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CONTENTS

STORIES:

He Who Waits	By Harry Warner, Jr.	4
The Organ	By Duane W. Rimel	11
The Gourmet	By Robert W. Lowndes	14

ARTICLE:

Imagi-Movies	By Forrest J Ackerman	9
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POEM:

Sonnet	By R. H. Barlow	8
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Cover by Robert W. Lowndes

ILLUMINATION

It has been some time since a fan magazine has been published which has been devoted to weird fiction -- and Polaris will try to fill that vacancy. We will print weird material chiefly--fiction, verse, and articles -- but we will also try to provide some things of interest to the science-fiction fan as well. Please write and tell us what you think of our first attempt, what material you liked best; better yet, demonstrate what you like best by writing an example and sending it to us. If we agree with you, your contribution will appear in an early issue.

Although for the present Polaris will appear quarterly, later we hope to be able to issue the magazine more often. Future issues may be distributed to the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, but will continue to be available to non-members at 10¢ a copy.

So please write soon, fellow fans--we want the opinions and the contributions of all of you. With your help we will try to make Polaris a magazine of which every weird fan can be proud.

HE WHO WAITS

by Harry Warner Jr

We crashed in the midst of the jungle, coming down from the stratosphere like a blazing meteor. The fire had broken out in the rocket compartments, eating away the blockheads like some great parasite, and we discovered it too late. Already half of our tubes, those on the port side, were not responding, and any moment, it seemed likely, the others would also cease their activity.

There was not time to brake our craft; before we could have done so, the back rockets might be entirely beyond firing, and we should certainly crash with only the front ones in working order. Without the partly neutralizing effect of the back ones, the flaming gases from those in front would spin the ship around like a top, and it would go crashing down into the virgin wilderness. As it was, though it would be impossible to make a perfect landing, we could at least hope to survive.

Corby took the controls; I handled the rocket blast. Both of us did everything in our power, but it was useless. A sudden gust of breeze a hundred feet above ground, and in another instant we sideswiped some dense foliage. Then came the crash.

When I came to my senses I found Corby dead. Seated as he was at the controls, he had suffered the full brunt of the shock, from the angle at which we hit, and must have died instantly. And that was a blessing, doubtlessly -- for a time I wished I were in his place. Then my grief and hopelessness began to abate, and I started casting about for some means of salvation.

As to my exact location, I had no idea. I knew we had been blasting our way high above India, and in another two hours should have been in Paris. But now--

It seemed hopeless. Without food, in the midst of a trackless growth of wild plant life, and with no human traces to be seen anywhere, the question was how long I could survive; not could I. My left arm hung limply at the shoulder, and I knew it to be broken. I was bruised and cut in almost every part of my body, from the terrible concussion, and could not hope to make much headway through the jungle. There was the hand rocket flare gun, which was my only hope.

For four days I lay there, in the midst of that intense heat, not leaving the wreckage. On the first day I had clambered, like an old Ford puffing up a hill, to the top of a nearby promontory, in a hope I knew to be futile, of finding some human trace. But it had been useless. The jungle stretched out on all sides, like a matted web, unbroken.

Each night I fired my rocket flares--a few each time. Unless some plane were to fly over me at a reasonably low altitude, even this was useless; still I hoped. Knowing all the time that it was a vain hope. On the fourth night I fired the next to the last cartridge--I dared not use the final one in case I might hear a motor roar later--and on the fifth day fell into a sort of delirium.

How long this lasted I know not. Most of the time I was only half conscious; day and night were blended like a changing scene in a kaleidoscope, and I knew no heat or cold; no pain or any other emotion. I merely existed.

Finally, blackness seemed to set in for the last time, and I knew I was dying. I had given Corby's body the respects within my power; my home affairs were fairly well settled, and so I did not rage at my fate so much as I might have.

