

Weird Tales

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A MAGAZINE of the

BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME XII

NUMBER 1

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 460 East Ohio Street, Chicago, Ill. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor.

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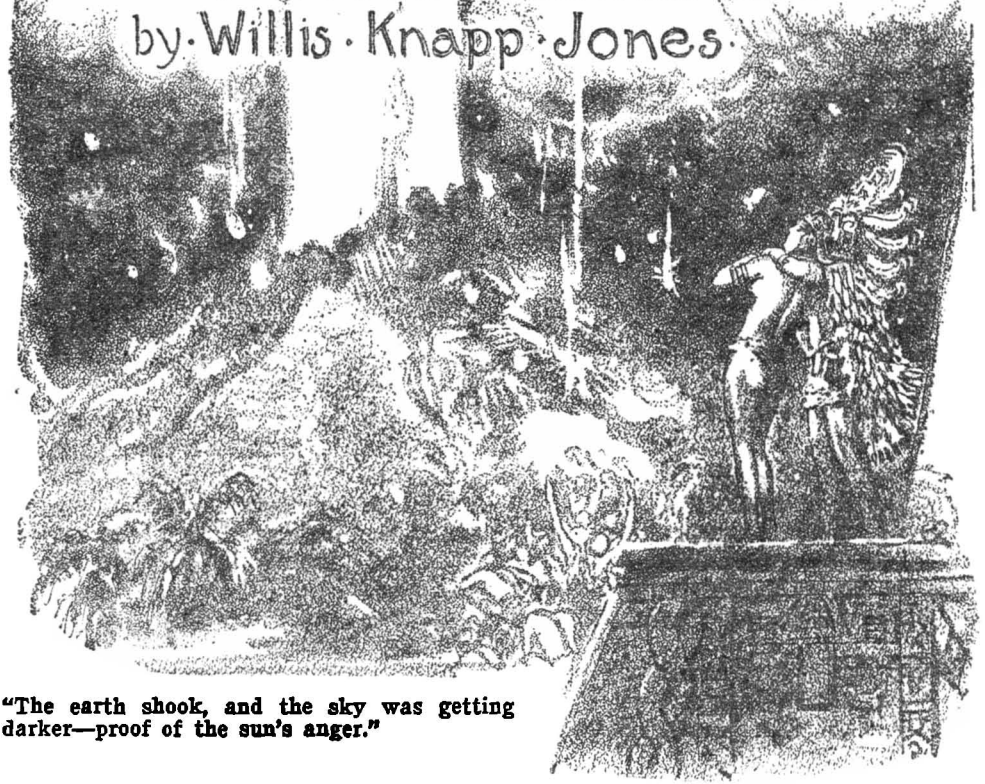
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THE MAN WHO REMEMBERED

by Willis Knapp Jones



"The earth shook, and the sky was getting darker—proof of the sun's anger."

AFTER the blow that knocked him senseless, Phil Espinosa regained consciousness babbling in some unknown tongue that neither of his American fellow scientists could understand.

None of them had seen the blow given, but from their Bolivian natives with the help of Paco, who spoke Spanish as well as Quechua, the Indian language, the ethnologist Craver discovered what had happened. It seemed that Gomu, an Indian worker whose light hair attracted as much notice as his surly disposition did, had got into an argument with Phil, who was superintending the excavation of a *huaco*, or Indian burial mound, and had hit the American over the head with a shovel. The other Indians had rushed to Phil and

so had not seen what became of the rebellious Gomu.

And now, here was the scientific expedition hundreds of miles from a railroad with their archeologist out of his head, babbling nonsense and failing to recognize either Craver or Sanderson, the botanist and animal man, both of whom he had known for years.

Paco brought in a new problem: "The Indians want to know what to do."

The lad was at the tent into which the injured Espinosa had been brought. Before either of the Americans could answer, Espinosa sat up on the cot and again talked in that unknown tongue. The ethnologist knew that it was some formal language, since he could detect speech-

groups and voice inflections; but he was totally unacquainted with the vocabulary.

