

# Weird Tales

*The Unique Magazine*

THE GODS of EAST and WEST  
by SEABURY QUINN



“THE GIANT WORLD,” a startling new story by  
Ray Cummings, begins in this issue

# Weird Tales

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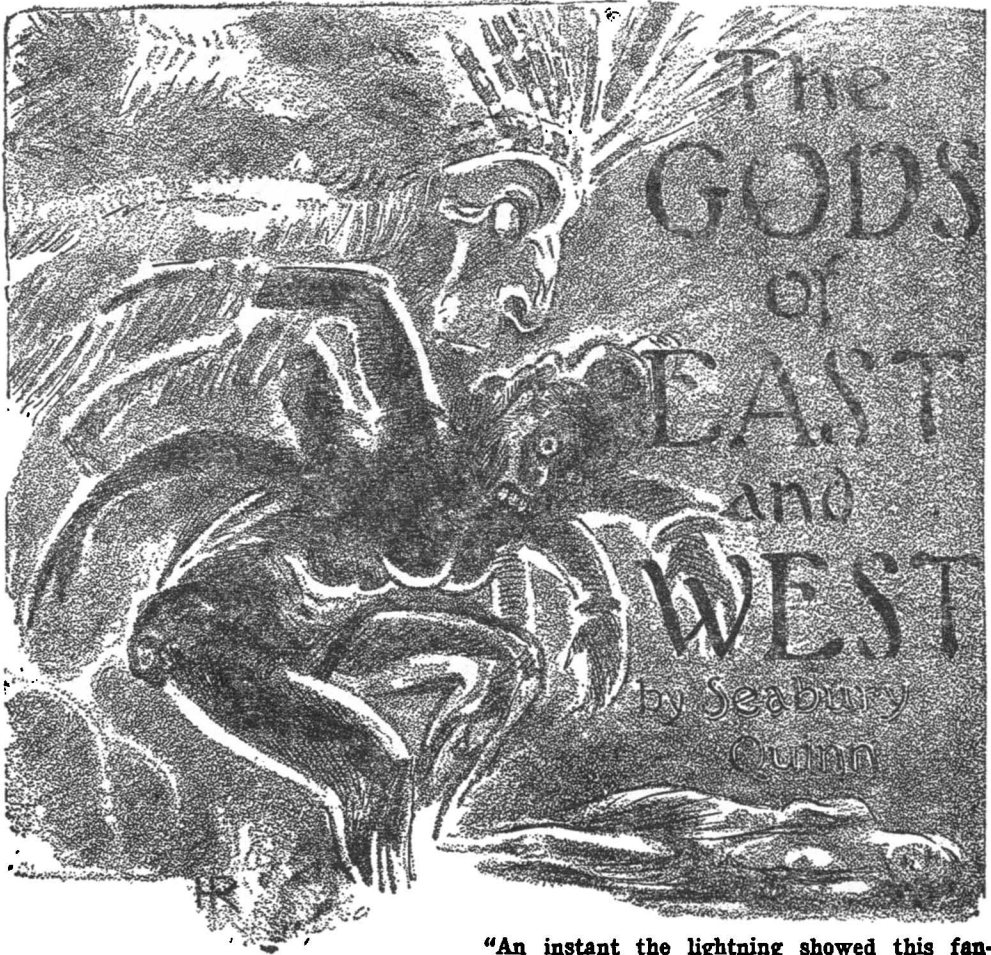
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"An instant the lightning showed this fantastic tableau."

"**T**IENS, Friend Trowbridge, you work late tonight."

Jules de Grandin, debonair in faultlessly pressed dinner clothes, a white gardenia sharing his lapel buttonhole with the red ribbon of the Légion d'Honneur, paused at the door of my consulting-room, glimpsed the box of coronas lying open on the table, and straightway entered, seating himself opposite me and selecting a long, black cigar with all the delighted precision of a child choosing a bonbon from a box of sweets.

I laid aside the copy of Baring's *Diagnosis in Diseases of the Blood* I had been studying and helped my-

self to a fresh cigar. "Have a pleasant time at the Medical Society dinner?" I asked, somewhat sourly.

"But yes," he agreed, nodding vigorously while his little blue eyes shone with enthusiasm. "They are a delectable crowd of fellows, those New York physicians. I regret you would not accompany me. There was one gentleman in particular, a full-blooded Indian, who—but you do not listen, my friend; you are *distrait*. What is the trouble?"

"Trouble enough," I returned ungraciously. "A patient's dying for no earthly reason that I can see except that she is."

"Ah? You interest me. Have you made a tentative diagnosis?"

"Half a dozen, and none of 'em checks up. I've examined her and re-examined her, and the only thing I'm absolutely certain of is that she's fading away right before my eyes, and nothing I can do seems an earthly bit of good."

"U'm. Phthisis, perhaps?"

"Not a bit of it. I've tested her sputum numerous times; every result is negative. There isn't a thing wrong with her organically, and her temperature is almost always normal, fluctuating slightly at times one way or the other, but hardly ever more than one or two degrees. I've made several blood counts, and while she runs slightly under the million mark, the deficiency isn't enough to cause alarm. About the only objective symptoms she displays are a steady falling off in weight and a progressive pallor, while subjectively she complains of loss of appetite, slight headaches and profound lassitude in the morning."

"U'm," he repeated thoughtfully, expelling a twin cloud of smoke from his narrow nostrils and regarding the ash of his cigar as though it were something of intense interest, "and how long has this condition of affairs obtained?"

"About three months. She's a Mrs. Chetwynde, wife of a likable young chap who's superintending a piece of railway construction for an English company in Burma. He's been away about six months or so, and while she would naturally be expected to pine for him to some extent—they've been married only a couple of years—this illness has been going on only since about the middle of August."

"U'm!" He knocked the ash from his cigar with a deft motion of his little finger and inhaled a great lungful of strong, fragrant smoke with careful deliberation. "This case

interests me, Friend Trowbridge. These diseases which defy diagnosis are the things which make the doctor's trade exciting. With your permission I will accompany you when next you visit Madame Chetwynde. Who knows? Together we may find the doormat under which the key of her so mysterious malady lies hidden. Meantime, I famish for sleep."

"I'm with you," I agreed as I closed my book, shut off the light and accompanied him upstairs to bed.

THE Chetwynde cottage was one of the smallest and newest of the lovely little dwellings in the Rookwood section of town. Although it contained but seven rooms, it was as completely a piece of art as any miniature painted on ivory, and the appointments and furnishings comported perfectly with the exquisite architectural artistry of the house. Jules de Grandin's round little eyes danced delightedly as he took in the perfect harmony existing inside and out when we parked my car before the rose-trellised porch and entered the charming reception hall. "*Eh bien*, my friend," he whispered as we followed the black-and-white-uniformed maid toward the stairs, "whatever her disease may be, she has the *bon goût*—how do you say? good taste?—this Madame Chetwynde."

Lovely as a piece of Chinese porcelain—and as frail—Idoline Chetwynde lay on the scented pillows of her Louis Treize bed, a negligée of knife-plaited crêpe de chine trimmed with fluffy black marabou shrouding her lissom form from slender neck to slender ankles, but permitting occasional high-lights of ivory body to be glimpsed through its sable folds. Little French-heeled mules of scarlet satin trimmed with black fur were on her stockingless feet, and the network of veins showed pale violet against the dead-white of her high-arched insteps. Her long, sharp-chinned face was a rich olive hue in the days of

her health, but now her cheeks had faded to the color of old ivory, and her fine, high forehead was as pale and well-nigh as translucent as candle-wax. The long, beautifully molded lips of her expressive mouth were more an old rose than a coral red, and her large gray eyes, lifted toward the temples like those of an Oriental, shone with a sort of patient resignation beneath the "flying gull" curve of her intensely black brows. Her hair, cut short as a boy's at the back, had been combed across her forehead from right to left and plastered down with some perfumed unguent so that it surmounted her white face like a close-wrapped turban of gleaming ebon silk. Diamond studs, small, but very brilliant, flickered lambently in the lobes of her low-set ears. Some women cast the aura of their feminine allure about them as a bouquet of roses exudes its perfume. Idoline Chetwynde was one of these.

