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# Rebellion - 5000 A.D.!

*By Garth Bentley*



*(Illustration by Marchioni)*

**Earthquakes of wide and terrible destructiveness wiped out whole cities; tidal waves of mammoth proportions swept in . . .**

**P**HYSICS C7, at the time I registered for Professor Clewe's course, meant only three hours of necessary credit toward my Bachelor of Science degree. When I answered the roll call on the first meeting day of the class I had little intimation of the part that the instructor was to play in remapping my future in a way that even the wildest of my boyhood dreams never pictured.

The course dealt with advanced electricity, and Professor Clewe was a world-famed authority on the subject. I was majoring in Physics with the idea of teaching the subject eventually. A vague and almost forgotten uncle had left me sufficient funds to remove all necessity of earning a living, and I had chosen pedagogy as a pleasant avocation.

The cloistered life of the university, with its comparative remoteness from the confusion of the outside world, appealed to me greatly. I had but little desire to plunge into the bustle of modern commerce; and the dignified and more leisurely field of research beckoned invitingly.

Although barely twenty-five, my life had not been an easy one until the passing of my uncle brought affluence and made a college education possible. Left an orphan at an early age, I had peddled papers, done odd jobs, worked in lumber camps, on dredge boats and in factories. I had even

played two seasons of professional baseball in one of the tiny leagues that are mentioned only in the back pages of Spaulding's Guide.

As a result, I did not fit in very well with the conventional un-conventionalities of college life. I had never been inclined to make close friends among my associates, my contacts with the other students were confined mainly to nodding acquaintanceships in the classrooms and on the campus. My professional record barred me from the athletic teams and—as I had never cared for feminine society, being somewhat shy of girls—I paid little attention to the social side of college life. I had a small apartment where I lived with my books and, except for occasional tennis games with anyone I could find, I spent most of my time reading and studying.

Professor Clewe proved to be an interesting lecturer and we soon became warm personal friends. In spite of the difference in our ages, I found him a delightful companion. Because of my interest in his subject, he was accustomed to discuss questions of

Physics with me as if I were an authority of his own standing instead of merely a student.

After several months of comparative intimacy—for Professor Clewe had but few friends—he confided that he was working

***AS we look back in history to the actions, the beliefs and the mentality of people of, let us say the Middle Ages, it is hard to conceive that a world of such ignorance, superstition, hate and persecution could have existed.***

***Similarly, the people of other ages looking back to the 20th century will find it incomprehensible to get our mental attitude, and understand why we live as we do.***

***A man who travels back from the future into the present, as Mr. Clark Ashton Smith showed so clearly in "An Adventure into Futurity," would find himself almost in an alien world. This would be just as true, perhaps more so, to a man of the present who happened to find himself in a future age. No time travelling story then, can be truthful, or fulfil its purpose that does not show clearly the difference in habit, thoughts and feeling of people of widely separated centuries.***

***The present story is one of the best stories of futurity that we have had the pleasure to print. It fulfils almost perfectly all that one could wish for, in a picture of a far-distant age.***

on an invention of his own that might revolutionize communication. His explanation of his invention was long and exceedingly complicated, and much of it passed over my head, I am afraid. Simplified to everyday terms, he was attempting to discover some means of sending radio messages in a straight line like a beam of light rather than on the customary Hertzian waves which radiated in all directions from the sending station like ripples on the surface of a pond.

Many others were experimenting along this line, I knew, with varying success. Professor Clewe, however, was seeking an entirely new wave or ray to carry the electrical impulses which carry radio messages.

After years of indifferent results, he had discovered an unknown wave of a totally different sort which he believed would ultimately prove the solution to the problem.

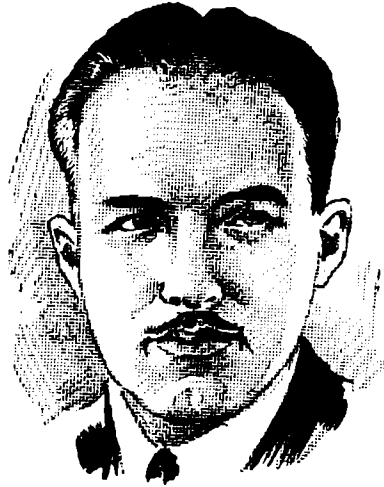
The discovery had come by accident, as so many scientific discoveries do, and as yet he had had little time to do more than experiment in the most rudimentary way. He had been using small models and had no way of gauging the exact power or accuracy of his machine. At his request one night, I accompanied him to his home—a bachelor cottage of five rooms. At least three of these had been turned into laboratories, and it was in one that he had been conducting his experiments.

Professor Clewe showed me the small models of his sending set and I listened eagerly as he explained them to me. But it was the completed machine, occupying one entire end of the largest room, that fascinated me. At first glance it seemed a confused mass of electrical apparatus. Condensers, Coolidge tubes, generators, Tesla-coils and other pieces of apparatus unknown to me were linked together with an apparently hopeless tangle of wiring.

I turned to the professor.

"It looks like a high frequency experiment of some kind," I remarked trying to follow the general hook-up with my inquisitive eye.

"Not exactly," he laughed. "You might call it a super-high frequency machine. It's a transmitter-generator of the same type as the smaller models but much more powerful. Some of the extra equipment is necessary for stepping up the voltage to the required power. I would hate to mention the actual voltage which I believe the machine will develop. I completed it only today and we will try it out tonight."



GARTH BENTLEY

WE examined the machine in silence for some moments. Finally the professor turned to me.

"I have checked this apparatus a hundred times since this morning and I am certain that my calculations are correct. The small models worked perfectly and I believe that this one will also operate successfully. We will make the first test a real one.

"Five miles from here," he continued, "I have fitted up a receiving set in a garage on one of the

big estates. I am going there now and I will leave you here to send the first message to me."

I protested volubly at this arrangement as I thought the honor of sending the first words over the new wave should be his.

"No," he said in reply. "This is only a private trial and the sending is the easiest part. I must be at the receiving end in order to study my apparatus there and to tune the receiver to the proper pitch. It may require a bit of delicate adjustment—work that you could not do. The transmitter is completely in readiness. All that you have to do is turn the switch on the panel and tap out a message with the key. You

know the International Morse Code?"

"No, but I'm familiar with the American system."

"Just as good," he replied.

He returned to the sending machine, and for some moments was busily engaged in testing connections and making sure that everything was in perfect order. Then, pulling on his coat and hat, he spoke.

"I'm going now. It's eight o'clock on the dot by my watch. Is yours the same?"

We synchronized our watches, and he continued.

"We had better allow at least a half hour. That will give me plenty of time to get there in spite of possible traffic delays. Then I will need a few minutes to get the receiving set adjusted. Suppose you throw the switch at exactly 8:45."

I nodded agreement and he left hurriedly. It was the last time I ever saw him.

Alone in the laboratory, I again turned my attention to the professor's transmitter. I was frankly puzzled with its intricacy. I was beginning to realize how little I knew of the strange force men call electricity. But even to my inexperienced eye, the machine suggested power such as few men have gathered. This was the type of transmitter one would expect to find in use in interplanetary communication, hurling its messages across the vast reaches of cosmic space by sheer power. Its vastness and unknown potentialities sent a queer shivery thrill through me as I stood regarding it silently.

I was conscious of a deepening interest and a growing excitement in the experiment. I took out my watch and shook it to make sure that it was going. The time was passing all too slowly for me; I could scarcely contain my eagerness while the second hand crawled around its tiny circle.

After a seemingly interminable time, during which I explored the professor's library, tuned in the radio in the living room and wandered idly about the laboratory, my watch pointed to the awaited minute. As if to confirm my wrist watch, the radio program ceased and the gong sounded for the regular quarter-hour station announcement.

I cross the laboratory toward the panel

which contained the control switch. The key, with which I was to send my message was fastened to the horizontal base of the panel, and I hesitated for a moment as I seated myself in the low chair, wondering what message I would send. Some theatrical impulse gripped me. If the invention proved successful, just as epochal a moment as the first flight of the Wright brothers. I made my decision: "A new day dawns" would be the message I would tap out in the Morse code.

With my heart beating wildly, I threw the great switch. The tubes began to glow. A great flashing spark leaped madly across the uprights of the huge Tesla coil, and continued to flow across the gap in a crackling flash of fire. The voltage, I thought absently, must be tremendous. The smell of ozone was strong in the air of the little room, and I was conscious of a queer tingling sensation all over my body. I turned to the key and pressed it down in the first stroke of the Morse A.

A blinding flash filled the room. For one instant I was conscious of a rainbow aura around the machine. The panel, the key and the meager furniture of the room, all appeared as if seen through a prism, distorted, colorful. Then I swam in a great blackness and lost consciousness.

## CHAPTER II

### A Strange Awakening

I STRUGGLED back to consciousness with the sound of many voices chanting a paean of triumph in my ears. My head throbbed painfully and my limbs felt as though they had been broken on the rack. Every muscle ached as I attempted to raise myself to a sitting position, and starry pinwheels danced before my eyes. I desisted in my efforts and lay back with a moan, closing my eyes again.

I tried to recall what had happened and, after a bit, I remembered the laboratory, the great machine and the professor's experiment. I moved my hand and realized that I was lying on soft grass with a slight breeze blowing on my face. Someone

raised my head gently and I felt cold water trickle down my throat. Presently cool, soft hands bathed my forehead and rougher ones chafed my wrists gently.

My strength returned rapidly, the ache in my body subsided and I opened my eyes once more. The pinwheels had ceased dancing, and as I blinked in the soft light, I looked into a pair of golden brown eyes in whose depth I could read compassion, welcome and a hint of reverential awe. As my eyes grew accustomed to the light, I discovered the eyes to be set in a face whose loveliness left me breathless, framed as it was, in a cloud of wavy, dark brown hair. Two soft yet sinewy white arms supported my head.

Another face came into my line of vision, the face of an old man whose long white beard and wrinkled features made him seem incredibly ancient.

He spoke to the girl who held my head, and his words were close-clipped and swiftly spoken, giving a staccato tone to his speech. She answered in a musical voice, using the same quick articulation.

"He awakes," she said.

The old man turned to those that surrounded us at a slight distance and addressed them in a loud voice. My mind was still too cloudy to catch the swift words of his message but it was greeted by a roar of acclaim. With the aid of the girl and the old man, I struggled to my feet. After a moment of unsteadiness I was able to take stock of my surroundings.

My two companions and myself were encircled by a ring of what must have numbered several hundred people. We stood in what was evidently a park, and huge street lamps of an unfamiliar pattern lighted the scene with a soft, glowing radiance and made the space where we stood as light as day.

I turned to my companions and surveyed them with interest. My first impression of the girl was confirmed. She was beautiful of face, and her figure was as well-proportioned as that of a dryad. She was tall and slender, and her hair was clasped round her forehead with a wide band of silver bearing strange inscriptions. She was

dressed in a loose-fitting tunic of white, girdled about the waist with a silver cord. The lower edge of the garment fell slightly below her knees, and her feet were encased in silver slippers.

