealing from the Professor. He is one of this group of criminal negroes and he supplied the gold they were going to buy New York with. Failing in their plans to turn the negroes in America white, he and his confederates have in some way induced the European nations to let them pay the debt. Perhaps they asked for social equality in return. But I doubt England’s willingness to grant that. They will pay the debt, in gold, and then they will combine and make some other metal, like platinum, the standard. They will refuse to trade with us unless we accept the same standard, which will ruin us commercially. Our gold will be valueless and it will take us years, maybe centuries, before we could resume our place in the world. We could not even use a gold standard in America, if it became known that gold could be made like sugar or alcohol. If we accept the offer, we will be ruined; if we refuse, we will invite the ridicule of the world and perhaps a devastating war. What is your suggestion?”

“I believe,” replied the Secretary of State, “that we should accept the offer, conditionally: that is, we will accept it when it is delivered in New York City. Suggest that the gold ship be guarded on its voyage by a combined fleet of warships from all the nations.”

“But I thought we did not want the gold!” said the Secretary of the Treasury.

“We don’t, but it would never do to say so outright. We will accept this offer, but the gold ship will sink on the way over.”

“Excuse me,” said Taine of San Francisco, “but how do you know it will?”

“I know, because you are going to sink it—on a clear day, with a calm sea—you will sink it and not a single person will be drowned. Then you are going to spend your spare time in hunting up this gold maker and put him out of business.”

The statement caused the greatest excitement.

Everybody talked at once—that is, everybody except Taine. He simply stared at the man who had proposed such a programme. The Cabinet members, however, seemed to feel that this was a very favorable solution to the problem.

“But how am I to do that?” Taine asked.

The President threw away his cigar and coughed rather nervously before he replied.

“You will use your own discretion, Mr. Taine. I do not think it would be wise for any of us to know just what you do or how you are doing it. All we want is results—yes—that is all—results. We will help you all we can and you can call on any of the departments for aid in any way. You just go and sink that ship on the way over—and sink it deep. I understand there is one place where the ocean is five miles deep—that would be the place of our choice.”

“It is a wonderful opportunity to serve your country, Mr. Taine,” said the Secretary of State.

“And just think,” interpolated the Postmaster General, “you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have done something that no other man in the world has ever done before.”

“I never thought of that,” said Taine. “That will be of great help to me when I am going down with the ship, five miles down.”

“Ah! You don’t get the idea,” growled the man from Arkansas. “Use your imagination, man! After the ship goes down, you swim to the U. S. battleship and get saved. How do you suppose you are going to finish the job if you get drowned when it is only half done?”

“Got any more suggestions?” asked Mr. Taine, of San Francisco.

“Not one,” replied the President. “I will see that you are at once provided with all necessary credentials, and all details of every kind can be attended to by the Chief of the United States Secret Service. That entire service is at your command. You can draw on the Treasury for any sums you deem necessary. We will assign as many of our operators to help you as you require. The entire resources of the Government are at your disposal secretly—but under no circumstances can we openly assist you. If you succeed, you will find that your reward will be commensurate with the gravity of the undertaking, and now we will adjourn and I beg of you one and all, to observe the strictest secrecy in regard to the entire affair.”

Taine went directly from the White House to the laboratories of the Department of Agriculture. There he spent several hours with the old Professor. The next day he visited the Secretary of the Treasury and talked over finances and some other details. He immediately left for Cornell University where his letters of introduction placed the entire department of Metallurgy at his disposal and brought to that college the most brilliant specialists from the Westinghouse Electrical Company. This act also involved consultations with men from the Naval Department and Cramp’s Ship Yards in Philadelphia. Following all this Taine disappeared.

THE Secretary of State, acting for the United States and for the President, wrote to the European nations, through proper channels, that their offer to pay the war debt was accepted, with thanks. He asked that the gold be concentrated at some port in France, placed on a battleship and be escorted to New York by a fleet composed of battleships of all the nations. At New York it would be weighed, and the representatives of the allied nations would at once be given their receipts.

Some weeks after this communication had been sent



and acknowledged, the Ambassador from Great Britain called at the White House, by appointment, to eat breakfast with the President and the Secretary of State. The Ambassador was a tall, white haired aristocrat, with a hooked nose, and a decided limp (his leg having been broken during the World's War). While somewhat unused to such fare, he seemed to enjoy the buckwheat cakes, honey, soft boiled eggs, broiled mackerel, lamb chops, doughnuts and coffee. In fact, the occasion caused him to slightly loosen both his coat and his dignity. The waiters were dismissed and then the President said:

"Well?"

The Ambassador almost smiled.

"Of course all this is strictly informal, Gentlemen, but at the same time you can rely on me as representing my Government in what I say. We could not at this time deliberately insult all of Europe, so we were forced to accept the offer of this group of rich men who proposed to underwrite the entire war debt. All we asked was that the gold we were to pay the United States, our share of the debt to you, be brought to London, and be there repacked before it was taken to France for the final shipment. This was agreed to by the powers, and the gold is in London at the present time.

"Blood is thicker than water, and my Government did not fancy the looks of the transaction. We found that some of the nations had granted large pieces of land to these financiers, but even worse than that, several of the powers had secretly promised social and political equality to any of the negro race that might settle in their country. Fancy that!

"We wanted to pay you if the other nations did, and all these people asked of us was an issue of two per cent. long term bonds, but we just felt there was something wrong with that gold. Because we could not find out what was wrong with it, did not make us feel any easier about it. For this reason my Government decided to keep the gold they had borrowed and send over our own gold from our reserve. It took just about all we had on the island to do it, but we finally raised the amount and we know that it is all real gold. Next month we are going to send it to France—and we just wanted you to know that we did the right thing. The friendship between the two great nations of the world is far more precious than a few billions in gold, and if there is anything wrong with the gold we borrowed, we wanted to be the ones to suffer. I wish to state also that we have been approached with the proposition that platinum be made the monetary standard in place of gold. So far we have been non-committal in our answer, as we could not imagine the reason for thinking of such a change, when gold has been the standard for so many years."

The President tried to control his feelings, but it was some time before he could reply.

"That is a splendid way for your Government to act. For weeks we have been distressed over this affair and our worry was increased by the knowledge that Great Britain was a party to the transaction. Your statement this morning shows me that no matter what happens, we can depend upon your friendship. I trust that the two nations will always remain in harmony about the great things in the life of this world, and together try to keep the world in peace and, at least in outward harmony."

Soon after, the Ambassador left. The President and the Secretary of State remained seated, looking strangely at each other. Finally the President broke the silence:

"Have you any idea where Taine is?"

"Not the least. He has just disappeared."

"As I remember it we instructed him to sink the gold ship."

"Exactly."

"Of course we did not know at that time what we know now."

"We certainly did not."

"If he sinks the ship now, it will take with it those billions of actual gold from the banks of Great Britain."

"It will. Of course it will."

"There may be something wrong with some of the gold but this from London will be sunk."

"Yes."

"It will be lost. No good to them or to us. Better find Taine and tell him to leave that ship alone. We can take chances on anything rather than have England think that we have been false to her."

"I'll try to find Taine—but—I have tried for some weeks to locate him and he is gone. Do you think we ought to notify France to be on her guard because we have found a plot to sink the ship."

"We cannot do that without giving them some reason. But Taine cannot sink the ship without being near it or on it. Suppose we send a dozen men from San Francisco, who have worked with him, to France. If they find him, we can at least ascertain how far he has gone with his plans."

This seemed such a good idea to both of them that a telegram was despatched to San Francisco, and eight detectives were rushed across the continent and over to France on the fastest cruiser. They did their best—and failed.

**I**N the meantime a fleet of warships were gathering in the harbor of Bordeaux to act as a convoy for the French steamer which was to carry the golden treasure over to the United States. Most of the nations were only represented by one battleship but Great Britain, France and the United States each had two armed and floating fortresses. The treasure was placed in the middle of the ship in a specially constructed strong room. It was placed in small boxes, each holding two hundred pounds of gold and on the outside of each box was a number and the name of the nation it was from.

On the steamer were representatives of each nation and in addition several of the small group of bankers who had advanced the loan to the allied nations and Germany. These representatives were under instructions to stay with the gold till it was accepted and receipted for by the Treasury of the United States.

While this was a financial transaction absolutely unique in the history of the world, it had been kept such a close secret that the newspapers could only guess what was behind the gathering of dignitaries and battleships in Bordeaux.

The gentlemen, who were to make the voyage together tried to be ostensibly friendly with each other but instinctively broke up into the little groups, Baltic, Mediterranean, Slavic. They were all friendly to the bankers headed by the unknown and enigmatic Count Sebastian. They believed that any group of financiers who could underwrite such a loan, had unlimited funds in reserve, and each man had been instructed by his country to make the best of the voyage and endeavor to secure additional loans for the financing of another war.

Count Sebastian was a striking man in many ways. His deadly white skin stamped him as a recluse, one who spent hours in study out of the sunshine. Yet he was strong, well built and seemingly a young man, even though his hair was snow white. His three partners on the ship were all aristocrats in appearance and



strikingly like him in many ways. They all had white hair. They were all educated and possessed a maximum of culture. It seemed to the English representative that they resembled the average Oxford graduate in many ways.

Just a few days before the day set for leaving Bordeaux, Count Sebastian astonished the French Government by announcing that his group of bankers had invited several ladies to make the trip as their guests, and that the two married bankers would bring their wives with them as chaperones. He suggested that the French and Italian representatives take their wives and daughters, if possible, and especially invited the daughter of the President of France to make the trip as the guest of their syndicate. Apparently the trip was to be a social one in many ways. The idea pleased the nations so much, that by the time the gold ship and its convoy of battleships left the French port, over thirty ladies were on board to make the voyage one long to be remembered.

No one knew just why this suggestion to take the ladies with them had been proposed by the group headed by Count Sebastian. Even his three associates had been surprised when he made his final statement in regard to it, but for several years they had obeyed him in every detail, having learned that by doing so they were sure to be successful in every venture.

The real reason for the decision was the fact that three weeks before the ship sailed Count Sebastian had met a lady. This was not at all unusual for one of the richest men in the world and a bachelor. The unusual part about this lady was that she was rich, had wonderful jewels, a past full of rumor and mystery and, finally, she did not care at all whether she ever saw the Count again or not. In fact, for the first week of their acquaintance, the only time the Count could even see her was at the theater or restaurant.

There were a thousand women in France who would have been nice to the Count had they the opportunity, and it was for this reason that he was driven to desperation by the coldness of this unknown stranger. Of course he wanted what he could not get: and, try as he could, this particular lady seemed to be particularly unattainable.

During the second week of their acquaintance, she permitted him to take her out riding, accompanied by her maid. After this she allowed him to come to her table at the restaurant one evening and share a bottle of wine with her. At the beginning of the third week, with the sailing of the gold ship but six days distant, he took her out riding again and, maid or no maid, proposed marriage to her.

She started to cry.

The maid started to cry.

But when the Count left her at her hotel, she whispered a request that he call on her that evening. Feeling that success was just within his grasp, he prepared for the call by purchasing an elegant solitaire and a necklace of matchless pearls.

She was waiting for him in the small parlor of her suite in the hotel. He was also astonished to find her dressed in the veiled habit of the Hindoos. Without waiting for any questions, she asked him to be seated.

"I do not want you to think, Count Sebastian, that I am not fully aware of the honor you showed me this afternoon by asking me to become your wife. I cried merely because I felt that you would regret your decision when you learned all about me. It was for that reason that I asked you to call on me to-night. My father was French, an adventurer, while my mother was a Malay. Of course they are considered Caucasians, but three generations back there was colored blood in my father's family and no matter how you

look at it, I am not a white woman. We are wealthy. I suppose that my father and mother have no real idea how much they are worth. They wanted me to come to France, pose as a one hundred per cent white woman, marry a white man, and forget them. When I first met you, I thought that the opportunity had come, but when I saw how devoted you were to me, I could not think of living such a lie—and though it ends in separation—better that, than a life of fraud."

THE Count knelt beside her and kissed her hand. "My dear lady," he whispered, "you have worried yourself to death and all absolutely without reason. I love you and I am going to keep on loving you. Your ancestry makes no difference to me—because I am a colored man myself."

"What?" said the astonished woman.

"Exactly that. My associates are all colored. Only some years ago we took a special treatment that gave us white skins. I will tell you all about that some day. We hoped to turn the race white—but something went wrong with our plans. If you are a negro, so am I. Your skin is white and mine is too. We have both been honest. Now, will you marry me?"

"But, Count, you are going to America in a few days. You have told me that it is the end of one of your greatest business transactions. You must forget me till you return from New York."

"Why cannot you come with me—on the boat?"

"How would that look? The only woman! Surely that would not be proper."

"But suppose there should be other women? Would you come if I invited twenty or thirty others?"

"That would be different, but do you think they would treat me as their equal, socially?"

"I am sure they will. You leave that to me, and prepare for the trip. Now, will you let me put this ring on your finger?"

In answer she extended her left hand, well covered with jewels, but with the left hand ring finger bare. The engagement ring was tenderly placed on it, accompanied by many kisses. Then the rope of pearls was examined with many exclamations of delight, and finally an engagement was made and a hurried trip to Paris planned to select a wardrobe suitable for the trip to America.

It was after this evening that the Count invited the other ladies, much to the displeasure of his associates. One of them did not hesitate to express himself, one night before they sailed.

"You know as well as I do, George, that we decided years ago that the less we had to do with women—that is, permanently—the better it would be for our plans. We broke that rule when we took Ebony Kate, and look what happened! Of course she helped hold the boys together, but I always will believe that in some way she was to blame for that explosion. Of course she was killed, and nearly everybody else except a few of us who were lucky enough to be in the vault when it happened. She and a thousand of our best men were just blown to pieces and our plans smashed with them. If we had done as we always did, we would have killed the man right away instead of waiting for the vaudeville in the temple. In consequence, he got the jump on us, and we were just lucky to escape with our lives. You let this bunch of skirts alone. Have all the women you want, but don't think of marrying one. Wait till we get through. We want nothing now but revenge and a place in the sun for our race. After we put over our programme there will be time enough for the luxuries of life."

Count Sebastian heard his friend through without interruption and without irritation.



"What you say is true, Marcus, but unfortunately, in this instance, I am really in love. I hate the white race as much as you do and have given the best years of my life to their ultimate humiliation. Perhaps we should have been better off without Kate, but you know as well as I do, that every black man we brought to New York was converted to our cause after spending one evening in the Temple. I don't know yet what caused the explosion. Of course we blame it on that man Taine, but there is such a thing as spontaneous combustion. I am sure that Kate was killed—that is all passed and gone—let's forget it. We still have the brains of the movement. I do not believe there is a bit of harm in the entire body or mind of this lady I am in love with. She is in sympathy with us—in fact, she has made me promise not to press marriage until this part of the programme is finished. As soon as the gold is delivered, we will all board the laboratory ship in New York Harbor and disappear for a while. She will go with me as my wife. She has dark blood in her and has been well educated. In our future work she will be a help to us."

"How do you know so much about her, George?"

"She told me!"

"Are you going to believe all she said to you?"

For the first time the Count showed irritation.

"See here, Marcus, don't call my future wife a liar."

The man called Marcus stopped talking and went out of the room, inwardly cursing the entire female race. None the less, when the ship sailed, there was a very beautiful lady with him, whom he introduced to everybody as his wife.

It did not increase the comfort of the President of the United States when he heard that over thirty ladies were going to be on the gold ship. He at once sent for the Secretary of State.

"I suppose you have heard the latest about the gold ship?"

"I certainly have," replied that official. "If Taine is not careful to select the right time, he will not only sink the ship and the English gold but he will also drown a few dozen of the most important ladies of Europe, including the daughter of the President of France. When they find out that the ship was sunk by our orders, we shall have some explanations to make."

"But we must find Taine!"

"You tell me how to do it. I can't find him."

"Then wire France advising that the ladies stay at home."

"Just as soon as they receive such a wire, thirty more will be determined to make the trip."

"Then let's wait till Taine shows his hand. Perhaps he will select a pleasant day and all the ladies will be saved. The American battleships are to be on either side of the gold ship and our officers can have the pleasure of rescuing these fair ladies. Perhaps a few international weddings will result."

"More likely there will be a few wars," sighed the President.

The next day he received a radiogram stating that the ships had left the port of Bordeaux.

THE next week was a living nightmare to the President and those in his confidence; but to those aboard the gold ship it was a continuous round of pleasure. The weather was perfect, the cuisine wonderful and the entertainments superb. The water was so still that on several evenings a boatload of officers came over from the American battleships and gave the European ladies a change of dancing partners.

