

A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

# Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume 29                      CONTENTS FOR JUNE, 1937                      Number 6

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Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. *Subscription rates:* One year in the United States and possessions, Cuba, Mexico, South America, Spain, \$2.50; Canada, \$2.75; elsewhere, \$3.00. English office: Otis A. Kline, c/o John Paradise, 86 Strand, W. C. 2, London. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 840 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

# Return to Earth

By WILLIS KNAPP JONES

*An odd and curious weird-scientific story, about the return of a man who flew to another planet*

**T**HERE is no doubt in any mind that the Council will uphold my decision that no communication should be established with Henry Sanborn's kind. Nevertheless, some of those influenced still by Henry's pleadings, insist upon further investigation. A simple narration of the events of the few hours I spent with Henry in his early surroundings will make clear that my decision should be final.

On the 12th of May, 1935, terrestrial calendar, eighteen years to the moment after I found Henry dead beneath my laboratory window, he and I landed in a secluded flat on a mountain slope close to the small village where Henry was born.

Henry had chosen the place and time of landing for reasons purely sentimental and to gratify one of those curious grandiose wishes that our observations, since he came among us, have revealed are common to his race. Characteristically, as he tramped awkwardly beside me down a rocky gorge, his mentality was dominated by emotions, and they were altogether animal. Like all his kind, he resembles in attachment to locality their domestic beast, the cat. In attachment to individuals because of contiguity brought about by chance, he is like another brute of theirs, the dog.

He was elated over our errorless journey, taking to himself all the credit of it, disregarding the calculations of our engineers whereby our course was plotted. I did not remind him of his own blundering landing among us, which wrecked

his ship beyond repair. How I restored life in him and have since maintained it, the recorders have written down.

As we approached the road, he halted, eyeing me critically.

"Usru," he said, "you'd better use your G-ray. We'll be meeting people pretty soon."

I tuned the G-ray to my personal aura key and set it at half-charge, taking a chance that the vision of any we might encounter would be as dull as Henry's had been before training sharpened it. A half-charge would protect me from untrained eyes, yet make things comfortable for Henry's.

"That's better," he commented. "You'd give people such a shock if they saw you before I explain things that they'd go wild and try to tear you to pieces."

This should have convinced me that communication with such a race was impossible. Instead I was moved by a reaction I confess with some degree of shame.

**E**NLIGHTENED intelligences can feel only contempt for that debasing emotion, pity, the virtues of which Henry so often tried to impress upon us. It results in perpetuating types that retard the race. The thinkers bred and trained it out of us ages ago. Yet now, as I gazed at Henry, jerking along awkwardly beside me, resembling a moving slat split half-way up, his non-luminous eyes moist with ecstatic anticipation, I experienced a pure wish without rational source or consequences.

I wanted to help him because he coveted so passionately the empty and purely selfish triumph he anticipated. Perhaps something in that heavy atmosphere aroused resistance in the lower nerve-levels—a friction generating that deceptive warmth. I felt what must have been pity! Henry's next words enhanced it.

"Just wait till I tell them!" he exulted. "What they did for that bird that flew across the Atlantic—what was his name? Oh, Lindbergh! That won't be a circumstance to what they'll do for me. I tell you I'll have a king's welcome!"

