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The Man in the Moon

by Homer Eon Flint

CHAPTER I.

LADIES FIRST.

IT is only fair to say, right now, that Catherine accepted Mr. Brett with a distinct condition. She was to be merely a companion to him in his last days. He cheerfully agreed to the arrangement, knowing better than to expect anything more. At the time, he was just four times her age.

"But it's worth it, my dear, just to have you to look at," he often assured her; and he meant it. He made her his sole heir.

So, as might be expected, Catherine soon turned her attention to making use of the million he had left her. She found, of course, that the particular strata of society for which she longed rather frowned down upon her. She had been the millionaire's stenographer previous to their marriage.

Whereupon she deliberately set to work to win a man of her own age; a man already within the charmed circle. She had brains as well as youth and beauty, and she proposed to spare neither.

She went about it very energetically, taking prominent parts in several social-welfare enterprises, thereby coming in contact with the people she sought to know. But she failed to make a hit with the younger men. Had she been as well informed in athletics or politics as she was in business, she would have have done infinitely better. And as soon as she realized this, she proceeded to have a good cry, changed her mind entirely, and began to look over the field of confirmed bachelors.

It was about this time that John Bates, of Bates & Foster, Constructing Engineers, decided to run for Governor. Immediately his opponents searched for facts with which to discredit him; and that is the reason why Philip Foster, his partner, was thrust into the public eye and before Catherine Brett's notice.

Philip had been the silent, and incidentally the thinking, partner of the firm, it seemed. His contact with the world had been almost entirely through Bates. Now, people learned that Philip was really the brains of the pair.

Of course, it was the San Francisco-to-Chicago Tunnel which put Bates & Foster on the world map. Before that, they had done everything in the engineering line, from installing the new Pacific Coast wave-motor system to building the Detroit airplane-starter tower. They had nothing to do with such propositions as the San Francisco Bay Bridge; they specialized on difficult work which other concerns were afraid to handle.

That is where Philip Foster's brains came in. Quiet, retiring sort of chap though he was, he had a most astonishing imagination, coupled with a truly remorseless logic. He could devise ways and means where all other experts failed.

Not to go into details; but who except Philip Foster would have had the nerve to adapt the screw-tube principle to so huge a project as the tunnel? Yet, to-day, when folks on the Pacific Coast receive a shipment of freight which left Chicago just

twenty-four hours ago, we may possibly think of Bates & Foster, and that will remind us of Bates; but never of Foster.

The Bates & Foster suite occupied the entire ninth floor of the Ballou Building, on Market Street, not far from the ferry. Altogether, it amounted to nearly thirty rooms, fully a third of which were given over to laboratories; for Philip often had a score of experiments, chemical, electrical or physical, under way at one time. As for the other rooms, most of them were occupied by the small regiment of draftsmen the firm required, while the partners had each a private office, opening off a single reception-room. The knob on Bates's door was worn smooth; Philip's still looked new. The one was opened fifty times to the others once.

Catherine found these details immensely interesting. She learned that Philip could claim membership in the coveted set; and she quickly made up her mind that this hitherto unsought, because unknown, bachelor must be won if she was to prove that she was "qualified."

She did not believe that true love was blind. On the contrary, Catherine was firmly convinced that the only genuine love is that which develops between those who have shown mutual fitness. She believed in love after a year or two of married life, during which both parties had proved that they were worthy. According to her theory, she couldn't possibly have fallen in love with Mr. Brett; it was out of the question for her to prove herself worthy of a man old enough to be her grandfather.

So her apparently cold-blooded designs upon Philip Foster were not so cold-blooded, after all. Catherine fully expected that the affair would become quite ardent enough in due time.

She learned that Philip rarely left his club, appearing in society only when his aunt gave some sort of an affair for a certain orphanage. By means of the most intricate maneuverings, which need not be gone into here, Catherine contrived to attend these affairs, succeeded in getting an introduction, and even managed to hold Philip's attention.

She did it by talking business. It relieved him immensely to get away from the small-talk people; he had never mastered the art of saying much about nothing while seeming to mean it all; and even though Catherine's stock exchange chatter was quite out of his line, it was infinitely preferable to the other kind of embarrassment.

He studied her carelessly. She was between twenty-five and thirty, slightly stoop-shouldered from her early life in Mr. Brett's office, and singularly languid in her movements. This, however, was rather deceptive; in actual fact Catherine Brett covered a great deal of ground in the apparently lackadaisical fashion of hers, whether she were walking or talking. She made every move, every word, count heavily.

Also, she was really beautiful, in a somber, wistful sort of a way. A closer look at her dark brown eyes might have revealed a very slight tightening at the outer ends of the lids. And the deep indentations at the corners of her mouth argued a strength in reserve that one might mistake for secretiveness. Her nose was very slightly arched, thin, and yet not prominent, probably because her chin was straight and sharply pointed. There was a single deep line between her eyes.

Now, Philip Foster was no Adonis. Of medium height and chunkily built, he showed many signs of too much indoor life. His face was pink as a baby's, his hands as soft. In fact, he was dangerously close to being plain, out-and-out *fat;* and for the past fifteen of his thirty-five years he had assiduously watched the scales, keeping within a five-pound margin which he felt he must never exceed.

His whole manner was exceedingly gentle and diffident. "As modest and bashful as a young girl," the newspapers had said; and Catherine found it quite true.

He had large, blue, timid and unassertive eyes, tucked away beneath a bulging forehead. His nose was really large; likewise his mouth. Why use more delicate terms? The only thing about his face which ever worried him was its lack of a healthy tan. He wasn't bad looking at all, Catherine decided.

Catherine also knew, from the newspapers, that "the other half of Philip Fos-

ter is his office." It was an extraordinarily complete thing, it seems, containing every conceivable publication on every branch of engineering. The man was a human index to all known data about the profession. Principles he knew by heart, while he kept facts and figures at his fingers' ends. In his office he was invincible; away from it—Catherine would see.

They had not met many times before he began to prefer her company. She had the tact not to compliment him in any way upon his success; had she done so, he would have been acutely miserable. And all this explains why, since neither of them cared to dance, they often wandered into his aunt's conservatory.

On the night things began to happen, it was full moon. Philip himself picked out a seat in the most secluded spot in the place. He expected to just sit and listen to her talk, as usual, saying " Yes?" and " Of course " now and then, meanwhile thinking of something really important. He took the place beside her quite without noticing that they had to sit pretty close together in order to fit the seat.

Said Catherine Brett to Philip Foster:

" Isn't the moon beautiful to-night?"

CHAPTER II.

AS FOR THE MOON.

PHILIP stirred uncertainly, and cleared his throat. " Very handsome moon, beyond a doubt. Although," he could not help but add, " there's one of Jupiter's moons which I happen to admire a good deal more."

