

Fantasy, Mystery, Thrills

# Weird Tales

DECEMBER

25¢

NOW

15¢

LORDS OF THE ICE  
a war-mad world:

By David H. Keller



GLAMOUR By SEABURY QUINN  
a tale of modern witchcraft:

and other uncanny stories

A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

# Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U. S. PATENT OFFICE

**Volume**  
**34**

**CONTENTS FOR**  
**DECEMBER, 1939**

**Number**  
**6**

<b>Cover Design</b> . . . . .	<b>Hannes Bok</b>	
<i>"Lords of the Ice": horrors of a war-mad world</i>		
<b>Glamour</b> . . . . .	<b>Seabury Quinn</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>An intriguing story of modern witchcraft</i>		
<b>The Considerate Hosts</b> . . . . .	<b>Thorp McClusky</b>	<b>22</b>
<i>The man and his wife told their guest that they were ghosts</i>		
<b>Lords of the Ice</b> . . . . .	<b>David H. Keller</b>	<b>30</b>
<i>A war-mad world, and a strange city in the Antarctic</i>		
<b>Nymph of Darkness</b> . . . . .	<b>C. L. Moore and Forrest J. Ackerman</b>	<b>49</b>
<i>A tale of Northwest Smith and a weird woman who appealed to him for help</i>		
<b>Night Gaunts</b> . . . . .	<b>H. P. Lovecraft</b>	<b>59</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>Escape from Tomorrow</b> . . . . .	<b>Frank Belknap Long, Jr.</b>	<b>60</b>
<i>A tale of the distant future—an artificial brain rebels against its enslavement</i>		
<b>Mannikins of Horror</b> . . . . .	<b>Robert Bloch</b>	<b>71</b>
<i>A story of dreadful doom, and tiny artificial men who actually lived</i>		
<b>"Deep Night, Dark Night"</b> . . . . .	<b>Virgil Finlay</b>	<b>79</b>
<i>Pictorial interpretation of an excerpt from Shakespeare's "King Henry VI"</i>		
<b>Dead Man's Schooner</b> . . . . .	<b>Andre Linville</b>	<b>80</b>
<i>An arresting tale of a radio broadcast, and a sailor who played the Flute of Death</i>		
<b>Bacchante</b> . . . . .	<b>Clark Ashton Smith</b>	<b>84</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>King of the World's Edge (Conclusion)</b> . . . . .	<b>H. Warner Munn</b>	<b>85</b>
<i>Saga of a weird voyage to America in King Arthur's time</i>		
<b>Weird Things</b> . . . . .	<b>Vivian Stratton</b>	<b>111</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>Weird Story Reprint:</b>		
<b>The Copper Bowl</b> . . . . .	<b>Major George Fielding Eliot</b>	<b>112</b>
<i>A grim tale of torture—from an early issue of WEIRD TALES</i>		
<b>The Eyrie</b> . . . . .		<b>119</b>
<i>Our readers exchange opinions</i>		

Published monthly by Weird Tales, 9 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N. Y. Entered as second class matter September 24, 1938, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y. Single copies, 15 cents. *Subscription rates:* One year in the United States and possessions, Cuba, Mexico, South America, Spain, \$1.50; Canada, \$1.75; elsewhere, \$2.00. English Office: Charles Laveil, Limited, 4 Clements Inn, Strand, London W.C.2, England. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

Copyright 1939, by Weird Tales  
COPYRIGHTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.



**WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH**



A beautiful woman sinking in the golden flood and under it the words: "Thus died the world."

# Lords of the Ice

By DAVID H. KELLER

*'A strange and imaginative tale of the world gone mad with war-lust,  
of the oceans rising in their beds to engulf the globe,  
and a super-civilization in the Antarctic*

## 1. Raw Material

“**W**HAT we need,” repeated the Dictator, “is more raw material.”

Having said that for the third time,

there was no danger that any of his audience could fail to understand just what he meant. But evidently he thought it necessary to explain.

“We have men by the millions for



Virgil Finlay '39

labor; we have scientists and inventors; in our country there are hundreds of large factories built to turn out every possible kind of material needed in peace—or in war. But our laborers are idle and starving, our scientists starting in to dream, and our factories are working about two days a week. I ask you, why? Simply because we have not the raw material to feed the factories and keep our inventors and laborers busy.

"There is a demand for iron, copper, oil, coal, all kinds of metals. If we had gold and silver we could buy, but we have nothing except credit and paper money,

and one is as useless as the other. Our inventors have produced synthetic products till we are all sick of seeing, using and eating them. But they cannot make iron, steel, copper, coal; and without these there can be no war till the time comes when our enemies are ready to wipe us out.

"I have sent for you today. I have called three men to my home, not to my office. One is the rich man of our land, the other owns most of the manufactories, and the third is a scientist. And I ask you. I command you! Give the land raw material. Shambert, can you buy it from other nations?"

"No!" was the sharp answer. "Those who have it will not sell; they know our need. If they did sell, how would we pay for it? In credits? Exchange? Our money? You call me rich, but I have nothing I can buy iron with. Perhaps an old ship now and then." He laughed rather sadly. "Can I exchange my farms for copper, my houses for steel?"

The Dictator turned suddenly to the scientist.

"Harlkin! Where is your science? Can you find or make these things?"

"I can find them," was the answer, "but not in our land. My men have examined almost every square foot of our land, and what could be found has been found. As for making them! Listen to me. I can take wood fiber and make silk, but I cannot make iron with wood or corn-stalks. You talk of synthetic preparations. It is a wonderful field of invention, but so far no one can make iron, or coal, or crude oil. Years ago we had some of these things within our land, but they have all been used. They are gone. They were made by nature millions of years ago, and we have used them in a century."

"So you can give nothing to Schmidt to keep his factories and men busy?"

"Nothing."

"But I must have battleships, guns, tanks, railroads, airplanes, submarines, ammunition. No matter how many I have I cannot have too many of these things. We have six million men to put in the army. Can they fight with their hands? Harlkin, you say that you know where these things are, and that they are in another country. Where?"

"In the Antarctic. The South Pole is covered with ice from six feet to two miles thick. Under that ice is the richest field of raw material the world has ever dreamed of—iron, copper, coal, all the precious metals. It is larger than Europe, larger than America. One can only guess how

many millions of tons of metal lie useless under the ice cap. And under the metal there is oil, an ocean of blackness. If our country had even a tenth of that wealth we would run our factories eight days a week and sixty weeks a year. But what good does it do us?"