"Do you think that?" I inquired as we

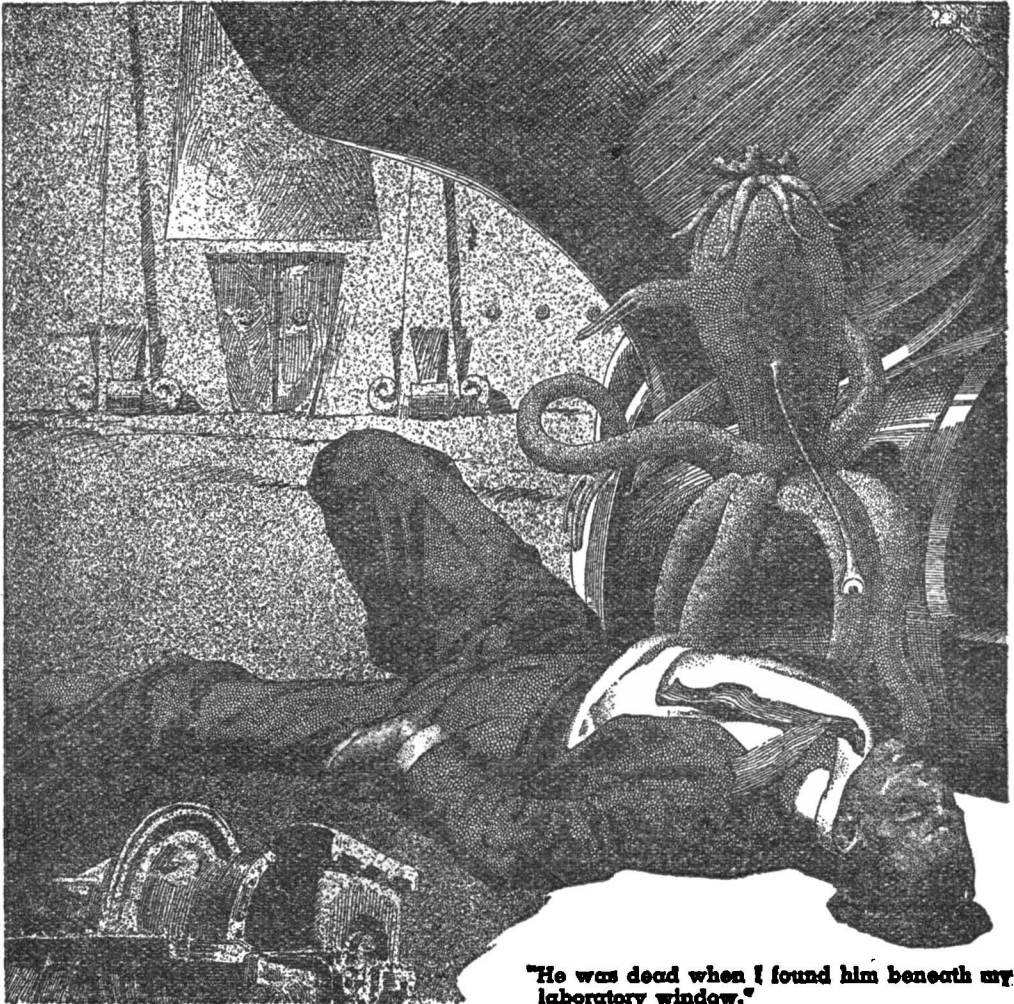
moved along a crudely paved highway, low, rocky cliffs on either hand. "Or do you only hope for it?"

In Henry, feeling characteristically blazed into resentment, another useless emotion long ago bred out of us.

"Listen," he said peevishly; "these are my people. I'll be teaching you from now on, and you've got plenty to learn, I'm telling you."

I was busy extracting from my instrument carrier my memory sounder. I concentrated upon tuning it to vibrations of eighteen of Henry's years before.

"That may be true," I replied after a



"He was dead when I found him beneath my laboratory window."

few responses. "I came with you to be taught. Nevertheless, you are going to need quite a bit of help."

"Not on your life!" Henry's tone grew more boastful. "You're going to be hollering for help from your Uncle Dudley before we're here much longer."

"Wait!" I commanded, pitching my voice to the tone level that Henry, however unwillingly, was always compelled to obey. My strange weakness dropped from me. I turned away and drew from my instrument carrier my distance control and focussed the levitator ray upon the ship far up the now invisible mountain slope. I made sure that the control functioned and set it at stationary. Finally I turned upon the ship the G-ray, this time at full strength.

"I am ready to witness your 'king's welcome,'" I told Henry.