The old man seemed even more ancient than I had supposed from my first glimpse of him. He, too, was clothed in a white tunic that reached his ankles, and which—with his white beard hanging low on his breast and his long white hair falling over his shoulders—made him seem like a patriarch of Biblical days. The tunic was belted with a silver sash, from the wide end of which dangled a silver ornament in the design of a four-spoked wheel. Like the girl's, his hair was held away from his forehead by a silver band that carried queer symbols.

The crowd, which had become silent as I arose, stood watching expectantly. I could feel the intensity of their concentration and subconsciously I knew that the undercurrent of excitement which gripped them was, in some subtle way, connected with myself.

I noticed that these spectators seemed about evenly divided; half were men and the rest women. The latter wore tunics similar to the girl's but shorter, coming several inches above the knee and bound with sashes of various striped materials. The men wore blouses open at the neck and loose, full shorts. Harnesses similar to double Sam Brown belts, crossed in front and behind, passed over the shoulders and were attached to broad leather belts. The short sleeves of their blouses bore various designs similar to the insignia worn by army divisions.

I TURNED to the old man.

"What are they waiting for?" I asked.

"They await your message," he replied.

"What message? I do not understand."

"You will know in time," he answered, gently. "In the meantime you must speak to them. They expect it."

"But what shall I say?" I was bewildered and none too clear in the head, even yet.

"Say anything! Something . . . Only

a few words will do," the girl broke in in an entreating voice.

I cleared my throat and took a few steps forward. The crowd was silent, waiting.

"My friends. . . ." I hesitated, and the words of my message to Professor Clewe flashed into my hazy mind. I continued, "A new day dawns. . . ."

The silence was broken by a tempest of sound. The people in the front rows passing my words back to those in the rear, the sound grew as all repeated the trite phrasing of my message. Then some one began the chant that I had heard on awakening. Another caught it up, another and another. It spread like a ripple of wind over a wheat field until all were shouting its cadences in unison. It had a triumphant ring, a conquering ring, like the song of an army to whom new hope has been given. I was able now to catch the words that snapped forth in sharp explosions of sound:

"O men arise!

Strike off your chains!

The night is gone,

New hope appears!

Lift up your eyes!

A new king reigns!

A new day dawns

On bitter years. . . ."

I caught my breath. The very fierceness of the song gripped me. The way they sang it! A song of new faith . . . . of salvation. . . .

The old man raised his arm and the song was stilled. He spoke:

"The day of deliverance is at hand, my children," he said. "But the time for action is not yet here. Pass the word among you that he whom we have expected for so long has come. But guard your news carefully lest it be known of those who rule. Go now to your homes and be of stout heart."

Slowly the crowd dispersed and we were left alone. The old man turned to me.

"Come, let us go. . . ."

"But why? Where? I do not understand."

"You are still dazed at the manner of your coming."

"But where am I? What country is this?"

"This is America. The lights on the horizon there are those of the city of Chicago."

I looked in the direction he had indicated and there, far to the northwest, I could see starry lights twinkling and in the sky the reflected glow of a great city. The ground where we stood was gently rolling but sloping upward toward higher hills close at hand. The breezes freshened and brought with it the breath of Lake Michigan.

"We are in the Dunes of Indiana?" I asked.

"They were once known as that," he replied.

"Once known. . . ." I could not grasp his meaning. The accident and the queer happenings of the past few minutes had convinced me that I was in some sort of delirium. A wild idea struck me. "Isn't this the year 1930?"

The girl looked at me wonderingly, and the old man shook his head.

"This is the year 5000," he said.

### The Coming of the Messiah!

**M**Y mind was too dazed to absorb this information quickly, and I followed my two companions unprotestingly as they moved toward a grove of trees near at hand. It did not occur to me to doubt the old man's assertion. There was too much evidence which tended to prove him right. The clipped, staccato speech and the queer costumes of the people, the very contours of the Dunes where we stood—the trees in orderly rows and the cultivated, park-like appearance of what I remembered as unspoiled country where nature ran riot—all urged the passage of considerable time. But, how?

Naturally, in the course of my college career, I had heard much of the fourth dimension, of moving in time and of other topics off the beaten track of science. I could only explain my present predicament by granting that the professor's machine had hurled me—somehow—some way—through three thousand odd years of time. It was unbelievable, incredible! Yet the fact remained that here was I—a normal young man of the twentieth century—torn

loose from his own environment and dropped in the center of a new age, in a world unknown to me in actuality and in theory.

Of course I had read many books of the semi-scientific kind, forecasting the world in the years to come and pointing out the changes that would take place. I tried to recall some of the glittering pictures the prophets of the future had painted. All sorts of descriptions had been given of the superman of two thousand years or so hence, pointing out how evolution, habits and environment would change his appearance and physical structure. He would be a large craniumed creature because of much thinking and brain work. He would have weak legs and spindly arms from too much dependence on machinery. He would wear glasses perpetually as a result of too much reading and study under artificial light. He would have no teeth or hair of his own and few, if any, toes.

I looked at my companions critically and marvelled how little humanity had changed physically in the thirty centuries and more which had passed. The man was old, very old, yet he differed but little in appearance from bearded grandfathers I had known. True, his movements were almost as swift and sure as my own and his wrinkled face carried the bloom of perfect health, but certainly these were changes for the better. I could think of many women I had known and admired who were little different from the girl of the brown eyes, and none of them equalled her in beauty or grace of movement. No, whatever else had happened, the human race had not deteriorated physically. If anything, judging from the uniformly healthy appearance of the people I had seen, the race had improved considerably.

My companions led the way to an open space among the trees where their airplane rested. I had no trouble in recognizing it as such. Its exterior resembled in many ways the ships of my own era. The streamlined cabin curved upward from the bow and receded toward the tail where it ended in a point. The propeller seemed very small for so large a plane, being no larger than those of the one-man planes to which I was accustomed. The wings were similarly two

narrow fins, extending along the sides of the cabin for half its length. These slanted backward and with the rudder and tail-pieces, which were shaped like the end of a conventional arrow, gave the ship the appearance of a great dart. There was no landing gear, I noted in amazement, the ship seeming to rest on its own flat under-surface. We entered the cabin and I saw that the interior was very comfortably arranged to carry six passengers. Deeply cushioned, roomy seats, upholstered in a very fine grained synthetic leather, awaited us. I turned to my companions.

"I do not know your names, my friends," I said, extending my hand. "Mine is Kenneth Martin. I am known informally as Ken."

"I am Jon Ley," the old man replied. "This," indicating the girl, "is Leda Ley, the daughter of my grandson who is dead."

I acknowledged the introductions, not overly surprised that he was the great-grandfather of a girl who seemed but little younger than myself. Jon Ley's outward appearance told of many more than the customary three-score-and-ten years. And his eyes were the eyes of one who had lived for centuries.

"Why are we here?" I asked as we took our seats. "And who were the people who chanted, whom you sent away? What was the meaning of their song?"

**J**ON LEY shook his head. "We have not the time to explain everything now," he said. "Already there is great danger. If we linger here it will mean destruction to all of us. When we arrive at safer quarters I will explain many things that you do not now understand.

"At the moment," he continued, "I will tell you that you were found outside the city near the ruins of ancient buildings. A young doctor, who is one of us, was giving first aid to a man injured in an accident when he saw a sudden electrical disturbance nearby—a great flash of light—and when he investigated you were lying there. With the aid of others, he placed you in his flyer and brought you here.

"He saw in you the answer to a prophecy



made one thousand years ago. In a very short time many people had assembled to do you honor. You are to those, who believe in the prophecy, a Messiah, a deliverer, come to remove the yoke of the tyrant from necks that long have borne unwilling burdens. Small wonder that many of our people will see you as a god, one who comes to us out of the past to lead us toward a new future."

"But I am only a man," I protested, "a man such as they are—like you, yourself—I have been plucked from my own era by some freak of fate and dropped into one many centuries removed. I am no god, nor can I pose as one."

"No, you are no god. The gods are dead," the old man mused. "They died many years ago—beyond the memory of any now alive. They who rule us have a god of sorts to whom they render a tolerant, patronizing sort of reverence as it pleases them. But the people have no gods. Long ago they gave up all hope of divine interference in their destinies. The religion that you knew died soon after the close of your own century. Too much was known even then of nature's laws, and man learned to control them in ways that gods would never have permitted. And the clergy, trading their spiritual leadership for temporal power, lost the respect of the people and became corrupt and futile.

"No, you are not a god," he concluded. "Yet many will so regard you and will do you reverence. A god come not to save men's souls but to save men's bodies and men's intellect."

## CHAPTER III

### The City

**L**EDA had turned to the controls of the plane and I was watching interestedly. I wondered how she would get the necessary run for the take-off, since the plane was without landing gear. I was not long in doubt. The girl pressed a button, threw a switch, pulled a lever. The motor hummed busily but quietly, and I felt the ship groan

and rise quickly headed for the city. We had risen vertically from the ground.

I uttered an exclamation of pleasure. Leda locked the controls and swung her chair around to face us.

"You are surprised?" she asked.

"Yes, I am," I admitted. "In my own day it was necessary to run the plane along the ground for some distance in order to get the necessary momentum for taking off. And our motors were very noisy compared to yours."

"We have progressed far since then," she replied. "I have read of your early struggles to fly. Of the Wright brothers and Curtiss and the rest. The ships of your day must have been very dangerous and cumbersome compared to ours. Many years ago our scientists discovered that gravity is only an electrical phenomenon and soon found a way to counteract it. Without the earth's pull against the ship—for the nullifying current passing through the metal hull makes the plane slightly lighter than the air it displaces—there is no inertia to overcome in taking off. And there is little danger of accident while the current is on. Here is our power source."

While answering she moved aside a panel in the wall of the cabin and I saw many batteries connected in relays. I was amazed at their smallness. They were all about the size of an ordinary book and of the same general shape. I was becoming accustomed to the amazing efficiency of this new world, however, and I realized at once that these small batteries were many times as efficient as the cumbersome and wasteful affairs to which I was accustomed.

"They contain a great deal of power?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied. "More than we are ever likely to use. The gravity destroyer uses remarkably little current and our motors use very little more. Every bit is translated into action."

The old man roused himself from his reverie and spoke, half to himself.

"There is nothing wasted today. We are efficient above all else." There was a bitterness in his tone that spoke volumes and strengthened my half-formed guess that the

new world was not so much of a Utopia after all.

As I pondered, we were winging our way toward the city. My mind was a seething mass of unspoken questions, all clamoring for utterance. The dismay, the sense of utter helplessness that had gripped me when I first realized my translation to this new era, had given way to an intense curiosity about the new life that faced me.

