

March

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AMAZING STORIES

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EDITOR



Stories by
H.G. Wells
Jules Verne
Geoffrey Hewelcke

EXPERIMENTER PUBLISHING COMPANY, NEW YORK, PUBLISHERS OF
 RADIO NEWS - SCIENCE & INVENTION - FRENCH HUMOR - RADIO LISTENERS' GUIDE



JULES VERNE'S TOMBSTONE AT AMIENS
PORTRAYING HIS IMMORTALITY

AMAZING STORIES

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Our Cover

This month illustrates a scene in the story entitled, "Lakh-Dal, Destroyer of Souls," by W. F. Hammond, in which Lakh-Dal flashes his concentrated rays of isolated moonbeams, or "Lunacy Rays," straight in the face of the unfortunate Chinese victim.

In five minutes, the man became a hopeless lunatic, whose vacuous and grotesque mouthings were fearful to behold.

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In Our Next Issue:

THE STORY OF THE DAYS TO COME, by H. G. Wells. We are always interested when we read a story of the far future, and of the wonders that might be in store for our descendants. But when such a story is written by H. G. Wells, it becomes all the more realistic and the more absorbing. What will the world look like several hundred years hence? Read this excellent story in the next issue.

THE MIRACLE OF THE LILY, by Clare Winger Harris. Insects are and were man's greatest enemy. What if they should gain ascendancy over human beings once more? Such a thing is not nearly as impossible as it appears at first glance. At any rate, the author, who is also the third prize winner of our \$500.00 contest, weaves a fascinating story around this idea.

THE RETURN OF THE MARTIANS, by Cecil B. White. Being an astronomer, our author is well informed on the subject and in this sequel to "THE RETREAT OF MARS," he gives us a most unusual, as well as powerfully written, story, which is not too technical to hold the interest of any reader, no matter what his inclinations might be.

BARON MUENCHHAUSEN'S SCIENTIFIC ADVENTURES, by Hugo Gernsback. In the next instalments, we find our resourceful Baron, in his quest for further first-hand information about the universe, moving through interstellar space again. This time he lands on Mars.

THE ANCIENT HORROR, by Hal Grant. Pre-historic monsters are no novelty in literature, but here is one so totally different and the story is so well written that by the time you are through reading the story, you will not be at all sure that it is not entirely truth that you have read. This is an excellent tale that is sure to give you a half-hour's interesting reading.

And Others.

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LAKH-DAL DESTROYER of SOULS

by W. F. Hammond



"For God's sake, stand back!" shouted Errell. "It is dying of Bubonic plague!" The others needed no second bidding and the space cleared as if by magic.



ERRELL, do you believe in Evil Spirits?"

The question, asked in all seriousness by no less a personage than General Scott Humiston, head of the Intelligence Bureau at Washington, was addressed to his son-in-law, Professor Fiske Errell, himself perhaps the greatest criminologist the world has ever known.

The two men were seated in Errell's study at his home in Arshamomoque, Long Island, whither the General had journeyed for his usual week-end visit with Jerry, his daughter. It was late November. Outside, the wind howled fitfully, rattling the casements and shrieking through the treetops like the wailing of so many lost souls, hastening to the scene of their crimes.

It was just the night for that sort of question, Errell reflected, as he hesitated for a moment before replying. When he did speak, it was with the air of one who had chosen his words carefully.

"No, and yes," he said. "If by Evil Spirits you mean supernatural, disembodied beings capable of wreaking bodily harm or even mental distress upon people, my answer is 'No.' I do believe, however, that there are fiends in human guise, whose sole aim seems to be the downfall of mankind in general, monsters who delight in the misery and misfortune of others and who devote their whole time and energy to the accomplishment of this base desire."

"And you think these 'fiends,' as you call them, are strictly human?" persisted the General.

"Just what are you driving at?" demanded Errell, roused at last from his usual calm. "You have an object in asking these questions."

"Yes, I have," admitted the other slowly. "Certain things are transpiring today, both in this country and abroad, which can only be accounted for by the existence of a living, breathing Embodiment of Evil—a creature half-human, half-demon, whose diabolic designs and ruthless will are carried out through a secret organization, with ramifications in every part of the civilized world."

"And the headquarters of this fiend?" queried the professor.

"That is for you and me to discover, if possible," replied the General, "for I tell you frankly," and there was no mistaking the gravity of his manner—"I tell you frankly, that unless we track this evil creature to his hiding-place and crush him as we would a loathsome toad, our boasted Western civilization will collapse and we shall become a nation of raving maniacs."

"I believe you really mean it," said Errell, impressed in spite of himself by the other's manner.

"Mean it? Of course I mean it!" exclaimed Gen. Humiston, at the same time bringing his fist down on the table with a bang. "Good God, man, don't you read the papers? Haven't you read of the crim waves that are sweeping this country, the hold-ups, the gang wars, the murders and suicides? Don't you realize that insanity is increasing among us at a frightful rate, that our asylums are already overcrowded and the whole land overrun with morons?"

"Yes, to all three questions," was the sober rejoinder.

"And before coming to this country," continued the General, "this same Evil Mind exercised his devilish arts in Europe. He it was who instigated the World War, the most terrible conflict of modern times, a struggle marked not only by wholesale slaughter and world-wide suffering, but which left in its wake a trail of lawlessness, of physical violence and moral turpitude, the end of which no man may foresee."

"Ah, then you do not believe that the Kaiser was responsible for that war?"

"Only so far as he was the unconscious instrument of this Devil in human guise, this monster whose own minions speak his name shudderingly and with bated breath. He is known among them as 'Lakh-Dal,' or 'Destroyer of Souls.'"

"And his headquarters?" queried Errell for the second time.

"That is something I cannot tell you exactly, although my men are hot on his trail. We do know, however, that he came from a spot in the remote fastnesses of the Himalayas, near the sacred city of Lhasa, which, as you probably know, is not only the capital of Tibet, but also the residence of Dalai Lama, supreme head of the Lamaist hierarchy. Four great monasteries are located there, which are much frequented by Chinese and Mongols, while close at hand is the great temple of Buddha.

"The actual hiding place of Lakh-Dal, however, is believed to be on the eastern shore of Yamdoktso, a mysterious lake of intense color, framed in a background of sombre majesty. Few white men have penetrated this region and still fewer have lived to tell the tale."

"Then you don't think he is there now?" asked Errell.

"No," came the answer. The General paused a moment, then added slowly and impressively: "At this very moment he is within fifty miles of New York City."

"The devil you say!" exclaimed the professor. Then, curiously: "What makes you think so?"

"These, and these, and these," and with the words, the head of the Intelligence Bureau thrust a sheaf of newspaper clippings into his hands.

The first of them were dated a month back and came from papers along the Pacific Coast.

"Stanford Professor Suffers Mental Collapse"; "San Francisco Editor Stricken with Aphasia"; "Noted Scientist Victim of Paresis"; "Senator Blank Has Nervous Break-down"; "Vice Rampant in Hollywood."