But finally, as the darkness became more and more nearly opaque, I somehow sensed someone near to me. Then I thought I felt myself lifted--carried--

When I regained full possession of my faculties, I found myself in a rude hut, somewhere. It was constructed of rough boards, for the most part, with straw thatched here and there to help keep out the moisture. As I lay on a rough pallet, looking about as best I could, the thing that shocked me most was the sight of a huge case of books.

And then I chanced to notice the one who I later learned was, and still is perhaps, the sole occupant of the place.

He was old. Nothing else can express his antiquity than that one word. It is useless to try to picture him in your mind; for that is not possible unless you have seen him. But he was old--and about him; there somehow seemed to be some strange appearance of some kind, something I could not track down; and yet something--

Seeing I was awake, he came over to me, and to my utter amazement, inquired as to my health in perfect English. And I was astounded still more when, upon tentatively moving my body a bit, I felt nearly fit and hearty again -- this, despite the fact that I must have been almost dying only a short while before. In an effort to determine how long I had been unconscious, I felt of my beard and found myself clean-shaven. I thought then that he must have shaved me.

I have no wish to make this longer than needful; therefore, I will not enter into a detailed account of all that followed. It will be best merely to give a sort of summary.

Inside of two days, I was well. Not wishing to appear inquisitive, I did not inquire of my host any more than absolutely necessary. Though the question of who he was; why he was staying here in this wilderness; and a dozen others were almost consuming my curiosity. Indeed, I thought that surely he would understand my state of mind and explain. But he did not. Rather, he seemed to take me in course, as though he were expecting me. At times, and later, I wondered if he actually had been.

The only explanation that came to me for this, that could possibly solve the puzzle, was that this was one of the holy men of India, of which I had heard vaguely, who made their life work that of penance in some extraordinary form. But many things seemed to discount that hypothesis. His books, for instance--

It was a little later before I noticed that they were not ordinary books.

Not until the fifth day of my stay with him did I have the opportunity to examine one of those books. But before discussing that, it were best to tell of the other inhabitant of this little hut.

A few paragraphs before, I have said that my befriender was the only inhabitant of the dwelling. He was the only--for lack of a better word I am forced to use this adjective: -- man-like thing there--human is not correct.

But this other--thing. It was not of earth.

Of that I am certain. Not even in the pictures I have seen of

prehistoric animals remotely resembling it in form. It stood on eight legs, short and squat. Head it had none, nor any outwardly visible organs. Upon the eight legs was a body, which was merely a round ball of some sort of fleshy armor--a poor enough description, certainly, and yet the only one I can give. It was a pet of the hut-dweller's--that is my only explanation for it. It followed him about like a dog--and when he disappeared on his strange absences, the most of the time it followed him. Certainly it was the more alien of the two.

One day he showed me one of the books. Its binding was ordinary enough, though of some excellent grade of leathery substance that I could not imagine meeting in this out-of-the-way corner of earth. I opened it, and gasped at the marvelous interior.

It was composed solely, save for a few lines at the bottom of each page in some strange writing, of pictures. But those pictures were of the most wonderful construction and technique I had ever seen. In full color, every one--each was the size of a page of the book. And there was nothing on the back of each picture; then I noted that the pages were removable.

I noticed something odd also, then -- that the scenes were almost all of action, and almost without exception, humans figured in them. My host told me to examine them at my leisure, and I spent the next two days in so doing.

Another thing must be mentioned. Though I am not a student of history, I know, perhaps, more of ancient times than does the ordinary man, and I saw that in many of the books the pictures were arranged in a kind of sequence--there was one set, for instance, that could have been nothing other than a marvelously executed, and most complete, series of illustrations of the principal events of the French Revolution.

Asking him who the artist was, he merely smiled enigmatically.

A few of the books -- very few--were blank--or rather, though the pages were there, nothing was on them. These, I noted, were to one side in the case of the volumes; and it also finally dawned on me that the books were arranged in some sort of sequence--the ones to the top and left of the box being evidently very early reproductions, the meaning of which I could not, except in a few rare instances, fathom.