"Not so well this morning, thank you, Doctor," she replied to my inquiry. "The weakness seems greater than usual, and I had a dreadful nightmare last night."

"H'umph, nightmare, eh?" I answered gruffly. "We'll soon attend to that. What did you dream?"

"I—I don't know," she replied languidly, as though the effort of speaking were almost too much for her. "I just remember that I dreamed something awful, but what it was I haven't the slightest notion. It really doesn't matter, anyway."

"*Pardonnez-moi, Madame*, but it matters extremely much," de Grandin contradicted. "These things we call dreams, they are sometimes the expression of our most secret thoughts; through them we sometimes learn things concerning ourselves which we should not otherwise suspect. Will you try to recall this unpleasant dream for us?"

As he spoke he busied himself with a minute examination of the patient,

tapping her patellar tendons, feeling along her wrists and forearms with quick, practised fingers, lifting her lids and examining the pupils of both her luminous eyes, searching on her throat, neck and cardiac region for signs of abrasions. "*Eh bien*," and "*marbleu, c'est étrange!*" I heard him mutter to himself once or twice, but no further comment did he make until he had completed his examination.

"Do you know, Dr. Trowbridge," Mrs. Chetwynde remarked as de Grandin rolled down his cuffs and scribbled a memorandum in his notebook, "I've been gone over so many times I've begun to feel like an entry at the dog show. It's really not a bit of use, either. You might just as well save yourselves and me the trouble and let me die comfortably. I've a feeling I shan't be here much longer, anyway, and it might be better for all concerned if——"

"*Zut!*" de Grandin snapped the elastic about his pocketbook with a sharp report and leveled a shrewd, unwinking stare at her. "Say not so, *Madame*. It is your duty to live. *Parbleu*, the garden of the world is full to suffocation with weeds; flowers like yourself should be most sedulously cultivated for the joying of all mankind."

"Thank you, Doctor," Mrs. Chetwynde smiled slowly in acknowledgment of the compliment and pressed the ebony-and-silver bell which hung over the ornamental head of her bed.

"*Madame* has called?" The swart-visaged maid-servant appeared at the door of the chamber with a promptitude which led me to suspect her ear had never been far from the key-hole.

"Yes, Dr. Trowbridge and Dr. de Grandin are leaving," her mistress replied in a tired voice.

"*Adieu, Madame*," de Grandin murmured in farewell, leaning forward and possessing himself of the

slender hand our hostess had not troubled to lift as we turned to go. "We go, but we shall return anon, and with us, unless I greatly mistake, we shall bring you a message of good cheer. No case is hopeless until——"

"Until the undertaker's been called?" Mrs. Chetwynde interrupted with another of her slow, tired smiles as the little Frenchman pressed his lips to her pale fingers and turned to accompany the maid and me from the room.

"Be careful—sir," the maid cautioned, with just enough space between the command and the title of courtesy to rob her utterance of all semblance of respect. De Grandin, turning from the stairs into the hall, had almost collided with a statuette which stood on a pedestal in a niche between the staircase and the wall. To me it seemed the woman bent a look of almost venomous hate on him as he regained his footing on the highly polished floor and wheeled about to stare meditatively at the figurine into which he had nearly stumbled.

"This way—if you please, sir," the servant admonished, standing by the front door and offering his hat in a most suggestive manner.

"Ah, yes, just so," he agreed, turning from the statue to her, then back again. "And do you suffer from the mosquitoes here at this time of year, *Mademoiselle*?"

"Mosquitoes?" the woman's reply was half word, half scornful sniff at the little foreigner's irrelevant remark.

"Precisely, the mosquito, the gnat, the *moustique*," he rejoined with a humorous lift of his brows. "The little, buzzing pests, you know."

"No, sir!" The answer served notice there was no more to be said on the subject.

"Ah? Perhaps it is then that *Madame* your mistress delights in the

incense which annoys the moths, yes?"

"No, sir!"

"*Parbleu, ma vierge*, there are many strange things in the world, are there not?" he returned with one of his impish grins. "But the strangest of all are those who attempt to hold information from me."

The servant's only reply was a look which indicated clearly that murder was the least favor she cared to bestow on him.

"*Lá, lá,*" he chuckled as we descended the steps to my car. "I did her in the eye, as the Englishmen say, that time, did I not, my friend?"

"You certainly had the last word," I admitted wonderingly, "but you'll have to grant her the last look, and it was no very pleasant one, either."

"*Ah bah,*" he returned with another grin, "who cares how old pickleface looks so long as her looks reveal that which I seek? Did not you notice how she stiffened when I hinted at the odor of incense in the house? There is no reason why they should not burn incense there, but, for some cause, the scent is a matter of utmost privacy—with the maid, at least."

"U'm?" I commented.

"Quite right, my friend, your objection is well taken," he responded with a chuckle. "Now tell me something of our fair patient. Who is she, who were her forebears, how long has she resided here?"

"She's the wife of Richard Chetwynde, a naturalized Englishman, who's been working on an engineering job in India, as I told you last night," I replied. "As to her family, she was a Miss Millatone before her marriage, and the Millatones have been here since the Indians—in fact, some of them have been here quite as long, since an ancestress of hers was a member of one of the aboriginal tribes—but that was in the days when the Swedes and Dutch were contending for this part of the

country. Her family are rather more than well to do, and——”

“No more, my friend; you have told me enough, I think,” he interrupted. “That strain of Indian ancestry may account for something which has caused me much wonderment. Madame Chetwynde is a rarely beautiful woman, my friend, but there is that indefinable something about her which tells the careful observer her blood is not entirely Caucasian. No disgrace, that; *parbleu*, a mixture of strain is often an improvement of the breed, but there was a certain—how shall I say it?—foreignness about her which told me she might be descended from Orientals, perhaps; perhaps from the Turk, the Hindoo, the——”

“No,” I cut in with a chuckle, “she’s what you might call a hundred and ten per cent American.”

“U’m,” he commented dryly, “and therefore ten per cent nearer the bare verities of nature than the thinner-blooded European. Yes. I think we may win this case, my friend, but I also think we shall have much study to do.”

“Oh”—I looked at him in surprise—“so you’ve arrived at a hypothesis?”

“Hardly that, my friend. There are certain possibilities, but as yet Jules de Grandin has not the courage to call them probabilities. Let us say no more for the time being. I would think, I would cogitate, I would meditate upon the matter.” Nor could all my urging extract a single hint concerning the theory which I knew was humming like a gyroscope inside his active little brain as we drove home through the rows of brilliant maple trees lining the wide streets of our pretty little city.

**A** SPIRITED altercation was under way when we arrived at my house. Taking advantage of the fact that office hours were over and no patients within earshot, Nora McGin-

nis, my household factotum, was engaged in the pleasing pastime of expressing her unvarnished opinion with all the native eloquence of a born Irishwoman. “Take shame to yerself, Katy Rooney,” she was advising her niece as de Grandin and I opened the front door, “sure, ’tis yerself as ought to be ashamed to set foot in me kitchen an’ tell me such nonsense! Afther all th’ doctor’s been afther doin’ fer yez, too! Desertin’ th’ pore lady while she’s sick an’ in distriss, ye are, an’ widout so much as sayin’ by yer lave to th’ doctor. Wurra, ’tis Nora McGinnis that’s strainin’ ivery nerve in her body to kape from takin’ her hand off th’ side o’ yer face!”