Then came a batch from Denver dated a week later but similar in their import; these, in turn, being succeeded by still later despatches from Chicago—stories of daring hold-ups, gang-wars, revolting murders and another Herrin massacre.

Following these came more recent clippings from Cleveland papers, from those of Buffalo, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and finally New York. All told the same sordid story of mental or moral degeneracy,

IN presenting our new author to you, we just want to make one thing plain in connection with this story, and that is, if you are at all nervous, don't read it before you go to bed. If you do, we assure you you won't sleep for the rest of the night. Here is a scientific story plus—one of the few that contains good science and thrilling episodes, adventure and tense situations. It is one of those stories that will remain fresh in your memory for years to come.

of honorable careers cut short, of brutal homicides, maniacal attacks on women, of suicide and shame.

"A fairly well-blazed trail," remarked the professor, but there was no humor in his voice. "If your theory holds good, Lakh-Dal is in New York right now."

And it was at this psychological moment that the telephone bell rang.

"For you, General," announced his son-in-law, handing him the instrument.

"No. 264 speaking," came a voice over the wire. "Two high-powered cars, containing eight men dressed as Europeans, but unmistakably Chinese by birth, passed over the Queensboro bridge shortly after 7 o'clock this evening. Twenty minutes later they were picked up by No. 47 on the Jericho turnpike, headed east. At 8 o'clock No. 383 reported them en route from Patchogue to Riverhead, on your side of the island. They may be on their way to Arshamomoque, so be on your guard."

"Very good," replied the Chief. He hung up the phone and repeated what he had heard to Errell.

"Forewarned is forearmed," was that gentleman's comment.

CHAPTER II

ERRELL looked at his watch. "Eight-thirty," he said. "If your friends are coming here, it's about time they showed up."

He turned to the General as he spoke, to find that individual sitting bolt upright in an attitude of frozen horror, his eyeballs starting from their sockets and one shaking hand pointing to the wall opposite the curtained window.

Errell's quick eye followed the outstretched arm and that which he beheld might well have affrighted a stouter heart than his.

Straight up the grey side-wall there slithered and squirmed a horde of slimy, wriggling, mottled lizards each one fully six inches in length. They appeared to follow each other in an endless stream from the floor; but a quick downward glance betrayed no sign of them on the floor itself.

And then, as the two watchers sat glued to their chairs, scarcely breathing and hardly able to credit their eyes, the noxious reptiles, as if obeying the command of some unseen master, proceeded to arrange themselves in the form of living letters. Thus, from the crawling, creeping Things, there presently was evolved this message:

"THOSE WHO DARE TO OPPOSE LAKH-DAL, DIE!"

Errell was the first to recover his mental poise. With a single bound he reached the window and threw up the shade.

As he did so, the glass above his head was shattered by a bullet from the darkness beyond, the missile passing so close that a lock of his hair was severed.

"Duck!" shouted the General, suiting the action to the word.

The younger man needed no second urging. The next second he had switched off the lights, plunging the room into the blackness of night.

And in that sombre gloom still another surprise awaited them; for plainly outlined on the same side wall, but this time in letters that glowed with a

weird, unearthly phosphorescence, appeared the warning:

"A WORD TO THE WISE IS SUFFICIENT"

Under cover of this same darkness the two men slipped downstairs, Errell extinguishing the lights as they descended. Jerry, wholly unaware of their danger, was in another part of the house, putting the children to bed.

"Are you armed?" this from the General, in a sibilant whisper.

"Colt automatic," was the terse reply. "And you?"

"Same here; two of 'em. Let's go!"

Errell unlocked the rear door and they stepped out.

"Shoot first and investigate afterwards," ordered the Chief, but his advice was unnecessary. As they rounded the corner of the house they heard the roar of two big cars, tearing up the road in their flight toward New York.

"The telephone!" exclaimed Humiston. "Quick, get the sheriff at Riverhead and head them off!"

Back into the house they rushed and Errell grabbed the instrument, only to set it down the next moment with a look of disgust.

"They've cut the wire, damn them!" he cried.

"Never mind," was the consoling reply, "they've shown their hand. The next move is up to us."

They made their way back to the study and Errell snapped on the lights again. As he expected, there was no trace of their late visitors, nothing to indicate that anything out of the ordinary had transpired, save the shattered window and a spent bullet in the ceiling. General Humiston pried this out with his knife as he stood on the table.

"Luger automatic," he pronounced it, as he held the flattened object up, "such as is used in the German army; but that signifies nothing."

Errell fastened a piece of cardboard over the broken pane and the two resumed their seats before the fire.

"How do you explain the presence of those beastly reptiles?" In his excitement, the General disregarded biological distinctions.

"I don't," was the laconic answer.

"But dammit, man," protested the old soldier, "they were alive and crawling all over that wall. We both saw them!"

"Yes, and men have seen pink elephants and green monkeys," retorted the professor, "but that doesn't prove that such animals exist."

"Oh, then you think we were hypnotized?" hopefully.

"I didn't say that, either," said Errell. "I am more inclined to consider it a conjuror's trick, such as fakirs perform for the edification of credulous tourists in India."

"There's no trick about this bullet," and the General picked up the object in question.

"No," admitted the professor, "that's real enough. However," he added, more briskly, "I hardly think they will return tonight. To make assurance doubly sure, though, I'll untie Kaiser Bill, my police dog. And now let's go down to Jerry, who of course must be told nothing of all this."

The next day was Sunday. The New York papers do not reach Arshamomoque, which is 90 miles east of the metropolis, until noon. It was half after the hour when Jerry's father, who had motored to Greenport, rushed into the house, greatly excited.

In his arms he clutched half a dozen papers, all topped with screaming headlines:

"Evangelist Goes Insane While Preaching;" "Bubonic Plague Victim in New York;" "Prominent Banker Attacked by Mysterious Illness;" "War Looms With Mexico;" "U. S. Marines in Nicaragua;" "New Killer Brands Victims With Weird Emblem."

"Do you believe me NOW?" said the Bureau chief, as he thrust the papers into Errell's hands.

As he read, the rôle of professor slipped from the young man's shoulders and he became again the great criminologist—calm, resourceful, relentless, a man whose very name was fraught with terror to evildoers.

"Jerry," he said, turning to his wife, "your father and I are leaving for New York right after dinner. I may be gone several days and during my absence I want you to keep the dog with you day and night. On no account be out after dark."

"Why, Fiske dear," came the troubled reply, "what do you mean? Surely there is nothing to fear in this peaceful village."

"Nothing worse than an assassin's bullet, I hope," was the grim response, and he told her of the attempt on his life the night before; omitting, however, all mention of the grisly apparition on the wall.

"Your father will send some of his men out this afternoon to look after you," he added reassuringly. "One of them, Jim Funston, you know already."

