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Weird Tales

THE SIX SLEEPERS

a startling thrill-tale

by EDMOND HAMILTON

Seabury Quinn

John Flanders

Arlton Eadie

Paul Ernst

DOCTOR SATAN

strikes a ghastly blow in

"HOLLYWOOD HORROR"

a tale of stark terror



Brundage



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A MAGAZINE OF THE BIZARRE AND UNUSUAL

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE

Volume 26

CONTENTS FOR OCTOBER, 1935

Number 4

Cover Design	M. Brundage	
<i>"The Six Sleepers"</i>		
The Six Sleepers	Edmond Hamilton	402
<i>A gripping tale of a super-civilization of the distant future</i>		
The Elder Gods	W. L. Hasty, Jr.	421
<i>Verse</i>		
Hollywood Horror	Paul Ernst	422
<i>Doctor Satan, the world's weirdest criminal, spreads terror in Hollywood</i>		
The Cold Gray God	C. L. Moore	441
<i>The fate of the solar system hung on a weird duel between Northwest Smith and a nameless being in a room on Mars</i>		
The Dead-alive Mummy	Seabury Quinn	461
<i>An amazing story about an ancient Egyptian mummy and a beautiful American girl— a tale of Jules de Grandin</i>		
In the Shadows	Lea Bodine Drake	476
<i>Verse</i>		
The Mystery of the Last Guest	John Flanders	477
<i>Out of the black night came a grisly horror—a tale of stark terror</i>		
The Carnival of Death (part 2)	Arlton Eadie	485
<i>A ghastly adventure with a Golden Mummy, and the death that walked by night</i>		
Song of Autumn	Charles Baudelaire	506
<i>Verse, translated by Clark Ashton Smith from the French</i>		
In a Graveyard	Eando Binder	507
<i>A ghastly doom overwhelmed an author who typed his story in a cemetery</i>		
The Amulet of Hell	Robert Leonard Russell	512
<i>What horrid creature was he that called himself G. Kodopolis?</i>		
Weird Story Reprint:		
The Lost Club	Arthur Machen	518
<i>A strange, eery story by a British master of weird fiction</i>		
The Eyrie		524
<i>The readers express their opinions</i>		

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, \$3.00 a year in the United States. English office: Charles Lavell, 13, Serjeants' 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.

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WEIRD TALES ISSUED 1st OF EACH MONTH



"If he didn't escape, he too would lie here in death-like sleep."

The Six Sleepers

By EDMOND HAMILTON

'A fascinating story about six fighting-men, each from a different century, who slept through the ages, to awaken at last amid the ruins of a super-civilization of the future

GARRY WINTON ran down that gloomy, narrow defile of the Atlas Mountains with bullets whining past his head and the yells of

blood-lusting fanatics in his ears. His gun was empty and he sought desperately with his eyes for some place of refuge as he ran.

The frowning black cliffs on either side of him, sheer, vertical battlements of black basalt, offered no visible shelter. Then he glimpsed a round dark hole in the rock wall just ahead, and with his last strength he ran to it and stumbled into the darkness inside it.

Crouched there, panting, the young American prospector waited tensely for his pursuers. His lean, wiry figure was taut; his blond, tanned face and serious gray eyes were distorted into a mirthless grin as he saw the yelling, white-bur-noosed Berbers come running down the defile.

They were making straight for the cavity in which he was. Clubbing his rifle, Garry Winton awaited the final, useless fight. He saw their brown faces and glittering eyes as they came on—and then to his amazement they abruptly halted, and recoiled!

In utter fear, the Berbers stared at the cavity where he crouched, their faces suddenly terror-stricken, their voices a shrill, fearful babble. Quickly they scrambled back from the cave, and then in a panic-stricken mob ran back down the defile.

Garry Winton looked out, stupefied, and saw that already his former pursuers had disappeared from sight.

"Now that," he said to himself, "is a damned queer thing to happen!"

He turned and looked back into the dark cavity in which he had been crouching.

"It's a cinch they weren't suddenly afraid of me," he told himself. "It must be something about this place that scared them."

He took from his pocket a little flashlight and sent its bright beam quivering back into the darkness of the cavity.

Garry discovered that this was not just a shallow hole in the rock, but was the mouth of a natural rock tunnel that slanted back upward into the mass of the

● Since his discovery by *Weird Tales* nine years ago, Edmond Hamilton has become a leading contributor to many periodicals, and short-stories, novelettes and novels have flowed in a steady stream from his prolific typewriter. He is acknowledged master of both weird stories and science fiction. His very best stories in both these fields, the cream of this fascinating author's work, appear only in *Weird Tales*. We recommend to you this story of the distant future, "The Six Sleepers," for we know that you will find it very enjoyable.

cliff. His curiosity at once aroused, he re-entered the opening and started to ascend the dark tunnel.

Up through the gloomy rock passage he climbed, his feet splashing in a trickle of water that flowed down it and had eroded it into being in long-dead ages. Finally Garry emerged into a great rock cavern that lay far up inside the cliff from the entrance.

Black, somber walls of basalt rose all around him into the darkness toward the vaulted roof of rock high above. This deep-buried cavern was filled with a deathly, solemn stillness, broken only by the subdued chuckling of a little spring a few yards from him.

Garry went over to the spring. Bubbles of gas came up constantly through the chuckling water, he saw. He scented an acrid, alien and pungent odor from the gas, one that somehow made his senses dulled and heavy. It was like the drugging breath of gardens of opiate flowers, lulling him into strange sleepiness.

He now became aware that the whole cavern was filled with this unfamiliar soporific gas, which, being lighter than

air, ascended through the spring from somewhere far in earth's interior and was trapped here in the cave. Garry was feeling drowsier every moment.

"Better get out of here!" he told himself, turning from the spring to the entrance of the tunnel.

Suddenly he stopped, frozen rigid. "What the devil!"

His flashlight beam had fallen on a figure lying on the floor near the spring, the shape of a man's body.

GARRY cautiously approached the prone shape. As he flashed his light over it, he uttered a cry of amazement. This man was dressed like a legionary of ancient Rome, in bronze helmet and cuirass, his shortsword in its belt. He lay with eyes closed in his swarthy face, his body apparently perfectly preserved.

And now Garry saw beyond him another and bigger man lying in the dark, one who wore a cap-like iron helmet and chain-armor, with the red cross of the Crusaders blazoned on his breast.

"Have I gone crazy or am I really seeing this?" gasped Garry.

He flashed his light beyond the Roman and the Crusader. There were three other men lying in the cavern.

Garry saw that one of them looked like an Italian condottiere or soldier of the Fifteenth Century, his attire a heavy salade helmet and an iron breastplate over a showy crimson silk doublet.

Another appeared to be a Sixteenth Century buccaneer, wearing a brilliant kerchief tied around his head, stained, baggy clothes and sea boots, with two cutlasses and a brace of pistols in his belt.