I was conscious of no regrets over the sudden termination of my former existence. I realized that there were no ties binding me to the past. I looked at my beautiful companion and felt a warm glow suffuse me. For all its strangeness, my new destiny offered many pleasant possibilities. I permitted myself to lapse into roseate dreams.

"Look!" Leda was pointing downward through the glass panel in the floor.

Then I saw the city, and I caught my breath as I tried to comprehend its vastness. Lit with a glow that seemed to illuminate every corner, turning the night into day, the city reared its head seemingly to the very stars. We were flying at an altitude of several thousand feet yet it appeared to me that we must inevitably strike the tops of some of the enormous buildings.

The structures were breath-taking in their magnitude. I had seen pictures of the pyramids and these huge piles of masonry brought them vividly to my mind. Yet I realized that the greatest of the Egyptian monuments would seem as an anthill in comparison.

AS we neared the city, I was able to see the architecture more clearly. Each building seemed as if built in the manner of a child's house of blocks, each block being placed upon the other and each one smaller than the one it rested upon. Starting with a base several thousand feet square, the building rose straight in the air to the height of thirty or more stories. Then a set-back and the building rose another thirty or so stories. Another set-back and more floors; and thus, after other series of set-backs and stories, the building ended in a great flat roof where many air vessels

were constantly landing or taking off while others were parked in regular rows around the roof's edge.

Although the buildings varied in height, the lowest levels or setbacks of all were even, and these levels were connected by wide highways, joining each building with its neighbors. As we drew closer I saw that there were not so very many of the great structures, an even hundred of them as I learned later, but they were arranged in regular rows three hundred or more feet apart.

Besides the highway levels, they were connected by threads of metal which my companions identified as the tracks of the monorail cars that carried the people about the city. I could see the traffic passing between the buildings on the many levels. There were little blurs that I knew were pedestrians and thousands of vehicles, some small, others large, which I knew were motor cars, although they had changed until almost unrecognizable. These too were run entirely by tiny but powerful electric motors.

I looked in vain for the trees and grass, the parks and boulevards that had been Chicago's proudest boast in the early days of the twentieth century. As we hovered over the city, it seemed a wilderness of concrete—or its modern equivalent. Yet the vast buildings, their orderly arrangement and the stern vertical lines of their windowless sides, held something of beauty that was unknown to the sprawling, growing city I remembered. Gone were the slums, the sordid ugly patches, the smoky grime of factories and railroads. The city, for all the mammoth proportions of its buildings, occupied but a fraction of its former size.

As I watched the unending flow of traffic, fascinated by its orderly pattern as well as the swiftness of its pace, a deep bell note sounded through the roar of the city. It was a clear, though low-pitched sound, and it reverberated through the canyons of the city, reaching us, high as we were above it.

"What was that?" I asked.

"The bell," the girl replied. "When it sounds, all activity ceases in the city and

the sleep period begins. In half an hour all lights will be turned off and there will be absolute darkness for eight hours."

I watched the streets rapidly clearing of traffic. Airplanes, like homing pigeons were fluttering to rest on the tops of the buildings. In a very few minutes the city grew quieter and fewer sounds floated up to us. The hum of busy humanity, that had sounded to us like the buzzing of innumerable bees died down to a gentle murmur.

"In a few moments all will be silent," Jon Ley remarked.

But even as he spoke the noise increased and out of the buildings poured the people. A hum of conversation reached us, high as we were. The tide of human beings increased until the streets were black with massed citizenry. The girl turned to Ley.

"What has happened? They have never defied the law thus. All should be in their sleeping rooms for the lights will be turned off very soon. Do you suppose . . . ?"

Even as she spoke, we heard the triumphant notes of the chant sounded by the multitude. It had sounded loud and joyous as we had heard it in the Dunes but now, hurled to the heavens by a host of voices, it defied description. A tremendous, exultant volume of sound that rose like the crest of a wave, sweeping everything before it.

I felt a queer catch in my throat.

"Is that for me?" I asked.

The old man caught my arm in a bruising grip.

"For you. But too soon, too soon!" he said and his voice was strained to a hoarse whisper. "They are undoing all of our work. All our plans are ruined."

**L**EDA gave a sharp cry of alarm and turned to the controls, sending the plane soaring upward into the blackness of the night. Out of the north, huge ships were winging their way swiftly toward the city. Each bore a great searchlight on the bow which sent dazzling beams of light far ahead.

"The guards," she gasped. "The guards have come."

The big planes hovered over the chanting multitudes. The song was hushed as the

searchlights, their blinding glare cutting through the soft glow of the city's illumination, played over the crowds. Men's voices, coarse and rough, spoke through great amplifiers, warning the crowds back to their homes. The words were harsh and grating, and the messages were liberally sprinkled with vile and obscene epithets. I squirmed at some of the coarser thrusts and glanced at Leda. Her face set in hard lines and anger shone in the glances she flashed at the planes of the guards.

The crowd hesitated, silently, for a moment. Then the chant broke out again and spread until it hurled defiance to authority in the fierceness of the singing.

"They are defying the guards," Leda breathed almost inaudibly, and there was a look of pride in her eye.

The dazzling white lights died out and orange beams shot from other lamps on the guard planes.

"The ray," the old man muttered. "They are using the ray."

Even as he spoke the beams of orange light played over the crowds on the higher street levels. Wherever the light struck, people cringed and fell. The rays cut great swaths in the packed highways and the song wavered and died out.

"They are beaten," the old man cried. "The revolt is broken and the rulers are warned. They know by now that the Master is with us and will be seeking him. We must go away at once before they discover us. To the camp."

The people were crowding into their homes. The crowds on the lower levels, seeing the rays used on the higher streets, had stampeded in wild disorder. The upper terraces were deserted except for the sprawling figures of those whom the orange rays had struck. The white searchlights were again in use and, even as Jon Ley spoke, their searching fingers began to comb the heavens.

Leda snapped on the motor and we rose higher, swerving and dodging to avoid the groping pencils of light. In spite of her skilful maneuvering, a beam struck us for a moment and flickered over the plane before she could evade it. At once two flyers

turned and mounted in our direction.

I had thought our little ship had flown swiftly on its trip to the city but I was amazed at the way it now leaped forward. The metropolis was left behind swiftly, and the guard planes redoubled their efforts to overtake us. Her face grim, Leda gave one look at our pursuers and moved the speed control still higher. The plane strained onward, quivering and vibrating at the unaccustomed speed. The larger guard planes fell rapidly astern and were hopelessly distanced but still we hurtled through the night.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Retreat

I MUST have slept, for I awoke to full consciousness as a slight jar announced the landing of the plane. Dawn was breaking in the sky as we alighted from the cabin. I breathed deeply of the fresh clean air of the morning and felt very glad to be alive. Leda, too, felt the beauty of the moment, and we stood side by side watching the changing glory of the eastern heavens. I drew a deep breath and turned to her.

"It's the same old glorious earth, any way, even if times have changed," I laughed. "It's a beautiful morning, isn't it?"

"Yes," she said, unconsciously slowing her quick, clipped speech to something nearer my own lazy drawl. "A new day dawns."

She was silent and a far-away look came into her eyes.

"Why?" I asked, curiously, "has that phrase I uttered on the spur of the moment made such an impression on you and on the others?"

"That phrase' as you call it has been our watchword for centuries. It was no accident that put those words into your mouth, but destiny. But you will know about it later."

I shrugged my shoulders carelessly. So much would be learned in time. Meanwhile there were other questions.

I looked over our surroundings. We were, it seemed, on the sloping floor of a great valley whose soil was of hard, black

mud and rank grass. From where we stood, it sloped downward to a small stream which flowed into a little lake, barely discernible through the trees to the south. Swamp grass, and reeds grew everywhere. Gnarled willow trees drooped their heads in the valley and on the shores of the stream. On the higher land, beyond the point where we stood, were other trees, some giants that were decades old.

Under one of the latter, not far from us, stood a small frame building, perfectly square and rudely constructed. Into this hut the old man had gone.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"In the Great Valley."

"And that river?"

"The Mississippi."

I looked again at the quiet stream that had once been the turbulent Father of Waters. Then, as never before, I realized how new the whole world was to me. Many a time I had ridden in the steamboats that one plowed upstream against its swift current. Often I had fished in it and had twice attempted to swim its more than a mile of width. I had seen it in flood time—a great sea of muddy brown water, stretching miles wide, roaring down the valley and sweeping everything before it, leaving death and destruction in its wake.

"You find it greatly changed?" Leda asked, fathoming my thoughts.

I told her of the river I had known—a vast artery that carried the commerce of a wide and fertile region, a link in the Great Lakes-to-Gulf waterway. She explained its change.

"The World Catastrophe made many changes in this country and the springs which feed it to the north are slowly drying up. I have seen ancient pictures of it when it was a mighty river, and it must have been a truly marvelous sight. We have few boats today. Those that we have are but gilded pleasure boats for the rulers and freight ships that carry heavy cargoes on the Great Lakes."

Jon Ley came to the door of the cabin and called. We entered the rude structure and found breakfast waiting us—the first meal in my new life. I felt quite hungry and

laughingly remarked that going three thousand years without a meal gave one a hearty appetite.

We had fruit—oranges of great size and of a pleasant taste, with very thin skins and no seeds. Then eggs, toast and a beverage that was clearly a coffee substitute. It was not unpleasant to the taste, but to one having my preference for strong black coffee, it seemed weak and insipid.

“You do not have coffee?” I asked.

“No. We honor the tradition of the breakfast cup but coffee has not been used for centuries. This is made of grain.”

“I am afraid I will require some time to grow accustomed to it,” I smiled. “But the eggs are very good. The hens have not changed in all this time.”

**A**FTER breakfast, much to my surprise, I was presented with a small box of cigarettes. I lit one with some curiosity, wondering what changes had been wrought in the fragrant weed. They seemed very mild and quite aromatic, and I exhaled the smoke through my nostrils with keen enjoyment.

“It is the one vice that seems to have persisted,” Jon Ley remarked, noting my satisfaction. “They are perfectly harmless, however. By scientific effort, nicotine and other more or less harmful elements have been removed and tobacco is now enjoyed by all ages of both sexes.”

Settled comfortably in the deep cushioned chair, I turned my thoughts again toward my own position. The many questions that had been surging through my mind during the past few hours, crowded to my lips. Surely there would not be a more favorable opportunity than this to secure some information about this strange new world and the part I was to play in it. I turned to Ley.

“Now will you tell me,” I demanded, “why I was expected in an era that is so far from my own in time that the very thought of my being here is ridiculous and impossible? Where have I been for three thousand years that they seem but a few hours removed from the moment I lost consciousness in my own era? And why did the peo-

ple chant their weird song? What was the significance of the battle in the city streets? Who is it that you fear—who are we now hiding from?”

The old man smiled at my impetuous questions.

