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The APE CYCLE

By Clare Winger Harris



(Illustrated by Harris)

Only by closing his eyes could Wilhoit Stoddart shut out the distressing scenes pictured before him on the screen. He found his attention drawn irresistibly . . .

THE APE CYCLE

By the author of "The Artificial Man" etc.

ON the afternoon of January 18, 1930, a train on a branch line of a well-known railroad slowed down and stopped at a station in the northwestern corner of the State of Illinois. Only two passengers alighted from the train, but they were possessed of individuality unusual enough to arouse the curiosity of the most indifferent inhabitant of this typical middle-western town. The man was clad in leather trappings, and most of his paraphernalia was strapped to his back. His face, though lined as if from continued exposure to the elements, was that of a man in his middle thirties. His eyes and forehead belied his general appearance, and were characteristic rather of the scholar and dreamer than of the rugged adventurer. The other individual was a little boy about nine years of age. He was a miniature counterpart of the man, and it was apparent they were father and son.

Presently part of the boy's bundle which was fastened to his back began to move violently, as if in an effort to extricate itself, at which the child exclaimed:

"Father, Adam is trying to get away. How soon shall we be home?"

"It is not long, son, before we'll be able to let Adam and Eve down, but they will have to be caged temporarily. Later they can have the run of the place, as you shall see."

The child smiled up into his father's face and said, "It won't be long before they'll be earning their salt, and won't folks be surprised?"

O'er the man's face there passed a troubled shadow.

"I'm afraid it will be a long time before folks will be surprised," he replied gravely. Then his face brightened with a strange vivacity, and he added, "but

when they do wake up to the realization of what we've done, the word 'surprised' will be much too tame to describe it. I tell you, Ray, it'll be the greatest thing the world's ever known."

That night, safely ensconced in the small farmhouse that straggled amid a grove of sentinel-like poplars on the center of his large estate, Daniel Stoddard, having satisfactorily and comfortably arranged Ray and Adam and Eve for the night, sat before the log fire in his great living-room and dreamed of the future—and the past.

The fire died down several times and had to be replenished, but still Daniel Stoddard dreamed on, living in retrospection the early years of his married life with his beautiful wife, Stella. She had come from a family of professional men and was not accustomed to the work necessary for the upkeep of a typical Illinois farm. But she had done very well in spite of financial reverses and her naturally poor health.

Conditions were hopeful, even promising, until Ray's birth, from which Stella was never able to recuperate. Hired help had proved undependable and unsatisfactory, and it seemed that in sheer desperation at her own helplessness, the fair woman, who was apparently born for better things, died, leaving with her husband the baby boy one and a half years old.

During the next five years Daniel had managed his farm with whatever futile, itinerant help he could get from time to time. It was during those years of apparently fruitless toil that the great idea found a permanent lodging place in his brain.

It was born of a belief that to men and women rightly belong freedom from eternal toil. And when the idea had grown in his mind, he determined to devote his life to its fulfillment.

One evening six years ago he had sat alone before his fire just as he was now. Ray was in bed, the papers read. At a loss as to how to pass the remainder of a lonely evening, Daniel had wandered over to his well-filled book-case and idly scanned the titles of the volumes therein. Absent-mindedly he picked one up, opened it and glanced casually at the page before him. What he read arrested his attention, and he turned the book over

and glanced at the title. It was the great work on the ancient Egyptians by Sir Gardner Wilkinson. Daniel turned again to the page that had originally attracted his attention and read the following: "Monkeys appear to have been trained to assist in gathering fruit, and the Egyptians represent them in sculptures handing down figs from the trees to the gardeners below. . . . Many animals were tamed in Egypt for various purposes—and in the Jimma country which lies to the south of Abyssinia, monkeys are still taught several useful accomplish-



CLARE WINNER HARRIS

ALTHOUGH man has made great strides in emancipating himself from the drudgery of earning his sustenance, he is still heavily chained to the bondage of labor. He has devised many ways to gain more leisure for the development of his inner faculties. Our mechanical civilization has added enormously to our possibilities for leisure and has also, as a consequence, enriched the human soul greatly in giving to every laborer a larger share of wealth in return for his services than has heretofore been possible. But it is recognized by many that the possibilities in the mechanical civilization are limited. In other words, there are still many tasks which will always have to be performed by sentient beings.

Experiments with the lower forms of life, such as the horse, the dog, etc., have been uniformly successful in doing part of man's labor. But a more intelligent being is undoubtedly necessary. Such a being is found in the ape—the form of life most nearly resembling man. Mrs. Harris takes this idea for her theme and develops from it a remarkable story of the attempt of man to emancipate himself from labor through the assistance of his ape brother.

ments. Among them is that of officiating as torch-bearers at a supper party; and seated in a row, on a raised bench, they hold the lights until the departure of the guests, patiently awaiting their own re-quest as a reward for their services. Sometimes a refractory subject fails in his accustomed duty, and the harmony of the party is for the moment disturbed, particularly if the unruly monkey throws his lighted torch into the midst of the unsuspecting guests. But the stick and deprivation of food is the punishment of the offender; and it is by these persuasive arguments alone that the simians are prevailed upon to perform so delicate an office."

A Great Dream

FOR the remainder of the night Daniel Stoddart sat before the fire. Through his mind flashed image after image of a world wherein mankind was forever freed from the bondage of labor. True, men have had such visions since the beginning of civilisation. The enslavement of the blacks had been such an attempt to free the white man from the drudgeries of existence, yet at what a fearful price! There must be another way, Stoddart thought.

He saw how the age of machines was promising man release from many types of work that have always kept millions in drudgery. But there must be something more, he thought, as he sat there in the freight.

"Machines can never do it alone," he had exclaimed. "There will always have to be men to tend machines, and do many other menial tasks. But with the careful breeding and training of these primates it would be different. Since time immemorial lesser animals have labored for men, and if treated kindly, how better can they justify their existence and help man in attaining the high goal for which he is ultimately destined? The horse, the ox, the camel, the elephant, the dog and other animals less intelligent have all contributed toward man's emancipation from the eternal problem of working for his sustenance. Why not the ape who most closely resembles man? His irresistible tendency to 'ape' man could be turned into useful channels. Slave labor was quite satisfactory until man became awakened to the moral wrong. But here we will deal with monkeys, apes, baboons and all of that branch of primates that are not human, and the moral objection that rightly abolished human slavery, could not be raised."

The result of that night's thoughts was that Daniel packed up his belongings, closed the house and with little Ray, then a lad of six, departed for the near East. And it so happened that the two and a friend, Job Wilhoit, an English business man of means, found themselves in the vicinity of the Red Sea.

"It is here," Job told Daniel, "that many of the aromatic shrubs from which we get our spices and medicinal herbs are grown."

Along the rivers and in the ravines, recesses, and glens, the shrubs Wilhoit sought were growing in abundance. Stoddart was looking for something else. The shrubs were difficult of access and the men wondered how the Indians succeeded in gathering their product for the market. Of course East Indians are nimble, but the two adventurers knew

it would require most unusual agility to harvest the crops from some of the taller trees, for their thick-growing branches were extremely difficult to handle. The natives were particularly secretive about their methods of operation, and would never allow the assistance of white labor.

But one day as the men were topping a hill they looked into the narrow valley below and paused in astonishment at the strange sight that greeted their eyes.

A few natives were walking amid the shrubs and underbrush, shouting strange words in their own tongue. This was followed by unusual commotion in the tree-tops, and turning their attention thither, the white men saw hundreds of monkeys picking the fruit and throwing it to their masters below. The work was done so quickly and efficiently that our friends became fascinated by it and it was dusk before they realized it.

Dan and Job remained in the vicinity of the working monkeys for several days, subsisting upon herbs and roots, the while they watched with growing amazement the startling intelligence displayed by the apes. Often they were greatly amused at some of the antics performed by the little beasts. Dan remembered particularly one mischievous monkey who invariably sought the top of the trees and always saw to it that his plucked fruit never failed to strike the head of a fellow-worker on its way to the ground.

Daniel became more and more enthusiastic over the future possibilities of ape-slavery and divulged his dream to Wilhoit. But his ardor was not shared by Job, who maintained that an innate treachery would prevent these animals from becoming servants in a civilized country. However he could not prevail upon Daniel Stoddart to give up his dream of emancipating man from life's drudgeries through the agency of the ape.

Stoddart, Ray, and Wilhoit remained in the Orient for nearly two years. When they finally sailed away they had with them in cages, six splendid, intelligent, specimens of monkey. For a year Daniel and little Ray were guests at the elder Wilhoit's estate in Wiltshire, England, where the two young men undertook the initial steps necessary for the realization of their hopes. The result was the breeding of some very intelligent simians whose aptitude was nothing short of amazing.

It had been agreed between Wilhoit and Stoddart that if it became necessary to replenish the supply of suitable beasts from time to time, the former with his ample resources would return to Asia for additional animals which he would ship to his friend in America.

So the two Stoddarts now home again had with them two monkeys, a male and female, whom Daniel destined to be the Adam and Eve of a future race of servant-slaves. They were to make man's existence upon earth a paradise by relieving him of the distasteful duties that have always kept him in bondage.

Daniel was surprised to learn just before his second trip to the east that Job had married and taken his bride with him. And prior to the third and last trip of Job Wilhoit, the Stoddarts received the announcement of the birth of a baby girl. Young Wilhoit, however, never returned to his wife and daughter. What had been his fate none knew. The

last that had ever been heard of him was when he got out from Kahinda in West Africa for an aping expedition into the interior.

With the coming of dawn, Daniel Stoddard rose from his chair and greeted the day with words of determination, "I will devote myself to the breeding and training of simians; each type for a specific kind of work best adapted to the animal's size and type of intelligence. I have in mind the ultimate development of the *perfect monkey servant*."

CHAPTER II The New Servants

EMERSON has said, "Everything is impossible until we see success." That the two Stoddards had accomplished the well-nigh impossible, there seemed to be no question. The proofs of the success of their venture during the ensuing twelve years were confined to their Illinois farm. But with the rapid approach to its borders of suburban homes, Daniel and Ray determined to seek some more isolated territory where they could stave off the encroachment of civilization until they were ready to divulge their secret.

One day the two stood on their front veranda and heard in the distance the sound of steam-shovels at work on a highway to go past their land.