Among the ladies none was more lovely, more wonderfully dressed or had a greater profusion of exquisite jewelry, than that of Angeline Pleasance, the exquisite

Asiatic, whose engagement to Count Sebastian was now known to all. She had permanently discarded her oriental robes and appeared in the daring of the latest Parisian mode, causing her to be the despair of all the ladies and the Count the envied of all the men. To match her petite form, she had a pleasing voice and a brilliant mind. At the card table, piano or tango she was equally proficient.

To the ladies she never failed to mention her wonderful maid, Marietta. To hear her talk one would think that without this maid she would be helpless and hopeless. The maid herself was rarely in evidence, and was such a dark ugly creature that the jealous ladies declared openly that the Pleasance woman had selected such a maid simply to accentuate her own beauty by contrast.

Thus the days passed, slowly to the anxious Americans, all too fast for the pleasure seekers on the gold ship. They passed without incident or accident, the ships steaming westward as though on parade, the gold ship in the middle, a United States battleship on either side, directly in front two English men-of-war and directly behind two French cruisers. The other ships brought up the rear.

One moonlight night Count Sebastian had left the dance hall and, accompanied by his associate, the one he called Marcus, walked over to the side of the ship. Just across the lazy waves he could easily make out the details of the U. S. Ship Pennsylvania.

"That is a big ship, Marcus," he said.

"It certainly is, George."

"One or two ships like that mean a lot—but they are just symbols, Marcus. They stand for the United States. We hate her, and we have tried our best to harm her, but so far it has been like shooting an air gun against that battleship. I feel helpless when I think about it at times. Look at those guns. One shot from that twelve inch gun pointing this way would send our ship to the bottom."

"You are pessimistic tonight, George. All this thinking is the result of your being in love."

"Not at all. But look at those guns. I fancy I see smoke curling from their open mouths. I have been nervous since the night the Center Internationale went to bits. Guess I had better take a dose of bromides tonight."

"Don't take any more dope, George," pleaded Marcus. "We want your active mind, keen and brilliant and not dulled by drugs."

The night before the ships arrived in New York, Count Sebastian took his fiancée to a quiet nook on the upper deck.

"Just as soon as we arrive in New York I want you and your maid to go to the Cosmopolitan Hotel and wait there for me. It may take me a day or more to attend to my business and then we are going to be married and begin our honeymoon on our steam yacht. It is primarily a floating laboratory but the rooms are elegantly furnished. My three friends are going with us—we have thought it best to keep it quiet for a while—I have not told you all, but you ought to know the main facts. This gold we are taking to the United States is synthetic gold. No one can tell it from real gold. Next week we will send to over a thousand scientists all over the world the exact method of its manufacture from mercury and lead. Just as soon as that information is published, gold will become worthless, and the United States will be a bankrupt nation. Every nation will declare platinum the standard of exchange. The United States will be exposed to the ridicule of the world. They will never recover from their humiliation."

Angeline Pleasance did not answer, but her lips gave



full proof of her loving devotion to her hero. Finally she whispered:

"You tell me just what you want me to do and I will do it. I want to do everything I can to help you. You may hate the white race more than I do, but I doubt it. Some day I want to tell you the story of my maid. She also has suffered worse than death at their hands. You must be careful. I am afraid of you going to New York. They may kill you as they did those poor people in the building you told me about."

"Do not worry, my dear," said the Count, soothingly. "They may suspect something but they would not dare come out openly and harm any of us. They could not do that without insulting the world. We cannot hurt them worse than through their pocketbook. After we crush them financially, we will have a final crushing blow. Come closer and let me whisper to you \* \* \* \* \*

\* \* \* \* \* What do you think about that?"

The woman sighed deeply.

"Oh! George! Could you do that? If you do, it will be wonderful! I hope I live to see that day; and to think that I am going to share such a wonderful revenge with you."

They agreed between their kisses that life was wonderfully fine.

TO the great delight of the President of the United States and his Cabinet, the gold ship finally arrived in New York. A regiment of Marines acted as guard and after some delay the boxes of gold were deposited in the Custom House. There the representatives of the Allied nations, the President and his Cabinet, the four bankers headed by Count Sebastian, and several chemists and metallurgists from the Philadelphia Mint gathered to determine the value of the shipment. The boxes were placed in separate piles, each pile representing the debt of a nation. A detailed inventory was given to the President, showing in detail the number of boxes, the value of gold in each box, both by weight and in dollars. Each man in the room had a copy of this inventory.

The Secretary of State called the persons in the room to order and spoke from his position on the top of a chair:

"Gentlemen, I am speaking for the President of the United States. Realizing that you are all anxious to be through with the business of this trip, so you and your ladies will have ample leisure to enjoy the hospitality of the City of New York, I am authorized to say that we will accept without question, your statement as to the amount of gold in this shipment. We feel, however, that we should make at least a perfunctory examination of this shipment, and have determined to open, in your presence, one box from each country. This will be given a casual examination by our experts, after which we will sign a receipt in full for the debt, giving a copy on parchment to each representative present. We shall first ask that a box of gold from Great Britain be opened."

At this point the British Ambassador limped forward.

"Before you open a box of our gold, I should like to make a statement. We thought it best to keep the gold we borrowed in our English banks. We have, therefore, replaced the original bar gold with minted gold of the Realm. As this does not pack as heavily as the bar gold, we had ten more boxes made and filled. So, if you count our boxes, you will find ten more than the inventory calls for. You can open any box you wish, as I am sure you will find them all the same."

The four bankers looked at each other. Count Sebastian shrugged his shoulders.

"Gold is gold," he murmured to the one beside him.

The top was unscrewed from one of the boxes in the English pile. As the Ambassador had stated, it was filled with royal sovereigns.

"We shall now have the other boxes opened," said the Secretary of State.

"As each box is opened, our experts will make a simple visual examination and then we will go to lunch."

Amid a deep silence, a box was opened from the French pile. The experts from the Mint looked into it, and began to whistle. Thereupon, without waiting for orders, they opened a box of the Italian payment, one of the German pile, another from Turkey. Then they went and began to whisper to the Secretary of State and the President. Meanwhile, the opened boxes were being examined by the various representatives of the foreign countries and the air became blue with curses in a dozen different languages. Other boxes were opened with the same result. Finally the President asked for silence.

"Gentlemen," he began. "I do not want you to think that I am reflecting at all on your own integrity or on the honesty of the countries you represent, but in some way you have been imposed upon. Our metallurgists inform me that these boxes are not filled with gold but with some alloy which they believe to be a combination of mercury and lead. Naturally, we cannot, under the circumstances, sign any receipt for the debt. We trust, however, that you will remain as our guests for a private discussion of the matter, which, we are certain will go far toward relieving the strain of the situation. I assure you that nothing of this will appear in our American papers and the question of publicity in Europe will depend upon yourselves."

At that time someone thought of looking for the four bankers, but they had disappeared. It was probably fortunate for them that they could not be found. They had taken advantage of the confusion following the opening of the French box and slipped out of the building and into one of the taxicabs waiting in front of the building. Refusing to listen to the pleading of his three associates, Count Sebastian ordered the chauffeur to drive to the Cosmopolitan Hotel. There he rushed into the lobby and asked for the Countess Pleasance.

"I am sorry, sir," the clerk replied, "but shortly after they went to their room, the lady and her maid came down, paid their bill and left, without leaving a forwarding address."

Staggering, the Count left the Hotel and walked out to the taxi, where the other three men were waiting for him. They were driven down to a pier in lower New York, jumped into a motor boat and in ten minutes were in a steam yacht headed for the open sea. None of them talked till they were well into Long Island Sound. Then the Count took a drink and asked:

"Tell me what happened, Marcus? What in hell happened? Surely we had gold in those boxes when we left Bordeaux."

The man called Marcus took a long drink of whisky. "Sure we had gold in those boxes in Bordeaux, but it was synthetic gold. We knew how to make it and just because we did not know how to unmake it, we thought no one else would know. Somebody was smarter than we were and that is all there is to it. The best thing we can do is to keep mighty quiet for a while. Europe will be a hotter place for us than the United States ever was—after this affair."

"But what about my fiancée?" cried Count Sebastian. "We must go back and find her!"



"Better leave her alone," growled one of the men, "and after this you cut out the love stuff when we are busy. No telling who she was, but I bet she was mixed up in it in some way."

Meantime the steam yacht kept steadily on its way out through Long Island Sound.

JUST as soon as he could, the President of the United States took the English Ambassador to one side.

"I want you," he said, "to send a full report of this to your Government; and be sure to put in all the details. Tell them not to worry about the gold they have being of no value, because every piece of the gold you sent us in good faith is going right back to London, just as fast as one of our warships can carry it. Under the circumstances, we would not think of keeping it. You had better have that other gold taken out and dumped into the ocean. I do not know yet just what happened to that gold on the voyage but I believe that whatever it was is known to some of our scientists and you can tell your people that the nations will keep the gold standard, and Great Britain and the United States will do what they can to make this world a better and safer place to live in."

The next two weeks were rather busy ones, spent in officially entertaining the ladies and gentlemen who had come to New York on the gold ship. All things considered, they had a rather pleasant time, and finally they left under the impression that the United States was not such a heartless country after all. Just what kind of a report they made to their respective governments was never learned. Some of the countries made an honest effort to pay their debt—while others did not, nations being very much like individuals in this respect.

AFTER the visitors had left and everything had quieted down to normal, the President started to review the entire problem carefully. He wanted to know what had happened—and he wanted to talk to Taine. The Secretary of State assured him, over the phone, that he had seen nothing of that gentleman. The Secretary of the Treasury informed him that Taine had drawn on him for a total of over one million, but otherwise had not been heard from. The Chief of the Secret Service informed him that Mrs. Taine had received several messages in code to the effect that her husband was all right and would be home soon. Just as he was giving up hope of ever seeing the mysterious gentleman from San Francisco, that very person walked into his private office.

"I thought perhaps you would like to see me before I went home," said Taine. "I knew that you were busy, so I waited till things quieted down a bit. In fact, a lady friend of mine and I have been down to Palm Beach taking a vacation. She is out in the anteroom making eyes at your secretary. Would you like to meet her?"

"I certainly should, but don't dare to get out of my sight. I will send for some of the Cabinet and we want you to tell us what happened. We are literally dying from curiosity."

A half hour later one woman and seven men were in the President's office. A stenographer was at a side table ready to take down Taine's verbal report. That gentleman coughed and rather shyly began:

"After I left you here some months ago, I went and had a long talk with that old chemist from the Department of Agriculture, and he told me that he did not know how gold was made, but that if it was made at all it was made so and so. Then I went to Cornell and found out what they knew about it and they called in some cranks from the Westinghouse and General

Electric and we went into executive session. They said it could not be done and I told them that if a black man had brains enough to make gold, they ought to have brains enough not only to make it but to unmake it as well. That made them mad and they raved around a while and then settled down to work. Finally they made something that looked like gold and was gold, only it could be changed back to mercury and lead. It was amusing to watch them play with it after they once found out how to do it. We finally were able to take a piece of the synthetic gold and shoot a special X-ray at it over half a mile and, pop, it would turn back to lead. Those youngsters were bright boys, and I think that something ought to be done for them. They did all the work: all I did was just to get them good and mad. Then we found that we could shoot this long distance X-ray just like a stream of water out of a hose, and were able to send it through a sheet of steel a foot thick. After that the rest was easy. We arranged with Cramp's Ship Yard and the Navy Department to put about twenty of these special X-ray generators in the two battleships that were to act as escort to the gold ship. Just for the novelty of it and to keep the machines concealed, we hid the X-ray tubes in some of the larger guns, and all we had to do was to keep them trained on the gold ship. The metal guns, by the way, gave the X-rays a beam direction, which concentrated them on any desired spot. The naval officers were very clever in their cooperation and intensely interested and during the entire voyage the gold ship was fired upon constantly by these rays. Of course we could not be sure that it would work because we had no way of telling that the gold we made was the same kind as the gold they made. We took a chance. I was greatly pleased when we heard the news as to just how well it did work. I took the liberty of giving fifty of the men most concerned ten thousand dollars each. I have their names and I really think that some of them deserve more. You can look into the matter and do as you think best.

"Then I went over to France. I was anxious to get on that ship and find out whether the bankers were the same men that I knew in New York, but I did not want to take any chances, so I engaged the best female impersonator in the world; really he is clever, and this time he went by the name of Angeline Pleasance, a half breed from Asia. She had a lot of jewelry and I bought her some more and a new wardrobe and I dressed up as her maid. It was the first time I had done anything like that, but I had a good teacher and we sure made a hit. This lady here is Angeline, and I know you will agree with me that she is some bird. Take off your hat and wig, and show the gentlemen what you look like as a real man. Our plans worked out nicely and Count Sebastian fell for her hard and wanted to marry her. That is how we got on the ship. The Count had the other ladies along so he could take his Angeline. I saw enough of the bunch of crooks to satisfy myself that they were the same white negroes I met the night the Center Internationale blew up. I don't know for sure how they escaped. Angeline found out a few things—not as much as we wanted to. Of course we could have gone off with them on their yacht, but we felt that it was too dangerous. I have promised to pay Bill a half million for his services and he has drawn the money but I made him promise not to spend any of it till you gentlemen approved of it. So, while we were waiting for things to quiet down, Bill and I went down to Palm Beach and he taught me a lot about his business and I did a lot of practicing down there. I am not so bad myself, only it is hard to shave three



times a day. I have a little memorandum of just what I spent and what I spent it for. You can have a bookkeeper go over it and audit it and the checks I have drawn on the Treasury. I think that is about all, so if you tell Bill the half million is his, we will go. I am anxious to get back home."

"Your friend Bill can have his half million and more, too, if he wants it," said the President. "We certainly do thank you, Mr. Taine. How much does the Government owe you?"

"Oh! My salary of two hundred a month from San Francisco has been going on ever since I left home. They pay my wife the money when I am out of town, so you see you really do not owe me anything."

"But we want to give you something," insisted the President.

"You decide what it was worth to you and send it to the wife," said Taine shyly. "You see, she tithes all my income outside of my flat salary and that means 10 per cent for the church and 90 per cent for herself. So if you want to give me anything, just send it to her. That will please her. There is another thing I ought to say and if you will, sir, I want to whisper it to you. It is something that Bill found out and we think you ought to know. \* \* \* \* \*

"You surely do not mean it? They would not dare to do it!" replied the President.

"Well, maybe not, but there is no telling what they will do so long as they are alive. At least you people in Washington can be on the lookout, and now I guess I will say good-bye and take the next train west."

### CHAPTER III

#### The Tainted Flood

**A**FTER his strenuous period of working in the interest of the United States, Taine was more than glad to return to his home and family in San Francisco. His wife and daughters were delighted to see him and the little black dog nearly barked his head off in canine welcome.

Taine reported to the Chief of the Secret Service at once and asked for and was granted a month's leave of absence from duty. They let him know at Headquarters that they had received some very nice letters concerning his work and that he had done a lot to put the city on the map of the world as far as intelligent detective work was concerned. He thanked him shook hands all around, and went back home prepared for thirty days of peace and quiet idleness.

In honor of his return Mrs. Taine prepared a supper of stewed mutton and dumplings, a dish her husband was very fond of, but which he got only at rare intervals, for it was very hard on his digestion. This time, however, she felt that he had earned a specially fine supper.

After the dishes were washed, they all went into the sitting room. Taine's slippers were put on and he was comfortably placed in his favorite chair with the evening paper in his hands and a lighted pipe in his mouth. The black puppy slept curled up at his feet, the daughters sat around the center table studying their lessons, and Mrs. Taine talked quietly to a neighbor who had just come in to learn the latest gossip.

"Yes, ma'am," replied Mrs. Taine, to her neighbor's question, "we certainly are glad to have Mr. Taine back home again. He had a most exciting time of it this trip."

"Oh! It must be so thrilling! Doesn't he ever get frightened?"

"No, indeed! He does not know what fear is. The most horrible places he has been in with his life hanging on a thread, and yet he never is afraid."

"You must be awful proud to have such a husband."

"I certainly am. Have you heard about what the President said?"

Taine listened to the conversation while he read his newspaper and smoked his pipe. He smiled a little at his wife's praise. No one knew better than he himself just what kind of a detective he really was, and just how often his blunders had nearly been his ruin. It was only his firm faith in predestination that enabled him to go on with such a hazardous calling. Meantime the daughters had kissed him and gone to bed, and as the ladies seemed to be very well occupied talking about church affairs, he thought he might as well take the dog out for a walk.