"Who owns it?"

"Half a dozen countries. A man flies above part of it, and claims all he sees for his country. No one lives there. No one can, no one ever will."

"Then any nation who settled it, sent a thousand, ten thousand colonists there, could claim it?"

"No doubt. The other nations would laugh. It would be a joke. And soon there would be ten thousand dead men there instead of ten thousand colonists."

Schmidt, the practical man, the owner of many factories, suddenly woke from his sleep of despair.

"I WAS in Louisiana once," he said softly, "and there is a lot of sulfur there, but some hundreds of feet under the surface. First they dug it out and then they drove large pipes down, two pipes near each other. Down one pipe they pumped steam and up the other pipe they pumped the boiling water with the melted sulfur. They turned this melted sulfur into large wooden frames, and when the water evaporated nothing was left but blocks of pure sulfur, one hundred feet long, thirty feet high. It was beautiful stuff and so easy to get. Would it not be wonderful if you could drive pipes through the ice cap, melt the metal and pump it up? Harlkin says that there is oil there, and that means power and heat. With power work can be done; with heat men can live even near the South Pole. How about it, Harlkin?"

"I wonder. Some years ago my men made a tunnel excavator. Few saw it, because the tunnels we made with it were for

military purposes. It worked on a rotary principle, and on some days we completed five hundred feet of tunnel, smooth sides and perfectly rounded. We could drive it through ice as easily as through rock, and I presume that if we set it on end it would go down as far as we wanted it to. If you want to know just what is under that ice cap, this tunnel-maker could tell you. As for applying the sulfur-mining principle to iron, I guess it could be done. No doubt all the iron was fluid at one time, and is yet near the center of the earth."

"I know about that tunnel machine," commented the Dictator. "I saw it work. It is very clever. I thought once of using it to bore a tunnel under the sea to the land of one of our friendly neighbors. But the time was not ripe for such adventures. Some day we may do it. How heavy is such a machine? Could it be taken apart and carried in submarines? Show me a map of this country of ice!"

A map could not be found, but instead a large globe of the world, used as an ornament in his library, was studied.

"A good joke!" he laughed. "See, my friends. Here England rules and here France and here the United States. Between them they have eaten up this continent of ice; yet no one lives there. We could go down there, and no one would know the difference, till it was too late to remonstrate. Harlkin, prepare to take your tunnel-excavator apart and place the pieces in as many naval submarines as you need. Bore a tunnel into the ice and through the rock.

"Take your metal experts with you. Make a survey of what you find. For a while do not try for depth, but simply go miles into one of those mountains you tell me about. And if you find gold, leave the machine there and send me the golden metal back as fast as you can. I will consult at once with my officers and we will pick the men who will go on this modern

argosy. No one must know of this. Afterward we will tell the world, but not yet."

## 2. *Gold Is King*

THREE Europeans came across the Atlantic Ocean to New York. Establishing a small office in their hotel rooms, they sent for a few hard-headed business men. To these they presented their letters of introduction. Shambert did the talking for the trans-Atlantic group.

"We have come to the United States to buy some steel, some copper, and a few other forms of raw material. I understand that you gentlemen are interested in marketing these things. Will you sell us some?"

"How much are you spending?" asked Paul Parker.

"Our first order will be for one million tons. If this is satisfactory we will want a hundred times that amount."

"That is a fairly large order, but we could handle it. We could have it at the seaboard as fast as you could arrange to ship it. How are you going to pay us?"

"That is the big thing," commented another business man. "We know your country. In fact this knowledge cost us a lot of money. We refuse to take goods in exchange. We have had experience in loaning you the cash so you could buy from us and then renege on the loan. If we sell you anything from a collar button up we want cash on delivery. We want the cash before we even will let you put the stuff on your ships. I do not know how Parker feels, but I think that he will agree with me."

Shambert smiled.

"What do you want? Gold?"

"Now you are talking!" replied Parker. "You give us the order, sign it, give us the gold, and the iron and copper and whatever you want is yours. But no credits, no exchange, no loans. You might pick up

some stuff here and there in America on some other terms, but when it comes to anything big like what you mention, a million tons of mixed metals, it just has to be paid for. We have the stuff, we want to sell it, but it has to be paid for."

"We expected you to say that," said Shambert, and he was still smiling, "so we brought over with us fifty millions in gold and have certificates of deposit in the Bank of England for three hundred million more, and if you name a bank here in New York we will place the entire amount there subject to your bills. What we buy from you from now on will be paid for in gold. I think that our total purchases will run into three or four billion, but whatever it is, we will pay for it, in gold."

"That is a lot of gold," said Parker. "You people must have found a mine. When some of our senators hear about this they will be wondering why you have not paid your debts. They may even ask us why we were willing to sell to you when you have not paid for the last order of copper we sold you. But if what you say is true we will take your order. But first we will go to the banks and check up on your statement.

"It is good news for us if what you say is true. I do not think that it will take many minutes for the bankers to tell us all about it."

The meeting adjourned.

To the astonishment of Parker and his business associates, everything told them by the European visitors was absolutely true. The prospective customers actually had three hundred and fifty millions in gold to spend, and seemed to be perfectly willing to spend it. There seemed to be no reason why they should not have anything they wanted, so long as they were willing to pay for it.

After that it was only a question of details. So many million tons of iron, so much steel, so much copper, aluminum,

bronze, coal. Even wool, cotton and food-stuffs were included in the order. When the list was completed and arrangements made for distributing it among the producers in the United States, it was easy to see that at least in some parts of the nation there would be a few years of prosperity.

Ocean transportation prospered. Every kind of vessel that could float, travel and carry was prepared for the shuttle voyages to Europe. Railroads prepared for a great increase in freightage. Men by the hundreds of thousands were put to work.

Shambert kept on smiling. His last words to Parker were:

"I will be back in six months with another three hundred million dollar order. You people have a lot of raw material we need. And you need not worry about the money."

To the Dictator he sent a single message, and it was not in code. It read, "*Gold is king!*"

### 3. The Mine

A REMARKABLE thing had happened. The plan of sending submarines to the Antarctic had gone ahead according to the details arranged at the first meeting of the Dictator and his advisers. Six of the largest submarines had been prepared for the long voyage. Two tankers were filled with fuel oil, and two freighters had been equipped with every form of supplies. The fleet had sailed without the slightest publicity.