"But you?" she questioned in sudden terror. "You will be in danger too?"

"I am always in danger, dear," he replied calmly. "The underworld does not forget and you know they have good reason to fear me."

"But this is something different!" she cried, with woman's swift intuition. "I can see it in your face. Oh promise me, both of you, that you will be careful. You are all I have."

CHAPTER III

LATE that same afternoon, General Humiston sat in his New York office on the top floor of a huge skyscraper. With him, besides Errell, were three of his trusted lieutenants, to whom he related briefly the events of the previous night.

"May I offer a suggestion?" ventured No. 264. "It is that we get in touch with No. 17 as soon as possible. He spent eight years in China and on one occasion, disguised as a Chinaman, he actually entered the sacred temple at Peking. He speaks the language fluently and over in Mott Street they believe him to be one of themselves."

"Locate him," ordered the General curtly, "and make an appointment for 9 o'clock to-morrow morning if possible." With that the conference broke up.

Errell decided to spend the night there, but instead of sharing the other's bed, he elected to sleep on the couch in the room adjoining. It was shortly after seven the next morning when he knocked on the door of the General's chamber.

There was no response. Again he knocked and listening intently, he thought he heard a muffled groan. A turn of the knob showed the door was locked on the inside. Without hesitating a second, Errell placed the muzzle of his automatic against the lock and fired. With the shattering of the lock, he pushed open the door and rushed over to the bed.

General Humiston lay stretched out, flat on his

back. His eyes were fixed in a glassy stare and his face was the color of death. He was still breathing, but there was a look on his face as of one suddenly bereft of his reason. The few words he mumbled were unintelligible.

Errell's first thought was that he had suffered a stroke. The next moment, Lakh-Dal's warning recurred to him, and into his mind an idea flashed that sent him on a run to the nearest drugstore. Here he secured a powerful medical battery with vibrating coil, and returning to the General's bedside, he affixed one electrode to the stricken man's forehead and the other against the base of the brain, after which he turned on the current.

And then he did a curious thing. Bending over the prostrate man, with his hands he made strange passes through the air, at the same time muttering certain mystic words that sounded like Chinese.

Whether it was the life-quickening vibrations of the battery, or the mysterious incantation, it is hard to say, but the patient's pallor gave way to a normal, healthy glow, the glassy stare was superseded by the light of intelligence, and the General sat up briskly in bed.

"What's all this?" he cried, as he took in the battery and wires.

"First aid stuff," replied Errell grimly. "Our friend Lakh-Dal has been busy again. When I broke into your room twenty minutes ago, you were in a condition bordering on imbecility. Another ten minutes and I would have been too late."

"Too late?" repeated his father-in-law dazedly, "Do you mean I would have been dead?"

"Worse than that," came the answer, in tones that carried conviction. "You would have been a raving maniac!"

Seasoned veteran that he was, General Humiston paled as he took in the other's words.

"But how could he get at me, way up here?" he cried. "And what is to prevent this Devil in human guise from completing his work the next time?"

"As to the first, I will tell you more later. This is neither the time nor the place for a detailed discussion. As to the latter part of your question, which is perfectly natural under the circumstances, I would suggest that you place a screen of sheet lead a quarter of an inch thick and four feet high around your bed at night, with another sheet of the same metal underneath the springs."

"I get you," said the General. "This Chinese devil has somehow discovered the long-sought Death ray."

Errell nodded. "Not only the Death ray," he replied, and his voice took on a sudden gravity, "but, if what I fear is true, he has discovered other rays even more terrible in their power for evil."

"But of that, more anon. Right at this very moment he may be exercising his devilish arts on some poor wretch, while we stand by powerless to interfere, since we know neither his identity nor his present whereabouts."

"My God, this is awful!" exclaimed Gen. Humiston, for none knew better than he, that upon his shoulders rested the responsibility of rounding up this hellish crew and crushing its evil master, as one would a poisonous snake.

"The first thing to do is to get in touch with No. 17," said Errell, taking command by tacit consent. "Get 264 on the phone." It was the fearless

enemy of the underworld speaking now, the man whose relentless energy and mysterious powers had made his name a byword among criminals of all classes.

No. 264 was located and reported that the man they wanted was in a room over Ching Foo's laundry in Mott Street. The place could be reached through a vacant house on the next street and Ching Foo himself would admit whoever was sent, through the basement door under the front steps. He also gave a pass-word.

"Just time for coffee and rolls first," said Errell and ten minutes later they were in a white-tiled restaurant, with a morning paper spread before them.

"Look!" and the General pointed to a headline.

"Strange Unrest in Chinatown. Tong Outbreak Feared." The story itself, written by someone who knew his facts, told of the arrival of a new leader from the Far East, a leader, whose power over his followers was that of life and death, and whose mission was fraught with sinister importance.

"Somebody has blabbed," commented Errell briefly. "I hate to think what his fate will be."

"And now," he continued, with a sudden change of manner, "I'm going to find No. 17. If I am not back by 11 o'clock, come after me and come prepared for trouble. I'll be dressed as a Chink."

"But you don't speak that language, do you?" asked the General, in surprise.

"I served for a whole year as a priest of the Inner Temple," was the astounding reply. "Outside of the Supreme Head of the Order, not a soul in the temple city knew me for other than that which I seemed."

"But I don't understand," said General Humiston and the head of the Intelligence Bureau looked with renewed interest at this strange son-in-law of his.

"It was during an uprising in Peking," was the reply, in short, jerky sentences. "I happened to rescue the emerald eye of the great image of Buddha from a band of half-drunken troopers. I was wounded in the scrap and it was the high priest himself who nursed me back to health. Out of gratitude for the restoration of the jewel and in order to insure my safety, he initiated me into many of the sacred rites of the Order."

General Humiston stared at him open-mouthed.

"Well, I'll be damned," he said, "and I thought all this time that you got your dope from books, that you were one of these self-taught detectives! No wonder the yeggs say you bear a charmed life!"

CHAPTER IV.

AT precisely 9 o'clock a typical Chinese dope-seller might have been slinking along the sidewalk in front of the vacant house at the rear of Ching Foo's laundry. Every now and then he glanced furtively behind him, as if at any moment he feared the heavy hand of the law might descend upon his cringing shoulder.

One last "look-see" and he vanished from sight as if the earth had swallowed him. Then came a peculiar knock at the basement door.

"17-264," said the stranger, in purest Chinese. Ching Foo unlocked the door. If he felt any surprise at the sound of his own tongue, his impassive, mask-like countenance gave no sign of it. Silently he led the way through the basement, across the narrow courtyard at the rear and up a dark stairway to the room over his laundry.

A soft knock, thrice repeated, and a voice from within uttered the Chinese equivalent for "Enter."

Errell dismissed his guide and stepped into the room. He found himself facing a man perhaps forty years old, dressed like himself in flowing eastern garb and seated at a small table so that he faced the door. One hand rested carelessly in the open drawer, but Errell knew it clutched a loaded revolver.