It is fortunate that the structure of Henry's brain renders it impossible for him to read a memory sounder, else he might have foreseen, as I did, his little comedy working itself out to the denouement that, without my interference, was inevitable. Yet, at the last, I did interfere a little, but only to hasten the outcome and shorten our useless stay.

Henry halted and waved his hand. "Look! Ain't that a sight for the sore eyes now?" He exhaled noisily. "Grand!" he muttered. "God's own country!"

We stood within a sort of natural gateway of tumbled rock whereby the highway passed through the cliffs. Beyond lay the main thoroughfare of the town, floored with asphalt, lined with pedestrian ramps of concrete, depots of trade on either side built solidly to this spot and here abruptly ending.

A dozen of Henry's steps, one glide on my part, took us into the midst of the industrial section, a place cluttered by wheeled vehicles traveling on the ground. There were no landing-stages. The race

has made small progress with air travel.

Henry's pale eyes glowed as he led the way toward a gaudy hut half hidden among glaring signs. There were chairs and tables of uncouth shape scattered about a graveled space beyond the pedestrian ramp. Henry pulled out two chairs at one of the tables. Mine faced the door of the little building; when he was seated, his back was toward it.

"Lemon ice-cream soda," he shouted to a long narrow male who popped out of the doorway. "And squirt a little phosphate in it.

"He's a waiter," Henry informed me as I eyed the white apron which the creature wore over a lot of other clothing.

I studied Henry's costume. Our garment-makers had carefully followed his instructions, but compared with the beings we had passed, his appearance justified the waiter's astonished stare before he re-entered the hut to prepare the stuff Henry had ordered.

Henry leaned back in his chair with a deep sigh of content.

"Lord!" he exulted. "How my mouth has watered these eighteen years for a good old lemon soda! I wish it was safe for you to try one."

THE waiter, returning with a sickly-appearing, yellow liquid in a transparent drinking-vessel, displayed marked agitation at Henry's ejaculation and at his whispered asides to me. He set down the drink and scuttled back into the shop, re-appearing a moment later with a rotund male I judged was the proprietor. They looked directly toward the chair into which I had climbed, but as they evinced no special agitation, I knew I had nothing to fear from them. I was tempted to extract from their minds the subject of their whispered conversation, but a powerful vibration from the aura detector in my carrier informed me that the first

crisis in Henry's little drama was approaching.

It came in a weird chariot propelled by combustion, inside a metal motor, of a fluid taken from the earth, which is called gasoline. A female sat in the chariot, grasping tightly a wheel by which she guided it, her set face reflecting the difficulty and danger of controlling the crude affair. Henry leaped to his feet, almost overturning the table.

"I know that woman!" he cried. He was trembling like an excited beast. "It's . . . we used to go together before——" He caught the female's eye and shouted, "Rachel! Hey! Rachel!"

The female glanced at him at first casually. Then as the shock of recognition exploded in her primitive mind, unfurnished with any of the psychological buffers bred into us through ages of selective race culture, she whitened. The vehicle, forgotten, careened into the pedestrian ramp. The primitive motor spluttered and ceased.

Henry perceived her recognition and was glad, but gladness turned to dismay as she reddened and worked frantically at the noisy starting-mechanism. Then fear darkened his thoughts as the female made the clumsy machine leap backward, her mind hurling contempt upon him. The machine snorted, belched from its rear end a cloud of filthy vapor, and disappeared around the corner of an intersecting street.

Henry sank back into his chair. Already the fear that had clouded his mind was fading as emotion kindled anew. By a reasoning entirely sentimental he foresaw success as the possible outcome of his next encounter with a being of his race—because he hoped for it!

I inquired, "Was that a king's welcome?"

"She's still mad at me," Henry muttered. "I had a date with her the night

I——" He hushed and stared moodily into his glass. "I wonder if she's married."