“Take shame ter meself, indade!” an equally belligerent voice responded. “’Tis little enough ye know of th’ goin’s on in that there house! S’posin’ ’twas you as had ter live under th’ same roof wid a haythen statchoo, an’ see th’ misthress ye wuz takin’ yer wages from a-crawlin’ on her hands an’ knees before th’ thing as if she was a haythen or a Protestant or sumpin, instid of a Christian woman! When first I come to Missis Chetwynde’s house th’ thing was no larger nor th’ span o’ me hand, an’ ivery day it’s growed an’ growed until it’s as long as me arm this minit, so it is, an’ no longer ago than yestiddy it wunk it’s haythen eye at me as I was passin’ through th’ hall. I tell ye, Nora darlin’, what wid that black statchoo a-standin’ in th’ hall an’ gittin’ bigger an’ bigger day be day, an’ th’ missis a-crawlin’ to it on her all-fours, an’ that slinky, sneaky English maid o’ her’n actin’ as if I, whose ancistors wuz kings in Ireland, wuz no better than th’ dirt benathe her feet, an’ belike not as good, I’d not be answerable fer me actions another day—th’ saints hear me when I say it!”

I was striding toward the kitchen with intent to bring the argument to an abrupt close when de Grandin’s



fingers suddenly bit into my arm so sharply that I winced from the pressure. "No, no, Friend Trowbridge," he whispered fiercely in my ear, "let us hear what else she has to say. This information is a gift from heaven, no less!" Next moment he was in the kitchen, smiling ingratiatingly at the two angry women.

"Dr. de Grandin, sor," began Nora, anxious to refer the dispute to his arbitration, "'tis meself that's ashamed to have to own this gurrul as kin o' mine. When Mrs. Chetwynde wuz taken sick, Dr. Trowbridge got her to go over an' cook fer th' pore lady, fer all our family's good cooks, though I do say it as shouldn't. An' now, bad cess to her, she's fer up an' lavin' th' pore lady in th' midst of her trouble, like as if she were a Scandinavian or Eytalian, or some kind o' stinkin' furriner, beggin' yer pardon, sor."

"Faith, Doctor," the accused Kathleen answered in defense, "I'm niver th' one to run out from a good situation widout warnin', but that Chetwynde house is no Christian place at all, at all. 'Tis some kind o' haythen madhouse, no less."

De Grandin regarded her narrowly a moment, then broke into one of his quick smiles. "What was it you did say concerning a certain statue and Madame Chetwynde?" he asked.

"Sure, an' there's enough ter say," she replied, "but th' best part of it's better left unsaid, I'm thinkin'. Mrs. Chetwynde's husband, as belike you know, sor, is an engineer in India, an' he's forever sendin' home all sorts o' furrin knickknacks fer souvenirs. Some o' th' things is reel pretty an' some of 'em ain't so good. It were about three months ago, just before I came wid her, he sent home th' statchoo of some old haythen goddess from th' furrin land. She set it up on a pedistal like as if it were th' image of some blessed saint, an' there

it stands to this day, a-poisonin' th' pure air o' th' entire house.

"I niver liked th' looks o' th' thing from th' first moment I clapped me two eyes on it, but I didn't have ter pass through th' front end o' th' house much, an' when I did I turned me eyes away, but one day as I was passin' through th' hall I looked at it, an' ye can belave me or not, Doctor, but th' thing had growed half a foot since last time I seen it!"

"Indeed?" de Grandin responded politely. "And then——"

"Then I sez to meself, sez I, 'I'll jist fix *you*, me beauty, that I will,' an' th' next evenin', when no one wuz lookin', I sneaked into th' hall an' doused th' thing 'wid howly wather from th' church font!"

"Ah? And then——?" de Grandin prompted gently, his little eyes gleaming with interest.

"Ouch, Doctor darlin', if I hadn't seen it I wouldn't a' belaved it! May I niver move off'n this spot if th' blessed wather didn't boil an' stew as if I'd poured it onto a red-hot sthove!"

"*Parbleu!*" the Frenchman murmured.

"Th' next time I went past th' thing, so help me hivin, if it didn't grin at me!"

"*Mordieu*, do you say so? And then——?"

"An' no longer ago than yestiddy it wunk its eye at me as I went by!"

"And you did say something concerning Madame Chetwynde praying to this——"

"Doctor"—the woman sidled nearer and took his lapel between her thumb and forefinger—"Doctor, 'tis meself as knows better than to bear tales concernin' me betters, but I seen sumpin last week that give me th' cowl'd shivers from me big toes to me eye-teeth. I'd been shlapin' as peaceful as a lamb that hadn't been born yet, when all of a sudden I heard sumpin downstairs that sounded like

burglars. 'Bad cess ter th' murtherin' scoundrils,' says I, 'comin' here to kill pore definselless women in their beds!' an' wid that I picks up a piece o' iron pipe I found handy-like beside me door an' shtarts ter crape downstairs ter lane it agin th' side o' their heads.

"Dr. de Grandin, sor, 'tis th' blessed truth an' no lie I'm tellin' ye. When I come to th' head o' th' stheps, there was Mrs. Chetwynde, all barefooty, wid some sort o' funny-lookin' thing on her head, a-lightin' haythen punk-sthicks before that black haythen image an' a-goin' down on her two knees to it!

"'Katy Rooney,' sez I to meself, 'this is no fit an' proper house fer you, a Christian woman an' a good Catholic, to be livin' in, so it's not, an' as soon as iver I could I give me notice to Mrs. Chetwynde, an' all th' money in th' mint couldn't hire me to go back to that place agin, sor.'

"Just so," the little Frenchman agreed, nodding his sleek blond head vigorously. "I understand your reluctance to return; but could you not be induced by some consideration greater than money?"

"Sure, an' I'd not go back there fer——" Katy began, but he cut her short with a sudden gesture.

"Attend me, if you please," he commanded. "You are a Christian woman, are you not?"

"To be sure, I am."

"Very good. If I told you your going back to Madame Chetwynde's service until I give you word to leave might be instrumental in saving a Christian soul—a Christian body, certainly—would you undertake the duty?"

"I'd do most annything ye towld me to, sor," the woman replied soberly, "but th' blessed saints know I'm afeared to shlope under th' same roof wid that there black thing another night."

"U'm," de Grandin took his nar-

row chin in his hand and bowed his head in thought a moment, then turned abruptly toward the door. "Await me here," he commanded. "I shall return."

Less than two minutes later he re-entered the kitchen, a tiny package of tissue paper, bound with red ribbon, in his hand. "Have you ever been by the Killarney lakes?" he demanded of Katy, fixing his level, unwinking stare on her.

"Sure, an' I have that," she replied fervently. "More than onct I've sthooed beside th' blue wathers an'——"

"And who is it comes out of the lake once each year and rides across the water on a great white horse, attended by——" he began, but she interrupted with a cry that was almost a scream of ecstasy:

"'Tis th' O'Donohue himself! Th' brave O'Donohue, a-ridin' his grrate white harse, an' a-headin' his band o' noble Fayneans, all ridin' an' prancin' ter set owld Ireland free!"

"Precisely," de Grandin replied. "I, too, have stood beside the lake, and with me have stood certain good friends who were born and bred in Ireland. One of those once secured a certain souvenir of the O'Donohue's yearly ride. Behold!"

Undoing the tissue paper parcel he exhibited a tiny ring composed of two or three strands of white horsehairs loosely plaited together. "Suppose I told you these were from the tail of the O'Donohue's horse?" he demanded. "Would you take them with you as a safeguard and re-enter Madame Chetwynde's service until I gave you leave to quit?"