Without being especially noticed by his wife he left the room and, putting on his overcoat, let the eager black puppy out of the front door ahead of him. The night was cold and damp as is so often the case in San Francisco and the fog put a white halo around all of the street lamps. Glad to be back in familiar territory, Taine walked briskly down the street. He had not gone far when he had the peculiar sensation that he was being followed. Nothing irritates an operator more than to feel that he is being shadowed; it is all well enough for him to pry into the most secret life of others, but it is an entirely different matter when the tables are reversed and he becomes the hunted instead.

**A**S soon as he was thoroughly satisfied that he was being followed, Taine started to lose his trailers. A rapid and zig-zaggy half hour was spent in jitneys, trolley cars, dashing in and out of office buildings, up and down elevators and into restaurants and movies by the front door and out by a side entrance. During this half hour, he believed that he had identified the three men who were after him, and, once that was accomplished, it was a matter of professional pride to double on them in such a way that he became the follower again. He went into a theater where he was well known, borrowed a wig and a costume and was out on the street and into the theater again inside of five minutes. Just as he was buying his ticket, he saw the three suspects leaving.

After that he felt thoroughly confident and satisfied with the game as it was being played. He soon saw that the three men were following a cold trail and in a short time they acted as though they also knew it. At least they ceased to double on their tracks, got into a jitney and started on a straight line to leave the city. In back of them was another jitney occupied by a woman.

In the course of the next hour, Taine found himself on a small balcony of a deserted house in the suburbs of the city. While the night was cold and damp, there was no wind and the increasing fog made it easy for anyone to hide in its enveloping blanket of gray. The three men he had followed were in a room in the same house, seated around a plain wooden table. He could hear their conversation distinctly as they made no effort to speak low. Their entire conduct while in this room showed conclusively that they were positively ignorant of Taine's proximity.

Taine was rather pleased, yet he was worried. The fact that he had eluded them and trailed them to their den was a source of pride to the detective. He was also glad that he had left the black dog at a neighbor's during the first three minutes of the chase. The thing that caused him deepest concern was his positive identification of the three men as the white negroes who for so many years had been plotting against the safety and happiness of the people of the United States. Twice before he had been able to block their plans, and



yet he felt that conditions would be insecure in his country as long as these criminals were at large. Their presence in San Francisco, and their following him was another source of worry. No doubt they knew who he was and just what part he had taken against them. The only reason they were on the Pacific Coast was to secure revenge on the man who, practically single handed, had been able to stop their nefarious schemes. Taine was not so much worried about himself as he was about his wife and children. There was no telling what such criminals would do. Meantime, he was paying the strictest attention to their conversation.

THERE were three of them. He had seen two of them on the Gold Ship—one known as Count Sebastian or George, the other, the one called Marcus. The third was Dr. Semon, scientist and inventor. Taine had met Dr. Semon in the Center Internationale the night that building had blown up and the white negro had boasted of his discovery of a serum that would turn a black man white overnight. Marcus was probably the man who had discovered the method of manufacturing synthetic gold. George was no doubt the brains of the group as far as leadership and organization were concerned. Said Marcus:

"I do not want to leave the city till we get Taine. I have a hunch that we shall never get very far so long as he is alive. A day or two one way or the other will not make any difference with our New York plans. I know a Chinaman that will slip bamboo splinters into his food and put him and his whole family into the cemetery in a few days."

"I am opposed to it!" answered the Count, decisively. "He is a very prominent person, a lot more prominent than he thinks he is. If anything happens to him, we shall have the Secret Service of the United States after us in earnest and openly. So far they have seen fit to leave us alone—that is, they made no attempt to arrest us after the gold fiasco. Taine is quiet now and his performance of to-night shows plainly that he is not to be caught napping. We are all educated men but at the best we are not super-criminals and I think we had better go ahead with our plans and leave Taine alone. He is not going to be successful all the time. Semon, have you figured out the amount of your new chemical that will be needed to thoroughly impregnate the water of the New York reservoirs?"

"Yes," replied the Doctor. "I have everything done except the actual operation. We have the chemical in a very finely powered form, enough of it to make a one to a million solution of all the water the City of New York uses in three days. My plan is to scatter it over the surface of the water by aeroplane on the same principle that they dust the cotton fields in the South. We shall have to make five trips from the store house, but the plane can carry five hundred pounds at a trip and twenty-five hundred pounds will do the work nicely."

"And you believe it will work as quickly wholesale in an uncertain dilution as it did in your experiments?"

"I am confident of it. Of course, it is hard to determine just how much water there is in the pipes leading to the city, but I believe that the treated water will be used by the end of twenty-four hours and after that the lot of the people of the city will be hopeless. Even if they suspect that there is something wrong with the water, what can they do? They have to use the water to drink, to cook with, to wash their clothes, their skin and their teeth. Inside and outside of their bodies they will be exposed to the drug. The first half million cases will not be understood—the

authorities will do their best to keep it quiet—the changed men and women will be kept indoors—perhaps quarantined. By the end of the third day the water supply will be pure, but by that time it will be too late."

The man called Marcus jumped to his feet, and raised his clenched hands above him as though to strike the Almighty in the face.

"What a revenge! Oh! If only it works as we think it will! Think of it! For years, from all parts of the United States the wealth, brains and beauty of the white race have gravitated to New York. Like gods they have sat there, dictating fashion, habits and morals to the millions of people who live in the rest of the western hemisphere. Like gods they have lived here and we negroes have just been their slaves and their playthings. We were a little more than animals, and a little less than human beings. They thought we were a higher type of ape. In their voices they tainted our blood and changed our blackness to an ashy gray. Now these imitators of Jehovah are going to turn black themselves. They will go to bed drunk with power and and content with life, the proud descendants of thousands of generations of white ancestry and they will wake up black. The physicians will think it is some new disease and for a few hours they will be very busy, till they themselves are blackened from head to heel. The city will be a merry Hell—for us—it will be a city of shadows."

"It will be worse than that!" cried the man called George, who on the Gold Ship had called himself Count Sebastian. "The news of what happens in that city will be kept out of the city papers—for a day, or three. Then by letter and telegraph and radio, by frightened fugitives in planes and automobiles, the word will travel around the world, *'The People of New York Are Turning Black.'*—A disease changing the color of eight million people—a pestilence touching rich and poor, great and small, the good man and the criminal! The city will be accursed. A quarantine will be established, but it will not be necessary, for no one will want to go there for any purpose save some brave men from the Public Health Service who will be sent to investigate. The business of the city will be crushed. Millions will try to leave, even though their skins are black. Outside the city, though, they will be treated as black folks. That in itself will be a rich joke. They do not realize what segregation means, but they will soon know. The negroes will despise them as painted monstrosities. If they go into a colored community, they will have to show that their parents were black before they will even be given a crust of bread. They will be unable to get work: everyone will be afraid of them and sicken at their sight. They will be lepers!"

"Other cities will follow. Chicago, Philadelphia, Denver. Soon it will not be a case of millions leaving the United States. Will they receive welcome in Europe? Will Canada sit calmly silent when ten million fugitives cross her border? In a year the proudest country in the world will be in a process of dissolution. Revenge? Why, such a thing will be worse than death. New York could overnight topple into the crater of a new volcano without causing one hundredth of the damage.

"Of course there will be some white people left. That will be another of the rare bits of sarcastic humor the situation will evolve. They will be the poor people, the crackers and the red necks and the white trash who live in the piney woods and on the mountains and drink white mule and mountain spring water. They will stay white and won't hesitate to shoot any black man who might bring the



disease to their isolated mountain homes."

"All that will happen," said Dr. Semon, "but first we must kill Taine."

"No," insisted Count Sebastian. "Let's wait. It will be more fun to watch him pretend to think when the President sends for him to unravel the latest New York mystery. He will not escape us finally. Ebony Kate will keep on the watch. Her sister works for his wife."

"Let's go," said Marcus. "The plane is in back of the house. We can make St. Louis in one flight if we are fortunate."

They left the room. Taine stayed on the balcony till he was sure they were well down stairs and then pried the window open and tiptoed into the room. He wanted to see a piece of paper that one of the men had dropped under the table. Holding it in front of his flash light, he saw that it was a map. Silently cursing the woman's clothes he had on, he went out on the balcony and dropped to the ground. Just as he landed, he heard the drone of an aeroplane starting from the other side of the house.

**T**AINE knew what he wanted to do; but he was not sure how he was going to do it.

On him depended the happiness of millions, the safety of his country.

He wanted to rush to his Chief with the news; he felt that the radio and the telegraph should carry the warning to the threatened city. The War Department ought to be notified and combat planes from San Francisco, Denver, and St. Louis should hunt through the air till the mangled bodies of the conspirators were burning harmlessly on the ground, owned forever more by the Caucasian race.

But who would believe him?

Suppose he told them the whole story? Told them what he had heard? It would be a tale so preposterous, so unreal and fantastic that he would be at once placed under observation in a Psychopathic Hospital. Before they found him sane, the damage would be done. Suppose they did believe him at Headquarters? What if they did send him by plane to Washington to arouse the nation? What should they tell the millions of morons in New York? That they must not drink, eat or wash till further notice? How many of them, superior adults or feeble-minded, would heed and obey? How could they obey? How long can eight million people live without touching water when an apparently pure supply was flowing from a hundred million faucets? And if they did realize the danger, what would happen? Every one who could do so would leave the city—even if they had to walk. It might stay a white city but it would be an empty one. No. Try as he could there was nothing to do but to stop these men before they sprinkled the pigment-producing drug over the waters of New York. They had to be stopped and there was no one to do it except Taine.

Try as he would he could not escape his fate.

After it was all over—the danger past—the city saved for the Caucasian race—then and then only he could talk about it. . . .

But who would believe him?

He thought of Biddle, who had sent him, single-handed, against *The Powerful Ones*. He tried to recall how the President of the United States looked when he told him that the gold must not come to the shores of America. Perhaps those two men would believe him, later, when he told them the story. It might be that his wife would understand that he was telling the truth.

He wondered if they were telling the truth!

Could white people be turned black by drinking

water that had a chemical in it diluted one million times?

Was it possible for such a disaster to take place in the twentieth century?

And if it could be done, what could he do to stop it?

Just then he thought of one of his most highly prized souvenirs from his last adventure, a small visiting card with the President's name engraved on it. On the reverse of the card, in the President's handwriting, was written.

*The Bearer, Mr. Taine, is a direct representative of the President. All citizens are requested to render him any service he needs.*

He had always carried that card with him. He had it now in a secret pocket of an inside vest, wrapped around with five hundred dollar bills. He remembered a silly story he had learned in his high school days. Something about a god called Time who had lots of hair on the front of his head but was bald behind. If you grabbed him at all, it had to be at the very beginning, "taking time by the forelock"; once he had passed, it was too late.

Running out on the street, still feeling rather silly in his feminine array, Taine took the first jitney and started on his journey to save his country from the peril which seemed to be impending.

They started to laugh at the little woman who came running into the Government airplane station and demanded a plane to take him to Baltimore. They laughed harder when he said he wanted to make a non-stop flight. They never would have taken him to the commanding officer (who was playing poker with his staff) had it not been for the woman's tears.

"I want to see you privately!" the woman said to that officer.

"Not by a long shot!" answered the Colonel. "I have cut my wisdom teeth and there is not going to be any blackmail around this station."

"Fiddlesticks!" said the woman, starting to tear off her dress. I am Taine, of the San Francisco Secret Service. I have to get to Baltimore, to the medical school there, and I want to travel quick."

The Colonel looked at the little man who was shivering before him in B. V. D.'s and a funny kind of a vest.

"That may be so, but you travel by train."

"Look at this," said Taine as he took some paper money from around a small piece of paste board and handed him a visiting card. The officer read it on both sides; then he turned to his Adjutant.

"Do you know the President's writing?"

"I believe so."

"How about this?"

"Looks as though it might be genuine."

The Commanding Officer drummed on the table with his finger-nails. Finally he woke up from his silent thinking:

"Captain Jenkins!" he said sharply. "For weeks you have been making preparations to break the record for the longest time a plane can stay in the air. I understand you were going to try it to-morrow. Lieutenant Jones was going with you. You and Jones are to start right away. Throw away one hundred pounds of impediments and take Mr. Taine with you. Your route is Denver, St. Louis, Washington and Baltimore. I understand that he has to get there at once. If you do not want to make the trip in this fog, I will ask for volunteers."

"No need of that, Colonel," said Jenkins. "Fix the gentleman up in some clothes so he will not freeze to death and we will start in an hour. Will you arrange for some sandwiches and coffee, sir?"



In exactly fifty-five minutes, Jenkins, Jones and Taine were in the air on their way east. Taine was not at all happy. He had never been in a plane and had always been confident he would not enjoy an air journey. During the first half hour he had ample reason to know that his anticipations had been correct; there was no doubt as to his increasing sickness. After the worst of his nausea was over, he became drowsy, and fell asleep. When he awoke, they were on the ground. Jenkins asked him if he had had a good sleep and explained that they had been forced down near St. Louis by a leak in the gas line. They would have it fixed in a half hour and hoped to start at once. Did Mr. Taine want anything to eat?

Taine looked at a sandwich, washed down the look with a cup of black coffee and said he was ready whenever they were. He was especially anxious to know if they had passed any planes. Jones laughed at that and said that the planes had been thicker than swarming bees. The sun was shining and the sky blue and clear. Taine went back to his seat, told them to let him know when they arrived at Baltimore. They wanted to know if he did not want to see St. Louis and the Mississippi from an airplane, but he said that all he wanted was to think and sleep or anything at all, just so long as he could avoid a repetition of his recent sickness. He had seen both the river and the city from the ground and that satisfied him. The two aviators looked with a pitying curiosity at the little man and made him comfortable in some blankets. He soon felt a bumping and then everything was quiet. In reality he went to sleep again—and stayed asleep till they arrived at Baltimore. It was really a fairly remarkable trip, from one side of the continent to the other in two hops, but the only thing that Taine was interested in was that he was finally in Baltimore and reasonably sure that he was some hours ahead of the three conspirators.

He said a few words of appreciation to the army officers and took an automobile to Johns Hopkins University. Here the card from the President again served him in good stead and within a very short time he was in conference with the Professor of Dermatology of that medical college.

The Professor was very properly thrilled. He had taught the subject of diseases of the skin for thirty years, and up to the present time no one had seemed to realize what a very important part of medicine it was. To have a man come all the way from San Francisco to consult him, a man with a personal message from the President of the United States, was enough honor to make him glow to the point of breaking out with a neurotic urticaria. He listened, rather impatiently, to Taine's presentation of the hypothetical case, and then, rather promptly and in as dignified a manner as though rendering a decision of the Supreme Court, he gave his answer:

"There is no disease, condition or manner of living, Mr. Taine, that really turns a white skin black. Certain diseases turn the skin yellow, for example, jaundice; or give it a bronze color, as in Addison's disease; or a dark gray as in poisoning from a silver salt; but no disease or drug described up to the present can turn a white man into a negro. Of course, there are certain diseases where part of the body becomes rather changed in color but of the hundreds of such cases I have seen in my long years of experience, I do not recall a single case where the change in color was so distinct or universal as to deceive a careful observer in regard to the patient's race.

"However, in justice to myself, it is only fair to state that there are thousands of new chemical com-

pounds which so far have not been tested in regard to their effect on the human skin. Erlich made six hundred and five arsenical compounds before he discovered the celebrated 606, the basis of all modern treatment of syphilis. There are many synthetic dyes, some of which are highly poisonous to the human organism causing rapid dissolution, disintegration and even decay of the entire body, Mr. Taine, and in some cases where poisoning has resulted from the ingestion or injection of such drugs, the skin has turned a deep purple, just before death."

Taine thanked him heartily and said he would have to go:

"I am astonished at your wonderful learning, Professor. You know a great deal about almost everything, and I certainly thank you for your interest in the matter. However, I must say that up to the present time you have not definitely answered my question, which was, whether a white man could be turned black by drinking or bathing in water which was poisoned by an unknown drug in the strength of one to one million?"

"I do not know!" said the Professor, rather bewildered.

"And I do not know, either," said Taine, "but I am going to find out."

"If you do," said the Professor, eagerly, "will you come back and tell me? I should like to write a monograph on it, and of course I would give you a copy."

"I would expect you to give me at least one copy," said Taine, "though of course I could go to the Congressional Library and read it there."

"You will not have to do that. I shall be glad to give you a copy. I will even write my name on it, and I do not do that for everybody."

