

The Monstrosity

By GEORGE W. CRANE

WELL, well, so you're the new feller what's thinkin' o' buyin' that piece o' property out near the graveyard, are ye? And ye wants ter know the strange story what's circulatin' 'round 'mongst the villagers? I guess, newcomer, that ye've come to the right party when ye come ter me, fer I've run this here store and post office nigh onto twenty-seven year, come next September.

But I'll 'gin ter explain 'bout that there doctor. Anyways, we allus thought he wuz a medicine man o' some sort. He come in on the train one afternoon, and 'fore nightfall had put up the price o' that old house in cold cash. Lem Higgins wuz s'prised as a kid that sees Santy Claus comin' down the chimbley, cause the doc didn't look any too well off. But the little shriveled-up old codger jest reached down in that there black satchel what he wuz carryin' and pulled her out—all gold 'n silver.

Howsoever I'm fergittin' part o' my story. There wuz a boy along with him. He must have been near eighteen year old, I sh'd jedge, but he wuz blind, so the doc said. Leastways, he had to be led 'round by the hand, and he wore big black specs o' some kind. Well, Slim Asbury down street thinks he's goin' ter do a little business sellin' the doc some furniture what he's had stored up in the loft.

Slim, he's a sort o' second-hand man; leastways, that's what ye'd call him in a town o' any size. But, 'tany rate, he thinks he'll unload part of the household stuff he's been collectin' these ten year or so, but Slim, he wuz shore fooled. 'Twarn't long till one o' the freight cars stopped down to the station, and unloaded a big lot o' goods with this here doc's name on 'em. Most o' the stuff wuz furniture.

Then a couple o' days later there come some more boxes of live animules. They wuz some of them pigs what the doc had to 'speriment on, and there wuz a big box what we never see'd into. Howsoever, Hank Squires, who's our constable, when he ain't away huntin' squirrels, says he thinks he heerd that thing in the big box sort o' whine and

growl; so Hank says it wuz some kind o' wild varmint. 'Course nobody ever see'd it, but we wuz mostly willin' ter take Hank's word, knowing that he's sort o' 'thority on wild critters, anyways.

Well, the doc hired the stuff took out to the old house—this one what you're thinkin' o' buyin'—and he got settled down in two or three days. We all sort o' thought he might take some cases, 'cause we don't have no reg'lar doc here, bein's it's so small, but no, he don't seem ter expect to do no work. Must have made his money in the city, we figgers it out.

Oncet or twice a week the doc comes down here to my store after some bacon and flour and sugar. He's allus leadin' that boy 'round with him. I used ter think maybe I could git him ter tell me somethin' 'bout hisself, but the doc, he wuz a quiet sort. Leastways, he never spoke much 'round here. Oncet in a long while he'd git a letter from some furrin place. I spelt out one o' the names oncet. 'Twuz some doc in Vienny—over in Europe, that is, if ye've never heered o' it before. Leastways, that's what the school marm said 'twuz, and she wuz boardin' at my place then and she's powerful smart.

Must have been nigh onto a year passed with things jest as I've been tellin' ye. Then it come that cold winter two year ago, and we had a deep snow. I 'member 'twuz after supper one night and Slim Asbury wuz settin' back there behind the stove playin' checkers with Hank Squires. I wuz jest finishin' sweepin' out the front o' the store—never used ter do it till that new school marm come along with them fool new-fangled notions 'bout bein' sanitary—when all to oncet, in run Jess Cooper. He'd been startin' out ter see his girl over 'long the mounting road, and I wuz shore s'prised ter see him, knowin' as I did that he'd jest set out 'bout half-hour before. They's nothin' that ever kept Jess from his ride out there, and I wuz plumb astonished. Jess, he wuz that out o' breath he jest couldn't speak fer nigh onto a minute.

"Where's Hank?" says he, soon's he kin speak.

"Why," says I, "be ye blind all to oncet? Hank's settin' right there back o' the stove."

"Well," says he, "I've never come so close to death in all my life and got away with it."