"With your education completed at the University of Illinois," said the older man, "it is time for us to continue our work elsewhere. We must be away from the prying eyes of neighbors."

"But father," protested Ray, "hasn't the time come for us to prove the merit of our 'unusual products', and to market our monkeys throughout the country?"

Daniel Stoddard placed a hand upon his son's broad shoulder.

"My boy," he said sadly, "I fear I am not destined to see that time. You know the old saying, 'Rome was not built in a day'. It requires infinite patience to accomplish visible and tangible results in the field of evolution. You will see in your day the beginning of man's emancipation, but even for you and your children the *great day* will not dawn. You and I will pass on cognizant of the fact that we have but laid the foundation for the great superstructure of humanity's freedom."

The two men gazed across the broad fertile acres of the Stoddard farm which were secluded from the outside by an arboreal wall of closely-planted poplars. Everywhere was visible evidence of the scientific care necessary for a perfect cooperation with natural law. Yes, the two Stoddards had prospered during the years since their return home on that wintry day in 1930.

The sound of a lawn-mower approaching from the side of the house drew the attention of the two men. It was being operated and guided by a gorilla, a travesty on the human form. The animal plodded along remarkably erect, and with its prodigious strength handled the lawn-mower as easily as if it were a toy, guiding it with careful precision. As sight of the two men on the porch, it bared its teeth in what might be interpreted as a smile of recognition, though it was not returned by the two masters.

"Beta is almost worth his weight in gold," re-

marked the younger Stoddard as the huge ape disappeared around the side of the house on the return swath. "Not only does he perform his own duties well, but he is showing marked ability in superintending the work of others. A few more overseers of his and Alpha's ability, and you and I could retire and be mere figure-heads."

"Scarcely that," replied the older man with a smile, "I can not imagine a day when the brain of man will not continue to be the prime factor in all human accomplishment."

"Man's brain started the ball rolling," commented his son, "but the momentum will carry it on."

"A sort of perpetual motion, eh?" queried the other. "I declare, son, your enthusiasm exceeds my own."

A baboon appeared, dragging a hose toward the porch. At the foot of the steps it deposited its burden, quickly ascended the steps and commenced carrying the porch furniture to one end. This done, it agilely descended, took up the hose, studied the nozzle for a minute as if slightly puzzled, then ran around to the hydrant and turned on the water. As it picked up the hose once more, its beady little eyes shifted ever so slyly to the two men standing on the steps. It brought the stream of water very close to its masters' feet, thought better of its mischievous inclination, passed the two and began to wash the dusty porch.

"Kappa will get too frisky for his own good some day," commented Ray.

Just at that moment a small monkey appeared in the doorway and chattered to attract attention.

"Go get the mail, Bedelia," ordered Daniel.

The simian came out of the house, cast an apparently disdainful glance in Kappa's direction, descended the stairs and proceeded at a loping gait down the walk. The two men turned to enter the house when a gurgling scream, followed immediately by an unusual chattering commotion, held them to the spot. Bedelia was being made the target for the water from the hose, wielded in the capable hands of Kappa, who jumped up and down in delight.

"Another case of atavism," remarked Daniel with an effort to suppress a smile. "Here you young rascal, drop that hose!"

A Strange Silence

BEFORE either of the Stoddards could enforce obedience from the recalcitrant Kappa, a huge paw reached up from below the porch railing, seized the hapless monkey, and gave the terror-stricken little animal such a blow that it fell to the ground.

"Hey there, Beta," cried Ray springing forward, "that's not the way to do! Do you hear? I will attend to Kappa. No, no!"

The gorilla blinked in amazement at Ray's outburst, then turned and retreated to the lawn-mower with injured pride apparent in every move. A puzzled scowl lowered the beetling brows beneath its receding forehead.

Bedelia took herself to the house in quest of a towel, and the two men bore the injured Kappa inside where they rendered first aid. But it was several days before the young baboon was able to perform his scheduled duties.

Daniel received the letter proffered to him by

Bedelia an hour later. It was dated from New York and ran as follows:

"Dear Mr. Stoddard:-

My daughter Melva and I arrived in America day before yesterday. We have been so busy enjoying the sights of this wonderful city that I have neglected writing you before of our intention to call upon you and your son at the 'monkey-farm', as Job has always termed it. Since my husband's disappearance my success with the few apes we had upon the estate has been miserable. Melva and I do not seem to employ the type of discipline necessary to hold the animals in subjection. We should like very much to be able to study your methods for a few days during our sojourn in your wonderful country.

Margaret E. Wilhoit."

Daniel turned the letter over to Ray in response to the latter's look of inquiry, and when he had finished it the father suggested, "Let us send a telegram to them to meet one of us in Chicago. It will be much easier for them than to have to find their way clear out here in the backwoods. Can you arrange to go, Ray? You can spare for a little while. The twins born to Omega last Sunday will be the last arrivals for awhile. Then I'll keep a weather eye on Alpha and I'm sure things will run along smoothly."

It was with pleasant anticipation that Ray considered meeting the wife and daughter of his father's former friend. He recalled Job Wilhoit quite distinctly, though he had not seen him since he himself was a lad of nine. Wilhoit had been a younger man than Ray's father, and at the time he knew him, was married about seven years. Ray figured the daughter was not yet twenty.

The meeting was one of satisfaction for all. Both mother and daughter, while possessing characteristic English reserve, proved friendly and entertaining, and showed an intense interest in Ray's description of the development of monkey labor. Melva's short brown ringlets, ready smile, and sly humor might not at first seem characteristic of a serious young person, but Ray was not long in discovering that this charming little English girl had deeper sides to her nature.

The trip to the farm ended all too soon as far as the two young people were concerned, but Mrs. Wilhoit was thoroughly fatigued after the long trip west, and was desirous of resting for a few days.

"Strange father isn't at the station with the car," Ray exclaimed as they alighted and surveyed the platform. "He knew when to expect us. You ladies sit down and wait a moment. I'm going to use the phone."

He returned shortly with a troubled, preoccupied air, and it was some time before he spoke.

"I didn't get father on the phone."

"Maybe he was a considerable distance from the house," suggested Mrs. Wilhoit.

"No, the phone was answered by Alpha."

"And who is Alpha?" queried Melva. "What an odd name. It is the Greek letter for 'A.'"

"Yes," replied Ray absently. "Alpha is A, and No. 1 in this case. He is our most intelligent ape. He oversees the running of our household week in, week out, with scarcely any interference

from either father or myself. Routine and habit, of course, instilled into him by generations of highly specialized training. He is a large and important cog in this organization of ape labor. He almost speaks, but his articulation is very peculiar. Only father and I can understand him, but to do so is no more a stretch of imagination, I am sure, than that exercised by many a fond mother over the first efforts of her babbling offspring."

"How interesting," cried Melva. "How far you and your father have progressed in the realization of your dream! I don't think even my poor father quite realized its possibilities to such a vast extent."

"Your father was an explorer and adventurer, Melva," explained her mother. "He was not of a scientific turn of mind. Capturing apes was sufficient thrill for him, regardless of whether they or their descendants were destined to be eventually human or mere trained circus performers."

"'Eventually human!' Why mother, what a sacrilege!" exclaimed Melva, a frown puckering her pretty brow. "Of course they can't become human. They have no souls!"

"At just what point in the process of evolution does the soul appear?" asked Mrs. Wilhoit with a knowing side smile at Ray.

"Well, all I have to say," continued the apparently grieved Melva, "is that if they ever do become human we can't have them work for us any more. That would be slavery."

CHAPTER III

A Tragedy

RAY smiled gravely, but there was a twinkle in his eyes. "With the first appearance of a soul, Miss Wilhoit, we will pay them wages and they will be satisfied."

The taxi gave up its passengers outside the row of stately poplars.

"What ample protection these afford from prying eyes!" observed Mrs. Wilhoit as the three entered the grounds.

"Yes, our isolation has been all we could desire," answered the young man. "Of course, through the years it has leaked out that we have animals that we are training, but no one dreams that our ambitions soar beyond the confines of the circus ring."

As the three approached the house they saw Bedelia picking roses from the bushes at the side of the porch. The women watched her with intense interest. The simian's selection was perfect. She picked only those that were at the height of their beauty. Finally when her bouquet had assumed ample proportions she buried her ugly flat nose in it and nimbly climbed the steps and entered the open door.

"Will she know what to do with them?" questioned Melva.

"Wait and see," was Ray's response, but his mind was not on Bedelia. "Come and be seated, ladies, I'll get father."

The two seated themselves in the orderly and immaculately clean parlor. They surveyed with interest its furniture of excellent quality, but a generation old; ottomans, tidies on chair backs, and long ornate mirrors with wax flowers under glass domes.

"Maybe the monkeys like these things," whispered Melva with a suppressed giggle.

"Hush, child," reproved her mother, "these two

men have more to occupy their minds than to keep up with modern styles in house furnishings. Look at that quaint china representation of those three monkeys who with their paws over their eyes, ears and mouths, admonish the observer to see, hear and speak no evil."

A pattering of tiny feet drew the attention of both visitors to the door leading to the hallway. Bedelia was approaching, triumphantly bearing aloft her bouquet of roses in a vase of water. She set it gingerly upon a small table near Melva.

"Come here, little monkey," said Melva, holding out her hands invitingly. Bedelia hesitated, then slowly approached, her little eyes shifting continuously between the two strangers. To their utter surprise, she sprang upon Melva's lap and nestled close to her shoulder, occasionally watching her face to see whether her action met with approval. She pawed over the ruffles and trimming of Melva's dress and examined her beads minutely, then, amid the shrieks of laughter of the women, she took Melva's hat off her head and placed it upon her own, where it nearly touched her shoulders.

"If she has the fleas that our monkeys at home used to have, I advise you not to let her keep it on," laughed Mrs. Withoit.

A shadow fell athwart the gay scene in the parlor, and apprehensively mother and daughter raised their eyes. Standing in the doorway, its head nearly touching the lintel, stood the largest and ugliest ape upon which they had ever gazed. But, strange to say, its extreme unattractiveness resulted not so much from characteristic simian traits as from the fact that it just escaped being human in appearance. The slope from forehead to jaw was far less marked, the nose had a suggestion of a bridge and in the proportionally small eyes lay a look of amazing intelligence.