Paco, the youngster, opened his eyes, however, and after a moment of bewilderment, made some reply. At once Espinosa answered him, and an animated conversation ensued. It was evident several times that Espinosa used words that Paco did not understand, but for the most part they were perfectly intelligible to each other.

Yet when Sanderson interrupted and tried to speak to him in English, there was a dullness in their colleague's eyes. He said something to Paco which seemed to surprize the youngster.

"He say: 'Who are those men?'" he reported in Spanish.

"But, Phil," Craver burst out, "we're the men that came with you from the States to search for the lost city of the Incas. Don't you remember?"

Again the look of bewilderment in Phil's face. Sanderson repeated it in Spanish, but with just as little impression.

"What language does he understand?" both men demanded.

"He speak Quechua, *Señores*," the boy told them. "But not the Quechua we talk. A long-time old language. Often he say words I not know until I remember how my grandmother who live 'most forever, she used to say."

They knew that Espinosa had studied Quechua, the ancient language of the Incas. They had heard him carrying on faltering conversations with natives when there had been no one near who could interpret for them; but never had he shown such fluency as now.

They began to be worried. He seemed to have forgotten everything. Through the boy they tried to stir his memory, reminding him of the great university that had sent them out, their great hopes of discovering

traces of a legendary city, Intihuatamba. At the name, his eyes gleamed. Raising one of his small and very well-formed hands, he pointed and spoke rapidly.

"He say Intihuatamba five league yonder in the lap of the mountain that never sleep." Paco pointed to a lofty peak, a snowcap, though this was the South American November, springtime.

"Tell him he's all wrong," Craver commanded. "He himself found the map of the Conquistadores marking the location as right around here."

"'Conquistadores,' he say. 'Who are Conquistadores?'"

"Good Lord, what's the matter with that man?" Sanderson cried. "The author of the best book published on remnants of the Conquistadores, and he asks us to tell him about the first Spaniards to visit South America!"

Craver was frankly skeptical. "Either he's playing a monstrous joke on us with pretense of ignorance, or else it's amnesia. Blows on the head do sometimes cause loss of memory. That's well authenticated."

Paco now interpreted something the archeologist said. "He want to know when you go to Intihuatamba."

"But yesterday when he set the men to digging, he told us himself that we were there."

When the lad repeated Sanderson's remark, Espinosa showed signs of disgust. The boy hesitated to translate his reply until Craver questioned him. "He say—he say, 'Surely he know where he live. He come from Intihuatamba his self.'"

"Humor him, Craver," Sanderson urged. "If he is raving and thinks it's somewhere else, we'd better go there. Leave the heavy stuff here and come back later when he's sane again."

"Yes, maybe a change of surroundings will restore him, though I'm sure I don't understand how the

little bump that I found on his head could knock him silly."

The Scotchman shook his head. "I don't know. I'm no doctor. But I did read somewhere about a man who was master of a dozen languages until his Convolution of Brocaw was injured, and then they all left him except his native tongue, the one he knew first of all."

"Well, that won't apply to Espinosa's case, then. I know that in spite of his Spanish name and his small hands and feet which Latins have, he was born in the United States and talked English long before he talked Spanish. And as for Quecha—well, he's been at that less than a year. He's cracked. That's the trouble with him. The idea of saying he lives in Intihuatamba! Why, that was nothing but a legend when the Spaniards reached Bolivia, and that was——"

"1526, four hundred years ago."

"Well, the Duchess believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast, but this is too near lunchtime for me to swallow any such tale as that."

PHIL ESPINOSA was giving evidence of impatience, so, to humor him, they began making preparations for their fifteen-mile tramp. Only part of the equipment was to be taken along, and half the men. Gray-haired Sanderson, the leader of scientific expeditions in virtually every part of the world, picked out the things to take along, and left the permanent camp in charge of a majordomo who was to keep the Indians at work opening the Inca burial mound.