Taine heard only half of that last remark, for he was rushing out of the building before the Professor had come to the end of his generous offer. His chief anxiety now was to get to New York City as soon as he could. He would have liked to go back to Washington and talk over the problem with some of the men there, but he resisted this temptation and he rushed to the B. & O. station instead. Here he became a human dynamo and after brushing aside three office boys and actually knocking an insulting clerk down, he saw the Superintendent and in a few minutes of rapid talking convinced him that he was in earnest. But it took all of his power of argument and the President's card thrown in for good measure, to secure a special train to New York. The tale should include the details of this ride to New York in a locomotive, hanging on to the fireman, and cinders thoroughly scattered all over the inside and outside of the man from San Francisco.

He reached the metropolis of the United States at midnight. At once he telephoned to Gray, Chief of the city's Secret Service. He was in Chicago. He called up Mr. Biddle, the Banker. He was at home, but had retired for the night, and could not be seen till nine in the morning. Taine was badly worried and growing rather mad. He had a plan and he could not work it outless he had help. The President's card was not of any value, unless he could get the right people to read it, and meantime the precious moments were passing. Hunger and fatigue and anxiety made him sweat and the drops running down his cheeks made ludicrous streaks amid the dirt and cinders clinging to his three day old beard.

He dashed over to the ticket office and had a hundred dollar bill changed. Then he ran out to the taxi stand and gave the driver of a yellow cab the address of the sleeping banker, Mr. Biddle.

After frantic ringing of the door bell, the butler



opened the sacred portals. He was very haughty in his statement that Mr. Biddle would see no one. Taine strong-armed him so thoroughly that he did not wake up for some hours and then did not have a very clear idea of what had taken place. The detective ran up the steps calling Biddle's name. A woman screamed and a man ran out in white pajamas and shot at Taine, who cried:

"Don't shoot again, Mr. Biddle. I am Taine, the detective. Don't you remember the man from San Francisco? Put that gun up. You will hurt someone shooting that way."

**B**IDDLE finally quieted the household and himself and then sat down in the library and listened to Taine. The banker made a very good listener. Finally the detective finished.

"What can I do to help you?" asked Biddle.

"I want to see the man who knows the most about the Croton Water Shed. The man who has been all over the grounds, who helped make the survey and had charge of the maps and blue prints."

"We will get him."

For the next twenty minutes the banker sat patiently calling up man after man. Finally he jumped up in triumph.

"I found the man," he said, "and he is on his way down town. He will be here in twenty-five minutes, pick us up and we will all go down town to his office where the maps are. I shall have to dress. What can I do for you?"

"How about a safety razor and a place to shave?"

"You can have that. How about a drink?"

"Not now. If I ever get out of this mess, I may get drunk, but not now."

"Have a cigar?"

"No! I never smoke. I find that the tobacco injures the delicate enamel of the teeth and once that is injured decay sets in and your teeth are soon lost, never to be replaced."

The banker dressed and Taine shaved and they were hardly finished when the door bell rang. It kept on ringing and finally the banker went to answer it himself. In doing so, he stumbled over the butler. Only then did Taine think of explaining to him that the poor fellow was not dead but simply knocked out by a detective's rough treatment. Immediately after that the three men, Biddle, Taine and the Surveyor, were in a taxi headed for City Hall.

"Well?" said the Surveyor, a few minutes later, in his large and orderly office, "what is the problem, and where do I come in after losing my night's rest?"

"You will get your share—later," answered the Banker. "For the time being, listen to this man and see if you can help him."

"All I want you to do," chimed in the detective, "is to tell me if you can recognize this map as a part of the country around or near the Croton Water Shed." He took a small folded piece of paper out of his inside pocket and handed it to the Surveyor.

The man looked at it, and then jumped up from his chair, crying:

"Don't interrupt me!"

"We won't!" said the Banker.

"Don't make any noise!"

"We won't!"

"I must have perfect silence. I want to concentrate. I must think!"

"Certainly," said Taine, soothingly. Then in spite of his dread and anxiety, he took a pencil and pad of paper off the desk and wrote:

*His mind is very delicate. He would never make a detective.*

and handed it to Biddle, who read it, smiled and wrote:

*Nor a banker*

and passed it back. However, the man was really capable in spite of his peculiarities, for after ten minutes of the greatest physical and mental agitation, he ran to a cabinet, took out a large blue print on the scale of one inch to the mile, spread it on the table, compared it with the small map Taine had handed him, and cried:

"There it is. I thought I remembered the place. Slept in that old cabin several nights when we were surveying that part of the shed."

"Is it hard to get to?" asked Taine.

"No. There is a fairly good road within a hundred feet but no one goes there. The whole area was bought by the state and practically cleared of its population."

"Let's start," said Taine, "and get there as fast as we can."

"What's the hurry?" asked the Surveyor.

The Banker told him in a few well chosen words. After that it was a foot race to see which one could get down to the waiting automobile first. In no time at all they were tearing up Fifth Avenue, headed for the cabin in the woods. The Surveyor insisted on driving in spite of the protests of the taxi-cab chauffeur. Biddle, however, kept his head, and they went right back to the banker's house, where they changed cars for his seven passenger Paige. They also picked up three policemen, and then headed for the country. The Banker's chauffeur was no mean driver himself and with the Surveyor beside him to tell him just where to turn, they had no trouble in averaging fifty-five miles an hour. There was no car trouble and no delay and yet dawn was breaking as the car stopped in the woods and the Surveyor jumped out and started to run.

"Hold on!" exclaimed Taine, catching him. "I am in as great a hurry as you are, but I do not want to be killed. Those three men may be there ahead of us and if they are, they would not hesitate to shoot us. Better go slow." His advice was followed, but the cabin was deserted.

The door was padlocked but Taine had no trouble in opening it. The party followed him inside. It was just a little cabin in the woods, a very ordinary little cabin, with a small stove and some shelves and a cot with bedding on it: but in the center of the room were twelve barrels.

They were ordinary flour barrels, Pillsbury flour barrels with the firm's label neatly pasted on every barrel, giving the exact brand of the flour and the number of pounds. The men looked at each other and they all looked at Taine. He looked at the Surveyor.

"Sure this is the place?" he asked.

"Positive!"

"Then get me an ax or something and help me to get the top off of one of these barrels. Fast! No time to spend thinking about it!"

The top was soon off and they all crowded around to look in.

"Pshaw!" said Biddle. "Just flour. Suppose we taste it?"

He would have done so, had Taine not grabbed his hand just in time. Taine told him in no uncertain language just what kind of a fool he was, and as the truth began to slip into the Banker's consciousness, the man grew pale and started to sweat. Then Taine asked the Banker to come outside for a conference, as a result of which the chauffeur, the Surveyor, one policeman and the Banker started off in the Paige. Taine and the other two policemen walked into the woods and hid themselves. Telling the men to watch



the cabin, the detective started off through the woods. In a very few minutes he found just what he was looking for, a meadow fairly free from brush and woods, large enough and smooth enough to make a good landing field for a plane, provided the aviator was a little more clever than the average. It was, at the most, a hundred yards from the cabin. In the middle there were ruts in the grass which looked as though a plane had landed there on a wet day.

Then Taine went back to the policeman.

**F**INALLY, after what seemed ages, a large truck came up the road laden with twelve barrels and several men. Behind was the Paige car. Taine inspected these barrels, said they would do, and ordered them carried very carefully into the cabin. The men who carried the twelve barrels in, carried twelve barrels out and back on the truck. When they were through the inside of the cabin looked just as it had before the lock had been picked. Taine put the padlock on, gave the driver careful directions and started him off with the truck. He then held a long conference with Biddle and started him back to New York City with the three policemen and the Surveyor. He then returned to his point of observation and thankfully ate the lunch Biddle had brought him.

With the exception of a hawk, who persistently soared above him, Taine was alone. Not really alone for he had abundant fears to keep him company. What worried him most of all was the map. Suppose the three white negroes had suspected his presence and dropped a map on purpose? They might even have had a special cabin fixed up to deceive him. While he was locating the cabin on the map and waiting for them to put in an appearance, they might be scattering the poison over the Croton waters. Was he wrong?

Would Providence permit him to be wrong?

Was he predestined to be the savior of New York or face the world as a huge joke, an ignorant blunderer?

The afternoon wore wearily on, the setting sun sinking silently on silvery spruce trees. Another hawk joined the first in its aimless flight. No! Not a hawk, but a plane!! This way!! Sinking, settling softly, safely in the meadow. Taine smiled and rubbed his chin.

He was safe.

He knew he was safe when he saw three men come running through the woods toward the cabin; he was confident he was safe when he saw them unlock the door and disappear through the doorway; he sighed a prayer of thanks to his Presbyterian God when he saw them appear carrying a barrel on an improvised stretcher. Shortly after the distant buzz of a motor was followed by the appearance of a plane over the treetops. Taine left his station near the cabin and circling through the woods gained a viewpoint of the meadow. One man, left behind, was building a fire at either end of the field to serve as guides to the aviator as darkness came.

The plane returned in the twilight. The men again ran toward the cabin, and came back staggering under the weight of another barrel. The top was knocked off and its contents transferred to a hopper in the plane. It was rather dark but Taine was able to see part of what they were doing and guess at the rest. After the departure of the machine, the man who was left behind broke up the barrel and used the dry wood to keep the signal fires burning. The detective waited till one more trip had been made, then scratched some leaves together, covered up as best he could, and fell asleep happy in his well earned contentment. It was morning when he awoke: everything seemed quiet but he decided to inspect the meadow before leaving. He

had come just in time to see the plane return, pick up the third man and start off again. He walked thoughtfully to the cabin and was not at all surprised to find the door open and the room empty. The twelve barrels were gone.

"This," said Taine to himself, "makes me believe in predestination more than ever before."

The country Taine found himself in was wooded and very sparsely settled. The only thing that he was sure of was that he was in New York state. He was also afraid that he was hungry. Within an hour he had a slight idea that he really was hungry and this idea rapidly grew till it took entire possession of him: just as he was about to despair he came out on a hard surfaced road bordering on a large lake. Greatly interested, he walked to the shore and going down on his knees carefully examined the stones and gravel washed by the little windwaves. There was a white scum there; just the slightest trace. He put some on his finger and tasted it.

Far down the road he saw smoke curling upward in the thin autumn air. That meant fire and fire might mean food. He walked down the road and came to a neat little bungalow. The man who came to the door was soon identified as one of the watershed police. He was glad to furnish what he had in the way of food; not much, but enough to keep Taine alive. In answer to the inquiry, he said that there had been several aeroplanes flying around the night before.

By noon Taine was in New York City. Ordinarily he was a neat little man but he was far from that as he got off the train in the Grand Central Station. He went at once to the Biddle home, where the butler admitted him rapidly but with decided resentment, for he was still nursing a swollen jaw. The San Francisco man luxuriated in a long, hot bath, and a shave. The banker had a clothing man and a haberdasher come to the house and by the time Taine was through with his nap, a completely new outfit was ready for his use. A valet helped him dress, and served him a very light lunch in his room. By dark Biddle arrived and they had a conference in the library during which the banker told the detective that the twelve barrels were safe, in a dry place, and that he was giving a little supper that night at home to a few of the big men of the city and he wanted Taine to be there and tell them about the events of the last few days. The San Francisco man protested—said he ought to start for the west—but the banker insisted and said that his guests were not to be disappointed and that he had secured a dress suit for Taine and had sent a long telegram to Mrs. Taine, to the effect that her husband was safe but would be too busy to write for a few days. So Taine went up stairs and had his clothes changed again, and looked very much like a society man when he came down to supper.

Ten men sat down to supper and those men represented the wealth, culture and power of the East. The Mayor was there and several business men, the President of a railroad, the head of a great department store and the private secretary of the Governor of the State. The dinner was well planned and suited Taine, who was still hungry from his long hours of fasting. After it was over and the servants were dismissed and the doors closed, Biddle introduced the little western man and asked him to tell his story, beginning with the Center Internationale episode. Taine talked without flourishes or oratory, just a plain statement of fact told by a plain man. When he finished, he took a small baking powder tin out of his pocket, carefully took the lid off and placed the open can on the table.

"That," he said, "is a small sample of this new



poison these men were going to put in your drinking water."

"That looks harmless," said the Mayor. "I fancy that it was all a joke. This probably is a new way Mr. Biddle entertains, us after his excellent meals."

Mr. Biddle looked at Mr. Taine. Everybody kept still. Then Taine began:

"I HAVE a little money, Mr. Mayor. Of course it is out west but Mr. Biddle will finance me. I bet you one hundred thousand dollars that you will not drink a glass of water with a little pinch of this drug dissolved in it. I will bet you another hundred thousand that if you do drink it, you will turn black inside of twenty-four hours."

His Honor laughed nervously as he replied:

"It would not be very dignified for me to make such bets. You may be telling the truth, yet I am frank to say that I cannot believe you till the thing is demonstrated. It is too fanciful, too much like a fairy tale."

At this the Governor's Secretary interrupted.

"I have an idea. Up at Sing Sing, in the death house, are eleven men waiting death in the electric chair. I believe the Governor would think favorably of pardoning some of them if they would drink some of this drug as an experiment. Suppose we go up to Albany right away and see him? We could take some chemists and specialists with us to tell us what actually happened."

"I do not like that suggestion," said one of the business men. No matter what happens, the men will be set at liberty and they will talk. A rumor that such a danger threatened New York will be almost as bad for us as though it actually occurred. Now if we could only get some idiots! That is the very idea! Let's go over to Ward's Island to the Hospital for the Insane and see if we cannot get the Superintendent to furnish us with material for the experiment?"

"No! A thousand times NO!" thundered the Mayor. "Such a thing would leak out—somebody would tell, and a dozen woman's clubs in the city would start to talk about it. To them, those idiots would seem precious. Every woman would say, 'What if they did that to my hopeless child, entrusted to the care of a great city, and unable to defend himself? Suppose my little one, once a baby in my arms, but touched by the finger of God, so that he never grew to be anything but a baby, was turned black to satisfy the curiosity of a group of politicians and capitalists? Use your imagination and hear the women talking and then at the next election go to the polls prepared to see Tammany Hall wiped out of power. By the Holy Shade of Tweed I would rather drink the damned stuff myself than to give it to a single ward of the State.'"

At the table was a silent young man. All through the evening he had sat in a gloomy introspection. Mr. Biddle had invited him because he was the junior partner of the most powerful law firm in the city. His right hand, with fingers long and immaculate, lay motionless on the white table cloth. His left hand grasped the stem of a Venetian goblet. During the entire discussion he had turned his face, expressionless, from one speaker to another. Right across the table sat Taine and the little tin can was between them. After the Governor's telegram was read, regretting that he could not be present, but urging them to solve the question once and for all, after the Mayor had foolishly hinted that Taine was telling the tale in the capacity of a commercial and professional entertainer, after seeing Taine's quiet rage and hearing the discussion it provoked, after all this the silent young man stood up.

"Gentlemen," he said. "I am convinced that Mr. Taine is telling the truth as far as he can see it. To believe a thing and to prove it are two different things. I followed his story with a great deal of interest and as far as circumstantial evidence is concerned, he has proved his case. You do not believe him because you do not want to believe him. The whole situation seems impossible, so horrible that you do not dare to face the facts. For thousands of years you have thought that a white skin meant a white God. To-night you do not even dare to turn some white idiots black."

"Yet, this is a matter of greatest importance to all of you. If this happened, you captains of industry would become paupers, you bankers would degenerate into small town note-shavers, and the politicians of the greatest city in the western hemisphere would start in to work for a living. You need the city to keep you where you are, and you know that it has to be a white city. Mr. Taine was right in feeling that the danger was as great as any that has ever threatened a people. He had the imagination to see how a thing like that would make New York a pariah among cities of the world."

"So far you are guessing. What you need is proof. Here is the drug and in my hand is a glass of water. Watch me! I take a spoon and put some of the drug in the water and stir it up. No doubt I have made a stronger solution than one to a million, but that is a matter of small importance. When we hold the glass up to the light, we see that it is perfectly clear. I smell it and find it has no odor. To all appearances it is simply a glass of ice water—and now I drink it."

He did so before anyone could stop him: he did it before they even suspected that he was going to do it. The room was quiet save for a few hissing gasps. He went on talking.

"Of course I have my own reason for doing this, but that is a personal matter. I took an extra large dose of the drug so it would work quickly and relieve your suspense. I will now clear a space in front of my chair on this snow-white table and when I sit down I will spread my hands on the cloth. This will enable you to watch any result without looking at my face. We will pass the time in telling funny stories and jokes."

He sat down and spread out his hands. Then he said:

"Have you ever heard the one about the two Irishmen? I heard that in Dublin and you would be surprised to know who told it to me. I told it once to some cosmopolitans in Monte Carlo and the story was well liked by most of them," and so on and on his talk rambled in an even, cultured, entertaining way and for an hour he talked and perhaps two, and the men listened to him in silence and watched his hands with dread—

Those white hands turned brown and then darker and finally they were black. They saw that the hands were black as any negro's hands had ever been—but no one dared to look the man full in the face—and he said:

"I think I can go now. There seems to be no doubt that Taine told the truth."