Catherine noted that his eyes were now fixed upon the big yellow disk with which we are all so familiar. Summer time—conservatory—moon; at least three conditions for romance were fulfilled. Catherine lowered her voice:

" What a soft light it is now! Once I saw it from Lick Observatory, and then it had a cold, hard look I didn't like." She shivered almost pitifully.

" It is due to our atmosphere," declared the engineer, thinking only of the softness of the moonlight, not of Catherine's chilliness. " Up at the observatory, the air is much clearer than here."

" Don't you think it has something to do with the warmth of the season?" suggested the woman, softly.

" Only in this sense," he answered, " that there's more dust in the air during the dry months."

She let silence prevail for a little while; then, shyly: " It always makes me feel confidential, somehow, to watch the full moon this way."

He looked at her blankly. " Confidential?"

" Yes "—moving a tiny bit closer to the man. " The moon seems so big and—near! I feel as though I could reach up and whisper secrets in her ear!"

The scientist gave a dry chuckle. "You'd have to reach about a quarter of a million miles, then," said he, adding regretfully: " I haven't the exact figures with me just now."

" But — she looks so big!" protested Catherine, provokingly.

" Very deceiving," said Philip, referring only to the apparent size of the satellite, not to Catherine's manner. " She's less than half the diameter of the earth, so that her actual area is only about one fifth." He added that he would look the matter up the next day, and mail her the data in more precise terms.

She sighed, in a manner which would have opened most men's eyes. " You scientific people are always trying to see the mathematical side of things," she complained, prettily, in a fashion calculated to bring contrition at once. " Isn't there something about the mellowness of that light which — well, which stirs thoughts other than — other than everyday thoughts?"

He longed for a telescope. " Looks normal enough to me," he admitted, sorry he could not see what she saw; he never liked to disagree with people. " As for her light—it isn't hers at all, of course."

Catherine pretended ignorance. " Whose light is it, then?"

" The sun's, reflected," said the scientist. " That's why it doesn't amount to much. Why, it would take half a million such

moons to equal the sunlight. At least, something very close to that figure," he added, uncomfortably.

Catherine sighed again, and Philip realized that he had not said the right thing. He was used to that feeling, however, and simply waited for the next test of his painfully limited conversational powers.

Catherine had a notion to change the subject entirely, then thought better of it. "I wonder why poets often rave about the 'cold beauty of the moon'?" she mused. "There's nothing cold about her appearance now." She settled herself more comfortably in the narrow settee, so that Philip was made freshly aware of her nearness.

"Nor is she cold," he declared. "The moon is always a pretty warm place wherever the sun shines on her. No wonder; her day is fourteen times as long as ours." He reminded Catherine that the moon always kept the same face toward the earth, and added that this peculiarity was due to the great gravitational pull of the bigger globe.

Catherine opened her eyes wide, then closed them swiftly as she saw her chance. "She has nights fourteen days long? What a pity she has no moon!"

"Oh, but she has," returned the agreeable man of science. "The earth is the moon's moon, Mrs. Brett, and a mighty efficient one. Four or five times as big, you know."

"Then," she went on, with studied artlessness, "it would be perfectly grand to sit in a conservatory like this, somewhere on the moon. Just think of a night as long as that, and watching the moon with—with—" She stopped, as though in great embarrassment.

Philip looked at her in perplexity. Not once did it occur to him that anybody could desire his company any longer than half an hour. He thought of something quite different.

"A conservatory like this on the moon?" he chided gently. "My dear Mrs. Brett, there can be no plant life of any kind there. No air or water; besides, the temperature drops down to the absolute zero, during the long night." He was on the point of telling her just how cold the nights became, but could not trust his memory for the figure.

Once more Catherine let silence have its way for a while, and Philip had just about brought his mind back to the electrical problem he had been trying to solve when she broke in with:

"Just the same, I think the moon has a wonderful influence. I know I simply cannot watch her without feeling—oh, different! "I want to do unconventional things!" she finished daringly.

"Eh?" The engineer's mind collected what she had said. "Oh, I don't see why you should be so affected, Mrs. Brett. This astrological nonsense has no basis in fact. The only influence the moon has upon the earth is in causing our tides."

"Tieds?" wondered Catherine, as though shocked. But Philip did not sense the pun. He gave a short and, to him, wofully inaccurate explanation of the tidal action.

This time Catherine did not let so much time elapse. "I wonder why the ancients used to call the moon 'luna'?" she murmured pensively.

"Why, I can't say," he said regretfully. "'Luna'—Latin word, I suppose." He frowned. "Maybe it's from the same root as 'lunatic.' Guess it is."

She clapped her hands lightly. "And yet you say that the moon can have no effect upon us!" she laughed delightedly, tantalizingly. "Although the ancients must have considered that the moon was to blame for everything foolish that happened!"

He pondered this seriously, so seriously that Catherine said, as lightly as she could: "Hasn't the moon ever inspired you to recklessness, Mr. Foster?"

Instantly his face lighted up. "Oh, my, yes! I've had any number of ideas about the moon. For instance—" He stopped, remembering that he was not talking to Bates. But Catherine, taking care not to appear too eager, urged him to go on.

"Well, this is it: Go to the moon and build a large, air-tight hotel. Nothing like this conservatory; more like an office building. Would have to carry all the water from the earth, but that is only a detail. Oh, yes," answering Catherine's questioning look; "there's more than one way to travel

to the moon. Merely a question of controlling the right kind of power.

" Having the hotel, I'd advertise a novelty such as the world couldn't resist. 'Go to the moon and view the full earth.' Ought to make a hit with some of these wealthy time-killers."

He kept right on, forgetting that the woman at his side was herself one of the despised " time-killers." " But the main attraction would be the difference in gravity." He briefly explained how the moon's smaller mass produced only one-sixth the gravitational force of the earth. " Fancy advertising an indoor Derby: 'Come and see Joe Dillon trot a mile in thirty seconds.' Or, 'Watch Annie Kellerman dive five hundred feet into six feet of water.' All quite feasible, you know, Mrs. Brett.

" I'd charge ten thousand dollars for the trip, including forty-eight hours' accommodations, and get rich in a year!"

Catherine had all she could do to resist his enthusiasm. Instead, she commented: " You must be pretty anxious to get rich!"

He became acutely self-conscious. He made some lame reply, and Catherine Brett came to a conclusion which was not at all unwarranted under the circumstances.

As she rose to her feet, she took his arm and gave it a friendly squeeze, glancing up at him in a knowing way which left him badly puzzled. For this is what she was thinking:

" He wants to get rich so that he can match my million!"

CHAPTER III.