"And how's that?" says I.

'Bout this time Hank has heerd Jess talkin', and he come ter see what's wrong.

"Why," says Jess, "some wild varmint's been chasin' me all the way back from the ridge over on the mounting road near Slocum's."

"What kind o' varmint wuz it?" asks Hank, curious-like.

"Couldn't see that," says Jess, "but 'twuz shore some powerful big critter. His eyes wuz big as my fists, and they wuz 'bout as high off the ground as my head. I wuz ridin' 'long on my way ter see 'Lizabeth tonight, this bein the night I allus goes out there as ye know, rain or shine, when all to oncet my horse shies. But I can't make out what 'tis.

"Then I goes 'long a little farther, and the horse, he shies agin. Still I don't see nothin', but I'm wishin' 'bout that time that I'd brung along my Winchester. The next time the horse shies I thinks ter myself, 'Here's where ye must figger this out, oncet fer all.' Well, then's when I see'd them eyes—big, green, yaller things, they is, and they starts towards me. Snow come up nigh to the horse's belly, but do ye know, them eyes wuz higher'n the horse's back. Well, I says ter myself, bein's I hain't got no gun, 'Jess,' says I, 'ye'd better not go ter see 'Lizabeth tonight.'

"Well, as I wuz sayin', the thing started fer me; so I jest wheeled my horse 'round, and we wuz on our way back agin fast as he could plow through them drifts. But that thing, it kept in sight o' me part way back."

NOW I hain't never laid no claims ter bein' an expert o' wild varmint, but bein's Hank, he knows 'em purty well, I says ter him, "Hank," says I, "what varmint is that?"

Hank, he chewed a while longer 'fore he 'sponds. Then he spits terbaccy juice onto my clean floor and says, "Danged 'f I know."

Now Hank, he ain't no fool by no means, and when he says he don't know, 'tain't many mounting folks what does.

Well, stranger, it snowed some more that night; so when Hank and Jess goes out there next mornin' ter the mounting road, why they don't see no tracks o' any sort; leastways, no animule tracks. Hank, he tells me he kinder doubts 'bout Jess, though the lad ain't been givin' ter drinkin' much, and has never see'd things before.

We don't hear nothin' more 'bout that there green-eyed varmint fer some-where's o' two weeks. During that time the doc, he comes down fer some meat. I ain't see'd him fer a long spell; so I 'splains 'bout that there yaller-eyed critter. The doc, he looks sort o' scared-like; so I says, "Doc, ye don't know nothin' 'bout it, do ye?"

Ye see, stranger, I sort o' figgered that the doc has lost that big wild critter what come in the box. I ain't 'splained my s'picious ter Hank, but I figgered that wuz the real solution. Well, the doc, he says he don't know nothin' 'bout any varmint like that, but he looks sort o' funny when he says it.

I don't say nothin' more 'long that line, howsoever, but asks him 'bout the boy—bein's he ain't been down ter my store now fer a spell o' nigh onto six weeks. The doc had told me he wuz ailin'; so now I asks him how the lad's feelin' by this time. The doc says, though, that he wuz feelin' tolaber better. Howsoever, the doc hisself looks powerful porely; so I tells him he must perk up a bit, or he'll be down, too.

'Fore he leaves fer home, he hands me a letter—me bein' the postmaster here—and it wuz goin' ter that old doc over there in Vienny. The doc's hand shook like a mounting pine in a storm, as he held the letter in his fingers; so I says ter him, "Doc, ye'd better make yoreself some yaller root tea."

Stranger, he jest looks at me a minute, and then 'gins ter laugh like he wuz hearin' some good joke. I 'gins ter think he's goin' plumb looney.

Well, that's the last I see'd o' the doc; leastways, the last he is ever at my store.

Hank, he ain't been able ter figger out what the varmint is, an' neither have I, but, as I wuz tellin' ye before, I got my s'picious where it come from. But I don't tell Hank that yet, 'cause I hain't got much evidence.

