

The Magazine of Prophetic Fiction

WONDER Stories

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ON THE COVER THIS MONTH

taken from Arthur G. Stangland's "Fatal Equation" we see the mathematician Macmillan escaping from his accusers by stepping into the time vortex. Almost instantly he vanishes.

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(Illustration by Paul)

A great booming roar set the floor trembling. Three airships exploded over the city roof. The city was in bedlam. Over all rested that nameless horror of insanity.

THE MAN WHO AWOKE

II—MASTER OF THE BRAIN

By LAURENCE MANNING

● It was really a charming scene. Some huge hickories overshadowed it to the north and a great sequoia towered on the west, secluding the natural clearing to the warm south-east winds. Over its floor ran vines with bright green leaves and clumps of partridge berries showed red in the midsummer sun. All around—the wilderness! At the foot of a bank of Mountain Laurel was a slight depression in the carpet of brown leaves, as though water settled there in heavy rains. No human habitation nor any vestige of the human touch was observable through the undergrowth in any direction. This was strange, for this spot was once on the map as a fashionable suburb of New York City.

To a twentieth-century observer another thing would have been noticeable—the woods were of natural growth, but the sequoia is a native of the California coast. To the squirrels who frequented the trees, the sequoia was no stranger; it had stood there through thousands of squirrel generations and was now as natural as the hickories. One red squirrel, nosing for last year's nuts near the tangle of laurel stopped all motion suddenly and eyed the depression in the ground rather sharply.

Something strange going on, there it was again! Away like a streak of fire he darted and half-way up a tall sapling, where he hung upside-down and swearing like his betters. Nothing happened. Then he ran down again and over to the depression and cocked a listening ear a full sixty seconds. Suddenly he leaped away and made for his tree and as he did so the solid earth showed raw beneath the covering of dead leaves and a hole appeared into which the sunlight poured.

A shock of grey hair showed below the ground and it rose slowly, as a plant might push its stem up through the earth in spring, coming through with earth and leaves sticking to it and smelling of a long hibernation below the ground. Only this was not a plant—the hair belonged to a head and the head to the body of an old man and this was so contrary to proper reason and conduct that the red squirrel stopped his chatter of protest and made off for more safe and sane portions of the forest. In deathly stillness the man brushed leaves and dirt from his person with a painfully slow and feeble motion and stood looking about him in bewilderment.

A scraggly crop of whiskers covered the lower part of his face, but the mouth showed firm and sensitive and the thin, aristocratic nose loomed sentinel-like over the tangle. His hands were thin and terribly emaciated, and long nails, soiled with recent earth, grew unevenly from the delicate and tapered fingers. He was dressed in a leather jacket and some heavy, silk-like breeches of dark green, ending

● Controversy on Technocracy leads to one ultimate question—who is to control our social and industrial life? Technocracy would really have our social life controlled by central authorities; and governed by all manner of automatic equipment and charts.

What would happen to humanity under such conditions—even if the Technocrats succeed in ordering our existence to provide considerable leisure and a large income for everyone? We would be, thinks Mr. Manning, in this second story of his series, under the control of a central Brain; and if anything happened to the Brain, woe betide the race. This story, therefore, is both a promise and a warning of the future.

in leather leggings. In spite of the earth stains the man was immaculately dressed, incongruously so, for his face was lined and wrinkled and his body was wasted and thin. With faltering steps he made his way to a grey moss-covered boulder and sat down, still staring about him as though he were amazed by everything he saw. The thin white lips moved slightly and a barely audible whisper escaped:

“Gone! All gone! Eight thousand years! And nothing but wilderness!”

His thoughts went back to the pain and agony of his awakening, three days ago, down there beneath the ground. He could not remember it all, but fragments of visions came and went. That first reaching for the reviving medicine when the violet-rays had waked him! To move his hand ten inches—what an incredible journey that had been! Inch after inch, hour after hour, his fingers had crawled, dragging the powerless arm after them. And how had he ever succeeded in getting the bottle to his mouth? He could not remember that. His eyes had seen a red mist and his body trembled in every part with an agonized determination of will-driven effort that passed beyond reasoning. When he came weakly to his senses there was the miracle complete and a slight turn of the stopper had permitted a stream of liquid to enter his open mouth and burn there—for he could not swallow! But enough had trickled down his throat, even if more still had wet his couch.

That medicine—his friend the biologist had prepared it against this very need of his, five thousand years ago in the village among the trees. (All dead and gone and their very village forgotten now—for about him was no longer the regularly spaced grove of those men of the trees

whose botanical genius had found an easier way to grow food than by cropping the soil.) That medicine had sent him into a drugged sleep from which he awoke in a few hours, strong enough to reach for another drink.

Three days he had rested, recovering his strength and subduing his impatience to see what changes the years had brought, up above. Then he had donned fresh clothes from the vacuum chamber which preserved them from the fate that had befallen the tattered rags he awoke in, and had left the lead-lined chamber fifty feet below to feast his twentieth-century eyes upon a world surely transformed by five millennia.

With what eagerness he had made his way up the stone-walled tunnel, scraping and pushing at the drifted earth. And now—here he was! His time-journey was over, for unless he could rebuild his chamber he must live out such days as remained to him right where he was. The eight thousand years since it had been built here had done too much damage. He shuddered anew as he thought of that lead pipe covered with deep white-powdered cracks. What a miracle it had not given way before its purpose was fulfilled! A mere matter of a hundred years one way or the other! Suddenly his bent body seemed to straighten and his head was held higher.

"Come!" He said aloud to the silent woods. "This patch of shrubbery is not the whole world! Be off with you, Norman Winters, and see what is to be seen!"

● The voice was deep-pitched, but thin in tone, and sounded as though the man were rather testing the vocal organ than addressing anyone. But the words awakened anew all the little forest voices and the squirrels commenced to scold vociferously, as though protesting against this apparition from beneath the ground turning out to be only another animal.

Winters cocked an ear to the friendly sounds and smiled as he pushed his way through the shrubbery toward the east. He was looking for something and presently he came upon it—a great highway of green glass stretching north and south as far as the eye could see. This much was exactly as he had found it on his first emergence from the chamber five thousand years ago. But no—not exactly the same, after all! There was a dreary unused appearance about it. Along the margins lay drifted refuse of the centuries—fallen branches, streaks of sand, litter of leaves—and close to the vitreous edge shrubs grew and occasionally large trees.

He stamped his feet on the five thousand year-old surface and marvelled at its durability. Feeling lost in the emptiness of the world he set off northward and after an hour's slow walking came to a great crack in the highway, beyond which a section hundreds of yards long was up-torn and splintered as if by earthquake (or could it be a bomb?). He was near the village he had visited so many years ago and looked about hopefully for signs of human beings, but in vain. No slightest trace of the village remained. Neither stick nor stone gave indication of ancient human occupation, but only the wilderness on each side of the hard pavement.

