

WEIRD TALES

THE UNIQUE MAGAZINE

EDWIN BAIRD, Editor

Published monthly by THE RURAL PUBLISHING CORPORATION, 325 N. Capitol Ave., Indianapolis, Ind. Application made for entry as second-class matter at the postoffice at Indianapolis, Indiana. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$3.00 a year in the United States; \$3.50 in Canada. The publishers are not responsible for manuscripts lost in transit. Address all manuscripts and other editorial matters to WEIRD TALES, 864 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and publishers are cautioned against using the same, either wholly or in part.

Copyright, 1923, by The Rural Publishing Corporation.

VOLUME 1

25 Cents

NUMBER 2

Contents for April, 1923

SIXTEEN THRILLING SHORT STORIES
TWO COMPLETE NOVELETTES
TWO TWO-PART STORIES
INTERESTING, ODD AND WEIRD HAPPENINGS

The Scar	CARL RASMUS	7
<i>A Thrilling Novelette.</i>		
Beyond the Door.....	PAUL SUTER	28
<i>A Short Story of Gripping Interest.</i>		
The Tortoise Shell Comb.....	ROYLSTON MARKHAM	34
<i>A Fantasy of a Mad Brain.</i>		
A Photographic Phantasm.....	PAUL CRUMPLER	37
The Living Nightmare.....	ANTON M. OLIVER	38
<i>A Night in a House of Death.</i>		
The Incubus.....	HAMILTON CRAIGIE	42
<i>A Frightful Adventure in an Ancient Tomb.</i>		
The Bodymaster.....	HAROLD WARD	49
<i>An Amazing Novelette.</i>		

Contents for April, 1923—Continued

Jungle Death.....	ARTEMUS CALLOWAY	70
<i>A Story in Which Crocodiles and Voodooism Play the Stellar Roles.</i>		
The Snake Fiend.....	FARNSWORTH WRIGHT	75
<i>A Tale of Diabolic Terror.</i>		
A Square of Canvas.....	ANTHONY M. RUD	81
<i>A Story of an Insane Artist.</i>		
The Affair of the Man in Scarlet.....	JULIAN KILMAN	91
<i>A Weird Story of the Thirteenth Century.</i>		
The Hideous Face.....	VICTOR JOHNS	99
<i>A Grim Tale of Frightful Revenge.</i>		
The Forty Jars.....	RAY MCGILLIVRAY	105
<i>A Strange Story of the Orient.</i>		
The Whispering Thing.....		
.....	LAURIE MCCLINTOCK and CULPEPER CHUNN	116
<i>A Two-part Novel of Death and Terror.</i>		
The Thing of a Thousand Shapes.....	OTIS ADELBERT KLINE	139
<i>The Concluding Chapters of a Weird Novel.</i>		
The Conquering Will.....	TED OLSON	152
<i>Do the Dead Return to Life?</i>		
Six Feet of Willow.....	CARROL F. MICHENER	157
<i>The Strange Tale of a Yellow Man and His Beloved Reptile.</i>		
The Hall of the Dead.....	FRANCIS D. GRIERSON	163
<i>An Occult Story of Ancient Egypt.</i>		
The Parlor Cemetery.....	C. E. HOWARD	169
<i>A Grisly Satire.</i>		
Golden Glow.....	HARRY IRVING SHUMWAY	173
<i>A "Haunted House" Story with a Touch of Humor.</i>		
The Eyrie.....	By THE EDITOR	179

YOUNG & WARD, 168 N. Michigan Boulevard, Chicago,
Advertising Agents for WEIRD TALES

The HIDEOUS FACE

A Grim Tale of Frightful Revenge

By VICTOR JOHNS

MARSEILLES, one hears while traveling through Europe, is the most vicious town in France.

Whether or not this ancient seaport, whose history reaches deep into the shadows of antiquity, is deserving of a criticism so sweeping and so condemnatory, I do not know. Such, at any rate, is the reputation it suffers among travelers.