'Bout a week after I'd see'd the doc and mailed his letter, we hears that the varmint has been prowlin' 'round the cemetery over there next the doc's house; leastways, that's what some o' the mounting folks says. 'Course this jest goes ter prove my argyment 'bout the varmint's bein' that critter of the doc's what come in the big wooden box, only it has got away, and is prowlin' 'round loose. 'Course it has got kinder used ter stayin' 'round the doc's place; so 'twuz only natteral fer it to be see'd there. In the meanwhile Hank, he's hung 'round my store most o' the time tryin' ter figger out what 'tis. He hain't been able ter find no tracks, bein's the wind has blowed the snow around in drifts on both nights the thing wuz supposed ter be prowlin' 'round.

Then the next night the widow what lives in that little cabin this side the doc's place see'd the critter's eyes peerin' in at her kitchen window. Nigh scared her to death; leastways, that's what she said afterward. But she goes one better'n any o' the men folks what's see'd it, fer the widow sets her big dog loose at the door, and then the wildest screechin' and yellin' lets loose that she gits plumb skeered, and takes down the big rifle what used ter belong ter her ole man 'fore he died with the fever, and then sets with it 'cross her knees.

She goes ter the door oncet right after the screechin'; but though she called and whistled, the big dog don't come back. And he wuz shorely one powerful dog, too! The widow, she sets there till sunup next mornin', and then she see'd her dog out under the window, dead. The wind had blowed hard all night, and the snow had drifted 'round so's she couldn't see no tracks, but the whole side o' the dog wuz ripped open, showing whatever varmint killed him made powerful quick work o' it.

Well, that wuz jest the spark what set off the cannon—as my old grandpap used ter say—fer the new school marm, she won't hold school alone no more, and the mounting women refuse ter let the kids come ter school till the wild critter's killed off.

'Course there ain't nothin' else ter do but git the danged thing, only we ain't got no clews. Howsoever, Hank, he gits a half-a-dozen o' the young bucks and me ter go 'long with him and lay in wait fer the critter. I decide I better s'plain my argyment ter Hank, and I does so. After that we sets a guard all 'round the doc's house.

WELL, 'twuz a cold night, but we kept walkin' up and down like them sentinel-fellers in the army till we'd meet each other, and then we'd walk back agin. We hain't see'd nothin' fer several hours, when all to oncet Hank whistles like a screech owl. That's our signal 'f we see anything 'spicious-lookin'. We all begin ter head toward the place where Hank is stationed, but when we gits there, Hank's gone.

By this time all o' the rest o' us has gethered there, and Hank's disappearance looks sort o' funny ter us. Then all to oncet Hank whistles agin; leastways, we hear the owl's cry, and then before we git started we hear two or three more in different places. Now we can't figger out how Hank could be coverin' so much territory in so short a time, bein's there ain't no real screech owls there in the dead o' winter; so we finally sets out toward the last place we heerd the signal.

Well, when we gits there, why, Hank, he ain't no place ter be found. We don't know what ter do next, bein's we ain't able ter figger out why Hank don't wait fer us all ter ketch up with him, bein's them wuz our orders ter start with. Well, sir, we waited there 'neath a big old oak tree, and the wind, it wuz risin' and lacin' them branches over our heads till we decide maybe we couldn't hear Hank whistle if he wuz ter try it. 'Specially we thought this wuz the case bein's we ain't heerd from Hank now fer nigh onto a half-hour or so. We set our heads tergether and decide ter set out and hunt him.

But we ain't goue more'n ten rod or so till one o' the boys in front lets out a yell. Bein's I ain't so spry as the rest, I wuz bringin' up the rear; so 'course I don't know what 'tis brung that yell from our man. I hustles ter the front, howsoever, and there, layin' face down in the snow, is Hank.

Now, sir, we wuz that s'prised we didn't say nothin' fer a spell, but then I reaches down and rolls Hank over. There ain't much moon shinin' that night; so we had ter git down close ter see his face, but it ain't bloody 'tall. We feels 'round his coat ter see if there's any bullet hole or somethin' ter 'count fer his bein' dead. But we don't find no blood o' any sort; so we wuz plumb upset. His body's warm, howsoever; so we start ter pick him up. Then Hank begins ter come to, and he talks foolish-like fer a minute afore he gits his right senses.

