

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

A MAGAZINE of the



BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME XII

NUMBER 4

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 2457 E. Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the post office at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$2.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. English office: Charles Lavell, 13, Serjeant's Inn, Fleet Street, E. C. 4, London. The publishers are not responsible for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts, although every care will be taken of such material while in their possession. The contents of this magazine are fully protected by copyright and must not be reproduced either wholly or in part without permission from the publishers.

NOTE—All manuscripts and communications should be addressed to the publishers' Chicago office at 450 East Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor. Copyright, 1928, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company

Contents for October, 1928

- Cover Design.....C. C. Senf
Illustrating a scene in "The Werewolf's Daughter"
- The Eyrie..... 436
A chat with the readers
- The Werewolf's Daughter (Part 1).....H. Warner Munn 438
A romantic story of the weird adventures that befel the daughter of the Werewolf of Ponkert—a three-part serial
- The Temple of Serpents.....Paul Ernst 461
A little carved snake of stone brought a terrifying experience to the skeptical American
- Carnate Crystal.....Mayo Reiss 469
The strange mineral came to the earth as part of a meteorite—and horrible was the result of experiment upon it
- The Dream Chair.....Leroy Ernest Fess 476
For weeks he lived a dual life, a good citizen by day and a hunted felon by night—then came the chair

[CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE]

[CONTINUED FROM PRECEDING PAGE]

Sonnets of the Midnight Hours:		
The Statues	Donald Wandrei	480
<i>Verse</i>		
Restless Souls	Seabury Quinn	481
<i>A tale of Jules de Grandin—a weirdly beautiful vampire-story, through which runs a red thread of horror</i>		
The Conradi Affair	August W. Derleth & Carl W. Ganzlin	505
<i>A five-minute story of overdeveloped microbes and the bizarre fate of a bacteriologist</i>		
The Dancing Death	Theodore Roscoe	507
<i>A weird tale of fanatical Moslems, and a strange twitching death that attacked the beleaguered party of white men</i>		
Warning	Clark Ashton Smith	525
<i>Verse</i>		
The City of Lost Souls	Genevieve Larsson	526
<i>Weirdly terrible was the punishment of the twelve who avenged a brutal murder in a spectacular way</i>		
Folks Used to Believe:		
The Phoenix	Alvin F. Harlow	534
<i>One of the strange beliefs of our ancestors</i>		
The Incubator Man	Wallace West	535
<i>Following a theory of Sir Ronald Ross, the scientist condemned his son to a lonely life in a glass cage</i>		
Ol' Black Sarah	Bernard Austin Dwyer	540
<i>Verse</i>		
Invisible Threads (Conclusion)	Arthur J. Burks	541
<i>A two-part story of occult vengeance and the use of psychic power to bring retribution upon evil-doers</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
The Specter of Tappington	Richard Harris Barham	551
<i>A ghost-story from "The Ingoldsby Legends," which was much relished a generation or two ago</i>		
Dregs	Joseph Upper	567
<i>Verse</i>		

For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES Apply Direct to

WEIRD TALES

Western Advertising Office:
YOUNG & WARD, Mgrs.
360 N. Michigan Ave.
Chicago, Ill.
Phone, Central 6269

Eastern Advertising Office:
GEORGE W. STEARNS, Mgr.
Flatiron Building
New York, N. Y.
Phone, Ashland 7329



THE INCUBATOR MAN by WALLACE WEST



"I am Lilith Hughes," she said.

"The best and ultimate test of the ability of man to live long beyond his present allotted score of years would be to have a man, from his babyhood up, live in what practically would be a sterilized test-tube. He would breathe sterilized air. He would eat sterilized food. He would drink sterilized liquids. He would thus be placed as far as humanly possible beyond the range of the myriad microbes that in many ways are the enemies of man and that bring about many of his ailments. Such a man, growing and living under special conditions, might live to be 200."
—Sir Ronald Ross.

SIR RONALD ROSS, great scientist though you were, and dead though you have been these hundred and twenty-five years, I lay a curse upon you for those words.

I, Columbus Norton, the Incubator

Man, am that creature Sir Ronald foretold, and I have lived a life of blackest hell that humanity might view me dispassionately through the gigantic glass test-tube wherein I have existed for one hundred and fifty years, and learn how to increase the length of life of the worthless race thereby.

