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Contents for January, 1925

Cover Design.....	Andrew Brosnatch	
Invaders From Outside.....	J. Schlossel	5
<i>A Planet From Outer Space Wages War on the Twelve Worlds</i>		
The Electric Chair.....	George Waight	17
<i>Death Faced Him—or Else the Grisly Horror of an Unknown Fate</i>		
As Obligated.....	Armstrong Livingston	26
<i>The Baronet's Bathroom Bell Was Bewitched</i>		
The Rajah's Gift.....	E. Hoffmann Price	35
<i>Oriental Tale—One Crowded Hour of Glorious Life</i>		
The Fireplace.....	Henry S. Whitehead	40
<i>A Weird Murder—and a Ghostly Revenge</i>		
White Man's Madness.....	Lenore E. Chaney	49
<i>Last of the Incas—the Lure of Gold</i>		
Red and Black.....	Irvin Mattick	67
<i>Yong Lo Was a Reptile with an Artist's Soul</i>		

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

When We Killed Thompson	Strickland Gillilan	73
<i>For Thirty Years He Believed Himself a Murderer</i>		
Wings of Power (First Part)	Lady Anne Bonny	77
<i>Three-part Pseudo-Scientific Novel</i>		
Out of the Long Ago	Seabury Quinn	95
<i>Werewolves—a Tale of Heredity</i>		
On the Highway	Cargray Cook	106
<i>Wild Automobile Ride, with Death at the Wheel</i>		
The Ocean Leech	Frank Belknap Long, Jr.	109
<i>Uncanny Monster Oozes Over the Side of a Ship</i>		
Two Crows	Francis Hard	115
<i>Verse</i>		
Fog	C. Franklin Miller	116
<i>Prehistoric Patagonian Monsters—a Tale of Stark Terror</i>		
Luisma's Return	Arthur J. Burks	123
<i>Haiti—Death of Henri I, Emperor of the North</i>		
A Changeling Soul	Victor Lauriston	129
<i>Tale of Tangled Personalities</i>		
The Specter Priestess of Wrightstone	Herman F. Wright	134
<i>Ghostly Legend of an English Castle</i>		
The Valley of Teeheemen (Conclusion)	Arthur Thatcher	138
<i>Two-part Novel—Strange Valley in South America</i>		
The Remorse of Professor Panebianco	Grege La Spina	157
<i>Scientist Tries to Find the Physical Qualities of the Human Soul</i>		
Arhl-a of the Caves	C. M. Eddy, Jr.	163
<i>Zurd the Coward—and the Love of Arhl-a for Wagh the Mighty</i>		
The Festival	H. P. Lovecraft	169
<i>Eldritch Tale of New England Witchcraft</i>		
Phantoms	Laurence R. D'Orsay	175
<i>Crime—Dope—and a Haunted Conscience</i>		
The Eyrie		179
<i>A Chat With the Readers</i>		

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OUT OF THE LONG AGO

by Seabury Quinn



Author of "Weird Crimes" and "The Phantom Farm House"

[Excerpts from the diary of Prof. Simeon Warrenner, D. Sc., Ph. D.]

Sept. 20, 19—

TWO letters in the afternoon mail; both requiring answers. Most important, a note from Morgan Carew, inviting me to come to Wales and join in some excavations he plans making this fall. He has stumbled over a promising-looking mound near the village of Cag na Gith, not far from Chatsworth, and expects some interesting digging. There is a dolmen in a pretty fair state of preservation on one of the hills, and Carew thinks some instructive kitchen-middens will be found in the neighborhood.

The second is a favor from Alice Frasanet, asking me to tea at 4 tomorrow. I suppose I may curse Frank Seabring for that. Ever since he met the girl he's been dancing attendance on her, singing my praises when other conversational topics failed. There are several drawbacks to having an assistant of the impressionable age. If it were not for Frank and the fact that Frasanet, *père*, is a liberal contributor to the Society for Anthropological Research, I'd ignore the invitation. But the boy is gen-

uinely fond of me, besides being an able and conscientious assistant, so I shall accept both invitations.