The last was a slim young man who wore the blue satin coat and breeches and silk stockings and court rapier, all considerably battered and worn, of an Eighteenth Century French nobleman.

Garry looked unbelievably at the five men—Roman legionary, Crusader, Italian bravo, buccaneer, and French nobleman.

Here were five men from five different periods of the world's past, who, each in his own time, had ventured into this cavern. What had killed them, and what miracle had preserved their bodies?

"They don't even look dead," Garry whispered in dazed awe. "They look as though they were sleeping."

He knelt slowly and touched the Roman's face. "By heaven, they *are* only sleeping!" he cried; for the swarthy face of the Roman soldier was faintly warm.

He stared at them, his bewilderment a thousandfold increased, racking his drowsing mind for the explanation. What was it that had held these five men of five ages in strange, deathless sleep here through the centuries? He could not conceive of any explanation—his brain seemed too dull and sleepy even to attack the weird mystery. Then abruptly that very sleepiness and languor he was feeling gave him the solution.

The soporific gas from the spring! That gas, which was making him feel so sleepy and heavy, was what had trapped each of these five men in the past when they entered the cavern. That unfamiliar gas, welling up from far inside earth's interior, must have power to hold living things in suspended animation indefinitely.

Each of these five men had been overcome by the gas and had sunk into a sleep from which they had never awakened, since the gas had never ceased to well up into and fill the cavern. No wonder the tribesmen outside had been in such fear of this weird cave!

Garry suddenly realized that he too was in danger of meeting that fate. He had become almost too drowsy and weak to stand. In sudden panic he started toward the tunnel entrance, but at his

first movement his numbed, nerveless body sprawled to the floor.

He struggled to get up, to reach the tunnel. If he didn't escape, he too would lie here in death-like sleep for all time like these five. He mustn't fall asleep—he mustn't! With fading consciousness he fought to remain awake, to crawl to the tunnel. But his lead-like limbs would no longer obey his will. The final remnants of consciousness were being stripped from him by the soothing, soporific effect of the gas he breathed. A warm tide of utter, pleasant drowsiness swept him helplessly on its breast into a world of darkness in which he knew nothing more.

GARRY WINTON awoke to a sensation of warmth upon his face and to consciousness of a diminishing quivering of the surface on which he lay. It was some time before he opened his eyes, and when he did so, he was almost blinded by bright sunlight. Blinking, he gazed dazedly.

He was in the cavern of the five sleepers in which he had fallen asleep. But now there was a great yawning hole in its roof that let in a flood of sunlight. This hole appeared to have been newly made, for chunks of broken rock were still dropping from its edges.

Suddenly Garry understood what had happened. There had been an earthquake, whose final quiverings he had felt as he awakened, and that tremor had shattered the roof of the cavern and allowed the soporific gas to escape into the outer air. And once the gas that held him in the strange sleep was gone, he had awakened.

Garry suddenly turned as from beside him came a muttered, bewildered exclamation:

"Nom de Dieu! Cette——"

It was the young French nobleman in

the blue satin court suit who had spoken. He had awakened and was gazing around with amazement on his handsome, high-bred face.

His eyes met Garry's, and they stared at each other. Garry's heart was beating rapidly with excitement, for he saw now that the other four sleepers were stirring also.

He said slowly to the Frenchman, "You understand English?"

"L'Anglais? I can speak it," the other answered quickly. "But who are you? What has happened?"

His amazed eyes took in the other four waking men. "I remember now," he said. "I came into this cavern to hide for the night from hostile natives, and then fell strangely asleep here."

He added, "I am Charles, Vicomte d'Epernon, once of the court of the martyred Louis Sixteenth but now a refugee from the rabble that now rules France—a soldier of fortune."

Suddenly both Garry and d'Epernon were startled as from beside them boomed a deep voice in oddly accented English.

"Be ye Christians or be ye Saracens?"

It was the Crusader who spoke, a great, iron figure that stood looking down at them now with stern face and cold eyes.

"I am Count Richard of Launsig, follower in the crusade of the blessed Saint Louis," he boomed. "It was Saracens who drove me into this cavern—be ye such?"

Before they could answer, another voice sputtered behind the Crusader, an angry one whose distorted English vibrated with rage.

"Aye, if you are Moors you are my enemies too, for it was the accursed Moors who drove me in here also, *me*, Francesco Grappone, one-time lieutenant of the invincible Cesare Borgia."

The fiery black eyes of the Italian condottiere sparkled with anger, his hands on the hilts of his sword and dagger.

"Now listen, don't do anything hasty!" Garry exclaimed. "We're none of us Moors, and we're all of us in the same boat here."

"Boat?" roared another voice. "Split me, we're in no boat at all but in a damned hole in the ground, jawing together!"

The sun-browned, booted buccaneer pushed through the others flourishing one of his cutlasses, his small eyes red with menace.

"If you'd know who *I* am, ask 'em back at Tortuga and Caracas if they know Tom Haskins' name!" he snarled. "Ask 'em back there on the Spanish Main, where I'd be now if I hadn't run east to harry the Guinea trade and piled my ship up on this cursed country's coast."

He glared around them. "But don't think that because my ship and crew are gone, you can foul my hawser! If one of you tries it I'll split him to the chin, I'll cut him down like pork——"

"Talk not so readily of killing or you'll get your fill of it!" snapped the Italian, Grappone, drawing his sword.

"Ho, ye want fight, do ye?" cried Haskins. "Come on then, you scum!"

Grappone's blade flashed like a striking snake, but an iron-gauntleted hand smote him and the buccaneer reeling apart.

"Peace to this brawling!" boomed the Crusader. "I'll cleave the man who starts fight here without due cause."

"Well done, Count Richard!" Garry approved quickly. "I think we'll have trouble enough without fighting among ourselves."

Then Garry saw, beyond the sputtering Italian and the raging buccaneer, the sixth sleeper, who had got to his feet and was looking at them. This was the

Roman soldier, a stocky man with a hard, strong face, his eyes looking out amazed yet alert from beneath his bronze helmet, his short-sword drawn and ready in his hand.

Calling up long-forgotten college Latin, Garry spoke haltingly to the legionary. The Roman's face changed as he answered.

"I am Quintus Maximus, centurion in the legions of Trajan Cæsar," he told Garry. "I was part of a punitive expedition sent here from Numidia. My comrades died from lack of water, and I found water in this cave—but had hardly found it when I fell asleep."

"We are all friends," Garry told the Roman. "We are all men who have lain sleeping here even as you have."

Then Garry faced the others. They were still looking around as though utterly at a loss to account for one another. He told them:

"Men, we are all six of us from different times of the earth's past, and we have lain sleeping here together until chance has at last permitted us to awaken. How long we have slept, it is impossible for me to guess, for I can not estimate how long it has been since I entered the cave. But when I entered here, it was anno domini 1934."