My father, Dr. Philip Norton, lived in what was then Newark, New Jersey, and enjoyed a nation-wide reputation as a specialist in germ diseases. He loved germs. He dreamed of germs. His whole life was filled with germ culture and the new and strange diseases he had discovered or had

learned to check. In fact, he had almost ceased to be human.

Then, in 1927 A. D., as time was reckoned in those days, he read an interview which Sir Ronald Ross, discoverer of the malaria microbe, had given to a newspaper reporter in what must have been an unguarded moment. This interview suggested to my father the idea of growing a man under glass, so to speak—I am the result!

The idea of growing a man in an absolutely healthful environment fastened upon the mind of my father like one of the diseases whose master he was. It made him give up all his other work so that he might devote his time to that one plan. It made him send me, his as yet unborn son, into the most pitiful slavery man has ever suffered.

I have read how it all was done. Dr. Norton constructed an air-tight glass chamber approximately three hundred feet square and twenty feet high. He equipped it with heating and cooling devices of the latest type, and fitted it with gymnastic apparatus, comfortable lodgings, a magnificent library and a swimming-pool.

The glass used was of the then new type which permitted the passage of ultra-violet rays. By the use of temperature-regulating devices an ideal outdoor climate of exactly even temperature was assured, winter and summer. He installed filtration plants for the air and water to be used, and an air-tight chamber by which food and other necessary articles could be passed into the enclosure without the slightest danger of any germ life entering with it.

When I was born, I was whisked immediately into this prison. While I was an infant a white-clad nurse cared for me. She wore rubber gloves and a respirator so that her touch could not contaminate me nor her breath mingle with mine.

I have often wondered what sort of woman my mother must have been to

allow her son to be snatched from her so easily. According to the books I have read (which, by the way, have given me almost my only knowledge of the outside world), mother love is not expressed so. Perhaps she also had given her life to science, or did not realize what she had done. I never found out. She died before I learned to talk.

During my childhood the imprisonment wasn't so bad. I knew nothing else. As I became able to care for myself, the nurse withdrew. After that I had contact with the outer world only through loud-speaking telephones which my father had installed and through the books and cinema films slipped through the fumigation chamber into my cell.

The best teachers were procured for me; the best of books and apparatus provided. The most perfect care was taken of my health. Living under such ideal conditions, I progressed in my studies with amazing rapidity, soon outstripping my teachers. At the age of twelve I passed the Harvard University entrance examinations, and in my sixteenth year was granted a Ph. D. degree. Yes, Dr. Norton had cause to be proud of his experiment.

I remember him well—a man with a stern, handsome face, who sat outside my cage, day after day, taking endless notes and talking pleasantly with me, yet watching my every reaction as though I were a guinea-pig.

He induced me to study medicine, and I made rapid progress, until we ran into the difficulty that live animal tissues could not be introduced into the chamber for fear of bringing disease germs with them. So, to this day, my knowledge of medical science is purely academic.

Oh, don't think I never rebelled! I did, bitterly; but my sense of duty, which had been fostered by my father in his many talks with me, conquered my rebellion. Dr. Norton continually pointed out the great service I was

doing to humanity—that through me and through him the world was learning to control itself, and to live sanely and keep healthy and live long.

The only time I ever saw my father angry was when, in a fit of boyish rage, I threatened to smash the glass and escape. His face turned white as marble. He stood, trembling with passion, hands clenched above his head, like some prophet of old about to hurl imprecations upon sinners.

"Boy," he thundered, "you hold the future of humanity in that club which you have in your hands. Mankind must live longer to become wise enough to conquer his environment. Shatter that glass, and man's future collapses into the dust with it. Aye, and if there is a hell, your soul will be consigned to the deepest pit."

What could a mere child do against the force of such a personality? I crept away trembling and never after that dared oppose his wishes.