"She is," I informed him, "and the young she has produced number four." I went so far as to prompt his mind to thought. "She holds no recollection of that engagement. She is agitated by another memory, more vivid, one stirring emotions of repugnance toward you. It is connected with the world war."

I should have been glad to start Henry talking about that war. He and I, as well as any others who cared to tune in on it with the rezcor vibration selectors, witnessed much of that insane mass murder. Memory vibrations coming in now were faint. Awakening Henry's would help collect others, of course. But he would not talk much.

"I can't use your damned scryer!" he growled.

He fell to musing. "It might have all been different if I hadn't let that infernal ship get too far out and sail away."

He broke off to stare at a dapper male who approached, swinging one leg stiffly out from his body as he walked. Ahead of him stalked a large dog, held in by a cord formed of the treated skin of some animal.

"Why, there's Todd Van Horne!" Henry exclaimed happily. "He'll be glad to see me!"

I HAD learned from Henry's tireless repetitions, every detail, the most intimate and the most trivial, concerning Todd Van Horne and his family. He, like Henry, had grown up in this village. But Van Horne, with several generations of wealth behind him, had cultivated pride and reasoned largely from it. It was the boast of his family that a Van Horne had fought in every war their country had waged. This Todd set in to raise, and equip at his own expense, a company to

engage in the world war. He and Henry had been close friends in their early school days. An older Van Horne had loaned Henry money to enter college. Todd planned that his old friend should be first lieutenant in his volunteer company. Todd, of course, was to be captain. But the edict of the Government that every able-bodied male should enlist ended this plan. Thereupon young Van Horne proposed to bear the expenses of both to a station where officers were prepared. Henry launched forth upon his catastrophic flight the night before he and Van Horne were to depart for this depot of training.

My interest, however, was greater in that four-footed companion of Van Horne's. It manifested senses far keener than those of its master. The G-ray was no protection against them. It glared toward the chair I occupied, the hairs about its neck bristling. It showed its teeth, growling with the fury only fear can inspire.

I turned my full face upon it. It dragged back against its leading-cord, wrapping it about Van Horne's legs, whimpering in abject terror.

Meanwhile Henry was capering before Van Horne, calling loudly, "Todd! Todd! Don't you know me, Todd? I'm Hank Sanborn!"

Van Horne, busy untying himself, paid no attention until Henry announced his name. Recognition flamed in his eyes. He loosed the dog. The animal staggered away, trembling so it could hardly stand. Then it gained control of its legs and fled.

Henry advanced toward Van Horne, hands outstretched.

"Don't you know me, Todd?" he kept repeating. "Aren't you glad to see me?"

"Yes, I know you now," Van Horne said in staccato syllables indicating extreme disgust. "And I'm damned glad to see you." He moved forward a step, his

stiff leg swinging almost straight out. "You yellow sneak! You—coward! I've waited eighteen years to do—this!"

He thrust his face forward level with Henry's and spat square into Henry's countenance.

Henry sank back into his chair as if he had been struck, wiping his face and uttering little whimpering sounds. Van Horne strode away holding himself rigidly erect, his stiff leg swinging wide with every step. In the doorway of the shop the waiter stood gaping, his jaw sagging loosely. The proprietor, behind him, stared across his shoulder.

"Can't you understand?" I prompted. "You left the night before you were to go with Van Horne to become an officer."

It was interesting to note Henry's mental processes. Nerve impulses fought desperately against the clear logic of those two encounters. Feeble vibrations in the gray cortex pictured dimly the inevitable conclusion from which a rational and perhaps successful course of conduct might have been planned. But all the white matter in his skull and spine throbbed with that weird emotion, hope. Hope directed his next step.

"If I could only find out what it's all about," he said uncertainly. Then, with mounting assurance, "I know where I can find out. I'll fix 'em. They're going to be sorry they treated me like that."

He arose and tossed a coin to the waiter.

"There's a man across the street that can put me wise," he said. "I noticed his sign still there when we first came up. Want to go with me?"