"Glory be, I would that, sor!" she replied. "Faith, wid three hairs from th' O'Donohue's horse, I'd take service in th' Divil's own kitchen an' brew him as foine a broth o' brimsthone as iver he drank, that I would. Sure, th' O'Donohue is more than a match fer any murtherin' haythen

that iver came out o' India. I'm thinkin', sor."

"Quite right," he agreed with a smile. "It is understood, then, that you will return to Madame Chetwynde's this afternoon and remain there until you hear further from me? Very good."

To me, as we returned to the front of the house, he confided: "A pious fraud is its own excuse, Friend Trowbridge. What we believe a thing is, it is, as far as we are concerned. Those hairs, now, I did extract them from the mattress of my bed; but our superstitious Katy is brave as a lion in the belief that they came from the O'Donohue's horse."

"Do you mean to tell me you actually take any stock in that crazy Irishwoman's story, de Grandin?" I demanded incredulously.

"*Eh bien*," he answered with a shrug of his narrow shoulders, "who knows what he believes, my friend? Much she may have imagined, much more she may have made up from the activity of her superstitious mind; but if all she said is truth I shall not be so greatly surprized as I expect to be before we have finished this case."

"Well!" I returned, too amazed to think of any adequate reply.

"**T**ROWBRIDGE, my friend," he informed me at breakfast the following morning, "I have thought deeply upon the case of Madame Chetwynde, and it is my suggestion that we call upon the unfortunate lady without further delay. There are several things I should very much like to inspect in her so charming house, for what the estimable Katy told us yesterday has thrown much light on things which before were entirely dark."

"All right," I assented. "It seems to me you're taking a fantastic view of the case, but everything I've done thus far has been useless, so I dare

say you'll do no harm by your tricks."

"*Morbleu*, I warrant I shall not!" he agreed with a short nod. "Come, let us go."

The dark-skinned maid who had conducted us to and from her mistress the previous day met us at the door in answer to my ring and favored de Grandin with an even deeper scowl than she had shown before, but she might as well have been a graven image for all the attention he bestowed on her. However:

"*Mon Dieu*, I faint, I am ill, I shall collapse, Friend Trowbridge!" he cried in a choking voice as we approached the stairs. "Water, I pray you; a glass of water, if you please!"

I turned to the domestic and demanded a tumbler of water, and as she left to procure it, de Grandin leaped forward with a quick, catlike movement and pointed to the statuette standing at the foot of the stairs. "Observe it well, Friend Trowbridge," he commanded in a low, excited voice. "Look upon its hideousness, and take particular notice of its height and width. See, place yourself here, and draw a visual line from the top of its head to the woodwork behind, then make a mark on the wood to record its stature. Quick, she will return in a moment, and we have no time to lose!"

Wonderingly, I obeyed his commands, and had scarcely completed my task when the woman came with a goblet of ice-water. De Grandin pretended to swallow a pill and wash it down with copious drafts of the chilled liquid, then followed me up the stairs to Mrs. Chetwynde's room.

"*Madame*," he began without preliminary when the maid had left us, "there are certain things I should like to ask you. Be so good as to reply, if you please. First, do you know anything about the statue which stands in your hallway below?"

A troubled look flitted across our patient's pale face. "No, I can't say I do," she replied slowly. "My husband sent it back to me from India several months ago, together with some other curios. I felt a sort of aversion to it from the moment I first saw it, but somehow it fascinated me, as well. After I'd set it up in the hall I made up my mind to take it down, and I've been on the point of having it taken out half a dozen times, but somehow I've never been able to make up my mind about it. I really wish I had, now, for the thing seems to be growing on me, if you understand what I mean. I find myself thinking about it—it's so adorably ugly, you know—more and more during the day, and, somehow, though I can't quite explain, I think I dream about it at night, too. I wake up every morning with the recollection of having had a terrible nightmare the night before, but I'm never able to recall any of the incidents of my dream except that the statue figures in it somehow."

"U'm?" de Grandin murmured

noncommittally. "This is of interest, *Madame*. Another question, if you please, and, I pray you, do not be offended if it seems unduly personal. I notice you have a *penchant* for attar of rose. Do you employ any other perfume?"

"No," wonderingly.

"No incense, perhaps, to render the air more fragrant?"

"No, I dislike incense, it makes my head ache. And yet"—she wrinkled her smooth brow in a puzzled manner—"and yet I've thought I smelled a faint odor of some sort of incense, almost like Chinese punk, in the house more than once. Strangely enough, the odor seems strongest on the mornings following one of my unremembered nightmares."

"H'm," de Grandin muttered, "I think, perhaps, we begin to see a fine, small ray of light. Thank you, *Madame*; that is all."

"THE moon is almost at the full, Friend Trowbridge," he remarked apropos of nothing, about 11



"Hear my prayer. O mighty Spirit!  
Smite and strike and make impotent  
Demons from across the water."



o'clock that night. "Would it not be an ideal evening for a little drive?"

"Yes, it would not," I replied. "I'm tired, and I'd a lot rather go to bed than be gallivanting all over town with you, but I suppose you have something up your sleeve, as usual."

"*Mais oui*," he responded with one of his impish smiles, "an elbow in each, my friend—and other things, as well. Suppose we drive to Madame Chetwynde's."

I grumbled, but complied.

"Well, here we are," I growled as we passed the Chetwynde cottage. "What do we do next?"

"Go in, of course," he responded.

"Go in? At this hour of night?"

"But certainly; unless I am more mistaken than I think, there is that to be seen within which we should do well not to miss."

"But it's preposterous," I objected. "Who ever heard of disturbing a sick woman by a call at this hour?"

"We shall not disturb her, my friend," he replied. "See, I have here the key to her house. We shall let ourselves in like a pair of wholly disreputable burglars and dispose ourselves as comfortably as may be to see what we shall see, if anything."

"The key to her house!" I echoed in amazement. "How the deuce did you get it?"

"Simply. While the sour-faced maid fetched me the glass of water this morning I took an impression of the key in a cake of soap I had brought for that very purpose. This afternoon I had a locksmith prepare me a duplicate from the stamp I had made. *Parbleu*, my friend, Jules de Grandin has not served these many years with the *Sûreté* and failed to learn more ways than one of entering other peoples' houses!"

Quietly, treading softly, we mounted the veranda steps, slipped the Judas-key into the front door

lock and let ourselves into Mrs. Chetwynde's hall. "This way, if you please, Friend Trowbridge," de Grandin ordered, plucking me by the sleeve. "If we seat ourselves in the drawing-room we shall have an uninterrupted view of both stairs and hall, yet remain ourselves in shadow. That is well, for we have come to see, not to be seen."

"I FEEL like a malefactor——" I began in a nervous whisper, but he cut me off sharply.

"Quiet!" he ordered in a low breath. "Observe the moon, if you please, my friend. Is it not already almost peering through yonder window?"

I glanced toward the hall window before which the black statuette stood and noticed that the edge of the lunar disk was beginning to show through the opening, and long silver beams were commencing to stream across the polished floor, illuminating the figure and surrounding it with a sort of cold effulgence. The statue represented a female figure, gnarled and knotted, and articulated in a manner suggesting horrible deformity. It was of some kind of black stone or composition which glistened as though freshly anointed with oil, and from the shoulder-sockets three arms sprang out to right and left. A sort of pointed cap adorned the thing's head, and about the pendulous breasts and twisting arms serpents twined and writhed, while a girdle of skulls, carved from gleaming white bone, encircled its waist. Otherwise it was nude, and nude with a nakedness which was obscene even to me, a medical practitioner for whom the human body held no secrets. As I watched the slowly growing patch of moonlight on the floor it seemed the black figure grew slowly in size, then shrunk again, and again increased in stature, while its twisting arms and garlands of con-

torting serpents appeared to squirm with a horrifying suggestion of waking into life.