His prophecy soon proved itself correct. The human race entered a new cycle as the result of dietary truths which I exemplified. Dr. Norton proved that a purely vegetable diet was more healthful for the human animal; that certain combinations of foods were poisonous while others were beneficial; that toxic substances in the blood will kill a man as surely as strychnin; that under right conditions of living, human machinery is little subject to breakage or deterioration—in short, during the first thirty years of my life, preventive medicine was advanced to such an extent that the average expectancy of human life jumped from 55.3 to 68 years.

ONE thing my father had not counted upon was the fact that I would become a man, with a man's dreams of love and fair women. And by the time I reached maturity there was no help for the matter. He regretted again and again that he had not also placed a girl baby in the chamber.

It was too late for that by the time he realized the desirability of such an experiment. I believe I hastened the day of his death by refusing to allow him to place a newly born girl in the chamber, even then, so that she might grow to maturity under the same ideal conditions, and perhaps, years later, become my mate. He must have been a soulless monster, even to think of such a scheme—and yet—and yet I loved him and while he lived did not greatly mind my confinement.

I slept eight hours daily, studied eight hours and played eight hours. The best books, cinemas and apparatus were provided for my research work. By the time I was fifty I can unhesitatingly say that I knew more than any one man in the world.

I was well developed physically also, in spite of the restricted space in which I lived, for my father had always impressed upon me the fact that a healthy body makes a healthy mind. I know that I must have been, even then, a splendid specimen of manhood, for I could not help but hear, through my loud speakers, the comments of the people who by this time were flocking from the ends of the earth to see me.

It was a strange thing to see my father and the other members of his establishment growing old, while I remained at the peak of my vitality. It has become a common thing to me since then, but the knowledge that death was stalking those outside, while I escaped unscathed, was at the time inexpressibly sad.

My father died when I was near fifty years old. With my consent he willed his laboratories and my glass cubicle to the government, with the understanding that I was to be carefully guarded and tended. His last words to me were: "Carry on, boy. Some day, through you, this silly thing that I am about to do won't be necessary."

With his passing my last real contact with the outside world was bro-

ken. I never could grow attached to the rapid guards and caretakers who took his place, or the obsequious officials who periodically came to refresh their shallow minds with my learning and advice.

For this reason the thing I am about to do no longer seems wrong to me. I have spent my life in the service of humanity. Men live longer and are, perhaps, somewhat wiser, but I often wonder, now, whether the sacrifice was worth while. At least, in a few hours I shall know whether the world is worth saving. My only wonder is that I have waited thus long.

But to return to my story. As the years passed I confined myself more and more to my studies, and ignored the crowds that gathered outside the walls of my cage to look and admire. I can truthfully say that my scientific treatises, written here, have been the wonder of the world. It was I who first explained the true time and space equation, and showed that Einstein, handicapped as he was by lack of equipment and the faulty work of his predecessors, had only half glimpsed the truth in his theory that space is subject to curvature. But enough of such nonsense.

It was when I was seventy-three years old, in the year 2000 A. D., or the year One, Free Time, that the Ruskinite rebellion broke out in the United Americas. There must have been some atavistic streak in me, for I sympathized heartily with those poor, benighted Ruskinites who dreamed of a breakdown of the gigantic monster of Science that mankind, like a Frankenstein, is building up about him, and who tried to smash it and return to the simple agricultural life of their forefathers.

Of course the outbreak was doomed to failure from the start, though streets of the country ran blood for a few bitter weeks. The very science which they hated subdued them. How could disciples of Ruskin stoop to heat rays, poison gases and atomic

bombs? They perished fighting to the last, but I know that for weeks government troops guarded my chamber as though it were a precious jewel. Sad would have been my lot, I am sure, could the Ruskinites have captured my cubicle. I know that I, who was at heart their best friend, was hated by them as the heart and soul of the scientific system.

I will skip over the next seventy-five years of my life with but a few words. Strange—three-quarters of a century—time enough for most men to live a full life and die content. For me they passed in a dreary succession, enlightened only by my studies and my dreams. As I look back, I conceive myself as a being almost in a state of hibernation, waiting for the vital spark which would awaken me.

In me metabolism and catabolism seemed exactly balanced. After my thirty-fifth year, I grew no older physically. I never was sick. I was amply confirming that prediction of Sir Ronald, made so long ago. My only regret was that my father could not have lived to appreciate his triumph—a triumph which had turned dust in my mouth ages ago, and which seemed no more remarkable than those silly experiments by which early Twentieth Century doctors were able to keep chicken hearts alive indefinitely in a sterile medium.