WANTED—A MONUMENT.

AMONG the late Mr. Brett's business associates was one who easily outclassed all the rest. He was a tanner, the leader of the Western world in his line, and the practical dictator of the Pacific hide trade. He became enormously rich during the war, through combining with other tanners to secure hides at rock-bottom prices, on the one hand, and selling the product at utterly unreasonable prices on the other.

So it is not really necessary to tell a name so well known. David Sulzman is not likely to be forgotten in a hurry.

And Catherine thought of him the very next day after, as she thought, she had divined Philip's ambition. She recalled certain things she had heard Mr. Brett say of the aged tanner, and she lost no time.

As a consequence, David Sulzman came to San Francisco one morning, stepping from the San José train just like some commuter. He was entirely without attendants, which was his invariable custom; and most people would have taken him for some highly respectable but not very successful lawyer of the old school.

For David Sulzman, then in his eighties, was not like other men of great wealth. He never even indulged in an automobile, although such a machine would often have been of the greatest service to him. " Can't afford it," he would say, in his low, pleasant, perfectly steady voice.

But this does not mean that David Sulzman was stingy. Whatever he had was of the best; his thirty-dollar shoes were made especially to fit a pair of oddly shaped feet; he wore nothing but the finest of black broadcloth.

Yet his shoes were repaired with the utmost care, as long as they would hold together; his broadcloth was worn until it shone as brightly as his shoes. He did not believe in using anything cheap, but neither did he spend five cents without getting full value. As to his generosity in matters of charity, and other qualities of a more intimate nature, they must be left to others to describe. We are concerned here with the man the world knew.

He did not take a surface-car, much less call a taxi. He walked from choice, preferring to spend several dollars' worth of time in an exercise he valued very highly. This, despite the fact that he required a cane, and could move no faster than a one-year-old child. When he reached the Ballou Building, he was tired out, and glad enough to resort to the elevator.

" Mr. Foster does not see callers except by appointment," he was told, in the engineers' reception-room. " Mr. Bates will doubtless be glad to see you, however."

He did not offer a card; he secretly hoped

he might be recognized. But the people in the outer office were all of a younger set, and none knew the rather striking face of the old man, although his white chin-whiskers, short, stubby, and "Dutchy," ought to have stirred their memories. He shook his head about Bates.

"I know the custom," he said in his peculiarly soft voice. "However, it will be necessary for me to see Mr. Foster. I did not make an appointment, but merely telephoned before I left San José, to make sure that he would be here to-day."

So the old fellow was certain that Foster would see him, mused a stenographer. Then the word "San José" did the rest. "You're David Sulzman!" she said with genuine pleasure. And the old man was satisfied.

As he expected, Philip was willing to see him. The old man faced the younger across a low, clay-filled modeling-table, at which Philip had been working when the millionaire entered. "A relief map of the Mount Lassen reservoir system," explained Philip, "which we have just finished for the Volcanic Steam Power people."

"You seem to specialize on big things," remarked David Sulzman; then, as Philip made no comment: "I have come to the right man."

"The right firm," protested the engineer, with a smile. "Bates is the man you should talk to, really; although I am more than glad to have met you." His eyes went back to the clay.

David Sulzman merely made himself a little more comfortable in his chair. "Mr. Bates may be a very clever man, and no doubt is," said he, with his deliberate gentleness. "But the thing I have in mind requires something more than executive ability. It will take originality of the highest possible order."

Philip waved a hand. "Bates will tackle anything under the sun," he declared. "He tells me what is wanted, and I figure it out." Which was a good deal for Philip to admit to a stranger.

"Then what is the use of talking to Bates first?" the millionaire wanted to know, not a change coming to his voice. "Besides, in one sense this is a rather personal matter.

"I have come to you because Catherine Brett requested me to do so."

Philip Foster forgot all about his modeling. He flushed deeply, sensitive fellow that he was, and David Sulzman judged that he might give Catherine an encouraging word when he next saw her.

"To begin with, Mr. Foster," said the old man, not letting the engineer collect words enough for a protest—"to begin with, I must bother you by explaining my own view-point. Otherwise you cannot be of much help to me.

"You know, of course, that I have a good deal of money. You ought to know, too, that whatever truth there may be in some of these magazine attacks on my business methods, the fact remains that the world has had a great deal more leather, because of what I have done, than it would have had otherwise."

"I understand that," Philip hurried to comment. "No thinking person underestimates men of your stamp, Mr. Sulzman."

But the millionaire was not looking for appreciation. "At the same time," he went on, "I am not blind. I realize that the day of the millionaire is almost past. What with income and other forms of taxation, it is not the game it once was. Moreover," and no socialist could have stated this with more conviction than the aged capitalist, "from now on, Mr. Foster, the world intends to encourage the majority, not the minority.

"Now," he became even more earnest, "many men of my station realize this as fully as I do. They know that the future is to see the rise of the working classes. They know that progress must go on and on, until people will one day positively forbid the accumulation of large fortunes, for fear that the welfare of the majority will be crippled thereby.

"And most of my associates have given in with as good grace as they possessed, and to-day are helping in the education drive, as well as other ways, to help lift up the very class of people which they were trying to keep down only a few years ago. Yes," he said, very surely, as Philip made as though to protest; "it is true. I know—I tried to keep them down myself.

"But to-day it is different. As I say, most of my class have turned to helping the progressive movement, hoping in that way to win the good opinion of the people. A few of us are still bitter about it; you can still read a few reactionary journals, which even go so far as to urge slavery as a solution of the labor problem.

"Personally," said the millionaire, a little sadly, "I cannot look at the matter either way. I am no longer young; I lack the kind of fighting spirit that would be required to stop this new progress. Besides, I cannot bring myself to it; I—"

He stopped, and Philip gathered that it was only the old man's pride that had prevented him from taking part in the great interwelfare movement.

He paused, as though resting, and after a while went on: "And yet, like any other man of ambition, I am anxious to leave behind me a name which will live as long as possible. I cannot depend upon my children to perpetuate my memory; the strain may die out in another generation. Neither can I expect my business to do it; the government will take it over, sooner or later, and change the plant's name into a mere number."

He said this with no bitterness.

"Now, Mr. Foster, other men of wealth have sought to immortalize themselves by building libraries, founding colleges, and so forth. They do not seem to realize that a democracy can do anything it chooses with such things, and if the people ever come to believe that these millionaires did more harm than good, their names will be wiped out overnight."

Philip said: "If all saw this matter as clearly as I do, Mr. Sulzman, you would need have no uneasiness."

"That is precisely what I mean," declared the tanner. "It is because I have so little faith in the good sense of the people that I have come to you.