"That wuz a turrible wallop!" he says, soon's he is in his right mind. We wuz all curious ter know what Hank

meant; so I says ter him, "Hank," says I, "what's wrong with ye, anyhow?"

Well, sir, he goes on ter tell us that he'd see'd them big yaller-green eyes what Jess Cooper wuz tellin' us about back there in my store several weeks before. Hank says he gives us the signal, and starts ter crawl up on the varmint. But danged if the critter didn't whistle back at Hank!

Hank says he don't believe it at first; so he whistles agin, but that varmint answers him. 'Course we all didn't know whether Hank has got back in his right senses or not, 'cause there's no critter what we ever see'd that could whistle. But then we 'gin ter rec'lect hearin' them signals comin' from different places almost at the same time; so we don't know but what Hank is in his right mind, after all.

Hank, he says he keeps crawlin' toward the place where he'd see'd the critter last, but he can't find them yaller eyes no more. He says he gits ter a big oak trec an' wuz standin' under it when all to oncet he hears the branches over his head begin ter crackle, and that's the last he knows till we find him.

Now Hank's story don't make us feel no better by no means, 'cause we 'gins ter think what a powerful queer varmint this thing is. Jess had told us it wuz higher'n his horse's back, an' now Hank, he tells us it whistled back at him, and then it must have lived in trees to boot; so we wuz holdin' our guns with our trigger fingers all ready ter shoot.

Well, sir, Hank, he ain't scarcely finished his story till one o' the boys calls out that he's see'd the yaller-eyed critter agin. We looks where he said it wuz, and shore 'nough, there 'twuz, 'bout a hundred yard or so from where we wuz standin'.

Now I ain't nervous—leastways, I hain't never thought I wuz—but I'll swear I didn't like the look o' them big yaller-green eyes starin' at me. We all didn't know but what it might be the devil himself, and we 'gin ter expect it will be flyin' next; so I up and took a shot at it.

'Course my aim wuzn't so steady as it might o' been, fer I'm allus reckoned ter be a sure shot; leastways, I've won several prizes with my rifle, but I hit the critter, anyways, an' it let out one o' the wildest yells what ever wuz let loose in this here mounting country. I 'gin ter respect that pore widow woman's nerve more 'n more. But this here var-

mint, after my shot, yelled an' screeched till we thought all hell wuz turned loose.

Well, the critter took off through the trees, and now we had it on the run, why, we 'gin ter feel better. Leastways, we know it ain't after us no more; so we decides ter go after it. First o' all, it makes fer the graveyard over there next the doc's house, an' we're follerin' it fast as we kin. 'Course 'twuz hard ter see where it wuz goin', fer it wuz purty dark, but every oncet in a while one o' the boys up in front would spot them big yaller-green eyes, as the critter looked back ter see if we wuz still after it.

We didn't none o' us 'specially like goin' inter them gravestones at that time o' night with this here varmint prowlin' 'round, even though we wuz chasin' it, but we 'gin ter think o' the wimmen folks what might be killed by it; so we all start right in. I don't like ter be in the rear no more; leastways, not while we're among them shadowy tombstones; so I speed up a bit till I'm among the boys.

Hank, he leads the way now, and we chased the critter out o' the graveyard, and it starts on toward the doc's place. Oncet in a while it lets loose one o' them screeches what we heerd when I shot it. The boys lets go with their rifles now 'n agin, but they don't seem ter do no good; leastways, it keeps on ahead o' us.