“Patience, my son,” he said. “It is a long story and I must go back many thousands of years to the beginning. As to how you came here, that I know not. Call it fate, destiny, what you will. Even in your time, I believe, there were those who claimed all time to be relative and debated the possibilities of travel in that medium. Quite evidently you have proved such a thing possible, although even the most advanced of our scientists, who died centuries ago, failed to discover the secret.”

I lit another cigarette and, with a smile toward Leda, settled myself to listen.

“The story I must tell is the history of the civilized world, which is a tale of progress and recession, cataclysm and rebuilding, peace and war. It is a tale of the futile struggle of man against every obstacle that nature, destiny and man himself could raise against the march of progress. I will skip the eons of man’s climb from the lower animals, since you are doubtless familiar with its phases, and our time is limited. It culminated thousands of years ago, eighteen thousand, in fact, in a highly developed civilization on the old continent of Atlantis. The progressive, industrious and adventurous Atlantians spread over the known world, bearing their civilization and culture to the farthest reaches of the earth.

“Then at the height of their power, came the cataclysm that plunged their country beneath the ocean. The great colonies in Europe, Africa and the Americas, completely exiled by the catastrophe, allowed their civilization to languish or were conquered by barbarian tribes and exterminated. So man’s onward march was stayed for centuries.”

“There were many in my own time,” I said, “who believed the legends of lost Atlantis. They claimed that the destruction of the island was the true source of the story of the Biblical flood.”

“They were right,” he replied. “In the

year 2954 a great cataclysm changed the map of the world and raised a huge portion of the ancient land above the sea. Excavations by the scientists brought to light evidences of a civilization exceeding all previous conceptions.

"But to continue my story. After the downfall of Atlantis, the world stagnated and culture languished. The climb out of the gulf of barbarism was achieved only after some thousands of years of painful effort. Not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did the earth regain its former peaks of advancement. Then inventions flourished and actual progress was made at a rapid rate. You annihilated distance and time, music and letters and art flourished, science probed nature's deepest hidden secrets."

### The Story of the Cataclysm

"**Y**OU know much of our times. Do all folks of this present era know as much of us?" I asked.

"Only a few. I have long been a student of the olden days. There are only a few books still in existence that deal with your era. Most of them have been destroyed long ago. Those of us who own such books keep them well hidden."

"And the people of today? What do the great masses know of our times?"

"Nothing. Their conception of history is vague and indefinite. The government schools teach them only a little—most of it propaganda supporting the existing order. They have their folk tales, is it true, of the days when men had liberty and leisure, tales of fabulous heroes who fought personal combats for the rights of men. In the legends you can see vestiges of men you revered: Napoleon, Washington, Bolivar, Lincoln, Wilson, and other men of ideals who strove to make those ideals realities—seekers of Utopia.

"The masses have been told for over a thousand years that Utopia has come. And all of the time their chains are being forged tighter." His voice was bitter and the lines of his jaw hardened. I said nothing and he picked up the thread of his story.

"In the years following your century, men forged ahead with new strides. Television, the monorail and its child, the monorail rocket car annihilated distances and brought all nations closer together. There was harmony in the world, prosperity and work for all, with a scale of living that the world had never known. Education, the arts and amusements grew and developed as machines replaced manual labor and man's leisure increased.

"Man conquered disease and the span of life was lengthened. The population increased until even the commodious earth was crowded. The last frontier was conquered and the far corners of the globe were made habitable by science. The five hundred years following your time saw a veritable paradise made of the world. Cities grew to unbelievable proportions. The earth's wealth staggered belief.

"Then, from too much easy living, the people became decadent. The power of those who controlled the colossal wealth of the world foisted weak fools in the high places of government, incompetent men who would not interfere in the piling up of power by their masters. Privileges and pillage in the sacred name of commerce grew greater and the selfish, short-sighted acts of the money barons brought discord among the nations.

"The year 2555 saw the leading civilized nations at war, and when they were embroiled, the hordes of Asia struck. The leading countries attempted to unite in defense but their real power had been wasted in their struggles against each other. The millions of China, Russia and India swarmed over the earth. Japan, progressive and industrious kingdom of one hundred millions, was wiped out. Europe was overrun and America attacked.

"It was seventy long and bloody years before the west conquered in the struggle. And in spite of all the science and learning, famine and pestilence swept over the world, decimating the population. In the year 2700 there were left less than a billion people on the earth and civilization was tottering.

"Slowly the nations began to rebuild.

Then mother earth who had slumbered for centuries took a hand. The year 2900 saw the beginning of a series of cataclysms almost unbelievable. Earthquakes of wide and terrible destructiveness wiped out whole cities. Tidal waves of mammoth proportions swept in from the sea and great geysers came out of the land as it settled and forced the underground waters to the surface.

"Then the continents were affected and the year 2954 saw the greatest tragedy since the sinking of Atlantis. Overnight the greater portion of Europe sank beneath the sea, the millions of its peoples drowning like rats. Only a few escaped in flyers to tell the story. Then parts of it rose again to unbelievable heights, and out of the Atlantic's depths rose the old Atlantian continent. The Northern portion of Africa disappeared. Much of Asia vanished and the fabulous land of Lemuria appeared above the Pacific.

"The Eastern portion of the American continent was submerged and the Western coast was broken by earthquakes and depopulated by tidal waves. The Caribbean sea overflowed the south and the lowlands of Mexico. The northern portion of the Mississippi valley rose. The South American Continent was broken away from North America and became part of Atlantis, although much of it rests under water.

"In your time the greatest of earth's cities were located on or near the seacoasts. It was still so before the Great Catastrophe—and all were destroyed. In the thirty-first century the total population of the world—centered in the Middle West of your day, the highlands of Asia, the islands that represent what is left of Europe, and the dark hinterlands of Africa and South America—numbered no more than a hundred millions."

## CHAPTER V

### A Transformed World

**I** SAT silent, as he paused in his narrative, appalled by this tale of holocaust and world destruction. It was unbelievable, incredible.

"One hundred millions!" I repeated stupidly. "Why that is less than the population of America as I knew it. And India alone had more than three times that number. But there are more than that in the world today, are there not?"

"We haven't come to the modern world yet," he smiled. "But imagine the situation of this remnant of the earth's peoples, having seen their civilization, their neighbors, everything they owned or valued swept to oblivion. Awed, horror-stricken, they lived in terror for generations, never knowing when they, too, would suffer a like fate. Communication among the remnants of the nations was lost. The will to progress was gone. Excesses of all kinds flourished.

"The handful of people remaining were stripped of nearly all semblance of culture and became again superstition ridden. Those who lived refused to bring children into a dying world; and the birth rate fell. Outlying countries, weaker in moral stature from the beginning, returned to their primitive gods and reverted to semi-savagery. Only the remnant of America, that had escaped the worst of the tragedy, and Central Canada clung to the outward semblances of civilization.

"But the year 3135 or thereabouts saw sanity returning. The inner forces of the earth had sunk again to slumber and our people began to rebuild. Slowly they revived the old arts and sciences, and began to develop new ones. They discovered the secret of gravity control and a new era of efficiency dawned. Motors were developed and perfected that would do a maximum of work at a minimum of power. Machinery rose to its former place of importance. By the year 4000, we had reached and passed the previous ages in physical attainments.

"The population had increased but slowly, however, and was entirely centered in five great cities, as it is at the present time. The science of chemistry had reached its highest peak and nearly all human wants were supplied synthetically. Many new foods were evolved from grains, and the only animals in the land were domestic stock kept for food purposes or as pets.

"Fast air transportation eliminated the

need for farms and small towns. All the grain, fruit and vegetables needed by the people were grown on the land within a hundred miles of each city. Those who labored in the soil went out each morning and returned each night. Those who worked in the factories and the laboratories never left the city.

"A few spots such as the spot where you awoke—the old Dunes—were set aside as recreation centers and parks. The rest of the continent was left to nature, and today is only a wilderness, as virgin as when the ancient red men owned it. Trees and vines have overgrown the ruins of the once great cities. Herds of wild cattle, horses, pigs, sheep and dogs, the progeny of those who escaped the cataclysm, roamed the prairies, that once were farms. A few semi-savage tribes, descendants of negroes, Mexican Indians, and a few of whites who survived destruction in the Ozark and Kentucky-Tennessee mountains, are still reported to exist. The rest of the world is much the same. A few cities are supposed to remain in Europe, but I doubt if more than a handful of people today know of their existence."

"Then," I said, making an effort to grasp the import of what I had heard, "the entire known world, the sum total of civilization, is in the five cities of this continent?"

He nodded agreement.

"Of course, the geography of the world is known—or something of it. In the forty-first century scientists and students made efforts to discover something about our new earth. In great air cruisers, they flew over the whole world, making maps, visiting the far corners, cataloging the flora and fauna. But, remember, over a thousand years had passed since the Great Catastrophe, and the inhabitants of the new lands had grown away from even the traditions of their old life. The expeditions were unfavorably received, several were wiped out in Africa and Lemuria, and others to Asia and South America were never heard from. The Atlantian expeditions found a fertile land and many archeological treasures but no inhabitants.

"And you must remember that each of the five cities had become an independent en-

tity. Each produced everything it needed and there was no reason to exploit or even explore the new lands."

"But if that was done nine hundred years ago, surely you have progressed since then," I remarked. I was slowly growing accustomed to thinking in terms of hundreds and thousands of years. "You must have a great deal of time for study and research."

**L**EDA who had listened silently to the old man's story, laughed. It was a sad little laugh.

"But we have not progressed," she said.

"We have gone far since then," Jon Ley agreed, "but in the wrong direction. The people of the present era are very down-trodden. And there is no incentive."

"What are the five cities of today?" I asked, curiously.

"Chicago is the largest, with about thirty-two millions. Sanpall is next with twenty-eight millions. Then Winnipeg with fifteen, Lansing with twelve and Demoyne with eight millions, respectively," Leda answered me. I did a little mental arithmetic.

"Then there are only ninety-five million people in civilized America?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied. "And all of them are located in an area of a few hundred thousand square miles."

"But doesn't the population show any increase?"

"No. The birth rate is watched very carefully. Only enough children are born to replace those who die."

John Ley took up the narrative.

"As our cities had grown and our civilization progressed, our liberties were restricted. When the great cities were first planned and built there were some who preached communal ownership of all property and of all industries. But human nature, greed and ambition dominated. The great majority wished the thrill of owning private property and the continuation of the monetary system, little thinking that they were selling their descendants into slavery.

"The inevitable happened as the centuries passed: given a restricted amount of wealth among a certain number of people, soon all will be in the hands of a few. Thus it was



with us. There arose a class who lived by capital alone, who were the owners and who reaped the rewards of the labor of others. This class grew more and more powerful as generation succeeded generation and fortunes grew greater and greater. Those with small fortunes grew fewer while the factories, the property, the laboratories and the fields became the property of the rich. The masses of the population, entirely dependant on the products of the factories and the plantations, were completely at the mercy of those who owned them.