**I** GLIDED beside him across the vehicle thoroughfare, restraining his impetuosity by reaching up and laying hold upon his arm with a grasping hand. He entered a dingy place within which sat a male in an apron made of the dressed hide of

some beast. He held a shoe in his lap, at which he tapped with a hammer, driving into it slivers of metal, which from time to time he took from his mouth. From the bottom of his face grew a mass of long white hair. Bare skin alone covered his skull. Before his eyes he wore dirty round bits of glass fastened into a metal frame that hooked behind his ears.

This monster looked up as we entered, peering over the bits of glass that distorted his eyes. But instead of speaking he spewed from his mouth a thick brown stream into a box on the floor beside him, filled with the dust of wood.

"I want to ask you a question," Henry said when this strange greeting had been completed. "Do you remember Hank Sanborn?"

The monster, with great deliberation, put away the hammer and laid aside the shoe. He took off the framed glass and wiped each piece with a dirty cloth he drew from a carrier sewed into the rear of his bifurcated nether garment. He spat again into the wood-dust box and spoke.

"Hank Sanborn? Why, yes. He was the chap that was always fooling with mechanical toys and gadgets he got up. Yes, sir, I sure remember that dirty yellow-bellied rat."

"Yellow-bellied rat!" Henry's protest was a puling wail. "What do you mean?"

"I mean yellow-bellied rat, that's what I mean."

The monster spat again. It is unbelievable how much emotion he put into that disgusting gesture. It was as if he had bitten into Henry Sanborn, found the taste of him nauseating, and spewed it out.

"He was smart. I got to allow him that. But he was a coward or a traitor. Maybe he was both. He gave out that he was inventing some sort of airy-plane to whip the Germans. Lick 'em in a month.

Bosh! Said the thing was locked up in the barn on the little farm his pa left him. We broke in after he run away, and there warn't nothing there but some wheel tracks. He made out like he was all het up to go to the officer's training-camp with Todd Van Hornc. Run away the night before him and Todd was to go the next morning. Todd's wearing a cork leg place of the one he left in France. Hank Sanborn!" The monster's look grew fierce. "If Hank Sanborn ever comes back to this man's town, he better not let himself be known; and if you're any friend of his, you'll tell him so."

HENRY followed me dejectedly back to the drinking-place. The vessel of yellow liquid, the foam dead, sat still upon the table. The waiter came forward hesitatingly. For his benefit I dropped into my own speech, keeping my voice down to a register I knew his untrained ears would not detect. As Henry replied in the same language, the waiter's eyes dilated. He hurried back inside the hut. In a moment he returned with the proprietor. The two stood in the doorway staring at Henry, increasing uneasiness mingling with the look of understanding dawning upon their countenances.

"I knew so many people," Henry grieved. "Everybody liked me, too. They'd be falling down and worshipping me if they only knew. But I can't get anybody to listen to me."

"A female," I prompted, for the time had come to bring on the crisis of this comedy. "One who liked you well. One with whom you might have mated."

"Why, sure! Anna Allison! Her father was head physician at the insane hospital just outside of town. Likely she's married, but Anna will listen to me. She'll convince the rest. Her father will help if he's still alive. I'll telephone her. There's a booth over there!"

He rose and moved toward a large, glassed-in box that housed a distance speaker. This telephone, as it is called, is a crude affair, too bulky to be carried on the person, demanding a third individual to connect the two who desire to converse across space.

I had been disregarding the thoughts of the other two, so I was not altogether prepared for the aid they rendered in bringing about what I had planned to use Henry to accomplish. Before Henry advanced three strides, the waiter, to whom the proprietor had been talking with growing excitement, popped into the box. He pulled shut the sound-proof door and went through the complicated process of securing connection with the person to whom he wished to impart his agitating information. After a sentence or two he came out.

"Will you call the insane asylum?" Henry asked.

The man's eyes seemed about to burst from their sockets. He stood gurgling until the proprietor thrust him aside.