This "missing link", for so both women unconsciously termed him, was possessed of prodigious strength; for even through the clothes he wore they could see the play of great muscles on his arms and shoulders. From the massive trunk rose his thick hairy neck, a pillar of strength, supporting the head that paleontologists might have easily constructed from the skull of the famous Pittdown man discovered in England. The hands, long and hairy, moved with restless energy about the buttons of the coat.

If either of the two strangers in the house had been less accustomed to apes of all sizes and descriptions, they would probably have fainted on the spot; but though their experience had acquainted them with a diversity of types, never had they conceived of such a creature as stood before them now.

A general command evoked an immediate response from the little monkey, who slipped unobtrusively from Melva's lap and disappeared through the door. But the great bulk of the newcomer did not move. Instead, he was gazing fixedly at Melva, and there was that in his too-intelligent bestial face that struck terror to the hearts of both women. Melva felt cold chills running up and down her spine, and when she opened her mouth to scream, not a sound was forthcoming.

The great ape, perceiving the fright of the two in the parlor, walked slowly forward, and his facial expressions gave clear evidence of the development of certain small muscles that had been wholly atro-

phied in his ancestors a few generations back.

It was Mrs. Withoit who finally spoke, her voice husky with fright, "Ray,—Mr. Stoddart,—where are you?"

Reflexed

THE gorilla-like creature ceased his stealthy advance at the sound of her voice and looked toward the hall and stairway. A faint rustling and the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps were welcome sounds to the visitors. In a moment Ray appeared, but a very changed man. His face was ashen, his manner thoroughly dejected. He entered the room as one walking in a nightmare, scarcely cognizant of the three occupants.

"Why, what has happened, Mr. Stoddart?" cried Melva running toward him.

He sank into a chair and stared for a moment with unseeing eyes; then, suddenly aware of his surroundings, he looked at the great gorilla.

"Alpha, what do you know about Dan?" he demanded imperiously.

"Dan gone," growled the beast in a queer throaty guttural tongue.

"Is—is—your father?" breathed Mrs. Withoit.

"Yes—dead," said the man in a toneless voice, "dead with no marks of violence upon him. It must have been his heart, but why—"

Melva had been watching Alpha covertly. The great beast shifted its eyes from one to another of the group.

"Will you send Alpha away?" whispered Melva.

"Prepare the vegetables for dinner," said Ray peremptorily. The animal shambled toward the kitchen.

"Do you know, I detest that brute!" Melva exclaimed after the kitchen door had closed on his huge bulk. "I think he is terrible—a travesty on humanity at its worst."

Ray thought a moment before he replied wearily: "What else can one expect? The end, however, justifies the means. The intelligence of that 'travesty' and others like him, will free mankind of drudgery. Though my father is dead, I am sure at the hands of one of those, I must carry on. Where monkeys are employed, the menial tasks of men and women are performed with scarcely any supervision. Think what it means for us to be free to turn our attentions to the higher things of life!" His voice rose rapturously.

"If there are many more like Alpha will there be any of us left to consider 'the higher things of life'?" Melva asked, trying to divert his mind from the tragedy.

"What do you mean?" Ray questioned, his voice sharp with a sudden note of alarm. It was evident that he was terribly disturbed.

"Simply this," the girl replied evenly. "Alpha has murdered your father and you should acknowledge the truth. Why don't you face this thing squarely and admit that your perfect servant who saves you physical fatigue, possesses mental quirks that have made him a murderer?"

"But I questioned him," answered Ray, "and he says he found father dead."

"Then why did he leave you to discover the tragedy alone instead of apprising you of the fact at once?" persisted Mrs. Withoit.

"Gorillas cannot kill without leaving behind them

the tell-tale marks of their violence," said Ray.
 "Not even exceptionally smart gorillas?" queried Melva.

"Not even those who are exceptionally smart," Melva replied Ray gravely, "for their intelligence is all concentrated in the direct field of their particular labor. They are exaggerated specialists. Outside of the care of this house, Alpha is a fool."

"I wouldn't be too sure, my boy," said the older woman shaking her head sadly.

"Nevertheless," replied the youth, "many years in this work make me reasonably certain that I know whereof I speak."

"Indeed, we hope you are right, Ray," said Melva. "We—we are very sorry for your loss."

Alpha's Treachery

FOR three months following the sad demise of the elder Stoddart, Mrs. Wilhoit and Melva toured the western states, returning to Illinois to say good-bye to Ray. They found him sad and lonely, but quietly determined to carry on the work bequeathed him by his father.

One evening, a few days prior to the date set for the departure of the visitors, Melva and Ray sought the lane that was shaded by the poplars. It had been an interesting day. Ray had been instructing two baboons who were specialized along mechanical lines, in the operation of a new farm implement. The baboons had proved very apt pupils, and before the day was over Ray was convinced that henceforth the care and operation of that machine or any like it could be entirely turned over to the two. Melva had taught four very young monkeys the names and different uses for all the dishes and silver-ware. They had played it as a game and the monkeys always considered it as such. Like their parents who for generations had performed table duty, the youngsters took to the task as the proverbial duck to water.

"You know, Ray," confided Melva, "for a while I rather lost the vision that our fathers had of the true greatness of this project. But lately I have caught some of your enthusiasm when I see what is accomplished here without the aid of human hands. What can not man do when, unhampered by the sordid, monotonous tasks of daily life, he will be at liberty to pursue science and art to the limit?"

"I have been on the lookout for a young man who seemed inclined to share my enthusiasm," said Ray with a curious glance at the face of his companion. "I am going west, out into the desert, where with unlimited possibilities of growth and in a climate more healthful for the monkeys, I shall quietly revolutionize the labor of mankind. Think of the time, Melva, when I can say that the day of man's emancipation has come!"

Melva was silent. Her previous ardor seemed to have left her.

"What is the matter?" her companion inquired. "Don't you believe the prospects of this enterprise demand a larger field of labor, and that I should have a partner to help me?"

"I do indeed," said the girl in mock solemnity. "I approve of the desert, the climate and an enthusiastic co-worker on this scheme, but why does he have to be a young man?"

"Well—you see," Ray said, looking off into the distance, "an older man like my father might—"

There was a sudden shriek. Ray turned his head to see Melva snatched at from behind the poplars and bushes that fringed the path and through the gloom he saw that she was being borne away, apparently unconscious, in the arms of Alpha. Ray began immediate pursuit, shouting the gorilla's name in imperious tones. Never before had Alpha so defied him. The distance between them rapidly increasing, Ray could hardly detect in the darkness the broad shoulders of the beast. He noted the light patch of Melva's dress floating through the air and deduced that Alpha had shifted his burden to facilitate his escape.

As Ray suspected, Alpha was headed for the monkey houses at the rear of the estate. The great ape did not possess the mental acumen to seek a hiding place. Ray had been right in his previous assertion that Alpha's specialization had made him a fool along other lines. The ape was now seeking the quarters of his mate.

By the time Ray arrived at the out-buildings which housed the monkeys, it was quite dark, and as he approached he saw a light flash on, only to be immediately extinguished. There was much confusion and chattering going on inside. When Ray finally burst through the door he saw nothing of Alpha nor Melva, but a group made up of gorillas, baboons, chimpanzees, orang-outangs and a few tailless monkeys who had formed a ring around some object. Ray hastened forward, thrusting the curious apes roughly aside. Lying prone and inert was the form of Beta. Ray learned from the on-lookers that he had been killed by Alpha when he dared interfere with the predatory ape. Beta had been strangled. The tell-tale marks were plainly evident.

"Alpha cannot kill and yet leave no marks," said Ray aloud, as if to rid himself of an eternal overshadowing doubt.

But now was no time for idle musings. Leaving the quarters of the smaller monkeys, he forced a hasty passage-way to the rear of the building. And then a sound such as he had never heard in all the years of his work among these beasts fell upon his ears; raucous and piercing cries, and a deep thumping, like the distant beating of an African tom-tom. Instinctively he knew it to be the sound of a gorilla on the war-path. Even before he could reach the door the thumping ceased, and was rapidly succeeded by the impact of huge bodies in conflict.

He opened the door and an amazing sight greeted him, but it was one that made his heart leap with joy. Melva stood beneath the high window gazing with terror-stricken eyes at what must have been a very rapid drama. On the floor was Alpha, who, curiously enough, lay in the identical posture of Beta, his victim of a few minutes before.

With a cry of joy Melva ran to Ray's side just as the irate female gorilla turned from the prostrate form of her dead mate.

"Omega?" said Ray in stern tones. "What have you done?"

The female turned her hate-filled eyes toward Melva, who would probably have been the next victim, but for the presence of the master. Ray

took a step toward the ape who coweringly retreated. Wishing to impress upon this servant at this critical moment the desired lesson, Ray stroked Melva's hair, patted her shoulder and said, "Nice Melva, good Melva." Then moving toward the carcass of the dead gorilla, he kicked it and said "Bad Alpha."

Omega comprehended, and appreciated the moral instruction which he was receiving, for the smoldering hatred died from her eyes, and in imitation of her master Ray, she kicked the body of her mate, and then, in spite of Melva's revulsion, stroked the girl's hair and patted her shoulder.

Melva tolerated it bravely, simply for the sake of the moral to be drawn from it. She smiled up into the serious face of her companion, whose appearance gave evidence of the birth of some new idea.

"The loss of Alpha and Beta will be a temporary setback to the monkey-farm enterprise, but I have an idea," he exclaimed with boyish enthusiasm.

"These monkeys must grow accustomed to the presence of a woman in their midst as a co-ruler with me. Pardon my stupidity, dear, I see now why I do not want a man, either young or old, as my partner in this desert project—because I want—you."

"It took a rather violent set of circumstances to convince you," the girl demurred, "and I am not sure but that a young man would be best for you after all. I hate being proposed to in a monkey-house! In the lane by the poplars would have been so much more romantic!"

He laughed and caught her to him in a close embrace. "You do not need to answer me now, Melva darling. Wait until we get back to the lane by the poplars."