I blinked my eyes several times, sure I was the victim of some optical illusion due to the moon rays against the silhouette of the statue's blackness, but a sound from the stairhead brought my gaze upward with a quick, startled jerk.

Light and faltering, but unquestionably approaching, a soft step sounded on the uncarpeted stairs, nearer, nearer, until a tall, slow-moving figure came into view at the staircase turn. Swathed from breast to insteps in a diaphanous black silk night-robe, a pair of golden-strapped boudoir sandals on her little naked feet and a veil of black tulle shrouding her face, *Idoline Chetwynde* slowly descended the stairs, feeling her way carefully, as though the covering on her face obscured her vision. One hand was outstretched before her, palm up, fingers close together; in the other she bore a cluster of seven sticks of glowing, smoking Chinese punk spread fanwise between her fingers, and the heavy, cloyingly sweet fumes from the joss-sticks spiraled slowly upward, surrounding her veiled head in a sort of nimbus and trailing behind her like an evil-omened cloud.

Straight for the black image of the Indian goddess she trod, feeling each slow, careful step with faltering deliberation, halted a moment and inclined her head, then thrust the punk-sticks into a tiny bowl of sand which stood on the floor at the statue's feet. This done, she stepped back five slow paces, slipped the gilded sandals off and placed her bared feet parallel and close together, then with a sudden forward movement dropped to her knees. Oddly, with that sense for noting trifles in the midst of more important sights which we all have, I noticed that when she knelt, instead of straightening her feet out behind

her with her insteps to the floor, she bent her toes forward beneath her weight.

For an instant she remained kneeling upright before the black image, which was already surrounded by a heavy cloud of punk-smoke; then, with a convulsive gesture, she tore the veil from before her face and rent the robe from her bosom, raised her hands and crossed them, palms forward, in front of her brow and bent forward and downward till crossed hands and forehead rested on the waxed boards of the floor. For a moment she remained thus in utter self-abasement, then rose upright, flinging her hands high above her head, recrossed them before her face and dropped forward in complete prostration once more. Again and again she repeated this genuflection, faster and faster, until it seemed her body swayed forward and back thirty or forty times a minute, and the soft pat-pat of her hands against the floor assumed a rhythmic, drumlike cadence as she began a faltering chant in eager, short-breathed syllables:

Ho, Devi, consort of Siva and daughter of Himavat!

Ho, Sakti, fructifying principle of the Universe!

Ho, Devi, the Goddess;

Ho, Gauri, the Yellow;

Ho, Uma, the Bright;

Ho, Durga, the Inaccessible;

Ho, Chandi, the Fierce;

Listen Thou to my Mantra!

Ho, Kali, the Black,

Ho, Kali, the Six-armed One of Horrid Form,

Ho, Thou about whose waist hangs a girdle of human skulls as if it were a precious pendant;

Ho, Malign Image of Destructiveness—

She paused an instant, seeming to swallow rising trepidation, gasped for breath a moment, like a timid but determined bather about to plunge into a pool of icy water, then:

Take Thou the soul and the body of this woman prostrate before Thee,  
Take Thou her body and her spirit, freely and voluntarily offered,

Incorporate her body, soul and spirit into  
Thy godhead to strengthen Thee in  
Thine undertakings.

Freely is she given Thee, Divine Destroyer,  
Freely, of her own accord, and without  
reservation.

Asking naught but to become a part of  
Thee and of Thy supreme wickedness.

Ho, Kali of horrid form,  
Ho, Malign Image of Destructiveness,  
Ho, eater-up of all that is good,  
Ho, disseminator of all which is wicked,  
Listen Thou to my Mantra!

"*Grand Dieu*, forgive her invincible ignorance; she knows not what she says!" de Grandin muttered beside me, but made no movement to stop her in her sacrilegious rite.

I half rose from my chair to seize the frenzied woman and drag her from her knees, but he grasped my elbow in a viselike grip and drew me back savagely. "Not now, foolish one!" he commanded in a sibilant whisper. And so we watched the horrid ceremony to its close.

For upward of a quarter-hour Idoline Chetwynde continued her prostrations before the heathen idol, and, either because the clouds drifting across the moon's face played tricks with the light streaming through the hall window, or because my eyes grew undependable from the strain of watching the spectacle before me, it seemed as though some hovering, shifting pall of darkness took form in the corners of the room and wavered forward like a sheet of wind-blown sable cloth until it almost enveloped the crouching woman, then fluttered back again. Three or four times I noted this phenomenon, then, as I was almost sure it was no trick of lighting or imagination, the moon, sailing serenely in the autumn sky, passed beyond the line of the window, an even tone of shadow once more filled the hall, and Mrs. Chetwynde sank forward on her face for the final time, uttered a weak, protesting little sound, half-way between a moan and a whimper, and lay there, a lifeless,

huddled heap at the foot of the graven image, her white arms and feet protruding from the black folds of her robe and showing like spots of pale light against the darkness of the floor.

Once more I made to rise and take her up, but again de Grandin restrained me. "Not yet, my friend," he whispered. "We must see the tragic farce played to its conclusion."

For a few minutes we sat there in absolute silence; then, with a shuddering movement, Mrs. Chetwynde regained consciousness, rose slowly and dazedly to her feet, resumed her sandals, and walked falteringly toward the stairs.

Quick and silent as a cat, de Grandin leaped across the room, passed within three feet of her and seized a light chair, thrusting it forward so that one of its spindle legs barred her path.

Never altering her course, neither quickening nor reducing her shuffling walk, the young woman proceeded, collided with the obstruction, and would have stumbled had not de Grandin snatched away the chair as quickly as he had thrust it forward. With never a backward look, with no exclamation of pain—although the contact must have hurt her cruelly—without even a glance at the little Frenchman who stood half an arm's length from her, she walked to the stairs, felt for the bottommost tread a second, then began a slow ascent.

"*Très bon!*" de Grandin muttered as he restored the chair to its place and took my elbow in a firm grip, guiding me down the hall and through the front door.

"What in heaven's name does it all mean?" I demanded as we regained my car. "From what I've just seen I'd have no hesitancy in signing commitment papers to incarcerate Mrs. Chetwynde in an institution for the insane—the woman suffering from a masochistic mania, no doubt of

it—but why the deuce did you try to trip her up with a chair?”

“Softly, my friend,” he replied, touching fire to a vile-smelling French cigarette and puffing furiously at it. “Did you help commit that poor girl to an insane asylum you would be committing a terrible crime, no less. Normal she is not, but her abnormality is entirely subjective. As for the chair, it was the test of her condition. Like you, I had a faint fear her actions were due to some mental breakdown, but did you notice her walk? *Parbleu*, was it the walk of a person in possession of his faculties? I say no! And the chair proved it. When she did stumble against it, though it must have caused her tender body much pain, she neither faltered nor cried out. The machinery which telegraphed the sensation of hurt from her leg to her brain did suffer a short-circuit. My friend, she was in a state of complete anesthesia as regarded the outward world. She was, how do you say——”

“Hypnotized?” I suggested.

“U’m, perhaps. Something like that; although the controlling agent was one far, far different from any you have seen in the psychological laboratory, my friend.”

“Then——”

“Then we would do well not to speculate too deeply until we have more pieces of evidence to fit into the picture-puzzle of this case. Tomorrow morning we shall call on Madame Chetwynde, if you please.”