All roads in Marseilles lead to La Cannebiere, a street of splendid cafés. Being a sort of hyphen that connects the waterfront with the fashionable hotels and shops of the Rue Noailles, it swarms with a curious blend of dregs and pickings. Up from the Quai de la Fraternité come sailors hungry for the pleasures a few hours' shore leave will offer; Algerian troops, on their way to Africa, jostle English soldiers back from India; adventurers and *le monde élégant*, pausing in flight to or from the Riviera, and the inevitable Magdalens, spatter its length with color and charge it with restlessness.

Late one afternoon last winter I drifted through this famous thoroughfare, looking for a place among the tables that edge its pavements. It had become my habit to sit for half an hour before dinner somewhere along the street, drink an appetizer, and expect the crowd to entertain me. The rows of iron chairs were filled with

earlier comers, who sat contentedly behind their *apéritifs* or cups of chocolate, but at last, in front of the Café de l'Univers, I found a vacant back row table, which I quickly possessed. With a glass of *vermouth cassis* on the table beside me, I yielded to the lure of seaport excitement.

My thoughts were soon interrupted, however, by an American voice asking in French if the other chair at my table was taken. I turned to assure the gentleman it was not, that he was in no way intruding—and I looked into the face of Lawrence Bainridge.

"Hello, Bayard," was his casual greeting. A bit too casual, I thought, considering the fact we had not seen each other for nearly two years.

I, contrariwise, must fairly have gasped, "Good Lord! What are you doing here?" for, as he swung the unoccupied chair about and sat down, he said,

"Well, what's so strange about meeting me on La Cannebiere?"

There was nothing strange about it; and I wondered at the amazement which so energetically had voiced itself. A rich, itinerant artist, Lawrence had zig-zagged several times around the world to paint unknown by-ways and hidden corners. Astonishment at meeting him in Marseilles was therefore absurd. Also, I felt he might construe my lack of *savoir faire* as a blunt refusal to play

up to his well-known and fondly-cherished reputation as a globe trotter. He was childish in certain respects—artists are.

The waiter quickly fetched a champagne cocktail and a package of English cigarettes. The cocktail Lawrence downed in a gulp and called for more. The second he drank with more restraint.

Though I had not seen him since two summers before—at Land's End, an isolated village in Massachusetts—our conversation was rambling and disjointed, like that of incompatible strangers who find no ease in silence. This annoyed me, for our similarity of tastes, I felt, should more than outweigh the separation.

As the late afternoon merged into early evening, the mistral blew its cold and sinister breath out to the Mediterranean. We drank steadily, Lawrence all the while jibing at me for clinging to so impotent a mixture as vermouth, currant juice and seltzer. He had reached his fifth cocktail, but through the exercise of will, apparently, was still sober. Nevertheless, he worried me.

Furtively, almost defensively, Lawrence sat in his chair. I reacted to his attitude by bracing myself against an intangible, though imminent, danger which thickened the atmosphere. He breathed jerkily, emitting from time to time a sharp clicking sound, as though part of his breathing mechanism had suddenly refused to function. Quivers ran through his body and ended in a twitch.

But he spoke with a crisp enunciation, and so precisely that each word seemed to have been scoured and weighed before utterance. On not a syllable was the checkrein loosened. I sensed a splendid effort at self-control.

I suddenly recalled the wild absurdity of Lawrence's recent work. In Paris, three months before, I had gone to his exhibition at the Vendôme Galleries and left the place convinced

that Lawrence Bainridge had gone stark mad.

"Flowers, *Messieurs!*" A flower girl, her wicker tray heaped with heavy-scented blossoms, paused before us. "No! Ah, *Messieurs*, but one little rose apiece—for luck!" she said.

Then she picked up a red rose bud and pinned it to the lapel of Lawrence's coat.