But I have dwelt too long on this. I noticed, from the start, that at times, this strange man would be gone for periods of varying length, sometimes as long as half a day, leaving me to myself. Evidently he trusted me implicitly, but he almost never talked; and whenever I would question him about the things that were puzzling me, he would merely smile that curious smile.

One night he returned from one of these disappearances, late, and I had lain down on that rude cot, and tried to sleep before he returned. But the questions of where I was, who the man was, when I could return to civilization, kept beating through my brain like sledgehammers, and sleep would not come. It was then that he came back--and I noticed he had with him one of the pictures. Thinking I was asleep, he quietly drew one of the books from the case--one that I had never before inspected, and placed the illustration therein, the page somehow fitting tightly. I noticed that about half the pages of that book were blank--and all the other volumes were either full or empty completely.

The next day -- which later proved to be the last of my stay

with him--I inspected that book, having mentally noted which it was the night before. I found the last picture--the one he had inserted the night before--was of a scene in a room: a scene of a brutal killing, with one man shooting the other through the head. Later I learned that during my stay the president of a certain South American country had been assassinated under identical circumstances. Where had he procured that photograph or picture? Had he been there?

He came in as I was still poring over other volumes. Just then I came to one scene that made me shudder a little, so realistic was it--a scene of a Procession--and for a moment, an awful moment, I wondered if this might not be the Jew whom the Savior had--

He seemed to understand. "No," he said gently, "I am not he of whom you are thinking."

"But--you were there?" I frenziedly asked.

Of a sudden the room seemed to whirl about me, as if I were falling. Reaching to catch myself, I could find no support. When I regained consciousness, after what seemed eons, I was lying on a grassy knoll on a road. It looked vaguely familiar, this place--and when I heard a snatch of conversation from a young peasant couple, I knew I was in France. At a small village, not far from Paris, it was.

That is the end of my story. Abrupt--pointless? Perhaps--sometimes I wonder too. Wonder if it might have not all been hallucinations I suffered--if I did not imagine it all--led an existence like Jekyll and Hyde, with my conscious registering nothing of what was happening, and my subconscious taking care of my body. But even as I think of that, it seems ridiculous--more so than believing that all this actually happened.

Furthermore, when I reached Paris, and took a thorough physical checkup--for my left arm was entirely normal, and I feared that it might have been fractured and not paining--the X-ray showed a small break in the arm--healed now completely! And that was but thirteen days after the day on which I crashed. When I reached civilization once more it had been only twelve since my landing in the jungle.

I told my story to a few. None believed it--they were of the opinion, like me at times, that I had lost my reason. But still I can't believe it. There are too many little threads that persist in hanging together.

I sometimes wonder why I never more need to shave.

A few things I have not noted here, yet. For instance, how, after dusk each evening, the man who cared for me would take a thoroughly modern telescope, go outdoors, and look up into the sky--look up with the telescope. As nearly as I could judge he always centered his attention upon the third star in the handle of the Big Dipper. He seemed to be waiting.

Sometimes I wish I could return.

Those pictures. How did he obtain them? From various things in them it seems impossible that they could have been painted by hand--even though they resembled oils, the detail was too minute, the distinction too sharp. I had never seen him have paints, furthermore; he gave no indications of being an artist; and several times he had been gone but a few hours before he returned--presumably with those likenesses each time. Of course, he might have received them from someone else, but--who could have painted such a

tremendous number of masterpieces in a few short years of mortal life?

They could not have been photographs. That is a certainty. Unless made by some process unknown to us--and what was that odd creature who constantly followed him about? I repeat, it was not of the earth.

How could that old man have been near enough to the assassination, to cite a single incident, to have seen it and photographed it, if it was he who did the painting? How did he heal me so quickly? Where did--does--he stay? Why is he there? How did he take me from his hut to France, and from where I crashed to his hut, if it was a long distance, in but a few hours?--for there was very little time, as I remember each day distinctly. How did he obtain those likenesses from the very dawn of our civilization?