"I'll call them for you," the proprietor said soothingly, turning his head toward the waiter and slowly closing one eye, then opening it again. He smiled at Henry, then went inside the box and closed the door.

Henry, facing me, did not notice that the man kept the connecting lever down while going through the motions of talking. He came out smiling more effusively.

"They're sure glad you're here, mister," he said. "They're going to send in a nice car for you. They're real anxious to have you come out there and talk to them. You see," he hastened to add as Henry's face showed doubt, "Frank—he's the waiter, you know—he heard you tell Mr. Van Horne who you was, so I told 'em. They're sure proud you're here."

"You see!" Henry's countenance

writhed with exultation as he addressed me in my own language. "I told you I'd find somebody! You couldn't have done a thing. You don't know how the minds of my people work."

Behind Henry's back the waiter and the proprietor tapped their skulls and smiled.

I also smiled.

A FEW minutes later a gasoline chariot panted up to the curb. A burly monster dressed in uniform stepped out, followed by a slender, keen-faced male—the most scholarly-appearing individual I saw during my brief sojourn among Henry Sanborn's kind. The monster who drove the chariot remained at the guiding-wheel. He was a huge creature evidently of great physical power.

Henry thrust forth his hand. "I know you!" he cried, addressing the slender leader. "Your name is Bender. You are an interne at the insane hospital. I am Henry Sanborn. I——"

"He's the head doctor!" the proprietor interrupted, edging forward importantly.

The keen-faced physician cut him off. "I have heard of Henry Sanborn." He studied Henry's countenance. "Your face is faintly familiar."

"I've been at the asylum a lot of times," Henry declared. "I used to go out there to see Anna Allison. She——"

"She is my wife," Bender stated with dignity. "Her father, my predecessor, is dead. I recall you now. You spent much of your time with an insane patient—Menkowitz."

"Yes!" Henry was quivering with eagerness. "Menkowitz taught me the secret of the anti-gravity field."

"Anti-gravity field?"

"Yes. His plans were imperfect, but I found the flaw. I flew beyond the stars."

He was interrupted by a sudden com-



motion. The waiter uttered choking sounds as he clapped his hand to his mouth to smother a guffaw, while the proprietor snorted loudly and blinked an eye at no one in particular. The uniformed attendant moved in, his big hand hovering close to Henry's arm. But Bender frowned him back, taking time to study Henry with professional interest.

"Go on, Mr. Sanborn," he prompted.

Now that at last someone was listening to him, Henry ceased thinking entirely and began to erupt the words of what he called "his speech". He had practised it assiduously during our journey.

"Suppose you played a phonograph record backward. All phonetic laws would be broken, wouldn't they? Now if you had one large enough——"

"Ah, I see," Bender said indulgently. "You flew beyond the stars by playing a large phonograph record backward." He nodded. The uniformed attendant laid his hand on Henry's arm.

"I am not talking nonsense," Henry said, abandoning his "speech" and speaking with a convincing seriousness I had to admire. "Menkowitz was insane, but he had found out how to reverse the magnetic field. It worked in a small way, but when he increased the size, it failed. I found out the cause and remedied it. I built a ship propelled by that principle. I meant to use it against the Germans. It would have ended that war in a month. I finished it the day before I was to leave for the officers' training-camp. I wanted to try it out—to be sure before I told about it. That night I wheeled it out of the barn. I got in. I sealed the doors and windows. I turned the magnetic field inside out."

Henry was convincing now, compelling Bender's mind to yield. At a glance from the physician the attendant dropped his hand from Henry's arm.

"Go on, Mr. Sanborn," the physician said again, eagerness creeping into his tone.

"I was thrown so hard against the side of the ship that I was knocked senseless. When I came to I could see nothing through the fused quartz windows but stars. The currents that had seized the ship were too strong. I could do nothing against them. There was another crash. I awoke on a wooded hill. A strange being was working over me. I had landed on another planet in another solar system. The people are very advanced but frightful-looking. Its name, as nearly as I can pronounce it, is Urcanus."

