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I Remember Lemuria

by Richard S. Shaver

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FOREWORD

Perhaps my parents never realized the puns that would be made on my name when they christened me Richard Sharpe Shaver. Under ordinary circumstances the puns would have been of little consequence, but because of the amazing fact of my amazing memory of the life of another person, long dead, it has been incredibly hard for me to speak convincingly and to make people believe in me. Invariably I get that oh-so-funny remark, "Sharp-shaver, eh? A regular cut-up, eh, kid!" accompanied by a sly dig in the ribs and a very stupid, "Get it?" How can a man get a serious audience after that?

And yet, there it is for all who wish--to pun and pun again. If I achieve nothing else at least you may laugh, and to laugh is to be physically and mentally healthy. For those of you who will read on and carefully weigh what I am about to tell you I am convinced there will be no thought of puns. Instead, when you consider the real truths behind what I say--and even better, experiment and study to corroborate them--it seems to me to be inevitable that you will forget that I am Richard Sharpe Shaver, and instead, am what science chooses to very vaguely define as the racial memory receptacle of a man (or should I say a being?) named Mutan Mion, who lived many thousands of years ago in Sub Atlan, one of the great cities of ancient Lemuria!

I myself cannot explain it. I know only that I remember Lemuria! Remember it with a faithfulness that I accept with the absolute conviction of a fanatic. And yet, I am not a fanatic; I am a simple man, a worker in metal, employed in a steel mill in Pennsylvania. I am as normal as any of you who read this and gifted with much less imagination than most of you!

What I tell you is not fiction! How can I impress that on you as forcibly as I feel it must be impressed? But then, what good to impress it upon those who will crack wise about me being a "sharp-shaver"? I can only hope that when I have told the story of Mutan Mion as I remember it you will believe--not because I sound convincing or tell my story in a convincing manner, but because you will see the truth in what I say, and will realize, as you must, that many of the things I tell you are not a matter of present day scientific knowledge and yet are true!

I fervently hope that such great minds as Einstein, Carrel, and the late Crile check the things that I remember. I am no mathematician; I am no scientist. I have studied all the scientific books I can get--only to become more and more convinced that I remember true things. But surely someone can definitely say that I am wrong or that I am right, especially in such things as the true nature of gravity, or matter, of light, of the cause of age and many other things that the memory of Mutan Mion has expressed to me so definitely as to be conviction itself.

I intend to put down these things, and I invite--challenge!--any of you to work on them; to prove or disprove, as you like. Whatever your goal, I do not care. I care only that you believe me or disbelieve me with enough fervor to do some real work on those things I will propound. The final result may well stagger the science of the world.

I want to thank editor Ray Palmer, in whose "fiction" magazine, *Amazing Stories*, the stories in this book were first published, for his open mind and for the way he has received the things I have told him in addition to what I have written in this story of Mutan Mion of ancient Lemuria. It began when he published my ancient alphabet in "Discussions" [*1] and requested the readers to carry out checks of their own. I myself did not realize the extent of the alphabetic (more properly phonetic) language. But surely there must be tremendous significance in the fact that the alphabet fits into every language to which it has been applied, to the amazing percentage of 75% in the German to 94% in the ancient Egyptian! Even in Chinese and Japanese it ranked consistent nine out of ten times.

To me it is tragic that the only way I can tell my story is in the guise of fiction. And yet, I am thankful for the opportunity to do even this; and to editor Ray Palmer I express my unbounded gratitude. I know that if even a few of you go to the lengths he has gone to check many of the things I remember, a beginning will have been made to something, the ending of which (if ending there is) awes me beyond my poor power to express my feelings.

--RICHARD S. SHAVER.

Footnotes

^3:1 January, 1945 issue of AMAZING STORIES. Some of the reports by readers were subsequently published, but the great majority were not. These reports proved to be the most amazing the editor has ever received on anything published in his magazine. They would seem to indicate beyond all doubt that the "ancient language" of Mr. Shaver is part of an original "mother tongue" from which all Earthly language, have sprung. For example, the name Mutan Mion, broken down into the letters and sounds of this ancient language becomes MU--"man"; T--"integration," "growth"; AN--"animal." MION means "manchild seed." So the name means "man spore cultured to new forms by integration growth forces." In other words, a synthetic mutation by the use of force or rays.--Ed.

I REMEMBER LEMURIA

Thought Records from the

Past Tell the Ancient

Story of Lemuria which

Some Call Mu or Pan

--By Richard S. Shaver

CHAPTER I

City of the Titans

I was working in the studio of Artan Gro when I heard a great laugh behind me. If ever there was derision in a laugh, there was derision in this one. I flung down my gaudy brushes and my palette and turned about in a rage--to find the master himself, his red cave of a mouth wide open in his black beard. I cooled my temper with an effort; for great indeed is Artan Gro, master artist of Sub Atlan.

"I am sorry, Mutan Mion," he gasped, "but I can't control my laughter. No one ever has conceived, much less executed, anything worse than what you have put upon canvas! What do you call it, 'Proteus in a Convulsive Nightmare'?"

But Artan Gro could control himself, I was sure. It is one of the things I have learned of the really great in the arts; they make no pretenses. He was laughing because he wanted to tell me frankly what he thought of my ability as an artist. It is bad enough when your friends mock your work (and they had), but when the master is convulsed with laughter it is high time to wake up to the truth.

"It is true, great Artan Gro," I said humbly. "I want to paint but I cannot. I haven't the ability."

Artan Gro's expression softened. He smiled, and as he smiled it was as though he had turned on the sunlight.

"Go," he said, "go; to the deeper caverns at Mu's center. Once there study science; learn to mix the potions that give the brain greater awareness, a better rate of growth." He patted my shoulder and added a last bit of advice. "Once you have mixed the potions, take them. Drink them--and grow!" He passed on, still chuckling.

Why is the truth always so brutal? Or does it just seem brutal when it comes from those wiser than you? I slunk from the studio; but I had already determined to take his advice. I would go to Tean City, at Mu's center. I would go to the science schools of the Titans.

Never before had I considered leaving Sub Atlan, my birthplace, or as I should express it, my growth place, for I am a culture man, a product of the laboratories. In fact, I remember no other place on Mu, although it is a fact that during the process of my development to culture manhood,

I roamed the culture forests of Atlantis, [*2] which is the name for Surface Atlan. Sub Atlan is just below Atlantis, while Tean City is located at the center of Mu, at a great depth below Sub Atlan. The walls of the great cavern in which Tean City is located are hardened to untellable strength by treatment with ray-flows which feed its growth until it is of great density. There are many other cities which grew through the centuries to vast size, but none so great as Tean City. Some are abandoned, but all are indestructible; their cavern walls too dense to penetrate or to collapse.

Since Tean City is located near the center of Mother Mu, gravity neutralizes itself by opposition. It is very comfortable. Many of the Titans live there, and in fact, it is almost a Titan city. There also are the mighty ones, the Elders of the Atlan race's government. Huge they are, like great trees, many centuries old and still growing. I had long wished to see them, and now that I had decided to go, the thrill was greater than any I had ever experienced, I was going down into the city of many wonders!

Out on the street I took one of the many vehicles that are provided for travel about the city. These vehicles, their weight reduced by a gravity deflection device, are powered by motors whose energy is derived from a gravity focusing magnetic field, by which one side of a flywheel becomes much heavier than the other. This is accomplished by bending gravity fall [*3] in the same way that a lens bends a light ray.

The topless [*4] buildings of Sub Atlan fled by me; and soon I neared the squat entrance to the shafts that fell from Sub Atlan to Center Mu, to Tean City, home of the Titans. [*5] I knew that swift elevators dropped down these shafts; but I had never traveled in one of them.

Because I knew the control-man of one of the elevators, having talked with him often of Tean City and the wonders he had seen in it, I went to his shaft for my descent. He was glad to see me, and very much surprised to learn that I was going to Tean City.

"You will never regret it!" he declared.

The car dropped sickeningly, so swiftly that a great fear grew in me that I would be crushed by deceleration when we finally stopped. In panic I watched an indicator's two hands move slowly toward each other as though to cover its face in shame. Then, with little sensation, the car stopped. Here at the center of Mu I had become nearly weightless and the ceasing of even such swift motion did not have ill effects upon my weightless body. I knew that I would not have that fear again.

Two fat Atlans stepped out of the car ahead of me, sighing with relief at their renewed weightlessness, which they had obviously been anticipating. As I was about to follow them from the car, the control-man drew me aside.

"Fear rides the ways down here," he whispered, his sharp-pointed, cat-like ears quivering an alert. "Fear is a smell down here that is ever in the nose--a bad smell, too. Try to figure it out while you are down here; and tell me, too, if you get an answer."

I did not understand what he meant, but I promised anyway. The smell of fear, in Tean City?

Immediately I was immersed in the sensually shocking appeal of a variform crowd, mostly at this hour, a shopping rush of female variforms. While there were many of my own type, and of the elevator control-man's type, there were a greater number of creatures of every shape the mind could grasp and some that it could not. All were citizens; all were animate and intelligent--hybrids of every race that space crossing had ever brought into contact, from planets whose very names are now lost in time. The technicians may have been wrong in the opinion of some when they developed variform breeding; but they have certainly given life variety. I had never seen so many variforms [*6] before.

At a corner of the vastly vaulted way where many rollat platforms [*7] crossed and recrossed each other, I stepped to a telescreen and dialed the student center. The image of a tremendous six-armed Sybyl female filled the screen and the electrically augmented body appeal of the mighty life within her seized the youth in me and wrung it as no embrace from lesser female ever had.

"And what" her voice shook me as a leaf in an organ pipe "might a pale and puny male like you want in Tean City? You look as if you never had enough to eat, as if love had passed you by. Did you come down here because no one wanted you elsewhere?"

I grinned self-consciously back at her image, my voice a feeble piping in comparison to hers.

"I have come to learn something beside drawing lines around dreams. I am a painter from the subsurface who has decided that knowledge of actual growth is more important than the false growth of an untrue image upon a canvas." I wondered what the master would have said to hear me.

"You are right," she boomed back, her six arms engaged in complex wand mysterious movements, picking up and laying down instruments and tools in bewildering rapidity, her attention elsewhere yet enough remaining on me to hold me bound in an attraction as strong as a towing cable. She was a forty foot Titan, her age

unknowable. As I thought upon this and tried not to think of the immense beauty and life force of her, I suddenly realized she was hiding fear. I have a peculiar faculty for sensing hidden emotions. That bluff greeting had been a hidden wish to drive me from some danger. But I did not speak of it, for I read that caution in her; a very strong mental flow that fairly screamed DON'T.

This kind of fear was a wonder and a new thing to me, for danger was a thing long banished from our life. Then she spoke, reluctantly it seemed.

"Go to the center of the Hall of Symbols. There you can ask a student or an instructor who will tell you all you need to know."

The grip of the woman life in her left my mind and she was gone from my vision. As I turned from the telescreen my mind insisted on visualizing that six-armed embrace and its probable effect upon a man in love. I shivered in spite of the warmth, but not from fear. The blood of the Titans was alive, I thought; strangely and wonderfully alive!

I stepped into a rollat at the curb, inspected the directory, then inserted a coin and dialed the number of the building that housed the Hall of Symbols. I leaned back while the automatic drive of the rollat directed the car through the speeding traffic, its electric eye more efficient than my own.

Yes, much more efficient than my own at the moment, which were wandering over the figure of a variform female on the walk whose upper part was the perfect torso of a woman and whose lower part was a sinuously gliding thirty feet of brilliantly mottled snake. You could never have escaped her embrace of your own will once she had wrapped those life-generating coils around you!

I thought upon it. The gen of these variforms was certainly more vital; possibly because the Titan technicians Who lived here kept the people healthier. Perhaps the hybrids were naturally more fecund of micro-spore. It had indeed been a day of brainstorming, I mused, when some old technicon had realized that not only would a strong integrative field with a rich exd [*8] supply cause all matter to grow at an increased rate, but would also cause even the most dissimilar life-gens to unite. It has been the realization that had resulted in various form life. Most of the crosses by this method had resulted in an increased strength and fertility. They now were more numerous than four-limbed men, and often superior in mental ability.

Automatically my mind associated the embrace of the snake woman with the six arms of the giant Sybyl of Info; and I decided that I understood why Artan Gro had driven me here with his scorn. If I didn't learn about life here I never would anywhere. That had been what he had reasoned.

Soon I was striding between the pillaring fangs of the great beast's mouth that was the door of the Hall of Symbols where the school ways converged. About was the bustle attendant to any rollat way station; bearers rushing; travelers gazing about lost in wonder at the vaulting glitter of sculptured pillars and painted walls, done by men of a calibre whose work ro [*9] like myself cannot grasp entirely.

Paintings and sculpture here hammered into the brain a message of the richness of life that immense mutual effort can give the lift unit, the pro. This richness of life was pictured in a terrible clash with evil, its opposite. [*10] The hot fecundity of life and health growth was a sensuous blow upon the eyes, the soul leaped to take a hand and make life yet more worthwhile. I could not cease gazing at the leaping vault of pictured busy figures whose movements culminated in that offer to the spirit of man to join them in moulding life to a fit shape.

My rapt study of the paintings was interrupted by the sound of a pair of hooves that clicked daintily to a stop beside me. I glanced at the newcomer, who had stopped to stare up at the paintings also in that curious way that people have when they see another craning his neck--and my glance became a stare.

What was the use of aspiring to be an artist, my reason said, if those great masters who had placed that mighty picture book on the vaulting walls above were so easily outdone by the life force itself!

She was but a girl, younger than myself, but what a girl! Her body was encased in a transparent glitter; her skin a rosy pale purple; her legs, mottled with white, ended in a pair of cloven hooves. And as my brain struggled to grasp her colorful young perfection--she wagged her tail!

It was all too much. Speculating about the life-generating force possible in the variform creatures was one thing; but having it materialize beside you was another thing entirely. Such a beautiful tail it was. Of the softest, most beautiful fur.

"What were you staring at?" she asked. "The paintings?"

I stuttered, then answered. "The paintings... I guess... yes, the paintings. I'm a... painter... was a painter..." I gave up. I couldn't talk, I had to look.

"They are marvelous, aren't they," she declared enthusiastically. "I always look at them when I come down to the school. I am studying medicine. Now take that painting up there--"

On her arm and breast I saw the medical school insignia; a man's figure struggling with a great snake, disease. [*11] It took brains to study medicine. This exquisite young thing, so full of gen force, so powerfully attractive, was smart too. And almost instantly she proved herself to be extremely friendly and companionable. She went on talking, describing, theorizing in a gush of amiable conversation that left me dizzy, gasping, and admiringly breathless. She told me everything about the paintings, the statues.

And before I realized it, we were walking on together. She was full of all sorts of information, and it seemed she had taken it upon herself to be my guide, to teach me the meaning of everything we saw. Her cheerful chatter soon told me all about herself, her studies, the schools, the great doors that led to each one from the central gathering place of the school rollat ways.

The Hall was justly famous for these doors. Before us now was the door to the medical school, formed of pillaring figures struggling with the coils of snakes. Next to it was the marine school door, formed of a crab whose huge claws met to form the arch. A planetron, a pendulum device to tell of the nearness of bodies in space, formed the entrance to the school of space navigation. All the ages of science of immortal growth had combined here in the symbols that formed the many doors.

Footnotes

^8:2 According to Plato, Atlantis was a continent located some four hundred miles west of the Pillars of Hercules (Gibraltar). In the Timaeus, he describes it as an island larger than Asia Minor combined with Libya. Beyond it, he says, were an archipelago of lesser islands. Atlantis had been a powerful kingdom nine thousand years before the birth of Solon (from whom Plato heard of Atlantis reputedly as told to Solon by Egyptian priests), and its armies had overrun the lands, when Athens alone had resisted. (It has been a point of difference between students as to whether Plato referred to the "Mediterranean lands" as lands now inundated by the Mediterranean Sea, or the lands surrounding the sea.) Finally the sea overwhelmed Atlantis and shoals marked the spot. In the Critias Plato gives a history of the commonwealth of Atlantis.

There are many other traditions of lands located west of Gibraltar. The Greek Isles of the Blest or Fortunate Isles; the Welsh Avalon; the Portuguese Antilia or Isle of Seven Cities; and St. Brendan's island. All except Avalon were marked on maps of the 14th and 15th centuries.

The legends of the Sargasso Sea are said to have sprung from encounters with the sea of weeds which

periodically grew over the shallowly sunken continent.--Ed.

^{9:3} The reader will note the curious use of the word "fall" in connection with gravity. Later in the story, the author elaborates on the subject of gravity in a very amazing manner, propounding a theory which your editor has examined in detail and by which he has been utterly confounded. This glib "focusing" and "deflecting" of gravity your editor cautions you to accept in the literal sense until Mu-tan Mion's story gives us more on the subject of gravity.--Ed.

^{9:4} Curious as to the literal meaning of the word "topless" we wrote to Mr. Shaver for a better description of the buildings of Sub Atlan. He revealed that (as Mutan Mion's memory told him) they were topless in the sense that they were roofless. Sub Atlan is located in one of the giant near-surface caverns that underlie Surface Atlan, or Atlantis, which is mostly forest with scattered large buildings. Since the elements are not a factor, almost all buildings are constructed without roofs to admit a maximum of light. Sub Atlan must have presented a strange appearance, for no two buildings were architecturally alike; some of them huge spheres, or multi-sided geometric shapes, tall spires, or merely rambling structures of no apparent intentional design. The reason for this was to provide variety to interest the eye, which would otherwise be jaded by constant contemplation of the unending sameness of gray cavern walls and roof of stone.--Ed.

^{10:5} When asked to describe the Titans Mr. Shaver sent us the following notation, which is perhaps the oddest of all his communications. When queried about its oddity, he merely replied that he had "answered your question" and gave no further explanation. We quote:

"Our great race, the Atlans, together with the Titans, our allies and often our fellow citizens, swarm through all known space and watch ever for the birth of new suns. Then, too, there are the Nortans; but the Nor-men shun all suns and can only be found where the sun rays shine not.

"When our Atlan sciencons hear of or see a new sun born, our ships flash swiftly through the void, to test the rays for poisonous emanations. When they find clean heat from a surface shell of pure carbon, fast upon their trail come the first great colonization ships. For our race is fecund beyond imagination and there is little death from any cause."

Obviously this is nothing from the "racial" memory of Mutan Mion, but seemingly something from an Atlan himself! Here and there, through Mr. Shaver's correspondence with the editors, such departures from the identity of Mutan Mion occur, and we can only suggest that Mr. Shaver's racial memory contacts extend not only to the culture man, but to other beings as well. Mr. Shaver himself cannot explain, and in many instances, is unaware, that such extensions exist.

The reader will here, again, note several inexplicable references. such as "poisonous emanations" and "a surface shell of pure carbon." Later in the story Mutan Mion tells of these things in great detail, and in them gives still another of the amazing scientific theories that stagger the imagination.--Ed.

^{11:6} Obviously variforms are not natives of other planets, but hybrids developed from many interplanetary life forms mated with Titans and Atlans by deliberate applications of mutative rays in the laboratories of Mu's technicons. It is extremely interesting to note that all have the status of citizens.--Ed.

^{12:7} Moving connected vehicles on the ways and walks which carried the bulk of pedestrian travel.--Ed.

^{13:8} Exd is Atlan for ex-disintegrance or energy ash. It was the content of the beneficial vibrants. It is the space dust from which all matter grows into being. Mutan Mion amplifies the exd theory later on in the story.--Ed.