"Inevitably those with unlimited capital became the absolute rulers of the country. The lawmakers, though for a time elected by popular vote, became only puppets who worked in the interests of their masters. And now, even those have given way to a hereditary council of twelve men who control or own the entire wealth of the five cities.

"This council makes our laws, dictates our comings and goings, hires the guards who govern us. Today we have no more liberty than the black slaves of your ancient cotton fields."

"Yet you seem an enlightened people, physically sound, mentally alert, and certainly able to visualize and carry out an energetic defense of your liberties and rights!" I exclaimed. "I cannot conceive of passive acceptance of such a condition."

"You do not grasp the picture," the old man reminded me. "Remember this did not come to pass in a year or two or in a hundred years but is the result of over a thousand. Think how much happened between your own day and the times of the crusades and you will have a better idea of the time it took and the psychological changes that occurred. Remember, too, that each generation was born to fewer privileges and pleasures. The change was very gradual.

"The industries started as stock companies in which many people owned shares, some in vast apartment buildings, some in power plants, some in the newspapers, the laboratories and factories, while some owned land on which they raised meat and grain. But, as always happens, many people could not hold their stock and were forced to sell

it. And in this way the few gained control to pass it on to their descendants.

"Then the long arm of capital reached into the schoolroom and into the nursery, rewriting the textbooks, praising the existing order of things through their self-owned newspapers, periodicals and television stations. They strengthened their hold in every conceivable manner. Invention, exploration, political economy, everything that threatened their grip on the people was discouraged and later forbidden by law.

"Today the Council of Twelve, with their families, relatives and dependant supporters number less than two thousand, yet they hold in peonage ninety-five million people. Every man of the masses has his work to do and each receives a salary proportionate to his services. Out of this he must pay for light, heat, clothing, amusement and taxes. Standardized scales of living are prescribed by law, and at the end of each year a man finds himself with . . . nothing, regardless of the size of his income."

"But what of doctor's bills and other miscellaneous expenses?"

"These services are furnished him and his family at government dispensaries, free of charge when necessary. In case of death, his body is disposed of at the city crematory. His two children that the law allows him, are born in government hospitals and are educated at government schools, each being educated according to the station and occupation of his parents."

"In other words, a caste system prevails?"

"Practically that, although it is possible for those who show great inherent talent for different lines from those of their parents to be placed in the positions they are best fitted for."

"And the aged . . ."

"Are cared for at the expense of the government after they are released from employment at the age of eighty."

"At eighty? But a man is feeble at that age!"

"No more. They have increased the average span of life to 110 years and some live a great deal longer. Few of the workers, however, care to do so. They are burned out when they leave their labors and

soon fail. Work today is not as you knew it. Day after day, for sixty years, the factory worker sits before the machine he operates, his eye on a clock, pressing a lever or a button at regular intervals. It is the drab monotony that eats out their souls while yet in the prime of life. They become automatons, robots, and without their work they die."

### Regrets

THE old man's voice relapsed into silence, and I sat musing over the perplexities of this strange new world. Sitting at the breakfast table and smiling into the laughing eyes of Leda, I had felt at home, among friends, on familiar ground. In the light of what I had just heard, I knew that I was among strangers, as far out of touch with their life and civilization as if my journey had been through space to another planet.

I considered the story from all angles. Part of it I accepted without question. The great wars? We had had one in my own time that had embroiled the civilized nations of earth with horrible loss of life and enormous destruction of property. And out of it had come the epidemic of influenza that, in spite of all medical science could do, had killed more Americans than the war.

I could not doubt his tale of geographical changes and natural catastrophes that had wiped out whole continents. We, too, had had destructive earthquakes, tidal waves, and volcanic eruptions. Islands had been created in the empty sea, or had sunk below the water even in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Who could say what might not happen in over three thousand years?

But I could not grasp the changes in human nature that seemed to have taken place. In that, I found my mind unable to encompass the changes in viewpoint that had taken place through the centuries. My own viewpoint was still that of 1931 when men were liberty loving, and—although civilization and the pressure of growing population had brought necessary restrictions—personal freedom was still jealously guarded. But

there would be time to study man's psychological evolution later.

I turned to the old man.

"What is your position in this new scheme of things? And Leda's?"

"We are not of the workers nor are we of the rulers. Ours is a unique position. We are independents who have inherited small fortunes that have escaped assimilation by the great ones. Our ancestors profited by the mistakes of others and lived well within their incomes. As a result we are able to live without labor yet our scale of living is but little better than that of the workers. We are not molested by the Council as long as we do not violate the laws—at least openly," he chuckled.

"You mean. . . .?"

"Well, there are some very peculiar laws," he replied. "No one is permitted to study except under the supervision of the Superintendent of Education, and then only from textbooks authorized and approved by the Education Committee of the Council. Of course, these textbooks are pure propaganda; everything pertaining to ancient history that might reflect against the existing order or create rebellion has been censored.

"No one can study the sciences, astronomy, chemistry, physics, geography, geology or their branches except those in the official laboratories. Sociology, psychology, and philosophy are legally banned and almost forgotten. Research work of any kind is discouraged and today the alleged scientists in the laboratories are little more than drug clerks who compound old formulas. There has been no new invention for over five hundred years!

"But I am a lawbreaker, none the less," he admitted, continuing. "I have inherited a library of the old books and texts which I keep safely hidden and study as I please. These I have supplemented with others, salvaged from old ruins in the days of my youth. There are only a handful of independents, and our goings and comings are never scrutinized closely. We may leave the cities if we choose, since we own our own planes."

"Can't the workers ever leave the cities?"

"They are supposed to stay in them, ex-

cept on the holidays when they may go to the parks and recreation centers where the games are played. Indeed, they have no way of leaving the cities since they are not allowed to own planes; and the monorail lines only traverse the city and extend to the parks. Motor cars are small and are used only in the cities as there are no roads to ride on outside the city limits."

I turned back to some of my original questions.

"But where do I came in? Why was I expected? Surely you cannot trace to any records of my disappearance in the past."

He smiled at my flood of questions and answered the last one first.

"I am sure that it was not that. From what you have told me you were simply translated through time, leaving no trace behind. Your friends would simply mourn your disappearance as an inexplicable mystery. Your relatives might have made some search for you but, from what I have read of your times, disappearances were common occurrences."

I NODDED in agreement.

"But I had no relatives and only a few friends of the most casual type. They may have wondered at my disappearance, but I am afraid they made little effort to find me."

I grinned to myself as I thought that, according to my own conception of the time that had passed—a matter of hours only—my friends at the college were even then searching for me, while to Jon Ley and Leda, in the same room with me, the people I called contemporaries had been dead and forgotten three thousand years.

"And was there no maid to mourn you?" Leda asked, slyly.

"None at all," I assured her. "I had little time for them."

"You must have been very busy." And I detected a hint of laughter in her tone. "What did you do that was so all-important?"

"I was a student," I confessed. "And in those days the ones who really studied had little time for other things. You see our lives were shorter, we had fewer years of

active life, and there was so much that could be learned. Now I find myself in a new age where all I learned is useless. I know less of the world you know than one of your school children."

"No. You cannot say that," she cried. "You knew a world that was highly competitive, where a man could carve out his own destiny. You know things of life such as we never dreamed of. I have studied my great grandfather's books and I think your days were part of the true golden era."

Jon Ley also encouraged me.

"You know many things that mankind has forgotten through the years. As to why you came here, I do not know. Perhaps fate or destiny directed you; perhaps chance or accident. You are here, however, and there is none who knows how to send you back, even if we would let you go."

I looked at Leda and smiled as she colored slightly:

"I have no wish to go back," I said. "But what will be my position here?"

"The people as a whole are satisfied with their lot," the old man replied. "They know no better and their fathers before them knew no better. Nor have they been taught to conceive of better things. But there are some who are discontented and dissatisfied. They have kept alive the old tradition of universal equality in spite of the efforts of the council to eradicate all doctrines of the old eras.

"And among their folk tales, handed down by word of mouth from father to son, is one that tells of the coming of a man from the distant past who will deliver them from their slavery. I think myself, that it is a remnant of the old belief in the second coming of Christ; but since the death of religion among the masses, it has been distorted into a legend of one who will deliver them from the physical oppression of the Council."

"And you believe that I am the man picked by destiny to act this part?" I asked.

"I do not know," he replied. "Because of my years I am venerated by the workers. I have fostered the belief among them, thinking that it did no harm and that the germ of hope served to lighten their burdens. This sign I bear," touching the silver ornament

that dangled from his girdle, "is the symbol of those who believe. I have become the priest of this—their only religion.

"The Council—thinking our cult a harmless reversion to faith—have tolerated us as a group of visionaries. But with your dramatic coming, filling as it does the conditions of the ancient prophecy, and my acceptance of you as the expected leader, makes us a menace to their supremacy. Should the agents of the Council lay their hands on you your life would not be worth a moment's purchase."

I received the news, that I was virtually a fugitive with a price on my head, in silence. Jon Ley continued.

"That is why we hurried you from the city area at once when the ill-timed revolt broke out. Now that they are warned that one has really come out of the past, they will be doubly on their guard."

"Oh!" I said rather stupidly and puffed hard on my cigarette. My role in this new drama was decidedly not to be one of mere spectator. Then a new idea struck me.

"But what if I don't choose to be a fifty-first century Moses? If I tell the truth—that I am only an accidental visitor who asks nothing but peace—will the people and the Council not believe me? And the credulous ones go on waiting for their real Messiah?"

A look of disappointment flashed over his wrinkled face and he shook his head.

"I'm afraid it would do no good. The story has gone about now and the rulers would think it a trick to gain time. And even if it were believed, the disillusionment of the people who have hailed you as the 'Master' would be a cruel blow."

"Well . . ." I made a sudden decision. "I will do my part to help them. Let them know I am no god, however, but only a human being who will help them to the utmost of his ability in their fight for liberty."

The old man's face glowed and Leda's eyes sparkled with excitement. I extended my hands across the little table and each took one in silence but the way they returned the pressure of my fingers brought a lump to my throat.

"And now that I have accepted my fate,"

I said decisively, "there are many things to be done. I do not intend to take a passive part in the affair. If I am to be a leader I will be one in fact not in theory."

## CHAPTER VI

### The Conspirators

FOUR nights later we climbed into the plane and took off into the darkness toward Chicago, under the gleaming stars. The constellations, though familiar, were slightly altered from how I had remembered them. All had shifted position. A few had disappeared. But I wasted little time on astronomy for my thoughts were entirely on the stirring events that were already shaping around us.

Although Jon Ley had admitted his own skepticism concerning the coming of a deliverer out of the past—his followers believed passionately and whole-heartedly in the fulfillment of the prophecy. The year 5080 had been the ordained date of the deliverance, and my sudden arrival seemed the answer to many centuries of expectation. And my aged mentor, I knew, was determined to take full advantage of the situation.