CHAPTER IV

A Moral Issue

THREE centuries is a short time, geologically speaking, and Nature, through the action of the elements, accomplishes little during that span; but give *Mae* three hundred years in which to change his environment, and he accomplishes wonders. Great as was the change in North America from the landing of the Pilgrims until the establishment of the first monkey-farm on a large scale south of Death Valley, it was infinitesimal as compared to the transition from the old order of labor to the new.

During the life-time of the early Zeser pioneers, Ray Stoddard and his wife, the former Melva Wilhoit, little public attention had been paid to occasional newspaper accounts of a "monkey-farm". But despite the ridicule of many, the years were proving that man had at last realized for himself an irksome servant for the performance of those intricate tasks that had always chained him to earth. Just as in the life of the individual, many conscious acts are gradually relegated to the supervision of the sub-conscious mind, so the once mental duties of man were handed over to the less intelligent apes, liberating man himself.

Wilhoit Stoddard, the present proprietor of the original "monkey-farm," south of what was once Death Valley, was a direct descendant of Ray and Melva Stoddard. Apes bred by his ancestors and himself were carrying on the manual labor in every

civilized country on the globe. This labor in the year 2216 consisted principally of tending machines; not only their mechanical operation, but the manufacturing output as well. And, as had always been proved to be the case among men, so it was among the intelligent apes: Some were more capable than others, and showed an aptitude for learning that was amazing. Of course the development of the ape cycle had not been alone by unconscious evolution. It was Ray Stoddard's son who had perceived that the evolutionary development of apes must be hastened. And so, turning over the actual management of his estate to overseers, he buried himself in his biological laboratories. It was a young vigorous man who entered the laboratory for a first time. But it was an old, bent but gloriously triumphant one who emerged thirty years later with the secret! By making extracts of the known glands of human beings and discovering a few for himself, he was able to procure in a concentrated form the vital substance that controlled the mental growth of the race. His next step was to test it on his apes.

His first success was phenomenal, but he died before he could extend it and his son was left to carry it on. It was found by Ray Stoddard's grandson that by application of the gland extracts to apes it was now possible to transmit characteristics of any desired kind and also to develop the speech organs of the brutes. According, gardeners, domestic servants, chauffeurs, mechanics, were all bred as the result of a definite extract. Families of apes therefore became specialized and men made it a business to breed these specialized servants for sale to the general public.

"I do declare," exclaimed Wilhoit to his mother one day as they were enjoying the pure, clear air of their western home. "I sometimes think Rex, our local overseer, shows more intelligence than some human beings."

"Well, do you know," replied his mother, "I think that there are many people who should still labor as do the great apes. Unless a man is mentally ready for emancipation, he deteriorates instead of progressing. It has always been so. It seems that not all people can stand prosperity and the leisure that accompanies it. Take Hayes Sulter for example."

"There is something worrying me," pondered Wilhoit thoughtfully, "and I might as well tell it now while we're on the subject. There is a moral question that has arisen as to whether we should keep the apes in servitude."

His mother started in shocked surprise. "A moral issue, son? But they are beasts. Surely—"

Wilhoit leaned forward in his chair and his voice came in awed accent. "They are more than beasts. We have made them so."

"Hail, Abraham Lincoln!" said a sneering voice from the door. "Wouldn't it be some joke if the descendant of the illustrious Stoddards who gave man his freedom from drudgery, should return him to that state through a mistaken sense of philanthropy? A nice mess civilization would be in, I must say!"

"Oh! hello, Hayes," exclaimed young Stoddard without turning his head. But Mrs. Stoddard glanced up at the indolent face of the newcomer.

"I think you misjudge Wilhoit," she said quietly.

"He has no intention of freeing the apes—why they're—soulless beasts. Aren't they, my boy?"

Wilhoit was enjoying himself hugely. He hitched his chair a trifle nearer to the one Sulter had nonchalantly lounged into, and riveted his eyes on the latter. "I'm not so sure about this soul business, and where the dividing line comes. If a lazy man has a soul, I believe an industrious ape has one too."

"Oh, Wilhoit," exclaimed his mother in shocked amazement. "If that is true, our system is all wrong and we should have to reorganize our entire economic life, and for that matter, our civilization."

"Yes indeed," chimed in Hayes, "and the age-old controversies of capital and labor would appear again. Excuse me for being frank, but no sane person would suggest such a thing. Just as the world begins to enjoy life, along comes an agitator and upsets things again. Bah!"

"Yes," said Wilhoit unflinching, "there have been many agitators known to history. They have shaken civilization out of its complacency. Struggle and turmoil have followed in their wake, but—the world has been better for their interference."

Hayes Sulter rose and bowed with mock courtesy. "Mrs. Stoddard, we must do homage to this would-be savior and emancipator of the apes. Isn't he marvelous?"

Signs of Rebellion

THE woman ignored the young man's sarcasm and continued to regard her son with a troubled countenance. The latter walked over to a side of the room that was occupied by the television screen and radio, but there was no response to his pressure on the switch.

"This is the fourth day," he remarked irritably, "that we've had no news of the outside world. Neither Rex, nor Vance (the ape electrician) has been able to locate the troupe."

"I'd invite you over to use ours," said Sulter with forced civility, "but we've been out of touch with the east for the same length of time."

Presently a light footfall apprised the three of the approach of some one. Upon appearance it proved to be a neighbor, Sylvia Danforth. The faces of the young men lighted up at the girl's approach, and Hayes hastened forth to meet her. But with no apparent rudeness she evaded him and smiled into the welcoming eyes of Wilhoit.

"I dislike being the bearer of bad news, Wilhoit," the girl said a little ruefully, "but father has had trouble again with his ape overseer, Felix. It has just been one thing after another from underhanded trickery to open defiance, but today's escapade caps the climax!"

"Your father's too easy with his apes, Sylvia," said Hayes smiling unpleasantly. "A little corporal punishment goes a long way."

"What did Felix do?" asked Wilhoit quickly. "You'll wonder how things could have gotten so upset in a once orderly world," replied the girl miserably, "but Felix knocked the radio broadcasting apparatus to pieces and attacked father with a bar. It took four of us; two apes, sister Inez and myself to lock Felix up where he could do no more damage."

"You hear?" cried young Stoddard in an unconsciously dramatic tone. "The era has dawned when man can no longer depend upon monkey supervision of machinery. It is true that the ape intelligence that freed man from his drudgery is now working in its own behalf. If it is allowed to continue unhindered, it will result in the rise of a new order of beings who have become cunning, efficient and powerful. We have only ourselves to thank for the situation. We have created our own nemesis."

"Oh come, dear," said Mrs. Stoddard with an effort at cheerfulness, "you'll have to admit that what has happened is a rare exception. One overseer in thousands runs rampant, and you take it as an ill omen of the future. I thought superstition was a thing of the past. Besides they are just specialized creatures who have no initiative."

"Some have, mother. You know that a number have been bred to intellectual labor. Why should they not read history and think of rebellion? Besides it is not superstition, but reason, mother, to read the future by the trend of the present. What surer guide have we than the logical unfolding of events?" He rose quickly. "I must get back to the quarry. I can't trust the apes with any explosives yet."

Sylvia turned to go and Hayes was at her side.

"May I come over and see Felix?" he asked. "I flatter myself that my apes have never acted up. Maybe I can handle him in a way to insure future obedience."

"I strongly advise against violence, Hayes," Wilhoit called after him in steeley tones. "My apes have never 'acted up' either, yet they know nothing but the gentlest of treatment."

Hayes and Sylvia walked down the broad shady avenue that led to the Danforth estate. It was a perfect day. Everywhere around them life's activities seemed to progress with customary unhampered regularity. The fields were dotted with monkey laborers; some doing physical work, others running machinery, and still others superintending. Many of the new fuelless, electrically-activated cars passed the two pedestrians, the majority of which were chauffeured by liveried apes.

Airplanes were still piloted mainly by human beings, though there were in North America in 2216 exactly 1308 licensed ape pilots who did nothing else but fly, and who were competent in their profession. It must be remembered that when a simian was bred to anything he knew it thoroughly, and usually he knew nothing else.

Sylvia and Hayes watched the speeding planes, and tried to guess which were piloted by men or women, and which by monkeys.

CHAPTER V

From Brawn to Brain

IF three hundred years had marked a radical change in the human inhabitants of the world due to their altered mode of living, it was trivial in comparison with that undergone by the great struggling servant class, the apes. Evolution progresses rapidly under stress and pressure. The human race had experienced and overcome its difficulties in centuries past. It had scaled the mountain and now at the peak of its civilization it did nothing but bask in the sunlight of freedom and leisure, apparently unmindful of the fact that

its unused faculties were deteriorating. And while humanity congratulated itself on the ultimate attainment of leisure, those who made this leisure possible struggled ever upward. Could they ever overtake those masters who had preceded them on the journey?

Man's first vital mistake, after the initial error of educating monkeys at all, occurred when he permitted them to organize. Had each man remained the absolute overseer of his own group of servants all would have gone well, but, eager to be relieved of all responsibility, he trained certain apes for the sole purpose of controlling and superintending others of inferior intellect. The efficiency of organization is irresistible, and the advantage of the organized monkeys over the scattered, pleasure-seeking, decadent members of human society was obvious.

After the efficacy of organization in the individual household was proved, overseers of neighboring estates were permitted to meet into higher clubs for the purpose of strengthening the working power of their groups. As first men had supervised these meetings but they had gradually become dilatory in attendance as they found that, left to themselves, the highly intelligent apes were able to work out their labor problems more satisfactorily. Men found it pleasanter to follow their own scientific or artistic bent, leaving the practical, active accomplishments of life to their servants. They begrudged time spent in conventions where the subject of discussion was the machinery of civilization and the practical carrying-out of labor schemes. Finally human attendance at even national conclaves ceased altogether.

The modern site of what had formerly been Death Valley remained the center of ape activities, although the human capital of North America was in northern Minnesota. The apes themselves had renamed Death Valley "Reclamation City," for to the enterprising, progressive simian the new name had a pleasant significance.

Rex, the present Stoddard overseer, was the concentrated product of three hundred years of intelligent breeding for qualities of leadership. In him were focused traits which produced independent thinking. The principal simian characteristic of imitativeness still prevailed, but it no longer applied exclusively to the physical. His mental reactions, probably a complete evolution of the ape's innate cunning, would have done credit to a business man of the twentieth century.