The man pushed back his chair, rose to his feet and left the room.

A guest seated near Mr. Biddle started to laugh. The other men looked at him in horror and disgust. He kept on laughing—seemed to be unable to stop—laughed till he cried and panted for breath. The guests looked at Biddle as though they felt it was his place to give the comedian his well deserved rebuke. As he evidently shared in their feeling, Biddle



simply waited till he had a chance to speak:

"Smithers! Please stop!! You are the only one who sees anything funny in all this. To me the affair is a tragedy. That man is a hero. He has sacrificed something that is dearer than life for the sake of his city. You should blush for shame at your conduct!"

Smithers gradually became quiet. His lobster red face paled and changed to a deadly pallor, a sickly whiteness, a sweating ashen face, as he replied:

"Oh! I know that you think it is brutal of me and all that, but I could not help it. You could not have helped it either if it had hit you the way it did me. I know the boy. For a year he has been in love with an octoroon, a nice girl and all of that and almost white. She would not marry him because she did not want to spoil his life and he would not live with her unless they were married. That was why he wanted to make the experiment—he thought that if he was colored too, she would marry him. She might have if he were just a little bit colored—just a shade off white like she is, but he turned black—like a piece of coal. I saw his face as he went out and it hit me all of a sudden that she would never recognize him as Jamison, her former white lover. He will never be able to explain it to her, how it happened. She is almost white and do you think she would marry a black man? He was brave and in love and all that sort of thing but fate has played him a sorry jest—I am sorry that I laughed—but—I—just—couldn't—help it!"

Just then, before Biddle had a chance to reply, the butler handed him a telegram. He opened it and read it and then jumped to his feet:

"Here is something that demands immediate attention from every possible source. We had sent the original twelve barrels containing the poison by truck to Boston. This telegram states that while crossing the Connecticut River at Springfield the steering gear broke and the truck and the twelve barrels broke through the bridge and were sunk in the river. The driver and the other man on the truck jumped out on the bridge and did not get hurt. Meantime the people of every town south of Springfield are exposed to this menace."

"I would advise," said Taine, "that you get in touch with the Governors of Massachusetts and Connecticut at once and have those areas put under martial law. Here is the rest of the drug. Have it examined and see if an antidote for it cannot be found. Do not delay this. Use all of your resources and arrest these three men. While they are alive, the country is not safe. Personally I feel that I have done all that I can do for you. The future safety of your city rests with yourselves. There is a midnight train leaving for the west and if you have no objections, I will make a rush and catch it. I want to go west and see how my family is getting along."

"But what do we owe you?" asked the Mayor.

"Oh! You send what you think it is worth to my wife. She gets all I make over and above my salary."

And by 1 A. M. Taine was speeding westward.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

##### The Insane Avalanche

A NAMELESS yacht was steaming on an unknown sound towards an uncharted island in the Pacific Ocean. It was the refuge of *The Powerful Ones*, a place specially prepared as a haven of escape when the world was being combed for them and the police of every nation was hunting them like so many cobras or tigers.

There were now only three left. George, known to European society as Count Sebastian, the man called Marcus, an inventor and scientist of unknown antecedents and Dr. Semon, who had been educated at the best medical schools and universities in Europe. There had been others, but they had died in the disaster resulting from the destruction of the Center Internationale. The one woman in the organization was, for the time being, hiding in San Francisco. There were subordinates in the association, and perhaps thirty in all, were either on the yacht or were waiting on the island for its arrival.

They were all negroes, banded together for the total subjection, and, if necessary, destruction of the Caucasian race. Three carefully arranged and minutely prepared plans had failed. The effort to buy New York and turn the black race white had terminated in the destruction of their building in New York, the death of over a thousand of their most valuable members and a serious economic loss. Their plan to impoverish the United States by flooding its banks with millions of synthetic gold and then forcing the world to change from a gold to a platinum standard had resulted in failure, and every nation in the world had been furnished with a method of detecting their artificial gold. No longer could they create millions in their laboratories over night. Then had come their determination to inflict a crowning and humiliating injury on their enemies by turning eight million white New Yorkers black overnight. That also had been a costly and useless effort. They had spent their resources in preparing nearly three thousand pounds of a powerful drug, and had used it in an effort to poison the water supply of the great city, yet, for a week after they had done this, they waited impatiently for the drug to act and nothing had happened. Discouraged, they realized that once more, in some mysterious way, they had been thwarted in their revenge.

They had failed, and for the first time they were pursued. On land, air and ocean the machinery of justice was following them in a determined search which they knew would stop only when they were safely behind the steel bars of some modern bastille. Then it was that they were glad they had an island to go to, prepared years before for just such an emergency, and equally glad they were to be able to get there—and they lost no time.

On the island, discouraged and disheartened, they lived from day to day, without hope and with diminishing pride in their own achievements. The elaborate system of government, which had been relentless and immobile in its rigid rule, began to disintegrate and decay. They, who had once been called *The Powerful Ones*, slowly approached the level of their humblest subjects. The tropical heat lowered their morale and slowly destroyed their desire to conquer the world. Gradually the equatorial sun was restoring them to equality with their savage ancestors. Women were brought to the island, at first secretly and then openly. When Ebony Kate arrived, the tom-tom was heard once more. A sailor breaking the laws of the island, was beheaded, and his body found other sepulchre than Mother Earth. Those who had hoped to conquer the United States were now being subjected by their own impulses.

Of course they still tried to invent new plans for the continuation of the struggle to which they had consecrated their lives, but it seemed to become harder to concentrate. The minds of Count Sebastian, Marcus and Dr. Semon had once held a large proportion of the knowledge of modern civilization, and no doubt they still knew all they ever did know, but it became harder to use their intelligence and knowledge in productive



effort. Each day nothing happened. Each day they promised each other that tomorrow they would begin intensive work.

THEN one day a stranger came to the island. He was a mulatto, well dressed, with several trunks of clothes, books and scientific instruments. It never was determined how he had found out about their refuge, and the exact location, but there was no doubt that he knew considerable about their organization.

There was no hesitation on his part in telling his reason for seeking them over thousands of miles of tropical ocean. His motive was the same as theirs before discouragement had anaesthetized their ambition.

"I am a physician by profession," he told the three leaders that evening," but my specialty is psychiatry. I have always been interested in the mind, and preferably in the abnormal, the unusual, the diseased mind. My color made it hard for me. The study of medicine was difficult, and the endeavor to become a psychiatrist almost insurmountable. There is only one place to study insanity and that is in a hospital for the mentally diseased. In Europe it was easy to obtain opportunities for study but hard to finance the years of preparation. In the United States there was practically no opening for one of my race. Again and again I took civil service examinations and was placed at the head of eligible lists, only to be sidetracked when they found I was a negro. I knew as much as any of them. In fact, for two years I wrote a series of papers for one of the great physicians of America, who published them under his own name. Finally I drifted to Harlem and opened a small hospital for mental diseases, and there I heard about you and your ambitions. They are still talking about you, in a whisper, in the secret halls of their lodges. They believe that some day you will come back and strike for them—destroy the Caucasian and establish the supremacy of the Ethiopic race.

"I gathered together the fragments of what I heard and from them I made a fairly good story of your plans and your failures. After the day's work was done, I used to sit in my office and wonder why you had failed and whether in some way you could not yet succeed. You will pardon me if I tell you that I gained the idea that the cause of your failure was your desire to gain your ends too quickly. You wanted to accomplish all in a year, in five years, instead of being willing to wait.

"One night I had an idea. A man can preach a sermon, write a book or live a life centering around a single new thought. Perhaps dozens of our specialty had entertained this idea for a second and then passed it by before it reached their consciousness. With me it was different. I was so thoroughly conscious of it, that for several nights I could not sleep. Finally I arrived at a decision. I spent a year in study and expended all of my wealth, not much, but all of it, and finally I was sure. Then I came to you. We need money, time and brains, but above all we shall need patience. Some of us may die of old age before we are through, but we will have trained men to follow us in the next generation, and the next.

"Now what I want to do is this——"

Far into the night he talked and long into the dark they listened, and they were tired by morning, but in their hearts was a new determination and a fresh courage. They had failed three times, but this time they were sure they would succeed, for, to the leadership of Count Sebastian, the inventiveness of Marcus, and the scientific ability of Dr. Semon, was added the deeply specialized mind of Dr. Abraham Flandings.

LIFE in the United States was becoming highly standardized. Many of the processes in the industrial life were so successfully studied that production was possible on a larger scale than had ever been dreamed of. A working slave would spend a lifetime carving and decorating a Roman chariot in the days of Nero, but in the era of Ford, four hundred men in four minutes could assemble an automobile and more than one of them had wealth enough to purchase and use it. Life was standardized as well as work. In the United States millions were becoming used to the same diet, the same amusements and the same vices. The home was disappearing. Babies were born in hospitals, reared in day nurseries, educated in state schools, amused by the cinema, entertained by the automobile and airplane. The companionate marriage provided a maximum of selfish, personal pleasure with a minimum of responsibility and self-sacrifice. In thousands of such families the wife was a wage earner as well as the husband and the pair ate out of tin cans and delicatessen stores. Sickness was financed by industrial insurance and domiciled in hospitals. The diagnosis was made piecemeal by groups of specialists, the disease was treated, thousands of drugs were in laboratories, and each patient had the attention of one-tenth of a nurse. No serious case was considered complete without a careful autopsy, the report of which was given to the surviving relatives to be considered as a basis for future reference. The remains, less the sections for microscopic study, were buried from undertakers' parlors and finally rested in enormous community graves and recorded in the large volumes of cemetery records, many thousand burials to the volume.

Life was easy. As the life of the world became systematized, competition grew less severe and the existence of the individual less complex. He had to think less because so many of the necessary things of life were thought of for him. In school his children had their teeth filled and tonsils and adenoids removed. An adults' health insurance forced him to eat more or less. When food could be bought in tablets, less skill was required to become a cook. It is not certain that the people were happier but they were certainly far more comfortable.

One of the most remarkable changes was the great increase in the amount of glass used. Like all other industries, the manufacture of glass was controlled by a trust, which for inventiveness and initiative had no equal in the business world of the western hemisphere. Their motto was:

"USE MORE GLASS IN MORE WAYS."

Their advice was:

"LET US SHOW YOU WHAT TO DO WITH GLASS."

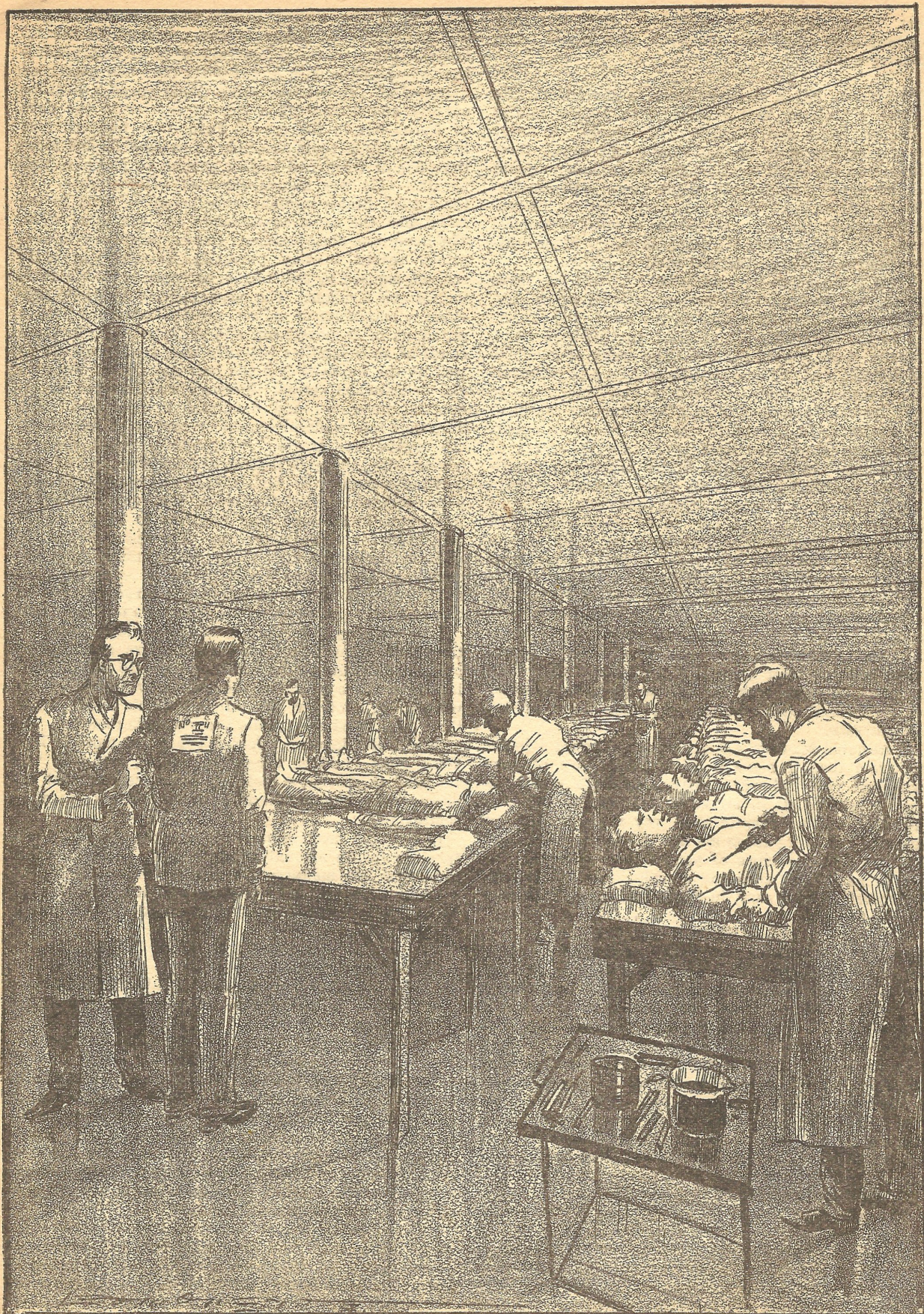
Their full page slogan in the papers of the United States read:

"YOU CAN DO ANYTHING WITH GLASS AND DO IT CHEAPER."

It seemed, from their literature, that this was to be a glass age instead of steel. Their inventors made glass that was flexible, malleable and ductile, as strong as steel, pliable as copper, and useful as wood. Roads were made of glass bricks: it was used for roofs instead of slate or asbestos, and finally a complete house was put on the market, a house of glass, 100 per cent glass, six rooms complete, for \$100.00.

It was a pretty house. The walls were of green glass, eight inches thick and filled with bubbles. It was, of course, supposed to be an excellent nonconductor of heat. The roof was of brown glass, thin enough to allow a soft light to filter through in the daytime, yet not transparent to the aviator passing above. Inside the furniture, plumbing, fixtures, were all of glass, dif-





*On their tags were written their final destination and they were taken, sleeping, to their new homes and laid in long rows in glass houses.*



ferent in tone and harmonious in design. All that was necessary was to rent or buy a piece of land, order the house and in a few weeks move in. The cellar was a combination basement and garage.

Naturally, when a house could be bought for the price of four supercord tires, the desire came to many companionate brides to own their own homes. Suburban cities of glass sprang up like mushrooms over night. People who had never considered it advisable to buy a home, gasoline being so high and so necessary, now stayed home on four consecutive Sundays, and on the fifth Sunday moved into their own home.

In the cities, the older tenements and apartment houses were falling into decay. The real estate men, architects and builders realized that steel would rust and cement crumble and decay. The Glass Trust, at the psychological moment, proposed apartment houses built of glass, and when the possibility of this type of construction was doubted, they put up a twenty-story building in the middle of New York City and asked the experts to find flaws in it. The Trust claimed that such a building could be erected, of standardized parts, in one-third the time and for one-half the cost of a similar building of reinforced concrete.

Within five years all the new construction in the great cities was of glass. The more substantial structures of stone were doubled in size by adding glass super-stories. Finally, as a gift to the city, the Glass Trust built a transborough driveway fifty feet wide on the tops of houses, thus greatly facilitating inter-urban traffic.

Not only in New York, but in all of the large American cities, this use of glass was progressively increasing. The rural districts, quick to see the many benefits arising from such a cheap, yet durable, material, adopted it even more extensively than did the cities. Accustomed to ordering merchandise by mail, they readily bought the new glass sections, and as quickly put them together. The farmer was now living in a glass house that was easily cleaned, vermin proof and cheaper than any other kind of material or mode of construction. In the South, the glass house was replacing the hut of the plantation hand and of the poor white.