"I want," his voice rose for the first time, so that Philip clearly saw what a dominating figure David Sulzman must have been when younger—"I want you, Foster, to devise something which will resist stupidity, which will guarantee that I shall not be forgotten, come what may!

"I want you to do something which cannot be undone, something which will forever remind the world that David Sulzman once lived in it! I give you *carte blanche;* you shall have every cent I own, if need be! The only thing I require of you is that your work shall benefit the people, either directly or indirectly.. Otherwise, the sky is the limit!"

"You mean"—Philip's breath came fast, and his eyes flashed—"you mean, Sulzman, that I am to go as far as I like? To invent anything I choose, build what I think best, so long as it works for the interests of the people in general and at the same time guarantee that they 'shall not forget who did it'?"

As suddenly as it had come, the old man's earnestness disappeared, leaving him a little tired and almost cross. His voice became the same as it had been when he entered.

"You can do anything you damned please, Foster, within the law or outside it, so long as you make the name of Sulzman *live!*"

CHAPTER IV.

STARTING SOMETHING.

PHILIP jumped to his feet and went to his drawing-table, where he leaned over the board and began to kick the legs of the table—his invariable habit when anything especially interesting was on his mind. He had forgotten that the millionaire's call was due to Catherine Brett, forgotten the understanding with Bates. He subconsciously realized that Sulzman's gigantic proposition was over Bates's head, anyhow.

"You're just the man I've been wanting to get in touch with," he said suddenly and with the bashful smile which only came to his face when he felt thoroughly at home with the smile. "Fact is, Sulzman, although Bates and I have pulled off some pretty unusual stunts, we've never been able to take hold of my really big ideas. And I think I've got the one that 'll fill your qualifications!"

"Could you make it clear to me now,

or would you rather wait until you have turned the matter over in your mind a while?" The aged millionaire might have been referring to the purchase of a pair of socks, for all the concern he showed. The world will some day be told how David Sulzman once cleared a hundred thousand in ten minutes through his masterful ability to handle large affairs in an unconcerned manner.

But Philip Foster was immensely excited. "I think I could do it right now!"—coming back to his chair, sliding half-down into the seat, stopping in this position for five seconds, and then hopping back to the drawing-table. "That is, in general terms. The details probably wouldn't interest you, anyway."

And within the next quarter-hour Philip Foster had unfolded a scheme which sent David Sulzman out of the office in such a nonchalant, confident, jaunty mood that any one who knew him intimately would have declared: "He's just found out something that pleases him immensely." But those who sat in the train with him never guessed that the old man with the quaint goatee was already anticipating a dream come true, a scheme which would immortalize him, and by so doing influence the life of every man, woman, and child on the earth.

As for Philip, he went at once to his partner. It will be remembered that Bates's campaign was a failure. Probably this tempered his egotism; for instead of disputing Philip's action, he meekly agreed that the hitherto silent partner had best handle the whole thing alone.

Within a week a new organization, known as the Foster Construction Company, was well under way. Arrangements were made for receiving the products of nearly twenty factories, products of a rather curious nature, handled in such a way as to insure very little talk. And mean time superintendents and foremen of exceptional ability were secured by the offer of extraordinary salaries, while a veritable army of skilled laborers was recruited in the same way.

Philip went to see Catherine a few days after David Sulzman's call. He thanked her formally for what she had done.

"You will have to take the credit, or the blame," he said, with his diffident smile, "for whatever we do, Sulzman and I. You've thrown two men together who have the same potential ability for getting results as nitric acid and glycerin!"

She realized that this was quite a speech, for Philip, and more than half suspected that it was rehearsed—which happened to be true. But she said, with just the right amount of shyness:

"I couldn't forget what you told me the other night when we were talking about the moon. About—about your wanting to get rich, you know."

Philip looked up, startled. Ever since Sulzman's advent Philip had given no thought to the other ambition.

"You're wonderfully—" He stammered at a loss whether to say "thoughtful" or "solicitous."

Catherine's face became radiant, and she swayed nearer to him.

"Why shouldn't I be?" she murmured, her eyes fixed on his. Next instant she turned away, as though aghast at her daring; so she never saw the bewilderment on Philip's face. A moment later, greatly to her disappointment, he said he would have to say good-by.

"Going to be an outside man now, for a few months," he told her. His enthusiasm mounted rapidly, and he smiled almost continually as he spoke of the trip he expected to make—an airplane flight to Ecuador, to begin the next morning. "Expect to reach Quito at twelve thirty-five the next afternoon," said he, happily. "Send you some photos."

She held his gaze for a second before remarking very quietly: "Aren't you going to leave one of yourself?"

"Why"—a little flattered—"if you like; I'll put it in the mail as soon as I get back to my quarters." He moved toward the door; then, his laggard memory finally wrenching an item from his unused stock of small talk, he stopped short. "Have you a picture of yourself which I might have?" Unconsciously he made the request seem urgent.

Catherine kept her face averted, for fear it might give her away. She found a small,

semiformal photo which emphasized the appeal in her eyes, rather than the beauty of her face. He took it from her with extravagant thanks.

And it was in just this mood that Philip went to the door. Catherine accompanied him thoughtfully; and as he looked back at her for what he knew would be the last time in several months, there came over him exactly the same feeling he would have known if, after several weeks of helplessness in a hospital, he were told that he would get well.

In his joy and excitement he would feel like hugging the nurse, in whose company he had been fearfully embarrassed before. And to-night he was jubilant, jubilant as a boy on Fourth of July morning; the fact that the "nurse" was a beautiful young woman of great wealth did not alter the case. Just as the man who is usually at ease becomes agitated when a real crisis arises, Philip Foster, ordinarily as shy and awkward as an adolescent girl, became perfectly at ease when the great moment came.

And yet, if Catherine had taken leave of him in a sad or pensive mood, he would not have done it. It was largely because she smiled up brightly at him in her effort to hide her feelings, that his exuberance reached the overflowing point.

"Well—see you in October then!" he exclaimed, as they clasped hands; and then, to her utter amazement, he swept her into his arms and gave her a boisterous kiss!

CHAPTER V.

THE MOON BACKSLIDES.

OF course, Philip was thunderstruck at his presumption, as soon as he had left the house. He wrote a very contrite note to accompany the photo he had promised, adding: "I hope you do not consign this to the ash-barrel because of my folly last night." Then, confident that he had dealt with the case in the most approved manner, he completely forgot about it.

Two days later found him, as he had said to Catherine, descending from the Intercontinental Aerial Stage landing at Quito. He spent several days in this place, getting in touch with the various factors of his enterprise.

Before he left for the interior, the first shipment of supplies, still in their original cars, arrived via the Pacific Submarine Freight Company's service and the Quito-to-the-Sea Tunnel.