"*Ugh!* Take it away!" he screamed. "I can't stand it!" He tore the flower from his coat and hurled it into the gutter.

"Lawrence!" I reproved, "You're drunk."

"No, I'm not drunk," he protested. Contrition had subdued his voice. "But—I can't stand—the smell—of roses."

Thinking to avoid a scene, I suggested we take a walk. He said it might be a good idea, first, though, he would fill his cigarette case. A subterfuge, I told myself, to regain composure, and an obvious one. Lawrence had never been obvious.

At that moment there passed before us on the sidewalk such a ghastly thing that my scalp tingled and the flesh on my legs seemed to shrivel and fall away.

It was a man whose face was like a hideous mask; the left side—young and unblemished; but the right half—so mutilated that description would nauseate. Fair was divided from foul by a line running down the exact center of forehead, nose and chin.

MY exclamation of horror drew Lawrence's attention to the repellent sight. At that moment the gruesome thing turned full upon us.

Lawrence fumbled with his cigarettes; the case fell from his trembling hands and clattered to the pavement. Quickly he reached down, but did not straighten up again until after the man—a sailor, to judge from his rolling gait, though he wore no uniform—had gone.

"Poor soul," I said. "How his fingers must ache to choke the life from the *Boche* responsible for that."

Lawrence made no reply. He was drained of blood. He sat rigid, petrified.

"In Paris and London," I continued, "one sees hundreds of *mutilés*—the war's driftwood—and I have trained myself to look unflinchingly into their eyes. But"—I glanced in the direction the sailor had disappeared—"my histrionic ability would fail me there."

Still Lawrence made no move or sound. That he was profoundly touched I knew, for a sensitiveness, abnormal in its refinement, had been his lifelong curse. It had prevented his marriage to a young woman in whom were combined, he thought at one time, all the qualities that appeal to a man of esthetic temperament.

In his studio, one afternoon, they were planning for the wedding. Lawrence recalled a newly-acquired *objet d'art* and took it from a cabinet. The treasure was an exquisite bit of ancient Egyptian glass, a spherulate bowl, so delicate of line and so ethereally opalescent of color that it always made me think of a bubble poised to float away.

I can imagine how he carried it across the room—with that caressing touch of velvet-tipped fingers peculiar to artists. The young woman, in order to examine it closely, grabbed the bowl and proceeded to paw it as a prospector might a bit of rock. Lawrence said afterward that had she struck him he could not have been more shocked. He broke the engagement that afternoon.

"Come, drink up, man!" I urged. "Stop looking as though you'd seen a ghost."

"Things other than ghosts can haunt one," he answered in a pinched tone.

We ordered drinks again, with misgivings on my part, for I felt the trembling man opposite me already

had had too much. He sat slumped in his chair, shoulders hunched forward, and stared straight before him. Reminiscent or speculative, I could not tell.

Then he began to tell me a story that explained many things. His words were no longer crisp; he now spoke in a heavy, monotonous way, with many pauses, pressing his hands together in a gesture of anguish.

"The odor of that rose," he said, "and the sight—I can't stand the smell of roses! Not since two summers ago. I met a Portuguese sailor on the Wharf one day—you know—in that damn place—Land's End. Had planned a canvas, and all summer had been looking for a model—a type.

"A Portuguese Apollo he was—but a Portuguese devil, too. Didn't find that out till later. I stopped him and asked would he pose. Conceited swine! From his smile I knew it was vanity, not industry, that made him accept."

A venomous hate wove its way through Lawrence's phrases. He continued:

"Well—he called at my studio—the next afternoon—and I started the picture. He was a find. Dramatic. An inspiration.

"During the rest periods Pedro—that was his name—would lie on the floor and talk about himself while I made tea. God! How vain he was! Boasted of his success with women—his affairs. They were many. Quite plausible. He spurned the Bay and its fishing, and shipped on merchantmen. The ports of the world were his hunting ground, he said. Swashbuckling bully!"