Rex presided at the fourteenth annual ape conference held in Reclamation City which was once the very heart of the great American desert. He occupied the chair and gazed out upon the vast throng of his fellow beings with a new look in his little eyes. He knew well that the day had passed when perfection in his daily work for men would interest the ape. His ambition for his kind was bred of keen observation of the relative ability of apes and men. At his side was seated a wisened, underlined figure, an ape of the Baris species who was acting temporarily in the capacity of secretary. He was Marzo, an overseer from a large estate in the capital city in Minnesota. He had shown acumen in political matters.

"Fellow apes," said Rex, rising and grimacing at the restless assemblage in the great hall, "this fourteenth meeting here at Reclamation City marks a new day for us. We will not stop working, but we will work for ourselves, not for men. You who are here are all overseers, and will tell those under you what I say. But first of all let me tell you that what we plan must

be kept secret from men as long as they seem to be our masters. Even they must not know that they are not until the time comes to kill them all."

Rex ceased speaking and looked down upon Marzo whose shrewd eyes moved restlessly between Rex and the assembly below.

"Do you want to talk?" Rex asked the other, noting his uneasiness.

The Mysterious Ape

FOR answer Marzo came to the front of the platform restlessly fingering the pencil and pad with which he took his secretarial notes. A hush of expectancy hung over the audience chamber as he spoke.

"A year ago you chose Rex as your president because he was a Stoddard ape. He deserved the honor you gave him and his presidency has marked real advance in the ape cause, but I have another candidate to propose for the coming year; one who combines the cunning of the ape with the reason of the white man. This candidate has been advocated to the nominating committee by Waldo, chief ape of Reclamation City. I want to introduce him to you now."

At this juncture all eyes turned toward an opening door at the rear of the platform out of which emerged three figures, foremost of which was Waldo, head ape in this, his native Reclamation City. The last figure was Vance, Stoddard's electrician who came with Rex and was qualified to act as an overseer should necessity arise. But it was the figure between the two that arrested the attention of the monkey gathering. For a startled moment the apes thought they had been betrayed, so human was the second figure that came forward on the stage with Waldo and Vance to join Rex and Marzo. Curiously erect and practically hairless the being was a travesty on both man and ape. He appeared to be an animate reconstruction of the Neanderthal man with his thick neck, long muscular arms, receding forehead and beetling brows, and yet somehow his face gave evidence of more intelligence than is commonly accredited to those dawn men. He must not, however, be compared to the more advanced Cro-magnon. It was not that he was less intelligent, but because the trend of his development indicated lower ideals than those of the unfortunate Cro-magnon race.

As the trio advanced Marzo again seated himself while Waldo addressed the apes.

"Just at the time that ape civilization needs one who combines the qualities of man and ape, Gunther is born and comes to us to lead us from slavery. But he can tell you more about his plans than I, so I will let him speak."

Ever since Gunther had put in his appearance excitement had been evident in the hall, but suppressed so that not a word from the platform should be missed. As Gunther stepped forward a chatter arose that gave evidence of the really primitive ape nature that lay under the thin veneer of civilization.

"Gunther, Gunther!" cried the apes. Gunther waited until all acclamation had ceased. He stood remarkably erect and surveyed his audience with a remote dispassionate gaze that was anything but monkey-like in its quality. Again, as upon his first appearance, enthusiasm waned, as doubt crept into the assemblage as to whether this being was ape or man.

Taking advantage of the temporary cessation of enthusiastic demonstrations, Gunther, the mysterious, began to speak.

"I claim to be the only missing link between you and those who have been your masters. I am unwelcome in their ranks, but to you I can offer much. In my veins flows human and ape blood and I believe I have been born to bridge the gap that would prevent the apes from gaining world power."

"We want Gunther for our president," was the unanimous cry from a multitude of throats.

But there was one dissenting voice. Rex recognized the fact that though he himself lacked human qualities, he was nevertheless the some of ape intelligence, and as such represented a pure strain that had evolved naturally under the conditions imposed upon it. This Gunther was half-breed and Rex instinctively felt that he could not be sincere in his apparent loyalty to the apes. If Gunther preferred the latter to men it was only because he had not been welcomed to the ranks of mankind, and his hatred to men inspired a show of loyalty to apes. Such a motive was not to be trusted.

"I have a plan to lay before you," continued the half-human Gunther. "If put into immediate effect it should not be long before apes and not men rule this planet."

Here the creature's eyes gleamed with the visioned prospect, and his thick lips drew back from his teeth in startling semblance of a smile. "Since men have withdrawn more and more from cities, and have become barons of estates, surrounded by their luxuries and conveniences that ape servants make possible for them, they are dependent upon the airplane and radio-televisor for intercommunication, the former for personal contact and the latter for exchange of ideas. Within the last twelve or fifteen years, airplane journeys have become less and less frequent with them, as they dislike any physical exertion whatever, and their radio-visors provide companionship from the depths of their easy chairs. Consequently the number of licensed ape pilots has steadily increased and it will not be difficult to wreck all human flown planes, proceeding cautiously so as not to arouse suspicion. But our strategic point of attack will be at broadcasting stations. How fortunate for us that men are not congregated in great cities as formerly. Had they depended upon machinery the city would have remained the logical community unit, but with intelligent apes to see to their every want, the isolated estate was the reasonable outcome.

"Of course they do have cities, but their boundaries are ill-defined and we find each man and his family quite dependent throughout this great country upon his overseer and the specialized apes. First, each of you must at a specified time, which we shall here agree upon, see that all airplanes are disabled and that radio-televisors are out of commission until we have control of broadcasting stations. It will be perfectly possible for each overseer to make his master believe that the trouble is local. The ape pilots, mechanics and electricians will work without avail upon the non-functioning mechanisms; then, while human communication is cut off, the apes will gain mastery over the helpless human beings and kill those who offer resistance. The men will know what it is to labor as we have labored; the women—well—you see in me the possibility of elevating the ape!"

Rex did not share the enthusiasm of the other monkeys. True, he yearned for power as much as did the rest, but a certain innate loyalty was inherent through generations of his ancestors, to the Stoddards who had advanced him from his jungle state. He thought of

Wilhoit Stoddard with an emotion akin to affection, realizing that his master was very likely the superior of the other masters of the apes represented.

CHAPTER VI

The Missing Link

AGONG sounded loudly. Instantly all was confusion, but above the din the new president's voice rose in shrill tones, "I give you four days in which to put out of commission all planes, and to gain control of all broadcasting stations. At the end of that time stations must be used by the apes for the furtherance of their plans."

Rex approached Vance, Stoddard's electrician, as they left the stage with the question, "What do you think of this Gunther and his scheme?"

"I think Gunther will make apes the rulers of men. I don't care for him but he will get us what we want."

Rex was silent. He dared not intimate that he was not wholly in sympathy with the ape uprising. He mentally questioned the ability of his kind to maintain permanent supremacy over a race that had hundreds of centuries' advantage over his own particular branch.

In a few hours all except resident monkeys had left Reclamation City. Waldo went to the broadcasting station where his master, Carl Brunenkant, the chief announcer, was just concluding a speech on the advisability of permitting the apes to have an hour a day for broadcasting purposes.

Carl asked his ape if the conference had resulted in plans for more efficient labor schemes, and Waldo replied that it had. The ape did not tell his master of the election of Gunther, for Carl Brunenkant, ever since he had learned of the existence of the missing link, had felt that it should not be allowed to live. But time had proved that Gunther was very capable of overseeing the labor of monkeys under him. He had been bought and sold and changed hands many times purely because of the prejudice against his origin. No one denied his ability as a first-rate overseer.

"Waldo," said his master, having suddenly determined to tell the ape of the white man's concessions, "how would you apes like to have the air for an hour each day to discuss your problems? We are willing to give over an hour to you if you prefer that method to personal meeting at conventions."

"You are wise, master," smirked Waldo, though the man did not recognize the sarcasm. "Control of the air for one hour in the twenty-four would let us settle the difficulties of our life-work without leaving our homes, and almost without stopping our work. The apes living in the five cities of the country where broadcasting stations are located are leaders anyway, and they would broadcast orders to the overseers of all estates throughout the nation."

In the weeks that followed the last convention of the apes the plan of Carl Brunenkant and Waldo that the apes be allowed to broadcast an hour a day was carried out. Those apes who had previously assisted men at the broadcasting stations took complete charge, and were aided by apes of lesser ability. When it was quite evident that men were no longer even passively interested in the broadcasts of the apes, the animals discussed their situation with greater freedom. Discretion was thrown to the winds. Waldo and Gunther talked from Reclamation City, Rex from Stoddard, California, and Marzo from the capitol where he was

temporarily presiding until Gunther should arrive. Gradually, mingled with the legitimate business of the apes, a plan for insurrection evolved around the nucleus that was the mind of Gunther.

Carl Brunenkant had apparently fostered the new ape freedom, and although he occasionally appeared around the Reclamation City broadcasting station, neither Waldo nor Gunther suspected his attitude of good will toward them. He had always been a champion of the monkeys, and their recent broadcasting freedom was entirely due to his efforts.

One morning just before ape broadcasting hour Carl and Gunther entered the station at the same time. Carl noticed the suppressed excitement that the freak could not quite successfully conceal. At the exact hour of broadcast Carl bade goodbye to Gunther and apparently left the building, but as the half-ape, half-man creature mouthed his greetings into the microphone, Carl returned. He moved quickly with apparent intentness of purpose so as not to arouse the suspicion of apes working about, and in this way managed to get the content of Gunther's speech.

Gunther was stirring the apes to immediate insurrection. Carl was an eavesdropper outside the door. So this was what had resulted from the additional liberties that had been granted the great servant class! Yet as he stood, hesitant as to the correct course of procedure in the face of this dire calamity, Brunenkant realized that this was exactly the crisis he had hoped to precipitate by granting the monkeys unwarranted freedom which their unphilosophical minds could only interpret as license.

Outside were the sounds of rushing feet, startled, inarticulate cries, and back of these spasmodic exclamations, like a running accompaniment, there issued the incessant chatter of thousands of monkeys. This chattering was a mode of vocal expression to which they invariably reverted under duress.