They had arrived without accident in the summertime, if there is any summertime around the South Pole. After some cruising they found what they were hunting for, an isolated harbor, a shelving beach surrounded by lofty ice-capped mountains. The supplies had been landed, a very small camp built, and the tunnel-machine placed in position against the base of the mountain. After a month of intensive work it was started on its bur-

rowing journey into the heart of the mountain.

An endless chain of carriers removed the fine powder from the hole as far as the relentless machine chewed and ground and bored its way into the rock. Hour after hour it worked its way, and hour after hour chemists and metallurgists studied the dust. For a week, two weeks, there was nothing but granite. Suddenly it happened. They had expected to find coal, iron, copper, but instead they found gold.

Not gold ore, but solid gold.

It looked like a gigantic joke of Mother Nature.

Millions of years before, she had scattered the precious yellow metal in different parts of the earth to arouse the cupidity and longings of the human race. But in one place she had kept most of her wealth. Hidden beneath millions of tons of rock and ice she had banked a million times more gold than all the men of all the ages had ever seen, gold that assayed almost 95 percent pure. Without warning the yellow dust came out in the endless conveyers, and when the metallurgists saw it they gasped with astonishment. They doubted their own findings.

They had the machine slowed to a foot a day. Even then they were unable to handle the yellow wealth. At last they made crude machinery to melt the metal and form it into bricks, and in three weeks' time they had the two ships and the six submarines loaded and ready for the return voyage. And they had gone only fifty feet into the lode. No one knew how much gold there was left; perhaps no one cared.

Harlkin had accompanied the expedition. He decided to stay. He was having the thrill of his life. The fact that he had saved his country did not excite him, and the fact that iron, copper or any of the baser metals had not been found did not depress him. He knew that with unlim-

ited gold the Dictator could buy everything the country needed. What was the use of mining and smelting and shipping iron from one end of the world to the other when these things could be bought for gold, and when there was more gold in sight than had ever been heard or dreamed of?

And he had found the gold!

Of course it was a pure accident. A hundred yards to the right or to the left and it would have remained untouched for another million years. It was more than wonderful, it was miraculous. There was only one thing to worry him.

There was too much gold!

That might lower its value, force every nation to adopt some other kind of money.

The submarines made one more trip, loaded again with thousands of yellow bricks. And then the short summer was over. It was thought best to close the little city. But Harlkin decided to stay. He asked three men to stay with him. He explained the reason to them:

"We can live very comfortably inside the tunnel. It will be warm, and fairly dry. There is much work to be done, and I want to be alone to think this matter out. The laboratory can be set up in the tunnel and we can go ahead with our scientific work. The thing that still disturbs me is the size of this gold lode. Is it possible that it is not gold? If it is really gold—and every known test says it is—how much more is there? I think we should make a few little lateral tunnels. We can do that by hand.

"Wealth has never meant anything to me, but now that we have an unlimited supply of what the human race calls richness, I do not want to leave it. I think that someone should stay here till next summer. Think of what would happen if everyone left and when the ships came back they could not find the place? A landslide could easily change the entire



topography of the region. This gold has been buried for a million million years. What if it should be buried for another million years?"

The three men looked at each other and then at their leader.

Finally one man, a white-haired miner, who had hunted for gold all over the world, uttered what was in the minds of all:

"If we are in the tunnel, and there is a landslide, and the gold is buried forever, we will certainly have a rich place to sleep through eternity. I do not know how the other feels, but for myself I want to stay. I am having the time of my life. I have helped find a real mine. Once I found a deposit that gave the owners thirty million before it was worked out, but here we could take that much out in one day by trying to. We can take out more than we can care for. Some day this adventure will be written up, and then people will know that John Johnson finally struck real paying ore."

**H**ARLKIN stayed, and John Johnson, William Smathers and Richard Young stayed with him. The four men were not entirely isolated. They had a radio with which they could communicate with the world if they wanted to, but they did not want to. The world was not to know what had happened or what would happen in that tunnel.

Meanwhile the factories in the Dictator's country were working day and night. Everyone was busy. Even the women had been put to work. Food, clothing, supplies of every kind were beginning to arrive on a thousand ships. Not only the United States but every other country that had raw materials to sell found a cash customer. It looked like an era of world prosperity.

The thinkers in the rest of the world were beginning to worry, but the business

men were happy. They had a market at last. Every dollar of the gold was turned over again and again. People made money and spent it. The more they made the more willing they were to spend it. Hoarding ceased. Saving became unfashionable. Gambling in stocks once more became a popular sport.

In the Dictator's country every preparation pointed toward another World War. But nobody cared and few worried. They had enough to wear, more than enough to eat, and the future was a long way ahead.

Another year passed. As soon as the summer started and the ice broke, more ships appeared in the harbor. Three trips were made that year. The tunnel was made three hundred feet longer and still went into solid gold. That fall the land of the Dictator paid its international debts. It owed no one, joined the League of Nations and asked for and received absolute equality with the rulers of the world.

Harlkin decided to stay through a second winter. This time he asked John Johnson to stay with him. The big reason this time was simply that he was afraid to return to civilization.

Primarily he was a scientist.

He was afraid of what would happen when the crash came. All the news from his home country told him that such a debacle was likely to occur at any time. It was not war he feared, but the destruction of all former monetary standards. What would happen when the world found that gold was worthless?

"The trouble with me," he explained to John Johnson, "is that I have too much imagination."

#### 4. Another Tunnel

**T**HE two men had spent one month of rather peaceful solitude. They had a definite routine of work, reading, exercise and sleep.

John Johnson had a rather interesting

hobby. He was making things out of gold.

"I got the idea from a book," he explained to the scientist. "It was an imaginative book written about a country called Utopia where gold was so common they used it instead of any other metal. So I am going to see how many things I can make out of the stuff. Did you ever read the *Conquest of Peru*, by Prescott? The Mexicans offered to fill a room with gold if the Spaniards would release their king. That has always been my idea, to have a golden room. All the furniture of gold, not plated stuff, but solid. Seems as though a man should sleep easier in a golden bedstead. It's a pity the metal is so soft that you cannot cook in it, but I am going to make a complete set of dishes, and a golden calf. Think of that! The Jews in the desert made one, but it took all the gold they had to make it. Perhaps I will make a golden woman. How do you like that idea?"

