

THRILLING

Wonder

STORIES

VOL. XLIV, NO. 1 A THRILLING PUBLICATION SUMMER ISSUE

TWO FEATURED NOVELS

- THE GOLDEN HELIX**.....Theodore Sturgeon 10
Lost in space, they attempted to make a new life for themselves on an old planet—and found out that they were evolving in reverse!
- TIME PAWN**.....Philip K. Dick 68
A doctor must always stand ready to answer all his calls—but this particular call happened to come to Jim Parsons out of the future!

SHORT STORIES

- END AS A ROBOT**.....Richard Marsten 46
Nobody could get away with murder while Robicide was on the job
- THE WALL**.....Charles A. Stearns 53
No barrier can keep out the darkness lurking in the human heart
- PROCESS SHOT**.....Sam Merwin, Jr. 106
The cameraman was on the spot for this Revolutionary War movie
- THE MASTERS**.....Theodore R. Cogswell 118
Earth still had a surprise for the conquerors from space

FEATURES

- THE READER SPEAKS**.....The Editor 6
- LOST: ONE MAGNETIC FIELD**.....R. S. Richardson 62
- WHAT ARE THEIR SCIENTIFIC NAMES?**.....A Quiz 67
- IMAGINATION (Verse)**.....Philip Jose Farmer 117

Cover Painting by JACK COGGINS

N. L. PINES, *Publisher*; EDWARD R. ROFHEART, *Art Director*; SAMUEL MINES, *Editor*

THRILLING WONDER STORIES. Published quarterly by STANDARD MAGAZINES, INC., 10 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y. N. L. Pines, President. Copyright, 1954, by Standard Magazines, Inc. Subscription (12 issues), \$3.00; single copies, 25c. Foreign and Canadian postage extra. Re-entered as second-class matter August 28, 1953, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under Act of March 3, 1879. Names of all characters used in stories and semi-fiction articles are fictitious. If the name of any living person or existing institution is used, it is a coincidence. Manuscripts must be accompanied by self-addressed, stamped envelopes and are submitted at the author's risk. In corresponding with this publication please include your postal zone number, if any. Summer, 1954. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.



"You've got a key to all the secrets of history...."

PROCESS SHOT

By **SAM MERWIN, JR.**

No wonder the Revolutionary War movie was good—the cameraman was on the spot when it happened.

THE installation was finished. Dr. Moorhead sat in an absurdly comfortable oyster-white leather armchair behind the immense blond satinwood desk that was his badge of office as president of Colossus Tri-Di Vidar Pictures, Incorporated—more generally labeled

CTV—and wondered what in heaven he was supposed to do to earn his immense salary.

He asked the question of Marlin Zandor, intense, fluid-featured, prematurely white-haired general manager of the studio, who had just guided him through the formal inauguration of a luncheon at which actors, executives, columnists and public relations experts had largely ignored the *filet de boeuf* Wellington and Moët Chandon in favor of the still and vidar cameras that had flashed and ground through the festivities and speechmaking.

Zandor's quick one-sided smile, though sardonic, lost none of its supple charm. He said, "Willis, when a man has attained your eminence and fame, and has managed to retain a reasonable semblance of physical health, he becomes a prize to be competed for in the open market."

"Good God!" exclaimed Dr. Moorhead, to whom, in the course of sixty-three full and active years, the idea had never occurred.

"Surely self-evident truth is not shocking to you," said Zandor straightforwardly. "If you do nothing more than appear at a dozen good-will engagements a month, you'll be more than earning your keep. You're a triple-threat front man—a historian, a university president, a former ambassador. We're counting on your prestige to cause the great adult audience we seem never able to get, to install vidar sets, or to turn theirs on when CTV productions are on the air. It's part of the mature productions program we're embarked on. You saw the rushes of the John Andre epic last night."

Dr. Moorhead nodded but was not able entirely to restrain a wince. He said, a trifle plaintively, "But do you have to ring in that love plot? Surely, what we know about the relations between Andre and Benedict Arnold's wife, following the winter when the British held Philadelphia, would have been enough."

ZANDOR shook his white head emphatically and slid off the corner of the desk. He stood in the center of the deep-pile carpet, hands thrust carelessly into the pockets of his \$100 slacks. He said, "Willis, the truth is great—we use it whenever we think it will sell. But in this instance, it doesn't allow for the love interest we've got to have."

