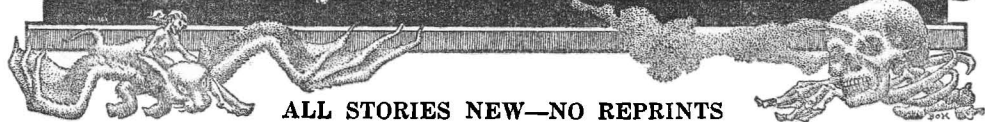


Weird Tales



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*Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use
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The Dreamer in the Desert

BY FRANCIS FLAGG



NEAR Time's white dawn the cities stood
 In fabled grandeur by a flood
 That rolled where now the desert lies
 Burning beneath its molten skies.

Strange galleons on inland seas
 Bore golden freights for monarchies
 Ruling from gorgeous peacock thrones
 Long mingled with the desert stones.

Green grew the grass and smiled the lake
 Where now the lizard and the snake
 Lie somnolent, the orchards fair
 Are gone the way of dust and air.

Only a wraith of all its glory
 The desert mutely tells the story
 For dreaming men to muse upon
 From crystal dawn to crystal dawn.

Yes, here it was that Arnor lay,
And lads and lasses passed this way
Through smiling field and tangled wood
In search of lovers' solitude.

The Temple priests went chanting here
To bless the harvest of the year,
And troths were pledged beneath the sky
That fruits might blush and corn grow high.
The god-man came on shoulders strong
Of the intoning, reverent throng,
The goddess came with raven hair
And pallid face of carved despair;

The conqueror trod with martial train
Victorious from the wars again,
And judgments rang through silver halls
That only dreaming now recalls.

Ah, vain their pomp and vain their pride,
Their glory scattered far and wide,
Their loot of jasper, jade and gold
One with the unrelenting mold.

Where is the might of Arnor now,
The triple crown on empire's brow?
Question the wind, the sun, the air,
The spider's web, the wildcat's lair,

For ruthless Time has gnawed the face
Of high gods in their holy place,
And only ghostly towers rise
In phantom glory to the skies.

But poets dream and rivers run
With crystal waves beneath the sun,
And deserts bloom and cities grow
As they revive the long ago.

The poet sees the king and slave
That Time has couched in common grave.
The "eternal" nations that could not stand
The might of wind, the strength of sand,

And wakes from dreams—the plains are bare,
With only heat-waves rolling there.