Sept. 21, 19—

TAKING it all in all. Alice's party was a success. During the few moments I was able to pry Frank away, I told him my project to join Carew, and asked him to get his traps together as quickly as possible, as I want to leave before the autumn storms set in. I am not a good sailor:

He seemed a little crestfallen at first, but a few minutes later came up all smiles, and assured me he'd not only be delighted to go on the expedition, but to stay at Cag na Gith long enough to dig to the center of the earth, or clear through, if I so desired. Frank is a good boy, but a little inclined to be flighty.

If ever there were a born flirt, Alice Frasanet is she. Before the guests had thinned out, she allowed herself to be teased into singing, and, with Dora Caruthers' accompaniment, rendered "The Land of The Sky-Blue Water." I felt sorry for Frank. The little minx planted herself squarely in front of him, and sang as directly to him as any Broadway chorus girl tor-

turing some hapless victim in the audience.

The half-mythical story of some remote ancestor of Frank's who married a Mohawk woman in the days when Boston Common was a cow pasture is a standing joke among his friends, and Alice declared she was addressing the charming little ballade to the drop of redskin blood in him.

Certainly she succeeded in making him a temporary aborigin, for he was red as a boiled lobster from collar to hair before she brought the song to a close.

Another incident that helped me through the dreary rounds of weak tea and vapid conversation was a story Shela Tague told me, which directly concerned Cag na Gith. I chanced to mention my plan to go there with Frank to help Carew in his digging, and at the village's name she turned as white as though a chill had suddenly come on her.

Thinking she was sickened with the fetid air, I was about to fetch her a glass of water, when she begged me to sit with her and listen to an experience she had near the place three years before.

"I was stopping at a farmhouse, about half a mile from the railway station," she began, "doing some sketching at times; but mostly walking over the hills and moors about the village.

"One afternoon, near sunset, I had set up my easel a few hundred feet from the station platform, and was painting away industriously, trying to make my colors and the daylight come out even. I chanced to glance behind me, and saw a queer-looking man sitting on a luggage truck near the station, gazing intently at me.

"There aren't more than half a dozen houses in all Cag na Gith, you know; and anything in the shape of a stranger, even a tramp, is a sensation in the place. I thought I knew every-

one, human and canine, in the village; but this loafer was new to me.

"I went on with my painting until the sun had gone behind the big hill where the dolmen is, and the air began to take on the twilight chill. Once or twice I glanced back out of the tail of my eye, to see what my companion was up to, and each time I saw him sitting in the same stiffly upright position, gazing fixedly at me.

"As I folded up my easel and camp stool, and started across the tracks for my boarding place, he rose and began to walk in the same direction.

"There was no hurry in his gait, Dr. Warrener, but I felt that he was all a-tremble, and terribly eager to overtake me. I began to hasten a little, and with two long strides—positively, they were like an athlete's standing leaps!—he lessened the distance between us by fifteen feet, and I saw he'd be abreast of me before I could pass the water pit lying on the farther side of the railway. I hadn't noticed him particularly, and couldn't see him very well in the gathering dusk, but there was something about that man that horrified me, though I couldn't say exactly what it was. He was tall, very tall, well over six feet, and startlingly thin, and seemed to be wearing a tight-fitting suit of shabby, fuzzy gray cloth. And though he walked directly on the gravel ballast of the roadbed, his feet made no sound.

"I hurried a few steps; then, when I saw I couldn't possibly shake him, I determined to brazen the thing out, and turned on him, asking angrily, 'What do you mean by following me?'

"Professor Warrener, if I live to be a hundred years old, I'll never be able to forget that face. It was small and narrow, and drawn to a point, almost like a dog's, and the teeth protruding from the great, wide mouth were long and yellow and hooked, like an animal's fangs. But the eyes were the most horrible part of it. They

glowed and glowered at me like two disks of phosphorus in the half-light, and I remembered thinking for one awful moment—absurd as it may seem to you—of a quotation from ‘Red Riding Hood.’ Do you remember where she asks the wolf, ‘What great eyes you have, Grandmamma’ and ‘What great teeth you have, Grandmamma’? Those were the very words that popped into my mind, and their awful answers came running in their wake like the echo of a horror. I’ll never be able to look at a book of fairy tales again without a shudder; for since that night the story of ‘Red Riding Hood’ is a frightful ghost story to me, and a real one, a terribly real one.

