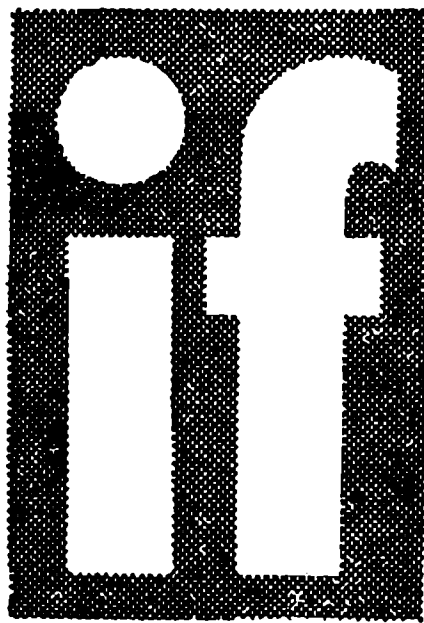


**worlds
of**



MARCH 1962
*All Stories New
and Complete*

**science
fiction**

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One little village couldn't have a monopoly on all the
bad breaks in the world.

BY JIM HARMON

They did, though!

DANGEROUS

QUARRY

THEY say automation makes jobs, especially if "they" are trying to keep their own job of selling automation machines. I know the Actuarvac made one purple passion of a job for me, the unpleasantly fatal results of which are still lingering with me.

Thad McCain, my boss at Manhattan-Universal Insurance, beamed over the sprawling automatic brain's silver gauges and plastic toggles as proudly as if he had just personally gave birth to it. "This will simplify your job to the point of a pleasant diversion, Madison."

"Are you going to keep paying me for staying with my little hobby?" I asked, suspiciously eyeing my chrome competitor.

"The Actuarvac poses no threat to your career. It will

merely keep you from flying off on wild-goose chases. It will unvaryingly separate from the vast body of legitimate claims the phony ones they try to spike us for. Then all that remains is for you to gather the accessory details, the evidence to jail our erring customers."

"Fine," I said. I didn't bother to inform him that that was all my job had ever been.

McCain shuffled his cards. They were cards for the machine, listing new individual claims on company policies. Since the two-month-old machine was literate and could read typewriting, the cards weren't coded or punched. He read the top one. "Now this, for instance. No adjuster need investigate this accident. The circumstances obviously are such that no false claim could

be filed. Of course, the brain will make an unfailing analysis of all the factors involved and clear the claim automatically and officially."

McCain threaded the single card into the slot for an example to me. He then flicked the switch and we stood there watching the monster ruminate thoughtfully. It finally rang a bell and spit the card back at Manhattan-Universal's top junior vice-president.

He took it like a man.

"That's what the machine is for," he said philosophically. "To detect human error. Hmm. What kind of a shove do you get out of this?"

He handed me the rejected claim card. I took it, finding a new, neatly typed notation on it. It said:

Investigate the Ozark village of Granite City.

"You want me to project it in a movie theater and see how it stands it all alone in the dark?" I asked.

"Just circle up the wagon train and see how the Indians fall," McCain said anxiously.

"It's too general. What does the nickel-brained machine mean by investigating a whole town? I don't know if it has crooked politics, a polygamy colony or a hideout for supposedly deported gangsters. I don't care much either. It's not my business. How could a whole town be filing false life and accident claims?"

"Find that out," he said. "I

trust the machine. There have been cases of mass collusion before. Until you get back, we are making no more settlements with that settlement."

RESEARCH. To a writer that generally means legally permissible plagiarism. For an insurance adjuster, it means earnest work.

Before I headed for the hills, or the Ozark Mountains, I walked a few hundred feet down the hall and into the manual record files. The brain abstracted from empirical data but before I planed out to Granite City I had to find the basis for a few practical, nasty suspicions.

Four hours of flipping switches and looking at microfilm projections while a tawny redhead in a triangular fronted uniform carried me reels to order gave me only two ideas. Neither was very original. The one that concerned business was that the whole village of Granite City must be accident-prone.

I rejected that one almost immediately. While an accident-prone was in himself a statistical anomaly, the idea of a whole town of them gathered together stretched the fabric of reality to the point where even an invisible reweaver couldn't help it.

There was an explanation for the recent rise in the accident rate down there. The rock quarry there had gone into high-level operation. I

knew why from the floor, walls, ceiling border, table trimmings in the records room. They were all granite. The boom in granite for interior and exterior decoration eclipsed earlier periods of oak, plastics, wrought iron and baked clay completely. The distinctive grade of granite from Granite City was being put into use all over the planet and in the Officer's Clubs on the Moon and Mars.