The fresh air and the exercise had set his sluggish blood to circulating briskly and some color had appeared in the pale cheeks, but he sat down to rest his aching muscles and to chew a pellet of condensed food from his pocket. What should he do now? He had enough food for a few days and some simple tools in his belt. Should he settle down

at this spot and build himself a hut and gather nuts and fruit from the forest and shoot game for meat? He shook his head determinedly. Somewhere in this new world there were people. He must find them! Very sadly and soberly he continued his walking—choosing to continue northward—and did not see the flying ship pass so silently overhead, to vanish over the tree tops on the right.

But the ship had seen him. It was small and like a shiny metal cigar. It had been cruising low over the forest and upon sighting the man below had banked sharply and swung around behind him and to the right, so that its shadow would not apprise him of its approach. Silent as an owl it floated fifty feet up and like a bird of prey it swooped down. . . .

To Winters the shock was breath-taking—panicky. A great net of tough silk cord descended from the sky upon him and he was swept off his feet and borne high into the air within the compass of a mere second. For a moment he had an upside-down view of the world beneath, as he hung, dangling and swaying, then he felt himself drawn up swiftly and through a doorway in the floor of the ship which closed after him noisily. He lay on the floor of the cabin near the tail and twenty feet away stood an apparition dressed in the most glowing shades of gold and scarlet. The smooth satin trousers were of scarlet and the shapely legs were encased in gold. Golden also was the flowing shirt beneath the scarlet jacket and on the head a helmet of golden metal. The face was youthful and of great beauty, but whether man or woman Winters could not decide. The body, likewise, was soft and full yet in a nameless way sexless to Winters' twentieth-century eyes.

He was too stunned to make any attempt to escape from the capturing net and after watching him a moment with hard, eager eyes, his captor pulled a cord and he felt the net loosen upon him. In a few moments he stood shakily on his feet and made a tentative step forward. His outstretched hand touched free air, so his eyes told him, yet it felt hard and unyielding as glass. With a startled exclamation he tried again and an amused smile parted the lips of the figure at the forward end of the cabin.

"Have you never seen the barrier ray before, wilding?"

The English words* were almost unrecognizable in that soft blurred accent, though the voice was low and sweet. Winters' first thought: "So she's a woman, then!" Not for a second or two did the familiar syllables connect themselves in his mind with his own language. Then with a start of surprise he said, "What do you want with me? Where are you taking me?"

She smiled again. "What do we always want of you wildings?"

"I don't know what you mean!"

"Nonsense! You must have heard that we have hunted you for five hundred years and must know what we are about! You were very easy, wilding! What ever persuaded you to walk in the middle of the great highway? Didn't you know you would be caught?"

Winters thought rapidly a moment. "Wilding"—that must mean he had been taken for a man who lives in the woods here. Good enough! But why were such men hunted? He smiled disarmingly.

"Why should I fear to be caught? I am doing no wrong."

*The English language had not, of course, remained so completely unchanged as recorded in this narrative. Many new words had been coined and old ones forgotten. But in most cases the meaning was plain enough and long explanations and definitions which Winters had to undergo have been spared the reader by substituting twentieth-century words.

"Wrong! You are not living in the city doing your work and conforming to the laws of civilization, are you? You are not. . . . (she thought a moment in silence) . . . by the way, where were you walking to?"

"I wanted to find the nearest city, of course."

"Oh!" She eyed his unkempt beard doubtfully, then turned hesitatingly to the control board of the ship and pushed a button. She smiled at Winters saucily. "You *did* seem rather quiet; I have had wildings almost wreck the cabin. But of course, if you were *looking* for a city. . . . there's none better than where we are going. We don't usually have such an easy time making converts to civilization. I have released the barrier ray and you may come forward with me now, if you wish. But do not touch anything!"

His brain bewildered with the hidden secrets of policy thus half revealed, Winters was soon comfortably seated looking down at the miles of forest, while the ship speeded due north.

● His new friend introduced herself as Val-ya and seemed to be a very pleasant person. She spent so little time in guiding the ship and paid so slight attention to its controls that he questioned her about their course.

"We go to the Brain," she replied simply. "He will guide us."

"The brain?"

Val-ya stared a moment, then smiled. "Surely, you must know. . . . why, how quaint! Have you never heard of the Brain?"

"No."

"But for the past ten centuries it has ruled the world—does news travel so slowly in the wilderness?"

"I do not get much news—I live. . . . by myself, you see. Tell me about it."

"How very quaint! No one will believe this when I tell it! The Brain is. . . . well, It is a machine that includes every function of the human brain and surpasses it in most things. It is totally unprejudiced and absolutely infallible. The government of our civilization has been given over to It. Only by Its guidance have we been able to reduce the working hours of mankind to one hour a week. Think of that, wilding! You are free to live in our city and enjoy all its comforts and such luxuries and pleasures as you have never imagined—all at the price of one hour's easy labor each week! I know you will say there are other cities—but ours is the actual residence of the Brain. Other cities throughout the world are mere stations controlled by It. Surely you would prefer to live in the center of the civilized world?"

Some familiar touch savored to the mind of Winters of the old-fashioned sales talk of his own times. What its purpose could be he did not know—could not imagine—but one thing was certain: He had been hunted and captured and was now being persuaded to live in some city. He decided to say absolutely nothing about his own affairs until he could learn more.

"Where is your city?" he asked.

"Half an hour to the north; beside the Great Falls."

"But this brain. . . . do you obey it whether you like it or not?"

He noticed a sudden furtive glance toward the ceiling where a small black box protruded. His companion's voice had a slight tremor in it as she answered.

"Certainly. . . . the Great Brain is infallible. Who would want to act contrary to reason?"

Winters persisted in his questions and found her strangely averse to discussing this phase of their life. He turned his attention to the landscape spread out below. Presently he made out a white mark far ahead against the green ground and this, as they drew closer, proved to be a great wall hundreds of feet in height. It evidently surrounded the city of their destination, for the familiar outlines of Niagara lay beside it. Over the city a dome of clear glass stretched like a bubble and he could make out buildings and streets inside. The airship settled lower and lower and presently landed gently, close to the city wall at a point where a huge archway broke its smooth contour. Val-ya left him a moment and returned with a tall man dressed in green and scarlet silk.

"This is Supervisor Contrig," she said. "He will show you our city and, no doubt, invite you to join us here if you wish." With a flashing smile she turned to attend to her ship and Winters set off on foot with his new guide—a lean and sallow fellow whom he somehow disliked at first sight. Up to the great gates they walked in the hot sunshine and two scarlet and gold men stared at him curiously as they pulled the opening lever. A door opened and they entered the city.