I can offer one possible explanation. Perhaps he is not of our earth -- perhaps he was sent here as a sentry, or ambassador, from some other system. That would explain his looking up to the stars -- and his attitude that sometimes seemed to be that of waiting. Waiting for whom? It might also explain his longevity. And yet, he did not look particularly different from any other earth man.

Possibly he was supernatural--again I use the past tense, for some reason. I wonder. It would explain his action upon my inquiring into that last picture... And I also wonder why it was--for a check on the books made it evident all were manufactured about the same time -- that there were no more about the hut, and no means of obtaining more--at the present rate of filling them, where is he to get more?

Or--

What will happen fifteen years hence, when the last book must surely be filled?

THE END

SONNET

By R. H. Barlow

The sunlit fields wherethrough I walked all day,
 Finding the stone, finding the coloured flower
 Are left behind me now: I cannot say
 What was the hue of one forgotten hour---
 The bird I killed because its wings were bright
 In memory cries no more; I do not seek
 Auspicious skies, but set my step oblique
 And reach the cliff of dream at edge of night.

And here I part the weeds whose guardian spears
 Surrender to no path, though much by dark
 Uncandelled by the moon, my swift steps claim
 Admission past them through unchanging years,
 And stare beyond the mist, and swiftly mark
 A gleam, within me mirrored, of great flame.

IMAGI-MOVIES by Forrest J. Ackerman.

The fantacycle in cinemattractions is back, oh boy, & how! We recently have witness the genuinely scientific Columbia Karloff film "The man they could not hang", & Columbia has an Atlantistorry about completed. MGM gave us Henry Hull & a new eery actor in "Miracles for Sale" -- an odd lun that might have been adapted from our own Unknown--based on the Merlini Mystery bk "Death from a Top Hat"; screend the stageplay "On Borrowd Time", fantasy of the Death Takes a Holiday variety; & pioneered for an eventual filming of THE MOON POOL (one hopes) with the wonderful cinemagic of "The Wizard of Oz". A little later on I'll let U in on an extra-special, superiffic scientific film Old Leo is planning.

England sent over "Clouds Over Europe", bfor they broke, with principal players from THINGS TO COME, "The Werewolf of London" & "Wuthering Heights" in the starring roles. It is believed that Korda completed the famous fantasy "Thief of Bagdad" bfor the War, & that Sabu will be seen in it in the US around Xmas. If it follows the Fairbanks' version faithfully, we shall see the magic carpet, forest of fire, flame-breathing dragon, subsea superspider, wingd horse's flite to the moon, the cloak of invisibility & the all-powerful powder.

All eyes will be on Paramount around New Yr, DR CYCLOPS' first showing being skeded for Dec 22. Shrouded in secrecy, this technicolor mystery movie is eagerly anticipated as probably the greatest trick-fotografy amazing adventure thriller since KING KONG.

The Invisible Man returns in the person of one Vincent Price: & features in the cast Sir Cedric Hardwicke ('Mr Brink' of "On Borrowd Time", the mad 'Theotocopules' of THINGS TO COME). Pic is in no sense a sequel to the Kains relisher of 6 yrs ago, it is said. Karloff & Lugosi will continue their coscaring shockers with "Friday the 13th" directly Karloff & kathbone complete the dark "Tower of London", Draculugosi just recently having playd in a pseudo-sci-ence-serial "The Fantom Creeps" (Monster Mech-Man...Devisualizer...Meteoray, Suspender of animation...One-Way Televisor...City-Shaking Vibratone...etc....see scientific cartoon version in Movie Comix mag, #6). "The Fantom Creeps" was written by Willis Cooper. 3dly, it has announced, Universal will film "The Electric Man", which has been languishing on its shelves since first attentiond in my Scientifilm Snapshots column in FANTASY Magazine 35 Aug....