Yet the rise in accident, compared to the rise in production, was out of all proportion.

Furthermore, the work at the quarry could hardly explain the excessive accident reports we had had from the village as far back as our records went.

We had paid off on most of the claims since they seemed irrefutably genuine. All were complete with eye-witness reports and authenticated circumstances.

There was one odd note in the melodic scheme: We had never had a claim for any kind of automobile accident from Granite City.

I shut off the projector.

It may be best to keep an open mind, but I have found in practice that you have to have some kind of working theory which you must proceed to prove is either right or wrong.

Tentatively, I decided that for generations the citizens of Granite City had been in an

organized conspiracy to defraud Manhattan-Universal and its predecessors of hundreds upon hundreds of thousands of dollars in false accident claims.

Maybe they made their whole livelihood off us before the quarry opened up.

I used my pocket innercom and had my secretary get me a plane reservation and a gun.

After so many profitable decades, Granite City wasn't going to take kindly to my spoil-sport interference.

THE Absinthe Flight to Springfield was jolly and relatively fast. Despite headwinds we managed Mach 1.6 most of the way. My particular stewardess was a blonde, majoring in Video Psychotherapy in her night courses. I didn't have much time to get acquainted or more than hear the outline of her thesis on the guilt purgings effected by The Life and Legend of Gary Cooper. The paunchy businessman in the next lounge was already nibbling the ear of his red-haired hostess. He was the type of razorback who took the girls for granted and aimed to get his money's worth. I gave Helen, the blonde, a kiss on the cheek and began flipping through the facsimiles in my briefcase as we chute-braked for a landing at the Greater Ozarks.

It took me a full five minutes to find out that I couldn't take a copter to Gran-

ite City. Something about downdrafts in the mountains.

Since that put me back in the days of horsepower, I trotted over to the automobile rental and hired a few hundred of them under the hood of a Rolls. That was about the only brand of car that fit me. I hadn't been able to get my legs into any other foreign car since I was fifteen, and I have steadfastly refused to enter an American model since they all sold out their birthrights as passenger cars and went over to the tractor-trailer combinations they used only for cargo trucks when I was a boy. Dragging around thirty feet of car is sheer nonsense, even for prestige.

It was a tiresome fifty-mile drive, on manual all the way after I left the radar-channel area of the city. Up and down, slowing for curves, flipping into second for the hills.

The whole trip hardly seemed worth it when I saw the cluster of painted frame buildings that was Granite City. They looked like a tumble of dingy building blocks tossed in front of a rolled-up indigo sports shirt. That was Granite Mountain in the near foreground. But I remembered that over the course of some forty years the people in these few little stacks of lumber had taken Manhattan-Universal for three quarters of a megabuck.

I turned off onto the gravel road, spraying my fenders

with a hail of a racket. Then I stepped down hard on my brakes, bracing myself to keep from going through the wind-screen. I had almost side-swiped an old man sitting at the side of the road, huddled in his dusty rags.

"Are you okay?" I yelled, thumbing down the window.

"I've suffered no harm at your hands—or your wheels, sir. But I could use some help," the old man said. "Could I trouble you for a lift when you leave town?"

I wasn't too sure about that. Most of these guys who are on the hobo circuit talking like they owned some letters to their names besides their initials belonged to some cult or other. I try to be as tolerant as I can, and some of my best friends are thugs, but I don't want to drive with them down lonely mountain roads.

"We'll see what we can work out," I said. "Right now can you tell me where I can find Marshal Thompson?"

"I can," he said. "But you will have to walk there."

"Okay. It shouldn't be much of a walk in Granite City."

"It's the house at the end of the street."

"It is," I said. "Why shouldn't I drive up there? The street's open."

The old man stared at me with red-shot eyes. "Marshal Thompson doesn't like people to run automobiles on the streets of Granite City."

"So I'll just *lock* the car up

by Jim Harmon

and walk over there. I couldn't go getting tire tracks all over your clean streets."

The old man watched as I climbed down and locked up the Rolls.

"You would probably get killed if you did run the car here, you know," he said conversationally.

"Well," I said, "I'll be getting along." I tried to walk sideways so I could keep an eye on him.

"Come back," he said, as if he had doubts.

The signs of a menacing conspiracy were growing stronger, I felt. I had my automatic inside my shirt, but I decided I might need a less lethal means of expression. Without breaking stride, I scooped up a baseball-size hunk of bluish rock from the road and slipped it into my small change pocket.