“What the monster—I can’t think of him as a man—would have done if he’d gotten to me, I don’t know, and I don’t like to speculate on it; but what I saw a few seconds later wakes me up screaming at night, sometimes, even now.

“While he was still fifteen or twenty feet away, a silly, little gray rabbit popped out of its hole in the rocks beside the tracks and scudded between us. As it flew past, the thing caught sight of it, and, seeming to forget me, gave chase. You know how fast a frightened rabbit can run, Professor? I assure you the poor little bunny didn’t have a chance with that tall, lean pursuer on its track. He ran it down before it had covered a hundred yards. I heard the poor thing scream as he crushed it in his long, bony fingers, and lifted it, still struggling, to his mouth, and tore it to bits with his teeth.

“I ran as I’d never run before to my cottage, and got there more dead than alive, for every drop of blood in my veins seemed to be running cold as a night-sweat. My landlady shook her head when I told her what I’d seen, and said, ‘Don’t ee go out o’ nights nae mair, Missie; for there do be bogles in the hills, an’ I’ve

heard me gran’father say they crave human meat a’ times.’”

DESPITE Shela’s earnestness, I could not forbear a grin.

“We’ll be looking for dead rabbit hunters; not live ones,” I told her. “What you saw was probably some poor, half-starved tramp; maybe a lunatic escaped from some asylum.”

“No,” she insisted, “it wasn’t. Nothing human could have looked like that thing. Please, please, Professor Warrenner, don’t go to Cag na Gith; I know something terrible will happen if you do. Why, I wouldn’t go there, not even at midday, for all the money in the Bank of England.”

“Possibly,” I assented, “but we’re looking for something more valuable than money: we’re digging for relics of a vanished civilization.”

To my astonishment, the little Irishwoman suddenly crossed herself.

“Digging?” she almost shrieked. “Digging? And in those hills? Professor Warrenner, you don’t know what you’re doing. The country people wouldn’t put a spade in one of those mounds for anything. They say the body of a bugwolf is buried there, and to turn the sod would liberate its spirit.”

“A bugwolf?” I echoed. “That accounts for the condition of the dolmen and mounds. Fear of the werewolf has probably kept the peasantry away. Carew told me that the excellent state of the land, archeologically speaking, puzzled him. Your friend, the werewolf—or, as the Welshmen will have it, the bugwolf—has performed a valuable service to science. I’ll have to propose him for honorary membership in the Society for Anthropological Research.”

“Ah, Dr. Warrenner, don’t make light,” Shela begged. “You scientists who don’t believe in God nor devil think you know everything; but you don’t. These stories of ghosts and werewolves are as old as humanity it-

self; surely there must be some truth in them, or they wouldn't have persisted so long."

"Well," I replied, "if what you saw really was a wolf-man, he'd better lie low while we're about. Frank Scabring is part Mohawk, you know. An ancestress of his was a woman of the totem of the bear; and the tribes claiming descent from the great bear, and those who had the wolf for their manitou, were always at war. If I remember my pre-colonial history rightly, the bear people usually came out ahead, too."

Shela twitched her shoulders as she rose, for all the world like a spaniel shaking the water from its fur.

"You'll be sorry if you dig in those hills," she warned.

"I'll be sorrier if the society's board of governors learns that I knew about them and didn't dig there," I countered. "Scientists of today are like bricklayers or carpenters, you know. So many bricks laid and so many nails driven, so much wages; so many scientific discoveries a year, a new appropriation; no discoveries, no salary. It's so much for so much, you know; and I think I'd rather brave your Welsh werewolf than the gaunt gray wolf that accompanies an unpaid salary."

With which bit of homely philosophy, I bade Alice adieu, got my hat and stick, and left to pack for the trip.

Oct. 10, 19—

CAG NA GITH. And a dreary little hole it is. Six or eight sad-looking cottages cling with despondent tenacity to the hillsides rising from the shabby little railway station. A nervous little train fusses up to the platform twice a day, always threatening to deposit a stranger in our midst, and never doing it. Even the loafers at the public house wear an air of settled gloom. The only thing of interest in the neighborhood is the great dolmen that crowns the tallest

hill. There it stands, foursquare with the compass, frowning disdainfully upon these degenerate offspring of the once mighty Britons like an ancestral portrait regarding the family spend-thrift.