"I see," said Dr. Moorhead, who saw all too clearly. He added, "Still, it seems a shame, when your background material—your settings—are so historically perfect."

"That's where we try to do an educational job," said Zandor with a flicker of pride. "Our backgrounds are accurate. And, by making them so, we do help people to get a sense of the past in a picture like this one. But, if we didn't give them stories they wanted to put money on their monthly bills to see, we'd be wasting it entirely."

He paused, added, "Good luck—and gladder than I can say to have you with us, Willis. Mrs. Zandor—Alice—hopes you'll have dinner with us tonight. Seven o'clock—no black tie."

"I'll be delighted," said Moorhead. When Zandor had left, he picked up a phone, told the honey-voiced female who answered that he would be taking no calls for the next two hours.

He didn't want to talk to anyone. He wanted to think. Yet, when he marshalled his thoughts, he found them unbearable. For, almost before he was launched on what had seemed to be his greatest opportunity, he was caught in the pattern again.

It was a much too familiar pattern. When, a young man whose sheepskin was still fresh, he had begun teaching American history, he had done so with the joyously serious intent of teaching his students to avoid future mistakes by revealing to them the tragic errors of the past.

And had found himself battling a weighty body of alumni and faculty opinion, that had decried him as unpatriotic for distorting the fairy stories

of history most of them had been taught as truth. That had been during the nervous Cold War era which followed World War Two.

Years afterward, when his definitive *Traitors and Assassins of United States History* had been published, he had found himself decried by press and pundits alike for destroying the fabric of American idealism.

And, as ambassador—but that was too recent, too painful to contemplate in the light of his latest disillusion.

For, as President of CTV, he saw all too clearly that he was again to be hamstrung in his efforts to help humanity face its future bravely through knowledge of its past.

He decided to take a walk around the studio grounds.

It became quickly evident, once he had slipped out the side door of his own sanctum sanctorum, that, despite the intense publicity campaign that had, for more than a week, been wringing the last ounce of exploitation out of his appointment as President of CTV, he was virtually a stranger on his own lot. In his formal luncheon attire, he seemed to be accepted generally as some sort of dress extra or character actor.

Though he had commenced his stroll with no conscious destination in mind, Moorhead found himself adapting one in self-defense.

WHILE watching the rushes of the André-Arnold epic, the night before, Moorhead had found himself intrigued by one background stretch, which had showed a view of No. 1 Broadway, Sir Henry Clinton's Headquarters in New York in 1780. In more than one way, it was a remarkable shot—for, while giving an impression of absolute historical veracity, it had shown the stone stairway of the entrance facing north, rather than south, which was not in accord with such period shots as Moorhead and other historians had viewed.

It was not important, but the detail

bothered him. He decided to find out the why of this seemingly unimportant fact. Besides, he did want to see how the studio managed to obtain such remarkable results, in regard to its historical backgrounds if not its scenarios. He asked a lot patrolman, was directed to a low concrete building a quarter of a mile away.

On its door it bore the gilt legend *Library and Research*, and its contents, while both interesting and impressive, proved disappointing. Its research seemed to be largely taken up with costume study, its library to consist of neatly stacked and filed cans of film.

"Process shots," said the pallid young attendant ushering him around. "One of our directors wants a scene laid in Sarawak or Moscow or maybe Kamchatka. We got 'em here, sir. CTV has camera crews out all over the world, at all times, getting background footage. If we haven't got what the director wants, we get it for him, sir."

"I see," said Moorhead, who understood the photographic process of putting a studio-photographed foreground against a "real" background. "But what about your historical pictures? Where do you get the background shots for them? Surely you don't rebuild every set you need on the lot here. The expense . . ."

The attendant frowned. He said, "Sure we build 'em. Take a look at the back of the lot if you don't believe me, sir."

"I'm not questioning your truthfulness," said Moorhead. "But in this André picture, I believe, you have managed a reconstruct—"

"Oh!" The attendant's frown faded. "Miniatures and Models has come up with something special for that one, according to the grapevine. It's all very hush-hush, but I guess it's okay for you to know about it, sir."

"I guess so," said Moorhead. "Where do I find this—Miniatures and Models?"

It proved to be another low concrete building, not far from Library and Re-

search. Inside, it was echoing, gaunt, empty.

Moorhead walked the concrete floor of an immense room until, at last, he reached a barricade, built across the far end of the long room—a steel barricade with a wooden door. Through this he heard sounds of life. He knocked, got no answer, knocked again.