I have made smarter moves in my time.

As I approached the house at the end of the lane, I saw it was about the worse construction job I had seen in my life. It looked as architecturally secure as a four-year-old's drawing of his home. The angles were measurably out of line. Around every nail head were two nails bent out of shape and hammered down, and a couple of dozen welts in the siding where the hammer had missed any nail. The paint job was spotty and streaked. Half the panes in the windows were cracked. I

DANGEROUS QUARRY

fought down the dust in my nose, afraid of the consequences of a sneeze to the place.

My toe scuffed the top porch step and I nearly crashed face first into the front door. I had been too busy looking at the house, I decided. I knocked.

Moments later, the door opened.

The lean-faced man who greeted me had his cheeks crisscrossed with razor nicks and his shirt on wrong side out. But his eyes were bright and sparrow alert.

"Are you Mr. Marshal Thompson, the agent for Manhattan-Universal Insurance?" I put to him.

"I'm *the* marshal, name of Thompson. But you ain't the first to take my title for my Christian name. You from the company?"

"Yes," I said. "Were you expecting me?"

Thompson nodded. "For forty-one years."

THOMPSON served the coffee in the chipped cups, favoring only slightly his burned fingers.

Catching the direction of my glance, he said, "Company is worth a few scalds, Mr. Madison."

I accepted the steaming cup and somehow it very nearly slipped out of my hands. I made a last microsecond retrieve.

The marshal nodded

thoughtfully. "You're new here."

"First time," I said, sipping coffee. It was awful. He must have made a mistake and put salt into it instead of sugar.

"You think the claims I've been filing for my people are false?"

"The home office has some suspicions of that," I admitted.

"I don't blame them, but they ain't. Look, the company gambles on luck, doesn't it?"

"No. It works on percentages calculated from past experience."

"But I mean it knows that there will be, say, a hundred fatal car crashes in a day. But it doesn't know if maybe ninety of them will be in Iowa and only ten in the rest of the country."

"There's something to that. We call it probability, not luck."

"Well, probability says that more accidents are going to occur in Granite City than anywhere else in the country, per capita."

I shook my head at Thompson. "That's not probability. Theoretically, anything can happen but I don't—I can't—believe that in this town everybody has chanced to be an accident prone. Some other factor is operating. You are all deliberately faking these falls and fires—"

"We're not," Thompson snapped.

"Or else something is caus-

ing you to have this trouble. Maybe the whole town is a bunch of dope addicts. Maybe you grow your own mescal-in or marijuana; it's happened before."

Thompson laughed.

"Whatever is going on, I'm going to find it out. I don't care what you do, but if I can find a greater risk here and prove it, the Commission will let us up our rates for this town. Probably beyond the capacity of these people, I'm afraid."

"That would be a real tragedy, Mr. Madison. Insurance is vital to this town. Nobody could survive a year here without insurance. People pay me for their premiums before they pay their grocery bills."

I shrugged, sorrier than I could let on. "I won't be able to pay for my own groceries, marshal, if I don't do the kind of job the company expects. I'm going to snoop around."

"All right," he said grudgingly, "but you'll have to do it on foot."

"Yes, I understood you didn't like cars on your streets. At least not the cars of outsiders."

"That doesn't have anything to do with it. Nobody in Granite City owns a car. It would be suicide for anybody to drive a car, same as it would be to have a gas or oil stove, instead of coal, or to own a bathtub."

I took a deep breath.

"Showers," Thompson said.

by Jim Harmon

"With nonskid mats and hand-rails."

I shook hands with him.

"You've been a great help."

"Four o'clock," he said.

"Roads are treacherous at night."

"There's always a dawn."

Thompson met my eyes.

"That's not quite how we look at it here."

II

THE quarry was a mess.

I couldn't see any in the way they sliced the granite out of the mountain. The idea of a four-year-old—a four-year-old moron—going after a mound of raspberry ice cream kept turning up in my mind as I walked around.

The workmen were gone; it was after five local time. But here and there I saw traces of them. Some of them were sandwich wrappers and cigarette stubs, but most of the traces were smears of blood. Blood streaked across sharp rocks, blood oozing from beneath heavy rocks, blood smeared on the handles and working surfaces of sledge hammers and tools. The place was as gory as a battlefield.

"What are you looking for, bud?"

The low, level snarl had come from a burly character in a syn-leather jacket and narrow-brimmed Stetson.