We foller it clear to the doc's back door, an' then it stops for a spell. Well, Hank says ter spread out an' surround the house, an' we do. All the time, howsoever, the critter keeps prowlin' round the house in circles. It 'pears like we have got it at bay now, fer its glowin' eyes is plain an' they're turned toward us most o' the time. We decides ter yell fer the doc, 'cause we're 'fraid ter shoot fer fear we'd miss the varmint an' kill the doc inside. So we 'gin ter call fer the ole man ter watch out, an' not unlock his door. We tells him ter light a lamp, so's we kin see the outline o' the critter as it passes before one o' the windows, bein's we ain't never see'd it, only them big yaller-green eyes.

But the doc, he don't answer; so we yells louder 'n before, and one o' the boys, he up and shoots over the top o' the house, thinkin' maybe the doc is asleep. But still there ain't no answer from within.

We keeps on callin' an' agin one o' the boys shoots, but the doc, he never replies. The varmint, howsoever, lets out another one o' them screeches, and bumps agin the door o' the house.

WE can't figger out what's wrong with the doc, bein's he ain't deaf, and even a heavy sleeper couldn't help hearin' all our racket goin' on; so we decides maybe the old man is sick or somethin'. That critter keeps bumpin' agin the door, fer we kin hear the noise, an' so we 'gin ter feel that maybe it will git inside 'n kill the pore ole man 'fore we kin ketch it. 'Course we ain't none o' us fond o' goin' inside the door into the dark house if that varmint gits there ahead o' us; so we don't kuow what ter do.

Well, I walks off an' gits a side view where I kin take a shot without danger o' strikin' the house if I misses. I calls out ter the boys ter git away from the other side o' the house in case my aim ain't so good as it ought ter be, an' then I fire.

There is another shriek, though this one ain't so loud an' fierce as them others has been, an' then all is quiet. But I kin see that I've hit the critter purty bad, and it's fell down. Them eyes never moves an' they're down close ter the ground; so I takes good aim agin, and lets loose with my Winchester another time. But there ain't no screech no more; so I calls out, "Boys, I think I've got the critter fer sure."

We all wuz feelin' better ter think that this here mysterious varmint is dead, but I wants ter make certain; so I says, "Boys, look out! I'm goin' ter take another crack at that thing right 'tween them big yaller-green eyes," and I does. But they don't move no more, an' there's no sound comes from the beast.

Now I knows that I hain't been missin' all them times, 'cause, as I have said before, I ain't a bad shot nohow. Well, sir, Hank, he hunts 'round till he gits some brush afire, and we draw in toward the turrible varmint.

As we do so, them eyes, they looks worse'n they did in the dark, fer the fire glitters an' flashes green an' red in 'em, jest like a wildcat's what I shot oncet when I wuz younger an' out huntin' one time. But the critter is still ahead of us, an' as we draw nearer we kin see it stretchin' out black-like in the shadows, and it's nigh onto six feet long. Still them glitterin' eyes is never movin', but the flames o' the torch what Hank is carryin' make 'em sparkle like a big diamond what I see'd oncet.

When we gits up close ter the thing, well, sir, the boys let out a yell agin, an' I come nigh doin' so myself. We're s'prised an' skeered more'n ever.

There, stretched out on the doorstep is that blind boy what allus used ter come

down ter my store with the doc. An' what's worse, he ain't blind like we allus thought he wuz, but has big yaller-green eyes what are still open an' flashin' an' glitterin' in the red fire o' Hank's torch. Well, sir, 'fore I kin git over the shock o' the first sight o' the boy, I see two bullet holes in the middle o' his forehead where I had shot him dead.

Now, sir, I ain't never killed a man before; so I wuz feelin' purty bad at that. Still, what kin I do? 'Twarn't my fault, bein's the thing ain't scarcely human, after all, with them big glitterin' green eyes. I kin tell ye we all never said a word fer a spell, an' then Hank, he breaks the silence:

"Danged 'f this hain't the queerest thing I ever see'd!"

I says, "Hank, ye don't think the Lord would hold me guilty o' this lad's blood, do ye?"

Hank, he says no, an' this makes me feel tolaber better, but I ain't happy yit. Well, Hank, he says there's somethin' strange 'bout it all, bein's the boy shorely wuz blind when he come, or, leastways, we allus thought so, an' now he's got eyes, but they hain't human. The thing scares us more layin' there dead than it did when it wuz prowlin' 'round the tombstones screechin'.