^{14:9} Here again we had to appeal to Mr. Shaver for amplification. We certainly got it, and along with it some

amazing thoughts. Ro (he says) is a thing of simple repetitive life pattern easy to understand and control. To ro you is to make you do things against your will. A large generator of thought impulse can be set up to ro a whole group of people. Row the boat is modern and the meaning has become physical force and not mental force. Ro the people was an ancient method of government. Romantic was the name of such a government. Ro-man-tic (science of man life patterning by control). It is the same concept as used by some scientists when they say "hypnotically conditioned." It is not necessarily an evil government method, but is one that was necessary. Any person is ro who is weaker than the mental impulses about him. Men are ro today because they are not self-determining, though they think they are. We are parts of a huge juggernaut, and we are ro in consequence. The determining forces that make our thought what it is are from outside when we are ro, from inside when we are men or gods.--Ed.

^14:10 This is indeed a strange comparison. Evil is the opposite of live, the inference being that to be evil is to die. Oddly (or significantly?) evil is live spelled backward.--Ed.

^16:11 This insignia lives today in the legend of Apollo! According to the Greeks, Apollo was a son of Zeus himself. Disease is typified in the legend by the python, which Apollo killed. Etymologically his name signifies one who "drives away disease." Roscher's derivation names him as the "sun god." Using Mr. Shaver's ancient language, he is "authority, energizer, power source of man's growth." This is startling when we discover, upon studying the legends of Apollo, that he was variously called god of prophecy; god of agriculture; ruler of seasons; keeper of flocks; rearer of boys; sponsor of gymnastics; the helper; healer and seer; averter of evil; god of song and music; leader of the muses; embarker and disembarker; god of streets and ways; one who stands before the house (as protector from violence and disease); originator and protector of civil order; founder of cities and legislation. Apollo, says Mutan Mion, was a son of one of the Titans of Mu!--Ed.

CHAPTER II

From Art to Embryology

From the moment that I pocketed a disc that bore the faun-legged girl's name and address, I was no longer an aspiring artist; I wanted to know what she knew, wanted to learn what she was learning.

Arl was her name, a short, sweet name for a girl and hard to forget, too. You can't forget a girl who wags her tail at you just like that.

And so she took me into the medical school and directed me to her own teacher. I became a member of the class immediately and discovered that I had entered upon the opening discourse.

The class was dominated by the immense presence of the teacher, a son of the Titans, bearded and horned, expounding in the exact syllogism of the technicon training. As he spoke, I became certain that this dynamo of human force should soon charge such a small battery as myself with everything in the way of knowledge I could assimilate.

There was only one slight disturbing factor. Just as I had sensed a strange, deeply buried and secret fear in the Sybyl, I knew that in the mind of this great son of the Titans there was a gnawing something that a part of his brain dwelt on continually. Fear was a smell that was ever in the nose down here in Tean City. The realization disturbed me so much that I failed to absorb a portion of the teacher's discourse. My absorption must have caught his attention, too, for I saw him staring disapprovingly at me. With a start, I re-concentrated my mind on what he was saying.

". . . a great cold ball hung in space. Once it had been a mighty, living planet, swinging ponderously around a dying sun that it had never seen, being covered with clouds. Then that sun had gone out, and the deadly ter [*12] stiffened the surface life into glittering death.

"The planet's forests, which had lived in dense, dripping fog, had, in their many ages of life, deposited coal beds untold miles in depth--clear down to the stony core of the planet. No fire had ever touched these forests, because the dense fog had never allowed fire to burn.

"Venus, our nearest neighbor in space, is such a planet now, although much smaller. As it is on Venus, so it was on the unknown planet.

"Hanging in space the dead immensity of this ball was largely potential heat, for its tremendously thick shell was mostly pure carbon.

"Such once was the sun, your sun and mine; the sun of which Mu is a daughter.

"Then a blazing meteor, spewed violently from some sun in space, came flaming toward this cold ball. Deep it plunged into the beds of carbon. The fire spread swiftly--an ever-fire of disintegrate, not the passing-fire of combustion--and our sun was born into live-giving flame!

"A carbon fire is a clean fire and contains no dense metals like radium, titanium, uranium, polonium--whose emanations in disintegrate in suns cause old age and death because minute particles given off accumulate and convey the ever-fire into the body, there to kill it in time.

"Then sun heat was clean, and life sprang furiously into being on its daughter, Mu's surface. Nor did this life die--death came only by being eaten. Then life suffered old age not at all, for there was no cause."

The voice of the teacher paused a moment, and now indeed I knew that there was much for me to learn. Here was something that struck deep into me with an instantly vital interest. Most provoking of all was his peculiar emphasis on the word "then." I could not help the question that sprang to my lips.

"Why do you say 'Then life suffered old age not at all, for there was no cause.'? Is there cause now?"

It was as though I had placed a torch beneath the hidden fear in the Titan's eyes, for it flamed forth suddenly for all to see; but it was as quickly quelled. All in the class looked at me with that shocked expression which plainly said I had overstepped my bounds; but in the eyes of Arl I thought I saw the gleam of approval, and I found a dam to hold back my ebbing courage.

The teacher looked at me, and I saw kindness in his eyes.

"You are new here, Mutan Mion. Therefore it is easy to understand that you have not heard of the projected migration of all Atlans to a new world under a beneficial sun. . .

"Yes, young ro, there is cause." He was answering my question with determination now, but he was not speaking to me alone; he was making his answer a part of his discourse. "I have spoken of the carbon fire as a clean fire. By this I mean that the atoms of carbon, when disintegrated, send forth the beneficial energy ash called exd which can be assimilated by our bodies and used to promote life-growth. However, the source of this ash is not carbon alone, but all other elements excepting the heavy metals such as I mentioned before. It is when these heavy elements begin to disintegrate in the ever-fire that we come to the cause of age.

"The particles of radium and other radioactive metals are the poison that causes the aging of tissue. These particles are thrown out by all old suns whose shell of carbon has been partly or altogether burned away, permitting the disintegrating fire to reach and seize upon the heavy metals at the sun's core. Our sun has begun to throw out great masses of these poisonous particles. They fall upon Mu in a continual flood, entering into living tissue and infecting it with the radioactive disease we call age.

"Through the years, the centuries, these poisons accumulate in the soil of the planet, and are continually being washed out of it by the rains with the result that all the water on Mu is becoming increasingly contaminated. When these waters are drunk, the poisons accumulate in the body, finally becoming numerous enough to completely halt all growth and still worse, to prevent any effectual use of exd, which is the food of all integration.

"The technicians, of course, have devised means to protect us from the accumulation of the age poisons, but it has become evident that their efforts are not entirely foolproof. We have discovered that we are living on a world that circles a sun that is growing old and is therefore deadly. We are living in the shadow of death, a shadow that will grow greater as the years pass until finally death will strike us all. We would, if we remained, not even begin to live out our lives. Centuries and centuries would be lost to us, and ultimately we might not even attain the initial growth of maturity!"

I ventured another question.

"What methods have the technicians devised?"

"They are simple ones. Multiple distillation of the water in which we drink and bathe; treatment of the water in a centrifuge to remove the very finely divided age poisons that cannot be removed by distillation; ben generators to create a magnetic field of ben energies; air centrifuges to remove poisons from the air. But I must impress upon you that it is impossible to shield us from all of the age poison; from that small amount that actually falls upon our own bodies and accumulates there as it does in the water. Eventually, if we remain on Mu, we will grow old, [*13] and finally die."

I looked him squarely in the eyes, respectful in a degree equal to the kindly interest that shone in his as he returned my look.

"It is not the age poisons you fear," I accused.

He looked at me silently; and a flood of force seemed to flow through me, encouraging me, protecting me, cautioning me. It was the same feeling I had gotten from the Sybyl.

"Come, students," he said gently. "We will go now to the embryo laboratory."

Before we entered the laboratory we were given nutrient potions prescribed by the Titan for his students to make them more receptive and hence his work easier. We were told that we would receive these potions regularly. Even as I took the first draught my brain throbbed with a new growth of ideas and strange new images. I was exhilarated beyond all imagining, and my enthusiasm knew no bounds. I took Arl's hand in mine as we trooped into the laboratory.

It was truly a wonderful place, the most amazing I had ever seen. I felt like a mite admitted to the treasure-house of a giant. Here were things that were beyond my intelligence to create of my own mind power; and yet I was being given free and welcome access to all of them, to learn from them, and to use the knowledge if I wished in my future life and work.

Many strange machines filled the laboratory, all performing tasks that I could only guess at. But these machines were subordinate to the real science of this great room, being designed only to chemically and electronically nourish and develop the many human embryos that moved and grew in synthetically duplicated mother-blood in sealed bottles.

The older ones kicked and tugged healthily at the grafted umbilical tube which supplied the life fluid--called Icor, the "blood of the gods." And it was this blood that was the subject of the lecture the Titan now gave us.

He told us of the upkeep and preparation of this fluid, both in the embryo and the adult; the difficult and important part being (he now stressed his words with greater emphasis with his attention bent especially toward me) the process of detecting and removing the slightest trace of the radio-active poisons that cause age.

I studied and I learned! These were the processes which had given the planet Mu its health and enabled us to live under more aging suns than other races. These were the life methods that had given us our fecundity; which had populated space for thousands of centuries with the seed of Atlan. I wanted to know all there was to learn about them.

The Titan, an old master at this most basic process of Atlan life, had imbued me with an enthusiasm for the true creation of life in its infinite possibilities of growth--such as no mere painter ever had. The delicate handling of those ultra-minute products of disintegration from which primary integrations are formed; the mixing of these integrations into the atoms of elements; the chemistry of combining these atoms into the molecules of the substances used in the manufacture of the synthetic blood, Icor--all these steps were sheer artistry, yet were made as simple as child thought by the genius of the Titan.

Once more the Titan commented on the proposed emigration from Mu, weaving it into his lecture. There seemed to me to be an undercurrent of double meaning in his motive for repeating it; a double meaning that I strove to associate mentally with the fear-thing that was something else and also something so secret it must not be mentioned. It was as though even the fact that there was fear of that "something" must be kept secret. Our aging sun (he said) threw off increasingly large amounts of these sun's seeds, small but dense and active disintegrative particles, and I learned that keeping Atlan's peoples young was an increasingly difficult job for

the technicians. I learned that the coordinators and rodite [*14] were preparing the plans and ships for our migration to a young, new-born sun, where the force setup of life conditions left a greater margin of exd for intake of power, where integrance went on at a faster pace, and where the infection that caused the occasional trouble with detrimental energy robotism or detrimental err [*15] in the human did not occur.

When the lecture in the embryo laboratory was finished we filed back to the classroom, and there the Titan flipped the switch that controlled the teleyes that supplied the home teletes of many with the course. We had not been dismissed, and I could see from the puzzled looks on the faces of the other students that this was not in accordance with the regular schedule.

For a long moment the Titan looked at us, and especially at me. Then he spoke:

"Today things have been said and seen and discussed in this class that had no direct bearing on the course you came here to take. You, Mutan Mion, have been the most brash--" my face grew red, and he hastened to add, "No, Mutan, I do not mean that you have been too forward; I meant brash in the sense that you have exposed yourself to a greater danger than that of my wrath." His eyes twinkled at the word wrath, and I knew that such would never be much of a danger! "I meant the menace that has caused the fear you have somehow seen in me. Perhaps you have sensed this in other places in Tean City, among others of the Titans; so it must be, for you to have been so certain of it as to challenge me.

"Yes, there was, and is, fear in me. And it is a fear that we all try to keep secret because those of us who show fear also show suspicion if not knowledge, and either has been equivalent to the signing of a death warrant. There are spying rays on us... at the moment we are screened... that seek out our knowledge and destroy us before we can coordinate it into an effective counteraction to the thing that is going on; to the thing we fear."

"What is that thing?" I breathed aloud, so intense was my interest.

The Titan drew a deep breath. "It has come to me that certain groups of Atlan are against the projected migration, and the recent disappearance of several men important to our work lends color to the story. Of course we all know that the only units able to do anything of the kind would be the key rodite of Sub Atlan and Center Mu. Some of these may have accidentally suffered a severe flashback of detrimental ion flow, so that their will has become one under detrimental hypnosis. What rodite area has become so corrupt as to allow such a condition to go unchecked I cannot understand; but that we are all in danger until the thing is checked is most certainly true.

"Therefore, since you here have gained an inkling of something wrong, it is only your right to be aware of it, so that inadvertent words may not cause you great harm. Also, we must fight this thing; and all of us must fight. So you may consider yourselves deputized by the ruling life of Mu to seek out the information that will clear the way for the migration. Until that is done we suffer fear, not new to me, but new to most of you.

"You may go."

Looking back at his gigantic form as I left the classroom, I saw him musing deeply; and the concern on his face told be that things must be even more fearful of consequence than he had made us believe. Reason told me, too, that it must be so--for great indeed must be the evil that can bring fear to the heart of a Titan, the super being of all Mu and of the universe.

Footnotes

^18:12 Ter--the Lemurian word for cold.--Ed.

^20:13 Impressed with the implications contained in this portion of the story of Mutan Mion, we wrote Mr.

Shaver for additional information on this theory of the cause of age. This information is curious, because some of the theories seem to be modern (by Mr. Shaver) and others those of Mutan Mion, with no particular designation as to which is which. However, we present the whole for your judgment.

"The sun itself seems to be the mother source of all radioactivity, infecting all the earth's surface and all the life on its surface. The sun projects minute disintegrances down upon us in a steady, numerous rain whose effects we call age. In water the poison is heavily present in suspension, especially so in thermal springs. In the air the poison floats forever with the tiny thistledown of dust it has infected and to which it clings. It settles on the leaves of plants. So we take the poison in with every breath, with every bite of food, with every drink of water; thus we age as the poison accumulates.

"But we do not have to let in that poison; we can protect ourselves and grow through a longer youth to a much greater age, with superior mental powers. It is very plain that a mother's body cells, although replaced every four to seven years, are not young because they remain in contact with the poison retaining fabric of the body and so age swiftly. Yet, the baby is young. Young because it gets filtered blood, filtered through the placenta--and would remain young if the poisons were to be continued to be filtered out by a duplication of the placenta filter. The stalk of a plant is old, yet its seed is young, capable of reproducing itself without passing on the poisons of age. It is because the stalk contains a filter to prevent passage of the poison to the seed. The simple filtration processes of birth and seeding CAN BE COPIED by man, thus putting off old age.

"Here are a few verbatim quotations from Madame Curie's notes: 'Finally, the radiation of radium was contagious. Contagious like a disease and like persistent scent. It was impossible for an object, a plant, an animal or a person to be left near a table of radium without it immediately acquiring radioactivity--becoming radioactive--a notable activity which a sensitive apparatus could detect.' A later page: 'Thus the radio elements formed strange and cruel families in which each member was created by degeneration from the mother substance--radium was created by degeneration from uranium--polonium from radium, etc.' And from a later page: 'When one studies strongly radioactive substances special precautions must be taken if one wishes to be able to take delicate measurements. The various objects used in a chemical laboratory and those used in physics experiments all become radioactive in a short time, and affect photo paper through black paper. Dust, the air of the room, one's clothes all become radio-active. The evil has reached an acute stage in our laboratory.'

"Note the word mother. The sun is the mother source of radioactives.

"It is a matter of common knowledge that certain watch factories formerly allowed workers (young girls of twenty) to tongue-tip the brushes with which they painted the radioactive dials. They died of OLD AGE at twenty and twenty-five years! Not of a disease, but of age poison; particles, whose origination is from the disintegration of the heavy metals of which radium is a member!"--Ed.

^24:14 Rodite--Life pattern synchronizers.--Ed.

^24:15 This is mainly due (explains Mr. Shaver) to depolarization of the matter of the brain; it is no longer earth polared, it is sun polared--and hence inducts the disintegrant flows from the sun into the brain by simple dynamic induction. I think a magnet could be sun polared and point to the poles of the sun just as an ordinary compass points to the poles of the earth. This is what happens to parts of the brain; they become sun polared. In the desert this is known as "cafard," to become crazed and kill until killed. Others are just stupid, depending on what parts of the brain are affected. The Malay "amok" and the Norse "berserk" are the same phenomena. When it lies in the part of the brain devoted to memory, the result is absent mindedness. When it lies in the nervous system and ego recognition of activating centers, the victim is a killer or a repressive reactionary. It is simply true that man is an electrical machine which functions well when his energy flows are of his own creating, but functions especially ill when the energy flows are from the sun.

The sun is quite a dynamo; it always gives off, from the surface; while earth always takes in, from the surface. Much of this intake is "snap-back"; that is, it is returning to a state of matter. Gravity is merely the disintegrant energy of suns returning to material form. Much of it, however, is like radium, a persistent disintegrant seed of a sun. Radioactivity is the seeds of disintegration.

Hence, a mind powered by sun particle energy flows of a detrimental nature becomes robot. The result is robotism, or the inability to think constructively. Victims of detrimental err have but one basic thought, to kill, in keeping with the natural elemental instinct of the disintegrant metals. (The reader has been presented here with two sensational theories which appear in complete form later in the manuscript; the nature of gravity, and the interrelation of energy and matter in an endless circle.--Ed.

CHAPTER III

Terror in Tean City

That evening Arl took me to a dance. Never had I known that there could be such pleasure! And as a part of it all I discovered that my education was to continue through every waking hour, whether in scheduled class or not. There was so much to be learned from actual living! And Arl, it seemed, was determined that nothing should be lacking in my education. Nor did I object, for nothing suited me better than to have her, beautiful tail and all, showing her friendship and interest.

The dance, she told me on the way to the hall in a rollat car, was very scientifically handled by trained technicons. The stimulation of human attraction between male and female, she told me, was due to the generation of many kinds of tiny and fecund spores which grow and are released upon stimulus by male and female. The male spores grow in the female and vice versa, just as pollen between flowers. This cell pollen and the sensation of its growing presence is love. I could imagine the immense fecundity given this process by the strength of the Atlan race, whose growth and youth [*16] never cease.

We arrived at the place where the dance was to be held, and I found a great room, tastefully draped, and decorated by paintings that depicted such scenes of love and joy and health as I have never before seen. Just as the paintings at the Hall of Symbols held forth that invitation to join in the elevation of the race, so did these paintings show the way to participation in love and joy.

The dance had already begun and we joined the throng on the floor. Almost instantly I was aware of the influence of stimulating electromagnetic frequencies. I felt the flow of exd of appropriate attunements; my nerve cells responded in a thrilling fashion.

The stimulating rays strongly ionized the air of the hall; making it extremely conductive to the electric pressure of the body aura, so that the dancers were intensely aware of each other. The consequently augmented vital aura of the cell pollen permeated the hall. It was absorbed by my body, and by that of lovely, faun-legged Arl snuggled in my arms, and by all the young, ecstatic bodies of those who danced about us. Under the stimulus, we wove intricate patterns on the gleaming floor; and the odor music of the Atlans wove into the sound music many scent accompaniments. These scents are of the most penetrative and nutrient of all the food chemicals, feeding the nerves as they are driven into the body by strong sound waves of a penetrative frequency.

In the enhanced delight of the dance I was oblivious of all but the bundle of vitality to which my pulse and soul were synchronized, and my arms held Arl as a treasure beyond value.

Then, as I lost myself in pleasure, it happened. The madness of the fear that was upon Tean City struck; and for the first time in my life I knew the true meaning of terror!