"The reason you have so many accidents here," I said frankly. "I'm from the insur-

ance company. Name's Madison."

"Yeah, I know."

I had supposed he would.

"I'm Kelvin, the foreman here," the big man told me, extending a ham of a fist to be shook. "Outside, doing my Army time, I noticed that most people don't have as many slipups as we do here. Never could figure it out."

"This rock is part of it—"

"What do you mean by that!" Kelvin demanded savagely.

"I mean the way you work it. No system to it. No stratification, no plateau work..."

"Listen, Madison, don't talk about what you don't know anything about. The stuff in these walls isn't just rock; it isn't even plain granite. Granite City exports some of the finest grade of the stone in the world. And it's used all over the world. We aren't just a bunch of meatheaded ditch diggers—we are craftsmen. We have to figure a different way of getting out every piece of stone."

"It's too bad."

"What's too bad?"

"That you chose the wrong way so often," I said.

Kelvin breathed a virile grade of tobacco into my face. "Listen, Madison, we have been working this quarry for generations, sometimes more of us working than other times. Today most of us are working getting the stone out. That's the way we like it. We

don't want any outsider coming in and interfering with that."

"If this quarry has anything to do with defrauding Manhattan-Universal, I can tell you that I will do something about that!"

As soon as my teeth clicked back together, the sickening feeling hit me that I shouldn't have said that.

THE general store was called a supermarket, but it wasn't particularly superior.

I took a seat at the soda fountain and took a beer, politely declining the teen-age clerk's offer of a shot of white lightning from the Pepsi-Cola fountain syrup jug for a quarter.

Behind me were three restaurant tables and one solitary red-upholstered booth. Two men somewhere between forty and sixty sat at the nearest table playing twenty-one.

Over the foam of my stein I saw the old man I had almost run down in the road. He marched through the two-thirds of the building composed of rows of can goods and approached the fat man at the cash register.

"Hello, Professor," the fat man said. "What can we do for you?"

"I'd like to mail a letter," he said in an urgent voice.

"Sure, Professor, I'll send it right off on the facsimile machine as soon as I get a free moment."

"You're sure you can send it? Right away?"

"Positive. Ten cents, Professor."

The professor fumbled in his pants' pocket and fished out a dime. He fingered it thoughtfully.

"I suppose the letter can wait," he said resignedly. "I believe I will buy a pair of doughnuts, Mr. Haskel."

"Why not get a hamburger, Professor? Special sale today. Only a dime. And since you're such a good customer I'll throw in a cup of coffee and the two sinkers for nothing."

"That's—kind of you," the old man said awkwardly.

Haskel shrugged. "A man has to eat."

The man called "the professor" came over and sat down two stools away, ignoring me. The clerk dialed his hamburger and served it.

I stayed with my beer and my thoughts.

More and more, I was coming to believe that Granite City wasn't a job for an investigative adjuster like myself but a psychological adjuster. Crime is a structural flaw in a community, yes. But when the whole society is criminal, distorted, you can't isolate the flaw. The whole village was meat for a sociologist; let him figure out why otherwise decent citizens felt secure in conspiracy to defraud an honored corporation.

I didn't feel that I was licked or that the trip had

been a failure. I had merely established to my intuitive satisfaction that the job was not in my field.

I glanced at the old man. The proprietor of the store knew him and evidently thought him harmless enough to feed.

"I think I can make it down the mountain before dark, Old Timer," I called over to him. "You can come along if you like."

The acne-faced kid behind the counter stared at me. I looked over and caught the bright little eyes of Haskel, the proprietor, too. Finally, the old professor turned on his stool, his face pale and his eyes sad and resigned.

"I doubt very much if either of us will be leaving, Mr. Madison," he said. "Now."

I took my beer and the professor his coffee over to the single booth. We looked at each other across the shiny table and our beverage containers.

"I am Doctor Arnold Parnell of Duke University," the professor said. "I left on my sabbatical five months ago. I have been here ever since."

I looked at his clothes. "You must not have been very well fixed for a year's vacation, Professor."

"I," he said, "have enough traveler's checks with me to paper a washroom. Nobody in this town will cash them for me."

DANGEROUS QUARRY

"I can understand why you want to go somewhere where people are more trusting in that case."

"They know the checks are good. It's *me* they refuse to trust to leave this place. They think they can't let me go."

"I don't see any shackles on you," I remarked.