Philip and his associates at once proceeded with the construction of a railroad, using the most up-to-date apparatus in the work and employing a gang to every half-mile; with the result that two months after the first shovelful was scooped, a complete equipment of rolling stock was plying over the three-hundred-mile stretch of line which lay roughly southeast of the capital.

Meanwhile buildings had been put up for men and machines; and by that time Philip was hard at work in Peru, putting the finishing-touches on a huge electric power plant high in the Andes. In all of this, the vast wealth of David Sulzman figured conspicuously, breaking down all governmental interference and securing real cooperation. There were no serious delays.

Philip had been away just five months when a peculiar thing happened, or, rather, began to happen. The general public was the last to notice it; the astronomers were the first, followed closely by the navigators, surveyors and others who had occasion to watch the heavens with any degree of accuracy. It is said that some of the old seafaring men along the water-fronts, watching the tides, noticed it before anybody else; but that is unlikely. What happened is this:

The moon began to slow up. The month began to lengthen. The almanacs all fell into disrepute; for, instead of rising fifty-one minutes later each night, as had been the satellite's average, she now lagged behind this figure until, after a week, her average was over fifty-two minutes!

A small matter, apparently; but to any one who knows how mathematically precise are all the movements of the heavenly bodies, the thing was simply terrific. In every observatory, all other investigations were dropped entirely in order that the whole staff might observe the new phenomenon.

The moon, which for untold ages and with unfailing regularity had circled the earth once every twenty-seven days, was actually slowing down before their eyes!

The public had scarcely done with discussing this mystery before there came an announcement which almost eclipsed the first one. It ran:

"It has been observed, in all parts of the world, that the daily revolution of the earth itself is changing. Instead of twenty-four hours, our day is now twenty-three hours, fifty-nine minutes and fifty-eight seconds long!"

This did not seem possible. Could it be that Mother Earth, who had not been known to vary the thousandth part of a second in the regularity of her spinning, had really begun to speed up a bit in her old days? It took a long time for most people to accept this; until, in fact, a few dependable citizens had had a chance to watch a few dependable clocks. It was true; *the day was shortening.*

But the next thing to attract attention was noticed first of all by a class of people who seldom pay much attention to scientific affairs. The folks here meant usually go by the name of "spooners."

"Honey—how big the moon seems to-night!" was the way the convention had started among these people for ages and ages. Now, it came to have a new meaning. The moon certainly did look big.

"It's due to an optical illusion, deary," was the usual explanation, such as had been given from all time. "If there were no objects on the earth between the moon and you, sweetheart, it wouldn't look so big."

But as night after night passed and the satellite seemed to grow very slightly larger each time, there came a time when everybody on the earth was aware of the new marvel. Shortly there came a third announcement from the authorities, an announcement somewhat delayed as a matter of policy.

"Let no one be alarmed," was this statement; "but the fact is that while the moon's speed has been decreasing, her distance from the earth has also been reduced.

"She is now twenty thousand miles nearer the earth than she has ever been before. She is falling toward us at the rate of a thousand miles a day!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE WORLD AWAKES.

THE next three months were the most extraordinary since the deluge. Never before had the world been threatened as it was now threatened. For, unless something happened to stop the moon before she fell the rest of the way to the earth, most certainly the entire globe, together with every living thing upon it, was doomed to absolute annihilation.

"Do not get excited!" the authorities cautioned, again and again, as soon as the announcement had been made. "We will soon discover the cause of this mystery, and then doubtless be able to remedy matters. Keep cool!"

But it did no good. Wherever there was a mind with imagination enough to see what this thing really meant, there also was fear. It was impossible to keep up courage in the face of that ever-nearing satellite, unless one had an especially strong mind. And those whose minds were strong did their best to forget their own fears, by trying to quiet those of others.

The only thing had helped was religion. Everywhere the churches were crowded to the doors; services were held every day, all day long. Vast crowds gathered on the mountain-tops, like the worshipers of old, and madly prayed to God to prevent the disaster. Every soul on earth was searched to its depths by the approaching catastrophe.

Out of all that wild period there emerge two facts which need to be recorded. One is the Second Ark, a tremendous antigravitational machine built by a Syrian named Ben Malik.

"This is the end of the world!" Ben Malik proclaimed, like Noah had done thousands of years before. The Syrian went to prodigious expense to get publicity. "Out of the earth's billions I shall be able to save one hundred. A hundred, no more, may escape the anger of God. Let the devout

assemble and examine themselves, that the fittest of them all may survive, to start life again on some other world!"

People flocked to this call. For weeks the self-examination went on, until nearly half a billion of the less intelligent peoples of the globe had gone through a winnowing process which left just a thousand—half men and half women—who were adjudged equally competent to represent the human race.

Ben Malik himself was not among them; he was a cripple. And for lack of any better method of picking the final hundred, the Syrian decided to leave it to chance. "The Lottery of the Lord," it was called.

But Ben Malik wanted to make sure. His was one soul in millions; not only was he willing to stay behind in order that a better man might take his place, but he felt constrained to give his Ark a trial trip before the great event took place.

The trial failed. The Ark, a hastily constructed affair, rose to a height of fifty miles and then broke under the strain of its own machinery. It and Ben Malik were totally destroyed.

The other great result of that wonderful period was the political revival. Obviously the swift approach of the moon meant that in a few weeks there would be no such thing as political parties, no such thing as social caste, no such thing as capital and labor. On Friday, the 27th of October, ignorance and wisdom alike were to perish, culture and rudeness were to be no more, poverty and wealth to come to an eternal end!

And it did not take the world long to see this. As always, the people of the thinking middle classes were the first to state the situation.

"Let us forget our differences," was the upshot of what they said. "There is nothing to be gained by contention now; the 27th of October will reduce us to a common level.

"Let us make the remaining days as agreeable as possible."

Of course, there were many who took this as a license. Among this class, the last few weeks were spent in rioting and licentiousness which went past anything the world had ever known before. No attempt was made to stop these persons; law and order were enforced only when the safety of other people was endangered.

But the great majority of folks saw the thing more seriously. They saw that not one of them could escape the calamity; in those days there was but one known method of getting away from the earth, and that was the method used by Ben Malik, who had scoured the globe to get enough of a certain element to make his single ill-fated attempt.

And so it came about that because it did no good whatever to think of self first, men began to think of others. Only a few weeks till the end of all things! Very well; why not make those few weeks devoid of misery? Why not fill them with happiness, so that when the end should come, it would find men with at least some agreeable memories to take with them.

It was a marvelous thought. Partly, it originated in the churches; partly with the socialists. And before long mankind was gazing upon itself in amazement.