"Come in!" roared an annoyed male voice.

He went in.

Two men were inside, playing gin. Both wore sports shirts and definitely undress slacks, but there any resemblance ended. One, the one who had yelled at Moorhead, was immense, dark and hairy. The other was little, wiry and wore gold-rimmed spectacles. He said, "Well, now you're in here, what is it?"

On the table, pushed to one side, were a pair of automatic pistols in discarded shoulder holsters.

"I merely had a question to ask you gentlemen," said Moorhead. He introduced himself.

HIS reception was irreverent. The two men stared briefly at one another, then the big hairy one said, "Sooner or later, we get 'em all in here. What can we do for you, Doc?"

Instead of feeling taken aback, Moorhead was delighted. Here at least, on the CTV lot, was humanity, brash and unafraid. He said, "Amongst other things, I'm by way of being a historian. I saw your yesterday's rushes last night, and I'm interested in where you picked up your information about the steps in front of One Broadway. In every print I've ever seen, they pointed the other way."

The little man said, "Sir, I'm glad to meet you. I was at Eastern while you were President, but I don't guess you'd remember me. And that book of yours—the big one—it's been a big help to us in this job we're on now."

"You mean *he* wrote the book?" the big man asked incredulously. Then, to

Moorhead, "What's the idea of flapping around here making noises like a studio boss? Draw up a chair and squat."

Moorhead sat down. He said, "You know my name." And, nodding at the hairy one, "May I ask yours?"

"Larz Johanssen," said the giant. "CTV's secret weapon. This is Maury Faylen, Doc. He rates as CTV's secret sorrow."

"Quiet, you freak," said the little man. And then, to Moorhead, "What can we do for you, sir?"

"He wants to know what makes Clinton's doorstep point north instead of south, you idiot," said Johanssen. "You're the brains of this outfit—by your own admission. Tell him."

Incredibly, Faylen looked dismayed. He opened his mouth to speak, closed it, gulped, then blurted, "Because that's the way it points, sir."

Moorhead smiled and said, "I'll accept your word for it, Faylen. But how did you find out?"

There was another long hesitation. Then Faylen said, "You're really the new president of CTV, sir?"

"Don't you ever listen to the news on your own box?" the giant asked. "Sure, he's the new president." And, to Moorhead, "How'd you happen to dig us out so quick? Old Mother Zandor tip you off?"

"Not yet," said Moorhead. "I merely got curious about that doorstep."

"See?" said Johanssen. "Build a better doorstep . . ."

"Okay," growled Faylen. "But we didn't *build* this one—all we did was take pictures of it."

"How?" Moorhead put the question swiftly.

His new friends exchanged another long look. Then Faylen said, "After all, he is the president." Johanssen shrugged immense shoulders.

He said, after looking at a gold-strapped watch on a hairy left wrist, "Okay—it's time we got to work anyhow."

Both men got up and began to strap

on their shoulder holsters. Looking mildly apologetic, Faylen said, "Damn things are a nuisance. But we aren't allowed to take chances."

Wondering, even a little afraid, Moorhead followed them through another door—which Johanssen carefully bolted behind them—down a flight of steel steps, to a sort of subterranean concrete vault. In its center, focus of a multitude of heavily insulated cables, stood a steel cabinet, about ten feet high by eight feet broad and deep.

FAYLEN checked a complex of dials and gauges mounted on one of its walls, while the ebullient Johanssen explained. "It's the strangest thing, Doc. If we'da known what we were getting into when we started it, we'd have dismantled the whole business. Since we got it operating, we can't call our souls our own."

"What is it?" Moorhead asked, increasingly puzzled.

"We call it the cockalorum, because we can't think of anything else to call it," said the hairy man. "It started out to be a special wireless transmitter for vidar news flashes from all over the world—an instantaneous transmitter. It was meant to give CTV newsreel the jump on Pathé and the others. Maury here"—with a nod at Faylen—"was supposed to be the white-haired genius that was gonna do it. Instead, he ties a sodium fission reactor to a time clock and comes up with this."

"I don't wish to appear unnecessarily stupid," said Moorhead, "but what does it do?"

Faylen finished checking the indicators and said, "Okay—she's ready now," to Johanssen, who began to unfasten bolts on a door in the cabinet. He said, "I guess you could call it a time machine. Anyway, that's what we've been using it for."