"Just because you can't see them," he growled, "doesn't mean they aren't there. Marshal Thompson has the only telephone in the village. He has politely refused to let me use it. I'm a suspicious and undesirable character; he's under no obligation to give me telephone privileges, he says. Haskel has the Post Office concession—the Telefax outfit behind the money box over there. He takes my letters but I never see him send them off. And I never get a reply."

"Unfriendly of them," I said conservatively. "But how can they stop you from packing your dental floss and cutting out?"

"Haskel has the only motor vehicle in town—a half-ton pick-up, a minuscule contrivance less than the size of a passenger car. He makes about one trip a week down into the city for supplies and package mail. He's been the only one in or out of Granite City for five months."

It seemed incredible—more than that, unlikely, to me. "How about the granite itself? How do they ship it out?"

"It's an artificial demand

product, like diamonds," Professor Parnell said. "They stockpile it and once a year the executive offices for the company back in Nashville runs in a portable monorail railroad up the side of the mountain to take it out. That won't be for another four months, as nearly as I can find out. I may not last that long."

"How are you living?" I asked. "If they won't take your checks—"

"I do odd jobs for people. They feed me, give me a little money sometimes."

"I can see why you want to ride out with me," I said. "Haven't you ever thought of just *walking* out?"

"Fifty miles down a steep mountain road? I'm an old man, Mr. Madison, and I've gotten even older since I came to Granite City."

I nodded. "You have any papers, any identification, to back this up?"

Wordlessly, he handed over his billfold, letters, enough identification to have satisfied Allen Pinkerton or John Edgar Hoover.

"Okay," I drawled. "I'll accept your story for the moment. Now answer me the big query: Why are the good people of Granite City doing this to you? By any chance, you wouldn't happen to know of a mass fraud they are perpetrating on Manhattan-Universal?"

"I know nothing of their ethical standards," Parnell said, "but I do know that they

are absolutely *subhuman*!"

"I admit I have met likelier groups of human beings in my time."

"No, understand me. These people are literally subhuman—they are inferior to other human beings."

"Look, I know the Klan is a growing organization but I can't go along with you."

"Madison, understand me, I insist. Ethnologically speaking, it is well known that certain tribes suffer certain deficiencies due to diet, climate, et cetera. Some can't run, sing, use mathematics. The people of Granite City have the most unusual deficiency on record, I admit. Their *psionic* senses have been impaired. They are completely devoid of any use of telepathy, precognition, telekinesis."

"**B**ECAUSE they aren't supermen, that doesn't mean that they are submen," I protested. "I don't have any psionic abilities either."

"But you do!" Parnell said earnestly. "Everybody has some psionics ability, but we don't realize it. We don't have the fabulous abilities of a few recorded cases of supermen, but we have some, a trace. Granite City citizens have *no* psionic ability whatsoever, not even the little that you and I and the rest of the world have!"

"You said you were Duke University, didn't you?" I mused. "Maybe you know

by Jim Harmon

what you are talking about; I've never been sure. But these people can't suffer very much from their lack of what you call psi ability."

"I tell you they do," he said hoarsely. "We never realize it but we all have some power of precognition. If we didn't, we would have a hundred accidents a day—just as these people *do*. They can't foresee the bump in the road the way we can, or that that particular match will flare a little higher and burn their fingers. There are other things, as well. You'll find it is almost impossible to carry on a lengthy conversation with any of them—they have no telepathic ability, no matter how slight, to see through the semantic barrier. None of them can play ball. They don't have the unconscious psionic ability to influence the ball in flight. All of us can do that, even if the case of a 'Poltergeist' who can lift objects is rare."

"Professor, you mean these people are holding you here simply so you won't go out and tell the rest of the world that they are submen?"

"They don't want the world to know *why* they are psionically subnormal," he said crisply. "It's the *granite*! I don't understand why myself. I'm not a physicist or a biologist. But for some reason the heavy concentration and particular pattern of the radioactive radiation in its matrix is responsible for both inhibiting the

DANGEROUS QUARRY

genes that transmit psi powers from generation to generation *and* affecting those abilities in the present generation. A kind of psionic sterility."

"How do you know this?"

"We haven't the time for all that. But think about it. What else *could* it be? It's that granite that they are shipping all over the world, spreading the contamination. I want to stop that contamination. To the people of Granite City that means ruining their only industry, putting them all out of work. They are used to this psionic sterility; they don't see anything so bad about it. Besides, like everybody else, they have some doubts that there really are such things as telepathy and the rest to be affected."