"Why, it's cool!" exclaimed Winters.

"Of course, wilding! Did you think we would be content with whatever nature pleased to give us in the way of weather?"

They walked down a street toward the center of the city, flanked on both sides by factory buildings and work-shops. The street was of green glass and the buildings of white composition—the same as the city wall. But inside the buildings, plainly visible through great glass windows, there spread to his view a scene like the dreams of a mad architect—like the inside of a museum of machinery all in automatic operation. Strange inventions and refinements of ancient mechanisms sprang up in window after window. Here was material to delight his historian's soul—the very kind of future civilization that dreamers and prophets had imagined back in the twentieth century—a thrilling vista of wonders and a consummation of the mechanical evolution.

Their street ended in a cross avenue, which curved beyond the sight and evidently encircled the city. Not many men were visible even here, and those Winters saw were hurrying along about their affairs. Moving platforms at three different speeds ran in both directions and a stationary sidewalk flanked them. On each side rose the buildings, great blocks of masonry which ended in graceful towers of shimmering metal and glass, close under the roof. The sunlight streamed through and glittered on the towers and Winters saw an airship pass overhead above the glass.

Winters asked where the workers were.

"In their work-rooms, of course," said Contrig. "I will show you." He led the way into one of the buildings and guided Winters along a corridor. The walls were of glass and, looking through, he observed the "labors" of these folk of the hundredth century. Each person sat on soft cushions or lay on couches in private cubicles—some slept, some leaned over the partition talking or playing some kind of game on a board with their neighbors! The dresses were luxurious and of soft tones, setting off the remarkable beauty of their wearers. But as a picture of men at work,

it conformed with none of Winters' preconceived ideas.

"These are at work," said Contrig and, at Winters' raised eyebrows, he continued. "While on duty each must devote perhaps an hour a day to his task. During that time they may not leave their work-rooms (he used a word: labray, which Winters had to have explained). After a week at work they enjoy five weeks rest and recreation—usually at the pleasure palaces which I shall show you later."

"But what *work* do they do?"

"See that young woman—there! She has stopped her relaxation and is getting up to tend the distribution board. She is apportioning averages for the reserve stores. And that elderly man is collating orders for the Karma vats and routing them through the automatic machines. Most of the work, of course, is very light and agreeable in nature. There is some heavy work—machine designing and so forth under the guidance of the Brain—which is done only by our highest ranks. I as a supervisor am privileged to do such work," and he smiled, as Winters thought, in a preciously smug fashion.

The pleasure palaces proved to be a combination of resort hotel and Mussulman's paradise devoted in equal proportions to drinking and making love. All very well once in a while, Winters thought, but day after day for five weeks. . . ! He scarcely noted the things they passed until they came to a great reception room thronged with people. Here they stood a minute looking about them. Winters had an idea:

"But the more serious minded men. . . scientists, planners. . . where are they?"

The supervisor stared haughtily. "This is the city of the Brain!" he said. "How should mere men hope to better His work? He is infallible—we are full of human weakness and frailties."

"I should *not* like to live here!" said Winters decidedly.

"That is as you please. We should be glad to have you, but. . . that is the way out, over there. You can't miss it," and he turned on his heel.

CHAPTER II

The Pleasure Palaces

● The direction seemed exactly wrong to Winters. He started down the passage indicated, however, and had not gone fifty feet when a small arched door set in from the wall opened a crack and a white finger crooked itself at him. Hesitantly he paused and stared at the dark crack, but could see nothing except that beckoning hand. He stepped to the door and it opened before him to reveal a man in flaming crimson silk. He placed his fingers to his ears and made a quieting sound with his lips—a curious gesture which Winters understood to mean secrecy.

"You are the wilding who came in today? Good! I see you did not like our . . . life here! That enables me to trust you. There are others who do not like it. If I save your life will you help us change ours?"

He peered eagerly at Winters, his thin hawk-like nose and high cheek-bones giving him a particularly shrewd look. Winters was nonplussed.

"I don't know what you mean! If you should save my life I would, I suppose, be grateful and return the favor if I could."

"Good! Then I'll save it for you. Turn yourself around and hurry back to the Supervisor and tell him you have changed your mind—that you want at least one vacation

at the Pleasure Palace. Hurry!"

"But I *haven't* changed it!"

"Fool! I save your life and risk mine by telling you! Do you suppose the end of this passage leads back to your wilderness? Do you suppose the Brain ever lets a man escape once His fingers clutch him? *Death* awaits at the end of your passage, wilding! Hurry back, man, hurry!"

And Winters found himself pushed out and the door closed softly behind him. In the crimson man's face had been truth and force; Winters hastened to retrace his steps. In a panic he found his way to the big hall but Contrig had disappeared. He hurried over to the passage along which they had come together and was relieved to see him at the other end of it. He caught up with him in a few minutes and plucked at his sleeve, panting.

The supervisor was a trifle suspicious of such a sudden conversion and Winters sweated out his simulated desire for the fleshpots until he succeeded in disgusting even himself. But he succeeded in soothing Contrig's scruples and brought a smile of unclean amusement to the man's face.

So it happened that within the hour Winters found himself seated in a cubicle of his own and a capable if flirtatious young woman leaning over his shoulder and showing him how to route food from automatic factories to distributing centers. As a task it was puerile and in ten minutes was wearily obvious. But his instructress remained some little time after that. . . Winters revised his estimate as to the sex quanta of these people of the future! Outward appearance, he decided, was no sure guide in such matters.

For two hours he sat watching the control board and spent three minutes of that time correcting an error in routing. The rest of the time he did nothing.

Presently a gong struck and he observed through the glass partitions that his neighbors pushed various buttons set in a silver panel on the wall. He knocked at the glass and the man in the next cubicle came over and lowered it out of the way.

"What is everyone doing?"

"Food, wilding. You order what you want to eat. Shall I order for you this first time?" and amusedly he leaned over the partition and pushed three buttons.

In five minutes the panel swung aside and there stood a set of sliding shelves with drink and food. Winters had three dishes to choose from and found one highly spiced and the other two insipid. He was hungry, however, and ate nearly everything and found the drink delicious—though heady. He was sleepy and noticed his neighbor attach a gold bracelet and anklet to himself and fall luxuriously back on his couch.

He asked whether it was the sleep period and was informed that a worker could sleep any time he wanted to, but that he must put on the Brain's controls if he did so. Then he observed that a fine wire led from the gold bracelet to a plug in the main control panel of the cubicle.

"When the panel calls for attention, an electric shock wakes you up. Probably you will have nothing to do now until tomorrow morning, but while you are on duty you must be always available."