Moorhead hesitated a moment before entering the strange device. He had heard of the long tradition of Hollywood practical jokes, and half-expected,

upon entering, to be doused with water; have most of his clothes removed by a group of rough and willing chorus girls, or find Marlin Zandor awaiting him, dressed as Abraham Lincoln or some such outlandish fancy. Certainly, Faylen and Johanssen seemed ideal types for practicing japey of this sort.

However, upon entering, he found himself wondering, while the bigger man carefully locked them inside, if he hadn't let himself be trapped by a couple of lunatics. He pulled a handkerchief from his breast pocket and began mopping a suddenly moist forehead.

But his hosts were no longer clowning. Johanssen had stationed himself beside what could only be some sort of highly complex camera, while Faylen—after motioning their guest into a rear corner—got busy with another board covered with such an intricate series of gadgets that it reminded Moorhead of a jet-bomber dashboard.

The little man said, without looking over his shoulder, "Roll her, Larz." With which, as the camera began to hum softly, he pushed a combination of buttons that caused the front wall of the cabinet to become transparent. "Polarized molecular screen," he muttered by way of explanation.

"I'll be damned!" said Moorhead, overwhelmed at the enormity of the spectacle suddenly before him.

From a frame of rubble, he was looking West across Lower Broadway at a panorama of Revolutionary Manhattan after dark.

To his immediate left were ruined houses, relics of the great fire of 1776 which—a few days after the British occupation—had reduced to charred ruins much of the lower eastern section of the city, then jumped Broadway further uptown and ravaged the western part of town. Beyond, also to his left, rose the bastions and apron of Fort George, defender of the lower island from the times of the early Dutch settlers to the post-Revolutionary Federalist era.

Beyond it the Battery fell away to

a harbor a-twinkle with the rigging lights of British men of war, and transports and supply ships-at anchor in the Upper Bay. Immediately in the foreground was a partially fenced oval that could only be the Bowling Green. Beyond it, across the street, rose the red brick elegance of Mrs. Lorin's, at No. 1, and its not quite as impressive neighbor at No. 3. To his right Moorhead could make out the fire-damaged spire of the original Trinity Church.

"How about it, Doc?" Johanssen whispered softly. "Does she point north or south?"

THE steps in front of No. 1 indubitably pointed uptown. But Moorhead was too overwhelmed to do more than nod agreement. For, little by little, his senses were forcing his reluctant brain to accept the fact that what he was looking at was real.

First, of course, his eyesight was dominant. He saw, in a matter of minutes, a profusion of uniforms. He saw red-coated sentries on duty outside No. 1, permitting passage of a cluster of gray-surtouted Guard officers inside. He saw heavy-booted Anspacher foot chasseurs in dark green jackets, jack tars with broad-brimmed hats, Hessian grenadiers with candle-waxed mustaches. Frowzily bundled, drunken daughters of joy were making their way to and from the Battery, their historic place of local assignation.

His ears contributed unassailable evidence to add to the reality his eyes revealed to him. He heard English spoken in a variety of accents to rival those of contemporary Times Square—all of them alien. He heard the curses of German auxiliaries, the high-pitched voices of women, the clatter of iron hoofs on cobbled pavements.

Nor did his nose play his other senses false. For the medley of odors that assailed his nostrils did not belong in any Twentieth Century American town. It was composed of pigs in the street, of unwashed dogs and unwashed peo-

ple, of manure, human and animal—and above all, an overpowering, acrid smell of burnt brick and wood and plaster from the rubble of the unreconstructed town.

And, at last, he felt cold—for the polarized barrier seemed far from weatherproof. He turned, aware of his discomfort, and saw that his companions were also shivering. He folded his arms tightly, Johanssen did something to a button, and the picture faded.

"New York was cold in November then," he said, as the lights in the cabinet attained fluorescent brilliance. "Forgot we weren't shooting the summer scenes yet. Hold on a moment."

He worked the locks and left the cabinet. Moorhead turned to Faylen, who said, "Got some good footage of the ships in the harbor. They'll make good process shots for next week's shooting."

"Good God!" cried Moorhead, stung by his companion's matter-of-factness. "Don't you realize what you've got here, man?"