Hop on the scientificinemerry-go-round! "Eternally Yours", United Artists release of a Walter Wanger production, has much magic, including the illusion of creating a woman out of chemicals. There seems to be some hypnotism in it too. Incidentally, I was interested not a little to note "Charlie Chan at Treasure Island" accepted mentelepathy as actuality. L. Ron Hubbard wrote the story from which Columbia develop "The Secret of Treasure Island". The new edition of "Raffles" is to have a televisual sequence. Paramount's "Television Spy", ultramodern melodrama, originly was titled "The World on Parade".

At RKO we all know it's "The Hunchback of Notre Dame" coming up, which, while not fantastic in any way, seems to have hold

of the fancy of the imagi-nation, due no doubt to the grotesque makeup affected by Chaney in the preceding version & curiosity re Laughton's in the forthcoming. Also at the Radio Studios, Orson Welles writes, directs & stars in "Heart of Darkness".

"Idiot's Delite"--"Lady of the Tropics"--"Conspiracy"--& now, with mounting momentum, Esperanto, Tongue of Tomoro, gets its biggest screen boost, as Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour & several hundred inhabitants of a mythical island employ the artificial language to sing Johnny Burke's hit-tune (he lyrickt the songs in "The Star Maker") for "The Road to Singapore". While in "1,000,000 BC" one will be treated to the unique experience of listening to dialog in a language spoken nowhere on earth! A narrator will translate.

Is "Earthbound" at 20th Century-Fox fantastic? Could be.... "Turnabout" & "The Frightend Ghost" are 2 more in the Thorne Smith vein.

A new "quicky company", Producers Pix Inc, is shooting "Buryd Alive" under the direction of Victor "White Zombie" Halperin; & has skeded "Invisible Killer" andor "Invisible Murder" (2 titles have been reported).

Another "quickcompany" is to remake "The Lost World" for release thru a Major Studio.

Warners have "The Return of Dr X" ready, wherein Humphrey Bogart, back from the dead, is made up similar to Karloff in "The Walking Dead". Being shot is a "B" production about scientificriminals who employ an elaborate ray of some sort for their various nefariositys (if there is such a word -- there is now!) WB also reported interested in S. Fowler Wright's little-known "Love in the Yr 53 EE" (Eugenic Era, from an old Red Bk mag story. Coincidentally, this is the yr 53EE...Esperanto Era!)

From Shep's Shop, Hollywood's foremost 2d-hand mag-mart, we learn a certn smart studio is investigating Argosy's recent run of stf with an eye to a buy of some story suitable for screening.

There is a possibility of importation from France, for showing in the foren film circuit, of "Et le monde tembla" ("& the World Trembles", I bliev), an Erich von Stroheim scientifiilm from the story "La Machine à prédire la mort" -- "The Machine to Predict Death".

Biggest News of All: WHITE EAGLE, a spectacular startler skeded by the Culver City Crowd (MGM). Ray Harryhausen, our Inside Studio Informant, tells of sketches the Art Dept is doing preparatory to actual shooting, of strangely-garbd men astride giant carrier eagles attacking the skyscrapers of New York while rocketships retaliate! Paradoxicly, prehistoric monsters seemingly play a part in a film layd in the future! Will this possibly prove to be the screening of our first time-travel Tale? Williamson invented the expression that gives ansr--"Time knows!"

THE END

More timely articles by Ackerman are scheduled for future issues!

THE DARGAN

by Duane W Rimel

I had been bedridden for many months--months of agonizing pain and fever and abnormal dreams of rolling, twisting spheres accompanied by the ponderous grinding of mighty wheels. Then followed a wearisome period of convalescence which was equally difficult to endure, since my strength hardly enabled me to turn over in bed. And through it all, one thought was predominant -- that of seeing Diane once more; for she, too, had become ill before I had been confined to my bed, and was, they said, in worse condition than I. But my attendants would not tell me the nature of her affliction, always shunning the question, or whispering among themselves whenever I mentioned it. So all the while I had been denied a glimpse of her lovely face, and the determination to cut short my period of recovery steadily grew to the proportions of an overwhelming obsession.