We don't know what ter do next, but Hank—after seeing them eyes still starin' up at us—says we got ter see the doc an' have this thing cleared up. We pull the body out from the doorway, and go inside.

Hank, he wuz leadin' the way, an' the smoky firebrand what he wuz holdin' over his head made movin' shadows along the walls what wuzn't comfortable ter see. But Hank kept on, an' bein's none o' the rest o' us wanted ter be left alone on the outside with them glitterin' eyes, why we all follered Hank purty close. We went through the kitchen first, an' the boards wuz rotten an' sounded hollowlike in other places, an' we don't like it nohow. But we keeps on follerin' Hank till we gits into another room.

There's a big flat table inside here, an' it's got all sorts o' shiny steel instruments on it. Some o' 'em is polished like silver, an' some is sharp 'n thin 'n pointed. But that ain't all what's in that there room, fer there's one o' them pig-like critters what the doc brung with him when he first come ter town. He is layin' there part cut open with both legs on his right side gone. He is froze solid, howsoever, fer there ain't a mite o' heat in the house. After we git a good look at all these things, why we decides ter go on with our search fer the doc.

We starts into the next room, an' it's got a bed on the far side, an' there we finds the ole man. We see'd at once why he didn't come ter the door when we had called him. He wuz layin' there on the bed with nothin' over him, and all the meat on his right arm wuz either chewed or tore off, an' the skeleton o' the arm wuz hangin' from the side o' the bed onto the floor.

You could see the meat up 'round his shoulder, an' it made me think o' one o' my hairs what I had down to the store. only I uses a sharp knife an' makes a smooth, clean cut, while this wuz uneven and stringy-like. 'Course this don't make us feel no better by no means, but it ain't all. His face was all cut up like somebody'd used one o' them sharp gleamin' knives, what we'd see'd layin' out there on the table in the other room, ter carve his name on the ole man's face, an' he wuz a turrible sight ter behold.

WE had got 'bout more'n we had bargained fer in one night; so I up an' says that we all had better go home an' come back the next day. Hank, he's feelin' 'bout the same way hisself; so he turns 'round an' starts ter leave. But as we all git ter the door we see'd a writin' book on the little old dresser top, an' it is open.

Hank, he picks it up, an' then we goes out. Before we leaves fer good, howsoever, I says we ought ter put the body o' the lad inside the house, an' we does. 'Course it's so cold we knows it will be froze solid purty soon, anyway, inside the house or out, but I wuz feelin' like I'd ought ter do my Christian duty ter the boy, an' make up fer pluggin' them bullet holes in his forehead. An' then I didn't want no stray cats ter mutilate it any farther till we could git back next mornin'.

We wuz glad ter git away from there, howsoever, an' start home. But we didn't go ter bed after we got back, fer it wuz the middle o' the night; so I jest took the boys down ter the store, an' built up a fire, an' got 'em some cheese an' crackers. Then Hank, he pulls that there writin' book out o' his pocket an' hands it ter me, 'cause I've took some 'special lessons in readin' from our schoolmarm when she wuz boardin' at my place.

Well, sir, it 'peared ter be one o' these diaries where some folks puts down what they've done each day. I read it all ter the boys, an' we found that the doc had been writin' down 'bout some o' the 'speriments what he had made on his animules. But farther over he tells 'bout that there big critter what had

them green eyes. I read it all ter Hank an' the boys, though some o' it we all don't 'gin ter know. Though I hain't never see'd some o' them long words before, I read it all jest as it wuz put down. I does my best, howsoever, an' starts at the beginnin':

"November 15. I am feeling highly elated with the success of my unusual experiment thus far, and have just written a letter to my eminent colleague at Vienna. After putting the sturdy young leopardess under the influence of the anaesthetic yesterday morning, I spent nearly an hour in the extremely delicate operation of removing her eyeballs without injuring in any way the optic tract of nerve fibers. I was compelled, of course, to sever the tract a short distance behind the retina, but made sure that I had enough left that I might use it in a very complex suture with that of the blind youth Rubini. I greatly deplore the fact that I have had to flee from the exquisitely equipped laboratories of the boy's eminent father, under whom I received the greater part of my surgical training, but then the latter did not treat me with the consideration due my genius. Knowing the nicety of my delicate operations, he should have permitted me to perform the transference on his son there before the eyes of experts, but he would not. It would have been all to his advantage, however, since I stole away in the night with the youth and have done it anyway.