"I should," said the other. "We had enough trouble getting this spot. Do you have any idea what a trick it is to get a safe camera location when and where you want it?" And, when Moorhead simply shook his head, "First, we have to prepare a phantom—that's what we call an electronic mockup of our cabinet. And when we've got it right to contain what the studio wants it to hold in the way of cameras and gadgets, we've got to expect them to want it bigger.

"Next, we've got to locate it temporarily," he went on complainingly. "And that only involves messing around with a few hundred light-years in space as well as time—stuff we have to do by the seat of our pants. Then, when we find our time, we've got to give our phantom a hook—so it'll stay put and not give us a picture of Mars or Halley's comet or something we don't want.

"Then, we've got to latch it onto some spot where it won't be spotted—and believe me, that takes a lot of do-

ing. Usually we find out we've got the whole cabinet pointing east instead of north, or something. Then we've got to pray we've actually got what we want, and that research doesn't have us hunting the wrong people in the wrong time. And are those babies ever wrong!"

STOP squawking, 'featherhead," said Johanssen, re-entering the cabinet with an armful of heavy coats. He handed one to Moorhead, told him, "Get into this or you'll freeze your ears off, Doc."

Struggling into it, Moorhead said, "But, for Pete's sake, you two, don't you realize what you've got? With this incredible invention of yours, you've got the key to all the secrets of history. With it, we can *know* what happened. We can discover if Nero was really the tyrant history calls him, or was smeared. We can get the truth about Ben Bathurt's disappearance. We can see the missing plays of Shakespeare being actually performed at the old Globe Theatre. We—"

"It ain't that easy, Doc," said Johanssen. "Sure, with luck and a lot of time, we could locate some of those things. But it would take some doing. And unless Zandor says the studio needs it, who's gonna pay the bills? We've got a good thing here. We don't want to louse it up."

Moorhead didn't bother to argue. His dream, his so often shattered dream, was alive once again. The vistas opening up before him, thanks to these two rough-and-ready geniuses and their invention, were too splendid for speech. He looked at the blank wall less than a foot in front of him and thought that, if cold could get through from outside while it was in operation, there was nothing to prevent him from stepping through the other way.

There was nothing but his own fear to keep him from walking the dung-laden streets of Revolutionary New York!

He must have made some involuntary motion, for Faylen said quietly, "Don't try to get through the gate, sir. There's no telling whether we could get you back. You'd be hung as a spy, for sure, if some of those Hessians caught you. They're really mean bastards."

"Of course not," said Moorhead, with what he hoped was dignity rather than stuffiness.

Again the wall in front of him seemed to dissolve. And again the incredible panorama lay stretched before him.

It looked almost exactly the same. But behind him, he heard Faylen say in a low voice, "What's the lag lapse, Larz?"

"Eighty-eight minutes," replied the other softly.

And by the moon, by the cessation of street activity, it seemed later. For this was, after all, an occupied city and—save for patrols and soldiers on duty—few were abroad in the near-darkness. He watched a squad of German soldiery tramp past with the heavy boot-tread that, since the Thirty Years War, has been a hallmark of the infantrymen from across the Rhine.

Then, suddenly, the front door of No. 1, across Broadway, was flung open, revealing an orange rectangle of candlelight. A number of surtouted figures appeared. Voices sounded, goodnights were said, an order or two was given. Two officers mounted horses and trotted off up the street, their beasts' hoofs striking sparks from the cobbles.

One figure, stocky within its outer wraps, and walking with a profound limp, moved off alone toward the doorway of No. 3, where, after crossing the alley between the two houses, he turned in. In the grip of near-unbearable excitement, Moorhead turned to ask, "Tell me, what's the date of this scene we're watching?"

It was Johanssen who answered. "By the old calendar, it's the fourth of November, 1780."

"Then that," said Moorhead, pointing toward the limping man, who had

paused in the doorway of No. 3 to glance back the way he had just come, "must be Benedict Arnold."

"Could be," came the appallingly disinterested reply. "He was operating in these parts about then, according to the dope we got."

GOOD heavens!" Moorhead exclaimed softly. It was physical anguish not to step through the barrier, not to cross the cobbled street and confront the man whose name, honored until six weeks earlier—when his treachery had become known—had become an American synonym for *traitor*. Despite all that was known, all that had emerged from diaries and memoirs and correspondence, how much of his story remained to be told! Moorhead's nails actually dug into his palms.