"That is better," laughed Harlkin. "Gold and women have a great deal in common. They have been associated for thousands of years. Rome was lost once because a woman wanted the golden bracelets the enemy wore. She sent word she would open the gate if they gave her what they had on their arms; so they double-crossed her and buried her crushed body under a pile of shields. Why not make a woman sinking in a quicksand of gold, her arms in the air and an agonized smile on her face, buried in the riches she gave her soul for? That shows not only women but the entire world. Think of that, Johnson! Not a nation that sold a pound of copper or iron but knew the Dictator was going to turn it into instruments for their ultimate destruction, but they all wanted the gold. They sold their future life for gold, and what did they do with it when they had it? Put it into vaults, built larger, stronger, deeper vaults to put more gold in. And there is

so much here that some day all their gold will be worthless. Iron will rule, not gold. Explosives, chemicals will beat the human race to bleeding, suffocating pulp amid their useless gold. The Dictator knows humanity and how to destroy it. But he made one mistake. He thinks that in the end his country will be a paradise and the rest of the world a shambles, but he is wrong. Our country will go down to ruin with the rest of the nations. So make your beautiful woman sinking in the golden flood and under it place the words: *'Thus died the world.'*"

Johnson started his piece of golden statuary in a rather silent but enthusiastic manner. He knew that he was more of a miner than an artist. He was not sure just how a woman would look sinking into a quicksand of gold, but he was a rather stubborn personality and hated to admit that he had an idea that he could not carry to completion. On the third day of his work he was interrupted by Harlkin.

"Something is happening above us!" declared the scientist. "I have noticed that you are a little deaf, so perhaps you have not noticed it. Something or somebody is boring into the rock right above one of our empty rooms. I noticed it first as a vibration when I placed the palm of my hand against the wall. Now I can hear the grinding noise, first with my stethoscope, but now it is so loud that I can hear it anywhere in the chamber. I wish you would come in with me and tell me what you think of it."

Johnson went into the room with him. Even with the handicap of his deafness he could hear the grinding vibrations. He climbed up on some empty boxes and placed his hands on the curving ceiling of the tunnel. He was not satisfied, but worked his way over to one side. At last he said:

"I think I have it. Someone is boring a tunnel sidewise into ours. I think they

are still going through the rock, because the vibrations are too strong to be produced by passing through the solid gold. It seems to me that the instrument they are using must be at least ten feet in diameter, and if such a thing were possible, it works easier than our tunnel-borer."

"Do you think that it is a machine worked by human beings, or is it some kind of a worm?"

"A worm?" asked the astonished miner.

"Yes. I read a story once which told of a giant earthworm making a hole in a New England farm. It was just like a little worm, only it had a head thirty feet in diameter, and no one knew how long it was because the only man who saw it was swallowed before he could tell just what he did see. Of course it was a science-fiction story and perhaps had more fiction than science in it. But remember this: we are on the edge of the unknown! Back of us is a continent that has never been really explored. Millions of years ago there were large insects. Could they have lived on here under the ice? But whatever it is, there is no doubt that it is headed our way. A few days more will tell the story."

"Have we any guns?"

"I think so, but I don't think we will use them. If it is a worm it would be useless. If some other men are back of the machine I think it would be also useless to try and fight it out with them. The best thing is to wait and see what is going to happen."

### 5. *The Strangers*

**T**HERE followed two days of waiting. At the end of the first day the vibrations became softer.

"They have struck the gold," explained Johnson. "Now they will eat their way through in a little while."

"You think that it is a machine operated by men?"

"Yes. I never have taken that worm idea of yours seriously."

"Time will tell," sighed the scientist.

And it did. At the end of the second day, the wall of the tunnel caved in, and out of the opening came, not a worm, but the polished metal head of a long, slowly revolving cylinder which kept on till it bit into the opposite wall of the golden tunnel and then once again kept on boring until it had completely disappeared.

The two men watched it.

In less than ten minutes there was nothing to show except the two holes, eight feet in diameter, perfectly round, and a heap of pulverized yellow metal.

"A machine without men!" cried Johnson.

"That is impossible," retorted Harlkin. "Every machine, no matter how complicated, has to have the human mind behind it. Some form of intelligence made this machine, started it to move, and directed it this way. Our finding the gold may have been an accident, but when one tunnel absolutely cuts through another tunnel, that means engineering skill of the highest type. We can do one of two things: Go into that new tunnel and find the brains back of it, or wait for that intelligence to show itself."

"You will not have long to wait," spoke a clear, almost musical voice, as out of the tunnel walked two men.

Harlkin shook his head as though to clear his emotions, and then said quietly:

"Perhaps we had better introduce ourselves."

"That is not necessary. We know who you are. You are Harlkin, the celebrated scientist, and the man with you is called John Johnson. My name is Alhazen and my companion is Ebn Junis. We are from the land of the ice, where we are called lords. We have been talking about you, and when we found that Johnson was going to build a symbolic statue of the effect

of gold on humanity we decided that it was time to come and see you."

"You knew we were here?" asked Harlkin, in astonishment.

"Of course. How do you suppose you would have come here and found the gold had it not been for us? Suppose we go and sit down in your rooms and let me explain the thing to you."

THE scientist led the way, the two strangers following, very much at their ease. They were tall men, rather thin, dark, with clean-cut, rather aristocratic faces. Except for their color they would have passed for members of the English nobility. Once seated, Alhazen began his promised explanation.

"Though we are far removed from what you think is civilization, we have never lost our interest in our fellow men. Occasionally we direct their actions, by our ability to use tele-psychology. We send ideas through the ether to their brains and they think that these ideas are their own inventions. Most of the time we let men go on their blind, bloody, blundering course, but occasionally we interfere. We have noticed you in past years, and many of your ideas, especially those of service to your fellow men, were given you by our leaders. We suggested to you that raw material could be found in this isolated part of the world.

"After you started, my friend, Ebn Junis thought it would be interesting to have you find gold, instead of iron or copper or coal. Perhaps I should let him tell you about that."

The other stranger took up the conversation.

"Gold has always been the curse of the race. They never had enough for everyone. The idea came to me that if there were enough gold given to the world things might be a little better; so I suggested to the other lords that we give you all you wanted. We knew about this

underground field of the yellow metal, just as we know everything else of interest concerning our country. They agreed with me, so we directed you here. We showed you the very place to land and the exact spot to start your tunnel."

The scientist looked at him in amazement.