I learned that plans had been formulated for the successful staging of a revolt, but they had been kept secret through many decades, waiting the coming of the "Master". They had been clever schemes, too, and given the element of surprise, they had a fair chance of success.

The old man and his board of strategy had counted to a great extent on the contempt of the guards for the masses. Overpowering their enemies by sheer force of numbers, the revolutionaries had planned to gain control of the guards' planes and the deadly, paralyzing orange ray. Now that the time for action had arrived, the police were on the alert. The premature demonstration on the night of my arrival had forewarned them of the temper of the workers. The officials would take no chance of losing control of their weapons by any surprise move on our part.

I had learned from Leda and Jon that

other weapons were unknown. Firearms had died out soon after my own era while their use and even their existence had long been forgotten. In the great wars, gas, fire and electric wave projectors had played an important part in destroying humanity; but even the secret of these weapons had died out. The only war instruments, centered in the hands of law and order, were the orange ray projectors on the guard planes. Indeed, there had been no need for lethal weapons. Crime, through strict application of the death penalty, had died out except for infrequent minor infractions of the numerous laws. There were no enemies left to challenge the supremacy of the cities. The half-starved wandering hordes that inhabited the wilderness kept their distance.

I had inquired concerning the weapons of these nomadic tribes, but my companions knew little about them. Clubs, rude spears and even ruder bows and arrows apparently served their needs. Any help from them was quite out of the question.

None the less, as we sped through the night, I was occupied with the problem of arming my supporters. In making my decision, although I did not regard myself as their promised deliverer, I had resolved to lead them until their rebellion had been successful or had failed utterly. If the former, I could turn over the power to a successor elected by the people. If we failed—well, I could visualize the outcome. My reward would be the age-old penalty for leaders of unsuccessful revolts—death.

A word from Leda warned me that we were approaching the city. I made up my mind hastily. We must have guns of some type or other. I cursed my own lack of curiosity back in the old days when I could so easily have studied the intricacies of firearms. Like so many others, I had accepted rifles, revolvers and cartridges as matters of course. Like the majority of boys, I had made gunpowder, *sub rosa*, in the high school laboratory when I was supposed to be making up back experiments in chemistry. I remembered its constituents and believed, with a little experimenting, I could find the right proportions of the ingredients.

A sudden thought struck me. Even if I

succeeded in making arms of some type, I would have no time to teach marksmanship to my "army". But there was one type of weapon that needed no experienced eye—the riot guns, sawed off shotguns used by both gangsters and police of my own day with telling effect. I was confident that I could design a shotgun of sorts. And certainly there must be artisans in metal among the rebels. With their help, I decided, it would be possible.

The humming of the motor suddenly ceased and we hung over the darkened city. The great bell had sounded over an hour ago and all lights had been turned off. The immense buildings, with their sleeping millions, loomed gigantic in the darkness. My first glimpse of them had been amazing enough but, because of the disturbance in the streets, I had not studied them carefully. As I peered out into the blackness, I tried to trace their solid lines, with the network of streets connecting the different levels far below us. A beam of light was visible, feeling its way among the great structures. I turned questionably to my companions.

"The guards' plane," Leda answered my unspoken query.

WE continued to hang motionless at our great height, while the guards made their leisurely inspection. Another beam of light to the west showed that more than one ship was patrolling the city streets. While we watched, the plane turned slowly toward the north. Silently as a withered leaf it began to descend. Directly below us was the flat roof of a building. With infinite caution Leda maneuvered our craft until it settled softly to the roof. I rose to leave the cabin.

"Wait," Jon Ley cautioned.

For some moments we listened intently to make sure that our arrival had passed unnoticed. Hearing nothing to indicate the approach of the guards, I followed my companions down a flight of steps into the interior of the building. Here we found an elevator that whirled us swiftly and silently past the hundred or more floors to the basement.

We left the car, traversed a short corri-

dor and entered a small room after Ley had unlocked the door with a key from the pocket of his tunic.

"Who?" a voice challenged us in a rasping whisper.

"Jon Ley."

"The Master is with you?" a different voice inquired.

"He is here."

At once the room was flooded with light from a small lamp on the table and I looked about me. Besides my two companions, eight other people were grouped about the small room, six men and two women. They greeted me gravely.

"Hail, Master!" said one in the rasping voice that had first greeted us. I extended my hand and as he came forward to grasp it, I took stock of him. I am no child, standing almost two inches over six feet and weighing more than two hundred pounds. But he towered a good three inches over me and must have outweighed me thirty pounds. His yellow hair waved rebelliously backward from a fine forehead, and his grey-blue eyes looked into my own green ones with steely directness. The great muscles bulged in his bare forearms and his square jaw was set in a determined mould. He would have been handsome but for a red scar that zigzagged across his left cheek from eye to mouth. He clasped my hand reverently in both of his and a look of something akin to awe appeared on his features.

Another man approached, a smaller, stockier man whose hair gleamed red in the light. He, too, was well-developed and his fine features broke into a smile as I extended my other hand to him.

Dik Steel, Ley explained to me was the name of the giant and the smaller man was Lon Mede. Others came up and were presented to me. Lee Sale, the young doctor who had found me and brought me to Dunes Park and the care of Ley; Don Wolf, slender as a lathe and giving the impression of rapierlike strength; Wil Gore, a studious appearing young man whose stained hands told of work in the laboratories; and Ben Duse, big and silent,

whose copper-tinted skin, black hair and eyes, and high cheek bones told of Indian blood that had persisted through many generations. The two women were the wives of Mede and Stele.

Introductions over, I repeated my pledge that I would lead them, and their cause would be my cause until success was won or all hope gone. Dik Stele, who seemed the acknowledged leader of the group, answered me.

"God or man, it is enough for us that you are here as the old saga foretold. We believe you were sent to help us and will follow you to death."

He resumed his seat on the great bench and the others murmured their assent. We talked of the cause and I found my forces comprised some twenty-five thousand workers of various grades, and their wives and families, bringing the total in the neighborhood of 55,000 people, all pledged to the dream of liberty. The six were the leaders and Jon Ley had ruled as a regent until the coming of the leader.

"What of the great mass of the people?" I asked.

"They will swing into line," Stele answered. "We have limited ourselves to those we were sure of, people who are better educated than the average and who have kept alive the old traditions with this as our standard."

From inside his tunic, he brought forth a faded, time-worn bundle and shook it forth—a small American flag, the red of its stripes still gleaming bravely. I fingered the banner tenderly and, seeing fully sixty-four stars in the small blue field, realized that it must have been made many years after my own era. The extra stars? Canadian provinces, perhaps, and Mexican states that might have joined the union in the dim past. Or new states carved out of territories and old state boundaries.

"*In hoc signo vinces,*" I murmured.

"You said . . . ?" Stele asked.

"In this sign conquer," I translated. "Let this be our banner. It was once a pledge of liberty to the oppressed of the world. Let it wave again over our cause."

**T**HEN came the question of weapons and I outlined my plans for constructing them. Here I found Mede and Stele of invaluable aid, as the former was a metal artisan and a designer while the latter was superintendent in one of the great foundries. We pored over the rude sketches I had made and I explained the nature and purpose of shotguns. Mede quickly grasped the technicalities of construction and agreed to work out the design. Stele felt certain, as he was comparatively free from supervision, that the guns could be made in his foundry using help that was loyal. There were machines already in operation that would perform much of the labor.

Jon Ley, listening to our talk, chuckled in his long white beard.

"You are truly the Master," he said. "You would use the Council's own factories to make the weapons that will overthrow them. It is a good plan."

"What would you?" I replied. "There is not time to establish our own plants. Already the Council knows of my coming and will look with suspicion on any movements by a body of workers. This way we will have good metal, efficient workers and excellent machinery at our command."

Next came the question of ammunition. I knew, in a mechanical age we would be able to secure quantities of steel ball-bearings that would serve even better than the lead shot; but the cases, with their complicated construction, presented a problem. Stele watched, asking occasional questions as I sketched a diagram of a shell.

"We can easily make cases of metal, also, perfectly machined to fit the inside of the guns," he said. "But what are you going to use to hurl them from the gun?"

I explained how gunpowder worked. He nodded comprehension.

"Wil Gore can help you there," he said. "He is Chief Chemist in one of the largest laboratories and has the power to engage in research within certain limits."

From Gore, I learned that saltpetre, sulphur and charcoal were in common use and he could also produce the fulminate of mercury to ignite the shells. If any of the sub-

stances were not available, he would see that they were made.

"You can not make sulphur, surely," I suggested. "That is a basic element."

"But we can," he smiled. "Long ago we found out how to readjust the component electrons and protons so that we can make any substance at will. It is a very necessary part of our work since many elements are no longer obtainable in their natural states."

We decided on a hundred guns to be distributed among carefully selected sub-lieutenants who would be instructed in their use. Each of us were to be supplied with them together with a quantity of ammunition. I found that the guards depended ordinarily on short wicked whips, whose keen lash as well as the heavily weighted handles, made them formidable weapons. Hence we decided to arm the mass of our followers with long-handled spears. I felt that they would prove wickedly efficient in this weaponless world.

The people were usually passive and subservient and the ray projectors served to break up the infrequent demonstrations. These orange rays, I found, were similar to intensified infra-red rays—although visible—and it was possible to use them as carrier waves for electric charges of high intensity. They had a paralyzing effect on the nerve cells and lengthy exposure to them proved fatal. By increasing the charge, too, they could be made instantly lethal in their intensity, although the range was short.

The only projectors were in the hands of the Council and had been for centuries. I considered the possibilities of constructing similar machines but none of the group was able to supply any definite information about their design. I gathered that the secret was kept closely guarded by the Council and decided to confine my efforts to weapons I understood.

At last Stele glanced the tiny chronometer on his wrist and announced that the time to break up had arrived. It was settled that I should go, disguised as a worker, to the laboratory with Gore where we would work on our powder. Mede would complete the

designing of the weapons and Stele would prepare a place in the foundry where they could be manufactured away from prying eyes. Sale, the doctor, was to be liaison officer, since he could move freely about the city, between our group and the lesser leaders. Wolfe was in charge of the monorail system and would organize his most loyal subordinates so that when the day of revolt arrived, the transportation system would be in our hands. Duse, chief of air pilots, was to organize a squadron of flyers of the fastest planes.

We chose, for the meeting place of our forces, the great central plaza—a parklike tract of land in the midst of the buildings. It could easily hold the entire population of the city if necessary and no street levels or monorail tracks passed over it. Our men could reach it by rail in a few moments from any portion of the city while planes in any number could land or take off there. We set the time at dawn one week to the day.

“And may our efforts be successful,” I said as we departed and the others answered; “A new day dawns . . . .”

## CHAPTER VII

### The Revolt!

ONE week passed—seven days of feverish activity for the new and secret revolutionary party. Under the skillful direction of Stele and Mede thousands of pike heads were prepared and fitted to stout handles. These spears, wielded in the hands of determined men, fired to fanaticism by the intensity of their struggle against oppression, would do deadly execution against any who opposed them.