For the earth was transformed. Where before there had been terrible poverty, even in the most enlightened countries, now every effort was made to relieve all suffering. Great hoards of foodstuffs, held for speculation by profiteers, were distributed overnight to the needy. The same with clothing, building materials, fuel and, finally, luxuries. If all was to be destroyed, why not make use of it first?

For the first time in history thrift did not pay. No one could gain by "putting something by." The aim now was to spend, spend for the good and the wholesome, spend for experiences which would leave pleasant memories. Memories! That was what was wanted! Memories which would make the next world worth while!

Couples who had been postponing marriage "until there's money in the bank," got married at once, finding an infinite satisfaction in knowing that the next world would not be a lonesome place.

People of wealth, who formerly had kept aloof from those less fortunate, who had been enjoying their station in life as selfishly as they knew how—such people suddenly

found themselves longing for something more substantial than memories of extravagance. Instead—

They began to find rare pleasure in helping those who needed help. They became eager in their efforts to give happiness. Shortly men and women of vast wealth turned their magnificent homes over to those who, because of misfortune and weakness, had known nothing better than tenements.

And a time came when people who had previously thought nothing of keeping half a hundred people from useful industry in order that their mansions might be " properly served "—a time came when these millionaires fought hysterically among themselves for the privilege of service, for the chance to make some one happy for a few hours.

And another class of people who, before, had gone aobut their work in a sullen spirit, convinced that their employers were robbers, were amazed to find a wonderful satisfaction in working as they had never worked before. They took vast pride in careful workmanship, got vast satisfaction from a consciousness of service rendered well. The end should find them on the job!

Memories! Memories of work well done, of something accomplished for the welfare of others. Memories of the blissful look that came to the face of one who had been presented with a right long withheld. Above all, the knowledge of having done something at last to right the fearful injustice of the world!

CHAPTER VII.

MADE IN AMERICA.

PHILIP FOSTER had been away about eight months when, quite unexpectedly, he returned. He brought with him certain Intercontinental officials whose names need not enter this account, officials who had been invited to the plant in Ecuador. Philip did not go home at all; he merely sent Catherine an aerogram, and proceeded straight to Washington.

On the same day, and for the first time, newspapermen were permitted on the grounds of the Foster Construction Company's plant. They found that the word " grounds " scarcely did the place justice; " tract " would have been more accurate; for there were about fifty square miles of the wildest mountain territory, all carefully guarded by several companies of aerial and ground patrols.

These reporters immediately transmitted their negatives by the Pacific Wireless Photography Service to the League of Nations Daily Screen News, who distributed the films to all parts of the earth by plane; so that Philip's little speech was flashed before the public in several million talking-picture theaters, at the same time the reporters' material was released.

" Friends and fellow citizens of the earth," began the engineer, using the English language, at that time the nearest approach to a universal tongue, " in behalf of my associate, David Sulzman, I wish to explain the thing that has worried us so long, and then get your judgment as to our future course of action.

" As I need not tell you, the moon, which has been dropping toward the earth for the past three months, came to a halt night before last, and has since showed no motion whatever. We seem to be in no danger now of that collision.

" At the same time "—and here a photo of the moon took the speaker's place on the screen, while his voice went on—" at the same time, the moon has entirely ceased her former monthly trips around the earth. And our day has been decreased to something like twenty-two hours.

" Now, be patient with me, but I've got to remind you that the moon, when she finally did come to a stop, did so on the side of the earth opposite from the sun. That is to say, we now see the moon each and every night; she rises when the sun goes down, and does not set till the sun rises again eleven hours later."

Philip need not have apologized; people never grew tired of hearing this incredible fact put into words. He hurried on:

" As a result, the whole world now enjoys full moon every night. Only, compared to what we used to call full moon, she's a supermoon now.

"To-night the moon is only a tenth as far away as she used to be." And the screen showed a small landscape of a part of the earth, with the satellite in the background. A hundred times the size she had been three months before, the moon was now an enormous, shining globe of tremendous brilliance and beauty, seemingly near enough to be touched with the fingers. She occupied a space larger than the bowl of the Great Dipper.

"If it were not for the fear she has aroused," continued the man of science, "we'd appreciate her more. The moon now lights our nights for us as they've never been lit before. We don't need artificial lights now, except for very special purposes; our country roads are as bright as our streets ever were; our streets brighter than any café.

"At the same time the moon has caused our tides to become immensely higher, and our ocean waves much greater. This has compelled some of our seacoast towns to rebuild extensively. On the other hand, it has enormously increased the output of our wave-motor system, so that we are now able to dispense with wood, coal, and petroleum entirely. In short, the moon has made us a present of enough power to turn every wheel in existence; and for all practical purposes, she has abolished night."

He made only brief mention of the great religious and social revivals, and their consequences. Not that Philip Foster was out of sympathy; instead, he was tremendously glad to see justice brought about as it had been. He was before the people merely as an engineer, and as an engineer he talked on.

Then came the sensation. The films which had been sent from Ecuador were shown. And for the first time the world learned what the secrecy-shrouded enterprise had been.

The most important of the great group of buildings which comprised the company's plant was a giant, dome-shaped structure, exactly like an observatory on a mammoth scale. Within it, and visible through an open slot, stood a colossal telescope. That is, it appeared to be a telescope, until its nature was revealed.

"This," it was explained, "is a device for projecting large quantities of radioactive elements to a distance. It is operated by means of electrical current taken from a hydraulic plant in Peru, and is capable of exerting terrific force."

As this was said, the "telescope" was slowly brought to the horizontal, and trained upon a range of peaks several miles away. The scene was next shifted to this range.

"A small amount of power will now be released," went on the explanation. "Watch closely the rocks on the top of the nearest peak." This was about a quarter of a mile away.

Next moment a wonderful thing occurred. A very large boulder, apparently of granite and weighing many hundreds of tons, was slowly toppled over by some invisible force; so that in a moment it was rolling and tumbling, end over end, down the side of the peak.

"The power-plant is located opposite the camera." As this was said more boulders were dislodged and sent flying down-hill, until the air was thick with rock-dust. There was a slight wait till this had settled; then came the finishing touch.

"Watch the entire peak this time."

At first nothing could be seen. Nothing appeared to be happening. Then, very slowly indeed, a change occurred in the outline of the mountain. Another moment, and one could see that its upper half was shifting. Before two minutes were up, the entire top of the peak had moved out of place among its fellows, so that it finally stood with one edge overhanging a deep chasm.

And then, while millions of people gasped in amazement, that whole vast mass of granite was tipped up, up and over, until it toppled inertly into what had been the cañon. At the same time there was a sharp earthquake, which was noted by seismographs in all part of the globe.