Carew has engaged a cottage a few minutes' walk from our digging grounds. A widow who boasts more wrinkles than I've ever seen in a human face lives a quarter-mile away, and, for a consideration, cooks our meals and otherwise ministers to our wants. The remains of an ancient stone-quarry lie about a hundred yards from the dolmen; here we have staked out a plot of promising ground. Tomorrow we commence digging.

Oct. 12, 19—

NOTHING remarkable. Our excavations have been more productive of disappointments than anything else. A few feet down we struck a stratum of coarse sand and gravel, and one or two bits of rough blue stone, clearly not indigenous to the neighborhood. After that, water. If nothing further develops in the next two or three days we shall move our operations to another hill.

Oct. 13, 19—

NO FURTHER discoveries of note. A few bones, apparently canine, came to light in the moist sand today.

The weather is perceptibly cooler, and brisk winds spring up at dusk. Last night the breeze was so strong it rattled the doors and windows in a most annoying manner; once or twice my lamp flickered and nearly went out.

There is a chill quality in the air, too, which baffles all the efforts of our little fire to keep the room comfortable. Several times the gusts of air played so about the door I could have been certain a dog was snuffing at the crack. Yet when I flung the door open there was nothing there.

Our house must be in the path of some air current shot down between the hills, for I chanced to look out the window while the panes were rattling, and the fir trees on the hilltop were perfectly quiet.

Frank has been very restless all day. Twice he left the work to go to the village, coming back each time with disappointment written large in his face. I suppose he has been expecting a letter from the Frasanet girl.

Oct. 14, 19—

IT IS really most extraordinary, the way the wind seems to have singled out our cottage for its pranks. Just before dawn I was awakened by the rattling of the casement. It shook and quivered till I thought someone was trying to force an entrance. Neither Carew nor Frank seemed disturbed by the noise, so I got up to investigate. Immediately I turned my flashlight on the window, the rattling ceased. The minute I left the window, the clatter recommenced; when I stood at the casement several minutes, the noise began at the back door. I hurried through the barren little kitchen, and heard it at the front of the house.

For several minutes I played a sort of crazy blind man's buff; finally I cursed myself for a fool and crawled back to bed. But the wind's sharp, furious stabs persisted some time, knocking at windows and doors, whining and whistling about the eaves and chimneys, and buffeting the walls. Almost as abruptly as it commenced, the racket ceased, and the absolute silence of the pre-dawn settled over the house.

Old Mrs. Jones was laying the tea things when I came in a few minutes before the others this afternoon.

"Be ye goin' to stop yer diggin' soon?" she asked, swathing the earthen pot in a tea-cozy.

"No," I answered, "we've just commenced."

"Ye'll not be diggin' by th' quarry, though?" she pursued. "Not much deeper?"

She avoided looking at me; but there was an almost feverish anxiety in her words.

"We haven't found much there," I conceded. "We'll try somewhere else if the luck doesn't turn in a few days."

The old woman busied herself with the toast and marmalade a moment, then, abruptly, "Did ye hear th' dargs last night?"

"Dogs?" I queried. "No; how do you mean?"

"Oh," she evaded, "they was howling at someat as was runnin' through the hills. Th' wind, p'aps."

"I certainly heard the wind," I assured her. "It raced round the house for an hour or more last night. Is it a habit of Welsh dogs to bark at the wind?"

"'Tis a habit of all dargs to bay th' wind when there's evil in it," she answered seriously. "Sixty-five years, girl an' woman, I've lived in these parts, an' there's always trouble come to them as dug in th' hills. I'm not sayin' it's true; but me faither used to tell of a bogle his faither had seen beside that heathen grave on th' big mound. 'Tis some as says th' old dead warn't buried deep enough, and they walks at night when their graves is seratched; an' some says it's a bogle that watches beside th' quarry; but none round here would strike a pick in th' hills for love nor gold. When our dargs howls, we knows there's things abroad."