Arl screamed, and pushing me from her, pointed to the edge of the dance floor. There the great shoulders of a horned son of a Titan hunched, one big hand clutching in desperate agony at the folds of a drape, the other pointing up and out to indicate the path of the ray that played upon him. Even in the face of death his only thought was to tell what he knew of the fear; and to point out its direction so that the technicons might answer with a ray of their own.

But nothing checked the ray; and I realized that contrary to all the usual rules there was no guard ray on duty. No wonder there was fear in Atlan! Slowly the huge youth's face turned black, his legs buckled, he fell and rolled over on his back, tongue protruding and eyes staring. He was dead.

His friends rushed to him, but the deadly ray had not ceased. It played first on one figure and then on another; each victim rolling in turn to the floor, face black with death.

"By the Elder Gods!" I swore to myself at the realization that no guard ray was going to protect us. "It is true; our perfect government is not so perfect after all!"

I stood as though oblivious to the fact that death might strike my way too. I could only look and rage within me at the death that played about the recently joy-filled hall. Within me the stimulating rays still caused an elation, but it was submerged beneath the surge of wrath that made my blood hot.

Arl was tugging at my elbow, the canny will to live of the female evident on her face in an expression of anxiety and calculation. Together we left the hall, taking a route along which her clicking hooves led me. We kept with a group of young Atlans who walked, without panic or the impulse to run, toward the parked rollats. I knew why; they feared to attract a spy-ray to themselves.

Arl's fingers pressed warningly on my arm, and I heard her whisper, her voice low, casual. An excited tone might have attracted the curiosity of the mad mind behind the black deaths, who must even now be surveying the scene of his mad acts of killing in grisly satisfaction.

"Listen to that man just behind us--"

I listened. His voice was also casual--held no excited note. In his voice was the cultured note that was evidence of one who has absorbed much of the vast education obtainable in Tean City.--"also heard that what lies behind the fear and death here is the mad wish of certain rodite to appropriate the whole fleet of ships prepared for the migration and go to the new sun leaving nothing behind alive with brains enough to build and fly ships in pursuit. Thus they would have the new sun's clean light entirely for themselves and their future seed."

A selfish thing, indeed! But more mad than selfish. Such a view could only be the result of detrimental err.

The speaker went on. "We, the mediocro, know how fecund life can be, but we also know the madness of refusing all of the normal units of life's fabric the right to existence and growth. No social fabric can be built of dull and lifeless robots which are so besotted with detrimental energy that they refuse the least of the units of the fabric their right to growth and intelligence. Therein lies the strength of the social fabric--the unit's realization of its own self and its place in the whole. The whole basis of a fuller life is the acquisition by mutual effort, the backing on which is woven the social pattern of the fabric itself."

I heard another voice, answering in agreement, yet with a troubled note evident in its tones, as if the speaker felt that agreement alone was not enough; that simply denouncing a thing that was as evil as this would not be enough. "Yes, this murderous effort is doomed to failure. The intelligent members of the guilty rodite must realize that such murder of the normal life unit is the refusal of their own right to share in the fruits of the social project. They must realize that such men as the Titan youth they killed have a potential value as great as their own."

Another voice chimed in. "Then why is it refused recognition? If they are intelligent, then why do they act so detrimentally? It must occur to them soon, or it will be too late."

"Unless they are all mad," said the first speaker. "The sane unit of such a project will see that the basic unit right is inherent to their own success, and realize that destroying those rights will wreck their own plans. The only thing it can be is the explanation a Titan growth technicon offered--that some rodite have been detrimentally charged by disintegrant coil leaks..."

I could not help breaking into the conversation.

"That is right! The thing has been explained to me that way; as a detrimental hypnosis in which the ego--or self-will--the self recognition of the mind centers confuses its self-originated impulses with the exterior-originated detrimental impulses to destroy. Such a condition is called dero, [*17] or detrimental energy robotism. The thing is simple enough, but I cannot understand how it could happen here in Tean City, where perfection in romantics is so old. Such an occurrence is guarded against by many battle ro, by great organic battery brains raised for just that purpose. How could it happen?"

The two Titans looked at me and shook their heads. They knew as little as I how it could be.

"Well, it couldn't, but it did!" Arl said with feminine logic, and taking me by the arm, led the way to a rollat. In a moment we were speeding away from the dangerous area. Beside me Arl relaxed with a sigh, and I felt her trembling with reaction.

I put an arm around her. "Brave girl," I whispered.

We were soon nearing Arl's apartment, and looking down at her fresh, young face, I felt a wave of worry pass through me.

"I wish we were under that new sun right now; on those fresh-born planets of life with clean new coordinating mechanisms under rodite we ourselves selected and could therefore trust. I fear that the migration has been too long delayed--the old sun's disintegrant pressure upon the unseen base of our life is now too great for anything else to happen than what happened tonight. Can we help to strive against this immense err, deep-seated in the control minds about us as it must be; or must we flee at once, before they make impossible our flight, thinking of it has a danger of tale bearing?"

But Arl's lips were on mine as the rollat slowed before her home, an effective quietus to my dangerous words, and my mind no longer dwelt on the fear--nor imagined the embrace of a six-armed giant Sybyl female or the crushing coils of a snake woman about me!--for it was too busy recording the ecstatic sensations of the intense vital charge the faun-legged girl threw into her embrace. My mind gave up its worry in Arl's soft contact.

The next day I entered the classroom and found it empty. I went to the incubation laboratory and found several other early students standing there in silent consternation, the fear welling up almost to openness in their eyes. The Titan was not present, nor were any of his attendants. Some of the embryos were dead, others half-smothered; because no attendant had turned on the filtered, enriched air tanks which kept their nutrient fluid supply aerated. I started toward them, but a young son of a Titan stopped me.

"I turned them on," he said in low, evenly-measured tones.

"Where is the Titan?" I asked.

"No one knows," was the answer I got from all.

Other students came in now, among them Arl. She came to my side, but remained silent, troubled.

We waited a short time. Then a student called tutor center, to inquire. He turned to us with a peculiar look in his eyes.

"They say he is ill!"

"Ill?" The exclaimed question burst from all of us. In Atlan this was startling. Illness is almost unheard of; a

rarity only on the space frontiers where new varieties of germs were sometimes troublesome.

The news brought Arl close to me, her silky-furred tail trembling as shudders shook her slim body. "Mutan, I am afraid," she whispered.

Her fear transmitted itself to me, and the thought came into my mind that this room was not safe. The same thought obviously had come to the others, because our movement toward the exit was as though by mutual accord. There was obviously some awful connection between the black deaths and the Titan's strange non-appearance. Yesterday the Titan had said a guard ray was on while he spoke to us so gravely of the fear--Had that guard ray been no guard at all? Had those evil rodite penetrated the guard ray, heard his words, known the Titan as a menace to their plan?

The: class was dismissed--this time by fear!

And somehow I knew that the thought in my mind was in the mind of all. We had the same knowledge the Titan had. We were in the same danger. We were marked for disappearance, illness, or the black death! We must flee, now or never!

Proof of the thoughts of the others came almost instantly. As we trooped in assumed light-heartedness down the tunnel toward the rollat ways one, of the accompanying youths proposed a picnic in the forest to celebrate the unexpected holiday. He said it loudly in a gay voice, and the others chorused their delighted approval, a delight that Arl and I feigned too. All fell in with the project, the unspoken desire to flee the city strong in our breasts, our anticipation of being together among the trees, which dwellers seldom see, strong too.

I raced ahead with Arl, shouting, "Let me lead you to the elevators." There was meaning in my voice, and intent in my mind. I was not forgetting my promise to my friend, the control-man.

We reached the shaft that led to Sub Atlan, from which we would take another lift to surface Mu. There, as we shot upward, I whispered the news to the control-man. "The terror is loose in Tean City," I concluded. "Escape as soon as you can. If at all possible, beg off from another descent and be away. There is great danger for all whom they suspect are aware of them."

He retained a straight face, but I could see the concern in his eyes, and the determination to make good his escape also.

As we lolled in apparent ease on the soft sod of the culture forest, the traditional empty glass made its appearance in the circle. No one spoke of it, but its significant reminder of death's clutch was a constant thing in my mind. Never had fear and death been a part of my thought before; but that empty goblet with its sweetly spiraling stem uppermost was no longer just tradition, but now had a meaning almost immense. What to do to avoid that damnable mechanical play of detrimental force from the mind of some unknown rodite, staring through the viewplates of his defective, detrimentally hypnotic mechanism, seeking to destroy the best first? [*18] If they thought we were escaping they would seek us out and snatch us back.

I sat and mused. "Simple magnetics; yet such mighty minds as the Atlans fall before it. We must be clever..." I went on thinking of it; but again recurred the regret of last night. If only the migration had taken place a few years ago! But perhaps it had been so planned; and delayed? Delayed by the black death which had thus far struck so secretly and silently. The plan of the rodite must be near completion or their secrecy would have been maintained.

And then, as I sat there, an idea presented itself. I knew a way to escape, and I spoke quickly before my thoughts were clear enough for any unseen listener to read

"Let us all charter a space ship and take a look at Mother Mu from above! There is no greater thrill than that to cap the day!"

As one we leaped to our feet. I knew then that our thoughts had been very similar; I had only been the first to express the next step in spoken words.

"We will have to take a shuttle ship first," said a young Titan quickly. "Come, I know the way."

Footnotes

^27:16 The Atlans, Mr. Shaver reveals, were ever youthful, and never ceased growing. There was no such thing as "maturity" in the sense that growth stopped. Thus, an Atlan's age could be determined to a certain extent by his size. Many of them reached tremendous stature, sometimes as much as 300 feet, and heights of 40 feet and more were rather common. Mr. Shaver refers to "ancient" books which have been destroyed, which contained a great deal of Atlan knowledge and history, but points to references in the Bible such as "In those days there were giants in the Earth" as actual truth, recorded memory of the Titans. Especially significant is the definite statement "in the Earth" and not on it! The Atlans, by the use of their wonderful machines, kept their bodies constantly supplied with a sufficient amount of exd (the energy ash from which all matter is formed by condensation) so that their growth never stopped, but their bodies grew ever larger and heavier. Health itself was determined by weight; a healthy person was heavy. If he became ill, he lost weight. Illness is the inability of the body to fully utilize the available exd, or is the result of an insufficient quantity of exd.--Ed.

^31:17 Pressed for a more complete explanation, Mr. Shaver has defined "dero" for us:

"Long ago it happened that certain (underground) cities were abandoned and into those cities stole many mild mortals to live. At first they were normal people, though on a lower intelligence plane; and ignorant due to lack of proper education. It was inevitable that certain inhabitants of the culture forests lose themselves and escape proper development; and some of them are of faulty development. But due to their improper handling of the life-force and ray apparatus in the abandoned cities, these apparatus became harmful in effect. They simply did not realize that the ray filters of the ray mechanisms must be changed and much of the conductive metal renewed regularly. If such renewals are not made, the apparatus collects in itself--in its metal--a disintegrant particle which gradually turns its beneficial qualities into strangely harmful ones.

"These ignorant people learned to play with these things, but not to renew them; so gradually they were mentally impregnated with the persistently disintegrative particles. This habituates the creature's mind, its mental movements, to being overwhelmed by detrimental, evil force flows which in time produce a creature whose every reaction in thought is dominated by a detrimental will. So it is that these wild people, living in the same rooms with degenerating force generators, in time become dero, which is short for detrimental energy robot.

"When this process has gone on long enough, a race of dero is produced whose every thought movement is concluded with the decision to kill. They will instantly kill or torture anyone whom they contact unless they are extremely familiar with them and fear them. That is why they do not instantly kill each other--because, being raised together, the part of their brain that functions has learned very early to recognize as friend or heartily to fear the members of their own group. They recognize no other living thing as friend; to a dero all new things are enemy.

"To define: A dero is a man who responds mentally to dis impulse more readily than to his own impulses. When a dero has used old, defective apparatus full of dis particle accumulations, they become so degenerate that they are able to think only when a machine is operating and they are using it; otherwise they are idiot. When they reach this stage they are known as 'ray' (A Lemurian word not to be confused with ray as it is used

in English.) Translated, ray means 'dangerous or detrimental energy animal.' Ray is also used to mean a soldier--one of those who handles beam weapons (note how the ancient meaning has come into our modern word)."--Ed.

^35:18 Just as lightning strikes the highest point, so does detrimental force seek the most active and the healthiest fruit first--they are most attractive. The detrimental is only a film over an integrative ion which is attracted first to the most integrant bodies near. This holds true in thought movements also--thus a dero strikes at the best first.--Ed.

CHAPTER IV

Escape Into Space

Accustomed as I had become to variform life, we presented a strange, almost fearsome appearing company to my eyes as we made our way toward the shuttle ship station. There was young Halftan, of Venusian blood, long-legged, web-footed and fingered, his eyes huge and faceted; his mate, a girl of Mu except that some forebear had given the line four arms, probably under the stimulus of mutation rays because the family pursuit of making instruments was one where twice the number of fingers could well be used; Horton, a young fellow of mixed bloods, older than the rest of us, quiet, but long-eared and sharp-nosed--a listening fox; his girl, a thin, gray, transparent-skinned maid of Mars, fragile and lovely, her large, leaf-green eyes lighting devoted friendship wherever they rested; two young Titan sisters, their horns just sprouting from under their curls, their great bodies new-budding into womanhood; their two escorts, of the Elder's special creation, large-headed youths of tremendous intelligence, their hands double-length, their necks and shoulders by far stronger than normal to carry their great heads easily, and finally a young Titan male, accompanied by his friend who was a distant cousin of my own Arl and whose sprightly, colorful femininity hinted that Arl's family must be especially noted for their beauty.

Together we made up a company of twelve life-forms of great diversity; and yet all of us citizens of Atlan; citizens apparently on an outing, now bound for a gay adventure to end a holiday's festivities in the supreme thrill, a sightseeing trip into space.

We dared not think of our true purpose; and I knew that at least the two Elder escorts were aware of what had brewed in my mind and would back me up when the time came. We thought only of our coming adventure, and tried to feel the delight of it so that even our emotions would register true to any spying telaray that sought us out to check on our motives.

The shuttle ship we boarded was a small, bullet-shaped plane containing little but a cabin, air-making equipment and a small fuel compartment in the rear. This plane was not a space ship, but only a sort of bullet to be shot from the surface of Mu to the large station ship of great weight which circled in its own orbit, just as the moon circles the earth forever.

To get the shuttle ship on its way gravity was neutralized by an upward beam of semi-penetrative force traveling at light speed which was turned on gradually until the car just floated in its cradle under the effect of the reverse friction to gravity of the force blast passing through the car. [*19]

When the weight of the car was thus reduced to less than a pound, I turned on the rocket blasts very gradually and traveled up the reverse gravity beam by instrument. In thirty minutes we were circling the huge station ship as though we were in our turn its satellite just as it was a satellite of earth. With vernier rocket blasts, about the size of toy pistol explosions, the nearly weightless plane approached a landing. Above us spread the world we had just left, making an imposing sight as we settled into a cradle atop the space station.

When we stepped from the shuttle ship at the edge of the oval landing area, we saw several globe-bodied moon-men bustling about their own type of shuttle plane, a long, wingless splinter constructed of a very fragile and glass-like substance. Although I feared to think upon it, the moon was my next destination. One thing that all of us knew was that we never intended to return to earth. The blackened face of that son of the Titans, the noblest blood in Tean City, as he lay dying on the dance floor rose before me to tell me flight was not only best, but the only course for us.

In spite of myself my eyes roved over the black dome of space, searching for the lights that might indicate a pursuing craft. It seemed almost impossible that we were fooling the mad rodite and their spying telepath rays. In spite of all self-imposed mental guards, my mind seemed intent on shrieking "Escape! Escape!" through

every possible loophole in my concentration.

I engaged the gnome-like moon-men in conversation in an attempt to still further blanket my turbulent mind. Arl caught my eye and wagged her tail in cheerful encouragement, seeming to divine what was on my mind. How expressive that beautiful tail of hers was; how much it could say; and with no dangerous thought waves to betray its meaning to those who must not receive on their sensitive instruments. With that tail, no language, no thought-transference was needed!

But even if pursuit developed, I had one trick up my sleeve. I dared not think of it, or some watching rodite informer might advise any pursuers of my plans and a way to circumvent them would be devised.

It struck me that not all of the rodite might know of recent conditions and developments in Tean City. Nothing had been announced on the tele-screen news. Thus, while we were escaping, others ought to know the truth, and certainly not all the rodite were dis-infected. They would not report what they read in my mind, and the rodite who knew would not attach special significance to others who knew; and the very fact that it was thought about in an unguarded way might cause them to dismiss us as of immediate danger, and thus blanket our intent to escape.

I thought of the dance, of the sudden striking of the black death on the dance floor, of my puzzlement as to what it might mean. I thought of the disappearance of our tutor technicon, wondered if he too were murdered. Any sub-rodite, getting a register of my thoughts, would certainly ponder the meaning of the unbelievable existence in center Mu of murder; murder whose actuality he could not doubt, because it would come to him as the unguarded and therefore true thought of a ro such as I was.

In double-quick time, still acting out our enthusiasm for an unexpected holiday, we chartered a fast space ship for an hour's time. An attendant led us to a cradle on the landing stage; and we entered the ship gaily.

The speedster rose slowly up the lifter beam under my control and when it was clear of the station ship I sent it hurtling outward.

When we were well out of sight of the station ship and picking up speed toward the moon I gave up thinking of our trip as a sight-seeing outing which was to proceed only a little way into space and then return, but began to think of the moon as our destination, meanwhile setting the autopilot destination needle on Venus. Then I pulled the throttle back to full on.

If what we had heard of the black death were true, it might well be that no space ships were allowed to leave the vicinity of Mu at all. Just the mere fact that we were hurtling straight away might have placed even more suspicion on our purpose if we maintained our original thought-fabrication. With the moon now our revealed destination, our true purpose was still veiled.

I switched on the electrically magnifying scope screen to the rear to look for possible pursuit. The scope had a screen of microscopic photo-cells which turned the tiniest light ray into an electrical impulse which was greatly augmented by vacuum tubes and the resulting impulse made a much larger cell on a viewplate glow strongly, giving a vivid image in half-tone.

Far behind us a craft sped along. Was it in pursuit? I watched it for long minutes, but there was no way of telling. It maintained its distance and its course. In a very short time their instruments could check our course, and if they were pursuing us, they would be unable to correlate it with my mental image of the moon as our destination; and they would be after us instantly. If they were merely harmless travelers to Venus, there would be no questioning of our own course.

I gave them time to check us with instruments, then I set the course pointer on Mercury, a planet almost never

visited, and watched closely. The strange craft veered.

"They are on our trail," I said. The words broke a silence that had become almost intense.

Arl's cousin looked shocked. "Then we can't escape," she said. "They have a mechanical advantage over us."

One of the big-heads was eyeing me shrewdly "You have a plan," he said. It was a plain statement of fact, not a question. It was as though he did not ask what was my plan, but expected me to put one into operation now that the crucial moment had come.

"Yes," I agreed. "Now is the time to play my one card. I hope that it will be an ace."

"We have not asked nor even wondered about your plan once we observed that you had one," said the other big-head. "But now the time for secrecy is at an end. It is unnecessary. If we cannot escape, our intent to do so will be useless to hide; if we can escape, our intent will not need to be hidden."

"True enough. And I will be more than glad to relieve my mind of the strain of withholding what is in it," I said. "I am but a ro youth, and the task has been hard."

"But one that you have done well," observed the young Titan gravely.

I accepted the compliment with a thrill of pride. Praise from a Titan was something to which I was not accustomed--indeed, old Artan Gro had many times given me exactly the opposite.