After a light meal, the rest started out: the three white men, Paco the interpreter, and eight porters. Their road was the bed of a stream along which Espinosa led them unhesitatingly. At first he examined his shoes and clothing with some curiosity, but said nothing about them. He did, however, catch up a poncho to throw

over his shoulders. Then with a machete in his hand to cut down bushes and jungle foliage, he fell into a swinging stride at their head.

Craver came next, a revolver at his belt with the holster unbuckled. He did not trust his colleague now. With insane notions in his head and a dangerous weapon in his hand, there was no knowing what he might do. But the archeologist paid no attention to the rest. He seemed to have reverted almost to a savage, a bundle of nerves and fears. His glance, suddenly grown keen, swept everything with quick, birdlike turns of his head. His pace was so rapid over the muddy road that the carriers had to pant under their loads, but he did not delay, except momentarily to find the best way around pools.

Once, as they slowed down while he slashed down jungle growth to let them skirt a mudhole, Sanderson called to Craver, "I've been thinking about the Convolution of Brocaw theory. I don't much hold with those who stick language ability into one corner of the skull, like a cupboard, but if there's any truth in heredity, and his line of Spanish ancestors got linked with some of the Indians who lived here before the Conquistadores arrived, then Quechua was their family language long before English, and——"

"Sanderson, you're cracked too! I guess it's time we left this unhealthy part of Bolivia and started home. Oh, Espinosa—I say, Phil, aren't you ready to go home, too?"

The archeologist, machete in hand, worked steadily, entirely oblivious to the mention of his name. Not even when Craver went directly behind him and called him again did he turn.

"I wonder what he's calling himself now," he said aloud. Then he lapsed into Spanish. "Paco, ask what *el patrón* calls himself."

Back came the answer: "*Cúnturni*, Son of the Condor."

Craver laughed. "That's not evolution, Sanderson. having a good scientist like Espinosa turn into a scavenger bird. That's devolution."

Just then their guide turned aside abruptly. He seemed surprized at the absence of a trail, but after a halt of a moment, and a glance upward at the snow-capped cone that towered just above them, he swung his machete and cut a swath through the lush jungle growth.

Scarcely a sound broke the stillness; only the crash of falling stalks, the sloshing of their feet and the chattering of the frightened birds. The air was dank, for no sunlight entered through the matted foliage stretching a dozen feet above them. There were no taller trees, such as the eighty-foot arching roof that they had met so often before, because now they were ascending the easy slope toward the mountain.

Sanderson stopped once and gathered a handful of the soil. "H'm, lava," he muttered. "Old Thunderbore must have had some great old eruptions in the past, but they didn't succeed in killing back the jungle."

Though the plant life was not so dense, their path was as dark as ever, for night was approaching. "Ask him how near we are," Craver directed.

"He say in one half coca chew you see the fire of his village."

"Yes, he seems to be pure native now. Don't you remember the Indian we met near Cuzeo who told Phil that before he could use up one cud of that coca they chew we'd be at a *posada* where we could pass the night?"

The archeologist did indeed seem all native. There was a tenseness about his stride quite foreign to his usual way of walking. But finally he stopped and Paco relayed his command: "Remain here till I come back."

He gave a weird bird-call and went on swiftly. Sanderson would have remained, but Craver followed. "Come on," he said. "There's no telling what he'll do in the state he's in."

But not until Espinosa stopped did they catch up to him. There he was, standing on a mound, and repeating this mournful bird-call, listening and looking in every direction in an agony of uncertainty. He was talking petulantly to himself. Paco, appearing at last, interpreted his words. "He say he lost. Intihuatamba is here but town disappear."

"Never mind. Tell him it's too dark to find it tonight. We'll make camp now and search in the morning."

Espinosa made no reply. He seemed dazed as he sat in the light of the campfire which the porters had quickly built. There was something melancholy about him. He kept rubbing his delicately formed hands together, and from time to time he would imitate some jungle bird.

The other white men were greatly worried over him, but were helpless. Craver tried to examine his wound, which was revealed since the bandage had been tugged off by some projecting branch, but Phil snarled at him and wrenched away. He would not let even Sanderson touch him, though previously he had been very fond of the white-haired botanist.