"How'd you get back here?" The burly attendant grinned and made an eye-gesture at the driver behind Henry's back.

"The Urcanians built a ship for me. They've known the principle of the reversed magnetic field for ages. Why, they've perfected it in the fourth dimension and even gone on and experimented with it in the fifth. Usru, one of their greatest minds, came with me. I'll introduce you to him after we've seen the ship—if he's willing."

"Can he speak English?" Bender asked.

"Yes. And I can speak Urcanian. But they don't use their spoken language much now. They have instruments by which they tune in on each other's minds. I couldn't use them. They require a different brain structure—nerves more sensitive, more perfectly controlled. Oh, they've got wonderful machines. Why, they have a little memory-prober that can read a man's life history from his mind!"

"Urcanus must be a very moral planet," Bender smiled.

"It is. But wait until you see that anti-gravity ship! Let's go out there right now! It's only about two miles up the road through the gap, then you walk about half a mile."

Bender turned to the uniformed attendant.

"Edgar," he said, his voice vibrant, "we're going to take a look."

**E**ARTHLINGS, as we have found from our studies of the planet since Henry came among us, have a faith in science that is pathetic. Their wisest believe that to science nothing is impossible. We, who, in so many fields have carried science to its utmost limits, know its sad futility.

Scientific curiosity dominated Bender. He and Henry climbed into the chariot. I shut out of my consciousness the discord and stench of its departure by concentrating upon the minds of the waiter and his employer.

What I read there made clear that my conclusions, which I reached long before I launched upon this expedition, were correct. These two were typical earthlings. Their kind, and even lower types, make up the bulk of the population of the planet, so Henry himself admits. Almost incapable of thought, they surrendered themselves now to the rush of feeling welling upward from their flesh.

"Suppose he's right!" the waiter quavered. He was ready to worship Henry as a demigod. Yet alongside this half-conscious impulse quivered urgings to hound my associate to the asylum, to the jail, to the rack and faggot, were they still available in that mad world.

"Bosh!" Doubt underlay the tone of certainty the proprietor felt he owed it to his superior position to assume. Then he voiced openly the inherent cruelty of emotion—benevolent only when protective of what the individual esteems in some way a part of himself.

"Bender's a fool to let that loony take him off on that wild-goose chase. He ought to be kicked out of his job."

I advanced the G-ray to full strength, making ready for Henry's return.

The chariot approached rapidly. Bender was driving, for it required the combined strength of both big males to hold Henry between them on the rear seat. The air clashed with the vibrations of Henry's screams.

"But it is there, I tell you! Usru lifted it up in the air with his distance levitator. I told you they've got wonderful machines. He turned on his G-ray and made it invisible! It's hanging over that field, but we couldn't see it. I tell you it is there!"

"Why, sure it's there," agreed the big male called Edgar. "By tomorrow it'll settle down again; then we'll drive over and take a look at it."

As they stopped at the curb, Edgar leaned out and explained to the proprietor in a hoarse whisper. "He raised such hell about this here Usru, as he calls him, Doctor Bender made us bring him back so's to ca'm him down a little."

Protected by the full strength of the G-ray, invisible now even to Henry's eyes, I awaited the denouement.

Henry turned a pleading face toward the waiter, who hovered discreetly in the rear of the proprietor.

"You saw him! You saw Usru!" he urged. "He might have seemed dim—like a shadow almost—but you did see him, didn't you?"

"I never saw nobody but you," the waiter replied, backing away a little farther. "You was talking to yourself all the time. Sensible English at first. Then you went clean off your nut and began to blab gibberish and work your eyes and make crazy faces."