For a moment neither spoke. Then, low but distinct and seemingly coming from within the room itself, came the sweet, muffled sound of temple bells; a cloud of perfumed incense spread over them, and upon Errell's silken coat a faint blue circle appeared. Within this circle, in deepest red, shone the symbol of China's highest priesthood.

And then from his lips, in the singsong tones peculiar to that cult, came the words: "Buddha's blessing be upon thee."

No. 17 stared. Where had he last heard those words? Ah, yes, he remembered now. It was in the sacred temple of the Inner City at Peking. He closed his eyes. Again he saw the prostrate forms of the worshippers, packed closely together and giving off that indescribable odor characteristic of China; again he heard the weird chanting of the priests and the solemn booming of the great bell of the temple; again the pungent incense assailed his nostrils. Even the face of the head priest bore a strange resemblance to this man who stood before him. With an effort he roused himself and spoke:

"Who are you and what is your mission?" he asked, and there was that in his voice which showed he was not to be trifled with.

"Fiske Errell," came the reply in English, and with the words the Eastern air dropped from him and except for his clothes and the yellow tint so skilfully applied to his skin, there was no trace of Chinese about him. "General Humiston sent me to you. What do you know of Lakh-Dal?"

No. 17 stepped silently to the little window and looked out; then went with cat-like tread to the door, which he opened quickly and noiselessly to peer up and down the passageway, before closing it and locking it again.

"For God's sake be careful how you mention that name here," he warned. "His spies are everywhere and he seems gifted with supernatural power. This very night he is to visit his wrath upon Fu Yung, the poor devil who spilled that story to the papers last night."

"Do you know where this unholy punishment is to take place? And is there any way we can manage to be present?" asked Errell.

"What do you call yourself in Chinese?" asked the other, a speculative look in his eye.

"Hop Sing," came the reply in that tongue. "I peddle opium from my room in Pell Street."

"And I am Hip Leong," said No. 17. "I am a waiter in Sam Lee's chop suey place across the street. There is a secret passage from the kitchen to a series of rooms in the house next door. In one of these rooms Lakh-Dal has established his temporary headquarters and from this room he issues his commands. The large room on the next floor is fitted up like a council chamber and it is here that the clan to-night will see how Lakh-Dal deals with those who disobey him. There will be at least seventy present and hardly any one of two there will know

the other. I can give you the password that will admit you, but after that you must look out for yourself. You are taking a frightful risk."

"What time shall I come to Sam Lee's?" Errell's tones were as cool as if they were discussing the weather.

"They have excellent chow mein there. You might try a dish of it at, say, 8 o'clock."

"I'll be there," was the prompt reply. "And now the password and any further details you think necessary."

"The word for tonight is "DEATH." Every member, before entering the council chamber, dons a black robe and cowl, with a black handkerchief covering the lower half of the face. The robes and cowls hang in the anteroom. The handkerchief you bring with you."

"Thanks. Now I'll lay my plans. If anything goes wrong tonight, Lakh-Dal will think Hell has broken loose; but I am not yet ready to strike the final blow."

Errell had risen as he spoke. No. 17 pressed a button beneath the table. Ching Foo appeared in answer to the summons and without a word escorted the visitor to the basement door, through which he had entered.

Back to his old hang-out went the fearless criminologist. When he emerged, twenty minutes later, it was as a tough-looking specimen, evidently a seaman still groggy from a night with the pipe. The man boarded a crosstown car and entered a resort on West Street frequented by longshoremen and seafaring men. He nodded to the proprietor as an old acquaintance and passed through a rear room in which sat half a dozen Lascars drinking and shaking dice. One of these swarthy fellows arose and lurched after him, closing the door behind him as he entered the smaller room further back.

"Did you find No. 17?" he asked, after making sure no one could overhear them.

"Yes," answered Errell. "Tell General H. to fill up a sightseeing bus with a score of his best men and come to Sam Lee's chop suey house in Mott Street at 8 o'clock tonight as up-state hicks on a trip to Chinatown."

"No. 17 is known there as Hip Leong, one of the waiters. We are going to be present at a council meeting in the house next door presided over by Lakh-Dal himself. There will be at least 60 others there and the time is set for 9 o'clock. If anything goes wrong, I will fire three shots in quick succession."

"You sure have got your nerve with you," said No. 264 admiringly. "I'd hate to trust my head in that den of wolves."

Errell laughed—the laugh of a man absolutely devoid of fear.

"Well, I must be going," he said. "I've got a lot to do between now and 8 o'clock tonight."

Together they left the speak-easy, only to separate at the next corner. No. 264 made his way by a circuitous route back to Headquarters, while the other returned to his room on the East Side.

CHAPTER V

THERE was an air of suppressed excitement in Sam Lee's brilliantly lighted restaurant that night. Beneath a multitude of Chinese lanterns the tables were filled to capacity. There was a

crowd of sightseers among them; for one thing, a busload of country chaps under the tutelage of a "rubberneck" conductor, whose frequent trips to that quarter had made his face familiar to the residents of Mott Street.

Nevertheless a keen observer might have noticed, as the hour of 9 o'clock drew near, that here and there a silent figure would rise from one of the tables and unobtrusively make his way to the lavatory which adjoined the kitchen. That none of them returned was a fact which apparently escaped the notice of the other diners.

On the surface everything seemed normal, but beneath the stolid exteriors of the Chinese frequenters of the place and the expression of bland innocence on their yellow faces, there ran an undercurrent of mounting excitement, a sense of mystery and nervous apprehension bordering on actual fear.

Presently, at a signal from Hip Leong, the individual known as Hop Sing left his chair and, like the others who had preceded him, glided silently to the lavatory, thence to the kitchen and through a rear door, which gave on to a gloomy passageway. With the closing of this door behind him, Errell found himself in utter darkness.

Which way should he go? A step to the right might plunge him through an open shaft to the cellar, while a deadly knife-thrust or the strangler's cord might await a false step in the other direction.

He flattened himself against the wall beside the door and stood motionless, every sense alert and ears strained for the slightest sound.

And then the door through which he had entered opened again to admit a second silent figure. The newcomer hesitated not a second, but even before the door had swung to, advanced straight ahead to what appeared to be a blank wall.

Against this wall he knocked softly—three times, then once, then twice—when to Errell's amazement, the whole wall, for a distance of ten feet or more, raised itself from the floor to a height of four feet while the man passed under it, after which it dropped back again, all without the slightest sound.

A moment later and Errell gave the same signal. Again the wall slid up and as he ducked beneath the barrier he noticed that the whole section was built of sheet steel and worked on roller bearings.

Looking about him in his new surroundings, he found himself in a small ante-room, around the sides of which were rows of hooks, from which depended the black robes of which No. 17 had spoken. Quickly he donned one of these and fastened his black handkerchief over his face below the eyes. Then, with a reassuring pat on the automatic in its shoulder holster, he advanced boldly to the door with the peephole and whispered the dread password.