I devoted myself to study as before, until I conceived that I had in my one head the whole sum of human knowledge. I gave out that knowledge to the world until it drew so far ahead of present understanding that scientists could no longer comprehend it. Oh, the silly fools! With so much to do, man dawdles by the way like a lazy schoolboy. Well, soon now they must begin working out their own salvation.

AND NOW I draw near the end of my story. As I said, I had conceived that on my one hundred and fiftieth birthday I held in my brain

the sum of human knowledge, together with much that was beyond the comprehension of any but myself. Savants from all the world consulted me regarding knotty problems of science and government. I might add, also, that the present expectancy of life is eighty years.

Yet how little we know, poor things that humans are! My complacency lies in ruins about me. A whole new set of complexes and speculations has been released within me. Three days ago, while resting on the lawn outside my quarters, I was struck by something totally outside my experience. As I lay there a shadow fell on the grass and I looked up at a girl who stood not ten feet away from me on the other side of the glass barrier.

"Good morning," I said inanely, knowing that the telephones would make me perfectly audible outside the enclosure.

She nodded slightly and continued to look at me with wide, luminous eyes, in which there was, I somehow felt, an infinite sadness.

She was a beautiful thing—beautiful with the glory which perfect health and well-being give to our modern girls. Her eyes were dark and soft, with that slightly oblong slant which is giving more and more of an Oriental appearance to the people of America.

Her body was a thing to dream of as it was revealed by the short kilt and embroidered band across the breasts, which is the fashion of today. Her feet, in little, gold-tipped sandals, were high-arched and sentient. Her hair was the color of gold taken from Inca mines—but I perceive I grow ridiculous.

"Did you wish to consult me?" I asked foolishly, growing uncomfortable under that steady gaze.

Again she shook her head, but added, in a voice that tinkled silver music: "Why should I wish to consult you?"

And strangely, I could think of no

reply. What could I tell that radiant being that she did not already know?

"Your name?" I ventured.

"Why," she answered, as though surprised that it could be of the slightest interest to me, "I'm Lilith Hughes, 3684."

"Of the National Theater," I exclaimed, interpreting the last two figures. "Of course you would be."

She smiled faintly. "Thank you." A pause followed. "I must be going," she said at last. "Performance in San Francisco, you know."

And then I said a strange thing. The words seemed to form themselves without my volition. "Can't you stay and talk with me a little longer?" I pleaded. "It's lonely here."

Again she smiled that slow, enchanting smile of hers. "Can't. I'm sorry. The Torpedo doesn't wait, you know. And then you have your work to do." Her voice sank to the faintest murmur, which she did not realize I could hear plainly through the amplifiers. "You have your work to do—poor thing!"

When I looked up, she was gone.

The hell of one hundred and fifty years of loneliness has been nothing to the hell of the last three days!

Last night I made up my mind to leave all this. Humanity must take care of itself. To be perfectly frank: to hell with humanity; I want out of this.

I am a man, sound and strong and well-favored. I look and feel and think like one of thirty-five and I—am in love. Strange that such a primal urge, which I had considered merely a trick of nature's to prolong the race, should sweep me away at last!

I am going to seal this statement of my case in an envelope, so that if anything happens to me in this strange world I am about to explore, people will understand why I have done this. Tonight I'll smash this cursed glass and go in search of Lilith. Pretty, name—Lilith.

THE foregoing manuscript, carefully typed and sealed, was found on the body of Columbus Norton, the Incubator Man, who died of an almost unknown disease—the measles—two days after he broke out of his sealed chamber.

Attendants at B. Hospital, where he was taken, say that because of his long stay in an absolutely germless atmosphere he had failed to develop any resistance to disease and was 100

per cent susceptible to the first microbe which found lodgment in his body. He died a very few hours after being brought to the hospital.

Evidently he had spent his time, until the disease struck him, in becoming acquainted with a world whose ways he knew only by hearsay. At least there is no evidence that he ever took the San Francisco Torpedo, as the manuscript implies was his purpose.