"It is a matter of mechanics," I explained. "And the one thing I will be forced to blank out of your mind as I do it. I warn you all not to think on the matter when you see it performed. As to my plan of escape--I have an even greater one. I will explain fully in a very short while--we will go to one of the sunless Elder stations on a cold planet. The nearest of these is Quanto, on the very rim of this solar system."

"A good choice," approved the big-heads. "But one that rouses our curiosity in your 'mechanical trick' to a high pitch. Obviously you know that Quanto is seventeen and one-third billion miles away." [*20]

I could almost read their minds. "Yes. Weeks away at the speed of this ship--and we have no food."

Even Arl's tail stopped wagging at that--but only momentarily. In her eyes I read that confidence I knew she had in me; a confidence that she herself felt was justified.

"Your plan!" she reminded me. "Now we know you have a definite one, for if you are aware of the fact that we have no food you must also be aware of a way to reach Quanto without it."

"Such great faith must be well placed," murmured one of the Titan maids. "I, too, can have no fear now that you have a plan."

I proceeded now about the thing I had in mind, taking care not to think of what I was doing, but think, rather of the appearance of my hands as they worked, of the movements of my knuckles, of the muscles that caused those movements, of the nerves that carried the message to the muscles....

It was a good thing for me now that I had listened so worshipfully to space pilots when I was younger; some of their adventures were going to stand me in good use. Autopilot mechanisms on these space ships were adjusted to a fool-proof speed, so that no speed-mad citizen could wreck a shipload of people. There was a stiff spring on the throttle, just a little stronger than a man's arm, which held the fuel flow to a safe maximum.

I found the case of the auto pilot locked and the key was naturally not aboard the ship, but kept by the attendant back at the satellite ship. But I found a way around that. I took the belts from several of my companions in spite of their puzzled faces and fastened them into one strong line. One end went around the throttle bar and with another I took a turn around a seat arm.

A dozen strong Atlan arms pulled the belt line taut at my bidding, and I took in all the slack at the seat arm. Back came the throttle bar. The acceleration of the ship spilled them all in a heap at the rear, but I held fast to the line and the bar stayed back.

Now our safety depended on whether the pursuing crew knew this simple trick--for many of the pleasure craft which our pursuer plainly was, were as well powered as the police craft, although their autopilots restricted them to a much lower speed. If the pursuing craft's pilot did not think of adding other men's power to the strength of his own hand on the throttle bar, he would never overtake me. Even police craft were set to less than maximum motive power, as the tubes burned out too quickly at full blast.

I watched the dark speck on the rear screen anxiously and slowly it grew smaller and smaller. When it had vanished the youthful Titan pounded me on the back until my ears rang and my knees buckled.

"You're a sly fellow, and your whole plan of escape is right. It's high time we ran away from the black death. I've worried and waited for it to strike me long enough. The Elder station on the cold planet are the best natured men you can find in space. Haven't been near a sun in centuries, and don't know the meaning of the word evil!"

He turned to the others and continued speaking eagerly. "They'll take us in, give us entrance cards to any government in space Personally I would choose some civilization that warms its cities with its own fires, and shuns all suns entirely. I've had enough worry waiting for Atlan's rulers to get wise to the danger and move. I want no more of these sun-bitten zany dero around me!"

The gray Martian maid spoke, her sensitive green eyes shining with admiration, her voice the slow singing speech of Mars

"The best thing you did was not to tell us what you had in mind, for someone would have read our minds as surely as Venus loves us. We have lived in dread and indecision for many moons. The black death has struck day after day and no official word of it. No one can tell who is dead; there is no way to tell if anything is being done about the danger or not, for anyone who made the slightest effort to do so disappeared at once just as our loved teacher did. We all know that he was not ill; and we also all know that the day he made that announcement to us he had signed his own death warrant--but he had evidently decided he must, as no one else seemed to move. It has been terrible, and if you had planned this flight with us we would never have gotten away. We have been very lucky to get this far. Now, if you will take my advice, you will go at once far beyond any influence from Mother Mu's rodite, under another space-group of planets, and there we will learn how to live where such things as the black death do not exist."

The smile she bestowed on me was Martian magic.

It must have been the look on my face that prevented any further remarks by my companions, and caused them to look at me in new curiosity. If so, my next words fanned the flame of that curiosity.

"I spoke of a greater plan, a few moments ago," I said. "And I am afraid it does not call for such conclusions as you two have made. I am sorry, but neither of you have given me any advice that I like, as sound as it may seem."

"Speak on," prodded one of the big-heads, his eyes alight with interest.

I checked our course briefly to make sure we were headed for Quanto correctly before I answered him. Then I made myself comfortable in a cushioned seat and faced them.

"What is it that we have been fleeing?" I asked.

"Basically, an aging sun," said the young Titan reflectively. "The black death is merely a result of detrimental action on certain rodite who have become dero and even ray. We have fled from them, but the real cause of our flight is the sun."

"Do we flee as cowards, deserting our comrades?" I asked softly. "Or do we flee only that we may be able to make a new plan to take the place of the one that has been interrupted by the rodite dero?"

There was a wry smile on the face of the big-head. "The day has come," he said, "when I have seen a ro put a Titan to shame! Of course, Mutan, we do not flee for cowardice, but to gain time and life to put up a fight. It is only that we have not thought it out as you have Nor has inspiration as yet given us such a plan."

"Then listen to mine," I said, "Just as it is with you, my first thoughts at realization of the fear that lay in Tean City were those of escape to a place where there was no fear. It is a natural reaction, especially if that possibility suddenly presents itself.

"Let us analyze the fear. First, the top unit of the force behind the black death must be a man in a very strong position, to stall off the whole migration as has obviously been done, and to control things so that no news leaks out about the terror that is otherwise so plain for many to see. So high and powerful must this man be that to fight against him on Mu itself must be to invite certain defeat. Perhaps even if we were to muster all clean-minded Atlans to the battle, we could meet only the same frustration as the migration plan has suffered--for is it not true that all Atlans who are aware of the danger of the sun's evil have made utmost effort to bring about the migration?"

"True enough," said a Titan maid. "No Titan has been unaware of the danger, and lately, even such ro as you have been brought into the plan. Perhaps it is fitting that the salvation of that plan come from the mind of a ro."

"Then here is the only salvation I can see," I said. "We must go to the Elders of Quanto. Through them we must contact the mightiest of the Titans and from them get advice and assistance. This thing may well become a space war before we are through--and as I see it, it must be so, or all the Atlans of Mu will be lost!"

I looked at Arl, to see if she listened, and she wagged her tail roguishly. Not only was she listening; she was thinking in tempo with me. At my glance her voice chimed in, doing things to my spine.

"Yes, and we ourselves must devote ourselves to the task, and go to a place where the growth rate is unlimited by law, so that we can become more equal to the job. It will take great power to displace the mad rodite. On Quanto we must find some mighty and old and wise technicon to go along and assure us of a hearing; otherwise the power will not be given us. We need the very mightiest power the Elders of space can give us to save the people of Mu."

"If you but wag that tail of yours at them, Arl, they will give it to us!" I laughed because I could see in all those around me the same conviction and devotion to my plan that was in her. The youthful company laughed too. "Of that there can be no doubt," they agreed, whereupon Arl swished her tail before them and pirouetted about on her clicking hooves.

In that instant the fear was gone from our minds. Instead we were filled with gaiety and hope, and great determination to do all that lay in our power to end all fear.

We circled Mercury, straightening out on a direct path for Quanto, constantly accelerating until it was unnecessary to explain why lack of food did not worry me. The young Titan remarked: "We will be at Quanto within twenty-four hours. Already our speed is approaching that of light. [*21] air locks. At last we were in the home of the kindly men from sunless Nor!

I leaned back with a sigh of thankfulness, feeling that I had saved at least some of the good life seed of ancient Atlan from the madness that was overtaking all of its races under the aging sun. To save still more would be a colossal effort; but as Arl's arms drew about my shoulders, I knew that such effort was worthwhile.

The purpose of life was plainer now. Such beauty and tenderness did not live in words or in paintings. Only in understanding and caring for the life seed, the bearers of future race growth, could a man find the true meaning of life. And in the mighty job that lay ahead in enlisting aid for the saving of our people from the black death of the mad rodite I knew I would become a man or die.

Footnotes

^{^38:19} Mutan Mion explains that gravity is the friction of condensing exd, ex-disintegrance, falling through matter into earth. By using a beam of similarly condensing particles of ex-disintegrance a harmless beam of upward gravity is obtained which can levitate matter slowly or drive it upward at immense speed. All space is filled with the ash from disintegrance of the suns of the universe. This, condensing again into matter, is integrance or gravity.--Ed.

^{^42:20} Mutan Mion says this is the eleventh and last planet of the solar system. The tenth (and yet undiscovered, though predicted by astronomers) is two billion miles beyond Pluto, which is itself nearly four billion miles from the sun.--Ed.

^{^47:21} Mutan Mion, apparently, holds no brief for the 'limit velocity' of light; or that the speed of light is the ultimate speed. According to Mr. Shaver's letters on the subject: "Light speed is due to 'escape velocity' on the sun, which is not large. This speed is a constant to our measurement because the friction of exd, which fills all space, holds down any increase unless there is more impetus. The escape velocity of light from a vaster sun than ours is higher, but once again exd slows the light speed down to its constant by friction, so that when it reaches the vicinity of our sun, no appreciable difference is to be noted. A body can travel at many times the exd constant, under additional impetus, such as rocket explosions. A ship whose weight is reduced to a very little by reverse gravity beam can attain a great speed with a very small rocket. Once beyond the limits of matter gravity ceases and the ship becomes weightless. Speeds over that of exd constant must be under constant impetus, for the friction slows them down quickly again, especially so in the case of solids. Sound, as an example, travels through air at a constant speed--and yet the impetus is obviously different in each case! The only conclusion is that the air itself is the governing factor in the speed of sound, which always remains appreciably the same. So it is with light. Both depend for their velocity on an initial impetus. Both remain constant because below a certain speed, friction disappears."

Your editors have been constantly amazed at the interchangeability of Mr. Shaver's (Mutan Mion's?) physical phenomena, or rather, their adaptability to one great physical law which we have as yet hardly begun to comprehend in its entirety. However, at this point a brief definition might aid the reader in understanding many things he has already read and will read in the following pages.

Matter in all the cosmos is constantly disintegrating and integrating. There is the natural parallel as to whether the hen or the egg came first--did the integration come first, or the disintegration? But that is the one and only unanswerable question in the whole theory. Exd is the ash (matter so finely divided as to become energy rather than matter) of disintegrating suns. It spreads out and fills all space. Then, perhaps because of the presence of an actual bit of matter (as in the case of the salt grain in the salt solution that commences precipitation which does not end until all the salt is once more in its original form), or under the influence of a

magnetic field which draws the exd

On Quanto, we knew, a group of Elder technicians from sunless Nor, a group of sunless planets 0.16 light years away, had lately established an observatory for the study of our planetary system. [*22] It was these Elders I wished to contact in my effort to enlist aid for our cause.

Our trip to Quanto consumed slightly over twenty-four hours, the hunger of which we could easily endure; and on the landing station we switched to a shuttle ship.

As we settled into the cradles of the great cavern's entrance on Tiny Quanto, liquid air glistened over the view panes. The ship rocked as the cradle connected with its conveyor and was drawn by it into the cave through the together, integration commences and the exd once more becomes matter. This fall of exd and its condensation is what causes gravity. When Newton was hit on the head by an apple, it was by an apple that was pushed down upon his head, rather than pulled down; since gravity is the friction caused by the fall through matter already existent of condensing exd. Obviously a condensation is a falling together of a finely divided element into a grosser state.

There are many finer points, staggering in their implications, concerning this theory which are not necessary to the reader's understanding of this manuscript; but they are being prepared in a monograph which is to be submitted to scientific circles.--Ed.

^{48:22} Quanto lies beyond the jurisdiction of Mu's government, which holds sway over all the planets of the solar system except this tiny world. Quanto is on the rim of Nor influence and is used by them as an observation station. Because of its small size, it is unimportant to the government of Mu.--Ed.

CHAPTER V

The Princess Vanue

We found the typical welcome that all the great ones accord to visitors. Our party was courteously received by the attendants, and we were directed to the administrative offices with swift efficiency.

For me, this first visit to a world people by other than Atlans or Titans was one of the most interesting of my life; but I did not find it half as exciting as my first glimpse of Tean City had been. The men from sunless Nor were of an amazing blondness, for no light but of their own making had ever struck their skins. Their size, as did that of Titans and Atlans, varied with their age and with the age of the parent. Thus, a son of a man of a hundred years age would be three times the size of a son of a man of thirty. [*23]

Further, the race from Nor, who are called Nortans, are a straight race of men. There had been no intermingling of races of other forms, not because it was forbidden, but because their technicons had not made the variform technique of breeding available to the public and without it all such intercourse is sterile. Perhaps they are right, although I see much beauty in variforms--especially in my own lovely and completely desirable Arl with her beautiful, expressive furry tail and her dainty, clicking hooves; certainly their race is beautiful and vital enough to please anyone.

All about the city of the Nortans it was evidenced by many wholly unfamiliar devices that the science of Nor had forged ahead of our own; and as I looked about, I knew why. Here was none of the fear that had pervaded Tean City; nor was there any of the sun-poison to be a detriment to constructive thinking in even the slight degree that evidently has long deterred the technicons of Mu from full scientific advancement.

The thought of the fear brought the need for haste once more home to me as we walked through the city toward the administrative buildings. It was better to continue our flight than to remain long even here, I knew. So, to improve time, I kept running over in my mind the desperate plight of center Mu; the delaying of the migration to a newborn sun; the fear of pursuit that was still with us; for I knew that in that administrative building toward which we were headed some watchful Elder of Nor was most certainly taking thought record of our minds, to see if there were harm in us.

So, when we reached our destination, it instantly became evident that we would have little explaining left to do. And at the same time, another thing became evident to me that filled me with terror. Fear, again, in the one place where I had thought I would not find it!

A young lady of the snowskinned Nortan race glided toward me, her hand outstretched in greeting, her voice a soft bell of welcome for all of us.

"We have read your thoughts and understand what brings you here. Follow me now to the Princess Vanue, chief Elder, for an oral check; and forget your fear, for soon you will be going to where fear is not. Your message spells danger to us, as well as to your poor, helpless fellows in Mu." [*24]

It had been the words "Princess , chief Elder" that had struck a new kind of fear into me. The chief Elders had been described to me in Tean City. They are the oldest of the race, and are given official power, according to the value of their achievements to the race. They are of both sexes, and have learned all there is to know of the secrets of growth; how to manufacture their own life-supporting essences, nutrients and beneficial vibrants. And on their ability to improve upon the standard nutrients of the people often depends their success. Thus, when a simple ro like myself comes near one of these Elders, his will becomes their will automatically; for it is overcome by the great, all-pervading force of the life within them. One hardly notices this when the Elder is of the same sex, but when that life force is of the opposite sex the attraction is so great as to be irresistible. So true is this that seldom is a ro of one sex allowed too near an Elder of the opposite sex; for never again would

the poor ro free himself of love for the Elder.

My spirit trembled when I knew the Elder to which we were being taken was a woman; a woman who for unknown centuries had absorbed all the essences of growth-promoting substances. And too, Nor was a place where growth science must be far, far ahead of our own sun-baked sciencon's achievements. Never would I be able to free myself of the spell that: woman-force would cast upon me!

I looked desperately at Arl's sweet face. Never again would I love her if this thing were true. In Arl's eyes I read the same fear, and I know then that she surely loved me and I was torn by the approaching loss. However, I dimly understood that it must be necessary--for no man near an Elder woman can deny her the truth of love for her.

We left the building and presently were ascending a long, transparent boarding tube into the side of a space liner that lay like a sleeping monster in the launching cradles. This was one ship that could land directly on a planet! But then, Quanto was small. We passed through a series of airlocks, reached the inside of the ship.

It was a long way into the center of the ship. As we progressed, I noted that all the ro who passed were maidens; beautiful white Nor maidens with glittering white-yellow hair that floated about their heads in a cloud, so fine was it that it was air-borne.

Soon I became aware of an aura of complementary forces that I knew came from the Nor Chief Elder, Vanue, whom we were undoubtedly now nearing. Her force scent grew stronger as we approached a mighty door set across a corridor. In glowing letters of hammered metal above this door was the legend:

VANUE

Elder Princess Of Van Of Nor

Chief Of Nor On Quanto

The great door, I discovered, was an airlock; to hold in the ionized and nutrient-saturated air of the chamber. These chambers the Elders seldom leave, since all evil is restrained from entering.

As we passed through the lock, the terrific stimulation of this conductive electrified medium seized us in a mighty ecstasy. We were drawn as by a powerful magnet toward a huge figure which was an intense concentration of all the vitally stimulating qualities that make beauty the sought-for thing that it is.

Within me I could feel the compass of my being swinging toward its new center of attraction. I was no longer myself. I was a part of that mighty being before me. My thought was her thought; I was her ro until she chose to release me.

Could she release me? I could not even wish it, nor ever would. Within me I knew that, and I felt no resentment, no regret--only joy.

All of eighty feet tall she must have been. She towered over our heads as she arose to greet us, a vast cloud of the glittering hair of the Nor women floating about her head, the sex aura a visible iridescence flashing about her form.

I yearned toward that vast beauty which was not hidden for in Nor it is considered impolite to conceal the body greatly, being an offense against art and friendship to take beauty out of life. I was impelled madly toward her until I fell on my knees before her, my hands outstretched to touch the gleaming, ultra-living flesh of her feet.

Beside me the other youths from center Mu were in the same condition of ecstatic desire.

As our hands touched her flesh, a terrific charge of body electric flowed into us. We fell face downward in unbearable pleasure on the floor.

She picked us up one by one and placed us on the desk before her. Waist-high now were our burning eyes. She bent to meet our gaze; and the mighty beauty of the eyes of the Elder princess of Nor flashed a question into our minds. As one man we chorused:

"Yes, it is true! Evil has the upper hand in center Mu; in Tean City itself!"

It was then that I realized how far ahead of Mother Mu's Titan and Atlan technicians were the Nortans and, I supposed, all other great ones of the dark worlds. For Vanue wasted no more time on us, but bending toward the banks of instruments before her throne, pulled a lever and through all the ship was heard the warning signal of departure. As if they were my own, I knew her thoughts! Quanto was to be evacuated.

The Nortans were certainly not the sun-spoiled sleepyheads our own race had proved to be. She understood the awful danger that could threaten a planet's multitudes' under the thumb of the dero madness.

At her willed command we all ran to seats that circled the throne. They were mounted on acceleration absorbers. The grand hand pressed the bar that lifted the now weightless ship up the force beam flowing out of the cavern.

Even through the thick walls of the ship we heard the huge airlocks scream shut behind us. Then we were out in space headed toward Nor, the vast cold planet where this Elder Goddess' daughter had been born centuries before. I realized that our precipitate departure was sure evidence that our news had meant much more than nothing to Vanue. She had enough Elder God sense in her to know that flight was imperative. There were misgivings in my breast as I wondered if any Atlan Elders or rodite had knowledge of mighty Vanue's presence in Quanto. It might make a great difference if they did!

As the acceleration lessened toward the midpoint of our takeoff, freeing us from our seats, the whelming voice of the great woman-being swept us.

"You children will remain with me until your future is settled. I will thus be sure that you are fully rewarded for bringing us such vital information."

The soft, singing voice of the gray maid from Mars questioned her, and in its notes was gray also.