"But I must continue in my exposition of this very difficult feat. After removing the eyes of the leopardess I quickly placed them in solution, while I commenced to take out the sightless eyeballs of Rubini, whom I had also placed under an anaesthetic. This task had to be performed with even greater exactitude, and I doubt if in all Europe a surgeon could be found who could have accomplished it.

"I stretched the optic nerves of the eyes over an inch by taking the eyeballs in my fingers, and then pulling them away from their sockets. I was very careful to fasten the optic tracts so that they could not slip back into the youth's skull after I had severed them. Such a calamity would have complicated the operation immensely. But I was highly successful throughout. Quickly I procured the eyes of the leopardess and made a very nice suture of the respective optic tracts. Very gently I released the taut optic nerves of the boy, and as they slipped back I placed the new eyeballs in his sockets. I encountered little difficulty in splicing the medial, the superior, and the lateral muscles of the eyeballs,

but had to be extremely careful in performing the compound suture of the inferior oblique recti.

"Immediately thereafter I securely bandaged the eyes, and awaited results.

"November 16. It is rather early yet to predict the outcome, although when I changed the bandages today, I noted that the sutures were healing rapidly. The youth is, of course, still under the influence of anaesthetics.

"I am very angry at Rubini's father, as I look back, because he did not permit me to perform the operation in his excellently equipped laboratory in Vienna. There I could have transferred human eyes belonging to some criminal sentenced to death, or else I might have taken out the eyes of a dying man who was in our hospital annex. However, I have been forced by fate to do otherwise, and I am looking forward with the greatest eagerness to the time when I shall see the light of human reason shining out from the transplanted eyeballs of the young leopardess. I console myself, too, by the thought that after I have thoroughly demonstrated my remarkable surgical feat, I can take out the youth's present eyes and replace them with others, probably human.

"November 22. For the first time I imagined that a glimmer of human intelligence shone out of those greenish orbs, but I have not yet taken off the bandages permanently.

"November 30. Nothing important has occurred in the interim. This afternoon, however, I removed the bandages, and permitted the youth to glance about the room. I am at a loss to account for his actions, however, for, though he appears docile enough as long as he is blindfolded, he becomes irascible as soon as he begins to see, and he can see.

"He walked around the room by himself, and touched several objects in a hesitating manner, but there was no uncertainty in his arm and eye co-ordinations after the first few minutes. But I could scarcely get the bandages back on. He grew almost fierce. I am aware of the normal predominance of the visual over the other senses in human life; so perhaps this explains his strange actions.

"December 3. Truly I must begin writing my article for the medical journal. Just as long as Rubini is blindfolded he is the same youth whom I brought here originally, but once the bandages are removed, he grows unmanageable. I am beginning to fear that the peculiar structure of the leopardess' eyes may be the cause of this. Could it be that, as long as he obtains impressions from the surrounding world by means of

his native human sense organs he is submissive—that is, while he is blindfolded and uses touch and hearing—but that as soon as the visual factor appears, this sense dominates the others, and even colors his whole mental imagery? I must make a close study of the phenomenon. I shall, however, be compelled to give him narcotics in order to keep him under control meanwhile.

"December 5. A strange thing happened last night. I am almost trembling yet as I think of it in retrospect! About the middle of the night, for some unaccountable reason, I grew restless in my sleep, and, upon awakening, found two large yellow-green orbs glaring at me from just a few inches above my face. By the unexpectedness of the event I was terrified. Then in a moment I realized its significance, and called out sharply, 'Rubini! Rubini! Go to bed!'