To hear Lawrence speak so bitterly of Land's End and one of its people was puzzling, for the extraordinary note sounded in that small New England town by its so-called foreign settlement, descendants of Portuguese fishermen who came over some seventy years ago and settled along the New England coast, had appealed strongly

to his artistic appreciation two years before. He had looked upon these natives as gentle, lovable folk, but to me their black eyes, heavy-lidded and drowsy, had always suggested smoldering fires, not dreams; their excessive tranquillity I thought crafty, hinting of vendettas.

Lawrence picked up the thread of his story:

"One afternoon Pedro began talking about a Portuguese funeral in town that day. A friend of his had died. I dislike funerals—corpses and such—even the mention of them. Always have. Told him to shut up. Instead, he began to tell of an interrupted funeral in Singapore he once had seen. Spared no details. Losing patience and temper, I flung a tube of paint which struck him on the head. He was furious. I told him I was sorry.

" 'Pedro,' I explained, 'ever since I can remember, things connected with death have been the only things I've feared. I have never in my life been in a cemetery—and I have never seen a dead body. Just to hear of them brings out a cold sweat.' Pedro laughed and said cemeteries—or dead bodies—couldn't hurt one."

This phase of Lawrence's susceptibility I had not known. And then his pictures in Paris danced before me. What had Pedro to do with them? What had Pedro to do with the change in my friend? But I asked no questions lest I rouse Lawrence to a stubborn silence.

I found myself fidgeting about, peering suddenly into the crowd as if to catch the gaze of hypnotic eyes. Once I saw the *mutilé* standing across the street beside a kiosk, watching Lawrence, or so I imagined, with ferocious intensity. My *vis-a-vis* and his emotional recoils had by that time become agitating companions.

Yet, in truth, there was much in his surroundings to breed thoughts of adventure, even crime. Wharf loungers and apaches were slinking

among the well-dressed shoppers who drifted down from the region above. Fringing the port, only a hundred meters distant, were the dark, twisting streets of a district noted for its nefarious habits and avoided by the wary; rumors of tourists who had wandered alone at night into that abyss of lawlessness, reappearing days later on the tide, skulls crushed and pockets empty, were far too numerous to pass unheeded. Out beyond the harbor the Château d'If clung to its rocks, guarding well grim secrets of a tragic past.

BUT to return to Lawrence.

"To blot out the Singapore funeral," he said, "I painted quickly. Makes me concentrate. Got so interested I stopped only on account of bad light. Put on my hat and left the studio—with Pedro—for a walk. Fresh air clears the brain. Must have been exhausted, for I walked along without seeing. Just followed Pedro. I suppose. A bend in the road—and I woke up—galvanized with terror.

"Before me stood the entrance to a graveyard. The stones bristled ghostly in the twilight. I halted—alert."

The stem of the glass, which Lawrence nervously had been twirling, broke, and his unfinished cocktail spilled upon the table.

"I couldn't go on—on through that forest of spectral marble. Pedro continued to walk. Was some distance ahead before he noticed I had stopped. He turned and told me to come along. I refused. He laughed—a derisive laugh—then spit out a single word—'Coward!'

"I've been through jungles in India. Gone deep into China where no white man had ever been. Know Calcutta—Port Said—explored the worst slums of the world—and I had never been called a coward before.

" 'You don't understand, Pedro—I can't, I can't go on!' He laughed again—like a hyena.

“‘Yes,’ Pedro said, a coward. How they will laugh—when I tell!”

“‘Had never been called that before—you know. I began walking forward—slowly. My legs trembled, but I walked. Passed through the gate.

“‘That’s right,’ Pedro said. ‘There’s nothing to be afraid of.’

“‘No—nothing.’ I answered, my jaws chattering.

“‘Then Pedro said. ‘I’m going to the grave of my friend who was buried to-day and say a prayer, take a rose from his grave and dry it—to carry in a little bag—always—for good luck. No harm comes then. You’ll take a rose, too.’