"Frankly," I said, hedging only a little, "I don't know what to make of your story. This is something to be decided by somebody infallible—like the Pope or the President or Board Chairman of Manhattan-Universal. But the first thing to do is get you out of here. We had better get back to my car. I've got good lights to get down the mountain."

Parnell jumped up eagerly, and brushed over his china mug, staining the tabletop with brown caffeine.

"Sorry," he said. "I should have been precognizant of that. I try to stay away from the rock as much as possible, but it's getting to me."

I should have remembered something then. But, naturally, I didn't.

IT was the time when you could argue about whether it was twilight or night. In the deep dusk, the Rolls looked to be a horror-flicker giant bug. I fumbled for the keys. Then the old man made me break stride by digging narrow fingers into my bicep.

Marshal Thompson and the bulky quarry foreman, Kelvin, stepped out of the shadow of the car.

"First, throw away that gun of yours, Mr. Madison," the marshal said.

I looked at his old pistol that must have used old powder cartridges, instead of liquid propellants, and forked out my Smith & Wesson with two fingers, letting it plop at my feet.

"I'm afraid we can't let you spread the professor's lies, Mr. Madison," Thompson said.

"You planning on killing me?" I asked with admirable restraint.

"I hope not. You can have the run of the town, like the professor. I'll tell your company you are making a *thorough* investigation. Then maybe in a few weeks or months I can arrange so it looks like you were killed—someplace outside."

"We don't aim to let any crazy fanatic like Parnell ruin our business, our whole town," Kelvin interjected bitterly.

I took a pause to make abstractions on the situation. I glanced at the little man at my right. "Parnell, my car is our only chance of getting out of here. If they stop us from getting in that car, we'll be bums here on town charity for the rest of our lives."

"No!" Parnell gave a terrier yell and charged the gun in the old marshal's hand.

It seemed as if it would take me too long to recover my gun from the dirt, but almost instinctively I felt the rock in the pocket of my pants.

I scooped out the sample of granite and heaved it at the head of the old cop. But my control seemed completely shot. It missed the old man's head with an appalling gap and hit the roof of the Rolls.

Fortunately, the granite radiations didn't influence non-human-oriented factors of chance. The stone bounced off the car and struck the marshal's gun hand.

Thompson dropped his gun and I reached for mine in the dust, vaguely aware of Kelvin pumping toward me.

I straightened up. He led with his right, of all damn things. I blocked it with my gun hand and let him have my left in the midst of his solar plexus. He crumpled prettier than a paper doll.

When the dust cleared, Professor Parnell was sitting on Thompson's chest.

"Hooray," I said, "for our side."

THE people had made one mistake. They thought people would believe us.

Parnell and I broke the story to some newspaper friends of mine. They gave it a play in the mistaken belief the professor and I were starting our own cult, and the equal-time law is firm. But nobody paid any more attention to us than to the Hedonists, the Klan, the Soft-shelled Baptists or the Reformed Agnostics.

I tried to get Thad McCain to realize all the money this cursed granite was costing us in accident claims, but it wasn't easy. Manhattan-Universal owned stock in Granite City Products, Inc. And we had spent a quarter of a megabuck modernizing our offices with granite only months before.

"McCain," I said earnestly, "will you just let me feed the new data we've got from Parnell into the Actuarvac? It's infallible. See what it says."

"Very well," McCain said with a sigh. He let me feed the big brain the hypothesis I had got from Parnell. It chattered to itself for some minutes and at last flipped a card into the slot.

I dug the pasteboard out and read it. It said:

No such place as Granite City exists.

"The rock has got to the machine," I screamed. "Chief, **DANGEROUS QUARRY**

this brain is stoned. It's made a *mistake*. We *know* there is such a place."

"Nonsense, my boy," McCain said in a fatherly way. "The Actuarvac merely means that no such place as you erroneously described could possibly exist. Why don't you try one of our Hedonist revival meetings tonight?"

THINGS have got steadily worse since then.

So far nobody has made the big mistake of dropping an H-bomb on anyone, but that's probably because all the governments made so many smaller mistakes the people made the mistake (or was it?) of kicking them out for almost absolute anarchy. But the individuals are doing worse than the governments...if that's possible.

People have given up going anywhere except by foot, for the most part.

Granite City granite is still as widely disbursed and almost as highly prized as South African diamonds.

I hope we will find some way out of our current world crisis, although I can't imagine what it will be.

Meanwhile, I hope you will excuse any typographical errors. It seems as if I just can't seem to hit the right keys on my typewriter any more, as my—and all of our—psionic sterility increases.

I ask hugh—wear wall it owl end?

END