He ate the food which was given him, giving the impression that his thoughts were far away. And then, wrapping himself in his poncho, he lay down with his feet to the fire as the Indians about him were doing.

Through Paco, Sanderson asked him to come into the shelter tent, but he replied that he always slept on the ground when away from his own stone hut, and would be cold away from a fire.

TWICE during the night Sanderson came out to see if Phil was all right. Once he put more wood on the fire because the American, sleeping between two porters, was turning and muttering, and Sanderson was afraid he would catch cold, since it was nearing morning.

The next thing he knew, he was aroused by a wail that petrified him. The scream that followed was enough to frighten anyone. It brought the two white men out of their tent, and every Indian was on his feet. Espinosa, the only one not aroused in fear, looked up at those who were gathering around him.

Daylight was breaking, and in the greenish light he wore an expression of embarrassment. "Jove, what a rummy dream!" he remarked, sitting up. "I say, Sandy, did I yell as loud as I dreamed I did."

"Louder!" replied the Scot.

Paco rattled off something in Quechua, but Espinosa put up a restraining hand and in slow and halting syllables started to answer. Then he switched into Spanish. "It's too early in the morning for me to struggle with Quechua, Paco," he apologized.

As he passed his hand over his head to smooth down his rumpled hair, a startled expression crossed his face. "Ouch!" he said. His exploring fingers touched the bump gently. Then the sight of the volcano above him made him scowl and look about him. "What's the joke?" he demanded. "What are we doing here?"

"That's what we wanted to discover," Craver told him. "It's your funeral. You guided us here."

"Go ahead; I'm green," Espinosa laughed. "I'll bite and ask for explanations. And what about this crack on my—oh, I remember. Gomu! But, I say! That's queer."

"What's queer?" asked Sanderson.

"The way he fitted into my dream.

Say, won't some of you tell me what it's all about?"

"As if you didn't know!" Craver remarked dryly. "But anything to please you. Like a prophet with a message, you were all for leading us to Intihuatamba fifteen miles from where we were, so out you——"

"Now wait. How could I lead you there? We were there already."

"That's what we thought, but when you began rattling off Quechua so fast that——"

"That's enough, Craver. I'm fairly gullible, but when you talk of my ability to speak Quechua, I won't swallow that, even though I dreamed I could handle it like a whiz."

"Maybe you'd better tell us your dream," Sanderson spoke for the first time. "Perhaps that will straighten things out."

"All right. We must be some miles away from camp, so I'll tell it to you on the way back. I'm sorry I brought you here on a wild goose chase, if I did it. But I must have been out of my head. I'm still a little bit muddled. But let's get packed and start back."

The white-haired botanist shook his head. "I don't know whether I want to go back. I believe I'd like to sink at least one shaft here."

"There couldn't be anything here," Espinosa insisted. "We're wasting time that we ought to be devoting to Intihuatamba."

"Perhaps this is Intihuatamba. You know we Scotch are supposed to be sort of fey, and I'm not too American to have lost my confidence in what you call 'hunches.' That mound over there——"

"Don't be foolish, Sandy. No people in their right minds, especially a group of Inca courtiers fleeing with their families after their uprising went wrong, the way the founders of Intihuatamba were supposed to have done, would pick a site just below an active volcano. Why, that's as crazy as my dream was!"

"We humored you yesterday, Phil. Now it's my turn. Tell those porters to uncover that mound, and while they're doing it, let's hear your dream."

The Quechua that Espinosa used to them came far less confidently than it had come the day before, but he made them understand, and after the breakfast Phil told his dream.

"I THOUGHT I was one of the courtiers that built the place. You see, after being saturated with all my reading and study of the place, it's no wonder. But I even knew my name. It was"—he paused and scowled, then a smile broke—"Cúnturni."

He did not see the startled glance exchanged between his companions.