"You think the dogs can see what you can't, then?" I asked, amused at her earnestness.

"Aye," she answered simply, "th' darg sees what mortals' eyes can't, because there's no soul in him."

I fumbled in my jacket pocket for my pipe, bringing out a small, hard object along with the briar. It was one of the bits of blue stone we'd dug

from the quarry the day before. Tossing it on the mantel. I opened my tobacco pouch.

"Where'd ye come by that?"

Mrs. Jones was staring at the bit of blue rock as if she saw a specter hovering over it.

"Oh, that?" I replied. "Why, we dug it from the gravel the other day. Odd, isn't it? No stone like it anywhere about. Can't figure how it got here."

"Ye put it back—tonight!" she interrupted excitedly. "It's th' bug-wolf stane. Man, man, ye don't know what ye did when ye took that bit o' rock from th' ground."

"The bug-wolf stone?" I echoed. "What'd ye mean?"

She twisted the hem of her apron between her gnarled hands, and swallowed painfully.

"I'm a Christian woman, an' I don't set much store by th' old tales; but 'tis said a demon wolf used to roam th' hills, killin' all he met; an' when th' fathers kilt his body they buried it under a cairn o' them magic stanes, to hold his spirit in. Man, ye unstopped th' flask when ye took that stane from th' earth. He'll be rummin' loose again, a-pryin' at yer doors an' winders, and some time he'll get in, an' that'll be th' death o' ye."

I balanced the bit of rock in my palm a minute, then flipped it through the door.

"Let him come for his confounded stone," I said contemptuously, reaching for a blazing splinter to light my pipe.

The slamming of the door answered me. Mrs. Jones was scrambling down the path as fast as her old rheumatic legs would carry her.

Oct. 15, 19—

MRS. JONES has discharged us. Bribery, threats and entreaties are alike of no avail to bring her back. An offer to replace the blue stone mollified her temporarily; but when we

went to look for it, the thing was nowhere to be found. I must have tossed it farther than I realized, yesterday.

Oct. 18, 19—

THERE are certain advantages in having an assistant of the impressionable age. Alice Frasanet arrived this morning, bag and baggage, including her Aunt Anna.

Frank has been of little practical use, anyway, and the small loss of his assistance is more than compensated by Alice's services. Like the practical little person she is, Alice has taken up our care where Mrs. Jones left off, and we have already been treated to a batch of biscuit, real biscuit, American biscuit. The ladies have obtained lodgings at the Jones cottage, and if all the guile I can exercise will keep them there, they shall remain till we've completed our excavations.

Oct. 19, 19—

OUR first real find was made today. Grubbing in a half-hearted way, I unearthed what appeared to be a human tibia; in a few more strokes we had an almost perfectly articulated skeleton out of the sand. Whoever possessed those bones in life must have been a human bean pole, for the limbs are disproportionately long. His hands and feet must have given him considerable trouble, too, for their bones are half again as long as those of any modern man's.

We laid the frame on a blanket beside the trench and searched about for the skull. Here the mystery began, for though we churned up the sand for yards round, we could find no head. Finally, after about an hour's search, we dug out a large dog's skull, which processed neatly upon the vertebræ. We shall pack these bones carefully, and hold them to compare with further discoveries. Is it possible we have stumbled on the remnant of an ancient dog-headed people, or did the old Druids have an unrecorded cus-

tom of burying the head of a dog with the malefactor in some instances of capital punishment? It is too early to indulge even in hypotheses, but the possibilities are fraught with interest.

"Maybe we've dug up Shela Tague's werewolf," Frank suggested as he and I packed the skeleton down the trail to our cottage.

"Maybe you're a fool!" I told him.

Oct. 20, 19—

SOMEONE is interfering with our work. When we arrived at the quarry this morning, we found sand scratched into our trench, stakes pulled up and several of our tools missing. Prints of large, naked feet in the earth showed that the miscreant had removed his boots in an effort to hide his identity, though why he should have done this is more than I can understand. One pair of village boots is exactly like another to me.

Toward evening it blew up a rain. Carew and I smoked endless pipes and played endless games of cribbage. Frank went to the Jones cottage. It was nearly midnight when he burst in, drenched and excited.