"What?" cried Count Richard. "Mean ye I have slept here for more than seven hundred years?"

"And I for more than four hundred?" exclaimed Grappone, amazed and incredulous.

"That's what has happened," Garry assured them. "And maybe for much longer than that, since we do not know how many hundreds or even thousands of years have passed since I entered here."

WHEN he had translated to Quintus Maximus, the Roman's swarthy face expressed his bewilderment.

"But if that is so, then Trajan Cæsar no longer rules the empire of Rome?" he said.

"There is no more Roman empire—even in my day it had been long past and done with," Garry told him.

The Roman shook his head in flat unbelief. "It is impossible that Rome should have perished, no matter what else has passed."

Garry told the others, "We don't know what the world outside will be like. It may be full of enemies, for all we know; for after all we six will be strangers in it, men from the world's past! Therefore I propose that we agree to stick together and help each other in the face of all strangers, until we can discover what this world and time are like."

"Agreed!" said d'Epernon promptly, drawing his slim rapier and extending it in a level salute.

Francesco Grappone slapped his own sword against the rapier. "You have the oath of the bravest soldier in Italy!" he cried.

"And the word of a member of the Free Brotherhood, which is as good!" growled Captain Tom Haskins, clashing one of his cutlasses against their two blades.

Count Richard solemnly extended his huge, unwieldy sword. "I accept the compact," the Crusader said. "But what of yon pagan Roman? Is he to join us who are Christian men?"

"He looks like a strong fighter, and this will give us a chance to convert him," Garry said hastily.

The iron Crusader nodded, and when Garry explained to Quintus Maximus, the Roman's sword flashed out with the others.

"A Roman gives his word," he said.

Haskins drew his second cutlas and handed it to Garry. "You'll be needing

this worse than I will," growled the buccaneer.

Garry struck the other five blades with the cutlas. "Then we six are agreed to fight for each other until we are sure of safety," he declared. "And now," he added as they sheathed their swords, "to get out of this cave and see how long we *have* slept."

He hurried to the tunnel entrance, the others following. But he found it blocked by a solid wall of down-fallen rock. The rock looked as though it had fallen a long time before, and it explained why no one else had entered the cavern and why their sleeping forms had never been disturbed.

There was nothing for it but to climb out the opening in the cavern roof. Yet it took more than two hours of struggling effort before they could all scramble up through the high opening.

They hauled up the great armored Crusader, last, and then stood panting on the edge of a rock ledge, staring eagerly. The sun was just sinking on the western horizon, a crimson shield whose level red rays lit up the world with dying splendor.

A WEIRD and beautiful landscape stretched before them, a mighty jungle whose vast green expanse started just below the low, rolling hills on which they stood, and swept away as far as eye could reach. Great, gray-trunked monarchs of the forest rose to heights of hundreds of feet, bearing on them a solid mass of strangely fronded foliage and brilliant flowers of unearthly beauty.

Great birds or bird-like creatures were flitting to and fro above the roof of this dense forest in the waning sunset, while down on the jungle floor the space between the huge trunks was choked with creepers and underbrush and wrapped already in forbidding darkness. There was no sign whatever of the rocky cliffs

and mountains that had formerly occupied this part of the world.

Garry stared with his five strangely assorted companions across this wild and forbidding landscape, struck with awe.

"It's been thousands of years, maybe hundreds of thousands," he muttered finally. "The world has changed, immensely."

"It's witchcraft," croaked Captain Haskins in a dry voice, the buccaneer's hand tightly gripping the hilt of his cutlas.

"Aye, this looks to me like a world of demons and not of men," came the deep voice of the Crusader, his gauntleted hand making the sign of the cross as he spoke.

D'Epernon pointed suddenly across the vast jungle toward a cluster of distant towers standing out against the red disk of the setting sun. It was so far and their vision so blinded by the crimson orb that they could see those towers only dimly. But even at that distance they seemed of cyclopean dimensions, black, huge, truncated columns towering from the remote jungle.

"That, can that be a city?" whispered the young Frenchman to Garry. "If it is—*mon Dieu*, it must be titanic!"

"It looks like a city of some kind," Garry said tautly. "Shall we head toward it and find out?"

"You are the leader," the great Crusader, Count Richard, said impassively. "We follow you there if you wish."

Garry looked in surprise around the five but found on their faces no evidence of dissent from the Crusader's acceptance of his leadership.

Roman, buccaneer, Italian and Frenchman—all five fighting-men were apparently so stupefied by their awaking in the far future that they looked instinctively for leadership to Garry, who seemed to

understand the incredible situation a little better than they.

Garry said decisively, "Then I say let's make for that city. We need not actually enter it until we find out whether the people there look friendly or not, but we'll learn something about what kind of world we've waked into.

"We might as well start now," he added. "We can make several miles through that jungle before darkness comes."

In a few moments they were marching down the slope of the grassy, low hills toward the edge of the mighty forest, moving in a compact little group.

Garry and young d'Epernon led, the American's gray eyes searching watchfully along the rim of the jungle, while the young nobleman merely stared with casual interest around the strange scene. Grappone and Quintus Maximus were behind them, the Italian's black, challenging eyes darting this way and that, the Roman marching forward as coolly as though he owned the country about them. Haskins followed in a waddling stride, cursing audibly at the low thorn bushes that tore at his boots. Last came the big, clanking figure of Count Richard, wearing his iron armor as though it were weightless, his cold, somber eyes taking in everything ahead.

They moved down the slope through the thickening twilight and into the intensified darkness of the jungle. There they forged forward between huge trunks they could barely see in the dense obscurity, hacking their way with their swords through thickets of underbrush, tripping on tangled creepers.

Before they had penetrated the jungle more than a mile, Garry halted suddenly.

"Listen! It sounds like a fight over there!"

From the dark jungle to their right were coming sounds of combat, squeal-

ing cries, the thud of rushing bodies. Then through the noises of conflict came a brief husky human cry.

"By heaven, it's a man being attacked by something!" Garry exclaimed. "Shall we see what it's about?"

For answer the five drew their swords and plunged after him through the underbrush toward the sounds of battle.

THEY emerged in a few minutes into a small clearing between the huge trunks. It was dimly lit by the stars that had blossomed in the dusking heavens, and it presented an amazing scene.

Crowding scores of dark-furred animals that were like huge rats were gathered about a great hollow tree, snapping and squealing at something inside the hollow.

The rat-like beasts turned as Garry and his companions crashed into the clearing, and immediately came rushing toward the six men. Garry, his sword poised to slash at the foremost of the creatures, glimpsed the thing's face in the starlight and was so transfixed with horrified amazement he forgot to strike. For though the creature's body was like that of a huge rat, its head and face were *human!*

"Blood of Christ, they're demons—they have the faces of men!" screeched Grappone.