"We fled from Cuzco, till we got so far away that we thought the Inca would never find us. We built thatched houses of wood, and took up our lives under the cone of just such a volcano as that, only we thought, then, that it was extinct. Oh, I can remember dozens of little incidents! We had run off with the Rainbow Banner of the Inca, and since I was the strongest one in the group"—he looked at his almost feminine hands with a rueful smile—"I was made keeper of it. My house was bigger than the others and more strongly built, the only one in the village of stone.

"I was married, too. She had been called Star of the Inca, but when we left the Inca she became simply *Cocolla*, Star. I can see her now." He shut his eyes.

For a moment there was silence, then Craver spoke up. "Go on, leave her out of it. She doesn't matter."

"Oh, but she does! We were so happy together. I remember making for her a curious ring with a gold nugget that looked like a star. She joked me about it because I thought I was making it small, but it slipped off from every finger but her thumb,

while it just fitted my little finger. I must have had a bigger one than I have now. Funny how the details come back to me, isn't it?"

"You read them somewhere." Craver yawned. "But what I'd like to hear is an explanation of your yell, if you have one. Otherwise, I'm ready to start back."

"Well, if you don't let me tell my dream——"

"Go ahead, Phil," Sanderson told him. "I'm more interested than you know."

"The trouble came when a priest announced that the Sun was angry with us and would not help us until we sent back the banner. I thought he had been bribed, because just then a messenger arrived from Cuzco, a light-haired Indian named—all I can think of is Gomu."

Craver nodded. "No wonder. You've got him on the brain since he cracked you yesterday."

"Maybe," Espinosa agreed, though he did not sound convinced. "But to continue. *Cocolla* and I had been married a year and were going to have a baby, a boy, for in those days we knew how to determine the sex of children, though for the life of me I can't remember how it was done. Anyhow, I swore that the Inca should never get this banner while I was alive. Some wanted to surrender and return, since they were tired of having to do all their own work and live so miserably, but *Cocolla* and I withdrew to my house and to its strongest tower.

"That was about noon, and the sky was getting darker all the time. We heard queer rumbles, and the earth shook. Most of the people were afraid, especially when Gomu said—and the priest agreed—that it was proof of the Sun's anger. He called them all together to decide what to do, but I refused. Then Gomu came, asking to speak to me; and, seeing that he was alone, I unfastened the door. But he attacked me treacher-

ously and stunned me with some weapon that he had hidden.

"It was dark when I recovered. There was a sulfurous smell everywhere and I heard what I thought was rain pattering on the stone roof. I was in exquisite pain. One of my legs had been so bruised by something that I could not move. I called Ccocola. No answer. The hearth fire was still burning, and by its light, at the foot of the couch where she was accustomed to lie, I saw something gleaming. I crawled over, each inch a torture. It was the ring I had made for her.

"Then I was in an agony of doubt. The Rainbow Banner which I had hung from the wall was gone. Had Gomu taken her, too? I slipped the ring onto my little finger and edged my way to the door. Someone must know where she was. By now I could scarcely breathe. The odor of sulfur was increasing, and when I opened the door, I knew the cause.

"There was the weirdest of lights everywhere, reflected from the red glow coming from the top of the mountain."

Espinosa shuddered. "It is all horribly vivid. Though I have never seen a volcano in eruption, I know just how one looks. What I thought was rain was a shower of ashes. Some of the houses were already aflame.

"Down the mountain, glowing red-hot, came a stream of molten lava. I saw that unless it turned it would overrun me. There was I, helpless, unable to bear my weight on my left leg. No one came in spite of my screams, not even my wife. I was sure then that she had been carried off, losing her ring in the struggle, or possibly leaving it as a sign for me."

He was trembling all over. He pressed the balls of his palms into his eyes as though to shut out the sight.

"And then what?" It was difficult

to say whether cynicism or anxiety colored Craver's tones.

Then I screamed and woke up to see you all looking at me as though I were a ghost."

"Well, you tell a good story." Craver acknowledged, "but you'll have to admit it was nothing but a dream."