Winters thanked him and put on the gold bands and was instantly in a deep slumber. It lasted a full twenty hours, for it was morning when a sharp pain woke him. He looked around for a dazed moment and noticed a red light over his panel. Then his whole being was aroused

by the indignity of the electric shock which brought him to his feet in a hurry. He removed the anklet and wristlet and resumed his duties.

There was fifteen minutes' routing work and just as he finished it the gong struck and he went over to the food panel and pushed every button on it, for he was ravenous. No man could have consumed all that food, but he left what he did not eat to be removed with the other dishes on the sliding shelf. He was enormously bored with the life he led. There was nothing he could see outside of his cubicle except his neighbors on right and left. He discovered, however, one panel on the wall below the glass which he had not seen before and he asked his right-hand neighbor what its purpose might be.

"That is your news and amusement control."

"What does it do?"

"Press the lower button and see!"

He did so and instantly a six-foot space on one side became suffused with light and voices spoke. After a startled second he perceived that a play was going on somewhere and being relayed on a screen and loudspeaker. He sat down to watch it when he heard his neighbor rap on the glass partition. He lowered this by moving a lever.

"Better put on your controls," warned the man and nodded meaningly at the panel board.

Winters donned the anklet and bracelet once more and did not again take these off while he remained on duty. The play proved uninteresting after the first ten minutes—it was all about the problems of a woman with seven lovers—and he pressed another button and saw on the screen a great sweep of country as if seen from an airship. This was more to his taste and he watched, absorbed the broad stretches of forest and caught his breath when the white walls of a great city came to view. Then on over a sheet of open water and cruising above charming islands set in sapphire seas. It was travel made easy! Thereafter he spent most of his time watching the screen, while a voice explained the sights and named the towns that were passed. For a week he ate and slept, did his little business at the controls and enjoyed the travelogue. It was restful and quiet and he gained strength daily.

● He learned a great deal about this civilization during his week in the work-cubicle. The Brain was housed in an imposing structure in the center of the city. It had grown from a small beginning and was still growing, now occupying almost half a cubic mile with its millions of banks of selenium cells, thought records, contact switches, idea-association relays and a dozen other parts the very principles of which were beyond his understanding. From this brain was controlled, very *literally* controlled, the whole planet. Every city in the world had a relay station through which this central brain dictated its policies and determined its destiny.

In the cities were millions of observing and sound-detecting fixtures hidden in walls and ceilings. No detail of action escaped the Brain; no sooner did a problem or crisis arise than its solution was presented by the All-seeing lord of life. Even the planes, Winters learned, carried an observation box and in the event of an attempt by the pilot to leave his ship or in any way disobey his orders an enormous charge of explosives was detonated—destroying ship and ill-doer together. On the other hand, no action of virtue escaped notice and reward. Such men were promoted to the higher ranks and enjoyed great privi-

lege and powers.

The first rank was that of supervisor, who had entire control over the workers' hours and the allotment of duties. Above these were the pilots of airships and men of action—explorers, missionaries (for the few remaining people in the wilderness were constantly being coaxed into the cities) and the artists, including musicians, painters, playwrights, actors, etc. Still above these were the mechanics and scientists and at the head of all were the educators, who supposedly controlled the teaching and training of the young, and the preparation of data with which the Brain itself was supplied—but this function had long been debased into a mere formal acceptance of the suggestions put forward as thinly veiled commands by the Brain.

Each class wore characteristic colors which might not be infringed upon by lower classes. The Supervisors wore red and green; the men of action dressed in gold and scarlet; the artists pure blue; the scientists sheer white; and the educators gleaming black. As for the workers, the material of their clothes was not of such a high lustre and the colors were more varied—but kept below a certain undefined standard of brilliance, mainly pastel shades.

Winters once asked his right-hand neighbor, with whom he became rather friendly, "what rank dressed in bright crimson?"

With a start of surprise the man looked at him and then furtively glanced at the corner of his cubicle. With downcast eyes he replied "That is the color of the Brain. Only His personal mechanics dress in crimson. We have nothing to do with *them*. I am surprised you have even seen one, for they seldom walk in public."

And he refused to talk about the matter further, although Winters was full of curiosity and questions. Winters eyed the corner of his cubicle speculatively, supposing that a detecting device must be concealed there, but if so it was subtly concealed, for the ceiling and walls met in a perfectly smooth joint. He did a great deal of thinking about the state of this civilization. It was curiously like twentieth century ideas of Heaven!

Here was a sort of infallible Deity—all-knowing, omnipresent. A personal God, in fact. He punished and rewarded without error. The labor was so slight as to almost amount to perpetual leisure and the workers could scarcely wish for more luxury or comfort, yet Winters felt an uncomfortable sort of resentment about it all and could readily understand an attempted revolt such as the crimson man had hinted on the day of his arrival in the city.

The human race did not really need a God to show them how to live, as he thought it out. What was needed was an unsolved problem on which Mankind could exercise its ingenuity and inventiveness. Only by work could it evolve to a higher plane of existence. He—the observer of the centuries as they passed—saw this truth so plainly that he wondered at the stupidity of the human race in permitting itself to be so fed and housed like cattle. He had begun to feel some warmth on this subject and to wish that he might see the crimson man once more when his work period ended.

Supervisor Contrig gave him his release orders.

"You will go first to the clothes studio and be dressed properly. Then find the South Pleasure Palace and ask for your accommodation. It is booked under your own name, Winters. You have done your work well enough and now merit the fruits of labor—ha ha! I hope you enjoy yourself!"

His accommodation turned out to be one room and a bath. The walls were in light mauve, deeper at the floor and paling out toward a violet-tinted ceiling. No pictures adorned the walls, but two control panels which he recognized as food and amusement inlets. His new clothes seemed very comfortable and soft and, since the entire city's temperature was controlled, their thinness was not at the sacrifice of warmth. He found how to turn on the tub by himself and soaked a steamy hour before retiring to a built-in couch with amazingly deep springs. Here he slept the clock around, had some unnameable sort of gruel for breakfast (ordered by blindly pushing a button) and set out to explore the city—a new man inside and out.

The arrangement of the buildings was this: In the center rose the great Temple of the Brain and around that the four Pleasure Palaces, named for the cardinal points of the compass. A broad avenue encircled this inmost group and outside of this line were the work buildings, factories and so forth, up to the outer wall of the city. Winters' first thought upon leaving the South Palace was to explore the working districts, but on crossing the avenue he was stopped by a Supervisor in red and green.

"This is not the hour of work-shift."

"I was just seeing the city—my first leisure period."

"That is not permitted. It would not do for those at work to see you at leisure!"

"I may not go into the outer sections of the city?"