"I saw him!" he exclaimed, flinging his dripping waterproof over a chair. "I saw him; but he got away."

"Who?" Carew and I chorused.

"The fellow who's been jazzing up our work. When I left the Jones house, that mongrel pup of the old lady's set up an awful howling—you'd have thought his grandmother was dead from the noise he made—and I spied a suspicious-looking bird down the road. I kept my eye on him as I walked along, and when he left the trail and made for the quarry, I followed him. He went straight to our trench and got down on his all-fours, scratching sand into the hole like a dog.

"I let out a yell and rushed him; but he saw me coming and streaked it across the hill."

"What'd he look like?" asked Carew.

"Darned if I know," Frank admitted. "It was raining so hard I couldn't get a good look at him at first, and he made off so fast when I yelled that I didn't get much of a line on him then. All I can say for sure is that he's about a head taller than any of us, and thin as Job's turkey-hen. His clothes looked skintight on him, and he was wearing a cap, I think—something with a long peak that stuck out in front of his face—and man, oh, man, he surely could run."

"Which way did he go?" I asked.

"That's the funny part of it," Frank shook his head doubtfully. "I'd have sworn he ran right for our back door, but I lost sight of him by that little bunch of scrub down the path. Don't suppose either of you heard anything of him?"

We talked the mystery over for half an hour, then went to bed for want of something more exciting.

Oct. 21, 19—

CCAREW is dead. Murdered.

It seems incredible that this horror should have come upon us; yet as I write, the poor fellow's body "lies by the wall"—what a beastly gruesome way of expressing themselves these Welsh have!

Last night, after supper, Frank departed for the Jones cottage as usual; and Carew and I settled ourselves for a quiet game and a smoke. The tobacco canister went empty before we'd dealt half a dozen hands, so we cut to see who should go to the village for a fresh supply. I drew an ace, Carew a ten spot.

"Be back in half an hour," he promised, pulling on his cap and jacket; "and if I catch that chap who's been meddling with our diggings it'll go hard with one of us."

Poor Carew! It certainly went hard with him.

Ten o'clock came. No sign of Carew. I played sullenly with my cold pipe and cursed his delay. Frank came in; midnight struck; still no Carew.

"Hanged if I can stand this any longer," I said irritably. "I'm going to see what's keeping him."

"I'll go with you," Frank volunteered. "This place is too all-fired spooky to stay in alone."

We set off briskly through the chilly moonlight, keeping a sharp lookout for any signs of Carew and our tobacco. Fifteen minutes' walk brought us to the village tavern, where the sleepy boniface paused long enough in ejecting a gin-soaked farmhand from the tap room to assure us Carew had not been there. Several interested spectators of the eviction proceedings corroborated him profanely. Here was a ~~poner~~ ~~poner~~. Carew had been gone almost long enough to walk to Chatsworth, yet no one had seen him. Buying a couple of tins of tobacco, we hurried back along the trail.

Out in the hills, we gave several long halloos, and the barren mounds shouted back our calls mockingly.

"D'ye suppose he could have gone over to the works, and turned his ankle, or something?" Frank hazarded.

"If'm, not likely; but we'll have a look," I answered as we left the path and struck across the hill for the quarry.

"That's where I saw that fellow scratching in the sand." Frank indicated the head of white earth beside our trench. "He was down on his knees, making his hands go like a pair of—hello, what's that?"

He pointed to a dark object lying on the sand pile.

I broke into a run without answering, for I had a presentiment of what we'd find.

Carew sprawled upon his back, his outstretched hands clutching at the yielding sand, one knee slightly flexed, the other leg hanging limply over the

lip of the trench. His throat and chest were horribly lacerated, as though he had been worried by some animal of incomparable ferocity. Across his cheeks and brow several hideous gashes wrote the story of his death-struggle. But the most appalling thing was the expression of unspeakable horror stamped on his features. It was as if he had looked one awful moment on the bareboned grisliness of death before the spirit was rent from his body.

"My God!" Frank shrank against me, shivering with panic terror. "His face, man; look at his face!"

I dropped my handkerchief over my poor friend's head. I had no wish to look again.