Inside of twenty-five years, ninety per cent of the population of the United States was spending at least half their life under glass. For the last ten of these years, the Glass Trust had ceased to invent new uses for their products and devoted all their energy toward selling large amounts at a low price and a small profit. While not claiming to be philanthropists, they at least felt that their firm had contributed largely to the economic welfare and happiness of the nation. At least they said so very modestly in their advertisements.

The ruling minds of the United States were rather well pleased with the progress the nation was making. They felt that they had each contributed their share toward the prosperity, health and happiness of the great republic. It is true that the wealth of the land was concentrated in the hands of a few large trusts, but these used their power to aid and not to oppress. Education, investigation, and prophylaxis were instruments used by them on a large scale. Every rich man gave millions toward the endowment of a Foundation. Carnegie gave every little town a library, while Rockefeller freed the country from the dreaded hook-worm. There were two great desires of every bright mind in the States, to become rich, and to use that wealth in a new service to humanity. Yet even the humanitarian work was so systematized as to become painfully impersonal. The individual was beginning to disappear, and to reappear simply as a cog in a great machine.

Then, right in the midst of this happiness, came disaster.

It came so insidiously, so quietly, so naturally and universally that for many years it was not recognized as a threatening danger and a destructive agent of gloomy horror.

EARLY in the history of the century, asylums had been erected for the care of the insane. At first these were simply boarding houses which gave custodial care to the inmates, clothed, fed and bedded them. In 1900 the ability to diagnose was being developed in these hospitals. Ten years later active treatment was begun for some types. By the time of the World's War, the specialty of Neuro-psychiatry was growing more rapidly than any other branch of medical science. Institutions for the insane were no longer called Asylums, but State Hospitals for Mental Diseases. The physicians were no longer called Head-knockers, but Psychiatrists. The insane were considered wards of the state and each commonwealth vied with the others in properly caring for these unfortunate people.

With the founding of the National Committee of Mental Hygiene, came the statistical study of insanity. At once certain interesting facts were disclosed. For example, it was found that as many people became insane every year in the United States as graduated from the Universities, Colleges and Normal Schools. That fact alone gave some people food for thought. Then from all over the United States came the complaint that the states could not build additional hospitals fast enough to accommodate the increasing demand. The yearly program of the American Psychological Society was occupied with the problem of prevention of new cases of insanity in the years to come and a proper care of those who were already insane. Many investigators spent years in trying to cure these cases but many more were working in the field of prevention. Bills providing for the sterilization of the unfit were passed in many states. More rigid laws were passed regulating marriage. The increase in insanity became like the weather, there was a lot of talk about it, but not much could be done to correct it.

In 1920 some states were caring for one insane person to every three hundred of its population. By 1930 the ratio all over the country was one in two hundred. At that time the burden seemed too great to be carried indefinitely, but with newer methods of feeding and increasing efficiency, every state was able to go ahead with the great charity. When five more years had passed, the situation ceased to be a problem and became a menace, a threatening disaster, for the ratio was now one in fifty.

Not a family but had at least one member insane. In some cases every individual, not only of a family, but of a community had become insane. Unable to care for themselves, lacking even the elementary instincts of self-preservation, these people had to be segregated and gathered together into large settlements and fed, clothed, bedded, and treated by the State. Yet, in spite of the tremendous burden, the country staggered on, in the hope that the wave of insanity would pass by and that the complete isolation of these mentally afflicted would absolutely prevent the transmission of the disease in future generations.

There was now no effort made to build new institutions for these people. Instead large towns were confiscated, walled around with high wire fences and turned into concentration camps. Normal Schools, Colleges, Churches and High Schools were turned into hospitals for specific types of psychoses. It required



the combined effort of the sane people to provide for the insane. Fortunately science had made it possible to care for these in the most efficient manner. Whereas, a ward physician formerly had a maximum of three hundred patients, he was now caring for three thousand.

By the next three years, to be exact, in 1923, the problem had become a national one, because one-half of the population were incapacitated, on account of their mental peculiarities. The United States army, regular and reserves, had been mobilized to its full strength and was used as guards, nurses and attendants. In some parts of the nation, public work and farming was done with various degrees of success by the stronger of the male patients, while the less afflicted females helped with the cooking and washing.

The leaders of the American Psychiatric Society watched the progress of this tidal wave with the greatest interest and intensive study, but finally had to make the soul-sickening report to Congress that they did not understand what was causing the great insanity epidemic, and consequently did not have the slightest idea of how they could prevent it. They stated that the insanity had little effect on the death incident and that if these people were humanely treated, the average length of institution life would be about twenty years. They knew, though it was only admitted behind closed doors and in a whisper, that if the increase continued for another ten years, the entire nation would be mad with no one to care for them. A continent of insanity left without control to follow the tortuous devices of their dementia! Perhaps it would spread and the entire world would go wild!!

The world feared this and enforced a rigid quarantine. The United States, weakened in man power and barely able to finance the crushing burden, was too feeble to protest.

Something had to be done!

**T**HERE arose in Congress a party who demanded the life in a humane manner, of every person who became insane, and who were already insane. They argued, and it must be confessed that they had a great deal of right on their side, that the time would come when these victims of insanity would have to die from hunger. It was still possible to make protein using atmospheric nitrogen, to change cellulose into sugar, to make synthetic fat, but the time might come when the laboratory worker would go crazy in his shop, the skilled mechanic become insane at his bench, the engineer hauling a train of food develop a psychosis at the throttle. Would it not be better to kill them humanely, rather than to wait for the time when, lacking the restraining influences of sanity, they would rend each other like beasts and die in the swamps and mountains of hunger and cold? With the insane burden off their shoulders, the sane population of the United States might yet restore it to its former place as a leader in the world. Now they had nothing to look forward to—— but—— the—— end!!!

This party was bitterly opposed by another faction of Congress. They argued that even though the entire nation went insane, even if their civilization perished under the growing curse, still as long as a million, a hundred thousand, a hundred or one person remained sane, it was the duty of that survivor of sanity to continue caring for his unfortunate brothers. It was better for the nation to perish clean than to survive with an inefaceable blot upon its manhood and honor. It was not their fault that the entire country was sick, but if in their panic they put one of these unfortunates to death, then forever their names would go down in disgrace on the pages of history. From press

and pulpit, from Senator to the Mayor of the smallest town came the cry echoing that command given centuries before on Mount Sinai:

THOU SHALL NOT KILL!

Yet what was to be done?

All through 1938 they talked and thought and prayed and in January, 1939, the dreaded news came. The increase during the year had been so great, that now there were two insane persons in the United States for every sane person! Small wonder that the Senators pleaded for the Psychiatric Death Bill.

It would have passed the next session of Congress had not an humble worker in an obscure college of the south, by name Howens of Spineville, made a special trip to Washington at his own expense and asked, with a peculiar diffidence, the privilege of appearing before the Committee on Insanity. They had been bothered with all kinds of cranks but this man was well provided with credentials and they gave him a hearing.

They met in one of the Senate rooms around a long table. Professor Howens asked to be seated near the middle of the table so all could see and hear him. On the table in front of him he placed a small Boston bag. Just as soon as he started to talk, they identified him as a college professor, for every few minutes he would stop and ask them if they understood the matter as far as he had gone. In fact, he began by saying that he was very much embarrassed, but if he could just imagine they were a group of his pupils, he would do very well in his talk.

"I have been working on this for some years," he said, "and before I go on I want to give due credit to three of my pupils who have been of the greatest help to me for many years. Of course our college, like all others, was turned into a hospital, but the laboratory smelled so that it never could be fixed up as a dormitory and we just kept on using it. I and my three pupils thought we might as well stay there as anywhere else, and we really were fairly comfortable on army cots, eating synthetic food and once in a while one of our turtles. Of course I wanted to stay but I never could make up my mind why the other three decided to spend so many years with me; so, you must understand that each of us contributed a part to the conclusions we reached.

"Hardner Gowers had been raised in the country and had learned to use his eyes in the woods. The woman, Ellen Heller, was really insane, her peculiar idea being that she could make paraffin sections better than anyone in the world, which of course was a delusion, because I taught her all she knew. Still, she was a very fine technician and was of great help to us and as we all thought a great deal of her, especially Gowers, we did not report her to the authorities; we simply let her stay with us. The third student had spent his four college years with the other two and had developed the habit. Therefore, though he tried to leave us, he was so miserable when away, that he came back and offered his services. Miss Heller used to say, 'Cline does not do a thing to help me but I cannot work unless he is watching me,' so Cline would sit on a stool and look at her work, and we got along very well. We were not bothered much by the authorities. They tried to investigate us once but could not stand the odor of our work shop.

"Gowers brought in a wasp's or mud mason's nest one day and we thought it would be interesting to study it in detail. Perhaps some of you gentlemen have seen them in your boyhood. The female builds it, a cell at a time. She fills each cell with small insects like spiders and flies and even small caterpillars. Then she lays one egg on the tops of these unfortunate vic-



tims of war. Sealing this cell, she builds another cell on top of it. After a period of incubation the egg hatches and the little worm finds itself on top of a pile of nice food, alive and fresh. By the time it eats all of this food it has grown large enough to fill the cell with its body and eventually, after a metamorphosis, breaks through the wall and flies out, a wasp."

AT this point he opened his bag and placed several objects on the table.

"I wanted to make all this very clear to you so I brought some real nests and also a large cement model of one. If you study this carefully, you will be able to see just what happens. Is there anything I have said so far that is not plain? Very well, then I will go on.

"When the female wasp prepares to fill a cell with food for her future offspring she flies around till she finds a fly or spider and after pouncing on it, she stings it in the back of the neck, injecting into the nervous system a minute drop of a poison that does not kill but which suspends animation and renders the victim unable to move. Life continues, but so slowly that to the average observer it seems that the insect is dead.

"We had done about all we could do in the way of research, so we decided to study the habits of this wasp, and see if we could identify and isolate the substance used in producing the paralysis of her victims. We did not have any trouble in securing lots of material, but the wasps were so small and the poison sack so tiny that it was almost impossible to secure any of the poison. Then Cline woke up one day over his stool and proposed that we make the wasps larger. That woke us all up. We built several hundred large wire cages, prepared a new card index and started to breed bigger and better wasps. It was all a matter of selection, first with wasps, then by cross breeding with dragon flies and by feeding the later generations with thyroid and irradiating them with radium, we finally produced a species as large as a pigeon, with poison sacks like walnuts. It gave us a thrill when one of these came sailing in one day with a large toad to put in a cell. The eggs were like robin eggs. We had to be careful at first because they were real savage.

"So we had all the poison we needed for our experiments. We had a fair idea of what it would do to a bird or an animal, but it was not till one accidentally stung Cline that we realized the great importance of it all. Cline was sitting on a stool looking at Miss Heller and he didn't realize that he was stung any more than we did. The rest of us kept on working till dark and then started in to dissolve our synthetic tablets for supper and Cline just sat there looking at where Miss Heller used to be but wasn't. Gowers was not usually jealous, but he thought this was going too far and he went over and told him so and then we found that he was asleep. He stayed that way for a month, during which time we kept a careful record of his temperature, pulse and respiration. When he awoke, we could not see that he was much worse for the accident.

"That gave us an idea. We tried it on rabbits. I brought one with me that has been asleep a year. We started all over again to see just what there was in the poison that produced such an effect on the nervous system. We finally tried to duplicate it in the test tubes and after hundreds of failures, we succeeded in making a preparation that was absolutely similar in action to the insect's poison. It was easy then to purify it, put it into smaller bulk, standardize the dose. Now we are able to show you, in this hypodermic syringe, five drops of a liquid drug which, when in-

jected into a human being of 150 pounds, will produce a deep coma lasting approximately one year.

"From our experiments we feel that we are able to say that during the period of this sleep a person so treated will lie motionless. There will be practically a total absence of all bodily activity. He will require neither food nor drink. Extremes of temperature will have no effect on his body. We have frozen rabbits in cold storage, let them thaw, and when they recover consciousness, they seem none the worse for the freezing. Of course they cannot be heated to a very high temperature. There seems to be a slight loss of weight due to evaporation, but we have provided for this by the injection of a small amount of sterile, saline water, about one pint every year. I hope that you have understood all this as far as I have gone.

"We had done considerable work on the subject before we fully realized just what could be done with the discovery. I believe it was Mr. Gowers who first called my attention to the matter. He had been reading of the conflict in Congress between those who wanted the insane killed and those who were opposed to such a radical procedure. It seemed to him that we had a compromise to offer that might be acceptable to both parties. Our method would not kill the patient, but at the same time it would place him in such a state that his care would be reduced to a minimum. Just as soon as we started to talk about it, Miss Heller had a thousand suggestions to make, and we have most of them incorporated in a thousand page report, but just now I will content myself by saying that we have figured that the large cities like New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Detroit, New Orleans, Denver, Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles, have ample room space for all the insane that need segregation and treatment. They do not have to be put on beds and they can be placed side by side in the rooms of the glass houses. These, as we know, are vermin- and rat-proof. Once a year the medical department of the Army can arrange to give each one a hypodermic of the drug, diluted with a pint of normal saline solution. Just as soon as the fifty, eighty or one hundred million people are thus cared for, the energy of the sane, released from the terrific burden, can be directed toward the rehabilitation of the nation. A Board of Inquiry can serve in every state, and as soon as a case of insanity is found to be hopeless, it can be given a treatment and placed with the others.

"Cline has been working on some statistics and some of his conclusions have been very interesting. There are two facts that we want to call your attention to. In our state there are some people who live in wooden houses. The windows are simply openings closed at night with wooden shutters. None of the people living in such circumstances, as far as we have been able to find out, have become insane. The other fact is that we have made a Simon-Binet examination of over a thousand of our sane citizens and found out that what we suspected was the truth; they were all very superior adults as far as the intelligence tests were concerned and they stayed sane no matter what kind of houses they lived in. As a matter of fact, practically all we examined lived in glass houses. We thought that all this might be more than a coincidence and wanted to advise you to have similar studies made all over the United States. There may be something in glass houses that makes people become insane if they are not superior adults to begin with.

"We want to help all we can. I do not know that we can do much more than we have done, but if you want us to come to Washington and work here, we will do it. You will find Gowers and Miss Heller most



valuable and even Cline says something every month or so that is of great importance. Now if any of you have questions to ask, I shall be glad to explain any of the details. This rabbit is one of our experimental animals, and I can put a cow in the same condition if you wish me to."

**N**ATURALLY this long statement of Professor Howen's caused the greatest excitement. There followed long interviews with the leading scientists of the country. Experiments were made and remade. Committees were appointed. The three co-workers of the Professor were sent for and their separate stories obtained. While there was some attempt at keeping the details of the new idea a secret, still it was not long before every person of intelligence in the United States was talking about the plan proposed by the Professor. The central committees sent for scientists from every state, and when these men came to Washington and talked to the four experimenters from the South, it did not take long for them to be converted. The calm knowledge of the Professor, the scientific ability of Gowers, the superior attainments of Miss Heller and the profound silence of Cline, who simply sat day after day without even thinking, impressed all the investigators.

After some months, the various committees reported. There was nothing new in the glass that had been used in the United States for the last twenty years. It was just like the glass that had always been used. There was practically no difference except in the quantities that were used. The scientists finally came to the conclusion that there was, in the sun's rays, some healthful property that was absolutely necessary to the mental health of the human race. When men started to live most of their lives with glass between them and the sun, these rays were blocked, and absorbed by the glass in such amounts, that men became insane for the want of them. Pediatricians told of the healthful effect of sunlight in rickets, which effect was absolutely absent when the sunlight was filtered through window glass. The Senate called upon the Glass Trust to see if by their help a kind of mental health glass could not be made, but it was discovered that the Glass Trust had gone out of business. This was not surprising as in many of the countries industries had stopped, partly from a lack of labor, partly because there had been no expansion of business.

The conclusions of Professor Howens and his three co-workers were substantiated by examinations all over the country. Where people lived an outdoor life with a total absence of glass, there was practically no insanity. Where they lived under glass, all but the superior adults became insane. The work was carried on as rapidly as possible, but when the final reports were ready for consideration by Congress, there were four insane to every sane person in the country.

They accepted the recommendation of the investigating committees. In fact, there was nothing else to do. The Sleeping Bill was passed and signed by the President in one week. Within another week Professor Howens was in charge of the chemical resources of the nation. With the help of Gowers and Miss Heller he soon started production of the sleeping drug on a large scale. Even Cline woke up for a few months and organized and initiated a huge card index which was to record every insane person in the country.