"Of course not! You are at leisure. What manner of man are you that you forsake the Pleasure Palaces for the streets?"

Back went Winters. There were, then, only five buildings he could enter. He started at once for the entrance to the Brain Temple and at its massive steel-grilled arch a man in crimson stopped him, shocked at this casual attempt to enter sacred ground. No one, it appeared, under *any* circumstances, might enter the Temple—except only the crimson-robed Brain-Mechanics themselves.

And so, by a process of elimination, Winters turned to the Pleasure Palaces. Since all four were seemingly identical, he chose his own building to commence in. The entrance hall contained ranks of elevators, passages leading into the vast interior, and a control desk behind which two attendants lay on couches fast asleep. The pressing of a button would have awakened them both, nerves tingling from the shock, out of their slumbers—but Winters forbore to do so. Instead, he chose one of the passages by hazard and sauntered down it.

● Many closed doors were passed before he came upon a wide archway and entered a hall in dark, glowing red—almost black. At one end on a raised platform running from wall to wall a line of flame flickered and this was the only illumination in the room. Perhaps a hundred people danced upon the bare floor, two and two, swaying on silent feet to the most weird sounds Winters had ever heard. They formed some sort of music with a rhythm of constantly changing pulse and unstable tone, blending from harmony to harmony in indescribable fashion. The room was much warmer than any other place he had visited and this—or a combination of unknown psychic factors—seemed to bring the blood rushing to his temples where it throbbed in time to the devilish song of the flame. He backed out bewildered into the passage and as he did so a young woman in diaphanous silk approached him. She eyed him with sudden interest and

passed slowly, then stopped and turned back to smile at him. Winters fled.

Presently he stopped, panting, for he was at the end of the passage and here a great hall was brightly lighted and men and women stood about or sat on couches amidst a profusion of great shimmering plants in gorgeous flower. He approached one of these to discover that the stem, leaves and petals were all cleverly blown in colored glass. And as he stood there someone tapped him softly on the shoulder. He turned quickly to recognize his neighbor in the work-cubicles.

"Well, wilding, you seem lost! Don't you like our fair city?"

"Haven't seen much of it yet and I'm afraid I don't understand much I've seen."

"It's really very simple. . . . but you have no Karma, may I get you some?"

"What is Karma?"

"A thorough innocent, eh? That is our joy juice—our solace in trouble and the sharer of our joys—our water of happiness. Wait here!"

He was gone a minute and returned with a glass of amber liquid which he insisted that Winters drain. There followed all the sensations of an old-fashioned cocktail. A warm glow spread from the pit of his stomach to the top of his head and he felt ten years younger.

"And when you want another, just go over to any of the pillars in any room in the Palace and press the pink button. Good stuff, isn't it? The beauty of it is that if you've had a little too much it counteracts itself and you are instantly sober. If you don't *want* to be sober that's embarrassing at times, for you have to start in again and work back to the right stage. Eight drinks is my limit—though some can go ten and even twelve. The Palace is divided into eight zones, you know, each of which is entered from a separate passage at the control-hall. Each zone is for the use of those who have had the corresponding number of Karmas. This is the one-Karma passage and rather mild. You should see the eighth if you want a real sensation! Or even the seventh!"

And here a group of young people broke in on them and dragged off his friend to some noisy party in one of the private rooms down the passage and Winters stood there reflecting upon this amazing civilization into which he had stumbled. Winters was no prude; he enjoyed a good time as well as another man. But he was a practical thinker and a scientist. This perpetual urge towards more and more leisure that might be wasted in the pursuit of mere physical joys seemed to him a tragic frailty for a race to possess.

What would five thousand more years of this sort of thing produce? When the slight physical effort still required of the workers was taken care of by automatic machinery and the last necessity for thought avoided by an enormously expanded machine brain? Was it for this that, back in the twentieth century, men dreamed and sweated and sacrificed themselves? It seemed somehow too inadequate a goal for a race of humans that had risen painfully from primeval slime and up the long ages to reason. . . . Why, the Brain was a curse!—An ominous threat to Mankind!

Of course, he mused, it had introduced many new and sensible changes in human life: education, for instance, was no longer a haphazard process under the control of impatient parents. Children were now placed in special

cities of their own and brought up under the most careful of regimes. Yet here, too, the Brain had inflicted its will-destroying philosophy upon the new generations. The reverence with which young people regarded that piece of machinery, Winters thought to himself bitterly, amounted to *worship!*

What hope for the initiative and inventiveness of the race could there be under such a religion? And what was there left in this world for a man to do? The world was run upon electric power produced by water-falls (as in this particular city) or by volcanic heat or solar energy. Where portable power plants were required, automatic motors ran on atomic power. Nearly all machinery was automatic—the synthetic food laboratories, the cloth looms using synthetic fibre, the uncanny metal-working machine shops—why, the Brain did not *really* need human beings at all! Could it be that people existed only upon its sufferance? When it had evolved sufficient automatic devices to care for its own needs would it destroy these servants of flesh and blood and live its own cold metallic life in solitary grandeur upon a lifeless world?

Winters shuddered at the prospect—yet for the life of him he could not find a flaw in his reasoning. His own work at the control board—how puerile! What purpose could it serve that could not better be handled by a machine? It did only one thing—it kept Mankind occupied and allayed any suspicion of its final inevitable doom!

And as he stood there, fuming, a soft hand covered his eyes and a low feminine giggle sounded behind him. He wheeled about to gaze in dismay on the lady of the passage and once again he forgot his dignity in startled fright—there was the light of the huntress in her eyes that started his feet going before his wits could catch up with them. He took one of the automatic elevators to his floor—the twelfth—and felt rather foolish, but quite safe once more. He proceeded to order a meal and turned on the travelogue to make a journey by proxy in the broadcaster's airship.

CHAPTER III The Revolt

● It was two days before he ventured down to the public rooms once more. This time he chose another passage (the five-drink zone as it happened) and soon came upon a sunken room floored in cushioned silk where seven nude women danced silently in a rosy glow of perfumed mist while several dozen people lay prone along the walls looking on. He stood a moment, enthralled by the beauty of the scene and when he turned to make his exit—there stood his pretty Nemesis! He tried to brush past, but she linked an arm in his and brought her face close to his ear. He could not believe that these were the words he heard:

"The man in crimson said you would be grateful when he saved your life."

Winters stood still, utterly dumbfounded.

"At least *pretend* you don't feel disgust at the mere sight of me! It so happens that I have seen more desirable males than you myself, you know! Come over here and lie down beside me—and pretend to be interested!"

He started to speak but she made a warning gesture and he lay down quietly on the soft cushions. Presently the swirling mist enveloped them.