Then came a quick "flash" back to the ray-projector, where a streak of blinding white light, about two hundred yards long, was now being emitted from its orifice. As the picture came to an end, the light began to subside very slowly.

The voice and figure of Philip Foster came back to the screen. " I suppose you've guessed it now," said he, with a return of his diffident smile. " The Foster Construction Company is responsible for the moon's backsliding!

" Every day for the past several months, when the moon had passed the meridian, we have been playing these rays upon her western, or left-hand, edge. You will understand that the left edge of the moon is her ' front,' with respect to her motion in space. Well, for six hours daily that ' telescope ' has been pushing with all its might!

" That's why the moon has come to a stop, and why the earth has come to revolve faster. By turning on this power very gradually each day, and, turning it off just as slowly when the moon had set, we've been able to use Ecuador as a fulcrum without the knowledge of any one else on the earth."

It was not until then that the supreme audacity of the thing seemed to dawn upon the scientist. His face changed, and a certain amount of determination came into it as he finished.

" Ever since the moon fell to its present distance of twenty-four thousand miles, the projector has been trained upon the center of her disk, instead of upon her western edge. In this way the moon has been prevented from falling any nearer—the whole matter has been calculated with extreme care, of course—and so long as our supply of certain chemicals holds out, we can keep the moon just where she is. I may add that we have a duplicate equipment to guard against accident.

" Now, the future is up to you, people. The company can keep the moon in its present position for a year. Or, it can proceed to undo what has been done, and restore the moon to exactly its former position and speed. In either case, the world's entire supply of the necessary materials will be used up in the process."

He waited a moment before going on. In the mean time, the feelings of those who were watching and listening, can best be imagined. What a choice he was offering!

" However," he continued, now smiling broadly, " there is a third alternative. It is this:

" That suitable sky-cars, already completed and thoroughly tried out, be sent with men and materials at once to the moon's surface. And once there, this equipment would proceed to make the moon's present position *permanent.*

" It would be done by means of miniature projectors, using— However, these details are a little intricate. You will find them discussed in a pamphlet the company is issuing. You may take my word for it that the method will succeed.

" So there you are. Either we (1) keep the moon on the job as a curiosity for about a year, and then let the smash come, or (2), we push her back where she used to be right away, or (3), make a real job of it, and keep her where she is as long as she'll stay!

" Take your choice! I thank you!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN—

CATHERINE had had plenty of time to think it over. Philip's lack of response to her letters bore out her suspicions, first aroused by his note apologizing for having kissed her. By the time Catherine had recovered from the astonishment of Philip's announcement to the world, she had resolved to match boldness with boldness. She would demonstrate her worthiness by being as audacious, in her own sphere, as he had been in the realm of science.

Once more the considerate reader must remember her theory of love and marriage; she was confident that ardor would come out of such a rationally made union. And she made her plans in all sincerity, sure that nothing but good would come from it all.

When Philip reached California he proceeded to call at once upon all whom he felt he should see. He made out a list in his methodical way, mapping his route so as to make every minute count. His one idea was to get it over, so that his time might afterward be occupied with something more valuable than social obligations.

He had figured that eight minutes, pos-

sibly seven and a half, would elapse between leaving and reentering his plane at the Brett home. As he ran up the steps he was already estimating the amount of time probably necessary for the next call. In each case he had taken pains to make sure that the person he wished to see would be at home at that particular hour.

But he suspected nothing whatever when, as he was announced at the Brett drawing-room, he found the place already nearly filled with callers. He never did know that an impromptu tea had been hastily arranged. He only wondered that Catherine should have so many callers so early in the afternoon.

He stood, embarrassed as usual, looking over the people before him. There was a small knot of women in the further corner. The butler spoke his name; and with remarkable speed the knot untangled, revealing Catherine herself at the center of the snarl.

She gazed at the returned hero as though she were entranced. She stood there for exactly the right length of time to get everybody's attention; then, her face changed, she gave an enraptured gasp, and in half a second had crossed that room, as it seemed, on wings.

Just in front of Philip she paused, for the briefest possible instant, peering at him as though to make sure her eyes were not deceiving her. Then she gave a tiny, happy, hysterical laugh, and swayed suddenly toward him. He involuntarily thrust out his arms; the fixed smile was still on his face.

And then her arms were about his neck, and his about her shoulders. The scientist had no time, no warning, no chance.

"Phil, my dear!" cried Catherine Brett.

Of course, it is all old news now, but it's a bona fide part of this account and therefore must be mentioned. By this is meant the remarkable end of the whole Foster-Sulzman scheme.

In one way or another the people of the world managed to express their choice of the three alternatives Philip had named. In the more advanced countries the thing was done by direct vote of the citizens themselves. In others, where the majority were not capable of forming an opinion, it was done for them by their representatives, whether political or ecclesiastical.

And when it is remembered that the moon's previous position and motions had had a very definite influence upon religious history in some lands, it is really remarkable that there was not more opposition than did develop. However, even the Brahmans finally came to see that the masses would be greatly benefited by the electrical power which the moon's new location would insure. Practically the whole world agreed to making the "new moon," as it was called, a permanent institution.

Consequently Philip and his associates, after remaining in the United States about two weeks, returned to their plant with the League of Nations itself backing their work. However, those two weeks were extremely significant ones.

Philip was daily in Catherine's company. He had, of course, felt obliged to go through with the thing according to Catherine's lead. His disposition would not allow anything else.

She had explained her theory; he had been unwilling to argue about it. And one day he found himself asking her to fix the day, quite without knowing that she had manipulated the conversation so as to make him do it.

They were to be married as soon as he came back from the moon. This was settled a week before he started. And during that last week the scientist looked at the matter just as cold-bloodedly as Catherine had looked at it some time before.

He saw that Catherine Brett was as unlike himself as any one could possibly be. At first he argued that "opposites attract"; then he began to look for some one point on which they could agree, a sort of home base, to which they could fly in case of differences.

There didn't seem to be any. Neither he nor Catherine was in love with any one thing. Even in love of country they differed; for while Catherine was an orthodox American, Philip was an internationalist, as might be expected in a man of his type of mind.

As for simple, elemental, animal attraction—even Catherine was obliged to admit that as yet she didn't care for Philip's embraces more than, say, her brother's. She may have been right in insisting that all this would come in time; but Philip continued to look for " something to hitch to." And he couldn't find it.

On the other hand, he found plenty of real obstacles; Catherine liked poodles; he, Philip, loved children. Also he was passionately addicted to trap-shooting, and very apt to get up at two o'clock in the morning, during the winter, in order to slay ducks. And for this kind of insanity Catherine had an absolute horror; she had had a relative hurt in a hunting accident, and she would certainly worry every minute.