"We'd best notify the coroner," I said, half leading, half carrying Frank away. The boy was done in with fear; never have I seen a man's nerve fail him so completely.

The fussy, fat little coroner performed his duties with all the punctilio of a rural official today. Strangers in a strange land, we were more than half suspected of our friend's murder, and might have been held for the assizes but for a bit of evidence the post-mortem disclosed. Clinging to poor Carew's nails were a few small tufts of tawny-gray hair. These, together with the terrible mangling of his throat, influenced the jury to return their strange verdict: "That Morgan Carew came to his death at the hands or teeth of some person or animal to your jurors unknown."

The village undertaker has just left. Embalming is about as much a lost art here as it is in modern Egypt, so the coffin has been put in the unused kitchen, where no heat will hasten dissolution. There, beside the skeleton of the thing—man or devil—we dug from the sand last week, is all that is mortal of my old friend. Tomorrow they ship the remains to England for burial. Carew had no near relatives; Frank and I shall go with

the body and see it laid in the family vault at Mulbridge.

Oct. 22, 19—

WHAT I saw last night simply could not have happened. And yet it did.

Frank and I were sitting before the fire, watching the reflection from the coals fuse with the afternoon sunbeams on the hearth, each busy with his own thoughts, when a subdued clatter in the kitchen started us up together. The tiniest noises are magnified a hundredfold in the house of death.

The same thought was in both our minds as we made for the back room. The rats were at their devilish work.

Frank took up a carving knife, big as a half-grown cutlas, as I swung the door open. I smiled at the action in spite of myself. The reflexes of elemental psychology are as unreasoning today as when our ancestors slunk naked through the primeval forests. Nothing but a blind desire to kill led to the seizure of that knife; a second's reflection would have told him that a knife is well-nigh as useless against rats as a pointed finger.

We searched the little cell of a room quickly. Nothing living, save a cricket which set up its mournful "ka-cheek" from a cranny in the stones, was there. The chest with the dog-headed skeleton lay by the cold, gaping fireplace. Carew's coffin rested starkly under its black pall on a pair of saw-horses beside the wall. One of the candles sputtering at its head leaned a little in its socket. I straightened it, pressing the melting wax with my thumb to prevent its soiling the cloth. Frank half seated himself on the rough deal table, gouging at the wood with the point of his absurd knife.

A sudden current of air, icy cold, fluttered the candle flame and shook the hem of the coffin-robe. Instinctively, I felt another presence; some evil thing, that traveled in a chill of

terror. Eyes seemed boring me from behind, and I gripped the candelabrum savagely to suppress the desire to turn.

Slowly, without moving my head, I turned my eyes on Frank. He was frowning morosely at the table, chipping bits of wood from it, as though intent on serious business.

"Rat, tat, tat!"

A sudden sharp clatter of knuckles against the window pane. I wheeled in my tracks, my breath gone hot and sulfurous with fear.

Staring through the glass was a great, shaggy-haired wolf. Yet it was not a wolf. About the lupine jaws and cheeks were lines hideously reminiscent of a human face, and the phosphorescent glow of those monstrous eyes never shone in anything carnal. As I looked, the monster raised its head, and strangling horror gripped me as I saw a human neck beneath it. Very long and thin it was, corded and sinewed like the neck of a thing long dead, and covered with thick, gray fur. Then a hand, hairy, like the throat, and slender as a woman's, fingers tipped with blood-red nails, struck the glass again. I went sick with fear as I speculated how long the fragile glass would withstand it.

The thing must have seen my terror, for the corners of its devilish eyes contracted in a malevolent smile, and a rim of scarlet tongue flicked its black muzzle.

A moan behind me told Frank's abject terror.

"Oh, my God!" he quavered. "That's the thing I saw the other night. That's the thing that killed Carew. Shela Tague was right. We dug up one of them, and the other has come for us."

I swallowed at the dryness in my throat. Words were beyond me.

"Professor—" Frank had crawled across the floor and seized me by the knees—"don't let it get in; for God's sake, don't let it in!"