Work was rushed in every department of the undertaking. The army and navy and public health service were called in for co-operation. Finally everything was ready for the transportation of the insane to the new centers, the sleeping cities, where they were to enter

into their long rest. The day this work was started it was estimated that there were one hundred and ten million insane and one million sane people in the States. Systematically they were brought to the great cities, indexed, tagged, and given their dose of sleep-drug. On their tag was written their final destination and they were taken, sleeping, to their new homes and laid in long rows in the glass houses.

The work continued.

There was no rest, no respite, no vacation.

The order had gone forth that the work would stop when it was completed.

Gradually it was accomplished, and the exhausted workers laid down their pens, card indexes, and hypodermic needles.

One hundred and ten million people were resting quietly free from worry and the need for food. They needed no nursing or care of any kind. Nothing more would have to be done for one year, when each of them would have to be given another dose. The primary dose had been so graduated that every sleeper would need his second dose on January first of the next year. It was believed that sufficient workers could be trained in the interval so the hundred and ten million doses could be given in one day.

The sane nation relaxed, but only for a short time. There was work to be done, far more than even a million superior adults could hope to accomplish. New homes must be provided. The children of the insane, deprived of their parents, must be cared for and reared to healthy adult life. An entirely different system of economics was necessary to promote the healthy industrial growth of the nation.

Meantime the world looked on, waiting to see if the late giant in the league of nations would die or survive. A few nations offered their sympathetic help, but as a rule the world looked on in apathy and indifference.

The million superior adults rose to the emergency and were equal to it. They showed mankind, once and for all, that a superior adult is worth ten ordinary adults, a hundred inferior adults, a thousand morons, a million imbeciles. No longer held down by the necessity of caring for the inferiors of the nation, the million real men and women worked wonders in a few years. Machinery, electricity, the atom were used as never before. Mankind no longer depended on its muscle but on its mind. In the United States a race of SUPERMEN was developing.

Every year, on the first January an army of workers invaded the cities of the peaceful sleepers and gave them their annual dose of somnifacient medicine. Then for the rest of the year they were forgotten, save by the watchmen who made their silent rounds. Free from damp and vermin, undisturbed by any sound, the sleepers slept.

Occasionally new cases of insanity developed even among the superior adults, but the Nation had learned the lesson and such cases were put to sleep at once. The prisons also were closed. It was as easy to give the drug to a criminal as it was to give it to a case of insanity. It is interesting to note at this point that crime rapidly diminished to the vanishing point. The hardened breaker of law, undeterred by the death penalty, was horror stricken at the idea of centuries of suspended animation. The criminal code became more and more simple, until finally it was reduced to a single sentence:

*Those who are harmful to the public welfare must sleep.*

Five years passed and then ten.

The sleeping treatment of insanity had saved the



nation which was once again becoming great.

Professor Howens, rewarded with the highest honors a nation could bestow, was working intermittently in his Washington home, endeavoring to find some practical use for the cockroach. His three assistants, financially independent for life, were touring the world, fully determined to marry each other if they could only agree on the details. Cline declared that he could not live without looking at Miss Heller a certain number of hours a day, and Gowers emphatically said that under no circumstances would he marry a woman who kept another man alive in such a ridiculous manner. The woman in question told them both that she would never marry any man, unless he could excell her in making a paraffin section. The outcome of this triple argument was that the three of them lived together as happily as most people do.

ON a desert island in the Pacific ocean four men and a woman, all nearing seventy, were engaged in an active discussion. The years had touched them lightly and they looked much younger than they really were. That is, all except the woman. She was black and looked old.

They were listening with interest to the report made by the youngest of the party, the neuro-psychiatrist, Dr. Flandings.

"It was an interesting trip," he said. "You cannot understand how close we came to succeeding in our attempt to kill a nation, unless you travel through it as it is today. Approximately a million and a quarter people are living in a country, that a few years ago supported nearly a hundred times that population. They are living comfortably, mainly in little country towns. The degree of education they possess has never been equaled in the history of the world. They have their university education for every young person. Culture and refinement are free. There seems to be a very slight difference between the rich and the poor. In fact, it is hard to tell just who the rich are and who the poor.

"Thanks to my wonderful letters of introduction I was permitted to visit one of their sleeping cities. New York has fifteen million sleepers where formerly ten million go-getters ruled the world. The streets are clean and silent. In the office buildings these people lie in serried rows. Each is tagged and card indexed. Once a year they receive a fresh dose of the quieting drug. Their hearts may beat, they may breathe, the blood may flow through their vascular systems, but these things can only be detected by instruments of the greatest precision. All that can be said of them is that they are not dead.

"When I told you, years ago, that insanity would increase in a country in proportion to the amount of glass used, I was stating a hypothesis that turned out to be axiomatically true. All we did was to invent new processes whereby glass could be made very cheaply and educate the Glass Trust in new methods of advertising. The plan seemed fool proof. All we had to do was to sit and wait for the nation to go insane. It nearly did. In fact, I believe that every person in the United States who could become insane did so. Even the sane ones would have tottered and fallen under the burden had it not been for the process invented by that Southern Professor. You remember that we considered the possibility of the fact that the sane ones might kill the insane ones to be rid of them, but none of us ever conceived of their solving the problem in the way they did solve it.

"Just what did we accomplish?

"We took a nation which contained every possible

form of degeneracy, feeble-mindedness, criminality and potential insanity and we purified it. We were the direct cause of their being able to produce a race of superior adults. Not only that, but we were the indirect cause of their being able to keep it so. Now, every criminal, every psychiatric case, even every person who contracts syphilis is at once put to sleep. They have a country free from crime, social diseases and nervousness. It did not take long for the mentally twisted of the world to learn to stay out of a country like that. The rest of the world is degenerating as fast as it can, but in the United States every force is one of uplift, and righteousness.

"And we did it. We wanted to have our revenge and we did it.

"And because of what we did, it is a better, bigger country today than it ever was."

"But what really became of our race?" asked George, who had once been called Count Sebastian.

"That was one of the interesting things they did. Every negro was examined. If he proved to be feeble-minded or diseased in any way, they put him to sleep. Those who were healthy were each given a thousand dollars and sent over to Liberia. At the present time there is not one negro in the States except those who are sleeping."

"I suppose they have them segregated, by themselves?" asked Marcus.

"Yes, I believe so."

"We are just where we were when we started!" exclaimed Dr. Semon.

The old woman, Ebony Kate, laughed:

"No! We are worse off than when we started. We have tried four times and four times we have failed."

"Tell me this, Dr. Flandings," asked George. "Did you find anyone who blamed us, *The Powerful Ones*, for what happened?"

"As far as I was able to find out," was the answer, "no one ever connected us with the wave of insanity. I even talked with some of the men who had been at the head of the Glass Trust and they were equally in the dark as to the part we had played."

Then George smiled, a bitter, crooked smile, as he whispered:

"If they have forgotten us, then we are all ready for the final blow. You three men, Marcus, Semon and Flandings go there, and by the sheer force of your intellect, secure positions in their central laboratories. It will be an easy thing for you to advance to positions of trust. Work on till you have charge of the making of this sleeping drug. Then find a powerful exciting drug to take its place, something that will make a maniac out of a marble statue. Arrange matters so that on the first of January each one of the sleepers will be given a dose of this mania-producing drug instead of the sleep medicine. Imagine the results! What can a million persons, no matter how intelligent, do in conflict with a hundred and ten million wild maniacs? Before they have time to realize what has happened, they will be torn to pieces and the country will be a desolate waste inhabited by millions of hungry, crazed fools and criminals. We will fly over the country in an aeroplane and watch it die! It will be our crowning triumph."

The three listeners ran over and hugged him in their joy.

"No one but you, George, would have thought of it!" exclaimed Marcus.

The old dame removed her pipe:

"Don't do it, boys!" she advised. "We have been defeated every time and by such a narrow margin that it makes me believe there is a God after all. We are



all rich enough to live comfortably for the rest of our lives. They have forgotten us. Let them alone and let us live in peace. No good will come of it."

The four men looked at her in pity, as Dr. Semon said:

"Poor Ebony Kate is certainly growing senile."

That worried the colored woman. She had failed to gain an education in her youth and though she had associated with these men all her life, still they had an unpleasant habit of using words she did not understand. What did it mean for a person to grow senile? There was no one to ask on the island; the servants were all illiterate. Anyway she could remember the word.

At the last moment, Count Sebastian decided to make the trip to the United States with the other three men. They left secretly and silently one night and when Ebony Kate awoke they were gone, and she was alone on the island with a dozen servants. That did not worry her as she was so greatly feared, that her life was an easy one. What bothered her was the word senile.

A YEAR passed and then another and yet a third. It was the first week of December when a steamer came near the island. The black woman at once recognized it as a strange ship. In the history of the island, this was the first time such a thing had happened. Shrugging her shoulders, she pretended indifference, gave a few rapid orders to the servants and walked down to the beach. Through the quiet waters of the lagoon a row boat was slowly approaching the shore. There were several men dressed in uniform, and one little old man in tropical linens.

The officers remained with the sailors but the little old man started to walk up the beach toward the black woman. They peered at each other. Suddenly the man said:

"I believe you are Ebony Kate?"

"I sure am—and are youse Master Taine?"

"Yes. That is my name. Well, Kate, we are some older than we were the last time we met. A good deal of water has gone over the mill dam since then. I never did think I would find you, but here you are. Can you take care of my friends and myself for a day or so? We shall want some fresh water and some fruit."

They walked back to the boat and Kate was introduced to the officers as Madam Octavia, formerly of Indo-China. Then they all went to the main bungalow. Taine and the officers all kept one hand in a pocket on a gun, but their caution was unnecessary. Taine, however, was uneasy.

"Where are your friends, Madam?"

"They are gone."

"I trust they are not dead."

"Ah! No. Not dead, Sir, but just away."

It was interesting to note that she was now talking in the best of English. Taine looked at her, wondering just what she really meant.

"So they are away? How well I remember the old times. There were Count Sebastian and Marcus and the clever physician, Dr. Semon. We were young then, Madam. I was living in San Francisco and every once in a while your friends made it necessary for me to travel. Life is different now in the United States. You would not recognize it. The changes in the last thirty years have been wonderful."

"And your wife and children, are they well?"

"They were the last time I saw them. That was a year ago. We have been cruising in the Pacific—for my health. I was beginning to grow old, Madam,

and my wife insisted that I consult a doctor, and he said that there was nothing wrong with me except that I had lost interest in life. He said that when a man had solved all of his problems and solved all his difficulties, he grew old. Then he said that what I needed was some excitement and advised me to go back on the Secret Service. I talked it over with Mrs. Taine and she suggested that I finish up my work of some thirty years ago and arrest or kill "*The Powerful Ones*." Her idea was that so long as they were alive, nobody in the United States would be really safe, and just because we had not heard from them for so long, was no sign that they were dead or harmless.

"I thought there was something in what she said, so I went to Washington. Almost everybody that I knew there was dead. As far as New York City was concerned, that was just a place where millions of sleepers were resting. The new city was upon the Hudson. I went there but all of my former friends were gone, a few were insane and the rest dead. So I thought it all over and decided to see the President of the United States. I told him the history of "*The Powerful Ones*" from the very beginning and ended by accusing them of the wave of insanity that had so nearly destroyed the nation. We had a hard time finding all the old documents but I finally proved every part of my story. Then I asked him for help in locating those men, provided they were still alive, and I suggested that they would be somewhere in the Pacific. He believed me enough to finance the search and I have been scouring the ocean for an unknown island. I heard rumors of such a place ruled over by an old-fashioned Princess and here you are and here I am."

"And the rest are not here," said Ebony Kate.

That was all she would say. The next day she was equally non-committal. Taine had an idea that the men he was hunting were hiding on the island, but to find them seemed rather hopeless. Meantime the steamer was supplied with water and fruit and a dozen live pigs.

On the third night, after supper, Taine announced his intention of remaining ashore instead of returning to the ship with the officers. The night was calm. Ebony Kate sat on the gallery fanning herself. Taine sat watching her. Suddenly she stopped rocking and said:

"Mr. Taine, what is senile? If you say that a person is growing senile, what do you mean?"

"It means that you are growing old, the skin wrinkles, the hair becomes white, your teeth fall out, your memory becomes poor. You become a withered, silly old hag."

"Would you call me senile?"

"No, indeed! You do not look a day over fifty. In fact, I thought that you were very well preserved. Of course you must be old but I never would call you senile."

"That is kind of you to say it that way, Mr. Taine."

"Just telling the truth, Kate."

"I believe you. I wish I could make up my mind to talk to you."

The wind was beginning to moan in the palm trees. In spite of the breeze, it seemed to be growing much warmer, almost hot. Taine wondered if it were going to rain.

"Go ahead and talk, if you want to, Kate," he said.

"I believe I will. You knew me when I was on the Barbary Coast in Frisco. I was keeping George then. He would have starved many a day but for my help. I often gave Marcus money and as for Dr. Semon, there was a time when he begged me to marry him.



In the early days of the adventure, I was the only one who was on Easy Street. Of course when they started to make the gold, I shared in their good times, but at the same time I was of great help to them. I held the group together and got all the Southern niggers to join us by my voodoo stuff. I was always true to them, and you know there were times when I could have made my pile by giving them away to the Government. They lived an easy life and they were white so long that I guess they forgot they were just black folks like I was. We have been on the island a long time: they used to make trips and they never did ask me to go. Guess they were ashamed of having a black woman with them.

"They were back of that insanity stuff. Dr. Flandings gave them the idea and they put it through the Glass Trust without arousing any suspicion. They failed—but they came close to succeeding. Perhaps you might have found out about it, but you never had a chance to even get started. When they found out how close they had come to success and yet how much better things were because of their work, they were discouraged. Flandings made a special trip all through the States and when he came back three years ago he said that life was happier and healthier there than it ever was before, and that they had gotten rid of all of our race. It was a white country for white people. That made them all feel sick, and then—my! But the wind is coming up."

"Don't mind that—go on with your story," urged Taine.

"They decided to do something else—and I told them not to—I thought they had better stop while the stopping was good—and Dr. Semon—he used to say that he loved me—he says to George, 'Poor old Kate is growing senile.' That's what he said, and then they went ahead with their plans and one night they all left, and that was three years ago and I have not seen them since."

"But what did they plan to do?" demanded Taine.

"I hain't no call to tell you all, but I'se gwine ter do it." In her excitement the negress had lapsed into her dialect. "They reckon ter git hold of the place where the sleeping medicine is made and make something that will make all those loony folk go wild. They reckon the loonies will tear everything wide open and kill all the rest er the folk that ain't crazy. I hain't no call to tell you—but Semon hadn't ought to call me that mean name!"

"BY the Seven Sacred Caterpillars!!" swore Taine, jumping to his feet. "If they succeed in doing that the country will be sure enough wrecked. They give that medicine on the first of every January. That gives us twenty days. We will broadcast the warning at once from the ship. It is too late for us to get to San Francisco in time. Get some of the servants to row me out to the steamer and—"

He did not finish his sentence, for just at that last word the storm broke. It was more of a tornado than a storm and more of a typhoon than a tornado. It caught the steamer and carried it to the coast of Australia, a sorry wreck, with over half of the crew lost. It carried away every house on the island and every one of the servants. It rushed in a diabolical fury over the island for half an hour, and then there came a death-like quiet. The full moon shone over the wreckage and saw two people unconscious under the timbers of the largest house—a white man and a black woman.

Ebony Kate and Taine did not die though they were rather sore and miserable for a few days. They could

do nothing but make the best of things and they proceeded to do so. They fixed a roof over a part of the ruins, gathered together what food supplies they could find, and then settled down to housekeeping, with Taine as the master and Ebony Kate as cook.

Taine was miserable. Had it not been for his firm belief in predestination, he would have been much more depressed than he was. While not possessed of all the details, he was confident that on the first of January one hundred and fifteen million raving maniacs would be turned loose in his beloved country, all the more desperate and depraved because of their long sleep. He was sure that it was going to happen and there was nothing he could do to prevent it. In the meantime, he salvaged a revolver and some ammunition from the wreckage and practiced target shooting. He told Kate what he intended to do. On her knees, she begged him not to:

"You are a Christsian man, Mr. Taine. Please don't go to your God with blood on yer hands."

But Taine only laughed at her:

"Just like shooting so many rats, Kate. Those white niggers have been the ruin of my country and the pest of my life. I do not want them to think that they have raised all this Hell and will not be punished for it. I am going to hide when they come, and wait till they start their bragging, and then I am going to walk out and kill them—one, two, three, four, just like I hit those cocoa nuts, and then you and I will wait our chance and go back home."