"They are fiends the Evil One has sent to beset us!" shouted the great voice of the Crusader.

But the rat-men, though their faces were human, were now leaping up with bared fangs longer than any human teeth, to seize and pull down the horrified men with paws like webbed hands. Their human eyes were red with hate and from them came a chorus of squealing cries.

Garry recovered himself enough to cry to the others, "They're monsters of some kind, not demons! Quick, your swords!"

As he yelled, he struck with his own blade at the foremost of the upleaping rat-men. His cutlas sank deep into the neck where the creature's human head joined its big rat body. It fell back dead.

The other monstrous things were now upon them, but Garry's five companions had recovered enough presence of mind to see that these things could be killed. Six swords whirled and flashed amid the attacking rat-men, as they sought to pull the men down. It was a nightmare fight in the starlit clearing against the human-faced monsters.

Gazing into blazing human eyes, hearing the squealing cries from semi-human throats, Garry struck and stabbed. Beside him the huge blade of Count Richard sheared death amid the rat-men, while beyond him the buccaneer, roaring, whirled his cutlas.

In a few moments all the men were bleeding from bites of the rat-men's fangs. Then d'Epernon went down, pulled from his feet by the clutching claws of the rat-men. Instantly Quintus Maximus leaped to aid him, but the Roman too was pulled down by the squealing hordes.

Garry glimpsed the two being dragged away into the darkness by a mass of the monstrous creatures. He yelled to his three remaining comrades and their blades whirled like dancing brands of light as they fought through the unclean horde to succor their comrades. Count Richard strode ahead, the Crusader's mighty weapon hewing the bodies of the weird attackers while their fangs and claws could make no impression on his iron armor.

The remaining rat-men bolted into the jungle after their fellows who had dragged away the Roman and the Frenchman.

"After them!" yelled Garry. "They've taken d'Epernon and Quintus!"

They crashed through the brush in pursuit of the rat-men, and in a moment came upon a number of large holes in the ground, the mouths of big tunnels burrowed out of the earth.

"They've taken d'Epernon and the Roman into their tunnels!" panted Grappone. "We don't know which one, either!"

They looked helplessly at the scores of tunnel-mouths, into one of which the rat-men had vanished with their captives.

"We've got to find them!" Garry exclaimed. "We swore we'd all stick together and we can't desert d'Epernon and Quintus now."

"But how in hell's name are we to find them in a cursed maze of tunnels like this?" demanded the buccaneer.

Suddenly Garry remembered something. "The rat-men were attacking someone inside that hollow tree when we interrupted. We'll go back and see who it is."

They hastened back to the starlit clearing and advanced cautiously to the dark opening of the huge hollow tree.

GARRY called into the dark hollow, without hope of being understood but making his tone placating, "Whoever you are, you can come out without fear. We are friends."

There was a moment's silence and then a figure appeared in the opening. The men uttered their surprize.

"A wench!" exclaimed Haskins. "And a likely-looking one, too!"

For it was a girl who stood in the opening, a black-haired, browned, slim girl whose smoothly tanned body was hardly concealed by the brief skin tunic she wore. She held a short spear and looked as lithe and dangerous as a tigress, her dark eyes watchful.

Garry took a step forward. Instantly there was a snarl from behind the girl

and out of the hollow back of her a large animal darted to her side. The men fell back in common astonishment and horror.

The creature that had darted out to take its stand beside the girl was a wolf-man. Its body was the great, hairy body of a wolf but its head and face were those of a man. Its green eyes were flaming and as it snarled defiance it bared cruel canine and incisor teeth.

"God's name!" exclaimed Grappone. "First rat-men and now a wolf-man. It is a world of monsters!"

"The woman must be a witch, and the thing beside her her familiar," said Count Richard flatly. "They must be slain."

He strode forward, raising his huge sword, but Garry caught his arm. "Wait! There's nothing supernatural about these two, and they may be able to tell us where the rat-men took Quintus and d'Epernon."

The Crusader protested, "But that man-animal is surely a demon who——"

"No demon, no," Garry said. "Tens of thousands of years may have passed while we slept, and in that time the world has no doubt somehow spawned these strange half-human races.

"Stand back, the rest of you," he told them, "and I'll see if I can make the girl understand me."

He took a step forward and the girl raised her spear a little higher, her eyes holding his with deadly intensity. The wolf-man snarled deep in his throat and surged forward to spring, but the girl caught his hairy neck behind his human head and held him back.

Garry sheathed his sword and held up his hands in a friendly gesture, though cold chills were running down his back.

"We are friends," he repeated, hoping that his tone would lessen the girl's evident distrust.

To his amazement she answered him,

and he could understand her. She spoke, not English, but a language derived from English as Spanish is derived from Latin.

"Friends?" she said. "Then why does your comrade who wears iron wish to kill Hath?"

Garry said, "If Hath's that creature beside you, it's because neither my comrades nor I have ever seen a thing like him before, and so we are amazed and fearful."

Her eyes widened in incredulity. "Never seen a wolf-man before? Does your tribe then keep none of them?"

"We're not from any of your tribes," Garry explained. "We are men from the far past who have been sleeping and who have just awakened into this world, where all is strange and new to us."

The girl's simple, direct mind accepted the incredible explanation which a more sophisticated intelligence would have doubted. Her clear dark eyes smiled suddenly into Garry's and she lowered her spear.

"I believe you," she told him. "I am Lenya of the tribe of Thimor, whose home is in the hills many miles south of here."

To Garry's amazement the wolf-man now spoke to the girl, in a husky, strange, yet human-sounding voice.

"Be not too hasty, mistress!" the creature warned. "Strangers are always enemies."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Garry, staring at the creature. "He can talk!"

"Of course Hath can talk," Lenya rejoined, surprized at his amazement.

To the wolf-man she said, "These strangers are not enemies, Hath. Did they not save us from the rat-men?"

Garry told her, "We did, but those rat-monsters captured two of our number and got away with them through underground runways. Can you tell me where they might have taken them?"

"I can tell you," Lenya said, a little sadly. "They have taken them where they have taken so many captives in the past, to the great underground community of the rat-men beneath the city Khmur."

"The city Khmur?" Garry repeated. "Do you mean that city of huge towers that lies miles west of here?"

She nodded. "That is Khmur, once one of the mightiest cities of the Masters, the race that ruled all earth, but now dead and forsaken by all save the swarming rat-men who lair beneath it."

"The girl speaks riddles," complained Grappone. "Who is this race she talks of, and whence came all these monsters?"

"You do not know of the Masters?" said Lenya. "Then you must come from a time even farther back in the past than theirs."

"The Masters were a great race of humans who developed from the men before them. They possessed all powers and discovered all secrets and ruled all of the earth, their race forming but one nation. They erected mighty cities such as Khmur, which lies near here, and Anthar, and L'Long, and many others. They had power to rend mountains apart and destroy them, by releasing fires like lightnings. They flew in the air with wings attached to their bodies, and legend says they flew even to other worlds in the sky beyond sun and moon."