"Do you mean to tell me that it was not luck?"

"There is no such thing in science. You found the gold because you were constantly working in an automatic manner under our control. The gold was found. You knew and your Dictator knew that there was enough gold here to make everyone comfortable, so long as gold remained the standard of world finance. He used that gold to prepare for another war. No doubt he thinks that with the nations conquered he can take back the gold he has given them and then his nation will be the only one with gold. And what will he have? So many tons of a metal. That is all. The human race will be no better. His country will be no better.

"But we allowed you to have the gold, just to see what you would do with it. When Johnson and you worked out the idea of making a golden image showing the curse to the world from the yellow metal we decided that you were two men who were worth cultivating. At least we might make you our emissaries to the outside world."

"Allow me to interrupt you," apologized the scientist, "but all you say is so very much out of the ordinary that I just have to ask you some questions. Who are you? Where do you live? How long have you lived there? Where did you come from?"

"All very proper questions," answered Alhazen. "To answer very briefly: we are Moors from Spain, driven from Cordova many centuries ago. With us came a few Jews, who decided to cast their lot with us. Our dwelling-place is two hundred miles

from here, built on a tableland of solid rock, many miles wide. We have lived there since the Spaniards conquered our people in Spain. Much of our wisdom is inherited from our Cordovan ancestors. To that we have added, because for centuries we have had nothing to do except study.

"If you will come and live with us for a few weeks or months you will learn more about our life and work. Of course, you do not have to accept the invitation unless you wish to. You will not be coerced. But tell me one thing: If there was peace in your country, if every man and every nation tried to help his neighbor instead of killing them, would there be enough food, clothing, fuel, necessities of life to make all happy?"

"I believe so," replied the scientist, "but so many people want more than the necessities of life and, if they can get them, the luxuries of existence, by robbing and killing, then that is what they have done and always will do."

"You are not rich?"

"No. I have been so busy trying to learn the secrets of the universe that I have had no time to play in the stock markets."

"And your friend, John Johnson, is he rich?"

"I do not think so. He told me the other day that his great desire in life was to find gold, but after he found a new field he lost interest in it. He has found more gold and has less money than any other man I know of."

"We know all that," commented Ebn Junis. "We knew about Johnson when we suggested to you that he, and he alone, spend the winter with you. Now suppose you come with us, and be our guests for a little while."

### 6. *The Ice City*

"IT TOOK us several days to bore the tunnel," commented Alhazen, "but the return trip will only take a little over

an hour. Back of our tunneling-machine we traveled in a small car which we left inside the tunnel. If you will come with us, we will start at once. Our machine is very similar to yours except that we do not have to get rid of the powdered rock. We simply drive it into the walls of the bore as we go ahead. This makes a very dense wall, and avoids any danger from seepage of oil or water. Perhaps this idea has occurred to you, Harlkin?"

"Yes, but I never could work out the question of power."

"Power never bothers us. Since we learned to split the atom we have all the power we need for any work. But let us start. You need not worry about your personal belongings. Everything you need will be provided for, and what you leave here will be perfectly safe."

Ten minutes later the four men were in a cylindrical car, exactly fitting the tunnel and twenty feet long. Alhazen touched a button and the car moved. It was difficult to estimate its speed, but in what seemed to be a very short time another button was pressed and the car stopped.

"We take an elevator from here," explained Alhazen. "At present we are about two miles under our city. Perhaps you have noticed the pressure on your ears. Please step this way, and enter this little car. These elevators are a very necessary part of our life. Living as we do, high in the air, our tunnel systems are absolute necessities."

In five minutes more the four men walked out of the elevator car into a large room.

"We will leave you here," said Alhazen. "You will be furnished a guide to your rooms. Once there, you will be provided for in every way. Your guide will remain with you and you will be permitted to visit all parts of our small city. I recommend especially our library and science buildings. Later on you might be interested in visit-

ing our temple, where we have a very large collection of gods. I am especially anxious to learn what you think of our food. It is largely synthetic, but we find it stimulating and it certainly has kept us alive. When we first came here the climate was milder, but as the centuries passed we had more and more trouble with our food supply and finally were forced to manufacture it. In your rooms you will find clothing, such as we wear. With us clothing is partly a necessity but in the city wholly ornamental, as we live constantly in a temperature of 72 degrees."

The two men left, and a third man walked over to the Europeans. He said, rather quietly:

"My name is Hiram. I am to take care of you while you are with us. Will you please follow me to your rooms?"

The three walked out of the building into a wide street, illumined with a clear, steady light. Flowers and trees were not only growing in parks but were in full bloom.

The air was warm. There seemed to be no sky, simply an opalescent haze above them.

"I notice," said Harlkin, "that you speak our language."

"A few of us speak all languages," replied Hiram. "We had to learn them all to benefit by the radio. Our common language is Arabic, but I know a dozen languages. A few of the lords of the ice who have trained themselves for years do not have to talk. They simply exchange thoughts silently. I am working on that, but so far am not an expert. No doubt Lord Alhazen told you of our use of telepsychology. That is most interesting, but it is never practised here, because everyone is equal and free to act as he wishes. We have rank, but it is based only on intelligence. Anyone can become a lord who is mentally capable."

They walked down the street. Harlkin

commented on its cleanliness, the absence of people, and especially the quiet.

"It certainly seems deserted," agreed Johnson.

"Everyone is resting," explained Hiram. "There is no night here, no periods of daylight or darkness. We simply accustom ourselves to rest at regular intervals. Those who do not care to sleep simply relax completely. I suppose that explains the total absence of what you people call nervousness. We have nothing to worry us, are never fatigued, and the work we do is either mental or the mechanical supervision of machinery that is almost human in its ability to do complicated work. There are some pieces of city machinery that have run for ten years with practically no attention. Here is the little building which will be your home. I am sure you will find it convenient and comfortable in every way. You have radio service with the world; so you will not be lonely because of lack of news from your home. I will show you to your rooms and call for you later on, in what you call morning."

THE two Europeans walked through the one-story house. It was John Johnson who at last broke the silence.

"Everything is made of gold, Mr. Harlkin. Furniture and even the floors. What do you think of it all?"

"Even in my wildest dreams I never imagined such a city in such a place possible. Two miles above sea level and perhaps two miles under the ice cap. There must be a roof to the city. How did they ever build it? It is wonderful, Johnson, the most wonderful thing I ever saw. Their ancestors were from Cordova. Do you know anything about that city?"