At once the heavy door of reinforced steel swung open and he passed through into a room approximately 60 feet long by 30 feet wide. Along the sides and at one end were double rows of chairs. At the further end was a raised platform and on this platform a massive chair to serve as a throne.

A tall cabinet equipped with a luminous dial and several projecting knobs stood at one end of the platform. At least that was Errell's first impression, but as his eyes grew more accustomed to the semi-darkness of the council-room he perceived, that what he had first thought was a dial, was in reality a circular opening in the face of the cabinet, through which

streamed a weird, ghostly light from some unseen course.

But that which gripped the imagination and added grim realism to the scene, was a second chair on the platform, directly facing the cabinet—a chair which was in every respect a replica of its grisly prototype in the death chamber at Sing Sing, save for the absence of connecting wires.

A bell tinkled in the distance; there was an expectant hush and then the black curtains behind the throne parted and Lakh-Dal stood before them. After him came two black-robed figures holding in their grasp the struggling, writhing body of a Chinaman, from whose twisted lips poured forth a stream of frantic appeals which ended in a piercing shriek, ere a rough hand was clapped over his mouth.

Still resisting desperately, the wretched man was thrust with brutal force into the fatal chair; his arms and legs were quickly strapped to the frame and an iron clamp such as photographers used in olden times affixed to his head in such a way as to hold that member rigid.

Amid a breathless silence, Lakh-Dal advanced to the edge of the platform. He was dressed in a long flowing robe of black silk, across the front of which was emblazoned a yellow dragon. Beneath this emblem were several mystic characters whose meaning Errell, from his seat, could not decipher. It was the man's face which held his attention, for if ever the Devil looked through the eyes of a living man, that man was Lakh-Dal.

He spoke, and every man present leaned forward to catch his words.

"I have called you here to show you how Lakh-Dal deals with traitors. First, I will destroy his soul, and after that his living body!"

At a signal, one of his underlings shoved the cabinet up to an open window, through which shone the rays of a full moon. The back of the cabinet was then thrown open, so that the moonbeams poured directly into it. At the same instant all the lights in the council chamber were switched off, plunging the room into the blackness of night.

And then, full on the face of the man in the chair there flashed a dazzling light from the cabinet—a light of concentrated brightness whose flat white was tinged with an unnatural shade of blue.

"Lunar rays?" questioned Errell. "No, *Lunacy rays!* This Chinese devil has isolated the rays which cause dogs to bay at the moon—the rays which turn those of weak minds into imbeciles and cause those already insane to become raving maniacs!"

The screams of the doomed man changed to a howl of pure anguish as he heard his fate pronounced. He frothed at the mouth and his muscles threatened to burst the restraining straps. Then, realizing that further resistance was useless, he gave a shuddering moan and closed his eyes, only to open them again with a yell of terror as the light from the cabinet fell full on his face.

And then ensued a scene which those who witness it were never to forget.

Under the malign influence of those mysterious rays, the man's face changed horribly. The light of intelligence faded from his eyes and his lower jaw sagged weakly. In five minutes those watching beheld a hopeless lunatic, whose vacuous grimaces and grotesque mouthings were fearful to behold.

Again the lights were turned on and again Lakh-Dal held up his hand to command attention.

"You have seen. Look again!"

At a word from their master, his two helpers advanced with drawn knives toward the figure in the chair and slashed away the clothing so as to expose the naked body of the mumbling Thing which had been a man.

The cabinet was wheeled away from the window and the shades tightly drawn. When it was placed in position, ten feet from the chair, the room was again plunged into utter darkness. Once more those who looked on gripped the arms of their chairs and eyes that glittered strangely peered fearfully from above the black masks.

Again the light streamed forth from the cabinet, changing rapidly from yellow to green, through the various shades of blue to a pale violet and then disappeared in ultra-violet.

Probably, of all those present, Errell was the only one who recognized the effects of these as the effects of the actinic rays, by means of which Nature produces chemical changes. But even he was unprepared for that which followed. It was gruesome and horrible beyond all belief; for again the rays from the cabinet changed, this time giving a weird glow, which Errell mentally classified as due to super-ultra-violet rays—those still further beyond the ultra-violet in the solar spectrum. What the function of these rays was, he was soon to know.

Under the faint light (if it could be called light) which now issued from the infernal contrivance, the wretched man's body appeared to shrivel and the skin to fall away. At the same time the atmosphere in the council chamber became permeated with the putrid odor of decaying flesh, the foul stench of a moldering corpse.

And then, to the horror of those who watched and, causing them to draw in their breath with a hissing sound clearly audible in that awful hush, a grinning skeleton stared at them through sightless sockets. Even this faded away and complete blackness reigned.

When the lights in the hall flashed up again, the platform was empty. Lakh-Dal had vanished behind the thick curtains. The meeting was at an end. Those who had come in answer to their Master's summons, hastened away, shaken to their very souls by this demonstration of his power.

CHAPTER VI.

AMONG late arrivals at Sam Lee's restaurant the next evening was a roughly dressed seaman, somewhat the worse for liquor, who, with more or less difficulty, made his way to a table in one of the side booths and slumped heavily into a chair without bothering to remove his cap.

Curiously enough, this table was one of those served by Hip Leong, the waiter, who came presently to take his order.

"Gimme a bowl of chop suey and some coffee," growled the stranger, in tones that could be heard throughout the room. Then, in a low voice: "That was some show he pulled off last night, Seventeen!"

Neither by look nor manner did No. 17 betray himself, although it is doubtful if in his whole life he had been more surprised. He filled Errell's glass with water, then shuffled out to the kitchen, from which he presently returned with the steaming dish

of chop suey. This he placed before his strange customer.

The latter slapped down a heavy silver dollar on the table.

"Keep the change," he growled again, and began to eat.

Hip Leong picked up the coin, but not before his quick eye had glimpsed the folded paper beneath it, which he deftly palmed. In the seclusion of the washroom, he unfolded this paper and read as follows:

"Where is Lakh-Dal tonight?"

He turned the paper over and wrote rapidly for a minute. When, a few minutes later, he removed the plates from the table, he slipped the paper under Errell's hand. On it he had written:

"Opium joint over Lee Yung's tea store across street. Sliding panel between second and third booths. Don't know password."

"Good stuff!" growled the stranger again as he rose unsteadily to his feet; but whether he referred to the food or to the information conveyed to him by the waiter, there was none to say.

Shortly before midnight, the same half-drunken sailor stumbled into Lee Yung's store and pulling out a roll of bills, closed his eyes meaningly, and muttered "Smoke."

Such visitors were by no means uncommon at that hour of the night and after one quick glance, the old Chinaman rose from his seat back of the counter and beckoned him to follow. Through a rear room they went, and up a narrow stairway, at the top of which was a locked door.