This morning, very early, and before any one was about, I awoke with the resolve to arise and see Diane; but when I stood on my feet, a dark giddiness swept over me, and the couch on which I had lain for so long veiled before my eyes. Certain things about the room seemed further down than before, as if by chance I had grown in stature during my sickness. Upon taking the first feeble step; the terrible weakness of my condition once more asserted itself, and I was forced to grasp the back of a chair for support. But no one had heard my movements. Drawing on my clothes very quietly, I stood again; the second time with more assurance and success. The doctor had warned against any violent exercise or excitement, so I went silently from the room, taking care not to arouse the household, and came, finally, to the front door. A new strength coursed through me then, and I stepped upon the porch with more confidence than before, my purpose of seeing Diane urging me on with irresistible and compelling force.

At that early hour no one was upon the streets, while a heavy fog enveloped many of the poignantly familiar scenes which had been denied me so long. The same dirty gray sidewalk ran past the house, and the old lilac bush by the corner stood bare and lifeless, a sentinel of despair. The front gate was torn completely away, whereas it had previously hung by one rusty hinge. When I passed by the breach, I realized, with a start, that today was the Sabbath, and in a few hours people would be going by on their way to church. I knew then that I must hurry to Diane's abode before many were about, for my appearance on the street might have shocked them; my body having become greatly emaciated through the fever and my face being totally devoid of colour. The fog, despite its coldness and dampness, helped greatly in my trembling walk.

Diane's house is not far away, and by resting at short intervals on steps and fence-railings, I managed to cover the distance in good time. How familiar the place looked! How many sweet memories the sight of it recalled to me! And yet it seemed that I had traveled an unusual distance through the mist, though surely it only appeared to be longer because of my weakened condition. As I approached her front door, the place looked barren and desolate, for I remembered very distinctly that there had once been a gener-

ous array of trees and shrubs along the walk -- and that was all gone. But I knew that this was Diane's abode in spite of the heavy shroud of fog; and knew, too, that somewhere in it she must be lying. How I would surprise her! Then I recalled, with some force, that during the past week of convalescence my attendants had said very little about Diane -- so little, in fact, that I had become greatly worried. But as I stood before her door even this morning, I knew that she was alive and waiting.

And indeed, when I passed through the heavy front door and toward her bedchamber, I felt assured again, as I heard light footsteps from within. But surely, I reasoned, she too could not be up and about, or she would have come to visit me. Hoping that the sound would not awaken any of her family, I rapped lightly on the portal, the echoes from the noise ringing loudly in the narrow corridor. My heart was near to bursting as I waited for her to answer the summons. Then the door came open, and she stood before me, attired in purest white. But surprise was not upon her pale countenance--only a welcoming smile, which, though it gladdened my heart, was not what I had expected. When I questioned her she explained that she too had risen against the doctor's orders, and had been awaiting my call. This I could not understand, though for the moment I was so overcome with joy that I did not see fit to ask how she had known that I was coming.

I realized what a pity it was that I had not secured some flowers as an offering to her pale, ethereal beauty. But she did not complain, and we asked many questions in turn about each other, since we were secretly betrothed and planned to wed before the year was past, even though my family frowned upon our acquaintance. Suddenly I remembered that the day was Sunday; and when I mentioned it to Diane, a queer light came into her eyes -- a light of happiness, I thought--which disturbed me strangely.

Upon Diane's suggestion, we decided to attend service that morning: by going early we would have a few hours together and be free from the usual bustle which was a regular part of the Sunday program. And since she was already fully attired, we set out immediately for the parish church, after I had wrapped my cloak about her slender shoulders to keep out the dampness of the fog.