"The Masters were lords of life, too, and could mold the forms of life as they pleased. And so they bred their human servants into unhuman and different forms, according to the purpose for which they designed them. Some of them they bred into rat-men to work their mines and burrow beneath the earth for them, men whose bodies were made rat-like for that purpose but who retained their human heads and minds. Others they bred into fish-men who searched for

them the bottoms of the deepest seas. Still others they bred into wolf-men such as Hath, to be their human hounds of chase in their favorite sport of hunting. And many other such hybrids they bred.

"But after long millenniums there rose dissensions between the Masters, and war came between their cities, and they smote one another with such terrific weapons that in a short time almost all of them were destroyed, save a few who had fled the cities to the hills.

"Those few surviving Masters were ancestors of the hardy tribes of hillmen to which I belong. Long ago our race lost the last of the knowledge and power our great ancestors possessed, but still we are their descendants, and the only true humans on earth.

"But the hybrid servants of the Masters, when the Masters were gone, survived and increased in numbers. And now in the world there are far more of the hordes of rat-men and bird-men and fish-men and the like than there are of us, the true men. And all of them are our enemies save the wolf-men, who still faithfully serve us.

"The rat-men have captured many of our number in the past. And two days ago when my brother Imos went hunting and then did not return, I feared that he too had been captured and I slipped away from my tribe with my faithful Hath to seek my brother in the jungle.

"But we did not find him and so we knew he must have been captured by the rat-men and taken to their lairs beneath Khmur. And before we could seek further, we too were attacked by rat-men and would have been captured also had it not been for your coming."

"But what do the rat-men do with the captives they take to their lairs?" Garry asked as Lenya finished.

Her eyes widened with horror. "They sacrifice their captives once each month

to That Which Dies Not. Once each month we hear their drummings from underneath distant Khmur, and know they are making their sacrifice."

THE great Crusader stirred and said to Garry, "Ask her what it is, this thing she calls That Which Dies Not."

Garry put the question, but Lenya shook her head. "I know no more than you, for those who see That Which Dies Not never live to tell of it. But we all know that it is someone or something horrible that the rat-men worship and sacrifice to, as they will sacrifice my brother and your two comrades."

"They'll not sacrifice Quintus and d'Epernon, not while the rest of us are living," Garry told her with steely emphasis. "Nor your brother either, if we can prevent it."

"How can you hope to prevent it?" Lenya said. "Already your two friends have been taken through the tunnels that run far under the jungle, to the lairs beneath Khmur."

"Then to Khmur we'll go, and get them," Garry said decisively.

"Aye, we swore a compact and we must succor our captured comrades," said Count Richard. "Also, much would I like to confront that false idol of worship, whatever it is, which is called That Which Dies Not."

"And maybe while we're after d'Epernon and the Roman, we can pick up a little loot in that city!" said Haskins the buccaneer, his small eyes glistening. "Gold, maybe, or gems——"

Lenya shook her head. "You are all mad, for if you dare venture into the labyrinthine burrows and tunnels of the rat-men which lie beneath Khmur, you will never return. But it is a brave madness, and Hath and I will go with you to search also for my brother Imos."

"You will?" Garry exclaimed. "If

you'll just guide us through these jungles to Khmur, it'll be all we ask, and you can wait outside the city while we venture in for our friends and Imos."

"It is agreed!" cried Lenya, her dark eyes alight. "Hath can guide us through the night and jungle straight to the city."

The wolf-man spoke in his husky voice, raising anxious eyes to the girl. "I can guide the way to Khmur, mistress, but it will be guiding you into deadly danger you should not venture near."

"If these men from the past are not afraid to venture for their friends, I am not afraid to venture for Imos!" declared the girl. "Let us start at once."

Reluctantly the wolf-man lowered his pleading gaze, and stood in the starlight sniffing the air this way and that, a weird and grotesque figure. Then he started at a trot across the clearing and into the depths of the stygian jungle. Lenya followed close behind him, and after her in single file marched Garry and Grappone and the buccaneer and the great Crusader.

As they passed the scene of their late fight with the rat-men, Garry stooped and picked up from amid the bodies the stubby shortsword of the Roman and d'Epernon's slim rapier.

The moon was now rising over the mighty jungle, casting oblique shafts of silvery light down through chinks in the roof of foliage high above. All around them in the dense vegetation rose the sounds of small animals stirring, and once or twice from far away through the night came a terrific squalling scream.

GARRY WINTON, marching with his three comrades after the girl and the weird wolf-man through the moonlit jungle, could not but wonder at the sureness of instinct of their semi-human guide. Hath seemed without effort to choose the easiest path through the mass-

es of brush and creepers, yet held always to one general direction.

Now and then the face of Lenya flashed around in the shafts of moonlight to assure herself that Garry and the others were close behind. The girl's slim figure moved untiringly forward after the human-headed animal who led.

Garry heard Grappone's voice behind him. "By Saint Mark, this makes me think of the night we valorous soldiers of the illustrious Don Cesare marched on Sinigaglia," the Italian was saying. "Tramped all night in the moonlight, and then at dawn we stormed the town."

"Yes, and it reminds me of when we of the Brotherhood followed Harry Morgan to sack Panama," said Haskins. "No food and no rum, and mosquitoes and fever all the way, so that to forget our troubles we trudged along through the jungle singing 'Spanish Ladies'."

The buccaneer's voice rose in raucous song:

"Farewell and adieu to you, fine Spanish ladies,
Farewell and adieu to you, ladies of Spain,
Our captain's commanded——"

"For God's sake stop that racket!" Garry ordered in a tense undertone. "Do you want to let everything within miles know we're here?"

"Aye, we go now on no godless search for loot," came the stern whisper of Count Richard. "Peace to this ribaldry."

The wolf-man and Lenya had stopped, and Garry and his comrades halted behind them. For a time they stood in the broken moonlight beside a huge tree-trunk, while Hath sniffed the air and listened.

The wolf-man whispered something to Lenya, and the girl listened and nodded. In a moment both of them turned back toward the waiting men, and Hath spoke directly to Garry in his strange, husky voice.

"We shall soon reach Khmur," the

wolf-man told him, "and your companions must make no more noise or the rat-men will be warned and will be waiting for us. It means all our lives."

Garry nodded. "They'll be silent now—I'll answer for them," he said.

Hath resumed leading them through the jungle, but now he moved with even greater caution and silence than before. They followed the wolf-man, keyed up by the knowledge that they were nearing the mysterious dead city that was their goal.

A half-hour later, Hath stopped again, at the edge of a space of clear ground which lay ahead.

"Yonder lies the city," said the wolf-man, looking out with head raised.