The opening of this door, in response to Lee Yung's signal, revealed a typical opium layout—the berths being arranged in tiers along both sides of the room. The partly drawn curtains showed most of them to be occupied by sleepy-eyed users of the drug, both men and women and of various nationalities.

By good fortune (or was it "good"?) the newcomer found himself assigned to booth No. 3, right next to the secret panel. Presently a little stand was placed beside him, on which were a pipe and enough of the drug for several "pills." The curtain was then partly drawn and he was left to his own devices.

The first thing Errell did, on finding himself alone in his booth, was to light the tiny bowl and blow a cloud of smoke through the stem of the pipe to give the impression of smoking. He then drew a dictaphone from his coarse blouse, pressed the transmitter firmly against the wall at the head of his berth, and held the receiver to his ear.

Hardly had he done so when there came the sound of padded footsteps, a soft tapping on the secret panel and the Chinese equivalent of "Ich dien," or, in English, "I serve." This was followed by the faint noise of a sliding panel, the sound of retreating footsteps, then silence.

Replacing the dictaphone in his blouse, Errell raised himself cautiously on one arm and looked out.

The room was hazy with smoke, the pungent fumes of the drug making it difficult for him to refrain from sneezing. As far as he could determine, all the other patrons of the place were either asleep or in a condition bordering on insensibility. Even the pock-marked attendant had taken advantage of the lateness of the hour and the condition of his

"guests" to light up his own pipe and he sat with his back against the door, his eyes closed in poppy slumber.

Errell's next act was to remove his own shoes and to coolly appropriate a pair of Chinese slippers with felt soles from the next booth. Holding his pipe in one hand, as an excuse for seeking a new supply of the weed in case the attendant should awaken, he approached the secret panel and tapped softly. He waited a second and then uttered the password, although he had detected no response.

To his surprise and gratification, the panel slid open at once, thereby admitting him to a narrow hallway lighted by a single lamp. There was not a soul in sight, yet as he stepped across the threshold the panel closed silently behind him in sinister fashion. Unconsciously he tightened his hold on the automatic in his right hand.

A narrow streak of light showed beneath a door at the far end of the hall, but the room this side of it seemed dark. He tried the knob. It yielded to his touch and the door swung open.

And then, from out of the blackness which surrounded him—a blackness which seemed vibrant with menace—something soft and clinging dropped over his head and shoulders, the sickish-sweet odor of chloroform assailed his nostrils and he felt himself slipping—down, down, down into a bottomless pit.

When he awoke, it was to find himself bound hand and foot, in a chair which he realized to his horror was the identical one occupied on the previous night by the unfortunate victim of Lakh-Dal's wrath.

At the same moment, a mocking laugh sounded behind him.

"And so the great Professor Errell condescends to honor me with his presence!" With the words, Lakh-Dal stepped into view.

His voice was that of a cultured scholar, a gentleman of high rank, but the eyes which blazed from that mask-like face were those of a friend incarnate!

There was something so malevolent, so merciless, so devilish, in their gaze that involuntarily Errell shuddered; but when he made answer, it was in words of cold contempt that stung like a lash.

"False disciple of Light—renegade priest who forsook the teachings of Buddha to sell thy soul to the Devil in thy quest of the occult—thy time is short. Even now the temple bells are tolling and the arms of Charon reach out for thee."

It was the voice of a high priest speaking, a priest of the Inner Temple in which Lakh-Dal had once served, and at the words Lakh-Dal cringed like a whipped cur. Then the Evil within him regained the ascendancy and his lips curled in a sneer.

"How about yourself?" he jeered. "Your own condition would seem to leave something to be desired."

Suddenly his manner changed. He came close to Errell's chair and when he spoke again it was in words surcharged with venom and hate.

"Thou fool!" he hissed. "Knowest thou why I have permitted thee to creep into my house like a common thief, when I might have struck thee dead? It is because I would use thy knowledge of chemistry in my work."

"Not a chance!" The retort came like the snap of a whip.

"Sayest thou so?" mocked the other. "We shall see."

He clapped his hands and at the sound two huge Chinamen stepped from behind the screen where they had been concealed.

"Bring him into the laboratory," commanded Lakh-Dal, leading the way.

The first thing that Errell noticed, when they were in the other room, was the morning sun streaming in through the east window.

"Then I must have been unconscious for seven or eight hours," he reasoned. "That means that No. 17 must have communicated with the General ere this and help is on the way."

With this comforting thought to cheer him, he looked about him with renewed interest. The room was, as Lakh-Dal had said, a laboratory. There were rows and rows of test tubes, retorts, crucibles, bottles containing variously colored chemicals, a set of dissecting instruments, hypodermic syringes and other devices for chemical and medical research.

On one end of a long table stood a wire cage three feet long by two in width, with a sliding door over the top. Inside this cage were two huge sewer rats, backed into a corner and teeth bared for a desperate fight for life.

At Lakh-Dal's command, his helpers lifted this cage to the floor and wheeled it into position three feet from the mysterious cabinet, which had previously been shoved up to the now open window, so that the sun's rays streamed through the aperture in front directly into the cage in which the rats were huddled.

LAKH-DAL stepped to the cabinet and began twirling the knobs. As he did so, the solar rays changed from bright yellow to orange, then to red and then to a still deeper red.

"Infra-red rays," said Errell aloud, his scientific interest aroused.

"Precisely," was the answer. "But there are other rays with which perhaps you are less familiar, such as these—" and he gave the knob a further twist.

The color changed from dark red to black, tinged with red, and in the twinkling of an eye the two rats had disappeared, leaving but a little heap of ashes.

Lakh-Dal re-set the cabinet knobs and closed the window. He then proceeded to separate a quantity of fuller's earth into a number of little piles, perhaps two-score in number. Unfastening the wire cage from its base, he lifted it and carefully scooped up the little pile of ashes.

While Errell looked on in puzzled wonderment, he proceeded to deposit a tiny portion of these ashes upon each little heap of fuller's earth, then reached up and took down a glass-stoppered bottle labeled "Cocytin."

Only then did Errell begin dimly to suspect what the other was up to.

Lakh-Dal removed the stopper and shook out a minute quantity on to the little mounds before him, stirring them gently at the same time.

Nothing happened.

Errell gave vent to a derisive laugh. His merriment was short-lived, however.

Without deigning to notice the interruption, Lakh-Dal produced a second and much smaller cabinet, which he held in his hands as one would a bullseye Kodak. He then pulled down the shades over the window, leaving the room in semi-darkness.

"Going to photograph 'em?" asked Errell sarcastically.

Still without replying, the man from China made some further adjustments on the camera-like box and pointed it directly toward the first of the little mounds of earth.

And then a strange and fearsome thing happened, a thing which turned Errell's scoffing to wonder and his spine to ice; for even as he leaned forward in fascinated horror, the handful of dirt began to quiver and squirm, to flop about from side to side, and finally to assume the flabby outlines of a new-born rat! And then, as the mysterious rays continued to play upon it, the loathsome thing gathered strength and, lifting itself up on its legs, started to run about.