"Not that I know of. Now I remember that Hiram said there was some kind of telephone here. He told me that if I wanted to know anything I should ask for the information over the phone. He said

that it was not like our phones, but a red circle in the wall of the living-room. I guess we had better try it out before going to sleep. Here it is. I suppose you just stand or sit in front of the red circle and talk to it. At least I will try it."

**R**ATHER slowly he asked:  
 "What kind of weather is there in Berlin?"

From the circle came the reply.

"Six inches of snow fell last night. Today the temperature is 31, and the sun is shining."

"What kind of a city was Cordova when it was occupied by the Moors?"

"It was a city of two hundred thousand houses and a million population. Its longest street was ten miles long and paved and lighted. The houses were air-conditioned, cool in summer and comfortable in winter. The furniture of the rich was made of sandal and citron wood inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Every house was piped with hot and cold water. The city library was so large that the index filled forty volumes. There were hospitals and universities. At one time it was the center of world education. Medicine, astronomy, mathematics, chemistry and all the arts and sciences were studied. When the Moors left Spain and the Jews were driven out, Spain lost something it has never been able to regain."

Harlkin turned to Johnson.

"That helps us to understand," he commented. "That was the old Cordova. Some of those Moors left Spain, and determined to go as far away from civilization as they could. They either came here deliberately or were carried here by storms. Alhazen said that the climate was milder centuries ago. It must have been, because otherwise they never could have built a city like this—not when the wind was blowing sixty miles an hour and the temperature fifty below zero most of the time. They must have known a change was com-

ing, and so they built that dome over the city. How they did it I do not know. What they have for a lighting-system I do not know. Some form of electricity, no doubt. And they have lived here, peacefully, quietly, comfortably, learning more every year, using their knowledge to better their lives. Eight hundred years without war. Think of that! Any nation could become great if it were able to live in peace that long. They must have laughed at us, Johnson, when we were passing through the Reformation, the Thirty Years' War, the Inquisition, the conquest of America, the Napoleonic wars, the famines, pestilences, bloodshed that have darkened the face of the world century after century. They have lived in isolation but it has been splendid, magnificent. We will spend the winter here. I must learn all I can of this city and its people."

"Perhaps," sighed Johnson, "one of them will tell me how they locate their gold mines."

Finally the two men, in spite of their excitement, went to sleep.

### 7. *The Temple*

**F**OR the next week Halkin lived in a period of intense interested excitement. In Europe he had been considered one of the greatest scientists of all ages. In the White City he realized that all his life he had been a child playing with toys and groping in the dark, in comparison with the men he now came in contact with. They knew how to do so many things that he had only thought of doing but had never even started to learn to do.

For example, heatless light, almost frictionless machinery, production of electricity so that 95 percent of the power was utilized instead of less than 5 percent. What interested him most was their ability to concentrate. They could turn their intelligence on one problem and think of

nothing else for five years, or ten, until they secured the proper answer, the correct explanation, the complete solution. During this time there was a total absence of anxiety, and a beautiful freedom from worry of any kind. The routine problems of civilization had all been solved.

Hiram tried to explain it to him.

"I am not particularly interested in religion," he said in his usual quiet, musical voice, "but perhaps this will tell you something that may interest you. For many centuries the human race has worried over the matter of gods. Some races had thousands and other races had only one, but no matter how many or how few they had they were never sure they were right; so they compensated for this inability to be sure by trying to make other people think the way they did. That is one of the reasons our ancestors had to leave Cordova. One of the primary decisions of the emigrants to this land was that everyone should be allowed to believe in any god he wished; there was to be free instruction but no coercion as far as religion was concerned.

"Centuries ago we started to make images of all the gods we knew or ever heard of. Because we had so much gold and because it could be so easily handled we made these statues of that metal. Our histories were consulted, and from every nation all over the known world we recalled the memories of their gods, and made them as we remembered them. Always there are a few young men who do nothing but make new gods. No matter how many we have, there are always more to make; because even in this age of science the imaginations of men run wild when it comes to religion.

"Here is the temple. We will walk inside and you can see for yourself. There are gods here that are animals, and half-animals, images of men and women beautiful and also with every conceivable form of monstrous physical deformities. In one

wing of the building there are symbolic gods of the wind, of the waterfalls, of rocks, trees and flowers. One entire section is devoted to the special gods of medicine, of the household, of hunting and the stars.

"You can study these images in any way you want; from the viewpoint of anthropology, philosophy, psychology, and even psychiatry. Any of our young men and women can come here, select a god and worship it for the rest of their lives."

"What has the result of this freedom been?" asked the scientist.

"Rather interesting. We know more about religion and practise less of it as an avocation than any people since history was written. We have no services and no priests. And yet our morals are rather fine compared with the races you know. Now and then a young man or woman deliberately forgets his obligations to himself and our city, and then we feel that he is sick. We try to restore them to mental health and if we fail they are simply given their freedom. They leave the city and they die."

The scientist spent two entire days wandering through the long rows of gods and goddesses. Then he asked Hiram:

"Where is John Johnson?"

"He has been down in the tunnels with the metallurgists. They are showing him how to find the various deposits of metals. He says that after he has learned how to do this he wants to go ahead and make his image of a woman sinking in a quicksand of gold. He says that it is symbolic of a new god the Europeans are worshipping and he wants to add it to our collection. He seems very happy and contented. Now that you are through with the temple, would you like to see our library, or our collection of model machinery? Or would you care to learn about our use of electricity or the things we make out of crude oil? Or how about studying a few days with the men who have learned to split the atom?"



"I want to talk some matters over with Alhazen," said Harlkin. "Is he a busy man?"

"No. At present he is working on a very interesting problem. He thinks that flowers and plants have a language and he is trying to learn it. Simply a pastime with him, and I do not believe that he will object to being interrupted. I will take you to his garden. He spends hours there with his eyes shut. He thinks that he can hear better that way."

They found the Moor in his garden laboratory surrounded by irises, peonies, pansies, bleeding-hearts and oriental poppies. He seemed very glad to see his visitors.

### 8. *Serious News*

"I AM glad you have come to see me," said Alhazen. "I have most interesting news for you, from the rest of the world."

"What is it?"