As we walked side by side, a surge of strength passed through me, and I did not have to rest at intervals as before. When we drew near to the stately structure with its sharply slanting roof and quaint steeple, Diane trembled slightly; but would not tell me the cause of her shivering, which I attributed to the coldness of the morning. Once when we were on the steps she trembled again, and I had a glimpse of her throat, which puzzled me greatly. For there was a mark on her pale skin -- a plain print of an inverted cross. It stood out on her white flesh very distinctly; but I gave it only a passing thought, as the portals of the church were over us then while for a moment the semi-darkness concealed us from each other. In the somber hallway her hand grew cold in mine, and I wished then that the caretaker might come and build up the fires so that Diane would not catch a chill.

When we entered the main room she clutched at me queerly, saying nothing, though her eyes were upon the huge crucifix above the altar. At last we sat down side by side in a pew near the back of the church where a good view could be had of the assemblage when they arrived. The air in the room was chilly, and I had to wrap

the cloak very closely about Diane to keep her from trembling.

Sitting there so quietly, I realized that my effort had cost me more than I had anticipated it might, for a great weakness gradually stole over me, and my head sank on my chest from sheer weariness. Diane sat unspeaking and apparently marvelling at the interior of the church: the beautifully wrought pillars, the coloured glass and the dark furniture: Noting her intent scrutiny, I inquired about it, and learned, to my astonishment, that Diane had never before been inside a church. This I recalled with some perturbation, remembering that indeed she had never attended service with me. She was so clean and pure that the thought of it did not seem exactly right.

In my complete exhaustion I must have fallen partly asleep, for I remember hearing, suddenly, the playing of an organ; very far away, but hauntingly beautiful, as if coming from some immeasurable distance. It was a melancholy sound, bringing with it memories of a younger day, and my early courtship of Diane. The melody rose and fell, modulating into a symphony of intense vibration, till it seemed as if the music were in that very room. The notes were unrecognizable both in tonal quality and expression; yet I felt certain that they were coming from an organ.

This, I thought, must be the opening hymnal of the morning service, but I could not open my eyes to make sure. Diane was still beside me, and her hands were almost icy cold. Then she uttered a low gasp, and I knew that something terrible had happened. I sat erect, staring at her; but in place of the fear I expected to see traced on her pale features, there was an expression of peace--of lasting gratitude; and I heard her whisper then that the music had cleansed her soul. And when in relief I sank back to my half-slumbering coma, I heard the organ again, for it had stopped during the interim of whispering. This time the music was gloriously and ecstatically beautiful, lulling me to a profound state of lethargy. The longer I listened, the more certain I became that it was an altogether unearthly resonance; one which I could in no way interpret save that it gripped the very soul in a paralyzing and consuming embrace. The last thing I can remember is a glimpse of Diane's throat -- a glimpse which revealed that the inverted cross had completely vanished from her pale flesh. After that I think we both fell asleep.

It is evening now and I am back in bed -- but under different circumstances than when I left it this morning. I have been forced to lie down, as they say a terrible fever has set in from the exposure I endured. The doctor is hiding something from me -- and when people come in the room, they stare at me queerly; even pity is written on their faces! When I demanded how I came to be at home again, they said that the good minister brought me in his buggy. They will tell very little about Diane, but I have heard them whispering terrible things about her -- that she never before attended church because she had written in the book of Lucifer. God! if I could only stand up for her....

I am accused of a hideous crime -- I will not mention the charge; but they say that early this morning I arose, went to the cemetery by the church, and did awful things which I heatedly disclaim. They say that Diane died three days ago--that I broke into

(Continued on Page 15)

THE GOURMET

by Robert W Lowndes

In the wavering candle-light, Le Marc became a grotesque, fantastical figure, the embodiment of some artist's representation of Esathoggua. His voice rebounded along the walls of this barbaric room as if rising up from an abysmal vault.

"It is not hard to understand why the Church made gluttony one of the mortal sins. Look at me, Paul. What am I more than a gigantic stomach, an insatiable appetite?" He poured another glass of wine, downed it. "When one's organs become so encased in fat as mine, when one's being is so enwrapped in taste-sensations, what place can there be for a soul?"