Nothing she could say had any effect on him.

January came and almost went. In fact, it was on the last day of January that a ship appeared on the horizon, came nearer, unloaded four men and several cases of goods and then sailed away. The four men proved to be George, Marcus and the two Doctors. They looked just about the same as when they left, perhaps a little older, but a thousand times happier. In fact, they were exuberant with joy as they greeted Ebony Kate.

"We got them this time, Kate. We certainly did," said George.

"Wait till supper time and then we will open some of the champagne, and you can tell me all about it."

They were a little worried about the damage done to the island and pitied the black woman on account of her months of loneliness. They promised to take her to Paris in a few months. The ship was going to stop for them on the return trip and from now on they were going to take life easy. She told them to put their things away and get ready for the supper. They knocked the top off one of the crates and filled her apron with canned goods, caviar, lobster and salad dressing.

At five that evening the five of them sat down to the supper. They were all in good spirits and the men, after a few glasses of champagne, all wanted to talk at once. Finally Ebony Kate said:

"Keep quiet. I's wanting to know what happened and you all talk so's I can't understand head or tail of it. George, you tell it, you'se got the bestest words."

"It was like this," said George, "we went to France and then across to the States. Didn't take long to show them that we knew our stuff and we got government jobs. We worked toward the laboratory end of it and somehow the men above us were always getting sick—that was good stuff you made for us, Kate; it didn't make them suspicious; just made them want a long vacation—and every time one of them went away one of us was promoted. The beginning of last year we were just about in charge of the manufacturing and distribution end of the game, so we started in earnest



and without their knowing a thing about it, we made about one hundred and twenty million doses of something that was just about dynamite. It looked like the sleeping drug, and it had the same chemical reactions, but it was certainly different in its effect. The last week we secretly destroyed all the records and formulae and a lot of the most delicate machinery. Then we rushed over to Vancouver and waited. On the second of January, we got absolutely correct reports from Seattle, one of the sleeping cities. One of the watchmen stood it as long as he could and then beat it to Canada. The radio sent the Canadian papers lots of detail. Every sleeping imbecile was just awake and raising unadulterated Hell of every description. We knew it wasn't any use to stay and since we were through, we were naturally anxious to get our things from the island and go to Paris for the rest of our lives. We won, Kate! Of course we cannot tell you every detail but it stands to reason that one million sane people couldn't do much against over one hundred and fifteen million maniacs. It took us over forty years to wreck that nation but we did it—and it is going to stay wrecked."

"So you all's gwine ter go ter Paris?"

"Yes, just as soon as we can."

"Gwine ter take me with yer?"

"Well, now, Kate, you see it's this way. You have a good home here and we will always take care of you and see that you do not want for anything. But at your age you had better stay here and take things easy."

"Think I am too old?"

"It's like this, Kate," said Dr. Semon. "You have been here so long, that it is just like home here and you would not be happy anywhere else."

The black woman looked at the four white men at the table with her. She knew that they were really black—in more ways than one—she thought of that white man who was really white waiting to kill them—he had always treated her like a black woman, but then he had always been kind to her— So she said:

"Suppose we end the supper with a drink of brandy?"

She served it to them, and then Marcus proposed a toast:

"To our friends, the whites of the United States, in Paradise, and may we never meet!"

They drank it standing, and then they all sat down. Taine walked into the room.

They looked at him rather stupidly.

"Stand up and fight," he commanded. "I am here to kill you all, but I want to give you a chance. Pull out your guns and we will start shooting."

"Don't shoot them, Master Taine," whispered Kate. "Wait a little."

Taine had them covered with his revolver suspecting treachery of some kind but the four men simply grew quieter and yet more quiet, seated in their rattan chairs.

And finally the white man realized that they were dead.

Ebony Kate was sobbing hysterically.

Taine thought about it for some hours before he understood.

**I**N the course of some weeks, the steamer came back to the island. Taine made arrangements to have all the natives carried to the nearest populated island. He engaged passage for himself to British Columbia. He kept himself as busy as he could, to keep his mind steady. He felt young and there was no doubt that the Doctor had been right in advising him to go back to work, but at the same time he was more than wor-

ried about his family and his nation. He knew that he could not rest easy till he learned what had really happened.

It was not until they had dropped the natives and started in earnest for the long voyage across the Pacific that it was discovered that Ebony Kate was on board.

"I just couldn't leave you, Master Taine," she said. "There's no telling what you will find in the States, and you may need some one to cook for you. Even if your wife and children are all right, it will be handy to have me around to help with the work."

Taine couldn't do anything except to tell her that she might come.

Somehow he thought of the little black puppy.

He wanted to get word from the States but the radio on the steamer was out of order, so nothing could be learned until the ship reached Honolulu. Everything seemed as usual there. Taine rushed to the Governor's mansion and presented his letters of introduction.

"We thought you were dead, Mr. Taine," said that gentleman. "Your steamer ended upon the Australian coast, but all their charts were lost, and we had no means of locating you without a persistent search. I have two ships out now looking for you. Tell me all about it? Did you find your men?"

"I'll tell you after you tell me. I cannot wait a minute longer. Tell me what happened in the States?"

"You mean you haven't heard?"

"Not a word. Radio out of order. I knew they had a bad time but what really happened?"

"Make yourself comfortable, and I'll tell you," said the Governor. "On the first of January they gave the doses of sleeping medicine as usual and I think they gave about one hundred and seventeen million doses. It seems that they had more workers than usual and the entire work was finished by night. On the morning of the second, wireless messages came into Washington from every sleeping city that the sleepers were awake. When the central authorities went to the laboratories for advice they found the heads of the departments gone, the records destroyed and the complicated machinery wrecked. It was only then that they began to realize what had happened. Immediately word was sent to every sane community to have the people congregate and prepare to defend themselves. It was not necessary to warn the watchmen to flee for their lives: they were all frightened, as none of them had ever seen an insane person awake.

"For three days there was the most intense preparation in our living cities. Provisions were gathered, barbed wire fences put up and charged with electricity, the men were organized into companies and put on guard duty. By the end of the third day nothing happened, and the Government sent scouting planes over the cities to see what was going on. They reported that the cities seemed quite normal. Then the Government called for volunteers to go to New York City. There had been fifteen million sleepers there and they considered that what had taken place there, had taken place in every one of the sleeping cities. They decided on sending just five men: thought that a few would attract less attention from the insane than a crowd would.

"The account we received from the Government went on to say that these men were taken to the edge of the city in an automobile and started out on their exploration. They had a wireless with them so they could report their observations as they went along.

"Then came the most astonishing thing!

"There was not anything to report!



"There were no insane people!

"But here and there, all over the city, and in the rooms and halls of the houses were little piles of dust, with now and then a gold tooth or a filling. That is what made them understand. See what had happened. The gold filling amid the little piles of dust. Then scientists were sent in, trained observers and chemists. They studied the entire problem from every point and they finally arrived at one conclusion:

"They reported that during all these years, the sleepers had been slowly using up their store of vitality, or energy, or whatever it was that kept them alive. Then, when the drug was changed, they became awake and started in to walk and talk and probably fight. This required a great amount of energy. In a short time they expended all they had. They simply dried up and died. There must have been something else, however, as there was not a trace of clothing or bone left and the scientists felt that there had been a spontaneous combustion of some kind. They could not explain it, but the dried bodies must have burned because around every little pile of white ash there was a trace of carbon, especially noticed on the streets.

"The Government is making an elaborate report on the matter for distribution, but I have not received a copy. What I have told you is just a preliminary statement Washington has sent out by radio to the newspapers."

"Then nothing happened? The sane people were not harmed?"

"No. Of course they might have been if the awakened insane had lived longer in that excited state, but they died too soon to do any damage."

"But what will the Government do to the new cases of insanity?"

"That is the interesting thing. They believe that

THE END.

there are going to be no more new cases. For nearly forty years every person that was criminal, alcoholic, syphilitic or with psychosis was put to sleep. They had no children. Only the superior adults, perfectly clean in soul and body, were allowed to marry. The specialists say there will be no more mental diseases in the United States because there will be nothing to produce them. We live in the open, avoid the use of glass, bathe in sunlight and live clean."

Taine scratched his head in deep thought. Finally he said:

"We shall not have to even take care of the sleepers any more?"

"No. There are no more sleepers and there will be no more!"

Taine laughed at that:

"It seems often that there really is a controlling destiny. Every time these criminals started to harm our country it ended in good. It makes me more of a Presbyterian than ever."

"Have you been able to find out anything about them?"

"Yes," Taine replied, seriously. "I know that they will never bother us any more. Still, I am sorry about that, in a way. I always felt so well when I was after them. Seemed somehow that it kept me young. Perhaps, though, I can find something else to keep me busy, even if the United States is one hundred per cent perfect. Can you tell me when the next steamer sails for California? I am anxious to see my children, and grandchildren, and most of all, my wife."

In the years that followed, Ebony Kate delighted in telling the little Taines how their grandfather and she had fought those white-black-boogers. Whenever they asked him for the truth of the stories, he always said that old Mammy knew as much about it all as he did.

## Rapid Aging of Wine

The following reports on the aging of wine seems quite *a propos* of the recent votes on Repeal of the 18th amendment. It is an abstract of a report of Dr. R. C. Downs on the chemistry of the aging of wine as published in the *Herald Tribune*.

He said the aging time can be cut so much that the cost of wine making will be greatly reduced. The process is a strictly American development, arising from some surprising results described by Dr. Downs that come from passing a current of air over benzene and naphthalene.

The result is malic acid, a chemical curiosity prior to discovery of this method of synthesis. From malic acid so made have come a small host of new chemical possibilities, including the quick aging of wine.

Malic acid, which is familiar in apples, is one of the new derivatives. For the wine a little calcium is added making

what the chemists call calcium malate.

"All young wine," said Dr. Downs in explaining the process, "contains cream of tartar and tartaric acid. It usually requires several years of aging for the precipitation of excess tartar during the process of fermentation, and after the conclusion thereof.

"If the wine is bottled before precipitation of tartarates is fully completed, the production loses in commercial value, because the bottles will contain certain of the tartarates in precipitated and visible form. Even in the production of unfermented grape juice this slow precipitation takes place.

"This long storage greatly increases the cost of production. By addition of calcium malate in proper proportions to wine, even when young, and agitating it for a short time, any proportion of tartaric acid desired can be removed, leaving malic acid to replace the natural substance in grapes."

### STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC., REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1933,

OF AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY, published Quarterly at Dunellen, New Jersey, for October 1, 1933.  
State of New York  
County of New York } ss.

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared Lee Ellmaker, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the AMAZING STORIES QUARTERLY and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Teck Publications, Inc., 222 West 39th St., New York City; Editor, Dr. T. O'Connor Sloane, 222 West 39th St., New York City; Managing Editor, None; Business Managers, Lee Ellmaker, 222 West 39th St., New York City.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each

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3. That the known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 per cent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: (If there are none, so state.) None.

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Sworn to and subscribed before me this 6th day of October, 1933.

LEE ELLMAKER, Business Manager.

ABNER GERMANN, Notary Public.

Queens County Clerk's No. 2417.

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New York County Reg. No. 40279.

My Comm. expires March 30, 1934.



# Rotary Force

By T. O'Connor Sloane, Ph.D.

ONE of the typical amusements of childhood, especially of the male division thereof, involves the whirling of a weight attached to a string around in the air. The more rapidly it is whirled the greater will the pull against the hand be. This idea of attaining velocity by whirling a weight in the familiar way, has been applied in the past to weapons for use in war or in the chase of animals. In Xenophon we find quite a point made about the regiments of slingers, soldiers who were instructed in the art of slinging stones or other projectiles at the enemy. Sometimes these projectiles were made of lead, even with a motto cast on them, intimating that the enemy can "take this." A blow with one of these would easily kill a man.

If we go down to the southern part of South America, we find there the Patagonians whose name has been rendered more or less accurately as "flat foots" because their leggings are supposed to flap around their feet, making them look very large. These have a rather terrible weapon, the bolas, meaning balls, that consist of the magnification of the boy's toy. It has some three thongs, at the end of each of which there is attached a round stone. This is a type of sling which is used in the pursuit of game. It is whirled around and projected at the animal with the idea of striking its legs so that the stones would whirl around and the legs of the animal would be tightly bound by the cord, and before they could get free, the hunter would be upon them. We are told of another use of it, in which if the hunter were attacked by a jaguar he would project the bolas so that one of the stones would strike with deadly force upon the head of the animal.

We can even go to the North and there we will find a miniature bolas. The three weights were ivory, made from the teeth of some denizen of the polar regions, the walrus or narwhal. The Esquimaux had considerable talent in the line of art for what we call savage people. The Esquimaux weapon, which the writer once possessed, had very pretty carvings of animals and canoes (kyaks) engraved upon it and it was used to catch birds with. It seemed really to be nothing more than a toy, it was so small, but it was a *bona fide* hunter's weapon.

The force which keeps the string or cord in these types of weapons or playthings, as the case may be, strained strongly outwards may be very great, and the name for this strain has long been centrifugal force. But what is there that should create this pull away from the center? It is not going too far to say that many people miss the cause which produces it.

Every object in motion, if only one force were applied, would go in a straight line. The earth and the planets and the satellites move in ellipses because they are prevented from moving in straight lines by the pull of gravity which acts just like the string of the boy's plaything. We think that if released, the stone attached to the string would fly away from the center in a radial direction. If released it does not do this but move in the line of a tangent to the circle in which it is rotating. This of course brings it further and further from the center so that one manual of physics adopted the term centrifugal component of tangential velocity, for the action which is certainly not as compact as the every-day expression of "centrifugal force."

This straining out from the center may be very in-

tense. There are on record many instances of grindstones bursting into pieces, flying all over the shop, and perhaps killing one or more victims. The novelist, Charles Reade, in one of his novels, brings in this danger and depicts a man of defective intellect, but who possessed the faculty of recognizing a dangerous grindstone by the sound which is made when struck with a hammer, and who tested the soundness of the grindstones for the mills.

All this seems to apply to things of small dimension, if we may so express it, but centrifugal force produces enormous effects. The great waters of the earth are heaped up around the Equator, so that the earth is some thirteen miles greater in diameter at the Equator than if measured on the polar axis. This is certainly a rather gigantic manifestation of force as far as man is concerned, for if the earth ceased to rotate on its axis, imagine what would inevitably take place. The water at the Equator would sink for several miles, laying bare the ocean bed for many miles from the present shore line. Going toward the poles, it would rise up for a height of several miles and would produce a veritable flood in the Northern and Southern zones.

And now take the planets and their satellites. They all move in approximate circles. The force that holds them in their courses, so that they whirl around like the boy's stone on the end of his string, is gravitation—something entirely beyond explanation except as far as theorizing is concerned. Cut the cord, as we may metaphorically term gravitation, and the earth, all the planets, the moon and all the satellites and all the asteroids would fly off in straight lines in the direction of the tangents of the elliptical path which they have been following. If on the other hand we can imagine something really inconceivable, that centrifugal force were abolished, every object, planet, satellite and asteroid in the solar system would plunge in straight lines into the sun.

In the spinning of a top, we have an example of rotary inertia, as we may call it, which maintains it securely on its point, and this persistence of a rotating body in holding its position is applied in a number of ways. It is used for steering ships and in controlling the flight of airplanes. It amounts to a heavy flywheel kept in rotation at a very high speed, so that it holds the ship upon her course practically independent of the helmsman, although, of course, its operations have to be watched and regulated. The rolling of a ship is also controllable by the same principle—an enormously heavy flywheel in its hold, kept in rotation at a high velocity, diminishes the disagreeable motion. These last two instances illustrate the action of the instrument known as the gyroscope.

Our comfort on this earth of ours may be said to be dependent on the proper course of the seasons and this is secured by this same gyroscopic effect. The rotation of the earth whirling on its axis, the equator doing over a thousand miles an hour, keeps the axis in an almost unchanging inclination to the approximate disc defined by its path around the sun, and it is rotary force which may be called a phase of centrifugal force, which holds that axis as firmly as if it were stayed like the mast of a ship by shrouds and stays, there being, however, a little periodical departure in the definite path from the absolute direction of the terrestrial axis.



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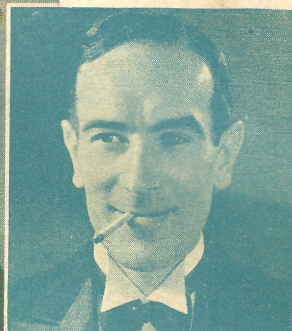
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