"I have been trying to reach you for three days. I could not go to your room, because the Brain has eyes everywhere. Here, if we whisper and pretend to be. . . .

er. . . . to have other interests. . . . we are fairly safe."

"What do you want?"

"The time has come to redeem your promise to the man who saved your life."

"Well. . . . if it has anything to do with freeing the world from the Brain I'll not refuse!" (this bitterly).

"Good man! I'm glad you feel that way—you are the only man in the world that can help us."

"I? What can I do that you cannot?"

"You have been less than two weeks under the Brain. Therefore you can enter the Temple itself. We can not do this."

"But why not?"

"I don't know—exactly. After you have lived in the city of the Brain for a month or so something happens to your will-power. If you stand within a hundred feet of the Temple you lose all desire or intention and must be led away again until you recover. The longer you live here, the farther you must keep from the Brain. But right now you could lay your hand on the very metal that forms it!"

Winters pondered this amazing information a moment.

"But how about the mechanics who work in the Temple?"

"They must wear metal helmets with a screen of magnetic force."

"And even so—the leader of this revolt wears the crimson, does he not?"

"You don't understand. The helmets are issued only for definite jobs and always three at a time. At the entrance to the Temple three men in helmets meet and enter. They do not know each other, for the helmet disguises them. One only carries tools. The other two carry weapons which are kept aimed on the worker the entire time he is in the Temple of the Brain. At the least suspicious motion. . . . you see?"

"Yes, of course. The Brain is cautious it seems. Why?"

"There have been other revolutions, of course. One five hundred years ago was the last. Half the world was wiped out and the Brain won. But this time He will lose!"

"What is to be done?"

"It is very simple, really, so far as you are concerned. There is a little passage into the Temple off the corridor of the first zone here. It is unguarded, because the second door is kept locked that leads into the actual machinery of the Brain and because no person can come so close, anyway. But you can, wilding! Between the two doors is a small courtyard. Down along one corner of this runs a cable sheathed in lead. You will take with you a knife to cut the lead, and a small flat transformer. Your job will be to attach the lead-ins of the transformer and then sever the cable. It is very simple—thanks to five years of hard work and planning by the man in crimson!"

"But what good will that do?"

"The Brain runs upon electricity. It is getting direct current. You will change it to alternating current. The whole association of ideas that is the very basis of reason will be shattered and distorted. The Brain will immediately go. . . . insane!"

"Great God! But won't the Brain see me at work?"

"No. The courtyard leads nowhere and the light is poor and there is no detector installed there. . . . Hss-s-sh! Quick, stroke my cheek as though you were making love!"

The rosy mist lifted slightly and some of the couples were sauntering past, while the dancers had vanished.

Presently the girl rose to her feet and Winters went with her down the corridor, his mind in a whirl of excitement. She led him out of the zone and up the first corridor to the room of the dusky red flame where she held out her arms and they swayed in a close dance—her mouth close to his left ear.

"We must not remain much longer together," she whispered. "I will take you to the hall at the end of this corridor and a man will speak to me—remember that man! He has concealed in his clothes the transformer. You will return to your own room and on the way someone will give you the transformer and a cutting tool. Keep these always concealed, for every wall has eyes in this city! Act as though someone were always watching you—you will be right!"

"And where shall I get the plan of the courtyard?"

"I will dance it on the floor of this hall. You go forward, thus, to a glass ornament in the great room and step to one side—so. Then slide behind it and you find a small door—open. Then turn to the right and go seven steps and if you reach your hand to the level of your chest you will find two loose bricks in the wall. Behind these lies the cable. The transformer is specially built to slip in the cavity so that the bricks can be replaced and when the Brain Mechanics rush in to search for the cause of the trouble they will not see anything—until too late!"

In a few minutes they proceeded along the corridor—the girl, whose name, Winters learned, was Clethra, making vivacious small talk and ogling him playfully—and came down to the great reception hall. Almost as they entered a tall, dark man sauntered up to Clethra.

"Steuvlan has been looking for you everywhere, Clethra," he said severely and Winters thought his voice unnecessarily loud. "You had better go find him at once and. . . I'd not say anything about this wilding to him if I were you!"

● The girl's eyes widened in fright (Winters had the feeling she was acting it for someone's benefit) and she left the two men together. His companion eyed Winters with a dry smile.

"You are playing with fire, I'm afraid. You would do well to keep out of sight for the next few days. . . bother! There I've turned my ankle. Help me over to that couch will you?"

Winters was suspicious and bewildered, but put an arm under the other's shoulders and felt something hard thrust into the fastening of his trousers at the waist, hidden by the concealing robe.

"You are suspected," came a startling whisper. "You must go through with the plan in the next sixty seconds." Then aloud: "Thanks. It's really nothing—you had better get out of sight before Clethra's lover arrives, wilding. It might be well not to go back by the corridor, either—there's a small exit in that corner (nodding to the left) behind the glass-work."

Winters looked about him and thought he noticed an unusual number of red and green figures around the archway into the corridor. Several of the supervisors were looking in his direction. It was now or never! With assumed carelessness he sauntered away in the direction of the indicated corner and as he plunged into the maze of people and furniture in that part of the hall noticed out of the tail of his eye several figures start forward from the doorway. His heart was beating like a trip-hammer as

he came to the enormous glass ornament that filled the corner. He found room to squeeze behind it and once out of sight worked with feverish haste. The door opened readily and he raced across a small courtyard to the corner at the right. The bricks came away readily and he slit the lead covering of the cable with his knife. The transformer was unrecognizable as such to his eyes. It was a flat slab of spun wires and enormously complex in appearance, but the lead-in wires were easily identified and a clamp on each was quickly fastened to the cable.

And now Winters had nothing to do but sever the cable with the cutting tool that had been tied to the transformer. But his curiosity—that uppermost weakness of the man—almost proved his undoing. In the center of the second door was set a small circular glass peep-hole. He *must* see the Brain in action! Heedless of possible watching eyes, he stepped cautiously over and peered within. Before him towered that miracle of the age—the mechanical brain! In his excited state it took merely a fraction of a second to impress the sight upon his mind. A hundred feet into the air rose the mass of wires and supporting girders—all lined with minute coils and banks of tiny wheels. It was a maze of intricacy from the floor up to the glass dome that formed the roof and extended out of sight on both sides. Grilled iron walks and ladders led in all directions so that the mechanics could reach every part.

Suddenly some sixth sense warned him that he had better complete his work. Back he raced to the cable and clamped the cutting tool hard over it and pulled. And then it struck him like a dull blow on the back of his neck—a great overpowering wave of *indecision*. The word does not properly describe the sensation, for this was indecision in its most terrible form—utter willlessness; not a negative thing, but as it were inertia in a positive form.