"I fancied that I heard a low guttural sound, quite like a growl, but perhaps it was only my own overwrought nerves. I was obliged, however, to arise and by sheer physical force compel the strange youth to return to his cot. I must not forget this event; it will require a greater dose of medicine to keep him docile from now on.

"December 12. An unusual thing occurred this morning. While dissecting a guinea pig upon my rude operating table, I heard a soft footfall behind me, and whirling about, found myself face to face with Rubini. His eyes had a peculiar gleam—there is nothing human about them. I am unable to account for it, unless the end organs of the leopardess are strong enough to dominate the mental imagery which they produce. Truly it is strange!

"But Rubini gave one glance at the bloody animal which I had before me, and then, before I could prevent it, he seized the nerveless creature and with his teeth tore a strip of flesh from its side. Surely Rubini has not been underfed, for I have always offered him all that he seemed to care for; he has frequently even left part of his food untouched. Living things, however, may fascinate him. Yet the guinea pig was practically dead. Why did he take it? Since this weird affair brought the question to my attention, I have been wondering what could have become of the many rats with which this old dwelling was infested until a few days ago.

"December 17. I feel that I am losing all control over the youth. Would that his father could see him now! He is growing fierce and uncouth. But it serves his father right to have forced me to flee in this manner, and perform the

operation without adequate facilities. I am, however, beginning to lose my ability to concentrate. I do not seem able to write that paper for the medical journal.

"I went to the store yesterday and purchased some food, and while there mailed a letter to my friend in Vienna, requesting him to describe my experiment upon Rubini to the youth's father. I am getting revenge for having been driven into this wilderness hole! But I find myself lapsing into periods of lethargy and forgetfulness. Last night I forgot to feed Rubini, and when I came to my senses, there he stood before me tearing a squirming, squealing rat with his teeth. Then he would leer at me in a weird sort of grin. I feel that way, too, sometimes.

"I am growing weaker and weaker, and have begun to take narcotics myself. Food does not seem to build up my strength. Rubini is getting beyond my control, and I do not know what to do. He was out of the house all last night, and this morning had a deep flesh wound in his left leg. I tried to bandage it, but he glared, and I am sure that he muttered something like a growl. How long he has been roving about the country I do not know. I wish that I could get him under control again so that I could take out those eyes once more from their sockets. Then I am sure that he would be docile again.

"December 28. Last night I awakened to find the greenish orbs again watching me intently from the darkness. I can not endure this much longer. I ordered him back to bed, but he would not heed me. In fact, he was quite refractory, and when I slapped him on the shoulder right soundly, he seized my arm, and sank his teeth into my wrist. Fortunately there was an open penknife within reach, and with this I drove him out of the room, and locked the door.

"December 29. I am almost afraid to venture out of my bedchamber in search of food. But hunger is driving me to do so; accordingly, I must be prepared. But what have I with which to defend myself? Only a small penknife! What a quirk of fate! The creation of my own surgical genius has turned upon me and awaits beyond the door. He has been prowling around ever since I drove him out of the room. But I must go; if not for food, at least for drink and perhaps neighboring help. I feel strangely a sense of foreboding. At any rate, though, I have proved my contention. I have drunk my cup of vengeance! Rubini! Rubini! I go forth to meet you once more!"

(Continued on page 82)

THE MONSTROSITY

(Continued from page 68)

WELL, stranger, we didn't want no sleep after I had finished readin' them things ter the boys, even though we warn't able ter make out all them long words. But we did git their meanin'; leastways, we got *some o'* 'em.

Next day Hank, he says we all ought ter git them bodies an' bury 'em, and we does so. 'Bout the time that we gits settled' down ter livin' comfortable agin, here come one o' them furriners from Vienny, an' what does he do but dig up the boy, an' takes him away. 'Course we don't see him no more, but the old house — why, it's stood there empty, gettin' rottener every day what passes.

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