A whisper of alarm from behind him brought Moorhead out of his rigid abstraction. A man had slipped out of the alley, a tall man wearing the green greatcoat of a Tory regiment. Crossing Broadway directly toward them, he paused, seemed to listen, then moved swiftly closer, to an obligato of Hessian hobnails coming nearer. For an instant a shaft of moonlight revealed saturnine features, with sunken eyes and a long, powerful young mouth and chin.

He flattened himself against the invisible barrier that separated him from his watchers, seemed to push almost through it, as the Hessians appeared on their return patrol toward the Fort and Battery and spied him there. A shouted "*Achtung!*" made the night raucous.

Moorhead couldn't help himself. Acting instinctively, he thrust an arm through the barrier and, despite cries of alarm from behind him, pulled the green-coated man into the cabinet. There was an instant of intense, unbelievable cold, as his arm bridged the gap between centuries, and then passage had been made.

A stunned American was gaping at

his rescuers while, outside, a startled and discomfited Hessian non-com poked in vain at the barrier and tried to discover where his quarry had vanished.

Johanssen said, "Now you've done it, Doc. Get him out of here quick—if you can."

"Just a moment." Moorhead assumed command. He turned to his stunned captive, said, "What's your name?"

There was the full authority of a university president, of a former ambassador, in his voice. For the other said, without pausing to reflect, "Champe, sir—Sergeant John Champe, of Loudoun County, Virginia, sir."

"I'll be damned. I thought it had to be you!" said Moorhead.

"Who the hell is it?" Faylen asked. Both he and Johanssen, Moorhead noted, had drawn their automatics and were holding them ready.

"Sergeant John Champe," murmured Moorhead. "Sergeant major of Lighthorse Harry Lee's Legion, on special assignment. Men, this is the fellow who faked desertion and joined Arnold's legion last week to arrange the kidnaping of his new chief. Right?"

Steel-strong fingers encircled Moorhead's throat, deep-set fanatical eyes burned into his own. "You just spoke your own death warrant, whoever you be," said a soft Southern voice in his face.

Faylen, moving swiftly and silently, broke Champe's stranglehold by chopping the barrel of his gun down hard on the sergeant's wrists. He said, "You got no business in here, fellow. If you know what's good for you, you'll get back out there quick."

Moorhead's mind was beginning to function at top speed. Yellowed pages of history and document floated before his mind's eye. This was November 4th, 1780, and this was John Champe, and across the street was Benedict Arnold, just returned from a council of war with Sir Henry Clinton.

Furthermore, on the far bank of the Hudson—this night and for several nights to come, unless journal and history lied—Major Lee, with a small escort and three saddled but riderless horses, was waiting in the Hoboken woods for a rowboat containing Champe, a helper, and the bound and gagged Benedict Arnold. His purpose was to return the traitor to Washington's Headquarters up the river, for trial and punishment.

BUT this night, this November 4th, was the night the conspiracy went awry. For, at the meeting from which Arnold had just come, it had been decided that the traitor and his Tory legion, along with Phillips's brigade, should embark the following day for the Virginia Capes, there to campaign in support of Cornwallis further south.

It was Champe's final chance to reverse history.

Moorhead gripped his shoulder, said, "Never mind who I am—except that I'm a friend. You've got to carry out your assignment tonight or it will be too late. You'll need help to get past this Hessian patrol. Here!"

He snatched the automatic from Faylen's surprised grip, thrust it into the surprised Champe's hands and said, "Just pull the trigger. It will fire ten shots."

And he pushed the tall Virginian back through the barrier.

There was the sound of a brisk scuffle, then the barrier was again opaque and the fluorescents were again on. Johanssen and Faylen, with a fine disregard for Moorhead's rank in the studio, were assailing him verbally.

"You loused up a lot of good footage," said the big man angrily. "Getting sentimental over that jerk. What was he—an ancestor of yours or something?"

"Maybe," said Moorhead quietly, "he was an ancestor of all of us in his way."

"He must of had a lot of busy days," said Faylen. His dextrous, experienced

fingers were busy with the gauges, while Johanssen was opening the door. He said, "I'll have a hell of a time explaining that lost artillery to the props department."

"I think I can cover that for you," said Moorhead. He walked on out of the cabinet and removed the heavy coat Johanssen had given him, discovering that he was sodden with sweat. Yet the triumph he felt at what he had seen and done overmatched any physical discomfort.