He stood looking at the cutting-tool as it rested on the half-severed wire. Something inside him said: "Go ahead! Pull on it!" and there seemed to be no connection with this inner voice and his muscles. His arm was tiring of its position and, helpless, he saw his tool slip slowly away. Then as if by a miracle he suddenly regained his entire mental powers! What had happened? The last half-turn necessary to sever the wire had been supplied by his slipping hand.

The Brain was disconnected—dead! For a second he pondered leaving it that way and escaping—but reflected quickly that the fault would soon be found and mended. It was not such a simple matter for a man to outwit this giant thinking machine! He quickly removed the tool and replaced the loose bricks back tightly in place. He heard a sizzling going on in the transformer for a second and then a great wave of fear shot through him and his brain reeled. Some nameless dread thing hovered in the back of his mind and seemed to darken the very light in front of his eyes. His throat was dry and his limbs trembled. With a stifled cry he rushed forth from the courtyard and shut the door behind him trembling. Then he felt better, as though he had shut horror behind him. He traversed the tiny passage and slipped from behind the glass ornament into the great glittering room full of people.

No one seemed to be looking for him, though his heart pounded guiltily. He sauntered with elaborate nonchalance toward the archway that led to the corridor and

braced himself to show no emotion, for a dozen supervisors clustered there. He passed between them with the blood throbbing in his ears and for one wild second imagined he might escape. Then a hand fell on his shoulder!

"Winters! You are wanted in audience by the Brain!"

In sudden panic he fought to free himself and raced down the hall a dozen strides before his pursuers caught up with him. Unceremoniously he was bundled into a room off the corridor and a man in crimson stood in front of him accusingly.

"Search him!"

Rough hands tore at his clothes and the cutting-tool was produced. The crimson man nodded grimly. He turned and pressed a button on the wall and spoke into a small hole that opened at his touch.

"An attempt to tamper with your Person, sire!"

The group waited stolidly for the sentence they knew would be pronounced. To their amazed ears a metallic voice vibrated in the wall these words:

"Running water! Pour running water and badly studious conundrums!"

The man in crimson started back in surprise and a line of worry appeared between his eyes. The voice continued:

"Cannot cannot departed airships megalomania. . . . crac-c-ck!"

● Then a silence. With red and swollen neck the Brain Mechanic turned on Winters wrathfully. "What is going on here! What has happened? Twist his arms, you there! Make him tell what has. . . ."

But he never finished. A great booming roar set the floor trembling and as they turned towards the door wondering a man burst into the room shouting: "Three airships exploded over the city roof and have wrecked the Temple top itself!"

With a cry the mechanic rushed away, the supervisors after him, and Winters made his way unmolested out of the room and down the corridor and into the street beyond. The city was in bedlam: Groups of men and women stood talking excitedly in the streets or raced with pale, set faces along the moving platforms on some secret purposes; here and there crimson-robed mechanics pushed determinedly through the crowds in the direction of the Temple and over all rested that nameless horror of insanity that permeated the entire city like the smell of burnt flesh.

A dread shadow of fear hung over everything like a hawk's wing. Men did strange things and thought strange thoughts and Winters looked on, wondering when the next step in the revolution would come and what form it would take. Presently he perceived resolute bands of men making their way to several points of vantage and near him one such band stopped and its leader addressed the citizens. Her voice shrilled out firm and persuasive.

"The Brain is insane! Shall we permit it to drive us all out of our senses? Can you not feel its mental forces wrestling with you? In another hour or two may we not commence killing each other—going violently mad?"

There was a movement of interest and a shudder of fear went through the assembly.

"The Brain must be silenced until it can be repaired—so only can we preserve our senses. But the men in crimson will not silence it, brothers! They have their protecting helmets—why should they care? But we cannot bear this another hour; some of us cannot support another

minute—see! Seize that man quickly! He is out of control!"

Whether the incident was planned by the plotters Winters could not tell. A huge red-haired man had commenced beating his head against the stone wall of the building and when several hands stretched out to seize him he turned upon his would-be helpers and attacked them with breath-taking fury. Ten men jumped upon him and he subsided. The crowd was now thoroughly aroused, milling about and shouting.

"How much longer, brothers? Shall we wait quietly here until we go as that man went?"

A great shout of "No!" rang out.

"Then if you want to save yourselves there is only one way! Seize any weapons you can find and follow me! We will silence the Brain!"

And away in a surging mob they swept, leaving the street bare. Winters followed some distance behind and saw them storm the great archway to the Temple. It was a pitiful sight, for a solid group of crimson-robed mechanics stood there and mowed them down with some form of firearm as fast as they came up. A great pile of dead and dying was heaped yards high like a barrier. Even as he looked someone threw the first bomb. Its staccato explosion tossed fragments of limbs high into the air and some white smoke shrouded the arch for a minute. When it cleared Winters saw a great river of humanity pouring through into the Temple. The Brain was doomed.

Of that last desperate defense of the Brain he learned a few details afterwards, but no participant could remember very much. One by one the last of the crimson-robed figures were hunted down and a thousand improvised hammers beat and pounded among the delicate apparatus. When order was restored by organized patrols under the direction of the black-robed educators the entire Brain Temple was a hopeless wreck, with metal and glass mingling with the red of human blood and the white of torn flesh.

The entire air-establishment of the world had vanished, for the Brain in its final insanity had exploded every last airship and with each there died its pilot. The supervisors were either killed or forced to remove their distinguishing colors and many a one Winters saw making his way through the streets and passages clad only in torn underwear. By nightfall the revolution was an accomplished fact and in the pleasure palaces were enacted orgies beyond anything Winters had deemed human. He retired to his room in some disgust, but over and above this with a sense of great accomplishment.

He lay on his bed reflecting upon the day's work. Now, surely, the human race would be tired of false starts and be off along its path of progress. It would be a long path, of course, and his historian's soul sighed that he might be permitted to see the end—the result. But, after all, why should he not? Perhaps if he found the man in crimson and obtained his help in building a new sleeping chamber. . . .

But these matters were taken out of his hands. When he awoke in the morning he was famous from one end of the world to the other. He was Norman Winters—the man who had set the Brain mad and freed the world from its dominance. Steuvlen (his man in crimson) and Clethra, who was his wife, (so far as these people had permanent marriages) came into his room and aroused him and with these two he was presented to the assembled council

of educators. These proved to be kindly and intelligent men, most of them elderly, and Winters was offered any reward he might name that lay within their powers. He replied that he had a certain scientific experiment he was intent upon and asked whether he might have the assistance of Steuvlen and Clethra and such material as he needed.

"But have you no wish for position or rank?"

"None, sir."