The yellow devil who had created it seized the creature by the back of the neck and dropped it into the wire cage. Again and again he repeated the same process until the cage was filled with some forty of these "synthetic" rats, climbing up on the wires and biting and snapping at each other.

Then, and only then, did Lakh-Dal see fit to speak, which he did in faultless English.

"What you have seen," he said, "shows you that I have mastered the problem of creating life from inanimate matter. I could just as easily have reduced you to ashes and raised up a thousand men in your stead.

"It has been said that life is but a form of vibration. This little box, which in your ignorance you assumed to be a camera, is a machine for utilizing the Millikan, or Cosmic rays. These rays vibrate faster than any other rays known to science and consequently have the shortest wavelength, there being, in fact, 635,000,000,000,000 of them to the inch!

"Buddha has said that man is made of dust. I go a step further and say 'of dust and cocytin,' which you saw me put together just now. With all the necessary ingredients present, it remained only to release the trigger of potentiality, which I did by means of the Cosmic ray."

"But why select rats?" queried Errell, scientific interest for the moment overshadowing personal fears.

"Ah," replied Lakh-Dal in silken accents, "that is where you come in."

He lifted a cloth and revealed a small cage containing but a single rat, but a rat so swollen and diseased as to make it even more hideously repulsive than its mates.

"Bubonic plague!" announced Lakh-Dal grimly, an evil smile playing over his yellow face. "It will be your pleasant task to inoculate these other rats with serum from this beauty."

"And then what?" asked Errell, knowing what the answer would be.

"And then I shall release them in congested quarters of the city and provide you with a fresh supply."

"I'll see you in hell first!" shouted Errell.

"Even that might be arranged," retorted the other, with a Mephistophelian leer, "but how about your wife and little boy?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, only that in case you refuse to obey me, I shall have to find means to persuade you. Would you enjoy seeing your son an idiot and your wife a raving maniac?"

"You devil! Kill me and be done with it."

"No, that would be a waste of good material,"

and Lakh-Dal grinned sardonically. "With proper handling you will make a good servant."

Then, with rising anger: "Unless you have completed this task ere the sun goes down, tomorrow morning will find your wife and baby in the condition I have described."

Errell groaned and bowed his head. And at that very moment there came the crash of splintering wood and No. 17 hurled himself into the room, closely followed by General Humiston and a dozen Secret Service operatives.

Taken wholly by surprise, the arch conspirator and his two husky assistants were seized and bound without a shot being fired. The straps which held Errell captive were released and he was free to stretch his cramped limbs.

"Thank God we got here in time!" cried the General, seizing his hand and pumping it vigorously. "And now, what?" he asked.

Errell glanced around. "Take those two fellows away," he said, "and leave me alone with Lakh-Dal for ten minutes. I have a message for him. First, however, bind him securely to that stool," pointing to the object in question.

His orders were carried out; Errell retired behind a screen. When he reappeared, a few minutes later, Lakh-Dal gasped in amazement, for it was a high priest of the Inner Temple that confronted him, even to the secret emblem which shone through the silken robe.

At the same moment came the soft tones of temple bells and the smell of incense. When Errell next spoke, it was in the solemn voice of one intoning the service for the dead.

"Miserable wretch," he said, facing the cowering man on the stool, "thou who has foresworn thy sacred vows in order to serve the Devil, the Great Master hath come hither to pronounce judgment upon thee and the bells toll thy doom. Listen!"

And then, apparently from a spot directly over the head of the doomed man, there came the sound of another voice—sonorous, commanding, majestic:

"Lakh-Dal, meanest and most contemptible of all men, in that thou hast defiled the temple of thy soul and hath prostituted it to the service of Baal, woe be unto you! Thy life is forfeit to Buddha and even now bony hands reach forth to tear the spirit from thy body and bear it away to everlasting torment."

At the last words, Lakh-Dal shrieked aloud. His head wobbled, he frothed at the mouth and the light of reason forsook his eyes. The man had become a hopeless idiot!

Errell smiled grimly. "So much for ventriloquism," he remarked.

It was while he was behind the screen, changing back to his former attire, that the door burst open again and a woman rushed in, followed closely by General Humiston and the others. She was dressed in the garb worn by Chinese women for their dead, her face was pale and disheveled and in one hand she carried a two-edged sword such as those worn by the Samurai.

"Aiyeh! Aiyeh!" she shrieked, and before anyone could stop her she had rushed up to the gibbering Lakh-Dal, had lifted the heavy weapon in her two hands and with one slashing blow had completely severed the wretched man's head from his body.

Then, while those who watched stood paralyzed with horror, the crazed woman placed the hilt of

her weapon on the floor, threw herself forward upon the sharp point of the blade and fell dead beside the headless body.

"It was her husband whom Lakh-Dal executed in the Council chamber night before last," said Errell pityingly. "Leave the bodies as they are until the coroner comes. Meantime I have other work to do. Two of you men back that cabinet up to the window, and you (pointing to two others) lift that cage of rats to the table in front of it."

He pushed up the window, to permit the sun to shine directly into the cabinet, then twirled the knobs as Lakh-Dal had done. Again the light changed from yellow to darkest red and then to still darker, and to the utter amazement of the spectators, the rats which but a moment before had been squealing and jumping about vanished, and only a thin layer of ashes on the floor of the cage remained.

"How about this fellow?" asked 264, pointing to the swollen rat in the smaller cage.

"For God's sake, stand back!" shouted Errell, "it is dying of Bubonic plague!"

The others needed no second bidding and the space before the little cage cleared as if by magic.

Errell took the precaution to don a pair of rubber gloves before lifting the cage gingerly to a position in front of the cabinet. A twist of the knob and the mass of corruption within the cage was reduced to ashes. Not content with this, he made assurance doubly sure by immersing both cage and contents in a strong solution of carbolic acid.

His next step was to empty the contents of every vial into the open sink and to smash the receptacles, after which he seized one of the heavy axes, with which his rescuers had forced their way through the door at the head of the stairs, and with a few vigorous blows he demolished the accursed cabinet.

The smaller box, with which Lakh-Dal had controlled the Millikan, or Cosmic ray, he took with him for future study. By this time, the coroner had arrived, and General Humiston gave a satisfactory explanation of their presence and that of the two bodies.

CHAPTER VII.

IT was on the Saturday evening succeeding the events of the previous chapter that Professor Errell, seated once more in his study at Arshamomoque, related to General Humiston the full story of his experiences and the means he had employed to accomplish the downfall of Lakh-Dal, that archfiend and enemy of the white race.

Jerry, who sat close beside her husband as he talked, shuddered and clung to him involuntarily when he described the tragic fate that befell Fu Yung in the Council chamber.