"Will you... can you... then give us back the love of our dear ones, which has cleaved to you?" There was a powerful pleading in her voice that penetrated even through the blanketing ecstasy that held me.

Infinite tenderness and compassion seemed to flow from the eyes of the great one.

"There is a way to do that," the master voice answered; and she bent swiftly toward the Mars maid, her great eyes flashing a strange thought I could not wholly read; a tender woman-language into the eyes of the Mars maid.

That simple Martian magic had made another friend, this time a great one indeed.

It was a strange passage. Most of it seemed more a dream than reality. Such things as the tremendous gait we built up--far more than light speed--and the great distances we traveled were the realities, but I barely noticed them. More real was the unreality of the thin, lovely forms of the Nor maids moving about their mighty

princess, the soft fires of their floating hair like seedling flames from the vast fire of Vanue's god-life crowned by its floating cloud of yellow; our own eyes burning like the spotted wings of moths against the screen of her will; the sad faces of our own maids beside us, gazing first at the fierce white flame of her body and then at our own bemused selves; the vaulting of the vast ship walls about us; the unfamiliar instruments blinking and whirring.

It was a very real dream to me--a dream I knew I would never stop dreaming. Strange passage.... Ever the whisper of the feet of the Nor maids on some swift errand; the soft rumble of the voice of their living Goddess and the answering bright song of her worshipping maidens. Yes, it was a strange passage, and every mile of it brought home a fascinating realization.

I had embarked on the most amazing voyage of my whole life. The very thought of what now certainly lay before me was enough to stun my mind into an apathy of thinking that was hard to overcome; yet my mind was so full of excitement that it did strive to think, to add to the realization of what the future would hold. A new life was

at hand; opening to wonders that staggered me to think of them--and awed me into all-engulfing reverence.

To live to become what this Nor princess had become; to have the love of people as she had the love of these Nor maids--that is the real dream. I knew that I must gain the key to the door of a way of living that would lead to the full value of the Nortan life.

So it was, sitting in the thrall of that too-strong beauty of woman-life, we noted so little. How much time passed? I will never know. It was as if all body functions ceased, as though food and drink were not needed--as long as we were in the presence of Vanue of Nor. But I did know that she was in continual communication with the planet Nor over the space telescreens. Face after face appeared before her, murmured briefly and intensely, and vanished; only to be replaced by others. I knew vaguely that she was calling for a conference on the strength of our information; and sensed also that we would attend that conference at her side.

The thought dawned on me slowly. Here was an honor few ro ever attain in the first century of their growth. By old Mother Mu! To see those Elders of Nor, the whole lot of them, male and female, all at once...! That would be more than one could well stand. An overpowering, devastating ecstasy....

Well, it would be an interesting death. [*25]

Footnotes

^50:23 Proportionately this would not be true. A man of a hundred considering he did not stop growing at the usual age, would certainly not be three times as large as at thirty. A baby doubles its weight in six months, doubles it again in eighteen. Thus the rate decreases in proportion to total mass, although the actual poundage increase is the same for a similar period of time. Later, however, this poundage begins to lessen until maturity is reached, where growth ceases altogether. In the time of Mutan Mion, however, growth was a constant thing, ended only by death. And the rate of growth could even be increased, if desired. This is what Arl was referring to when she mentioned that it would be necessary to "grow" to be able better to perform their mission. The reader will see the methods of this stimulated growth demonstrated further on in this manuscript.--Ed.

^52:24 The Nortans, as did the Atlans and Titans, spoke the universal language of space; a language originated by a Titan Elder of the far past. The name of the language is Mantong. The original individual language of each race has fallen into disuse as the three races have intermingled through all space. This is the same language of which the alphabetical key was published in the January 1944 issue of Amazing Stories, and

also as an appendix to this book.--Ed.

^58:25 This reference to death from mere association with the Elders is singularly intriguing. According to Mr. Shaver, the Titans, Atlans and Nortans had the ability to bestow beneficial forces upon less favored mortals, such as Mu-tan Mion (a ro), and also radiated a perpetual flow of life energy which was beyond their control to cut off from any ro who visited them. Hence, the animal magnetism of Vanue was such as to cause Mutan Mion's whole being to be drawn to her body with a force so great that it superseded any other love he might have had. Her attraction commanded all of his maleness, his ability and capacity for love of the opposite sex.

Now we find him referring to the possibility of dying from too much of this animal magnetism. Obviously in his mind a superstition has been built up which has enhanced his imagination of the effects of meeting the Elders in a great group. He refers to meeting the Elders as being "a great honor" for ro less than a century old. Therefore we can discount his belief that it will be fatal to him; because it is sometimes done to ro younger than a century as an "honor" and without fatal result. The truly interesting factor here is when we consider Mr. Shaver's constant insistence that dark space is full of Titans, Atlans and Nor-tans, and that they do not visit our world because it is plagued by the sun's poisonous radioactives and is a cause of death. They shun their ancient home, Mu. We, says Shaver, are a quarantined people under an evil sun. We have no value to them. In their language we are errant (detrimental energy animals: E--energy; R--dangerous dis force; AN--animal; T--force of growth. Literally errants are animals whose force of growth is directed by a dangerous dis energy and is therefore evil). Can we assume that he is incorrect in his assumption that these super beings never visit the earth, and that such instances as the biblical references to angels, Christ, and other things are actual records of such visits? Perhaps it is significant that the reference to these things always seem to include effusion of an energy of some sort; i. e. the radiance of the angel who drove Adam and Eve from the Garden; the brilliant light that blinded Saul as he rode to destroy Christians; the radiance amidst which Elija, and Christ himself, ascended into Heaven; the light that came from the burning bush and the voice that spoke to Abraham.--Ed.

CHAPTER VI

Conclave of the Elders

I never knew how much time the voyage consumed; but it seemed very soon that the great vessel floated down the landing beam into the white and yawning face of a landing area on a station satellite of Nor while I and the other youths dreamed on almost oblivious in the quarters of Vanue.

Still in that dazed dream of love we followed among her maidens into the tubes and aboard the special shuttle ship awaiting her, and shot off to Nor looming not far away. We did not pause on Nor's dark surface, but descended into the depths of a great cave toward the council place somewhere in center Nor.

I had thought in the past that the Titans were mighty of thought and size--but what I saw now eclipsed anything I had ever heard of the glories of our own races. Big and vital as was Vanue, she was but a little child among the tremendous Nortan Elders and Gods.

There are no words to describe what the development of unchecked growth in man brings forth. These ancient Nor-tans, who had studied and purified all the source-substances of growth and combined them into an endless variety of nutrients which they introduced into their bodies by many means--borne in electric flows; on penetrative sound waves; by injections; by direct feeding--had been growing at a fierce rate for unknown centuries. Their inner beings had evolved in various ways, so that they were evidently of a more complex atomic and molecular construction than ordinary flesh. There is no way to describe the qualities of thought, of inner strength of spirit seen on their faces and in the aura that is always about such beings.

We trooped after Vanue as she entered the vast reaches of the council cavern and took her throne by the side of her father, a mighty bulk of man-flesh but only a lesser luminary in that gathering.

Before the council came to the business at hand we were treated to a brief prelude of entertainment--psychologically a reward for the effort of coming to the council. It was a prelude to music and dancing, a review of the best talent of the planet, calculated to bring the minds of the council into harmony on the subject of the welfare and glory of the race. Entertainment, yes; but the amusements of Elder Gods are nothing to pass over.

What it all meant was beyond me; I was aware only of the awful beauty and tremendously fecund strength of the dancers--bred and fed by wizard technicians of growth; trained to express meaning and emotion of a kind too vast for ro to grasp. They danced in a vortex of conductive rays which carried their thought and body essence, augmented by apparatus, to each watcher.

The climax was the appearance of the greatest beauty of the planet--a sorceress of the art of entertainment named Hypaytee--who wore on her head a device which caused a vast augmentation of the thought images of her mind to play about her body in a tremendous revelation of the infinitely developed soul of woman. I had loved woman--hut never before had I undestood even vaguely what development did to the greatest value of life. The rewards this woman could give a man by the use of her mind alone, coupled as it was to that mighty, sinuous dancer's body expressing all the things that draw men to women, brought the concourse of Elders to their feet in an earth-shaking applause and a mighty vow to care for the race that produced her. This thought was also projected from the control rays which took root in every heart. It came to me, too: and I was a Nor-man now, no matter what I had been before!

Then Vanue's thought flashed out, setting the thought cloud [*26] areas into coruscation with an alarm, a command to attention. I was brought out of my daze to see my own thought record projected in the thought clouds. I saw once again, as real as the first time I had seen it, the fear on the faces of the six-armed Sybyl of the Info screens; the striking of the black death at the dance; the hideous fear on the faces of the dancers; Arl's

sweet face contorted in a scream.

A thought-record from the brain of each of our group from Tean City followed. It was evidence enough, thus gathered together, that evil had the upper hand in Mu.

My own efforts to conceal my thought as I planned our escape and the trick of the belts on the throttle that had resulted in our success finished the record display.

I was mightily surprised to hear applause and a great thunder of voices calling for me--Mutan Mion of Atlan. They called for me, the stupid artist! those vast voices from hundreds of ancient beings, some of them three hundred feet in height!

Vanue held me out in her two hands for all to see. And as I became the center of their attention, my embarrassment exceeded any emotion of a similar nature I had ever had. If I had known that they would think of an escape from such a condition as so much of a feat it is probable I would never have tried it. I would have been hopeless of success from the very inception of the fool-hardy thought.

I was put down again, my face red, my thoughts flustered, my embarrassment a flood of discomfort in me--but a discomfort that held within it a strange glow of humility that was at the same time a glow of pride. I was proud with a just pride; and I felt somehow that it was not my own pride, but the pride of Vanue, whose utter slave I had become. Vanue, Elder of Van of Nor, was proud of her ro!

The actual conference of the Godheads took place now in thought projections in the thought-cloud area. I saw that any thought, no matter how abstract, could be projected in these clouds by thought augmentors. [*27] They used an image language instead of words, and their talk was to me but a whirlwind of changing forms, faces, geometrical figures, maps of space and figures on orbits and many other things incomprehensible to me and probably to most of the ro present. The powerful minds of the Nortans functioned too rapidly for us to grasp any but the simplest meaning in the ideographs unfolding in the cloud before us. But I did gather that some action was to take place at once to save the Atlans and the Titans of Atlan from the derodite.

Now from the mists of the Elder Gods' highest throne of all came a swift ray that lanced down and touched me delicately. An ecstasy of change came over me. What that ray did to me and told me in the next brief instant I can never say in any words. Then a voice spoke out:

"Mutan Mion of Mu, we have seen the great compassion and love for your fellow man that lives in your breast. We admire such greatness in such a tiny ro; and because of the love of man in you we have decided that it must not go without full satisfaction in deed.

"You came here to gather together an expedition and return to Mu for the rescue of your comrades who are in deadly danger. Never could you carry such a gigantic project as this would require to its successful completion--and yet you have done it; for we of Nor have made a solemn vow to rescue the men of Atlan on Mu and to destroy the derodite who threaten to spread their evil even into dark space.

"However, because of your great desire, we have planned a place for you in this great mission. You shall have your part in it; and you shall have another duty which is worthy of your capacity for compassion. We, the Nortans, have seen in your mind a vision of the far future--of a time on Mu when men shall be slaves of the degenerate sun around which it circles; of a time when they will be but mentally deficient savages living out a life span compressed to an irreducible minimum by radioactives. This may be a true vision, in part or in whole--for we may not succeed entirely in our mission. We may even fail!

"Therefore, we give to you the task of preparing a message, in great duplication, to these pitiful men of the future--so that there may be some hope that those among them who have the mental power to fight against

their cruel environment may make their lives in some measure complete. This message will be left on Mu, and in it, in many places for future man to find."

The voice ceased. The conference was over.

Footnotes

^61:26 Three dimensional pictures were formed by projection of the image into a mass of gases held by electric pressure in a cloud whose particles glowed in various colors according to the mental wavelength of the vibration field in which they floated. Ordinarily the cloud is opaque white, and when the thought-picture is projected into it by the Nortan mind, it becomes transparent except for the particles which form the image in full color. The command for attention causes the whole cloud to change color from milky white to flaming red.--Ed.

^62:27 In a letter from Mr. Shaver, this reference to augmentors is explained in great detail. Says Mr. Shaver: "I refer you to a picture printed in many high school books of ancient history. It is from the 'Book of the Dead' a copy of which could be obtained in any large library from a book about the 'Book of the Dead.' This picture shows a scene which is called a picture of the Gods, and is in two sections. On the lower section the Gods are 'weighing the souls' our historians tell us. Actually it looks like a butcher buying a hybrid hog: half hog and half deer... the animal has a line around its middle as though it had been cut apart and sewn together again. It is evidence of the hybrid breeding of animals by the Atlans and Titans of Mu.

"Another picture shows a teacher seated before an instrument, and before the teacher, facing him, is a group of students each holding a smaller instrument. This is an actual pictographic representation of the thought augmentor and the focusing device used to pick up its waves.

"Still another instrument pictured in ancient Egyptian glyphs is the crook the Pharoahs always carry. Notice the bottom end has a clevis--with holes. I have seen such handles protruding from the ancient weapon-beam apparatus. It acts as a beam director, like the stick of an airplane; and if removed would have kept the apparatus from being used by anyone else. Why else the clevis on the bottom? The origin of scepters was this carrying of the control handle to keep others from using the dangerous apparatus while one was gone for a short time.

"Certainly the use of this apparatus was very general in ancient times among rulers for it gave them control of men's minds and its use was always secret among them."--Ed.

CHAPTER VII

A Wedding on Nor

As we passed from the misty vastness of the council cavern Vanue turned to us of Atlan, trooping behind her, and said in a serious voice.

"It is law among Nortans that no service to the race goes unrewarded. Now there are certain things I plan for you which I cannot give you legally except you swear to serve me always as my loyal followers. Is there anything to keep you from that?" Her eyes searched us one by one.

The Mars maid answered, her eyes shining:

"There is only our oath to the state of Atlan, and the present evil conditions render that oath void."

Vanue went on: "I am only a young Elder; you might do better than to follow me--my fortune in the future is not wholly assured. You might do better!"

"You have honored us, Vanue," said the Mars maid. "You have let us see your mind at work; we know there is no evil in you. That your fortune should be our fortune is enough for me. You have said you will give the love of our men back to us, and though I don't understand how you will or can, I know you will."

One by one we swore loyalty to Vanue before all other greater beings.

Then Vanue looked at her Nor maids and said with a strange innuendo that made them laugh with delight and anticipation: "Now we must send them to school--in pairs!" The laughter of the gold-topped lilies of Nor rang merrily.

What sort of a school was this, I wondered, to make them laugh so?

The tubes took Vanue's train to the doors of her own cavern palace. Huge air locks swung open to admit the whole procession into the under parts of the palace. When we stepped out into the special air of her home that tremendous acceleration of the life processes that I had noted in her chambers in the space liner again seized us--and life became a thing to really fear to lose.

But as yet I had no inkling of what lay before me in the mystery of the wisdom that had built that place to house their first borne, Elder Princess Vanue, daughter of the Elder Gods of Nor.

Flinging off her wraps, which she had worn to the council chamber because of their significance, Vanue said: "We will put the children in school, and then to our own work. We have much to do to make ready and the time is short."

"School" turned out to be a vast laboratory--a replica on a much mightier scale of our own Titan technicon's laboratory school where Arl and I had learned to know each other and the possibilities of life. Instead of embryos, the nutrient tanks contained six foot ro and even much larger men and women.

Taking Arl and me in her hands she placed us in one of the big tanks. The liquids were warm and comforting and we splashed about playfully while others of our Atlan group were also being placed in pairs in tanks like our own.

Then Vanue's maids swarmed about us, placing wires about our arms, our wrists, our hands and feet; fastening breathing cups over our mouths; thrusting needles into our veins and attaching them to the ends of thin tubes;

placing caps of metal with many wires connected to generators and other machines on our heads; covering our eyes with strangely wired plates of crystal.

I heard the tank cover sealed and more fluid gushed in until we were completely submerged. We floated in suspension within the tanks.

Then began a strange thing; for our minds, Arl's and mine, were conscious of each other through the medium of the interrelated wiring and the plates over our eyes--an awareness that must have been augmented a thousand times. Her breath was my breath, her thoughts took place in my head stronger than Vanue's ever had, and the woman-soul of her was so augmented in my mind as to eclipse all other woman's appeal that my memory had ever recorded.

A strange little voice (it must have been Vanue's speaking over a telethought instrument) whispered beside me: "You will never escape Arl now. You are her slave forever." And as I listened, I knew that Vanue spoke the truth.

Arl's face, laughing before me in the eye plates, became larger and larger, entered my brain, became the wellspring of my being. I heard Arl's thought, a vast river of force flowing in my mind, saying: "Where I go, there will you go also. The thing that is my desire is growing in you. My roots are your soul. You are my desire and the slave of my desire!"

And I heard my own thought make answer in Arl's mind: "So it shall be, always, oh maiden of the clicking hooves and swift hands, of the beautiful tail, of the clean will and strong desire!" And I knew that what I said was true.

The fluids and forces that were pulsing through us made these things grow within our beings, so that centuries of loving contact were replaced by minutes of furious growth; and we fell asleep, strangely within each other our thoughts, growing and becoming an integrant part of our being. Through every fibre of my body I could feel fecund growth swelling and expanding, patterned by thoughts which were mine and yet not mine. In my ears strange sounds beat mysterious meanings which were forces taking root within me. My memory was a vast garden of new thoughts growing as my mind grew, and remembering all the principles that came over the wires from the Elder Gods' own thought record.

Always overhead I could feel the Nor maids watching my mind pictures and correcting the growth memory so that everything took its rightful place. And within me I could hear Arl, sleeping and growing too, and she was very dear.

The thing that was me slept as a babe sleeps in the womb, and the seeds of the Gods' thoughts took root in Arl and me and grew. We were at once children asleep in the womb of the God mother, and man and wife wrapped in each other's adoring arms. Time flowed by like water; and we slept but were more awake and alive than ever before, and felt the pleasure of each the other's body and soul appeal, the very inner essence of man-life and woman-appeal to man. Life pulsed from each of us into the other constantly. We had more pleasure of each other in the growth school tank than ever I have known of in any pleasure.

Among the things that became a part of my knowledge was the promise of the future in such tanks as this: Sometime Arl and I were to build such a tank and appartatus and take a long sleep in it and awake as Gods, full of the strength and the beauty and the pleasure of life and life's fulfilment.

So it was that Arl and I were married by an actual mingling of the seeds of our being, and not by any foolish ceremony; blessed by the actual love of Vanue, now our Lady, and not by any meaningless words.

Though we were in the growth tank less than a week, we came out inches bigger in every way; but the real

growth that had taken place was an inner growth--for I was vastly heavier and my strength was aware of new limits.

Mentally, too, I was vastly more able; for when I looked about at the apparatus I knew the inner construction and use of every bit of it, and I knew that from then on few things would mystify me other than the work of the very oldest Gods.

I found that I had not lost my love for Vanue, but that I loved her now as one loves and is grateful to a leader. My love for Arl was the strongest thing in me. [*28]

All of us found out now that Vanue was not the most foolish of the Elders of Nor, despite her comparative youth, but was looked up to everywhere as one whose star was in the ascendant. Her followers were more numerous than many much more prominent Elders.