In petty matters—which often loom pretty large—there were more objections. Philip was inclined to be stout, and liked to have the house warmed to precisely sixty-eight degrees or lower. Catherine, being slender, required a temperature about six degrees higher. Moreover—don't laugh; this is deadly serious—Philip was a great lover of the photoplay, which Catherine simply could not tolerate.

Of course they respected one another. Philip stood in awe of Catherine's social prestige and business acumen, while she fairly worshiped his profession. But Philip did not agree that Catherine, in throwing herself into his arms, had thereby matched his own boldness.

" What you did was old, old stuff," he might have told her had he been conceited enough, which he wasn't. " What I did was absolutely new."

But Philip never realized what a terrific effort it cost Catherine to make her actions appear natural on that occasion. Only a woman could appreciate that supreme play.

And only a man could comprehend to the full the mental and moral agony the man went through before he finally began the moon's transfer.

So neither understood the other. And the great difference between them can best be stated by simply remarking this: that, whereas, Catherine was not aware that she did not fully appreciate Philip's feat, yet he plainly saw that he could never properly value hers. It was the old, old distinction between the mind that has ceased to expand, and the mind that is ever expanding.

CHAPTER IX.

—IN THE MOON.

IT was done. Nearly half the moon was gone—the half the world had never seen, and now was never to see. It was blown into space by the steady pressure of what are now known as " Foster's rays." At times the cloud of powdered rock-dust was clearly visible from the earth as the material was ejected from the surface.

It is only necessary here to add that the insignificant gravitation of the moon was not enough to pull any of this dust back to the surface. It was hurtled into the void, never to return.

In this way, just as Philip had outlined, the mass of the moon was decreased to the exact point where the sun's pull, added to that of the earth, amounted to just enough to keep the moon in place. As we look up at the immense disk above us to-night—always there, night after night, turning what once was blackness into continuous twilight—as we look up at her, we take it for granted that she will always look just like that; that she will forever continue to circle the sun, instead of the earth. The younger generation will find it hard to believe that she was once a pitifully small object, giving only a hundredth part of the light she now gives.

Of course she is only half a moon now, as a result of what Philip and his associates accomplished. But the half that is left is the half which people have always seen.

Perhaps it should be mentioned that miniature projectors were used to propel the heat-and-cold-proof sky-cars through space. Buoyed up on those irresistible rays of invisible force, the vast loads of men, machines, and materials necessary for the work were transported quite without difficulty. In fact, up to the very last day the whole enterprise was carried off without any loss of life, and with only a few trifling accidents. That made the last day's record even more of a shock to the world.

For, upon the return of the last sky-car to the earth, people were startled beyond measure to learn that Philip Foster himself had lost his life just as the work was being completed.

" He left the sky-car, dressed as usual in a protective, insulated suit, taking enough oxygen to last over an hour." So ran the official report of the superintendent, who immediately wired a copy to Catherine. " He said he intended to take pictures of a near-by crater before its destruction.

" No one saw fit to watch his actions. He was out of sight for perhaps half an hour; then some one saw him on the edge of the crater taking photos. He again disappeared. It was thought that he was returning to the sky-car as he knew that the crater was next in line for the projecting crew.

" But just as the men were sweeping the rays in that direction three men in the sky-car plainly saw Mr. Foster standing motionless half-way down the inner slope of the crater, out of sight of the workers. There was no mistaking his suit; it was different from the others. And before the three men could warn the crew, the crater was wiped off the moon.

" Mr. Foster probably did not suffer, for the reason that the shock of the rays would certainly have caused concussion of the brain. A thorough search of the locality was made as soon as the rays were stopped, but quite without results. At this moment the unfortunate man's remains are now flying through space in the direction of the constellation Hercules."

And yet, before the last of the sky-cars had put a thousand miles between itself and the moon, a strange sight would have met the eyes of any person who might have been left behind. There were no telescopes aboard the car which would have shown the thing. Neither was any one on the lookout.

Directly beneath the sky-car, on the patch of the moon's surface which the machine had just quit, there was a stir and a movement in the soil. Presently a large, square section of the sun-lit material was in actual motion; and before the eyes of the mythical beholder, a cavern was revealed in the solid rock of the satellite.

A minute passed, and then a figure clad in a suit the exact duplicate of the one the three observers had seen destroyed, clambered lightly to the surface, and turned the big glass eyes of its helmet up toward the fast-disappearing sky-car. It was the figure of a man of medium height, inclined to be stout, who slouched somewhat even as he sat on the edge of the pit.

No one needs to be told that it was Philip Foster. And a glance into the cavern would have told the whole story. The place was stocked with enough supplies of all sorts, very scientifically selected, to last one man a lifetime.

Presently the engineer disappeared, to return with the framework of a small, hemispherical building, which he at once proceeded to set up over his cavern. When finished, some time later, it provided him with a neat, little, combined observatory, drawing-room, wireless-station and living-room, all incased in glass.

To-day an unusually fine and powerful wireless tower stands in the mountains of California; and under the direction of John Bates, sworn to secrecy, the news of the world is daily transmitted into space. On the moon, a former fellow citizen hears what earth's billions are doing.

All about him is desolate wilderness. The sun shines continually just above the eastern horizon; there is neither day nor night. Always the dark side of the earth is toward him; he sees very little of the globe he renounced. He never talks to a living soul, although he makes a great many talking-machine records; why, we need not try to tell.

But he has a great deal to be thankful for. He has plenty to eat and to drink; the air he breathes is chemically pure; he always has the great black above him, every star shining with vast greater brilliance than we on earth ever know. And beside him at all times is his beloved library, the condensed compendium of all the information that is worth while to him.

And back in Bates's office, in his safe, is a sealed document which is to be opened only in a certain contingency. In the vaults of a well-known bank rests a large chest, in which, among other things, is a duplicate of this document.

And—mark this—so far as any one on earth knows, there are not enough of the required chemicals in existence to produce the " Foster rays " once more. The moon will never be visited again!

As we enjoy our satellite this evening, if we happen to possess extra keen eyes we can detect a short, dark streak across the face of our moon; a streak which no astronomer ever saw in the old days. And if we use a small opera-glass, we can see just what it is.

For the Foster Construction Company made a thorough job of the moon's transformation. All the while that the crews were blasting on the other side, another crew of chemists was at work on the earthward face. Look closely through that glass, and this it what you will read:

GIFT OF DAVID SULZMAN.

But, although many of us will utter the old guess about " the man in the moon," and many will recall the supposedly tragic fate of the Californian engineer, only a very, very few will know that there is now an actual, bona-fide, flesh-and-blood being on its surface. That an American citizen now lives there, its sole inhabitant, and the only genuinely independent man in all creation.

For he, of all men, is absolutely safe from the other sex!

(The end.)