"But what was that cabinet, anyway?" asked the General, "who had followed every word of the recital with the utmost interest.

"It was a refinement of the modern spectroscope, which Lakh-Dal had perfected to a degree beyond anything as yet known to science," was the reply. "As you probably know, when sunlight is passed through a glass prism, it breaks up into rays of different wavelengths. These rays, viewed through the spectroscope, appear as bands of lines and colors, one above the other in the following order: Violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red. For this reason they are known as the prismatic colors, and
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for a long time these rays were believed to comprise all the rays into which sunlight may be resolved.

"Certain phenomena which occurred in Nature, however, seemed to require still other rays to account for them, and finally, in 1898, Dr. Roentgen discovered the ray which has been named after him. This ray, commonly referred to as the X-ray, he found far beyond the violet ray, and in what is termed the ultra-violet zone.

"Within the past year still another ray has been discovered—this, too, in the ultra-violet zone. By means of this new ray it is possible to project a picture through even a brick wall, the ray meanwhile remaining invisible until it is intercepted by a fluorescent screen or some other fluorescent substance. It was doubtless by the use of this ray that Lakh-Dal conveyed his first warning to us in this very room.

"I'm glad to hear that!" said the General, with a sigh of relief. "I thought I 'had 'em' when I saw those creeping lizards on the wall."

"Better lay off that bootleg stuff," warned Errell in mock seriousness, then resumed:

"As commonly portrayed, the color bands in the solar spectrum are arranged one above the other, as before stated. Now let us conceive them as being arranged about the circumference of a circle, thus:

"This same circle may also be used to mark not only the earth's daily revolution on its axis and its yearly sweep around the sun, but the cycle of human existence as well; for if we accept the theory that 'Vibration is Life,' the inevitable corollary is that 'Inertia is Death.'

"Mark the coincidences: At the top of this mystic circle is violet, the color with the shortest wavelength and most rapid vibration of the prismatic hues, and likewise the color most characteristic of electricity, which is itself closely allied with life. Since Spring is Nature's resurrection time, this same position is occupied by the Vernal Equinox. It is also the logical position for Dawn, which marks the beginning of the new day.

"As life progresses to its fullest, it is accompanied by a gradual slowing up in the rate of vibration and a corresponding increase in wavelength. Hence, we find the zenith of Life midway in the color scheme—green, flanked by blue and yellow. This is as it should be, too, for above us is the blue sky, around us the green of vegetation and over all a flood of yellow sunshine. The same position marks Noon, when the sun is at its zenith, and the Summer Solstice, when plant and vegetable life is most abundant.

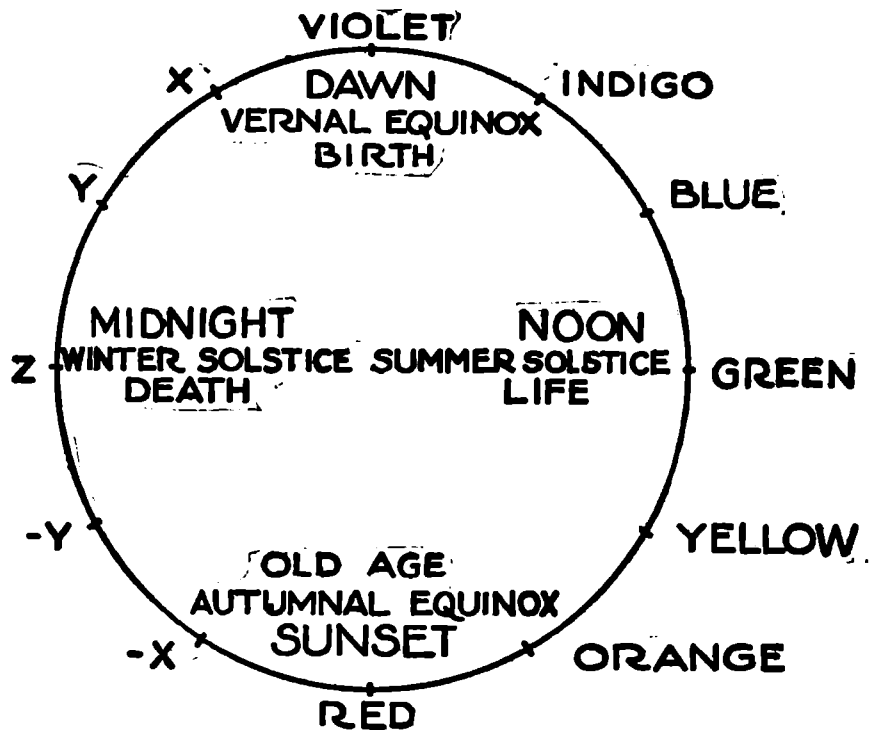
"With a continued slowing up in the rate of vibration, we come to old age, which is the sunset of life, and to the setting sun. Red, which illumines the western sky at the close of day, is also the color most lavishly used by Nature in her Fall painting, and it is therefore natural to look for the Autumnal Equinox in this position at the bottom of the circle.

"Probably you are wondering, General, what all this has to do with Lakh-Dal; but I am coming to that presently. Let us now continue on our journey around the circle. Once we pass the point marked 'Red,' we enter the region of mystery and hidden rays, of darkness and of Death. Vibration, which has been continually slowing up, ceases entirely at the point marked 'Z' and so we can expect Death at the zero point. This also marks the Winter Solstice and the hour of midnight, when the blackness is most intense.

"There is but one stage left. As we pass out of the 'Z' zone, we find ourselves entering the region of the ultra-violet, with its hint of another dawn, the approach of Spring and the faint stirrings of new life.

"All that is occult and mysterious, both in Nature and in human experience, lies within this region of the invisible rays, this unknown region, which only now we are just beginning to explore, and which holds within its dark recesses the key to all mystery, even to that of life itself!

"It is my belief that in some way Lakh-Dal stumbled upon the secret of these rays and, realizing their potency as a destructive agent, set out at once to indulge his lust for evil and his hatred of man-



Analysis of light, time and life referred to wave frequencies.

kind in general. As a first step, and acting, I suppose, on the theory that 'Whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad,' he planned to destroy our whole western civilization.

"This he meant to accomplish in three ways: First, by depriving our leaders of their reason and thereby bringing about a condition of chaos; second, by unloosing a horde of murderers, thugs and moral lepers to work their will upon a helpless and defenseless people; and finally, by wiping us out entirely by means of his plague-infected synthetic rats, released simultaneously in all parts of the country by his agents."

A horrified silence followed the professor's concluding words, broken finally by the General, upon the tip of whose tongue the question had been trembling:

"What about your own demonstration of occult power?" he asked, "the temple bells, the holy in-

cense, the priestly garb? How do you explain these?"

"My oath to Buddha and his high priest prevents me from answering that question," responded Errell gravely, "but this I will say: There was nothing supernatural about it."

And with that the subject was dropped.

THE END