Carl rushed to a window and gazed with horror at a milling throng on the streets below. Men were fleeing from the apes, who, armed with weapons of all descriptions, were capturing all human beings they could and killing those who offered too violent resistance. Into the young man's mind rushed the thought again that Gunther in the next room at the microphone was the stimulus for the atrocities he saw taking place in the streets below, and which he knew were being repeated at the devil-ape's instigation in all the cities and on all the estates throughout America. His fear-shocked limbs responded at last to the dictates of his brain, and with murderous intent he turned toward the broadcasting room from which issued the guttural commands of Gunther.

Gunther Retaliates

INSTANT mental oblivion was the reward of his belated action. A huge ape whose duty it was to protect Gunther during the inciting broadcast had felled Carl with a blow the instant he had made a move in the ape ruler's direction.

During the hours that Carl Brunenkant lay unconscious in the corridor outside the broadcasting room in Reclamation City, the nation-wide ape revolution had been proceeding uninterruptedly. As master of ceremonies Gunther still held the microphone and urged his fellow-beings on to conquest. His throaty voice was the first sound to register on Carl's mind with returning consciousness. Carl looked cautiously about

him. The hall was deserted. He had been left for dead and was not being watched at present. He heard apes moving about in the outer hall near the entrance to the building. Presumably they were preventing new entrants, but it was evident no molestation was anticipated from inside. Carl dragged himself painfully to a sitting posture and listened.

Came the voice of Gunther, "Marzo, it is rumored that Rex has overthrown his master, the great Stoddart, whom he deems more valuable to us alive than dead."

From the loud speaker issued the tones of the shrewd Marzo, "Let me summon Rex to the television screen and question him. He may tell me more than he would you, for I have never been his rival for power as you have."

Brunenkant crept cautiously toward the open door of the room whose sole occupant was the ape president-elect in radio television conversation with his dependable aide. Gunther's back was toward him, the television screen facing him with the winemed little face of Marzo who was temporarily acting as president, looking from it.

Suddenly the screen went black, Marzo had disconnected with Gunther in order to communicate with Rex, but in a second another scene flashed to view and prominent in it were the figures of Rex and Stoddart.

Carl Brunenkant and Wilhoit Stoddart had been college friends, and it was with the first feeling of joy that the former had experienced since the uprising of the apes, that he recognized his friend Stoddart.

"Now the apes will sit up and take notice," thought he. "Stoddart knows apes. They won't defy him."

But his jaw dropped as he listened to the words that issued from the radio, "I acknowledge my defeat, I have met my superior. What skill I may have in my line is at your service as yours has been at mine . . ."

CHAPTER VII

Open Revolt

MEANWHILE, indulging in pleasant, idle conversation, Sylvia Danforth and Hayes Suter entered the gateway of the Danforth estate following their visit to Wilhoit Stoddart. Instantly they sensed that something was wrong. Apes were hurrying about in unaccustomed haste, their grotesque, hairy bodies intermittently visible through the dense foliage that surrounded the house. Sylvia hastened forward, calling her father and Inez; but the incessant monkey chatter about her rendered her voice inaudible. With the characteristic integrity displayed by the Danforths for generations, she pushed open the front door and entered the house. Hayes was a few paces behind her, but in the short time it took him to cross the threshold things began to happen. A scream of terror from Sylvia quite unnerved him, but mindful of masculine obligations, he pushed forward.

He was brought to a sudden halt by unexpected contact with a huge hairy body, and looking up with apprehension he met the baleful gaze of his own overseer, Tony. His horror changed to immediate indignation at this interruption of the orderly running of his estate, and he flew into a rage at his overseer's unprecedented behavior.

"What are you doing over here, Tony?" he demanded.

Those were his last words. The thick neck of the gorilla was suddenly thrust forward in a line with the curvature of the spine. The beast took tone

shuffling step forward on his bent, awkward legs, seized the throat of his hapless master, and all was over before the latter could cry out.

Sylvia had been ignorant of the tragedy enacted at the door. She had been seized immediately by her father's overseer, who had been released by Tony; and despite her hysterical cries to be released, she had been ruthlessly borne to the library. The scene which she witnessed there was indelibly imprinted upon her mind. Her father had been strangled, apparently in the act of using the radio-phonograph; and Inez lay a suicide, her fingers locked about the handle of the small revolver that was always kept in a secret place behind the mantel.

Inez' death was seemingly a surprise to Felix, though he appeared aware of Mr. Danforth's murder. Holding firmly to Sylvia with one huge paw, he shuffled over to the body of her sister and gazed at it in perplexity. A moment later Tony appeared on the scene. When he saw the lifeless form of Inez, his jaw dropped and his beady eyes bulged out in their intensity.

"You do?" his malignant gaze sought Felix.

"No, girl do self," responded Felix, pointing to the weapon clutched in the dead fingers.

"Hold live girl so no shoot," admonished Tony; then, lowering his clumsy bulk into the chair by the radio-phonograph, to Sylvia's utter amazement, he called the Stoddart home.

As was natural, Rex, the ape overseer of Stoddart, answered the call.

"Ape rule," Tony called in excited tones. "Kill master and phone rest. Man now weak, ape strong. Ape rule world. Ape work, why not?"

The voice of Rex came distinctly to Sylvia's ears. Owing to the teaching of Stoddart he had much better mastery of the language than other overseers. Stoddart had in the past prided himself on Rex's power of expression. The creature could actually differentiate between shades of verbal utterance.

"Be careful," the words were well enunciated. "Tricks are better than force. Did you get girls? You know we need them for future race."

Evidently, for reasons of his own, Tony did not divulge the death of Inez.

To all this horror Sylvia was a silent and helpless witness. Would Rex outwit and kill the human inmates of the Stoddart estate? Sylvia had great confidence in Wilhoit's ability to handle his monkey servants. For many generations his ancestors had done nothing else. He was as qualified for success in his as were any of his apes in their specialized vocations.

Ape Versus Man

WILHOIT STODDART was not exactly happy after the departure of Hayes with Sylvia. He had loved the girl since childhood, and while he had no doubt that she returned his affections, he did not trust the friendship of Hayes, and was troubled to have Sylvia in his company.

In this mood, he walked to the television screen and pushed a button. And now after a four-day hiatus the apparatus was functioning. It was as if he stood at an open window. A most unusual scene was depicted: a typical American city of twenty-third century, yet it was so unfamiliar in many of its aspects. Even in his panicky bewilderment Wilhoit observed the details

of the scene before him, and the awful truth of its significance struck him with stunning force. *Apes and apes had chased places!* The leisurely pedestrians were monkeys, big and little, while those who labored at the menial tasks of a complex civilization were men, cowardly frightened men and women, held in subjugation by the very beings whom they had once controlled.

What was this place where man's sovereignty had toppled? Wilhoit scrutinized the screen, but could see no indication of its locality. This was indeed not to be wondered at, for the trend of civilization had been toward a uniformity of civil and social structure until but little difference existed in communities.

With trembling fingers he turned on the radio, confident that the daily bulletin would give some explanation of the situation. It did—but alas for its revelation! A bestial snarl issued from the loud speaker, followed by a mirthless imitation of man's laughter—and then words pounding their horrible significance into Stoddart's brain—"and so by this time tomorrow every overseer must be in complete control of the man who once controlled him. We have nearly all the broadcasting stations now. Our sudden nation-wide uprising will put us in power. We have long deserved this. For centuries our bodies have been the tools of progress, then our minds took over this task while man has done nothing but strut about and play. We will continue this civilization where man has left off, but we will do it for ourselves and not for him. Those men who can be made to use their intelligence to further our needs will be used, the strong ones will work, the weaklings will be killed; the women who are young and—"

The ring of the radio-phonograph in the next room turned Stoddart's attention in that direction. Scarcely before he had lifted his hand to disconnect the national broadcast radio instrument he heard the low thronging tones of Rex's voice answering the instrument. There followed a moment's silence and then Rex's warning, "be careful" roused Wilhoit to instant concentrated attention. "Did you get girls?" What did it mean? Wilhoit Stoddart after a flashing instant knew very well. The time that he had long dreaded, had come, though not exactly as he had feared. Through his brain flashed a casual remark made by a friend just last week, "Man need never fear the ape. When mentality and mere brute force vie for supremacy, the former will always win." But vaguely Wilhoit was beginning to realize that the mind of the ape was a power to be conjured with; and together with his superior physical prowess, he was a formidable adversary. Yet as he sat crouched, listening in stunned silence, the whole situation struck him as unreal and illusory. His faithful and capable Rex who had managed his affairs in a most competent and satisfactory manner would surely continue to do so. They were dependent upon each other. Their mutual exchange of service was absolutely indispensable.

"... we need them for future race." The closing words of Rex's conversation stirred the eavesdropper to instant action. No longer did the situation seem fatuous. It was one to be instantly reckoned with. A sane man must perform a distasteful duty without fear or hesitation.

In a lower drawer of the writing-desk was a loaded revolver, but in order to reach it, it was necessary to pass the door which Rex, now phoning, faced.

It was a difficult situation for Wilhoit, but there was no other prerogative. It was suicide to tangle an ape unarmed.

It struck Wilhoit at once as strange that if the apes

had been wanting power for years; they should have been so long discovering this fact consciously.

The young man took a cautious step in the desired direction, but drew back as Rex came toward the door near which he crouched. The great hairy body brushed by Stoddart and arched over to the television screen where it fumbled awkwardly with the buttons and dials. Now was his chance. The next few seconds were filled with activity. Wilhoit reached the drawer but it failed to respond to his first pull and before he could renew his efforts Rex had leaped toward him and pinioned his arms to his sides.

Struggle was not only useless, but dangerous. So this, Wilhoit thought, was to be the end of all man's effort toward a higher plane of existence! Man should never have relinquished his active hold upon the personal management of his affairs. With such intelligence as he claimed he should have been warned of the inevitable danger of trusting power to those whom he had enslaved. All of his idealism fled in this moment as the vision of a possible downfall of the human race flashed through his mind.

"Kill master." The words rumbled from Rex's throat and his grip about Wilhoit's chest tightened. The ape was repeating mechanically his orders.

The man gazed into the beady eyes of the monster towering above him, conscious for the first time of the power he possessed.

"Be quick about it, Rex," he muttered hoarsely.

The plea must have astonished the great ape, for he relaxed his hold and an expression of perplexity puckered his ugly features. Plainly he was being torn between love and duty.