"When your Dictator started in to use his gold, all of the other countries were rather interested, not only in selling him raw products, but also in finding out where he was getting the gold from. I suppose there were some who even thought that he had learned the secret of the alchemists and was making it. But someone who knew the real facts decided to commercialize it. He loved the idea of personal wealth more than he loved his country; so he traveled here and there and sold the secret, and each nation buying it thought it was the only one in the secret. As a consequence, when the winter ends and the ice breaks at the beginning of our short summer your little harbor will look like a filled sardine can. I know that eight nations are preparing to send warships, freighters, colonists and troops to your gold mine. Perhaps the Dictator knows it, but perhaps he does not. He has a peculiar mind, and

so far none of our psychologists has been able to get into rapport with him. Some days he thinks one thing and some days something entirely different. He has a many-track mind and no definite time-table or direction for his mental trains. But next October he is going to start his air fleet in action, and London, Paris, Rome, New York will be conquered before the nations know that war has been started. His first declaration of war will be the destruction of every large city in the world except his own capital. Did you know that?"

"I was afraid of it. That is one reason why I wanted to stay here. I am not sure that I ever want to go back. I am a scientist and not a fighter."

"That was well said. I am glad to hear you say it. What do you think will happen in your little harbor?"

"That is easy. There will be a battle royal. Everybody will start fighting everybody else. When they finish there will be nothing left except the tails, like the time the Kilkenny cats settled their differences."

"I feel that you are right. And that is what we do not want. If these nations want to stage a war and kill each other by the millions we are willing to look on with indifference, but we do not want it to happen on our front door-steps. Perhaps you think that we never worry, but there is one thing we are afraid of and that is the loss of our isolation. For centuries all we have asked is to be left alone. We gave the Dictator gold as a social experiment. Perhaps it was a mistake. There was just a chance that if everybody felt he had enough to pay his debts and be comfortable, all would cease hating one another; but it seems that no matter how much gold anyone has he always wants more.

"So we decided over a hundred years ago that if necessary we would give the world a shock that would keep them so busy for a few centuries they would forget their strife and jealousies. I am going to

tell you about it, because I feel that someone should know it. Perhaps if the world is warned they will stop in time."

"But what can I do?"

"You are going back to carry the warning. We are arranging to send you in one of our submarines. You need not be surprised at that. We used underwater travel years before your nations perfected it. Go to the Dictator or King or President of the eight large countries and tell them to make peace with each other, or something very serious will happen. You are known internationally. You are respected. Perhaps they will listen to you."

"And perhaps they will not. But what can you do that would harm the world? Hiram tells me your population is less than five hundred, counting the women and children. It is a rather small number to frighten the whole world with."

"Numbers do not count. One man could do it. Perhaps you recall the ancient scientist who said he could move the world if he had a long-enough crowbar and a place to stand on. In a way he was correct. Come into the house with me and I will show you a small working-model of a very interesting piece of machinery."

In a few minutes he was showing his visitor something that looked like a twelve-inch shell. It was conical at one end and flat on the other. At its pointed end it was grooved.

"That," explained Alhazen, "is a small model of our tunnel-borer. The actual size can be anything up to fifty feet in diameter. It can be charged with enough energy to travel twelve miles through solid rock at one charging. At the present time we have five thousand of them in place pointed downward toward the center of our continent. These are all connected in such a way that the pressure of a single contact will start them all sinking their way into the ice.

"Under the ice is rock. Then come layers

of metal, and large deposits of coal. No one knows how much coal there is in these veins. Under the coal are lakes of oil; and under the oil there is more rock and below that lies the fire. Occasionally in Siberia, Alaska, and in our own country this fire has broken through and formed volcanoes. In parts of Antarctica there are still a few that break out occasionally.

"Our city is peculiarly located. We are on a granite rock that is at least three miles deep and several hundred miles wide. Whatever happens to the rest of this continent, we feel that we are safe. To quote the words of a very celebrated man, 'We have builded our house upon a rock.'

"Now as a scientist I am going to ask you a question. Take one of these machines and start it downward on a twelve-mile journey. It will go through ice, rock, coal, rock, a lake of oil, through the lake into more rock and then into the fire. What will be the result?"

"You will have a chimney, and through it will come fire, and the fire will keep on and on till all the oil and coal has been burned and till the pressure of the molten mass underneath is exhausted."

"That is correct. In other words there will be a volcano. Explosions will increase the size of the hole, and heat will be formed. Remember that. *Heat will be formed.* Over Antarctica there is enough ice to cover the entire world 120 feet if it were spread out in a thin layer. Suppose it would start to melt, not slowly as it is doing now, but rapidly, inside of a year? The increased amount of water would raise the surface of the oceans over 100 feet. Suppose only half of it melted? I think that New York, London, Berlin would be flooded. The Gulf of Mexico would become three times larger than it is now. A great inland sea would form in the Desert of Sahara. The geography of the world would be changed. And the temperature would also be changed. Vegetation would

increase at a tremendous rate. Insect life would threaten the lives of the human race. Am I right?"

"I believe so!"

"Tell your world that. Tell them that if they do not live in peace we will start melting the ice. We will turn this continent into a sea of fire. We will give them so much to think of that they will have to use all their energy saving themselves, instead of preparing for wholesale murder and territorial conquests. You have seen enough of our city and the people in it to know that this is not an idle threat. We do not want to do it, but if we are forced to we will. We are willing to destroy our continent to keep it from being exploited for the greed of your peoples."

"There is one thing that worries me," cried the scientist, "and that is, they will not believe me!"

"Give them the chance. And tell them that if their fleets come here next summer to fight for gold we will bury them under a rain of fire."

"You are in earnest?"

"Absolutely!"

"All right. When do I start?"

"At once. Leave Johnson here. He is happier than he has ever been in his life."

### *9. The World Doubts*

**H**ALKIN had been talking to eight men for over two hours. He had told them about his experiences and had given them the message from the lords of the ice. His language had been plain, and simple. There was no need of any of the eight failing to understand what he said.

The eight men represented eight countries. Not one of those countries trusted any of the other seven. Each country had been preparing for war as rapidly and as silently as possible. Now they were being asked to stop thoughts of war, live in perpetual peace and work for the mutual hap-

piness of the human race. It was too much. The Dictator, who had decided to represent his own country at this conference, watched the other seven with half-shut eyes. Six of the other men remained quiet. The American spoke.