For such cerebration as was possible to him, the waiter's conclusion was logical. Henry was capable only of oral communication, which we seldom use because it is

inadequate for expressing our delicate shadings of thought. Having two eyes and an almost inflexible countenance, his efforts to use the facial gestures and eye movements and mouth positions with which we eke out oral speech were indeed alarming.

"What does this here Usru look like?" The proprietor, with what is doubtless a characteristic racial impulse to make brutal sport of another's wretchedness, kept repeating the question until he finally caught my distracted companion's attention.

"He's a little under three feet tall," Henry cried. "His body is only half the size of his head and he has no legs. But he has six arms. He uses two to grasp with and the other four to glide with instead of walking. He has one eye on a sort of stem or tube, and it is luminous. He has an organ he hears with and it's got other senses we haven't. It looks like a sort of fleshy blossom on the top of his head."

"Better drive on, Doctor," Edgar chuckled to Bender. "We might see it if we stick around here."

Bender gave Edgar a reproving glance but started the motor. As the chariot moved away, Henry struggled violently.

"Let me out!" he shrieked. "I tell you he is here! He's flooded himself with the G-ray and you can't see him! Usru! Us——"

Edgar's huge hand clamped down upon his mouth. The chariot roared away, gathering speed with every revolution of its clumsy wheels.

**I** ROSE. The table was between me and the two males of the drink shop. Before disposing of them, I reviewed what I had learned. Henry had planned to impart to his kind the knowledge of the anti-gravity field and establish communi-

cation between the earth and Urcanus—other planets. That would infect other worlds with the earth's recurrent mental disease—war. On Urcanus are limitless stores of metals which earthlings esteem precious and greedily desire. Urcanians cannot risk contact with a race thinking so far down in their emotions—with their bodies, instead of their heads. We have bred away the body to just enough to support the sac that holds our brains—our real selves.

What would these two creatures before me attempt, endowed with Urcanian knowledge? Now they were shaking and gasping with ribald glee as they repeated choice bits of Henry's conduct. Pity! Here it was reversed, become wanton, brainless brutality.

I rapped upon the table loudly—three times.

The earthlings stiffened into rigid, wildly staring images. They did not reason that Henry might have told the truth. Emotion discarded the obvious and invoked the occult. I proceeded to supply them with ample premises. Here is what they saw.

The glass of stale yellow liquid, raised of course by my grasping hands, to them seemed to rise of itself. They saw it hang suspended in air. Then, while they clung together, uttering little moaning sounds, it seemed slowly to fade into nothingness as I brought it within the aura of my personal G-ray.

I turned my atomic disintegrator upon the table, set at slow speed. They saw the flimsy structure crumble bit by bit to dust, and grain by grain, the dust dissolve into nothingness.

I turned off the G-ray and fronted them, thrusting out my eye-tube and making it its most luminous. That released the waiter's vasomotor processes.

He tore at the proprietor's clutching hands, striving to loosen them.

"My God!" he babbled. "What that guy had—it's catching! I see what he said he saw!"

With a piercing howl, he wrenched loose the proprietor's fingers and went away in long, high, bounding leaps. The proprietor sagged slowly down upon the gravel, a loose, blubbery heap.

I effaced myself from human sight with the G-ray and tuned the arrester ray of the distance control upon the chariot. That stopped it. A heavier charge rendered its occupants helpless. Even against the drag of earth's heavy atmosphere my sturdy little individual inertia and friction compensator enabled me to reach the machine in a twinkling.

Henry was happy to go back with me

to the ship. He was pulsating with horror at the thought of incarceration among the insane. He seethed with disgust at the stupidity of his kind. From these emotional premises he deduced a compelling desire to return with me to Urcanus where he is understood and honored.

He will be happy. He was dead when I found him in the wreckage of his ship beneath my laboratory window. He is alive because of our skill. Earth has no science able to maintain life in him a month. On Urcanus we can observe him for centuries, studying the psychology of development as we step him up stage by stage toward our own perfection of mental and physical organization. When he is useful to us no longer, there remains euthanasia.