The guns, turned out in the dead of night by the light of improvised lamps, by some of the finest craftsmen in the city, exceeded even my wildest expectations. From my rude sketches and explanations, the two had evolved weapons that would compare favorably with the finest shotguns of my own day. They were double-barrel affairs and were surprisingly light, being made of a beryllium-steel compound, lighter than

aluminum yet stronger than any other metal alloy. The barrels were long to give added range and the well-balanced stocks, while crudely finished, were made of a synthetic rubber compound, hard yet flexible enough to offset the recoil.

In the laboratories, Gore and I had experimented until we had powder which, while not having the efficiency of the smokeless powder—was equal in power and effectiveness to the once-favored black variety. With the amazing efficiency of the day, cases were turned out in a plentiful quantity and filled under my direction.

As laborers going out to the fields, my rifle corps had left the city the morning before and flown many miles into the wilderness. Here safe from the prying eyes of the guards, I gave my men instructions in loading, unloading, sighting and firing their strange new weapons. We had no practice at marksmanship since I felt that little would be gained and a great deal of good ammunition wasted. In spite of the half-choked barrels, I knew that the steel shot would spread sufficiently to be effective over a wide area. All the men need do would be to point the weapons and pull the triggers at the proper moment.

I shot off several rounds of shells to illustrate my points and found the weapons marvelously efficient in spite of their hasty construction. As we were making preparations to depart, an inquisitive pig, the scion of domesticated porkers who had run wild in the jungle, nosed his way into the clearing where we stood and regarded us inquisitively from a safe distance. I raised my weapon hastily and fired. Although fully fifty yards away, the pig vanished, leaving only torn shreds of flesh. My army, seeing a practical demonstration of the new weapon, gripped their guns tighter and their lips set in grim lines that boded no good for the ruling Council and the guards.

At dawn of the great day, our men waited, each in his own home, for the great bell to sound the end of the sleep period. The gong that sounded the call each morning for the workers to arise and prepare for work would today be the signal for their revolt.



In a small swift flyer, I waited with Ben Duse and Leda on the top of one of the highest buildings. I had not wanted Leda there for I knew that ours was a dangerous mission. But she had insisted on coming and at last had her way.

"I will go where you go," she had said. "Should you die, I will die, too. I will not live away from you." And in the thrill of my discovery of her feelings toward me, I had given in reluctantly.

I knew our blow would not be entirely unexpected. The Council, whose guards and spies were everywhere, had long since discovered something was afoot as proven by several efforts to capture me that had failed only by chance and the devotion of some of our followers. I did not doubt that many squadrons of the guards waited the signal even as we waited it. Our own spies had reported that the Council had increased the number of guards during the last few days and though their weapons would be but the whip and the orange ray, our victory—if victory was our portion—would not be entirely bloodless.

The first pink streaks of the dawn showed on the eastern horizon. We sat in silence, smoking cigarettes guardedly. Gradually the stars faded and the day was at hand. The mammoth buildings stood out nakedly in the cold morning air, their windowless sides grim and forbidding, the street levels bare and deserted. Yet I knew that within those buildings were many others waiting only the bell to strike, even as we waited.

Then came the gong, its liquid golden note reverberating and quivering on the still air. Its tone lingered and died echoing among the farther building as I looked again at the city. From every building people were streaming into the streets. The majority of them massed aimlessly on the different levels, sensing something unusual around them but not knowing just what was happening. But here and there in the crowd were men carrying spears, who moved purposefully toward the platforms of the monorails. Then came the cars, great cabins swinging along suspended on their slender rails. At each platform new re-

cruits surged into them and the cars swung on toward the meeting place.

I WATCHED car after car pass along those lines that were visible from where I stood as each filled with their human cargoes gave way to empty ones. Truly, Sale was doing his part effectively.

The Indian touched my arm and I tore myself from watching the milling thousands in the streets. Duse pointed to the north. Faint in the distance, from that further portion of the city where the rulers dwelt, I could see the guard planes winging their way toward us.

"Come," Ben said, starting the plane and I followed him inside. A whir of the tiny motor and we were off toward the gathering place. As we rose in the air a flag of red and white stripes with white stars on a blue field, broke out from our rudder and fluttered madly in the wind.

From every roof around us planes took off and followed ours, falling into the V-formation used by war planes of my own day. We rushed through the air toward the plaza. Far away I could hear the wailing of the sirens on the guard planes as they approached. And far below us I could hear the thunderous voice of the crowd. They were singing, these slaves of the rich, singing the chant of deliverance and their voices were jubilant, inspired. I turned to Ben Duse at the controls of the plane.

"A singing army is never defeated," I said.

"May it be so today," he replied.

Then we were over the square and I could see the men, with the sun glinting on their pikes, massed in orderly rows and at their head the giant figure of Stele with his little company of riflemen. Approaching from the other side of the plaza were the ranks of the police, their whips swung over their shoulders. Steel glinted in their hands and I saw that each carried a long sword. Then I knew that with these trained and drilled men meeting our steel with steel, the odds would not be so overwhelmingly in our favor. We outnumbered them three to one but our forces were untrained and undisciplined.

We sped over the square and I saw the planes of the council rushing to meet us. The projectors in the bows of each plane glowed with orange light and I knew that their beams were being directed toward us.

"How far is the beam effective?" I asked.

"Less than two hundred feet in the day time," Duse answered. "But under that range they will penetrate even the glass of these cabins."

"Then we won't let them get that close," I said, reaching for my gun.

We were very near to the first plane, now. I threw open a small window in the front of our plane and took careful aim. I saw the man at the controls of the guard plane jump to the ray projector and move a lever frantically. I felt my shoulder go numb as I pulled the trigger. The gun blared—both barrels—and I was hurled away from the narrow slot by the recoil. But my shot was true, for when I looked again the ray projector and a large portion of the front end of the plane had disappeared. The ship drifted idly with its gaping front and then, slowly at first but gathering speed, it sank toward the ground far below. As it crashed, I turned to Leda handing her my empty gun and receiving a fully loaded one in exchange.

"You injured their anti-gravity current," she remarked.

Duse was guiding the ship swiftly toward the next enemy plane. The guards were flying in single file—some distance apart, and there were fully twenty of them opposing our fifteen. We met the second, and I profited by my first encounter, firing before the ray reached the effective range. My shoulder was still numbed from the dose it had received, weak though it was. This time I shot from the left shoulder, resting my gun on the ledge and taking a snap shot with one barrel. As before, the projector and the front glass of the plane received the full charge and shattered. As Duse swept over the crippled ship, I poured the charge of the second barrel into the gaping hole. I caught a glimpse of the horror stricken face of the pilot as his ship began its sickening dive.

Then we were past him and sweeping toward the next plane. I reached for the reloaded gun and another ship went down to join the first two.

Noting the fate of its predecessors, the fourth plane held back, waiting its comrades to come up. They bunched and came toward us slowly in a solid phalanx. But we, too, were prepared. Duse slowed our plane as did the pilots nearest us while those of the wings of our formation rushed forward. From an inverted V, we became a great U, the points encircling the enemy. Before they could solve the purpose of this maneuver the ends of the U closed into an O and we began the ancient form of fighting used by the Indians in raiding emigrant trains. In a wide circle, beyond the range of the stabbing orange rays, we swung around them leisurely, all the time pouring a rain of death and destruction upon them. Massed as they were, the first disabled ships impeded the progress of the others. Even my inexperienced gunners could not miss, and under our withering fire over half of them were out of commission in the first few minutes. The remaining ships rose in an effort to escape. We shot them down to destruction on the buildings and the streets below us.

ONLY four were left when they made their last desperate attempt to avoid extermination. Full at the circle of slowly moving planes they hurled themselves. One went down and the orange rays of the other three cut through our line. Two of our planes dipped and hurtled to the ground, the circle broke and they were loose. It was a desperately courageous maneuver and I applauded it, but the three planes must not escape.

Swiftly we straightened out in pursuit and I blessed Duse for his selection of our ships. We flew at a speed that I had not believed possible and rapidly overhauled the larger, heavier guard ships. From a distance of but a few yards, I sent the raking blast from my gun through the side windows of the nearest plane. The charge struck the control board, demolishing it. We turned to the second plane and found it

already besieged by several of our squadron, passed it and hurried toward the last one.

"Above it," I cried as we came near, knowing the projectors could not be turned upward. As we hovered above it, I fired through the trap in the floor, taking careful aim at the ray lamp projecting from the bow. It disappeared as if sliced by a giant knife. I turned to Ben.

"Circle them."

He did so, threatening and crowding the plane until it came to a stop.

"Signal them to turn back to the city plaza," I called to Leda. "Tell them we will spare their lives if they will do as we direct."

She spoke the message into the radio of the plane and received an affirmative answer from the guards.

We turned back toward the city, our squad swinging in behind us. As we approached the plaza, the crowds on the tops of the buildings and on the upper street levels saw us. Some cheered wildly, others were silent, and I wondered at this, greatly.

We reached the plaza and our planes settled slowly to the ground among our land forces and the hordes of murmuring, cheering people behind them. We stepped from our ships and looked around us. There was no need to ask who had won. The ground was dotted with crumpled, contorted figures. Many wore the brief white garments of the workers, the sign of the wheel crudely fashioned on the breast of their tunics, silent proof of the fighting qualities of the Council's forces. But the majority of the inert bodies wore the Nile green of the guards.

A tall figure swung over towards us with great lumbering strides. Dik Steele, a red welt crossing the old scar on his cheek and blood streaking his white garments. Beside him trotted the stocky figure of Mede, likewise blood-spattered and with his left arm, crudely bandaged, dangling uselessly at his side.

"Master," Steele gasped. "You are hurt?"

"My arm was struck by the ray but it is nothing. You have won?"

"Yes, the Council's forces are beaten."

"Where are your prisoners?"

"Prisoners?" The big man's face was puzzled. "We took no prisoners. All who have not escaped us by flight are—there." He waved his hand expressively in the direction of the battle field.

I could not blame my lieutenants. After centuries of abuse and ill-treatment at the hands of the guards, I knew that the people felt that nothing short of complete annihilation was sufficient punishment for the green-clad enemies.

Then Leda and Duse approached, the latter herding the ten prisoners from the captured plane in front of him, my gun slung over the crook of his arm with all of the nonchalance of a Tennessee squirrel hunter. I turned to the captives as he halted them before us.

"Who is your leader?"

One of them stepped forward a few paces. "Go back to the palaces of the Council," I said, "and give them this message: We are in complete control in Chicago. Tell them the Master rules and the old order is ended. I will treat with the Council in this place today, one hour before sundown. They must meet me here."

He stared at me incredulously.

"But, Sire," he cried. "The Council—they will never come."