“‘I saw a large mound of flowers. The air was strong with perfume. Roses. . . . We reached the grave. Pedro stopped, knelt down and said a prayer. Shadows under the trees were black and the leaves rattled like bones. I wanted to run—but I stood beside Pedro—and shivered. Pedro took a rose from the grave and put it in his pocket. Then he took another, got up and offered it to me.

“‘No!’ I cried, drawing away. ‘I won’t touch it!’

“‘Pedro said. ‘You’ve got to be cured.’ He pointed to a large flat stone lying flat on the ground beside him, and explained:

“‘Over a hundred years ago—you can see the date when it’s light—a funny man had this grave made. Built it like a cistern. Brick walls. Look!’ and he slid the stone to one side. Pedro was strong.

“‘I refused to look. Kept my eyes on the path. A gust of wind blew my hat against Pedro, and it fell to the ground.

“‘As I stooped to pick it up, he pushed me—*into the grave!*”

THE horror of this piece of perversity got me.

“‘Lawrence!’ I exclaimed. ‘You don’t mean it!’”

“‘Yes,’ he answered, in that new tone, so flat and spiritless. ‘I sank

into something—soft. . . . Pedro’s laugh sounded far away, and he closed up the grave—with the stone.

“‘My throat was in a vice. Couldn’t make a sound. Tried to gather strength for one big scream—then something somewhere in me snapped. *Tsing!*’ it went, soft and little.

“‘Don’t know how long I was there. It seemed an eternity. I lived on—with the dead man—and crawling things. I don’t know. There may have been nothing at all. At last I saw a rift above—the night sky—and Pedro reached down to pull me out.

“‘When he came the next afternoon I told him I must rest for several days. My nerves were bad. All night I lay awake—and thought—and planned. At daybreak I fell asleep. In the afternoon I went to Boston.

“‘Three days later, back in Land’s End, I settled my accounts. All but one. Told the neighbors I was leaving for New York next day. Gave instructions to have my things packed and shipped to me there.

“‘Pedro came as usual in the afternoon. I worked as though nothing had happened. He got tired and lay on the floor. I boiled some water for tea. Very, very carefully I made that tea.

“‘‘What kind of tea is this?’ Pedro asked. ‘It tastes so queer.’

“‘‘A new kind.’ I told him.

“‘He drank, then lay back—asleep.

“‘From a shelf of etching materials I took a bottle. The liquid inside was clear. So harmless it looked! Poured some into a cup. Filled the cup with water, then knelt down beside the sleeping Pedro—dipped a feather into the liquid—and painted half his handsome face. Nitric acid—bites deep. . . .

“‘Pedro’s groans were silenced with a gag. More tea for rest and sleep.

“‘The streets that night were empty as I half carried, half dragged Pedro to the shanty where he lived alone. I threw him on the bed and looked without pity on his face.

“No—there was nothing—to be afraid of. I told him. But Pedro didn't hear.

“Don Juan's career was finished. Apollo had become repulsive. My last debt was paid.

“I packed two bags and caught the early train. That afternoon I said ‘Good-bye’ to the islands of Boston Harbor as I steamed out for England.”

Several minutes dragged past before either of us moved.

“Come. let's go,” was all I could find to say.

I TOOK Lawrence to his hotel and left him at the entrance with a promise to call the following morning. Unable to keep the appointment. I

went around during the afternoon. He was not in his room and could not be located.

Deciding to take one last look about the Old Port before leaving for Paris that night, I strolled down the Rue Noailles, through La Cannebière and the Quai de la Fraternité, into the Quai de Rive Neuve, where a group of excited men were gathered at the water's edge. As I reached the crowd two sailors with grappling hooks were laying a dripping corpse on the pavement. It was the body of Lawrence Bainridge.

The right side of his face was slashed and crushed into a shapeless mass—but the left half was untouched and fair.