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## Contents for August, 1926

- Cover Design ..... C. Barker Petrie, Jr.  
*Illustrating a scene from "The Woman of the Wood"*
- The Woman of the Wood ..... A. Merritt 149  
*When the peasants attacked the forest, the forest struck back—a tale of graphic action, strange murders, uncanny mystery*
- The Whistling Monsters ..... B. Wallis 167  
*Frightful beasts that were neither flesh nor fish, neither bird nor reptile, but combined the hideous qualities of all four*
- The Tsantsa of Professor Von Rothapfel ..... Alanson Skinner 183  
*This story of shrunken heads was written just a few days before the author's tragic death last summer*
- The Terrible Old Man ..... H. P. Lovecraft 191  
*The inhabitants of Kingsport heard terrible shrieks coming from the house of the old man one night*

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

<b>The Door of Hell</b> .....	<b>Emma-Lindsay Squier</b>	<b>193</b>
<i>The physicist opened a path to the world beyond the grave, and could not close it again</i>		
<b>The Devil's Pay</b> .....	<b>August W. Derleth</b>	<b>204</b>
<i>Five-minute tale of black magic—the duke paid a heavy price to accomplish the death of his enemy</i>		
<b>The Monster-God of Mamurth</b> .....	<b>Edmond Hamilton</b>	<b>207</b>
<i>Creeping horror, weird thrills, uncanny shivers, are in this eery tale of the Desert of Igidi</i>		
<b>Weird Story Reprints</b>		
<b>No. 14. The Horla</b> .....	<b>Guy de Maupassant</b>	<b>217</b>
<i>After man, the Horla—one of the most famous of weird tales, written by a great French story-teller</i>		
<b>Starkey Strang</b> .....	<b>Bertrande Harry Snell</b>	<b>232</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>The Mad Surgeon</b> .....	<b>Wright Field</b>	<b>233</b>
<i>The physician granted five years of robust health to his patient—and then sudden death</i>		
<b>The Devil's Graveyard</b> .....	<b>G. G. Pendarves</b>	<b>241</b>
<i>Giles the Thruster comes back from the tomb, accompanied by the Four Ancients and Gaffarel the Mighty</i>		
<b>The Other Vera</b> .....	<b>Willis Knapp Jones</b>	<b>255</b>
<i>Vera found her personality tragically intertwined with that of the wife of Obju, the African chief</i>		
<b>Fettered (Part 2)</b> .....	<b>Grege La Spina</b>	<b>262</b>
<i>Serial novel of occult evil that drew its chains around four men and women in the North Woods—a tale of midnight horror</i>		
<b>On Canton Road</b> .....	<b>Samuel M. Sargent, Jr.</b>	<b>280</b>
<i>Verse</i>		
<b>The Eyrie</b> .....		<b>281</b>
<i>A chat with the readers</i>		

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# STARKEY STRANG

By BERTRANDE HARRY SNELL

Up from his grave rose Starkey Strang, when midnight's foulest gloom  
 Cast evil blackness on the earth: up from his musty tomb  
 He came, all fleshless and unclad, for Starkey had been dead  
 Full ten score years, the faded script upon his tombstone said.  
 His dry bones rattled as he walked and in his awful eye  
 There gleamed a light that ne'er was born beneath an earthly sky.

From where the mouthing vampire moults beneath the vapid moon,  
 Where Shaitan sings with ghastly grin a rude and rimeless rune,  
 The while he fondles at his feet a pauper, or a king  
 That his feal fiends have flayed for him—a writhing, nameless *thing*;  
 Where flaunt the fiercely flickering flames above the horrid hole,  
 That holds in helpless horror full many a screeching soul,  
 Where nameless gnomes in robes of red blaspheme with lurid cries,  
 And ghastly ghouls guard well the gates, to snatch the soul that tries,  
 In hopeless way, to make escape, and hurl it back, once more,  
 Into the scorched and slithering mass that fills the fiery floor:  
 From such a place had Starkey come, through vacuous realms of Naught  
 (Though barely had he ventured through, so nearly was he caught),  
 To walk once more upon the earth, to see the world he knew;  
 Now wasn't that a foolish thing for Starkey Strang to do?

He ambled through the churchyard gate, his fleshless jaws agrin;  
 "Cogswounds!" said he; "a stoup or three I'll have at Piebald Inn."  
 He turned—and, oh! there at his heels a specter, all in white,  
 With soundless step and swaying robe, came slinking through the night;  
 Then fearsome was the frenzied shriek that tore the midnight air,  
 And formless was the pile of bones that lay, all lifeless, where  
 Poor Starkey Strang had stood, erstwhile . . . . Lift up your skulls and toast  
 The man who died a second time, because he saw a ghost!