"Surely such an emotion indicates the birth of a soul," thought Wilhoit, his terror giving way to a feeling of sadness. "It is possible I am in the presence of a representative of the next future race of our world. We human beings forfeited our birthright!"

It was apparent that love had conquered, but not without a compromise. Wilhoit was to live, but as a prisoner. As easily as one would carry a baby the huge ape bore his captive in his arms into the store-room where he secured a ball of stout twine. Returning with his burden to the den and placing a chair before the television screen he deposited Wilhoit in the chair facing the screen and bound him securely. This accomplished he turned on the radio and television and left his captive to enjoy it as he might.

CHAPTER VIII

A Rescue

ONLY by closing his eyes could Wilhoit Stoddart shut out the distressing scenes pictured before him on the screen, but he found his attention irresistibly drawn to the views which by the mechanical device so popular then shifted the scene from one population center to another, all showing with little variation the downfall of a civilization. No other destruction in history could be compared with it. If for an instant one is reminded of the descent of the barbarous hordes from the north upon the comparatively high civilization of Rome, he must bear in mind that at least those Vandals and Goths were human, and they were destined to pour strong fresh blood into the decadent life of the empire.

"Maybe my vision is too short-sighted," thought Wilhoit in his misery. "If man has come up through the ages from life-forms similar to the apes, perhaps ape

ascendancy at this time might be only a temporary setback for the human race and in that vaster concert that man can scarcely grasp, it may be nature's method of keeping us strong and pure. Evolution has not ceased, nor can we imagine it to cease until all life forms have attained a state of perfection."

Suddenly Wilhoit saw a very frightened looking man appear on the scene. He was speaking, "Fellow men, resist the apes no longer. They are qualified to be our masters; superior in physical strength and in mentality. We are nothing but decadent philosophers and dreamers. The Ape Cycle has come; and it is for the good of our race that we usher it in gracefully."

"The contemptible coward," muttered Stoddart, clenching his fists. "I'd like to lay hands on him!"

The man's place was taken by an ape who echoed the previous speaker's sentiments. Then the scene shifted and there flashed across the screen scenes of pillage and disaster where men tried to resist the power of the apes. It was evident that where monkeys could not get control of power-houses, radio-stations or air-lines, they destroyed them.

Now the scene went direct to a broadcasting-station where ape announcers stood before the microphones, while human assistants stood helplessly by; again a view showed a few highly specialized simians occupying chairs of the nation's executives, while another depicted in the street murder, rapine and incendiarism.

Presently something touched Wilhoit's sleeve, causing him to start violently. It was difficult for him to realize that his body was not actually in the midst of the scenes which his eyes beheld. He turned round quickly, as far as his bonds permitted—and saw Sylvia crouching by the arm of his chair, a finger indicating that he must be silent. Swiftly she cut his bonds, grasped one hand in hers and in the other she placed a small revolver. Still maintaining silence, she led him from the room. The house seemed strangely deserted and they passed through to the rear without meeting a single servant.

"Now," she whispered, "do your duty."

For a moment her words had no significance to the man, but following where she pointed, he saw a hairy prostrate form lying midway between the house and the power-station.

"Why," he gasped, "it is Rex, but how—?"

She nodded and pointed to the weapon which he held in his hand.

"You mean you did that?" he queried unbelievably.

"Yes, I killed Felix and escaped a worse fate than death. Then I came over here to save you, if it were not too late. Oh—look!"

Rex was not dead. With obvious effort he was rising, and in his great black hand he held a small object that glittered in the afternoon sun. It flashed once, twice. Wilhoit had already fired and the ape dropped his pistol.

Wilhoit and Sylvia ran forward together as Rex made an attempt to recover the weapon. Wilhoit fired again, and the great beast sank to his knees, a guttural growl issuing weakly from his throat.

"Well, I guess the game's up, old sport," said Wilhoit grimly as the gorilla clutched at his side. "Sorry to lose the manager of all my affairs, but I guess I can shift for myself."

The fierce little eyes of the gorilla rested craftily upon the face of his master. Yet in that gaze, mingled with the sly cunning, Stoddart read an emotion akin to pity.

"I am dying, master," the ape said, "but for your kind it is the end too."

Rex gradually sank back and in a few moments his body twitched and lay still.

A Disguise

THE isolated estate of Wilhoit Stoddard had been a small but complete unit of civilization typical of the trend of rural progress in the twenty-third century. As feudal lords of the middle ages the human masters, surrounded by their monkey serfs, had reigned supreme.

Wilhoit, however, could not now trust any of his apeslaves to assist him in a daring project which he had evolved, so, with regret, he killed his few remaining apes.

All the evening before and far into the next morning Wilhoit and Sylvia had planned the best method of attacking the organized ape civilization of the world. One scheme after another had been discarded as impracticable; but gradually they evolved one that seemed possible of accomplishment. Of course they did not know what had taken place at Reclamation City. They did know, however, that the apes had removed their capital to the former capitol of the nation in northern Minnesota.

One morning several days later Sylvia was at work in front of the hangar repairing the plane which had been damaged by Wilhoit's ape-pilot prior to his death.

Sylvia looked up from her work expecting to meet the adoring eyes of Wilhoit. She dropped her tools and stifled the scream that rose to her lips. Beside her stood a giant gorilla. Any gorilla would have been a formidable presence at that particular time and place, but this gorilla was none other than Rex—whom her lover had shot before her eyes!

A chuckle, most ungorilla-like, issued from the loathsome mouth of the beast. Sylvia gasped in relief.

"Oh, how you frightened me, Wilhoit! But you do look like the real thing. How natural the hide looks!"

Wilhoit threw back the hideous ape-mask that had covered his head and regarded his sweetheart tenderly.

"It was rather a raw trick to pull, I'll admit," he said apologetically, "but I had to find out for sure what a successful camouflage it was. The hide dressed nicely and will prove a very useful costume for my proposed trip to the ape civilization centers."

"The plane is about ready," said Sylvia, "but I think you had better give it a final going-over. Here are the tools."

Wilhoit smiled down at her. "Still somewhat of a relic of the age when women were not at all mechanically inclined."

"It was purely a matter of environment," she countered. "You know women finally came into professions that had been hitherto considered solely man's field, and they found they could do as well as their brothers."

"Granted," agreed Wilhoit, "but they have through it all maintained characteristics that no amount of environment can change."

"Only desirable qualities," she smiled up at him. "Won't you please give the machinery a final looking-over?"

"Which only proves my point," he remarked as he picked up the tools and went to work.

Precisely at noon he climbed into the cock-pit of his plane. With a last tender adieu to Sylvia and a warn-

ing to be on constant guard against chance prowlers of the enemy, he flew across the country. It sickened him to see with his own eyes the overthrow of man. Everywhere monkeys were in control.

There was not so much actual devastation visible as the subtler indications of a radical change of administration. Wilhoit saw now that the plan of the ape overseers must have been on foot for some time past, and that the secret must have been cunningly guarded. Naturally they had taken possession of the great centers first, and then carried the fight to the rural communities. That Rex had been biding his time for the opportune moment to strike was apparent to Wilhoit as he reviewed the events of the past weeks; a brooding unnatural reserve on the ape's part; catching the servant at eavesdropping; the apparently disabled radio and television, all things pointed to a plot that had been growing before his very eyes.

He was flying above what used to be the Canadian border when his plane radio-telephone buzzed.

"Hello," he called.

"Who flies the Stoddard plane?" came the question. "You've been watched for some time. Where are you going?"

"This is Rex. I have Stoddard a captive on the ranch. Am going to the Capitol to see President Marzo. Come along. I have a great scheme."

He reached over and manipulated a dial on the complicated instrument board, looked into a small mirror-like object and saw there the faces of several apes grouped curiously together.

Before four o'clock Wilhoit spied the gleaming domes of the continental capitol buildings which were located at the geographical center of the North American continent. His radio and television were constantly active as he neared the national air-port, but it was apparent his disguise was satisfactory, for he met with no opposition.

Wilhoit was grateful for his almost instinctive knowledge of ape psychology. It would stand him in good stead in the present situation. So well did he know what Rex would say and do under these given circumstances that he felt his confidence increasing. Of course there was this fact to face, and face squarely. It would not be enough to do just what Rex would, natural as that might seem. He must talk as his servant talked, and put his knowledge of ape psychology to the utmost test.

CHAPTER IX

The Conference

PRESIDENT Marzo, who was filling the chief executive chair, was an ape of the Baris species.

He was smaller than any of his executives who surrounded him; agile, cunning and with that rare type of intelligence that had become alarmingly manifest of late. But Stoddard felt equal to the task of matching wits with the little creature before him, who reminded him of a shrewd, wizened old man. Marzo knew Rex as a dependable ranch overseer, specialized in his particular type of work, but with nothing spectacular to his credit.

"Why did you want to see me?" Marzo's eyes surveyed the gigantic figure before him, and Stoddard trembled inwardly in fear of discovery.

"My master is tied and servants guard him," Wilhoit made answer in the excellent imitation of ape

talk in which he had become well versed.

"I didn't know you could fly a plane," continued the president suspiciously.

"Stoddart taught me a little of all kinds of work. I was his overseer, and he knew apes, and his father knew apes."

"Yes, you," said the other testily, "but I want to know how loyal you are to us and why you were not killed your master as thousands of apes have done."

"I am with you," replied Stoddart, "and I did not kill my master because I think I can use him for the apes' cause."

"Yes?" queried the cunning Marzo, and the eyes of the members of his cabinet gazed intently at the gorilla.

"As you know," continued the disguised man, "my master knows more about the breeding of apes and their training than any man alive. His family has done nothing else for generations back. Unless we keep him to advise us, we may get back to what we were before man bred us for servants, and then this fight for freedom would be for nothing."

A chimpanzee-like creature standing behind the president spoke in a high-pitched chattering syllabics: "I don't trust you, Rex. You are the overseer for this one man in the world who knows more about us than we do about ourselves. He would know just how to get you to do his bidding. He has been an expert at that all his life. Fellow-apes, I advise that we have nothing to do with either Stoddart or Rex."

There was a rumble of mixed approval and dissent after the chimpanzee's words, but Marzo silenced them with an indescribable monosyllabic grant.