Arl and I spent several days together in our love, and in seeing the wonders of Nor's civilization. Here was a vast series of underground cities, all heated and bathed in beneficial energies artificially created. No need for a sun's light to live. No danger of dis-integratives from a dangerous sun poisoning the soil and water of the planet, to cause slow death by age.

Then one day Vanue called me to her.

"I speak now of the mission the Elders of the council granted to you in the conference chamber. As you remember, your part in the coming task is two-fold. In one phase of this you will accompany us to act with us in the great war that must be fought. We have developed a plan in which your help as an advance and secret agent is necessary. You will be told more about that later, when we have embarked.

"Now, however, your other mission begins, here on Nor. It is the mission of love for your fellow men. No matter how successful we are in rescuing the men of Atlan, it cannot be that we will rescue all of them. Many must not be rescued! There is nothing we could do for them, poisoned as they are to the point of death. Nor must we allow any of this poison to escape to the dark worlds where it can infect others. Too, the dero influence is dangerous, and madness must not spread over the universe.

"Thus it has been given to you to inscribe on imperishable plates of telonion, our eternal metal, a message to future man which will be placed on and in Mu so that those who have the intelligence to find and read it may benefit by the truths of growth and defense against a too-soon death by age.

"After the passing of Atlan science from Mu, men will begin to die at the same age, and their sons will all be the same size at the same age. This will be caused by accumulations of sun-poison in the water of Mu, which will stop all growth in mankind at almost the very beginning of their development. They will scarcely get beyond childhood before they will begin to die.

"These plates you will inscribe will contain a message that is a key and a path to the door that will open life value to these future men, whose fate we know and pity, but cannot prevent. We can only teach them what we know that will enable them to get the most out of their life on Mu. The dero will not be able to read, and thus will die as they should. Those whose minds are powerful enough to escape complete dero-robotism will read and profit.

"You can tell them how to attain this life growth by freeing their food and water intake of all the poisons that will be found in it in the natural state. The age poisons can be removed by centrifuge and by still; their air can be made a nutrient by proper treatment and freed of all its detrimental ions by field sweeps of electric. The exd on which the basic integration of life feeds can be concentrated (just as it was in your body in the growth school tank) in energy flows which greatly increase the rate of growth and the solidity and weight of the flesh.

"Tell future man to do these things, Mutan Mion, and their reward will be great. You have seen what the reward of such effort can be--in thousands of years of life's fullness--even on a planet under a detrimental sun. We cannot save those men yet unborn. We can only leave for them the heritage that is rightfully theirs, the heritage of our sciencon knowledge. And you, Mutan, in your infinite love and pity for your fellow men, shall perform this task with all the energy that your love makes possible!"

I left the presence of mighty Vanue, marveling at the understanding of the Elders and Gods of Nor. No wonder that their race is so great. To me, the humble artist of Sub Atlan, had been given a great mission; one that thrilled me to my depths. I hurried to Arl to tell her all about it.

"The wonder of it!" I exclaimed, having repeated what Vanue had told me, "In my hands--the simple-awkward, unskilled artist's hands of Mutan Mion, culture man of Mu--has been placed the hope of future man! To me is given the honor to preserve for men yet unborn the knowledge of their heritage of life!"

Arl held me to her, and her eyes were shining. "Yes, I understand," she said.

"There is more!" I went on. "The Nortans set out soon to rescue many thousands of Atlans and Titans and their variform offspring from the threat of death by a dying sun's radioactives, and from the black death of the derodite; but I, Mutan Mion, am to be the rescuer of untold numbers of future men down through the history of Mu, until the very planet is dead! Think of it..."

Arl kissed me tenderly. "Go, Mutan, and busy yourself with the beginning of the message. You have but little time, and I think you should begin by putting down the story of Mu--our story!--and thus give body to the message to future man. Perhaps he will not even remember Atlantis! Nor Tean City, nor all the other vast cities of center Mu. Perhaps he will not even remember that there ever was such a being as an Atlan or a Titan or a Nortan. It will be your duty to tell him that, too, my loved one. For how can he believe and hope if he has no knowledge of the truth of life?"

"Most certainly must I tell them of you!" I exclaimed. "Never in all Time was there such a woman!"

And kissing her again, I hurried off to the sciencon laboratories to gather the materials necessary to begin scribing my imperishable plates of telonium with the message of hope to Lemurians unborn.

For many days I worked, putting down the truths and the knowledge to overcome the poison of age to the fullest possible extent, as it is now done in Tean City and all Mu; and the means to full life growth. I told the story of our flight from Mu, and much of the history of Mu. I told of the Titans and the Atlans who live throughout all dark space; who are seaching ever for new suns. I told of the Nortans; who do not believe in living near any sun, old or new.

I brought my message up to date--and barely in time. For when I had finished Arl came to me.

"Vanue's ship leaves for Mu in a few hours," she said. "You must be ready."

At that moment it hit me--these were my last hours with my loved Arl until I returned from the war in Mu; if ever I returned. Now for the first time since reaching Nor I knew sorrow. But Arl saw what was in my mind, and her words brought joy back to me.

"I am to go along, as operator of one of the telescreens on our own ship," she announced happily.

I should have known that my loyal Arl would never consent to remaining behind while I went into danger!

"Your life is my life," she was whispering as she snuggled in my arms. "Where you go, there also will I go."

Your soul's nearness is my desire."

Footnotes

^69:28 The "school" of growth to which Mutan Mion and Arl and their companions went for their growth in both body and mind is the concrete manifestation in apparatus of the science of mangrowth as conceived by the three ancient god-races. It was based on simple laws of the integration of matter. These simple laws are being set forth in a scientific monograph by Mr. Shaver and your editor, who firmly believe that its publication will throw a bombshell into all of present-day physics and chemistry. Naturally they cannot be dealt with in complete form here, but a slight explanation of what was done to Mutan Mion seems necessary. Part of this explanation is in the words of Mr. Shaver:

Growth is an inflow of exd. Life itself is a flame of integration, which like a fire must be fed or it goes out. Exd is the fuel of that flame, and by its condensation into matter, adds to the flame, causing growth. Naturally this growth is a material growth. What the Nortans did was to concentrate the flow of exd so as to feed the flame of life at a greater rate, and thus cause greater growth. A technical simile might be drawn: a fire, when supplied with finely divided carbon and a larger supply of oxygen becomes a greater, fiercer thing. It is the same with life. When supplied with a greater quantity of exd, it grows, becomes stronger, more active.

The mechanical means is very similar to the magnetic field lenses used in electron microscopes, which direct and focus a flow of particles called electrons into a beam more revealing than light because its particles are smaller. This same magnetic field principle can be used to focus exd and thus hasten integration. A magnetic field, lens-shaped, could focus falling exd by attunement just as a radio collects certain waves. This attunement can be determined by constructing a coil in the same shape as the coils of the electron microscope--but much larger. The focus can be determined by its light focus, which would be the same. A plant, placed beneath this point of focus, perks up its leaves, reaches out, is invigorated, exudes a dew, in a short time is twice the size it would ordinarily have been.

Once there was a book called the "T" book ('T' for integration, for growth force, energy, etc.) which was in rather widespread use up to the time of Christ. It contained the elemental frames of logic and simple what-to-dos like the age-poison elimination, beneficial generators, and so on. But some group feared its influence and it was destroyed, so completely that only the memory of that once infallible book remains, which memory was the father of the Bible and all its veneration, including the cross on its cover, the 'T' sign.

The direct need for a greater future for man is strengthening of the general mind by T forces, the growth of a better brain. No progress is truly progress unless man grows a better brain to grow a better brain. That is the pattern of progress--to grow a growth to grow, etc. What man needs is a conscious aim toward growth. To learn how to grow into a man better able to grow into a wiser man is a goal followed by but a few men out of all the number who could be striving in that direction. The great ones called such a goal 'TIC' and any energy not directed toward that goal was called 'ERR.' Alexis Carrel says much the same thing in 'Man, the Unknown.' He is one of the few men on earth whose efforts are not err to self interest. That is, he aims to understand his life process and make it last longer. True self interest is seen in his efforts, as in few others. These others think of self interest as an oppositional of other self interests--which is a de illusion (Atlan for disillusion), for oppositionals neutralize. True self interest would therefore always be a coincident, not an oppositional.

Our most basic concepts have become err from disintegrant force distortion of thought flows over the long period of time since we were children of the Gods of the past.--Ed.

CHAPTER VIII

Return to Mu

It had been but a short month since our arrival on Nor. Many had been the preparations, most of them unknown to me. Only now as I went to the launching cradles did I see the full extent of those preparations. I found a fleet of mighty space vessels lifting from the frozen face of Nor, leaving to gather at a rendezvous in space.

Vanue's own vast vessel was not the least among the fleet, nor I and Arl the last aboard. On her viewscreens we watched countless other ships lifting on reverse gravity beams with what seemed to be almost utter ponderance until they reached a point in space where they could take up normal flight. New-built ships these were, wonderful in their engineering and armament.

We watched, also, many Nortans, mostly Nor war-maidens and Nor warro, embark on our own ship. Vanue herself was already aboard, together with several other Elders of minor stature. They brought with them vast quantities of material of unguessable use. Observing it I understood that their purpose was not wholly to save the people of my race from their sad plight, but to nip in the bud the growing power of Evil forces so near their own stead in space. That they were wholly confident of their ability to do this, I knew, but I knew also of the mighty armaments and endless warrens of the Atlan armies. I had seen their tremendous vessels maneuvering around Mu on the viewscreens and the news teles. I hoped the Nortans were not overconfident.

But as we proceeded into space toward Mu at greater speed. I found that I did not really know the Nortans. I had underestimated them. They understood concept, and I came to realize that concept had become a frozen thing on Mu by comparison. The Nortans used the truth, for it was the right conceptual attack. Evil has no concept; it is a mad robot to detrimental force. When Evil has power and men must obey or die, then only is it to be feared. But sometimes men fight for Evil unknowingly.

As we passed an Atlan space station a Nortan ship would land and presently take off again, followed by all the ships of the station. They had just told them the truth. The Nortans had an ancient reputation that forbade any doubt of their words. It was as simple, and as powerful, as that.

This went on so often, that as we neared Mu the Atlan fleet with us was nearly as large as our own. The truth can be a mighty friend and these space warriors knew the Nor-men and trusted them.

So impressed was I by the ships of this vast battle fleet that I was tempted to go to my quarters and describe them as part of my message to future man; but I abandoned the idea. I reasoned that if my message were a needful one when it was found, its finders would have little use for, or need of, such technical information as the construction of space weapons.

Perhaps when they learned again to fight the aging power of the sun and the evil her disintegrant force can bring to life, they could again learn such other things as they would need by searching space for friendly peoples. There was an idea--I would put down the information necessary to direct such a search. It would be a simple thing--for the great ones would never be found near or under the rays of a sun as old as this one will be by then. Aging suns would always be a space horror to be shunned by all men. Only the action of the derodite on Mu had kept our own Atlans so long under its rays. Only on or near dark worlds and new suns would the great ones be found.

It was while I stood at Arl's side watching still more Atlan ships join us that a thought came to me.

"How can the Nortans so quickly trust the ships of the Atlans as to allow a number of them near their own fleet?"

"Silly," chided Arl, flirting her tail at my question, "they don't trust them. It is not a question of trust. They just place a very large female Elder aboard each ship as it joins our fleet and there is no further question of trust or obedience. Supposedly she goes aboard 'to advise the commander as to our plans and to interpret our ways to him,' but you know the real reason--"

"Of course!" I interrupted her with a rueful grin. "I should certainly understand from my own recent experience with Vanue!"

Atlan warriors are all male. Those commanders and their men would be unable to do anything else but obey, with complete loyalty. They could not do otherwise, for they could not find the will or wish to do it. Not even the commanders of space ships are Elders by any means. Under the spell of that vast woman-life, they would be helpless to her will in their ecstatic love for her.

There were maneuvers as we neared Mu, but I saw little of them. Most of the time I was busy with my telonion plates, inscribing further knowledge or duplicating them so that they might be deposited in Mu in many places.

Another job I had which took up much of my attention was the task of making thought-record from the heads of men in Atlan vessels nearby, in an attempt to learn what had happened in Mu since our flight. They knew little, for the telenews had evidently been as uncommunicative of Atlans' true troubles as before. Some whispers they had picked up, but nothing of great value.

I kept on, but it was of little use. They knew just enough to make them ready to join us, but no more. There was nothing that would help us in the coming battle. All we knew was that we were enroute to war upon an enemy who was undeniably powerful, but whose identity we would have no way of knowing--until he struck first! And that first blow might be a terrible one...

Noting some agitation in the ship I was watching, I focused on the commander's quarters just in time to hear the last of a general message from surface Atlan:

"--and since we hold the population under our war rays; and since the safety of that very population we know to be your objective; let me warn you that the very first sign of an attack on your part will be the signal for a general slaughter of the people on our part. They are only in our way anyway. You may kill us in time, but you will never attain your objective!"

The horrible import of the message stung me into inactivity for a moment, then I recovered and with haste swung my ray to hear Vanue's reaction to this problem-posing message. What would she reply? Or had she a reply to this development? Death for the very people we had come to save rested in her hands...

Then came Vanue's voice; and it held a world of bafflement in it, a note of defeat that opened my eyes wide in disbelief.

"Return to Nor," was what she said!

Return to Nor! Abandon our mission? No! It could not be. There must be a ruse in Vanue's mind. Vanue was not the kind to give up, even though the odds seemed great. Then what--

Vanue's voice in my mind said a single word: "Come."

I switched off my thought recorder ray and bounded down the corridor toward the great doors of hammered metal, a wild joy in my heart that at last she had need of me, and that certainly this was a ruse.

Even before I reached the great doors I knew one thing: Vanue's ship was not retreating toward Nor as the others seemed to be. Under cover of the swarm of retreating ships, our own vessel had slipped into the moon's shadow as we passed her and had come to a halt hanging there invisibly in the moon's earth lee.

Once I arrived before that vast flame of beauty I sank to my knees, but she reached out a great hand and raised me to my feet. From her desk she took a tiny box and showed me its one projection--a tiny stud; a switch.

"Take this and put it in your clothes. It looks like a pocket reading machine, and it will not be noticed with suspicion. In the locks an Atlan ship and pilot is waiting for you. He has been directed to take you to surface Atlan.

"Once there you will mask your thoughts in any way you please, for I know your ability in that respect. Then go to your old home in Sub Atlan. There turn on your telenews and wait beside it until you hear three clicks from it, repeated at uneven intervals. Then take out this box and press the metal stud full in. It will tell you what to do next. That is all."

I bowed low, kissed her foot's radiant flesh, and ran from her quarters.

The Atlan ship was waiting for me, the pilot ready and silent. He pointed out my old Atlan student's outfit, which was already aboard, and indicated that I was to wear it. I jettisoned my Nortan uniform and in a moment was once more Muton Mion, life-culture student of center Mu.

When I had completed my transformation I found that the ship was already rocketing down the regular passenger lane from moon to Mu. The pilot, an Atlan, spoke a few words of explanation and lapsed into silence.

"I am a taxi driver and you're a passenger. Mind that--and luck!"

It was all so simple. I could hardly believe it would work. But it did. The ship settled on the public field. I jostled my way into the tubes, and soon was roaring along toward my home--a student returning from an outing.

I switched on the seat telenews but apparently nothing was happening.

It recited the most inane occurrences: a taxi motor failure had plunged two fares and the driver into the sea, and they had escaped with a ducking; a snakeman had caught his tail in a subway door, but would live; our adored chief Elder was having a birthday, may he have many more... I switched the telenews off. Anything could happen--and to Atlans nothing out of the way would even be whispered. Of the vast Nor fleet that had been so lately above, not the slightest hint. Great was the control of the derodite in Mu!

Not easy would be the task of the Nortan invaders!

Reaching Sub Atlan, I made my way to my own home, threw my hat at the old place on the hat rack, embraced my mother and kissed the tears from her dear face, slapped Foster Dad on the back and answered his grunted "Where in the whirling world of woolheads have you been wandering?" with "Just sewing a wild oat. I'll tell you about it at dinner," and bounded up the stairs to my old room where I switched on the telenews and lay upon my bed, carefully masking my thoughts by thinking what tale I would make up to explain my outing to Dad.

Three sharp clicks from the telenews startled me. I had not expected the signal so soon. Vanue must have been watching. I leaped erect, drew the box from my pocket and pressed the switch. A voice came from the box.

"Put this box on your head and put your hat on tightly to keep the box in place. Do not take your hat off for any reason from then on. Go outside and walk around the block. Soon you will notice a strange thing; after which you will get more directions."

I did as directed, promising to return soon when I dashed past my astonished mother and father. I stopped only long enough to retrieve my hat.

Outside a strange drowsiness came over me. It was hard to move. The lights of Sub Atlan flooded the ways, but I ignored them and walked slowly around the block. I noticed the girl at the food tablet stand lolling fast asleep over her open cash drawer. How very careless of her, to sleep so. But then I found the service ro at the rollat stand also deep in slumber; and several of his customers sprawled in slumber on the seats with the doors open, the hood up.

The voice in my hat explained the mystery.

"By now everyone in Sub Atlan but yourself and certain others is asleep. So will you be if you remove your hat and the box, which gives off stimulating vibrants.

"Go at once to the administration center and switch off the auto watch and general attack alarms. Bind the chief Elder and anyone else who seems able to frustrate a landing. Then, whenever everything seems safe, put a communication beam on our position and guide us in"

The Administration building in Sub Atlan is a great tower which reaches not only to the roof of the cavern that houses Sub Atlan but through that roof and on up to surface Atlan, where it looms as the tallest building on the surface also. Great rollat ways connected the surface building with the sub building.

I activated a rollat at the curb stand, dialed the administration center's number, and drove the rollat by hand directly into the great hall and up to the doors of the council chamber. As I arrived I was surprised to see four of my comrades, Atlans from Vanue's ship, racing into the hall behind me from rollats at the curb.

I nudged the great doors with the rollat bumper. They held. Turning the thing I drove across the hall and came back at full speed, crashing into the great valves and at last they gave. I plunged into the hall, brakes squealing.

CHAPTER IX

The Abandonero

Instead of finding the old chief Elder and his aides about the room, there was nothing. We raced through the place toward the telemechro center where the rodite mechs of the whole city were supervised by a concentration of screens which controlled them all when necessary. Upon these screens the whole city was watched, and could at any time be wholly robotized in an emergency from this point. [*29] And here we found them, the controllers of the city; but they were not the giant elders I had expected to find. I broke into laughter at the sight of them.

Clothed in rags and dirt, hung all over with hand weapons, their hair long and matted, were the strangest, most disgusting creatures I had ever seen in my life. They were dwarfs, some of them white-haired, from the Gods know what hidden hole in Mu's endless warren of caverns.

"What in the name of mother Mu are these things?" I asked Halftan, who had been one of the Atlans arriving immediately behind me, and who now helped me in the task of binding the hideous dwarfs in turn after turn of the heavy drapes from the walls.

"You already know of them," he said. "They come from the abandoned caves and cities of Mu. When the machinery became defective from age, many centuries ago, a vast number of caverns were sealed up. Fugitives hid in them, used the defective pleasure stimulators, [*30] and as a result, their children were these things.

"They die of age, are stupid, cannot even read or write, but they must have a vicious, cunning leader who has learned to use them. They are called 'abandonero' by the techs, who have captured some of them for study.

"If you had been in Tean City years ago, you would have heard them talked about on the telenews. The ones shown then were so stupid no one paid any attention. There is nothing so careless as a swelled head, I guess. Those supremely intelligent Elders of ours who should be tending this center will probably be found in ashes in the incinerator!"