I pressed the boy's shoulder, not so much to comfort him as to have the feel of something human under my hand. Then my fingers closed fiercely on him, as, high, and sweet, and very lovely, I heard Alice Frasanet's voice rising from the trail at the base of the hill. She had promised to look in on us before we left with Carew's body, and bring us a plate of biscuit. Now she was coming blindly to meet this waiting horror.

From the land of the sky-blue water
They brought a captive maid—

Perpetuating her old jest at Frank's Indian ancestry, she came singing up the path. The thing outside turned at the sound, its pointed ears cocked forward, the white of its teeth showing as its lips parted in anticipation of easy prey. Slowly, bending nearly double, it crept from the window, making for the clump of withered brush at the turn of the path, crouching to spring as Alice rounded the bend.

I looked, horror-frozen in my place, waiting the tragedy as the Christian martyrs must have watched the gratings lift from the lions' dens.

Balancing the tray daintily, Alice approached the knot of shrubs. Silently as a shadow the gray thing slipped into the path, barring her way with gaping jaws and red tongue lolling from its mouth. Slowly, jaws working with a horrible, chewing motion, it advanced its hellish face nearer and nearer her throat.

I tried to speak, to shriek my horror to the evening sky; but a paralyzing dust seemed to have gathered in my throat, and only a hoarse, inarticulate whisper came. Summoning all my strength, I took a step toward the window; next instant I went reeling against the wall as a dark object hurtled past me.

Dashing panes and sash to splinters, Frank took the window at a bound. The crash of falling glass was

drowned in the yell he set up as he cleared the intervening distance with long, loose-limbed strides.

It was Frank who charged that gray horror; yet it was not Frank. As Jekyll metamorphosed to Hyde, so a subtle physical change was wrought in him. It was a man no one in ten generations had seen who rushed down the hillside. It was a cry no living white man had ever heard that he raised as he brandished his great knife.

"Aie, aie, tchn-yoh-yeh-roh-noh!"

Twice he repeated the blood-freezing yell, ending the second time with a crescendoed *"Aie, aie, YAH!"*

It was the Mohawk war whoop—the battle cry of the people of the bear.

IT WAS a miracle of heredity I beheld; an atavism, a throwback, a reversion to type. Sleeping, but never dead, the long-forgotten character of his redskin ancestor had awakened in Frank Seabring at the challenge of danger to his beloved.

Before us lived and breathed the personality of a Mohawk sachem—some warrior of the totem of the bear, whose moving passion was a hatred of the wolf people.

"Aie, yah! Aie, yah!" the battle whoop rang out again.

There was something horribly comic in the wolf-thing's expression as it turned. Such a look of astonished rage the Evil One might give at defiance from a lost soul.

They sprang together, meeting in mid-air. The man-wolf struck swiftly, seeking to bury its fangs in Frank's throat. Frank's free hand sank in the coarse fur at the creature's gullet; the great knife described a half-circle, disappeared; rose and sank again, and again, and again. Stumbling, reeling, spewing blood, the bug-wolf staggered from the clinch, the light of battle fading in its eyes.

“*Aie, tchn-yoh-yeh-roh-noh, YAH!*”

The bear had tasted blood; but not his fill.

Again they closed; once more the wolf-thing sought to worry at Frank's throat. Again the huge knife rose and fell, blood dripping from its point and edge. And ever, as the murderous work went on, the war whoop of the Mohawk rent the mountain quiet.

Taller by a head than Frank, the wolf-thing began to sink. Slowly it went to its knees, to its side; to its back.

“*Aie, aie, YAH!*”

Like an executioner's simitar the great knife descended, traversing the bugwolf's throat, a dye of rusty-red staining the fur in its wake.

Once more the blade circled the man-brute's head, and Frank Seabring, product of effete New England, college man and instructor in anthropology, rose and contemplated the scalp of his slain foe.

Tucking the patch of fur in his belt, he seemed to notice Alice for the first time, where she stood ash-white, beside the path. An instant he regarded her wonderingly, then abruptly tore his Norfolk jacket apart, spreading the open edges between his outstretched hands. It was the blanket-holding, the age-old invitation of the Indian brave to his squaw.

And Alice Frasanet, fox-trotting, bridge-playing, tea-drinking Alice Frasanet, laid her fluffy, empty little head against his breast.