"It looks to me like a beautiful piece of propaganda. One country has secured a vast amount of gold. I might say that we know definitely that this gold was taken from land that belonged to the United States. They have used that gold to build a powerful war machine. Now a scientist from that country comes and tells us that we must not go on our own land and take any of our own gold. He also says that we must stop all our preparations for national security, break up our army and navy and air fleet and from now on live in peace. His threat tells of a land of supermen who can, when they wish to do so, change the surface of the earth.

"I do not know what the rest of you are going to do, but just as soon as it can the United States fleet will sail south. Where our flag flies we are going to be masters. We know how to play poker and we refuse to be bluffed. That is my answer in plain words. The rest of you can do as you please, but there will be no more gold taken by anyone from our lands."

And he left the room.

The other six left without a word. Harlkin was left with the Dictator.

"I ought to kill you, Harlkin!" purred the Dictator, "but instead I am going to decorate you. You have exploded a mine that is greatly to our benefit. Tonight our air fleets start in six directions. Instead of explosives they will drop bacteria. In a month thirty million of our enemies will be dead from disease. And now because I cannot trust you I am going to make you a prisoner. You will be very comfortable, but nevertheless you are going to be in prison."

"I expected that," replied the scientist.

"You are doing something that is very terrible, and something that you will live to regret. I am going to advise you not to take the offensive without giving the matter a few days of serious thought."

"No! The order goes out tonight."

Just then a messenger knocked at the door. He said he bore a radiogram for the Dictator. The ruler tore the envelope open, read the short letter and handed it with a sneer to Harlkin, who read:

"IF CONFERENCE HAS FAILED, WE START  
OUR MACHINERY AT ONCE.

SIGNED,

ALHAZEN."

"Just another reason for issuing the order," cried the Dictator. "It looks to me like a part of the American bluff. Do you know that I doubt your entire story? And this radiogram confirms my thought. You are in a conspiracy against your country. This message probably was prepared by you in advance."

The thinker shrugged his shoulders as he sighed:

"I guess there is nothing more for me to do. If you doubt me, there is nothing I can say to change your mind. Go on with your plans to destroy humanity."

### 10. *The World Goes Mad*

THE Dictator had not counted fully on his enemies. Every other nation except the United States launched its air fleets that night. His thousand planes were met in air before they had crossed their own borders. All that night raged the battle. With morning came the beginning of another world war in which the science of seven nations did its best to destroy and kill.

It was different from the last World War. Not one nation had a friend or an ally it could trust. Every nation started in to fight the world, each thinking that its

instruments of destruction were greater and more deadly than those of all other nations. The United States and Canada remained on guard, thinking that they were protected by the oceans; but when the Panama Canal was blown up and the Hawaiian Islands were captured by the Asiatics they plunged into the multi-war.

For two weeks the various parts of the human race gripped one another by the throats, and then came the flood. Tidal waves and earthquakes should have given warning of what was going to happen, but the nations were too busy killing and being killed to pay any attention. But when the oceans started to cover their lands they were forced to start thinking about it.

The ice of Antarctica was melting. The whales knew it, the sea-lions had fled for their lives, but no human being actually saw what was happening. Five thousand volcanoes had opened their flaming throats in that land of perpetual ice. The water flowing down their maws only excited them to fresh fury. Fire that had rolled restlessly for millions of years now started in gigantic, super-heated fury to the surface. Antarctica was being turned into a furnace. The world was being covered with the water it spewed out.

The rock on which the lords of the ice had built their little city swayed, but finally held firm; the ice cap above melted but no water came through the perfect roof. Their world changed around them, but inside the city life went on as usual. London, Berlin, New York turned into ultra-modern Venices. Half of the world was either finding new homes or working frantically and vainly to build dikes to save their cities. Gone were thoughts of gold and conquest and the terrors of war. Humanity had all it could do to adjust itself to the new geography. Through it all, the ice lords continued on with their calm life, though there was not much ice left to justify their names.

11. *Two Friends Meet*

**D**URING the rioting that had followed the downfall of the Dictator's country he had been killed. Halkin escaped from prison and finally made his way to Switzerland. That little country, on its lofty mountains, had been one of the very few countries not seriously affected by either the war or the floods. As always, it served as a place of refuge for the suffering ones and the oppressed. The scientist was made welcome, it being felt that his knowledge would be a great asset to any country. A little laboratory was given him and he was provided with the necessities of life. To that little room came Alhazen.

The scientist was both surprised and pleased.

"I never expected to see you again," he cried.

"I was not sure of it myself," was the quiet answer. "We thought our city was secure; but for a few days, during the worst of the earthquakes, we had serious doubt as to whether our rock foundation was as secure as we had fancied it. But we came through in good condition. Many of our rock tunnels were ruined, and our future supply of oil destroyed, but we are doing very well, considering everything. When the earth became a little quiet we drove a new tunnel to the seashore, contacted with our submarines, and here I am. It took a good deal of mental concentration to find you. Everyone in your old country thought you were dead, but I felt that your time for death had not come."

"How is John Johnson?"

"Fine. He finished his symbolic god of gold, refused to be satisfied with it, melted it and made it over again. You see the first time he made it, he was not very well acquainted with the feminine face. He met one of our women, fell in love with her, and she is his model for what he thinks is going to be a masterpiece."

"I suppose he will marry and live happily ever after?"

"No doubt. Now in regard to our plan. You would be surprised to know how it worked. There is little left of the old Antarctica you found the gold in. No ice, and only a few isolated lofty mountains rising out of the water. We blew a continent to pieces to make the world recover from its madness."

"Do you think it worked?"

"I do not know. We hear talk of a world confederacy. No doubt even now various groups are at work trying to form such a union and head it. Human nature changes very little. You can change the shape of continents, but when it comes to the emotions of mankind they are rather unchangeable. But I want you to go back to the City of Ice with me. You have no family and no ties. We like you and have work for you. It is something new. We solved so many of our problems that we felt we had to have something new and entirely different to puzzle over in order to retain our national youth. We want you to share the adventure with us."

"What is your idea?"

"It is the sky and the stars and the moon."

"Interspace travel?"

"No. We have begun to doubt the existence of space. We think that perhaps there is a solid covering to the earth, on the other side of what we call the stratosphere. No one has ever been up there to actually see what really is there. Perhaps the things we see there are optical delusions. It is hard for me to put it into words, but the main idea is that we are not sure what really is above us and we are going up there to find out. Will you come with us?"

"I think that you are wrong. But I would like to be there when you find out that you are. So I will go. When do we start?"