His words wiped the laughter from my lips. No laughing matter now, these ugly dwarfs! They were dero, children of dero, enslaved in some manner by the derodite master who sought the death of all Mu! And the very fact of it brought home to me the greatness of the menace we were beginning to fight. For the first time I felt some misgiving as to the outcome.

We finished tying the filthy brutes and then turned our attention to the immense central synchronizing screen where a multiplex view of every station in the city could be seen. At each screen slumped the particular wizened dwarf who had been operating it, and who was now fast asleep and secured by our makeshift bonds on his limbs.

We activated the big space communicator, swung the beam toward the approximate position of Vanue's ship, sounded the 'ware' signal.

Instantly Vanue's face appeared on our screens--and we flashed the view beam on each of the bound dwarfs and on the big multiplex screen, showing the sleeping dwarfs who had replaced the original Atlan Elder's rodite. She nodded comprehension, not speaking. Then she switched off her communicator. We waited; it was up to her from now on. Meanwhile it was up to us to hold the fort here in the telemechro center.

"Thank Venus," said Halftan, his eyes aglitter with excitement, "these creatures are stupid, or we would not have overcome them so easily, nor would our job holding out here be as easy. Smarter operators would have

managed to flash some signal when they sensed they were going to sleep."

I was inclined to agree that his analysis was correct. But I also added mentally that when no checking signals went out in the next few minutes, an investigation might be made from Tean City, or wherever the central control was located.

"Do you suppose our enemies never heard of a sleeper ray?" I asked Halftan.

"Did you, before you met Vanue and the Nortans?" countered Halftan. "Besides, these dwarfs are sub-dero, not thinkers! I remember from the old tech report on them in the news. I wondered then why no one made a move to clean them out, but concluded that it was because they could not think coherently enough to be a menace. I realize now, however, that our corrupt big-heads were using them even then by some means that they had discovered."

"I was not talking of these dwarfs," I said. "I am wondering about the rodite and the big-heads themselves."

Halftan's face grew thoughtful, and he began a watchful survey of the multiplex screens with a new tenseness evident in his body.

Both of us saw it coming at the same instant, and a shock of real surprise swept through us. The dark bulk of Vanue's great Nor ship showed on the screens shadowed over the great surface tower of the administration center. The lightless ship had drifted down the communicator beam! What power Vanue must have, not to need the lifter ray for landing! What unknown science to use a communicator beam as a pilot beam!

It hovered for a brief time, then the roar of its great jets became a maddening thing; and the ship lifted again into the night sky. Why had it come, and what had it done? Had it done anything?

Our wonder lasted only a brief time, for soon we saw Vanue coming into the center, dwarfing it, stooping low to clear the ceiling fittings. Swiftly after her came her Nor maids, a hundred or more of them; and a dizzying activity sprang into life about us.

A tender from the Nor ship was lying before the doors of the hall, and in and out we Atlans and Nor maids sped, trundling trucks of apparatus. Once emptied the tender returned to the surface. Under Vanue's eye the dwarfs were unbound and placed in their former positions, while a rodite beam was set up behind each screen. Now they were held in a rodite beam from a Nor maid's mind, the slaves of her augmented will.

The hangings were replaced; the space communicator switched off; even the marks of binding were chafed from the dirt-encrusted wrists of the abandonero. Then we hid. To the view screens all was as before our entrance.

Vanue gave a signal, and somewhere in space the sleep ray switched off. The city came to life. That sleep had not lasted more than thirty minutes. Would the freaks from the lost cavern realize what had happened? On that question depended the lives of millions of people, all over Mu. Vanue had no doubt but that the derodite would carry out their murderous threat to kill the people if we attacked. Well, we had attacked, but in a way Vanue hoped would not be realized.

The telescreen from Tean City began sounding a constant call. The nearest dwarf, a hideous old woman, reached over and threw the circuit open. On the screen was the furious face of a fat Atlan. He was one whom I knew well from his appearance on telenews screens as a high official in construction.

"Where have you been?" he screamed at her. "Don't you know how tough a spot we're in? Your orders are to stay on duty until relieved."

The hag's hoarse voice answered, a groveling fear on her dirty old face.

"We had a li'l trouble. One stray Elder came in with a private key, nearly bumped us all before we did away with him. Everything is all right, else. Nothing to worry about. He didn't know what was doing--been away for a year. He's dead meat man now."

"Might have upset everything," the fat Atlan growled. But he seemed appeased by the news. "The overgrown fools. There aren't many of them left alive in Mu. Let me know at once if anything else turns up."

Behind him, on the rodite screen, before he turned off the beam, we could see a scene of mad revelry. In the background were the tremendous figures of some of the great ones of Atlan writhing in horrible torment while about their bodies crackled the blue flames of some paingening electric. Drunken renegades from Atlan's army reeled across the screen, dragging protesting girls after them. It was evident that they were celebrating the frustration of the Nor fleet in a manner deemed to be appropriate!

Then the Tean City screen went blank as the beam was switched off, and the old hag, her face a toothless grin at what she also had seen, reached out and broke the contact on the screen.

On the various units of the multiplex screen from the sub-rodite stations of surface Atlan and Sub Atlan cities much the same conversation took place. Each abandonero explained apologetically that he had fallen asleep and begged not to be reported. Each was reproved by the ro at the "plex" control.

We knew that they would never realize that all had fallen asleep. Many even denied their sleep, claiming they had had no signals. All reported everything all right.

"All right indeed!" I could hear mighty Vanue's thought in her furious mind. She waved her hand--and from somewhere in space that big sleep beam went on again.

On the multiplex screen at the center we could see Normen entering everywhere, setting up control apparatus without awakening the dwarfs. All over the sleeping city Nor-men were active, setting up hidden controls, ships landing and taking off--the armies of Nor gathering and entering the caverns. . .

Could they do it? Could they take the planet without setting off the alarm which would bring death down on the helpless people? As I looked at the sleeping, hideous things whose forebears had once been men, I felt they could. And when they did, I would not have wanted to be in the shoes of the Atlan or Titan who had trained and turned these things loose on the people of a whole planet! There would be a grim reckoning when the Nortans caught him.

"Vanue--Vanue!" called a Nor maid to her mistress.

"I have it! I have been reading the mind of this thing in its sleep. The center of this whole mess is not in Tean City nor any city, but in the abandoned caverns. Some ancient Elder, exiled long ago, returned secretly to Mu and entered those sealed cities. He has been chief of the abandonero for all their life. All their orders come from him. They do everything he says--nothing without his word. If we took the whole planet, we would still have his high and mighty madness to reckon with, together with a horde of these creatures who do his bidding--with Venus herself knows what kind of antique junk to do it. Some of those old war mech builders were not fools, and their methods were lost in wars when they were killed. You know, like the one time we ran into antique war mech on Helbal, when the deros of those old burrows used that stuff on us. No one knew what it was. We had to blow it all to Hades to get them."

Vanue picked her up with delight and kissed her. It was becoming increasingly plain to me that this was not the first time these warrior maids had seen action. They worked too smoothly. With the hand weapons and

war weapon harness they wore, they were formidable looking Amazons. Their strength was unbelievable, and I knew it came from the inner growth of the incubator which increased the solidity of the flesh. My own period in the incubator had demonstrated that on my own body.

With the new knowledge the Nor maid had picked up, a new plan of action came into being. Vanue relinquished her authority in the telemachro center to one of the many space officers who had been going in and out on errands mysterious to me. Then the hundred Nor maids and ourselves accompanied Vanue to the tender and we were soon flashing skyward up the rollat tunnel and out into space.

Footnotes

^82:29 The telemachro center was in itself under outside control, the communications mechanics being ro to the central control which was ro to the master control in its turn. Thus, all the rodite supervising the city could be placed under one master control through the screens in the telemachro center. By this means, the whole city's inhabitants could be placed under hypnotic condition, even including the rodite themselves. From this it can be seen the telemachro center is a vital spot in the dero control which had been thrown over all Mu.--Ed.

^83:30 Entirely aside from our questioning of Mr. Shaver, we received a letter from him in which he describes the pleasure stimulator mentioned here. Or rather, he describes the sensations concurrent with its use in a very peculiar manner--since his words seem to indicate that he himself went through the experience. Whether or not the following words are those of Mr. Shaver, or of Mutan Mion, your editors have as yet been unable to determine. Certainly some of them are Mr. Shaver's (which only makes them more startling in their implications) and certainly some of them are not. In either case, they give us something to ponder upon.

"They played stim on me, a powerful augmentation of woman-love; to a hundred powers of natural love. There are no words to describe what this apparatus did for life. There were hundreds of rays about, always pleasant, their messages like conversation as though a thousand Scheherazades were telling tales at once. It augmented every cell impulse to a power untold. It seemed that every tree carried a beautiful face; every breeze was like a bath in elixir; every sensation having the value of a thousand nights of love. Little bells and visions of indescribable beauty mantled my closed lids to waft me into a sleep of dreams beyond anything mortal mind could devise." (Note the difference between the foregoing paragraph and the following.--(Ed.)

"These mechs--rays--stim--have been used always as the forbidden fruit of life, the last treasure in the temple of secrecy which has consumed the ancient science. The orgies which the uses of such stimulants inspire have been going on secretly since the earliest times--beneath the temples and in the secret pleasure palaces of the world. (Shaver here seems to be talking of our modern world, not of ancient Mu.--Ed.) These orgies still go on, and are more deadly than before--more filled with de accumulated in the apparatus, the stim itself concealing the deadly rays whose effect is explained as the sad results of overindulgence; which is untrue--the stim is a beneficial of great virtue and leaves one stronger and wiser after use.

"The legend of the sirens is an example of ancient mechs which no one could resist--in the hands of evil degenerates it became a deadly attraction--drawing shiploads of men to death and the ships to looting.

"The course of history, the battles, the decisions of tyrants and kings--was almost invariably decided by interfering control from the caverns and their hidden apparatus. This interference, this use of the apparatus in a prankish, evil, destructive way, is the source of god worship, the thrill of divinity, the sensing of the invisible, the prostration of the will before the stronger will of the ray gen (ridden and unknown as it was)

"The remarkable part of it all is that it still goes on today. Emotional and mental stim--unsuspected by such as you and the average citizen--used in mad prankishness, all come from the ancient apparatus. If you will remember your stage fright in the school play, the many other times when your emotions seem to have gone away without sufficient reason--were these natural?

"The dero of the caves are the greatest menace to our happiness and progress; the cause of many mad things that happen to us, even so far as murder. Many people know something of it, but they say they do not. They are lying. They fear to be called mad, or to be held up to ridicule. Examine your own memory carefully. You will find many evidences of outside stim, some good, some evil--but mostly evil."

Mr. Shaver gives this information in all seriousness. In the deserted (and not so completely sealed!) caverns of Mu, the dero descendants of the abandondero still exist, idiotically tampering with our lives by senseless use of the ancient stim mechanisms which actually were created to enhance man's life and not to plague it, but now are detrimental through an accumulation of radioactives which impair their action.--Ed.

CHAPTER X

Into the Tunnels of the Dero

Far out in Mu's nightshadow lay the silent fleet, dark and still as any lonesome rock drifting through space. We reached it and boarded Vanue's ship. Once aboard Vanue called a conference of fleet commanders, but we ro were excluded from it. Very obviously something very special was being planned that demanded no loopholes for a leak be left open. Not that we would consciously allow such a thing to escape our minds--but after all, we were only ro and far below the mental caliber of the Elders.

When Vanue came from the conference, her cheeks were flushed, she was beaming triumphantly, and her aura was pulsing madly. She went immediately into the tech laboratory of the ship and ordered two of the hideous abandondero brought in for examination.

They were placed in a telaug [*31] and examined exhaustively for details of the lost caverns' entrances and exits and the location of the renegade Elder's power plants. Also we got a more or less clear history of what had been happening on Mu for many years; although the picture was about as clear as mud to the abandondero themselves. They had minds like rabbits--like mean rabbits now suddenly discouraged in their meanness.

For many years, most of their short lives, they had been stealing youths and maidens for torture and tormenting thousands of the Atlans with rays right in the streets.

When any Atlan had tried to do anything about it, it had only resulted in his death by one means or another.

How this idiotic dominance of theirs had been kept a secret for so long a time, while it grew stronger and stronger, was comprehensible only when we understood that the centralizing of all power by the rodite method of government had allowed complete control once the central rodite synchronizer was taken over. It had meant the sudden and complete end of Atlan government without even a suspicion that such a turnover had taken place.

When the center had gone bad no one had known. Even the abandondero couldn't tell us, except that they knew it had been long ago. Little by little, after the important coup, normal Atlans in charge of minor branches of the rodite government had been replaced by abandondero. The secret police had been killed off! By their strangle hold on the telenews centers all knowledge of such deaths and disappearances was kept from the Atlans. By continually checking over people's minds for any who were becoming suspicious, any trouble could be checked before it started.

For Venus knows how long they had been picking off the best brains of Atlan, the very flower of our race; doing them to death day by day, and no one was ever the wiser.

Much of all this we had to guess, for the abandondero actually knew little of the master organization beyond their own vicious experiences; but they knew their ancient warrens well and we could deduce approximately, from the ugly, half-formed images in their minds, where our objectives lay.

With this information in our possession, we went into action. In a very short time a host of tiny winged planes were dropping silently toward the vast culture forests where the hidden degenerates had made tunnels to the surface to gather fruit.

These planes were sealed-cabin helicopters, equipped for short flights in space by auxiliary gas jets, silent and flareless.

Our primary objectives were certain tunnels which held cables running to Tean City as well as other tunnels which held cables connecting the depths with the surface.

I kissed Arl lingeringly before I stepped into one of the planes and took off for Mu's forest-covered surface and became just one of many dropping motes that looked harmless enough but which carried more might than had ever before been gathered into such compactness.

We landed and made our way into the tunnel nearby. It led down steeply, and was a very ancient thing once we had gotten beyond the area constructed by the dero. It led soon into vast caverns housing long.-abandoned cities.

These ancient ruins in the lost caverns were impressively eerie things. They had been built, I knew, in the early days of Mu, when under the new sun all growth had been furious and undying, with a fecundity scarcely to be imagined in present-day Mu. Most of the people who had once lived here had long ago become too big to stay in Mu; had gone to larger planets under other suns, or to huge, cold, planet-cities that drift in dark space. From what they had left behind I became more and more convinced that Mu's youth was too much in the past to have any more future. The planet should have been abandoned long ago. Just the contemplation of these mighty, long-gone glories in comparison with the lesser marvels of the best of modern Tean City was enough to tell the story to even the most thoughtless of Atlans.

Our lights played over the deserted, awful, death-like glory of the ancient mansions and even the hue of them gave off melancholy. However, to the warro and war maids accompanying me, such thoughts as those were not in order. Instead they kept sharp eyes and minds open for danger. What weapons lay unused in these tremendous fortresses from Mu's wild youth only the oldest of Elders could guess. And which of them might suddenly prove to be manned by warriors of the renegade Elder was something we could not know. But from the portent of their presence we realized that our enemy might be a tougher nut to crack than we dreamed.

As we marched down the silent, dust-laden ways, sleep rays and augmentative detectors of several kinds played miles ahead of us. Now and then we came upon a modern rollat, wrecked against the wall of a building, a dero asleep in its seat. They had crashed because the auto drive would not work here--check rays at corners and building entrances not being activated.

It was not many hours before our communications beams told us that the enemy cables had been cut; and so far as could be determined all dero communication beams had been tapped with false answer equipment and ro placed in attendance. So far our march into the depths had been accompanied by signal success. Next would come the actual locating of and the attempt to reduce the cavern stronghold of the renegade dero Elder. Rolling behind us as we advanced came an endless line of burden rollats, bearing war rays whose potency was incomprehensible to me. But I could guess from their complex construction that here were things that could loose terror itself. Before many hours I expected to see them go into action, loosing terror upon the author of the fear that had ridden hag-like upon the back of Tean City and all Mu's Atlans for many years.

It was then that I got a shock--for a big carry-all came riding by and in it, among the warrior maids bearing the crest of Vanue, was Arl... lovely, smiling, brave Arl of the cloven hoofs and defiantly flirting tail!

She flashed her teeth at me gaily as though she were on a picnic!

What is there about danger that accentuates the man-life in a man? As that smile played on me, the whole cosmos whirled in my head. I felt even more powerfully than I had in the duo-incubator the sensations of one-ness that existed between us. Comets buzzed in my head and I felt the urge for battle surge up in me; battle to preserve for myself and all others happiness such as was Arl's and mine.

Then, as we skirted a vast city bowl lit vaguely by a kind of marsh light that glimmers in these old warrens,

action came! A dis ray raved out at us suddenly from a dark pile in the bowl several miles away. It cut great gashes in our columns before the swift, silent answer from the ray rollats had reduced the whole pile to silence.

Gray dust rose in a cloud over the bowl city as we swarmed into that huge old city-center building; and the horror that we found inside cured me forever of all sun lit planets. These devilish abandondero had a meat market in the lower floors, filled with human flesh; and a pile of choice cuts I saw was composed mainly of Atlan girl breasts! These dero things were cannibals and lived off immortal Atlan flesh!

So much for our illusion of benevolent government! How long had it been composed of hidden, grinning cannibals, the whole of our race unaware of its ultimate fate? I realized now that it takes more than patriotism and fine words over a telescreen from a ro face to make a state a safe place in which to live.

Because of a degenerating sun, all our apparent tremendous scientific advance had been set at naught by a few madmen... with these dero creatures eager to do anything the madmen said in return for a little fresh human meat. I saw now the fatal weakness in centralized government. One silent grab at that neck of power lines had resulted in death for the whole cream of the race. The awful power in telaug rodite methods of rule had only served to place the total wealth of the planet in mad criminal hands.

Yes, Halftan is right! There is "no thing so careless as a swelled head." To see sweet Atlan girl breasts displayed as a butcher's merchandise set a fury to raging within me that will not cease so long as de makes dero!

Thousands of the ragged, filthy abandondero lay about the huge building, unconscious from our rays, and we put them rapidly under telaugs to get a complete picture of their strength and the location of their other forces. Once we had gained our information they did not live long! We could not think of them as human things, these slaves to the disintegrant impulse to destroy that courses through all matter under an aging sun; and perhaps we, too, in this moment of horror, felt within us the effects of the sun poisons.

The children of the abandondero lay about naked or with a few rags draped on them, usually with a human bone they had been gnawing upon or playing with clutched in their hands. Vanue had all of the children gathered up and sent back to the ship "to treat them and use them to people a small planet as an experiment."

"Let that planet be far away!" was my thought.

We had learned from our searching of the minds of the abandondero that the old Exile's stronghold lay far in, nearly at center Mu. Yes, the rot had progressed far in Mother Mu. Always in my mind the most amazing fact of this rot will be the extent of its influence on the pattern of Mu's life-supporting energy flows. This dictating pattern had been so effective that their plight was not known nor hardly whispered of by any of the Atlans. Yet they were slaughtered indiscriminately, sold as meat to the abandondero, and the gods know what else they had put up with for how many years with the sickening realization that to appeal to higher-ups for help would spell death. All these years... without managing to make their plight public knowledge!

The telaug records told us that many of the dero had been torturing and tormenting Atlans all their life, and eating them too. Yet the news systems had managed to all such tales, partly from individual fear of consequences, and partly from a dread of being considered mad for harboring such suspicions. There is no cloak for corruption like the average citizen's supreme faith that all is well as long as the paper is delivered, the telenews functions without saying anything alarming, and the dignitaries strut their pompous fronts regularly as upholders of righteousness.