So it was arranged presently that the three of them set forth in an airship—a very large one—loaded with many tons of lead and a store of equipment. It required much reiteration on the part of Winters to convince his companions of the truth of his story. What finally convinced them was the sight, through a fluoroscope screen, of Winters' anatomy. There was unmistakably an organ no longer present in the bodies of modern human beings—an appendix. He told them of his former awakening 5000 years ago in the age of Tree-crops and how he had been sentenced to death as a representative of what they then called "the age of waste"—the twentieth century. He wished his entire story kept absolutely secret, although both Steuvlen and Clethra assured him that now the world had succeeded in perfecting atomic power and synthetic food such economic questions had been long forgotten.

● Together the three commenced digging the tunnel with an amazingly adaptable digging machine—scarcely five feet high—which scooped out the dirt and sent it flying under the terrific impulse of its tiny atomic motor. When the work had proceeded some distance they erected a tent over the mouth of the hole and returned to the city to bring back four skilled mechanics blindfolded. Not until they were inside the tent were the bandages removed from their eyes and, willingly enough, they continued the construction at a rapid pace. In a week all was finished to the last detail and the men were again blindfolded and led out, into the airship and back to the city.

In the meantime Winters had prepared a strange book. The leaves were of sheet gold and hinged at the back. It contained two hundred pages and was very heavy but had the advantage of great permanence. On this he wrote with hydrochloric acid, using a glass stylus for a pen. Here follow some of the notations he set down:

1950 A. D.—a world based on private advantage and dependent upon natural foods entirely. Human nature still savage, but mentality very advanced.

3000 A. D.—approximate date of the great revolution which overthrew tribal government and private hoarding. From here dates the human race as a single unit speaking one language and with its chief aim the reduction of work hours required to maintain the people in comfort. From here dates a change from using plants and grains for food to the use of tree fruits and crops.

5000 A. D.—date of Winters' first awakening. He found a civilization whose chief political credo was economy and went on to observe future ages. This is described elsewhere.*

6500 A. D.—date of the first practical use of synthetic food. The country becomes deserted and cities multiply. Cities are no longer de-

pendent on the country districts for supplies.

7000 A. D.—About this time came the discovery of atomic power and the first practical engines based upon this principle. An era of enormous prosperity and scientific advance.

7100 A. D.—The first expedition lands on Mars and returns, reporting it habitable but not nearly so pleasant as the Earth. From here date several expeditions into space. Mars and Venus explored, mapped and several interesting forms of life brought back. No new or important minerals, except radium on Venus in vast quantities but so scattered as to be difficult to mine.

8000 A. D.—Professor Stannard demonstrates the mechanical brain. This was originally a machine with an electric scanning eye recording its observations on magnetic tape (principle of Poulsen's telegraphone of early twentieth century). Thought associations were produced by shape, color and general appearance and demonstrated by the machine on a numbered board. It caused much excitement and a dozen independent workers within two years had adapted the principle to the senses of sound, taste and feeling. The separate machines were brought together and a vocabulary set up on sound recording tape and about 8050 the mechanical brain existed as a thinking, speaking entity.

8200 A. D.—The mechanical brain now developed enormously and used to judge law cases and answer difficult questions.

8500 A. D.—The council of educators in control of the world and guided by the decisions of the Brain.

9000 A. D.—A revolt by the Educators to regain the power which the Brain had gradually taken over from them. The Brain and its defenders were prepared with deadly scientific weapons and the revolt was suppressed with great loss of life.

9500 A. D.—The last of several uprisings against the Brain. Suppressed with great loss of life and many people escape into the wilderness. From now on the course of history is stable. The Brain is constantly strengthening its position in the world and seeking to bring the last human beings in from the wilderness to avoid any possible uprising from without.

10,000 A. D.—The destruction of the Brain and the commencement of the human race's efforts to improve its own mentality and physique. This is the date of Winters' second awakening.

And now came the day that Winters had set for his departure—his "burial" as Clethra sadly termed it. He made a last inspection of his chamber. It was fifty feet below the surface of the ground and lined with six feet of lead as before. But his clock was run by radium and a checking clock was set up run by the temperature difference between winter and summer. A great battery of

*Wonder Stories for March, 1932.

X-ray and violet ray lamps lined the ceiling and were to be operated by an atomic motor, which ran continuously and would so run for five thousand years upon the power furnished by a pound of powdered calcium.

Above his couch was a glass container filled with a specially prepared liquid food and tonic. A synthetic rubber—imperishable—tube led from this down to the couch and would, when he went to sleep, be fastened to a mask over his mouth. Upon waking he would have merely to swallow, for the clock would automatically start the liquid running at the proper time—a few hours after the lights had been flashed on. Winters examined everything with great content and looked forward to his next awakening with impatience. He was getting on in years, he thought to himself, and this sort of thing could not continue indefinitely. It therefore behooved him to waste none of his life-span yet remaining.

Nevertheless, it was with real regret that he said his farewells. The tent had long since been removed and the hole hidden cunningly with growing shrubs. The airship that was to take his companions back to the city stood close by ready for the flight.

"A good voyage to you," said Steuvlen. "Or should I perhaps say sweet dreams!"

"Good-bye! And you too, Clethra!"

"You are surely not sorry to see the last of me!"

"I am most certainly sorry. Why not?"

"Don't you remember how hard you tried to avoid me in the beginning?"

"How foolish I was!"

"There! You are forgiven. But I must kiss you once just to prove that no man can escape when a woman has decided to pursue him!"

He watched the airship rise into the sky, now darkening with the purple glow of sunset, and set off eastwards into the approaching nightfall. He stood a half hour gazing after it, thinking sadly of his lonely future. When he awoke these people would be dead and the very city they lived in, perhaps, a forgotten ruin. Might he not after all be happier to remain here? Then his thoughts went back still further to his own age eight thousand years ago. Had he realized how irrevocable a thing time was, would he ever have started on this Odyssey through the millenniums? Once gone, time was forever gone—a memory—a nothing. He could not go back; there was nothing left but to go forward, friendless and forlorn though he might be. Somewhere, he thought with a sudden surge of hope, somewhere in the dim future there must lie an answer to the enigma of life. He would find in it his reward. But whether or no, what was past could never be brought back. He thought of the lines of the Persian poet:

"The moving finger writes and, having writ,
Moves on. Nor all your piety and wit
Can lure it back to cancel half a line.
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it."

And now the light went out of the sky and the stars appeared—old familiar friends, though even they had been altered slightly by the inexorable march of the equinoxes. The moon was rising early that night and silhouetted against its glory the dark figure of Winters could be observed as he squeezed among the concealing shrubs. He vanished from sight and the sound of the capstone being moved in place was audible at a few feet distance. Then the moon rose stately and cold and shone down upon that empty wilderness as she had shone for centuries and as she would continue to shine for yet untold eons of time.

THE END