Garry and his comrades peered, fascinated. Out there a half-mile from them and at a little lower elevation stood that great city of cyclopean, columnar structures which they had glimpsed from miles away. Bathed in the silver moon lay Khmur, city of the long-dead Masters who once had ruled the world. It was now a place of black shadows and brooding silence, its awful pylons aspiring for twice a thousand feet into the moonlight, dark and dead.

This dusty city of a mighty, vanished race reached out a solemn spell upon Garry and his companions. Gazing at it with the girl and the wolf-man, they seemed to vision it as once it had been, blazing with lights, its streets trod by a proud race and their submissive semi-human servants, its sky humming with flying craft.

Then the spell passed, and they realized that it was not Khmur the living but Khmur the dead that they gazed at.

Garry whispered to Lenya and the wolf-man, "I see no rat-men down there. Are you sure their lairs lie beneath?"

"It is sure, yes," answered Hath. "The rat-men do not go and come much on

the surface, but their underground runways extend for many miles beneath the surface of the jungle."

The wolf-man added, "I ventured into Khmur once, long ago, and saw that there were entrances in the city to the lairs below, though I did not enter them then. I can lead you to one of them."

Garry turned to Lenya. "You will stay here and await us," he told her. "Here you'll be safe, and if we can rescue your brother you can be sure that we'll do it."

She pressed his hand. "Hath will help you find Imos and your friends," she said. "I will be waiting here."

Garry whispered a word to his three companions, and they slipped soundlessly out into the moonlight with Hath and started down across the clear space of ground toward the dead city.

THE Crusader's armor clanked a little as they advanced but they made no other noise. As they went forward into the shadow of the huge pylons, Garry saw wrecks of statues and walls about them in the moonlight, and guessed they were crossing ruined gardens that once had encircled the great city.

They stepped onto marble-paved streets, still smooth and unbroken after ages of disuse. American and buccaneer, Crusader and Italian, they strode after the wolf-man past the bases of titan structures that towered above them like vertical mountains.

There was no sign or sound of the rat-men in the dead streets and buildings. But suddenly Hath stopped short.

The wolf-man listened, then abruptly motioned them with him into the black interior of one of the mighty buildings. Crouching there with them in the blackness, he whispered, "We are followed!"

"The rat-men?" Garry asked in a low voice, but Hath motioned him to silence.

There was a scraping sound in the dark as Count Richard drew his great sword. Garry and Grappone and Haskins already had their blades out, tensing behind the wolf-man.

They heard soft steps out on the moonlit streets, then saw a figure appear in the silvery light out there, at sight of whom Garry uttered a brief exclamation.

"It's Lenya!"

The girl, hearing his utterance, turned quickly and came in to join them in the blackness.

"I knew you would not let me come with you," she said quickly, "so I waited till you had started and then followed. I could not wait out there."

"Mistress, you should not have come!" uttered the anxious whisper of the wolf-man.

"Hath is right," Garry agreed; "but now that you're here, we can hardly send you back."

Grappone was plucking his arm tautly in the dark. "Saints in heaven!" whispered the condottiere. "This place we have come into!"

He and the Crusader and Haskins were staring about them in awe, the eyes of all the men now having become accustomed to the comparative darkness inside the huge building. Garry, looking about, saw that their little group was standing just inside the entrance of a colossal hall whose dusky walls rose vastly about them, only half visible in the obscurity. The American made out looming shapes of glinting metal, mighty things that might have been machines and that were ranked in symmetrical rows down the middle of the chamber.

Moved by overpowering curiosity, Garry approached the nearest of these things and examined it, straining his eyes in the dark. He found it an upright metal cone mounted in a gimbal-like framework, slender pipes or cables run-

ning from the tip of the cone to other similar machines farther along the hall.

Examining the thing, Garry whispered excitedly, "It's a mechanism for production of some kind of power, you can see from the lead-off. This building must have been a district power-plant for part of the city."

He added, "By heaven, I believe the thing produced atomic power! For there's no intake at all and——"

The others had been listening uncomprehendingly but whirled around as there came a sudden sharp warning whisper from Hath.

"Listen!" exclaimed the wolf-man. "I wish to hear——"

Garry and the rest were silent as Hath laid his ear to the marble floor. In a moment he raised his head and motioned for them to follow his example. His ear pressed to the cold marble, Garry heard a dim, distant continuation of percussive sounds, a throbbing drumming.

He raised his head to hear a choking whisper of horror from Lenya.

"It is the drumming!" the girl exclaimed. "The drumming which the rat-men below make once each month when they sacrifice to That Which Dies Not!"

Garry's heart went cold. "You mean that our two friends—*now*——"

She nodded swiftly. "The drumming will grow louder and louder, and when it suddenly stops, as it always does, we know that the rat-men have given their captives to their god."

Garry leaped to his feet. "Then there's no time to lose! Quick, Hath—lead us to the lairs below."

"But we cannot hope to snatch the captives from the very grasp of That Which Dies Not!" exclaimed the wolf-man.

"We can try," answered Garry inflexibly. "Lead the way."

"Aye, lead the way," vibrated the Crusader's deep voice. "I am anxious to

look on the false god worshipped by those demons of hell."

The buried drumming beneath was growing audibly louder as they hastily followed Hath out into the moonlit street.

THE wolf-man led them to a corner of the colossal building, and paused. There yawned a break in the marble paving, a black hole a dozen feet across that was the mouth of a steeply inclined tunnel slanting down into the earth beneath the city. Up through the tunnel beat louder, louder, the rhythmic throbbing of the drums.

"This way leads down into the tunnels and lairs of the rat-men," Hath said.

Garry turned to the girl. "You will await us here, Lenya," he said. "And this time you will not follow."

"But I cannot——" she started.

He interrupted her abruptly. "You will obey! And if we have not returned by the time the drumming stops, escape from here at once without waiting for us longer."

"I—I will wait," she said, her face white in the moonlight.

The wolf-man came to her side and raised his head to her like an anxious domestic animal.

"Mistress, do not wait too long for us," he said, and then turned and entered the tunnel.

Garry and his three comrades followed, swords in hand, and in a moment were out of the moonlight and swallowed up by the comparative darkness of the tunnel.

They soon discovered as they advanced downward, however, that the darkness was not absolute in the passage. Streaks of glowing earth which Garry guessed to be veins of radio-active minerals existed in the tunnel's walls, and dimly illuminated it.

Hath moved with haste now, but in

extreme tension. Garry saw that the hair was bristling on the wolf-man's back as they went deeper beneath the surface. Now the drums were a throbbing thunder echoing up the buried passages.

They crossed other tunnels, came to forks in the ways, were going deeper into a veritable maze of passages and burrows.

Hath turned toward them a face taut in the feeble light.

"We have not yet met a single rat-man," he said. "It is because all of them to the last one are gathered somewhere below in the place where they prepare to worship That Which Dies Not."

