



Weird Tales

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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH

Dream-Stair

By ROBERT NELSON

What naked, bald and drunken child
Leads me to some mad, topless stair
And keeps me toiling upward there,
A withered thing, forlorn and wild?
About me swarm Satanic goats,
The seas below are frothing red,
And harsh winds sting my seething head
As steel on stone drops down in moats
Where drown and rot accursèd swains—
Dismembered thralls of some mad king—
Whose bloating heads arise and sing.
But, lo! whence all these hellish rains
That seem to linger for an age
And pour upon my harried life
Such airs, with loathsome larvæ rife,
As whisper o'er a wizard's page?
Then, mounting with white moons, I see
The frenzied flight of huge man-birds,
And hear the cold and lethal words
Babbled behind that drapery
Whose swelling folds lean forth and sway,
Shrouding a handed Shape, that grasps
And throttles all the Gorgon's asps,
And braves the Gorgon's eyes to slay!
The child brings ardent wine to me,
And still I climb the dream-built stair;
And in fell silence spreading there
Great shadows eat the spherèd sea.
False child! false child! O traitor child!
What Image meets my frozen eyes?
Is It what Satan sanctifies—
Full-fraught with bale but pleasing mild?
But the stair crumbles, clean destroyed,
The circling mists and phantoms flee,
The child pursues them mad with glee,
And leaves me in the falling void.