Furthermore, now that it was over, his hosts seemed to have lost the edge of their anger. Johanssen, shaking his curly head, said, "You can't afford to get too enthusiastic with things like this, Doc. You just can't tell what might happen. Suppose that crazy loon had decided to shoot all of us there in the cabinet?"

"He was desperate enough to do it," said Faylen.

"Suppose he'd of shot you and then ducked before we could stop him," said Johanssen. "Think of the spot we'd have been in—trying to explain how you got shot with Maury's cannon."

"I'd have been a bit cut up over that myself," said Moorhead, marveling that men with the universe open to them should be so tautly chained to mundane things.

They went upstairs and, at the door of the building, Faylen said, "Glad you dropped in on us, sir. It's been an honor."

"I'd like to do it again," said Moorhead, wondering how he could manage to spend the rest of his life peering through at the past. "I'll be good next time. I promise."

"Scout's honor?" asked Johanssen with a leer.

"Scout's honor," pledged Moorhead. Walking back across a studio lot over which twilight was falling, he salved a limping sense of honor with the thought that he had never been a Boy Scout in his youth. For he knew he couldn't hope to keep any such pledge.

THERE was no need to do anything radical. Just a little nudge in the proper spots would relieve the world of most of its age-old miseries. Attila could be made to fall from his horse before he and his Hunnish hordes reached the Rhine. Genghis Khan could be easily eliminated in Tatar tribal warfare before reaching Earth-shaking eminence. Joan of Arc need not be burned at the stake. Early checks in the careers of Napoleon, of Hitler, of Lenin and Stalin, would surely make the world a far healthier, less neurotic home for humanity.

He churned over the most propitious possibilities as he walked back to his air-conditioned mausoleum, all memory of past failure and frustration forgotten. For here was an opportunity that no true member of the human race could conceivably refuse. Here was the chance really to help—what's more, to help people by means of people-invented instruments. Truly the long-sought Operation Bootstraps!

By the time he reached Marlin Zandor's mansion, high in the hills above the city, nestling securely, decoratively, in its own wrapping of landscaped greenery, doubts were beginning to assail him. He wondered whether he, or any one man, had either the right or judgment for such appalling authority. Zandor's brilliant, pragmatic brain, he decided, would offer a nice balance to his own more emotional, more idealistic thinking.

Informality at the Zandors' was, surprisingly, almost that. At table, there were only six: Zandor, his wife, their daughter of seventeen years, their son of fourteen, a school friend visiting him for the holidays, and Moorhead. If there were a few too many servants, if the meal was a trifle too perfectly prepared and presented, if Mrs. Zandor's charm seemed to have been blasted on with a paint-gun—well, Moorhead had no real complaints.

The intensity of his own desire to come to grips with his vast new prob-

lem, alone with Zandor, troubled him far more than his host's family. He felt immense relief when, after the youngsters had gone about their business of the evening and Mrs. Zandor had superintended the serving of coffee and liqueurs in the living room, he found himself alone again with the studio general manager.

He studied his host over the glowing tip of a fine Havana and said, "Marlin, I discovered something this afternoon that I'd like very much to discuss with you."

"Of course, Willis," said Zandor. "But what say we look at a few of today's rushes first? They should be ready by now." He rose quickly and led the way to a small but luxurious projection room at the rear of the house, overlooking the inevitable swimming pool.

And Willis, well aware by now that the showing of vidar film preceded and usually precluded all other topics in Hollywood, had no alternative but to follow and settle down in a cushioned chair beside the man who was really his employer.

There were shots of a new super-Western in the process of being made. Watching them, Zandor occasionally spoke into the voice-tube of a tape-recorder at his elbow. Once he held up the shooting to make a call to the director, suggesting a change.

Then he had rushes run of a science-fiction film, also in the works, and again had comments to make on it, memoranda to record. Finally, he turned to Moorhead and said, "Sorry, Willis—I had to get these out of the way before we got to the André epic."

"That's the one I wanted to talk about," Moorhead told him.

"I rather thought you might," said Zandor. "Here we go."

There were a number of shots taken that day on studio sets—mostly revealing remarkable cleavage on the part of Lori Ames, CTV's current blonde bombshell. At one point, where, in the role of a proud Manhattan beauty, she

was in the process of spurning Sir Henry Clinton, Zandor chuckled and said,

"You'd never think, to hear her, that she was born Zobelina Arkins in Ash-tabula."