As they went on, Haskins growled behind Garry, "Curse me if I like this grubbing under the earth. Give me blue sea and sky to fight in, not a rabbit-hole like this."

Grappone whispered tauntingly to the buccaneer, "So you begin to grow fearful? That will make a good story to tell d'Epernon and Quintus when we find them."

"Me fearful?" raged Haskins. "Damn you for a lying rogue, when we get out of here I'll show you how——"

"Truce to this bickering," came the menacing whisper of Count Richard, behind them. "Get onward!"

They went deeper still, and now passed great chambers burrowed from the earth, in some of which they saw strange, numberless nests, the carcasses of slain animals half eaten, and other objects.

Pounding, pulsating, reverberating, the drumming was now a roar of sound that beat tangibly about them, coming from close ahead.

They rounded a turn in the tunnel, and then the wolf-man jerked backward quickly.

"The place of sacrifice lies ahead!" he warned. "Take care not to show yourselves."

Hath, with the words, dropped to his belly and began crawling forward again, his green eyes now blazing with excitement.

The four men followed his example, creeping forward around the turn of the tunnel, then pausing with the wolf-man to peer into the space which lay ahead.

It was a huge burrow or chamber in the earth, enormously greater than any other of the rat-men's burrows they had encountered. Feebly lit by the veins of radio-active matter in its earthen walls, it presented to the staring eyes of the five an amazing sight. The place was a great subterranean amphitheater, its earthen sides cut into terraces or seats which sloped down from all sides toward a round earthen pit at the bottom. The four men and the wolf-man looked down from the very top of the amphitheater.

THE terraced rows beneath them were crowded with thousands of the grotesque rat-men. Furred, webbed-pawed beasts with human heads and brutish human faces, they crammed the place with their hordes, all gazing and straining eagerly down toward the central pit.

Garry's senses sickened at sight of that unclean, monstrous throng. Creatures who were but part human yet whose ancestors long ago had been men! Creatures more terrible in their brutishness than the brutes themselves!

Garry felt someone touch his arm and turned unsteadily to find Grappone pointing down, his black eyes sparkling.

"Look, d'Epernon and Quintus!" the Italian said. "Down there in the pit!"

Garry conquered his sick horror and stared down to the earthen pit at the bottom of the amphitheater. Except for a round hole several feet across in one side, there was no entrance or exit to the pit. Prisoned in it stood three men, d'Eper-

non and the Roman and a dark-haired young man in a skin tunic.

"The other is Imos, the brother of Lenya!" came the wolf-man's tense voice. "And it must be that That Which Dies Not will come out for them from that hole in the side of the pit."

Garry's brain began to work. He told the others over the throbbing thunder of the drums, "We will wait here until That Which Dies Not, whatever it is, comes out into the pit. Then if we spring down into the pit quickly, we can reach it before the rat-men can stop us."

"But we'll never be able to fight our way back up through them to this tunnel again!" exclaimed Grappone.

"We won't try to," Garry told him. "I have a plan, and if it works we'll have a chance to escape; if not, we'll give these things something to remember before they get us."

By this time he almost had to shout to the others, so thunderous was the drumming. The sounds were produced by a score of rat-men above the edge of the pit beating with their paws on hollow earthen drums. Garry sensed an avid, unholy expectancy in the waiting throngs of rat-men, a straining toward the pit, an intensely eager anticipation that yet had something in it of fear.

Louder, louder—his ears seemed bursting with the appalling throbbing. And then suddenly, dramatically, the drumming ceased utterly and was succeeded by a complete and aching silence.

Garry and his comrades saw the rat-men hordes strained forward as though frozen in fixed suspense, every eye watching the pit below and the three men in the pit, and the round wall-opening.

Down there in the pit, young d'Epernon lounged against the earthen wall looking coolly toward the round opening. Quintus Maximus stood beside him, the Roman's face hard and contemptuous.

Lenya's brother was bravely erect, but horror was in his eyes.

In the strained silence there sounded the rustle of something moving beyond that opening down in the pit-wall. Then slowly, smoothly, something started to emerge from that opening into the pit.

That Which Dies Not was coming forth to claim his sacrifices.

"My God!" choked a horror-dazed, staring Garry. "That thing——"

"The false god of the brutes, spawn of the Evil One!" rasped the Crusader, his eyes cold flames.

For That Which Dies Not was a snake-man. An enormous, pale-green serpent whose thick, round body was sliding forth yard by yard from the opening into the pit, and whose head was not wholly reptilian, nor wholly human. The huge serpent jaws that were yawning wide as the thing advanced were not human, but the features above them, the rudimentary nose and the flattened ears and the pale, glassy eyes—these were the features of a *man*.

Garry, shuddering and shaken, divined sickly that this, too, was another of the monstrous semi-human hybrids which the Masters had bred into the world. It had been perhaps the only one of its kind, a mere experiment, but when the Masters had perished, it had lived on and on as great serpents can do. The awful, undying god of the rat-men, receiving here the sacrifices which they brought!

Garry wrenched himself out of his daze of horror as the monstrous thing writhed forward toward the three captives in the pit. He clutched his sword and told his three comrades and the wolf-man in a fierce, quivering whisper, "Now! Into the pit!"

They rose erect, unnoticed by the hordes of rat-men below, whose every faculty was focused on their appalling deity. Swords raised, and the wolf-man's

lips writhed back from his fangs, they charged down through the rat-like hordes toward the pit.

THEIR compact group crashed down through the rat-men before the unclean horde was aware of their presence. Swords gleaming, they leaped down into the earth pit.

That Which Dies Not recoiled in anger and alarm, whipping its enormous body up into great green coils, its horrid half-human head swaying with pale eyes alight with hooded fires. It darted its head forward in a striking movement of incredible speed, its jaws yawning. But the Crusader, his face aflame beneath his iron helmet, was swinging his huge sword in a terrific arc.

"Perish before your worshippers, false idol from hell!" thundered Count Richard as he struck.

The great blade shore away the horrid head cleanly, and instantly a spout of green blood spattered the men and they were flung this way and that as the enormous coils of the body convulsed madly.

"D'Epernon! Quintus! To the hole in the wall!" screamed Garry to the frozen men.

He was dragging them, and the horror-stricken Imos, toward the round hole in the pit's side from which That Which Dies Not had emerged. They struggled past the wildly looping coils of the thing's body and crowded through the opening, into a big, dark, ill-smelling earth chamber that had been the lair of the snake-man.

"Quick!" cried Garry to the others. "Hunt for a way out of here, before the rat-men recover and follow. There must be some other entrance to this lair!"

Grappone, fumbling the earthen walls in the dark, exclaimed, "There's an opening here—high up in the wall!"

They swarmed to his side, and quick-

ly as a cat Haskins clambered up to the opening, then helped drag the others up.