"The Council is not composed of fools," I said. "They will come. Tell them how their forces were wiped out in the city. Tell them what happened to the ships of your fleet. And tell them that if they are not here on the appointed hour, I shall seek them out in their homes and not a man, woman or child will I spare. If they come, they have the word of the Master that no harm will befall them."

Then as the sun reached high meridian, the plane sped off to the north with its tale of defeat. The day was won and the city was in our hands.

## CHAPTER VIII

### The Terms

WE met the Council in the Plaza that evening. They came in great ships of blue whose appointments spoke of luxury

hitherto unknown on the planet. Their planes settled gently to the ground in a group near the center of the square where I awaited them with Jon Ley and my six lieutenants. Behind us stood our forces, drawn up in a semblance of review formation. The crowds of the citizenry grouped themselves in the Plaza and on the nearer buildings.

Out of the planes came the Councilors and their retainers. They moved slowly toward us, hesitated and finally came to a halt at a distance of a hundred feet. Stele went forth to meet them and returned with twelve men whose tunics of darker, richer blue identified them as members of the Council. These were the men whose riches had held ninety-five million people in virtual slavery.

I regarded them closely. All were men of middle age and more than one showed the wrinkled skin and white hair of advanced years. Almost without exception they were short stocky men, and the voluminous folds of their blue toga-like garments failed to hide the gross contours of over-indulged bodies. Cruel hawk-like eyes peered out from fat faces in striking contrast to sensuous mouths and weak chins. And on all of their faces appeared mingled expressions of fear, hatred and disdain. They feared us, but they looked down upon us with scorn born of generations of contemptuous toleration of the servile working classes. And, in the society that had spawned them, there existed but two classes—themselves and their slaves.

They listened in silence as I told them of the breaking down of their power, of the defeat of their guards, the annihilation of their fleet. I can only imagine the bitterness that filled their hearts as they heard the story of the end of their former regime. Yet not by the slightest change of expression did they betray any feelings but those of the utmost disdain for us and our achievements. I paused when I had finished the story of our victory and one, the leader of the Council, spoke.

"We grant the truth of your assertions. What are the terms you propose? What is it you want of us?"

I considered carefully before replying.

"We who fought in the struggle ask nothing for ourselves. Our efforts were made in the name of the people and in the final analysis it is to them that you must go for terms," I said. "As temporary representatives we have outlined the major terms, which I now give you:

"First, you will relinquish all claims to the government, the courts and the keeping of the peace, which shall be turned over to duly elected representatives of the people.

"Second, you must give up all claims to ownership of factories, property, fields and laboratories, retaining only your personal property and unemployed capital. All industries on which the people depend for the necessities of life will henceforth become the property of the government.

"Third, all class distinctions will be abolished and in all further dealings with the people you must meet them on a common footing.

"Fourth, you will turn over to the new government the secret of the orange ray and any projectors that still remain. These will be reserved for the common defense."

The Council considered our terms among themselves for some moments. Finally the leader spoke.

"The fourth provision is impossible. You have destroyed the entire supply of the projectors and the secret was destroyed with them. There are none now alive who know how to make them. As for the other provisions, what is the alternative if we refuse to surrender our rights in this way?"

"Defeated despots have no rights," I warned them. "You would not be alive thirty seconds from now if I but gave the word. Don't you understand that you are entirely at the mercy of the people? There are no laws of justice and mercy for those who have lost the power of enforcing their dictums. Our terms are more than generous."

"Yet you have said that it is the people with whom we treat. Have we not the right to present our side to the people? Your party with the strange new weapons that destroyed our guards, have won, it is true. But you are only a small portion of the

people and number but a few thousand more than our class. There are many thousands, yes, millions, who were happy and contented with our rule. They were well treated, they were provided for, they were happy and satisfied with the treatment they received. I grant that we have been thoughtless and often intolerant of the rights of the people, yet in the main we have acted for their good.

**I**F you are sincere in your statements of your purpose, it is this great body of the population who must decide the question since it is they who gain or suffer most from what we do here. Let them choose their rulers."

"No!" Jon Ley whispered in my ear.

"How will this be accomplished? The people must know the facts if they are to come to an intelligent decision."

"Through the television, the press and the periodicals. Through speakers who can present both sides to the people. At the end of three days we can receive their verdict."

"Don't accede," the old man begged.

"Wait," I said to him, shaking off his hand from my shoulder. "They are right. After all it is the people as a whole who are most concerned and it is up to them to decide. Remember we know little of the real feelings of the people. There are many millions who have not joined us in our uprising. We have had no way of knowing how they regard us. And even the poorest of the citizens must have his say in the decision."

"That is true, Master," Stele broke in. "The people must decide. But I have little doubt of their decision." And Mede and my other lieutenants voiced their agreement with the scarred giant.

I turned back to the Council.

"We agree. We will await the verdict of the people and abide by their decision. We meet here at sunset on the third day."

The Council departed in their blue flyers and for a moment we stood watching the great planes fade to specks in the sky. Old Jon Ley shook his head sadly.

"I am afraid, my lad, that all our efforts

have gone for nothing. The Council wins the victory after all."

"Nonsense," I cried. "The people are ready for revolt. You have told me they have long awaited the Master, and we have removed from them the menace of the guards. They will support us, never fear. But right or wrong, I will be no tyrant ruling by force of arms alone. Our blow was struck for the masses and the masses shall decide."

"Well spoken," Jon Ley's face brightened but his brow still remained furrowed. "Yet I have many doubts. The Council, for all the decadence of their laws and the softness of their living, are very wise and shrewd. I am afraid their propaganda will prove more powerful than even those guns of yours. They have in their favor the deep inertia of the public and its apathy to sudden changes. They may not look with favor on your terms. Yet," and his voice was strengthened by a cheerful note, "there are many thousands who will support us. And the men who fought for us today will be loyal to the end. We will hope that you have decided for the best."

I thought the old man a prey to senile fears for, with the blind idealism of youth, I had boundless faith in the judgment of the common people, a faith that was shared by Stele and Mede and the others. But the next seventy-two hours proved how right he was—and how far from the truth our hopes had been.

During the early hours, our cause gained momentum as the news of our victory spread over the city. Riots of small dimensions broke out in the other cities and the few guards who were left of the Council's forces were busy keeping the peace. All work in Chicago was at a standstill and there were no guards in evidence. Our supporters went about among the people stating our plans and making converts to our cause. Over the radio stations that had turned over their programs to our speakers, we outlined the terms as we had given them to the Council and presented our expectations of the future.

Then the Council's efforts began to be felt. In the newspapers and periodicals

and over the television they pleaded their cause. They openly admitted their past mistakes and promised a rosy future in atonement. They would lessen the restrictions and the laws, while unpopular ones would be repealed. Higher wages, shorter hours and more freedom would be enjoyed by all. The Council would be enlarged to include elected representatives from the people.

And many were the doubts cast upon my leadership by their secret agents who mingled with the people in the homes and the smaller gatherings. How did anyone know that I was truly a man from the past? Might I not be a clever impostor who sought to gain control of the world? Would they be better off under the absolute control of one man than under the benevolent and paternal rule of a Council that included their own representatives? Surely the old order, with its promised new freedom, was better than an unknown and untried plan that would disorganize society and bring chaos.

**S**LOWLY the tide of public opinion swung toward the Council. Long before the allotted time was up, I knew that the old man had been right in his estimate of the power of the Council's propaganda. Yet I was not sorry. Forcing my rule on an unwilling or skeptical public would have been neither practical nor consistent with the ideals of liberty.

At sunset on the third day, we met the Council in the plaza. As we lighted from a plane, Duse, Ley, Leda and myself, we heard the sound of singing in the distance. Down one of the broad avenues between the towering pyramided buildings, came my army, chanting the song of the new day. At their head marched Stele and Mede, and beside them a man carrying a tattered flag nailed to a shaft of a spear. Then the riflemen led by Sale and after them the men with their spears led by Gore and Wolf. And bringing up the rear marched other men, women and children. A lump rose in my throat as they grouped themselves in one corner of the square. These people would be loyal, whatever happened.

The Council arrived, and a steady stream of people filled the plaza except for the open space in the center where we stood. I looked about the milling sea of faces, tightly massed and strangely silent. The leader of the Council advanced towards me, and his face was triumphant.

"The Hour of the Judgment has come," he said.

I nodded, saying nothing in reply.

He turned to the crowd and raised a hand for silence.

"Representatives of the people of Chicago, you have come here this day to render your decision. Shall you be ruled by the Master and his forces?" He broke off for a moment and from the corner where my forces stood came a shout, "The Master," and voices began the chant which was quickly hushed as he again raised his hand. "Or is it your wish," he continued, "to cling loyally to the Council?"

"The Council!"—it came in a great shout from the throats of the elected representatives of the blue clad followers. It was taken up by the masses and hurled back in a torrent of sound by millions of voices. "The Council! We choose the Council!"

He turned to me and spoke above the din of the shouting.

"You are satisfied?"

"The people have decided," I said, "and so be it. But do not forget that we are still the actual masters of the city. We shall not imperil your reign so long as you keep the promises that you have made them. But there is yet the question of my people."

The great crowd was dwindling, going back to take up their accustomed routine. But those who had brought about the revolution, who had kept alive the traditions of freedom and equality through the centuries of oppression, remained in a compact body waiting my word. A mad thought surged through my brain. It was not yet too late to grasp the reins of power. With our weapons we could destroy the Councilors, overawe the people and—But I stilled the thought and turned again to the leader who had been joined by other members of the Council.

"You realize," I said, "that we could yet

enforce our will upon you in spite of the judgment of the people? We have no wish to do that but there was to be an alternative."

"What is that?"

"We will go, leaving you in peace, to rule the five cities as you see fit. Do not forget, however, that we have taught the people the lesson of revolt against oppression. And see that you do not give them cause to repeat it with more disastrous results. Had we wished, red riot would have shaken the city to its foundations."

"But what are your demands?" he persisted.

"We and all those of the five cities who are loyal to us will depart to establish a new nation far from here. We are to go unmolested and you will supply us with planes to carry us and with materials, food, clothing, tools—all of the essentials for founding a new city. The secret of the guns will go with us."

They conferred together for a little time. At last the leader came over to where I

stood with my friends.

"It is agreed. We will supply you with whatever you wish. When will you go?"

"In one week."

And seven days later, with Leda by my side, our plane led the great fleet of ships from the city. Fifteen thousand loyal men, their wives and families and all of their possessions followed us in great air liners. And behind them came huge transport planes carrying chemicals, machinery, tools and everything needed to establish a highly civilized community.

So we took off into the unknown, unexplored world, leaving the five cities and their teeming millions to stagnate as they would. In every heart and brain was the determination to establish a new, progressive nation where all men were equal and all men's efforts were bent on making their best contribution to the welfare of society.

The land of our goal was the re-born continent of Atlantis where, in the ancient cradle of civilization, we hoped to found our new republic.

THE END