We did. The patient was markedly worse. Great lavender circles showed under her eyes, and her face, which I had thought as pale as any countenance could be in life, was even a shade paler than theretofore. She was so weak she could hardly lift her hand in greeting, and her voice was barely more than a whisper. On her left leg, immediately over the fibula, a great patch of violet bruise showed

plainly the effects of her collision with the chair. Throughout the pretty, cozy little cottage there hung the faint aroma of burnt joss-sticks.

“Look well, my friend,” de Grandin ordered in a whisper as we descended the stairs; “observe the mark you made behind the statue’s head no later than yesterday.”

I paused before the horrid thing, closed one eye and sighted from the tip of its pointed cap to the scratch I had made on the woodwork behind it. Then I turned in amazement to my companion. Either my eye was inaccurate or I had made incorrect measurements the previous day. According to yesterday’s marks on the woodwork the statue had grown fully two inches in height.

De Grandin met my puzzled look with an unwavering stare, as he replied to my unspoken question: “Your eye does not deceive you, my friend; the hell-hag’s effigy has enhanced.”

“But—but,” I stammered, “that can’t be!”

“Nevertheless, it is.”

“But, good heavens, man; if this keeps up——”

“This will not keep up, my friend. Either the devil’s dam takes her prey or Jules de Grandin triumphs. The first may come to pass; but my wager is that the second occurs.”

“But, for the Lord’s sake! What can we do?”

“We can do much for the Lord’s sake, my friend, and He can do much for ours, if it be His will. What we can do, we will; no more and certainly no less. Do you make your rounds of mercy, Friend Trowbridge, and beseech the so excellent Nora to prepare an extra large apple tart for dinner, as I shall undoubtedly bring home a guest. Me, I hasten, I rush, I fly to New York to consult a gentleman I met at the Medical Society dinner the other night. I shall get back when I return, but, if that be



not in time for an early dinner, it will be no fault of Jules de Grandin's. *Adieu*, my friend, and may good luck attend me in my errand. *Cordieu*, but I shall need it!"

"DR. TROWBRIDGE, may I present Dr. Wolf?" de Grandin requested that evening, standing aside to permit a tall, magnificently built young man to precede him through the doorway of my consulting-room. "I have brought him from New York to take dinner with us, and—perhaps—to aid us in that which we must do tonight without fail."

"How do you do, Dr. Wolf?" I responded formally, taking the visitor's hand in mine, but staring curiously at him the while. Somehow the name given by de Grandin did not seem at all appropriate. He was tall, several inches over six feet, with an enormous breadth of shoulder and extraordinary depth of chest. His face, disproportionately large for even his great body, was high-cheeked and unusually broad, with a jaw of implacable squareness, and the deep-set, burning eyes beneath his overhanging brows were of a peculiarly piercing quality. There was something in the impassive nobility and steadfastness of purpose in that face which reminded me of the features of the central allegorical figure in Franz Stuck's masterpiece, *War*.

Something of my thought must have been expressed in my glance, for the young man noticed it and a smile passed swiftly across his rugged countenance, leaving it calm again in an instant. "The name is a concession to civilization, Doctor," he informed me. "I began life under the somewhat unconventional sobriquet of 'Johnny Curly Wolf', but that hardly seemed appropriate to my manhood's environment, so I have shortened the name to its greatest common divisor—I'm a full-blooded Dakotah, you know."

"Indeed?" I replied lamely.

"Yes. I've been a citizen for a number of years, for there are certain limitations on the men of my people who retain their tribal allegiance which would hamper me greatly in my lifework. My father became wealthy by grace of the white man's bounty and the demands of a growing civilization for fuel-oil, and he had the good judgment to have me educated in an Eastern university instead of one of the Indian training schools. An uncle of mine was a tribal medicine man and I was slated to follow in his footsteps, but I determined to graft the white man's scientific medicine onto my primitive instruction. Medical work has appealed to me ever since I was a little shaver and was permitted to help the post surgeon at the agency office. I received my license to practise in '14, and was settling down to a study of pulmonary diseases when the big unpleasantness broke out in Europe."

He smiled again, somewhat grimly this time. "My people have been noted for rather bloody work in the old days, you know, and I suppose the call of my lineage was too strong for me. At any rate, I was inside a Canadian uniform and overseas within two months of the call for Dominion troops, and for three solid years I was in the thick of it with the British. When we came in I was transferred to the A. E. F., and finished my military career in a burst of shrapnel in the Argonne. I've three silver bones in each leg now and am drawing half-compensation from the government every month. I indorse the check over to the fund to relieve invalid Indian veterans of the army who aren't as well provided with worldly goods by Standard Oil as I am."

"But are you practising in New York now, Doctor?" I asked.

"Only as a student. I've been taking some special post-graduate work in diseases of the lungs and posterior poliomyelitis. As soon as my studies

are completed I'm going west to devote my life and fortune to fighting those twin scourges of my people."

"Just so," de Grandin cut in, unable longer to refrain from taking part in the conversation. "Dr. Wolf and I have had many interesting things to speak of during our trip from New York, Friend Trowbridge, and now, if all is prepared, shall we eat?"

The young Indian proved a charming dinner companion. Finely educated and highly cultured, he was indued with extraordinary skill as a raconteur, and his matter-of-fact stories of the "old contemps'" titanic struggle from the Marne and back, night raids in the trenches and desperate hand-to-hand fights in the blackness of No Man's Land, of the mud and blood and silent heroism of the dressing-stations and of the phantom armies which rallied to the assistance of the British at Mons were colorful as the scenes of some old Spanish tapestry. Dinner was long since over and 11 o'clock had struck, still we lingered over our cigars, liqueurs and coffee in the drawing-room. It was de Grandin who dragged us back from the days of '15 with a hasty glance at the watch strapped to his wrist.

"*Parbleu*, my friends," he exclaimed, "it grows late and we have a desperate experiment to try before the moon passes the meridian. Come, let us be about our work."

I looked at him in amazement, but the young Indian evidently understood his meaning, for he rose with a shrug of his broad shoulders and followed my diminutive companion out into the hall, where a great leather kit bag which bore evidence of having accompanied its owner through Flanders and Picardy rested beside the hall rack. "What's on the program?" I demanded, trailing in the wake of the other two, but de Grandin thrust hat and coat into my hands, exclaiming:

"We go to Madame Chetwynde's again, my friend. Remember what you saw about this time last night? *Cordieu*, you shall see that which has been vouchsafed to few men before another hour has passed, or Jules de Grandin is wretchedly mistaken!"

Piling my companions into the back seat, I took the wheel and drove through the still, moonlit night toward the Chetwynde cottage. Half an hour later we let ourselves quietly into the house with de Grandin's duplicate key and took our station in the darkened parlor once more.

A quick word from de Grandin gave Dr. Wolf his cue, and taking up his travel-beaten bag the young Indian let himself out of the house and paused on the porch. For a moment I saw his silhouette against the glass panel of the door, then a sudden movement carried him out of my line of vision, and I turned to watch the stairs down which I knew Idoline Chetwynde would presently come to perform her unholy rites of secret worship.

The ticking pulse-beats of the little ormolu clock on the mantelpiece sounded thunderous in the absolute quiet of the house; here and there a board squeaked and cracked in the gradually lowering temperature; somewhere outside, a motor horn tooted with a dismal, wailing note. I felt my nerves gradually tightening like the strings of a violin as the musician keys them up before playing, and tiny shivers of horripilation pursued each other down my spine and up my forearms as I sat waiting in the shadowy room.

THE little French clock struck twelve sharp, silvery chimes. It had arrived, that hideous hour which belongs neither to the day which is dead nor to the new day stirring in the womb of Time, and which we call midnight for want of a better term. The moon's pale visage slipped slowly into view through the panes of the

window behind the Indian statue and a light, faltering step sounded on the stairs above us.