"You'd never think, to hear her, that she was ever closer to New York City than a penthouse suite at the Savoy Plaza," said Moorhead. Zandor chuckled again and motioned him to silence.

THEN, without warning, Moorhead found himself again looking at the incredible vista of nocturnal eighteenth century New York from a ruined doorway on the east side of Lower Broadway. He felt excitement grip him as he saw the same patrol pass by, the same break-up of the council at No. 1, the same return of Benedict Arnold, limping through the night to No. 3, the same appearance of Sergeant Champe from the alley mouth between the houses, the same

Then the lights were on and Zandor was speaking softly. "Willis," he said, "I can't blame you for what you did. I can only praise Allah no damage seems to have resulted from it—as far as we can tell. And try to prevent anything like it from happening in the future."

"But good Lord, Marlin," said Willis, "don't you realize what those two crazy geniuses of yours have got hold of? Haven't you any feeling of responsibility for the possibilities of time travel, of its benefits for the world?"

The studio manager looked years older as his gaze met Moorhead's questioning regard. He said, speaking more slowly than was his wont, "I think I'm as aware of responsibility as you are, Willis—at least in this instance. When I first found out what the boys had, I nearly went out of my mind. Here was a chance to eliminate every villain in history before he could get started.

"But I looked into it first, as much as I could," he went on solemnly. "And, Willis, do you have any idea of what tampering with the past could do to

the present? It could mean that none of us would ever be born."

"Poppycock," said Moorhead. "We're here, aren't we?"

"Are we?" countered the other. "Sure we are—as long as we don't tamper with the past! If we did, we might still be here—but we can't be sure of it."

"That sounds like casuistry to me, Marlin," said Moorhead.

"And what does time travel sound like?" Zandor asked inexorably. He went on to explain, step by step, how he had at length decided that the only reasonable use to which he could put the amazing Faylen-Johanssen invention was process and research shots for historical CTV epics.

"If we turned it over to the government, what would happen?" he asked rhetorically. "By the time the politicians and viewers-with-alarm got through laying on restrictions it would be tied up worse than atomic energy was after World War Two. And, if that could cause a Cold War, think what any threat of control of the past might do. I confess, the prospect appalls me."

"Surely there must be some way of using it for the benefit of humanity at large," Moorhead protested. "You—we—can't just let it lie there, with all its possibilities, being used for such a piddling commercial purpose."

"Some day, the time may be ripe for it," said Zandor. "You and I—we've got to be hard-headed pros and wait until that time comes. Meanwhile, just be thankful you didn't do anything this afternoon that might have set history on its ear."

Moorhead, whose dreams of beneficial grandeur had shriveled notably under the bombardment of hard fact to which the studio manager had subjected them, sat up with a gasp of sudden alarm. "But I did!" he exclaimed. "I did do something. I gave Sergeant Champe Faylen's automatic when I pushed him back."

ZANDOR did not answer in words. Instead, he pressed some hidden mechanism which started the rushes moving again. And, again, Moorhead found himself looking at ravaged, Revolutionary Broadway.

But this time the view was a little different. It seemed to come from above and a trifle outside the doorway, to be facing downtown rather than west. A fine view of the ramparts of Fort George and, to the right, of the ship-laden bay beyond was visible.

On screen, he watched Arnold enter his own house, well to the right edge, then saw Sergeant Champe move into focus as he crossed the cobbles. He saw the sergeant hesitate, then duck into the doorway and disappear; saw the Hessian patrol appear, heard them begin to curse at loss of apparent prey.

This time the picture was not shut off. Instead, moments later, the green-coated sergeant was thrust again onto the cobbles. He held Faylen's automatic

in his right fist and brandished it at the German soldiery. Then he stopped, looked at it angrily, cursed and hurled it away. Shortly afterward, he was led away for questioning by the Hessian patrol.

"What the devil happened?" Moorhead asked as the lights came up in the projection room to reveal an empty screen. "Why didn't he shoot?"

"I asked Faylen the same question by phone this evening," said Zandor, eyeing a fresh cigar appreciatively. "He says he kept the safety catch on. The pistol was just a useless hunk of metal to your friend." He watched Moorhead rise woodenly from his chair, rose likewise and added, "You'd better get a good night's sleep, Willis. It's been an exhausting day."

"That's right," said the new CTV President. "A very hard day." He saw relief in Zandor's eyes as he left. Zandor knew he would not rebel again—and so did he.