"Yes, I know, but it was weird enough while it lasted."

Sanderson was studying the mountain. "Have either of you noticed that scar down the southwest side?"

Both his companions raised their heads.

"You see where the lava spilled over in some eruption, and then started down the slope. For about half-way down it is headed straight for this spot, then it turns into that gully and is diverted southward. Doesn't that bear out what Phil was trying to describe?"

Craver, now that Espinosa was recovered, was endeavoring to treat the whole affair as a huge joke. "He's probably been studying the mountain since daybreak to make his story sound all right."

The archeologist shook his head. "No, I swear I told you absolutely nothing but what I dreamed. But why all the fuss over a little dream?"

"You never studied dreams seriously, apparently." Sanderson spoke seriously. "I don't mean dreambook stuff—coffins mean death, shoes mean marriage, and that rot. But psychologists claim to be able to tell not only the past life of the individual, but also of the race, by dream study. Mightn't it be that Phil went through some experience that one of his remote ancestors endured?"

"Impossible!" Craver objected. "In the first place, any ancestor of Espinosa's with a broken leg would have been killed by the volcano, and a dead man can't transmit hereditary influences."

"But according to his story, he left a child, and the father's fate might have been a legend, or he might have been saved. Besides, if there's anything to it, a volcanic eruption would be a good explanation of the disappearance of the town, just as Herculaneum was blotted out in Italy."

"Sanderson, are you going to give Phil the satisfaction of thinking he fooled us yesterday with his pretense of insanity?"

"I'll give you my word of honor," Espinosa broke in, "that I have no recollection of anything between the time that Indian attacked me and this morning when I yelled."

"The knock on the head would take care of that, Craver."

"Amnesia—if that's what he had—is cured only by the passing of years or by an operation," the ethnologist pointed out.

"Or by another blow. In his dream he was struck on the head, you remember."

Craver laughed heartily. "A blow given in a dream cure amnesia?"

Sanderson's face was serious. "Do you remember two lines by the English poet, Noyes:

Did the grog we dreamed we swallowed
Make us dream of all that followed?

I don't know. I'm only wondering."

THERE was a shout from Paco, and at his words the scientists leaped up. The Indians had stepped back, and in plain sight was a gap in the ground through which some stone beams projected, protected from the elements by a grayish, ashlike covering. Inside could be seen some sort of room.

"Well, Craver?" Sanderson was exultant. "How about it? The place Phil dreamed of, the tallest building in the town whose reinforcements held up against the weight of the volcanic ashes!"

Under the spell of their enthusiasm and curiosity, the Indians went on

digging, while Sanderson, sure that they had found the ruins of the lost Inca city, sent Paco back for the other porters and the rest of the stores.

The scientists were too much excited to stop for anything, and they even helped dig while the Indians were resting for lunch.

By the middle of the afternoon, they realized that they had made one of the finds of archeology, a place left in the form in which it had existed centuries before. Enough of the hard soil had been removed from the building to free the front entrance. Then more carefully than ever they went on uncovering what they found. Finally a human shoulder-bone was uncovered that crumbled into dust at the touch. Sanderson at once ordered them to stop, and Phil, whose duty was to take charge of such excavation, continued the task.

One of the careless Indians had smashed part of the left arm, but around the forearm and hand the volcanic deposit had fossilized.

From the instant of their discovery, Phil had been like one in a dream. He did not seem to know what was going on. Craver, his skepticism vanished, was as eager as the others to get to the bottom of everything. Seeing the mold around the arm, he had an idea. He picked up what was like a shell for a cast and tried to put his hand in it. "It's more your size, Phil," he said. "Put your arm in. My hand is much too big."

Espinosa did as he was directed. After tapping the shell, he thrust in his arm. Then his eyes dilated. He gasped and fainted.

As quickly as possible they drew off the shell, fearing some animal had made it his shelter. But Craver gave a cry and pointed. On Espinosa's little finger was a ring they knew he had never worn before, a plain gold ring, but set in it was a little gold nugget, exactly like a tiny gold star.