I could see what had made them so supremely blind now. It was the effects from which the migration had been intended to save them. Yes, that migration had been delayed too long by a few centuries, it appeared.

It was another thing for me to stress in my message to future man; to inscribe on my timeless plates of telonion. Those who will people this planet again with children from the seed of the few we will not be able to find and rescue must be warned that there can be no peace nor beauty in life under this sun, except that they build special chambers which exclude detrimental forces as well as the radioactives that cause age.

Just so long as Mother Mu spins under this sun, just so long will her energy fields induct disintegrant charges from her destructive force, and these charges will work out into neutralization of man-matter growth through destructive will in the units of the life pattern. Without extraordinary precautions these detrimental forces will result in continual war and complete stalling of all real racial, social and individual growth.

If one of future man's really healthy men creates a machine of value to his people, one of the destructive men will take the same machine and destroy that same gain with it. Disintegrant energy must be neutralized by an equal amount of healthy integrant energy. If it is not, this disintegrant energy will work out in continual social troubles, famines, diseases and death--if it does not actually take the form of a war.

This need not be the fate of future man! The life which grows in integrative source material concentrating chambers can be safe, immortal life--but all life outside such chambers will be destructive, if not by actual fierce blows, then by stupid interference and destructive disapproval.

These are the truths I, Mutan Mion, culture-man of Mu, realizing even more forcibly now, must pass on to future man, written on tablets that will be deposited in likely places so that they may be found in some future time. These truths--in addition to a history of the great war I am now observing; a war which wishes to save all future men, but which cannot, because of those lost ones of the forest whom we will never be able to search out--must reach future man! [*32]

Footnotes

^90:31 Telaug--a machine which augmented and strengthened telepathic signals so that even the most secret thoughts could be read.--Ed.

^97:32 Judging from the information recorded by Plato, as received from Solon, it would seem that these metal plates so often mentioned by Mutan Mion (which this manuscript definitely states were deposited in many places both inside and upon the surface of this planet) were deposited about 12,000 years ago. Since such vast upheavals of nature as the sinking of Atlantis, the smashing down of the gates of the Pillars of Hercules and thus forming the Mediterranean Sea, have occurred, it would seem that the hiding places of these plates more than likely have been destroyed and rendered impossible of discovery. At least, science has no record of any such plates having been unearthed; nor is there any such record in legend or history beyond the possibility of the plates of the Ten Commandments given (found?) by Moses upon the mount. However this seems unlikely, since they are described as being of stone, which seems true since they were smashed by Moses in his anger. Apparently the message over which Mutan Mion labored so mightily has never been found.--Ed.

CHAPTER XI

Battle to the Death

At distances of a hundred miles and more the battle was joined at last. We surrounded the old fire-head, [*33] ex-Elder Zeit, of Atlan in his center-Mu lair and succeeded in cutting him off without alarming Tean City or any other post so far as we could judge. We knew the dero would not use the destructive machines to kill the people without word from the old master of murder. And they would not get that word; for our ro sat astride all communications.

But the old idiot himself was actively alarmed! Every weapon that ones-time Atlan stronghold held was throwing fire and death through every boring we could approach him by. Nor-men died by the thousands (and they are not enamored of death for they have much to live for!) before we finally brought up enough shorter [*34] ray to ground those tremendous flows of hell-fire from the ancient generators. Zeit's hideout was a super arsenal!

Now our own needle rays concentrated on a single spot in the old fortress' metal walls. That metal, we knew, had been hardened in the past by subjecting it to exd flows of great strength. [*35] It would resist most rays, but it was just a matter of throwing enough dis at a small enough opening point till the metal began to blaze and flow in a stream.

The opening grew larger, but the defenses of old Zeit were a long way from being pierced. Our own forces were protected both by conductive fans of rays which grounded any ray that threatened us and by flows of energy which were so strong that any ray that struck them was repelled or swept out of existence by the out-massing kinetic of the cone of force. But since these rays coned out at Elder Zeit's dero fortress on a level with its walls, there-was little overhead to protect us. It was an opening for Zeit and he took advantage of it!

From the towers of black metal suddenly sprang whirling comets; electrical vortices packed with howling energy in circular motion, which can be thrown in such a way that their circular motion causes them to describe an arc, for the same reason that a pitched ball curves. These arcing electronic cannonballs curved over our outflung protective wall and, striking our lines, bounced and leaped unpredictably from one point to another, searing everything within a dozen feet of their erratic path.

A few of these would not have mattered, since their behavior was uncontrollable, but they came flaming over by the thousands and set the whole army into confusion, dodging about, trying to guess where the howling, whirling, pausing, leaping things would go next.

Since many of our men had to leave their controls to dodge the rolling fire, their retreat almost became a rout when old Zeit threw a hellishly dense concentration of dis on our protective fields, breaking it down before our remaining men could swing enough counter-force into action to neutralize it, burning down our grounding conductive rays; and boring a huge hole through our center.

As I watched in horror, my mind was unable to gasp this paradoxical truth. How is it that mere mechanisms can so rout intelligent men? The same intelligence built these machines, long ago. Now, seemingly, it confounds that intelligence, seeks to and almost succeeds in destroying its creator.

But our Nor giants had a few tricks left up their sleeves. I suspected that they had not been used because it had been unthinkable that the old devil of a dero Elder could have outreached us. Conductor rays soon dissipated the charges in the fireballs; an out-massing bank of force ray generators replaced the burned-out breach in our protective fields.

Now our men had time to carefully fine down the focus of our needle rays to a more and more concentrated beam of dis force. Then simultaneously placing all the needles on a predetermined point, usually at the base of the openings where Zeit's deros worked at their ray guns, they beat down the flashing black sweep of Zeit's counter-conductive concentration, . . . and his deros died at their controls.

This went on for hours as the dero were replaced by others under the devilish Elder's will--only to be killed again by the dancing, unpredictable needles of death which went through anything when they suddenly all swung to one point.

All the time cutter needles gnawed steadily at the rock roof of the great bowl, directly over the ancient black-walled fortress. Chunks of the superhardened rock rained down. It was tough stuff; tougher than steel. As soon as the artificially hardened surface of the rock was cut away the soft body of the rock above could be cut down in masses huge enough to cover the renegade Elder's hideout completely.

The walls and roof of the metal fort gave out great brazen clangings as the rocks fell from the height.

Still the fiery vortex spheres kept pouring from the black towers in steady streams, only to be caught by repeller beams and flung aside.

Force needles cut doggedly at the tower's sides and one by one they toppled with a great thunder of metal on metal and a fury of blazing-arc force from torn power cables.

Over the whole blazed a fiercely dancing flare of blue and purple flames from the clash of dis rays with the neutralizing fields. It was more and more evident that the end was approaching for the abandondero's feared master! A great exultance was growing in my heart as I foresaw the end which must soon come.

To corroborate my vision of nearing victory, interceptor ro of the falser-answer communicators sent us a message that Zeit was calling wildly for help.

"Nothing is so pleasant," went the report, "as to sorrowfully tell him that we're unavoidably detained by pressing engagements."

But in my mind now came a darker, sobering thought.

It was the thought wave of Vanue, impinging on my brain. "What will his last effort be?" I heard her muse.

I had caught and repelled a couple of vortice balls on my beam that might have approached her and had been dreaming of what form her reward might take--but now that thought left my mind. If Vanue had reason to worry of what Zeit might have up his sleeve as a last desperate gamble, I too had reason to be concerned.

I watched the battle with more sober contemplation, peering ever for signs of some final development that might be dangerous.

Then as I watched for it came the thing that is always feared in battle; the unseen factor that suddenly upsets all calculation. From somewhere the dero had unearthed a tremendous levitator. [*36] We ourselves had a few with us to get the heavy stuff over tough going; but this one was a monster, once used in construction. This thing began lifting the masses of rock that had fallen on the fort, lifting them and dropping them from high in the air upon our lines.

Our own lifters were not big enough to handle the tremendous masses that kept dropping on our ranks and smashing the protective force-beam generators. When several of the generators had been crushed, the old devil used the master beam of the old fortress and bored through the openings, burning a path of destruction.

Our whole enterprise was endangered--even faced total defeat!

I could hear Vanue's mind racing madly, "What to do? What to do?" And because of her confusion and anxiety, I knew how desperate our situation was indeed. Never had so great a fear filled my heart as I watched with staring eyes the havoc old Zeit was causing in our lines with his great super-ray.

As fast as our needle rays found the thing, new dero rushed in, moved it, went on with its deadly work. However, a concentration of conductor rays finally bored through to its base, shorted its vast power down to our size. Now we could handle it!

But our losses had mounted horribly. As I gazed upon the slaughter, I could not help but think that with our superior mental equipment all this should have been avoided. I am afraid there was criticism of our Nortan minds in my thoughts at this moment. . .

Vanue's thought came into strong being in my head, answering my unspoken denunciation.

"Detrimental force has an automatic electric play about it that strangely serves for thought. It is hard, no, impossible, to predict; as our healthy minds neutralize detrimental force, cannot therefore 'think' it. Too, in these conditions, their telaugs read our minds and our own imagination works against us. Healthy men are naturally too optimistic to foresee trouble fully. Then, beside that, no one knew or could know that the old fortress in here was so heavily equipped. Old Zeit nor any of his retainers have been out of the place for nearly a century. He kept the mech secret with very rigid care. People have gone into his fortress, but none have come out. The tunnels that lead down to this place are all too small to bring real war equipment down from the surface. We are really near the center of Mu. And on top of that, we have been a little over-confident, due to the unintelligent appearance of the dero. Who would expect such things to put up a fight?"

Her voice ceased in my mind, and I no longer fostered the thought that all this death could have been prevented. I felt a deep shame for even harboring the thought, and a deep gratitude for the favor she had bestowed on me in explaining so patiently even while she was in the midst of the greatest battle of her whole career. Such honor had never before been bestowed on a simple ro, I was sure.

Now, as I returned to my contemplation of the battle, I saw that our sleeper beams were following our dis rays' openings in Zeit's force shields, but they seemed not to have the desired effect. The old ogre must have had some means to jerk his harried dero awake as fast as they dropped off. Possibly some type of stimulator ray--a clever use for stim, I thought; ordinarily they are for entertainment.

Finally, however, we swept the whole place with a concentration of dis rays and sleeper beams and the boulder-covered pile of horrors fell silent. A few beams still played from the heap, but they were evidently automatic watch beams with no one awake behind them.

Our own lifters now cleared a path for our rollats to the doors. At last it was time to enter and mop up. As we went forward, I heard Vanue's ever-cautious mind warning me to "Watch out for the devil's joker" as our rollat-mounted rays moved up to the wall's lee and started blasting away at the doors. We rolled over the blazing mass of their remains and were inside. Atlan's leech had been loosened!

The place was three-deep in corpses. Many of them had been Atlan warriors; whether captives driven by Zeit's or his rodite's will or renegades I could not say. They lay at the white-hot projectors, their hands burned free of flesh, the bones still clasping the red-hot controls. Powerful indeed had been Zeit's ro compulsion.

We found the vast mountain of flesh that was ex-Elder Zeit of old Atlan. He was snoring among a mass of synchronizing rodite apparatus as big as a city block. It was both antique and modern in construction, much of it evidently salvaged from ancient ruins. Zeit was a three-hundred-footer, and he was not only big, but

amazingly fat from his soft life in his hideout.

It was going to be a real job to get him to the surface alive. It would not be surprising if the soldiers found it necessary to take him apart and reassemble him later on.

The realization that we were going to move him to the surface was a surprise to me, because not to blast him into nothingness the instant we found him had seemed to me to be infinitely more than godlike emotional control in itself. But that the huge and evil head might contain technical secrets of value I realized when I thought of it.

We bound him with endless turns of steel cable, lifted him with a dozen of our levitators, and started him floating along toward the surface. Before he arrived, I'll wager he scraped a few turns in a rather painful manner, and not by accident either!

Other things we found in old Zeit's fortress--things that horrified us. He had had a couple of dozen Elder captives. It is one thing to see a broken man of my size, but to see the living remains of a Goddess Elder broken by torture until she had become a whimpering, cringing, babbling thing to pity did not quiet the rage in my breast, rage that I could see and feel burning in the Nor-men around me.

There were many captives still living, of all sizes, many women and girls--but most of them were in horrible shape from their treatment, and the others nearly insane from waiting for the same torture. I saw the endless variations on the torture theme old Zeit had devised to amuse himself in the centuries he had spent hiding in this place--as we recorded it on the thought record from his ro's minds.

I was placed as a guard over some of the antique equipment reserved by Vanue for her research. As I stood there, I could read the thoughts of many of the Elders who passed by after having viewed the gibbering things Zeit had made of Atlan men, women and Elders. I knew that if what they were thinking ever came to pass, Zeit would receive the equivalent of his tortures in Nor before he died--if he were allowed to die!

Now that the battle was over, more important Nor Elders arrived. Vanue's father was among them, and I heard him speak to a comrade. Vanue stood beside him as he spoke, listening as I did.

"I see that exile for him was a large Atlan mistake. To humble the exalted and to release them to work out their revenge at leisure is to create a devil and give him leave to harm you. These Elders he has been so lavishly entertaining in so terrible a way are the very ones who sat at the council which expelled him. Obviously they were a bit too gentle with a monster who sold his own people as slaves and got caught at it."

Vanue turned briefly to me, and once again I discovered how close she kept track of me.

"Zeit's joker never materialized, Mutan... and your reward for diverting the vortice balls will not be forgotten. It is a good religion, the word 'reward'. [*37] Do not forget it."

There is a peace about being read by an understanding mind. Vanue would always know my intent toward her. I was her ro, until someday I would graduate into true self-determination. It was enough.

"Tea City still to take," I was thinking aloud a few minutes later, and suddenly realized that Arl, somewhere in the fortress, operating her telescreen beam, had been secretly watching me--for her voice sounded in my ear in answer.

"They got wind of what happened some way. Missing messengers, false reports exposed, or something. Anyway, they loaded up some of the finished migration ships, destroyed the rest, and took off. But I would say the abandonero migration has been too long delayed just as was the Atlans'--the Nor fleet will hunt them

down like rats."

Hovering in the air before me her face appeared, materialized by tele-projection, and she bent forward and gave me a kiss with full augmentation. I reeled from the vital charge and nearly fell, but wound up on my knees asking for more. She went on speaking as if the tremendous kiss she had given were a nothing.

"They just made it, too. They tried to wipe out the Tean City population, but our men were entering from the lifts and from the tubes and laid down a blanket of conductive till none of the police corrective ray about the city would function at all. With the exception of the rockets on the ships. none of their mech would work.

"I think the Nor-men let them operate the lifter beams and the rockets to get them out into space where they can't hurt anyone."

And now Arl gave me the encore I had been begging for--but while she had been talking she had coupled on a booster circuit and the resulting kiss stretched me flat on the ground with a bump on my head as big as a dodo's egg.

I got to my feet to find her image gone, and the faint echo of her laugh still in my ears.

A few days later and Mu had been cleaned up. The victorious Nortan armies set up a temporary council of surviving Elders, who were few enough, to act in place of the real government that had not existed on Mu for nearly a century because of the coup of old Zeit. This council decided to take Nor advice and start building a home in a cold planet, far from any sun's evil influence.

A planet with untouched coal deposits located near the Nortan group of planets was chosen as the Atlans of Mu's new home. Work ro were dispatched to commence borings into the planet and to begin building the huge, steam heated, ray-drenched greenhouses in which Normen live and know so well how to build.

In a few short months the first ships took off for New Mu, and the last of the race of Atlan soon followed, abandoning Mu for their new home in space. Arl and I remained on Mu to the last. During this time I finished my telonion message plates and distributed them in the most likely places both in and on the surface of Mu. I pray that the descendants of those few wild men I have seen in the culture forests but have been unable to approach, may someday find these plates and have the sense to read them and heed their message. Someday, I have a feeling, they will be a race of men again. It is good seed they inherit, and they might be worth my effort in spite of the sun.

I pray that when they find the plates they will understand!

THE END

Footnotes

^{^98:33} The word "fire-head" used here does not mean that Zeit was a hothead, or impetuous, or any other similar modern meaning of the word. It has a deeper significance, denoting his mental condition. For a complete definition the reader is referred to footnote . Old Zeit's head, his brain, was infected by the ever-fire of the sun, and the infection was so derogatory to this thinking processes that the only possible result was detrimental thought culminating in murder, the most detrimental of all thoughts. The reader is here requested to note the word "derogatory," an accepted word of our English language, which has as its root the ancient Lemurian word "dero." Note that the ancient meaning has come down unchanged!--Ed.

^{^98:34} By the word "shorter" Mutan Mion does not mean the rays brought up were not as long, but that they were capable of "shorting" the energy flows from Zeit's generators. They must have been ionizing rays which

served in much the same capacity as lightning rods, grounding the destructive beams hurled at the Nor-men before they were able to strike their target.--Ed.

^99:35 This principle of "hardening" metal and stone so that they become unbreakable (used to prevent the roofs of the cavern cities from collapsing) has been mentioned several times in this manuscript. It is accomplished by forcing additional exd (which the reader will remember is the ash of disintegrated matter, or more properly, the basic energy from which matter is again integrated) into the substance to be toughened until it reaches a state whose ultimate end would be what we today conceive of as neutronium. By adding more matter, packing it so to speak, into the interstices between the particles of matter, a greater density and therefore a greater cohesiveness is obtained. This cohesiveness is actually the "in-flow" of gravity.--Ed.

^102:36 A levitator is a portable lifter beam generator. Some of them are very small, and can be carried in the palm of the hand, or in the pocket. They were in common use for all tasks in Mu, and from Mr. Shaver comes the amazing statement that some of these portable levitators have been found in modern times and their secret use has given rise to the belief in the ability of "mediums" to use levitation of objects as one of their tricks in their seances. Perhaps most noted of these mediums was Mr. Daniel Dunglas Home, wizard, whose seances were the sensation of the United States and of Europe, the incredible recount of which was recently presented in "Magazine Digest." His feats of levitation are indisputable, being vouched for by such persons as Princess Pauline Metternich; Austrian Ambassador, Prince Joachim Murat; Mme. Jauvin d'Attainville. Home was born in Currie. near Edinburgh, on March 20, 1833. Among his abilities was the power to see events happening a great distance away; the ability to "elongate" his body as much as a foot; and at one time he caused Ward Cheney, silk-manufacturing titan, to be lifted three times into the air while he "palpitated from head to foot with contending emotions of fear and joy that choked his utterances." (The reader should note the amazing similarity to many of the mechanisms of ancient Mu--the emotional stim; the levitator; the tele.) It was after he became the darling of such figures as Napoleon III, Eugenie of France, Alexander II of Russia, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning that he developed his "body elongation" trick and a still more sensational one wherein he placed his face among burning coals, bathing it as in water; without any sign of a burn. Is it possible that Home "discovered" his abilities in an ancient cave?--Ed.

^106:37 This reference to the word "reward" as a religion is mystifying. and Mr. Shaver has never explained it. However, our thought on it is what might be termed the basis for all religions--the incentive to do good because of the hope of a reward of some kind. This seems the correct view when we consider Vanue's insistence that a service of good is never left unrewarded. It is logical to believe that loyalty would remain constant so long as the reward always certainly comes as a consequence of each demonstration of that loyalty. If nothing else, Vanue was an excellent psychologist, and a brilliant leader. Also she protected, as well as rewarded, as her reference to the "joker" demonstrates.--Ed.