"*Mon Dieu,*" de Grandin whispered fervently, "grant that I shall not have made a mistake in my calculations!" He half rose from his chair, gazing fixedly at the lovely, unconscious woman walking her tranced march toward the repellent idol, then stepped softly to the front window and tapped lightly on its pane with his fingertips.

Once again we saw Idoline Chetwynde prostrate herself at the feet of the black statue; once more her fluttering, breathless voice besought the evil thing to take her soul and destroy her body; then, so faint I scarcely heard it through the droning of the praying woman's words, the front door gave a soft click as it swung open on its hinges.

Young Dr. Wolf, once Johnny Curly Wolf, medicine man of the Dakotahs, stepped into the moonlit hall.

Now I understood why he had hidden himself in the shadows of the porch when he left the house. Gone were his stylishly cut American clothes, gone was his air of well-bred sophistication. It was not the highly educated, cultured physician and student who entered the Chetwynde home, but a medicine man of America's primeval race in all the panoply of his traditional office. Naked to the waist he was, his bronze torso gleaming like newly molded metal from the furnace. Long, tight-fitting trousers of beaded buckskin encased his legs, and on his feet were the moccasins of his forefathers. Upon his head was the war-bonnet of eagle feathers, and his face was smeared with alternate streaks of white, yellow and black paint. In one hand he bore a bull-hide tom-tom, and in his deep-set, smoldering eyes there burned the awful, deadly earnestness of his people.

Majestically he strode down the

hall, paused some three or four paces behind the prostrate woman, then, raising his tom-tom above his head, struck it sharply with his knuckles.

*Toom, toom, toom, toom!* the mellow, booming notes sounded, again and still again. Bending slightly at the knees, he straightened himself, repeated the movement, quickened the cadence until he was rising and sinking a distance of six inches or so in a sort of stationary, bobbing dance. "Manitou, Great Spirit of my fathers!" he called in a strong, resonant voice. "Great Spirit of the forest dwellers and of the people of the plains, hear the call of the last of Thy worshippers:

"Hear my prayer, O Mighty Spirit,  
As I do the dance before Thee,  
Do the dance my fathers taught me,  
Dance it as they danced before me,  
As they danced it in their lodges,  
As they danced it at their councils  
When of old they sought Thy succor.

"Look upon this prostrate woman,  
See her bow in supplication  
To an alien, wicked spirit.  
Thine she is by right of lineage,  
Thine by right of blood and forebears.  
In the cleanly air of heaven  
She should make her supplication,  
Not before the obscene statue  
Of a god of alien people.

"Hear my prayer, O Mighty Spirit,  
Hear, Great Spirit of my fathers,  
Save this woman of Thy people,  
Smite and strike and make impotent  
Demons from across the water,  
Demons vile and wholly filthy,  
And not seemly for devotion  
From a woman of Thy people."

The solemn, monotonous intoning ceased, but the dance continued. But now it was no longer a stationary dance, for, with shuffling tread and half-bent body, Johnny Curly Wolf was circling slowly about the Hindoo idol and its lone worshiper.

Something—a cloud, perhaps—drifted slowly across the moon's face, obscuring the light which streamed into the hall. An oddly shaped cloud it was, something like a giant man astride a giant horse, and on his

brow there seemed to be the feathered war-bonnet of the Dakotahs. The cloud grew in density. The moon rays became fainter and fainter, and finally the hall was in total darkness.

In the west there sounded the whistling bellow of a rising wind, shaking the casements of the house and making the very walls tremble. Deep and rumbling, growing louder and louder as it seemed to roll across the heavens on iron wheels, a distant peal of thunder sounded, increased in volume, finally burst in a mighty clap directly over our heads, and a fork of blinding, jagged lightning shot out of the angry sky. A shivering ring of shattered glass and of some heavy object toppling to a fall, a woman's wild, despairing shriek, and another rumbling, crashing peal of thunder deafened me.

By the momentary glare of a second lightning-flash I beheld a scene stranger than any painted by Dante in his vision of the underworld. Seemingly, a great female figure crouched with all the ferocity of a tigress above the prostrate form of Idoline Chetwynde, its writhing, sextuple arms grasping at the woman's prone body or raised as though to ward off a blow, while from the window looking toward the west there leaped the mighty figure of an Indian brave armed with shield and war-club.

Johnny Curly Wolf? No! For Johnny Curly Wolf circled and gyrated in the measures of his tribal ghost-dance, and in one hand he held his tom-tom, while with the other he beat out the rhythm of his dance-music.

It was but an instant that the lightning showed me this fantastic tableau, then all was darkness blacker than before, and a crashing of some stone thing shattered into half a thousand fragments broke through the rumble of the thunder.

"Lights! *Grand Dieu*, lights, Friend Trowbridge!" de Grandin

screamed in a voice gone high and thin with hysteria.

I pressed the electric switch in the hall and beheld Johnny Curly Wolf, still in tribal costume, great beads of sweat dewing his brow, standing over the body of Idoline Chetwynde, the hall window-panes blown from their frame and scattered over the floor like tiny slivers of frozen moonlight, and, toppled from its pedestal and broken into bits almost as fine as powder, the black statue of Kali, Goddess of the East.

"Take her up, my friend," de Grandin ordered me, pointing to Mrs. Chetwynde's lifeless body. "Pick her up and restore her to her bed. *Morbleu*, but we shall have to attend her like a new-born infant this night, for I fear me her nerves have had a shock from which they will not soon recover!"

All night and far past daylight we sat beside Idoline Chetwynde's bed, watching the faint color ebb and flow in her sunken cheeks, taking heedful count of her feebly beating pulse, administering stimulants when the tiny spark of waning life seemed about to flicker to extinction.

About 10 o'clock in the morning de Grandin rose from his seat beside the bed and stretched himself like a cat rising from prolonged sleep. "*Bon, très bon!*" he exclaimed. "She sleeps. Her pulse, it is normal; her temperature, it is right. We can safely leave her now, my friends. Anon we shall call on her; but I doubt me if we shall have more to do than wish her felicitations on her so miraculous cure. Meantime, let us go. My poor, forgotten stomach cries aloud reproaches on my so neglected mouth. I starve, I famish, I faint of inanition. Behold, I am already become but a wraith and a shadow!"

**J**ULES DE GRANDIN drained his third cup of coffee at a gulp and passed the empty vessel back for replenishment. "*Parbleu*, my friends," he



exclaimed, turning his quick, elfin smile from Dr. Wolf to me, "it was the beautiful adventure, was it not?"

"It might have been a beautiful adventure," I agreed grudgingly, "but just what the deuce *was* it? The whole thing's a mystery to me from beginning to end. What caused Mrs. Chetwynde's illness in the first place, what was the cause of her insane actions, and what was it I saw last night? Was there really a thunderstorm that broke the black image, and did I really see——"

"But certainly, my excellent one," he cut in with a smile as he emptied his cup and lighted a cigarette, "you did behold all that you thought you saw; no less."

"But——"

"No buts, if you please, good friend. I well know you will tease for an explanation as a pussy-cat begs for food while the family dines, and so I shall enlighten you as best I can. To begin:

"When first you told me of Madame Chetwynde's illness I knew not what to think, nor did I think anything in particular. Some of her symptoms made me fear she might have been the victim of a *revenant*, but there were no signs of blood-letting upon her, and so I dismissed that diagnosis. But as we descended the stairs after our first visit, I did behold the abominable statue in the hall. 'Ah ha,' I say to me, 'what does this evil thing do here? Perhaps it makes the trouble with Madame Idoline?' And so I look at it most carefully.