"We have to take some chances," he said, then addressing himself to Rex. "Can we see Stoddart by television? I should like to talk to him."

"As you know, during this uprising we damaged the radiovisors, but I will return and repair it."

"Very well, Rex," said Marzo. "And remember Stoddart in the future is our servant. His brain will work for us as our brains has for him and his kind in the past. Go and let us hear from you both as soon as you reach the estate."

"Are you and Stoddart the only ones at your home?" questioned the chimpanzee suspiciously.

"There are just two of us," replied the supposed Rex.

After he had left, the chimpanzee addressed his president again. "I don't trust either Rex or Stoddart. If you take my advice you will see that both of them are killed."

But Marzo insisted that the small ape's suspicions were unfounded. Then for several hours the cabinet meeting continued until a television call for the Stoddart estate from Gunther at Reclamation City ended the discussion. The screen revealed two figures; the one, Stoddart, nodding in salute to the ape-cabinet, and the other, Rex, his huge paw resting on his former master's shoulder.

Without Stoddart spoke. "I acknowledge my defeat. I have met my superior. What skill I may have in my line is at your service as yours has been at mine. Rex wants me to talk personally with all the national overseers in the Grand Auditorium."

He turned inquiringly to the gorilla who patted his shoulder and nodded assent.

"I will come in person, or perhaps you would rather have me talk by radio, and you could be in your several communica." He paused for answer.

"Have him come in person," whispered the ever-

suspicious chimpanzee to Marzo whose shadow he seemed to be.

"All right, but you let him alone," growled Marzo. "It is better to have him in our midst if there is treachery," finished the self-appointed adviser.

"Very well, the overseers will meet in the Grand Auditorium tomorrow at this time and we will expect you, Stoddart, in person," said the president.

Without disconnected the radiovisor and turned to Rex who was acting in a most peculiar manner, and from whose hairy chest mild feminine exclamations were issuing.

"Without dear, please get me out of this thing. I'm nearly suffocating! It's a good thing you didn't talk five seconds longer or I'd have collapsed and given the whole secret away."

The young man laughed as he assisted the girl from the gorilla skin. "Well the game's on, darling, and you'll have to wear this outfit awhile tomorrow, but it won't be where you'll have to bear close inspection. It will just be in the plane, and I can fix it so you can have ample breathing space."

What Happened at the Capitol

DURING the greater part of the night Without and Sylvia worked on a far corner of the estate making grenades of blasting material that had been used in quarrying stone for the construction of building foundations. Two monkeys had lost their lives a few weeks before through carelessness in handling the explosives, so that it had been necessary for Without to take over most of the dangerous work himself. The bombs were so heavy when completed that it was decided to construct a trap-door arrangement in the bottom of the plane, that could be opened by a lever releasing them to do their work of destruction below.

The early part of the following morning was spent in equipping the plane for the trip to the Capitol. With the bombs properly stowed, the two passengers climbed into the plane and sent it flying directly northeast toward their ultimate destination. Beneath them stretched a scene that would have been unbelievable to their ancestors of the twentieth century; the great American desert blossoming as a rose. The reclamation of the desert wastes of Earth had been accomplished during the early years of monkey training. Artificial rainfall and ape-slavery had made it possible to inhabit territory that had been just so many thousands of waste acres separating two thickly settled portions of a country.

They saw many planes traveling in their direction, carrying monkey overseers from all over the country. The convention would be a large one. Flying low over Reclamation City, Sylvia and Without noticed that the streets were crowded with scurrying figures, and they were amazed to note that in this one city alone, human beings were in the majority. Why they should be more in evidence than the apes, could not be surmised until their radiovisor buzzed and indicated that someone in Reclamation City wanted to speak with them. They were surprised to see in the television mirror, not the face of any baboon-like creature, but the indignant features of Carl Brunenkant.

"Well—hello there—" began Without, but stopped at the contemptuous gaze that encountered his own.

"Without Stoddart," said Brunenkant in steeley tones. "We have been watching what has been going on. Know that Reclamation City, which had been captured

by the apes is now in our hands again. We look with utter contempt upon you as a coward and traitor."

Bruneskant turned his scornful eyes to Rex from whom peculiar muffled exclamations of indignation were issuing. A quiet word silenced the ape figure.

"If you will desert quietly and surrender," pursued Bruneskant, "all will proceed in an orderly manner; if not we will shoot your plane down!"

Without thought of the girl at his side and of the bombs stowed on the plane floor. Yet he knew he was being watched by the apes at the capital. But before a reply could be made a shriek of terror was followed by an inarticulate cry from the radio, and the television mirror depicted a surprising scene. Bruneskant's cry was cut short by the appearance of two gorillas who bound and gagged him so quickly that the two occupants of the plane could scarcely realize what was taking place. One of the animals bore away from the range of their vision the struggling form of Bruneskant, the other turned to the radio and spoke, "Go ahead to the Capitol, Rex and Stoddart. We have just recaptured Reclamation City."

Rex nodded a curt acquiescence and Stoddart snapped off the visual and auditory connections with Reclamation City. He knew that Sylvia disguised as Rex would not bear close inspection, and that she dared not speak.

"I expect our fellow-men in the city below us need our assistance badly, dear," Wilhoit said as the plane sped on, "but we can render better service by getting to the Capitol. To help the citizens of Reclamation City now would be like shooting a gorilla in the arm when one could just as well aim at the head or heart and put the beast out of commission forever."

"This is 'gorilla' warfare," commented Sylvia dryly.

On the remainder of the trip they did not see a single community center in which men still ruled.

After a time there came a persistent buzzing in the radio that Wilhoit ignored as long as it was safe to do so. Then he at last answered by snapping in the switches. The two realized now that they were visible on the screen to the myriads assembled in the Grand Auditorium at the Capitol. Sylvia and Wilhoit viewed the vast assembly of hideous upturned faces; faces which masked the intellects that had attained such a high state of perfection that they had conquered their masters!

Stoddart spoke. "We shall soon be there."

"We want to hear from Rex," cried a voice from the assemblage.

"Yes, a speech from Rex who is bringing his master to us," called another.

SYLVIA raised her arm, encased in its heavy hairy covering and the throng shouted in acclamation. President Marzo drew back his thick lips from his protruding teeth to speak, when the plane suddenly lurched to one side and then dropped like a plummet. In the excitement of the falling plane no one noticed that Wilhoit disconnected the instruments of communication. All thought they were naturally injured in the fall.

A few seconds later the plane mysteriously righted itself and took off in the direction of a secluded landing place.

"Say, Sylvia, you sure were plucky not to scream and betray your identity," said her lover admiringly. "But I knew you couldn't make a speech without giving yourself away."

Hastily he revealed his plan to her, which they con-

tinued to put into action. Wilhoit donned his gorilla suit and seated himself in the apparently wrecked plane admonishing Sylvia to stay out of range of the television. Soon he was in communication with Marzo and the assembled overseers.

"What happened?" asked Marzo.

"Enough," replied the supposed Rex. "—Stoddart lost control of the machine and we began to fall. I grabbed the controls in time to break the fall, but we hit hard. Stoddart was killed and it is just as well, for I was beginning to suspect him of treachery."

"So were we," exclaimed Marzo emphatically.

"It is well," came the gruff tones of Rex. "I know all he was going to tell you, and we can carry on our great cause alone. I'll start as soon as I can make some repairs on the plane. Am bringing the body of Stoddart to the Capitol."

He abruptly severed communication.

"Quick, Sylvia dear, you'll have to put on this sufoosor once again. I promise you it won't be long now. For the rest of the act I am a corpse, but I will lie with my hand on the lever that will release the grenades, waiting for you to say when is the instant to act. We have to be careful all along the route, for spy-glasses may be turned in our direction and we must be prepared to respond to insistent radiovisor calls."

During the rest of the trip to the Capitol television observers had momentary glimpses of an ape guiding a plane to the continental capital, and slouched beside it in the seat, the inert form of the man who had been most dreaded in the newly-created monkey republic. At length the lofty buildings of the Capitol hove in sight. Nesting in the center of them was the low, broad structure of the Grand Auditorium. Twice the long awaited plane circled the low structure as a bird about to alight on her nest. The human beings and their ape captors that thronged the streets watched intently; the former with chagrin, the latter with elation.

"Now the plane will land on the broad dome of the Auditorium," cried many as the object of their scrutiny cut a half circle and made for the center of the dome.

"Let her go, Wilhoit," came a whisper from the gorilla's chest.

The hand of the apparently inanimate being pulled violently backward and almost simultaneously under the deft control of the girl, the machine climbed rapidly upward into the clouds. There was a deafening explosion and the plane rocked crazily.

"Keep her going, Sylvia. We must make altitude. Don't straighten out for another thousand. Gee, you sure are some pilot!" Wilhoit finished admiringly.

"You pulled a few fast tricks yourself," she threw back at him. "Boy, if I didn't have on this killing outfit, I could fly to Mars!"

Another thousand feet registered on the altimeter and Sylvia flew the plane in a horizontal position. Once again over a stretch of open country they descended, landed, and Sylvia shed her ape disguise.

"Do you really think that will be the end of ape rule?" asked Sylvia.

"It can not be anything else," Wilhoit replied confidently. "The outstanding ape intellects of the continent were wiped out in one fell blow. The remaining terrified, disorganized monkeys can be either destroyed or properly subjugated as the world sees fit."

A month later a pretty domestic scene at the Stoddart ranch was interrupted by a summons from the radio phone, and when connection was established a friendly countenance greeted Wilhoit and Sylvia.

"Carl!" Wilhoit exclaimed delightedly.

Carl Brunenkast smiled into the blushing faces of Sylvia Danforth Stoddart and her proud husband.

"You—know?" queried Wilhoit.

"Every one has followed your romance with intensest interest, and for its happy outcome the country offers its best wishes, but the nation's congratulations are extended to you, President Stoddart, and your presence is requested at the Capitol, for the affairs of the

nation need immediate attention. Also I imagine the future 'first lady' will like to get an intimate view of the White House.

"You mean—" gasped Stoddart.

"The nation signifies its confidence in your ability and takes this means of showing its gratitude for deliverance from the menace of the ape cycle by electing you president of North America, and your duties are to commence at once."

THE END.