I smiled: Le Marc usually became metaphysical at this stage. "Worrying about your eternal soul again?"

"You misapprehend me. Yet, it is a point. What meaning can life have for a man who can do nothing more than digest? I think they were right: man was meant for better things than this.

"Look at me closely, Paul. See the caricature of humanity I have become. Is there anything like me in the world outside?"

"I could not help but think of some of those mediaeval drawings, showing lords with enormous paunches which had to be supported in little carts when they tried to walk.

"Perhaps you are right -- but what of it" I said. "A few years more or less from the life-span -- does it make any great difference? You have lived as you wanted to live: what more can you ask?"

He sank back into the depths of his chair. "No, I have not lived."

There was no answer I could make. To refer to Clarissa now would be an unforgivable indelicacy. My eyes wandered to the great silver platter which contained remnants of the night's feast. One does not dine with Le Marc: one banquets.

"What kind of meat is this?" I asked. "It is really different; of a tenderness and delicacy quite new to me -- a triumph for you, I think. And there you have it, my friend: you will always have the satisfaction of knowing that the name of Le Marc has become a symbol of gustatorial artistry. The whole world will know you some day and respect and admire you even as the small circle of your friends and acquaintances do now."

He closed his eyes. "Clarissa!"

"Once I was like you, Paul. Not merely young -- and surely I am not old, even now -- but alive. My soul is still the soul of a slender, beautiful young man, lithe and athletic. My dreams are the dreams of a strong young man whose blood throbs and whose sinews are not lost in fat. I want to dance with the dance of the seasons, to hurl the discus and throw the javelin, to hunt with the bow and arrow, to roam the night with one also young, lithe, and -- alive.

"You cannot imagine how I hungered for Clarissa, ever since I first saw her. But my gods are terrible gods, Paul. I have made them with my own hands; now they are my masters and they demand sacrifice."

"Clarissa is gone, Le Marc. You must try to forget her."

"Yes, that is right: she is gone."

"Your interests are so bound up in your work -- it is not surprising that she should have wandered. You do not blame her, Le Marc? You can forgive?"

He poured another glass of wine. "What is there to forgive? The fault was mine, Paul. I never should have married Clarissa. But she was so young, tender -- so alive.

"You cannot imagine how I hungered for Clarissa."

His head sank forward. "It is a terrible thing to know such hunger. To live with it as I have lived. We were together for several years, you know. And every night I would dream that I was again young and lithe -- only to awake and see myself as I was. Yet, she loved me: I was not blind, Paul: she loved me even as I loved her. She saw the real Le Marc, not this padded sepulchre. Yet -- for all my love, I knew that some day, she must go.

"I think she knew it, too. I could see the realization of it grow upon her day by day. How can I forget that? How can I forget the love and trust she had for me? She saw my soul, but the world cannot see it. The world can only see this mockery of the human form I have become. How can they know how I loved her?"

Brightly in the yellow candlelight, tears coursed down his cheeks.

"Le Marc! What are you saying?"

"What difference does it make now? What use are these tears? She is gone."

"Le Marc! What happened to her? Where is Clarissa?"

A sob welled up from the enormous figure in the great chair. He stretched forth a swollen hand for the wine bottle, but his reach fell short and it overturned, reddening the white of the tablecloth.

On the weirdly decorated silver platter rested a few cold slices of delicate, tender, white meat.

THE END

THE ORGAN

By Duane W. Rimel
(Continued from Page 13)

the family tomb and brought her forth to the church before anyone was awake. But I know that I have done right, for the mark on her throat is gone and her soul is free. And I understand now why she was waiting for me, and I can understand, too, the impulse which caused me to struggle to her bower.

As evening draws on I am appeased by the fact that she smiled when I saw her last -- smiled as the organ played. And now I hear those haunting, impelling notes again, seemingly from some vast distance; and I think I know why they have come. For the organ is playing that same melody we heard in church this morning--the melody which wafted her soul to heaven.

THE END

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