"My friends, Jules de Grandin has covered much land with his little feet. In the arctic snows and in the equatorial heat he has seen the sins and follies and superstitions of men, and learned to know the gods they worship. So he recognized that image for what it was. It is of the goddess Kali, tutelary deity of the *Thags* of India, whose worship is murder and whose service is bloodshed. She goes by many names, my friends: some-

times she is known as Devi, consort of Siva and daughter of Himavat, the Himalaya Mountains. She is the Sakti, or female energy of Siva, and is worshiped in a variety of forms under two main classes, according as she is conceived as a mild and beneficent or as a malignant deity. In her milder shapes, besides Devi, 'the goddess,' she is called also Gauri, 'the yellow,' or Uma, 'the bright.' In her malignant forms she is Durga, 'the inaccessible,' represented as a yellow woman mounted on a tiger, Chandi, 'the fierce,' and, worst of all, Kali, 'the black,' in which guise she is portrayed as dripping with blood, encircled with snakes and adorned with human skulls. In the latter form she is worshiped with obscene and bloody rites, oftener than not with human sacrifice. Her special votaries are the *Thags*, and at her dreadful name all India trembles, for the law of the English has not yet wiped out the horrid practise of *thaggee*.

"Now, when I beheld this filthy image standing in Madame Chetwynde's home I wondered much. Still, I little suspected what we later came to know for truth, for it is a strange thing that the gods of the East have little power over the people of the West. Behold, three hundred thousand Englishmen hold in complete subjection as many million Hindoos, though the subject people curse their masters daily by all the gods whom they hold sacred. It seems, I think, that only those who stand closer to the bare verities of nature are liable to be affected by gods and goddesses which are personifications of nature's forces. I know not whether this be so, it is but a theory of mine. At any rate, I saw but small connection between the idol and our sick lady's illness until Friend Trowbridge told me of her strain of Indian ancestry. Then I say to me: 'Might not she, who holds

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# The Gods of East and West

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a mixture of aboriginal blood in her veins, become affected by the strength of this heathen goddess? Or perhaps it is that fused blood is weaker than the pure strain, and the evil influence of the Black One may have found some loophole in her defense.' One thing was most sure, in Madame Chetwynde's house there was clearly the odor of Eastern incense, yet nowhere was there visible evidence of perfume save such as a dainty woman of the West might use. Me, I sniffed like a hound while examining her, and kissed her fingers twice in farewell to make sure. This incense which were so all unaccounted for did puzzle me.

"You recall, Friend Trowbridge, how I questioned her maid about the punk smell, and how little satisfaction I got of her. 'There is going on here the business of monkeys,' I tell me as we leave the house. And so I make a print of the front door key that we may enter again at our convenience and see what is what.

"*Eh bien*, my friends, did we not see a sufficiency the following night when we beheld Madame Idoline fall forward on her face and make a voluntary offer of her soul and body to the Black One? I shall say so.

"'How to overcome this Eastern fury?' I ask me. 'The excellent Katy Rooney have bathed her in holy water, and the blessed fluid have burned and sizzled on her so infamous head. Clearly, the force of Western churches is of little value in this case. Ah, perhaps she *have* attacked Madame Chetwynde through her strain of primitive blood. Then what?'

"*Mort d'un chat*, all suddenly I have it! At the dinner in New York I have met the young Dr. Wolf. He

is a full-blood Indian and, he have told me, a medicine man of his people, as well. Now, if this woman's weakness is her Indian blood, may not that same blood be her strength and her protection as well? I hope so.

"So I persuade Monsieur Wolf to come with me and pit the strength of his Great Spirit against the evil force of Kali of the *Thags*. Who will win? *Le bon Dieu* alone knows, but I have hopes."

For a moment he regarded us with a quizzical smile, then resumed:

"The Indian of America, my friends, was truly *un sauvage noble*. The Spaniard saw in him only something like a beast to be enslaved and despoiled; the Englishman saw in him only a barrier to possession of the new country, and as such to be swept back or exterminated; but to the Frenchman he was a noble character. Ha, did not my illustrious countrymen, the Sieurs La Salle and Frontenac, accord him his just dues? Certainly. His friendship was true, his courage undoubted, his religion a clean one. Why, then, could we not invoke the Indians' Great Spirit?"

"We know, my friends, or at least we think we know, that there is but one true God, almighty and everlasting, without body, parts or passions; but does that same God appear in the same manner to all peoples? *Mais non*. To the Arab He is Allah; to many so-called Christians He is but a sort of celestial Santa Claus; I greatly fear, Friend Trowbridge, that to many of your most earnest preachers He is little more than a disagreeable old man with the words 'Thou Shalt Not!' engraved upon His forehead. But, for all these different conceptions, He is still God.

"And what are these deities of heathendom?" He paused, looking expectantly from one of us to the other, but as we made no reply, proceeded to answer his own question: "They are nothing, and yet they are

something, too. They are the concentrated power of thought, of mistaken belief, of misconception. Yet, because thoughts are truly things, they have a certain power—*parbleu*, I think a power which is not to be sneezed upon. For years, for centuries, perhaps, that evil statue of Kali has been invoked in bloody and unseemly rites, and before her misshapen feet has been poured out the concentrated hate and wickedness of countless monkey-faced heathens. That did induce her with an evil power which might easily overcome the resistance of a sensitive nature, and all primitive peoples are more sensitive to such influences than are those whose ancestors have long been agnostic, however much and loudly they have prated of their piety.

"Very good. The Great Spirit of the Indian of America, on the other hand, being a clean and noble conception, is one of the manifestations of God Himself. For countless generations the noble Red Man had clothed him with all the attributes of nobility. Shall this pure conception of the godhead go to waste? No, my friends, ten thousand times no! You can not kill a noble thought any more than you can slay a noble soul; both are immortal.

"And so I did prevail upon the good Wolf to come with us and summon the massed thought and belief of his great people to combat the massed thought of those despicable ones who have made them a goddess in the image of their own uncleanness of mind. *Nom d'une anguille*, but the struggle was magnificent!"

"You mean to tell me that I actually saw the Great Spirit, then?" I demanded incredulously.

"*Ah bah*, my friend," he replied, "have I not been at pains to tell you it was the massed, the concentrated thought and belief of all the Indians; of today and for countless generations

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before today, which our good Wolf invoked? *Mordieu*, can I never convince you that thought, though it be immaterial, is as much a thing as—as for example, the skull in your so thick head?”

“But what about Mrs. Chetwynde’s maid?” I asked, for deep in my mind there lurked a suspicion that the woman might know more of the unholy sights we had seen than she cared to tell.

“Quite right,” he replied, nodding gravely. “I, too, suspected her once. It was because of that I induced the excellent Katy to return to Madame Idoline’s service and spy upon her. I discovered much, for Katy, like all her race, is shrewd, and when she knows what is wanted she knows how to get it. It appears the maid was fully aware of her mistress’ subjection to the Black One, but, though she understood it not, so deep was her devotion to *Madame* her mistress that she took it on herself to cast obstacles in our way lest we prevent a continuance of *Madame’s* secret worship. Loyalty is a great, a wonderful thing, my friends. That poor woman was shocked by the spectacle of her beloved mistress casting herself before the thing of stone, but the bare fact that her mistress did it was justification enough for her. Had she been asked to do so by Madame Chetwynde, I firmly believe she would have joined in the obscene devotions and given her own body and soul to the Black One along with that of her deluded mistress whom she adored.”

“Well—I’ll be—— But look here——” I began again, but:

“No more, Friend Trowbridge,” de Grandin commanded, rising and motioning to Dr. Wolf and me. “It is long since we have slept. Come, let us retire. Me, *parbleu*, I shall sleep until your learned societies shall issue profound treatises on the discovery of a twin brother to that Monsieur Rip Van Winkle!”