The opening was apparently one by which the rat-men had lowered extra food into the lair of their god. The seven men and the wolf-man found themselves in one of the feebly-lit tunnels. As they threw themselves along this, they heard a rising tumult of squealing cries from the amphitheater.

"The rat-men have recovered from their stupefaction and they'll be after us!" Garry cried. "For God's sake, hurry!"

"Follow me!" came Hath's husky cry. "I can lead the shortest way to the surface."

As they ran up the ascending tunnels, d'Epernon panted to Garry, "I will say this for this world: one is not bored. No!"

The youth Imos was exclaiming dazedly, "That is Hath, my sister's wolf-man. Then Lenya——"

"Lenya's waiting for us above, if we ever get there!" Garry answered. "Hurry!"

They plainly heard the squealing uproar of enraged pursuit as the rat-men surged up the tunnels in search of them.

The Crusader, laboring upward in his heavy armor, fell behind the others. "You go on," he gasped. "I cannot keep up——"

"No, we'll get out together or stay together!" Garry cried. "Take his other arm, Grappone."

With Garry helping on one side and the Italian on the other, they dragged Count Richard's great figure up with them.

As they climbed, Garry took from his belt the swords of the Roman and the Frenchman he had been carrying, and handed them to them. Hardly had he done so when they saw above them a circle of silver light. They burst up into

the bright moonlight that still illumined the somber city Khmur, at the same point where they had entered the tunnels.

A swift, lithe figure ran toward them in the moonlight. It was the girl Lenya, her hands clutching excitedly at her brother, words tumbling from her lips.

"Out of the city at once!" Garry shouted. "Once in the jungles, we'll have a chance."

As if in mocking answer to his words, d'Epernon pointed and cried, "See—they come!"

A mob of rat-men that had emerged at another point in the city was sweeping down the moonlit street of dead Khmur toward the fugitives. The eyes of the semi-human brutes burned red in the moonlight and from them chorused squealing, raging cries as they poured forward.

Garry desperately looked around, and saw the black entrance of the colossal building they had entered earlier that night.

"Get in here and we can stand them off better!" he cried.

THEY ran for the big doorway, thrust the girl into the dark interior of the vast place and then turned with swords glittering in the moonlight to face the oncoming horde that was but yards away.

The seven men and the wolf-man had formed themselves into a line across the door, Garry at its center with Hath on one side of him and the Crusader on the other. Imos had grasped his sister's spear.

The maddened rat-men flung themselves forward in a solid wave—and were met by six swords that drank the blood of a score of the brutes before they fell back. They rushed forward again, their numbers increased, a furry, unholy, ravening horde. Garry stabbed and slashed like a madman at the wave of distorted human faces and furry bodies. He

heard Count Richard shouting in his great voice as he swung his tremendous sword in mighty strokes. He was aware of the wolf-man Hath, all wolf now, rending with lightning fangs the necks of rat-men who came within his reach.

D'Epernon was stabbing with his rapier at the monsters as precisely and swiftly as though engaged in a fencing lesson, his handsome face unmoved in the moonlight. Beside him the Roman stood like a rock, hewing down with swift, close strokes all before him.

Grappone was using both his sword and dagger, striking, stabbing, his black eyes flashing sparks of fire.

"Ha, you wish more of it—you crave more steel, it seems," he muttered in continuous running talk as he fought. "Come and get it, then—there is plenty for all—do not crowd——"

Beyond him, at one end of the line, the buccaneer Haskins whirled his cutlas and roared over the din of battle:

"You dirty scum! You dogs! How like you *that*? And *that*——"

The youth Imos, stabbing expertly with his spear, was pulled down and rat-men swarmed over him. But Hath leaped and tore the brutes from off the youth with lightning snaps, and Imos staggered up again.

Garry, as still more of the rat-men came swarming to the attack, felt inevitable certainty.

"We'll never get away from them now!" he cried. "But we'll still kill a few!"

D'Epernon flashed a strained smile in the fight. "It is worth sleeping so long to end in a battle like this."

The line of men was giving inward, pressed back by sheer weight of the rat-men's bodies.

Garry glanced momentarily back at

Lenya's white face. His gaze comprehended also the great cone-shaped machines, and a desperate thought crossed his mind.

"Try to hold them a little longer!" he told the others. "There may still be a chance for us!"

He jumped back from the line of battle in the door and raced back to the nearest of the cone-like mechanisms, the one which he had examined earlier that night. He felt about its base, found switches, push-plates, intricate beyond his comprehension. He twisted, pushed, pulled at them, hoping against hope.

If this mechanism was still intact and undamaged, as it had looked! If it were really a producer of atomic power, then time, even a great length of time, would not have deteriorated its potential energies. . . .

A blinding current of fire flashed from the tip of the cone along the connecting cable as his fingers touched a spring. He released the spring and when the streak ceased, clambered up and tore away the cable from the top. Then, panting, he struggled to swing the cone-like mechanism around in its supporting gimbals.

He could not swing it, it was too heavy for him. The line of fighting men at the door was sagging inward as the rat-men pressed harder. Garry yelled frantically to Lenya, and as she pulled too at the great cone, it swung slowly over, its tip pointing toward the battle-filled door.

Garry leaped down, his fingers found the spring. He screamed to the fighting men over the wild roar of battle.

"D'Epernon! Haskins! Stand back from the door—all of you stand back!"

They heard his mad cry, and leaped back to either side of the entrance. The rat-men poured through the door.

Garry pressed frenziedly on the spring,

and from the tip of the conical mechanism a terrific blast of dazzling fire shot toward the intruding rat-men. For moments the awful fire-blast flamed, and then vanished as Garry released the spring. In the doorway and outside it in the moonlight lay only scorched, distorted bodies of rat-men.

Those of the rat-men who had not been in the path of that awful outburst of atomic force, after staring a long minute, whirled and fled crazily toward the tunnels leading down to their lairs. In a few moments no living rat-man was in sight in moonlit Khmur.

Garry Winton sat down, quivering violently, as the others came running to him.

"By heaven, it was taking a chance," he said hoarsely. "I was afraid that even if I did manage to release the power, it would blow this whole place to fragments."

AN HOUR later the mighty pylons of Khmur lay miles behind them in the moonlight as the little party of eight people moved southward through the jungle, the wolf-man leading the way.

"We'll go back, though," said Garry, to his comrades and the girl. "We'll study those mechanisms, learn how to operate them, wipe out the rat-men and all the other inimical monsters in this world. We could even live in Khmur and those other cities. *We* will be the Masters."

Lenya shook her head. "I will not let you go back there, ever. You will all stay with our tribe, become part of us."

In the moonlight Garry grinned at d'Epernon and Grappone, at the iron Crusader and the buccaneer and the Roman.

"It seems," he said, "that after thousands of years my adventuring days at last are over, and I'm going to settle down."
