

Weird Tales



ALL STORIES NEW—NO REPRINTS

MAY, 1945

Cover by Pete Kuhlhoff

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*Except for personal experiences the contents of this magazine is fiction. Any use
of the name of any living person or reference to actual events is purely coincidental.*

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The Ultimate Paradox

By THORP McCLUSKY

WHEN Beecham, gardener, chauffeur, and man of all work to Dr. Severance, the retired physicist, first saw the crochety old man standing on the lawn beyond the rose arbor, adjusting a strangely complex machine about his body, he thought nothing of it, but went on with his pruning. In the thirty-odd years he had spent in Dr. Severance's employ he had seen too many strange sights to become immediately interested in every new gadget with which the old man toyed. cursorily, he noticed that the thing was cumbersome, and that there were many tiny wires and belts connected about it which bothered the master somewhat in the fastening; he noticed a flat, metallic cabinet suspended down Dr. Severance's back, and a composition panel set with a chaos of small dials and switches hung across the aged man's chest. But these details interested Beecham only momentarily, and, after a brief stand-up-and-stretch, during which he wiped a spray of July sweat from his forehead, he bent down again to his work.

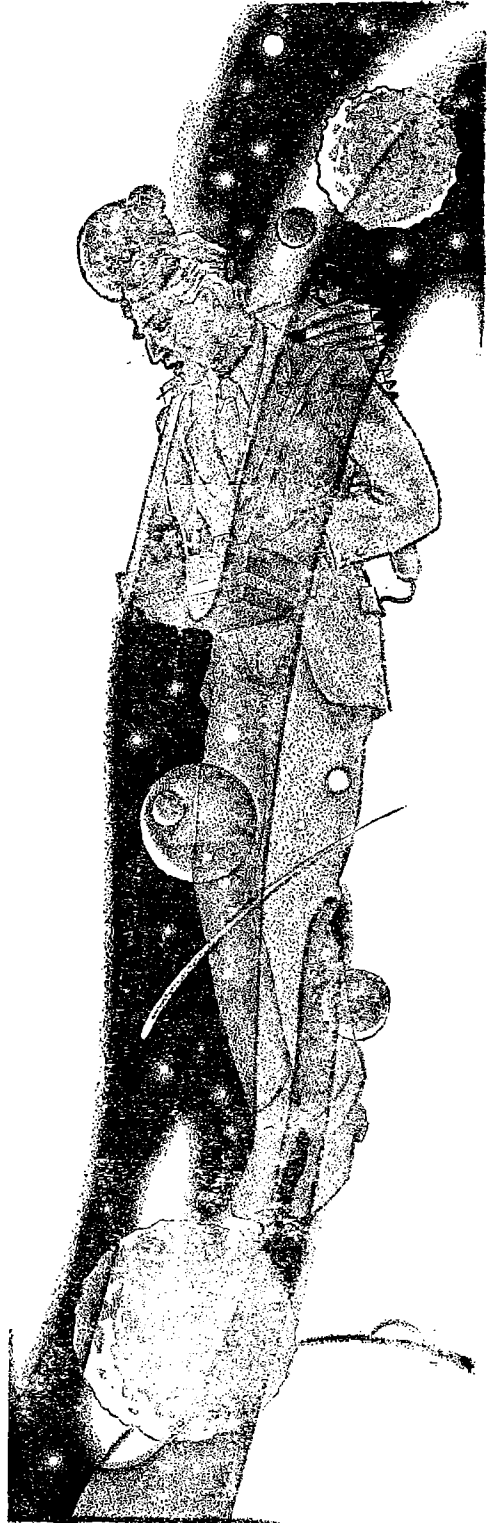
Nor did he look up when, five or six minutes later, the shadow first fell across him. The day had been, up to that moment, broilingly cloudless, and his first impression was that the sky was becoming overcast. Thinking that the shadow might be that of his employer, and without looking up, he said, jovially, "I take it the day is fair enough for you, Dr. Severance, sir?"

Silence, intense and unexpected, answered. Beecham, believing that, after all, it had been a cloud, and anxious for rain to freshen his parched gardens, looked up toward the sky, and screamed, stranglingly, in mortal terror!

Before him, in the acre or so of lawn

Heading by BORIS DOLGOV

*Thirty years in the employ of the scientist
and he'd seen a lot of strange sights
but this*



that stretched up to the rear of the house, stood the embodiment of an insane dream: the figure of a man, a thousand feet tall! A mighty metal fabric the size of a battleship was on its back, and its chest was covered with monstrous mechanisms. The nap of its garments was like thickly woven haw-sers. The thing's tremendous feet almost covered the lawn, and as Beecham watched he saw the soles of the shoes spreading out in every direction, as fast as a man might walk. Beecham screamed again, and the sound was like the voice of nothing human. And while he watched, paralyzed with fear, the thing grew skyward.

Suddenly the nightmarish petrification left Beecham's legs, and, howling and frothing, he ran across the gardens toward the road. Other people were running from neighboring houses; Beecham saw them gesticulating and shouting. Some covered their faces with their hands, ostrich-like, cowering where they stood. Others ran, aimlessly, stumbling and falling, getting up to run and stumble and fall again.

The shadow was no longer falling on him. The sun shone again, glaringly hot. Beecham looked back. The figure, grown immeasurably more huge, had stepped from the lawn across a wide expanse of pasture land, and was standing at the edge of a wood.

From far down the road Beecham heard the wail of a siren. A long black touring car raced down the boulevard and with brakes screaming, stopped abruptly beside the hedge a few feet from Beecham. It disgorged a number of policemen.

Police Captain Riley looked across the pasture-land toward the wood.

"My God, what can we do against a thing like that!" He was not afraid, but his voice shook. He carried a submachine gun in the crook of his right arm, but, after a moment's hesitation, he shrugged, turned and put it down on the front seat of the automobile.

Siren after siren wailed as the police came in patrol and radio cars, on motorcycles, in commandeered automobiles. The roadway was jammed. Beecham, feeling less afraid, wormed his way toward Captain Riley.

"My God, are we goin' nuts entirely?" Riley was saying.

"Please, officer," Beecham pleaded, plucking at Riley's sleeve, "I know *him*." He gestured toward the figure. "It's Dr. Severance. I'm his man Beecham, and I'd recognize him anywhere."

"Holy Mother of Mercy!" Riley cried, looking first at Beecham, and then at the silent colossus standing in the wood. He said no more, only stared at the thing that grew there, stared with his mouth hanging slackly open, and a greenish sickliness on his face.

BY THAT time there must have been half a thousand people lined along that road, watching the wood a mile away, and the being that rose, second by second, into the sky. For the most part there was silence. There was an occasional scream, and there were curses that were really prayers, but there was no coherent word spoken in all that first ghastly half-hour. For it occupied no more than a half-hour altogether, that first stage. Watches cannot lie, and cannot be frightened.

A horrible sound of crashing trees and crunching shrubbery came from the wood. The figure did not move; it only grew. And the forest crashed as it grew.

Perhaps twenty minutes had passed since Beecham first noticed the shadow. The figure at the end of that time was probably *five miles tall!* This estimate cannot be considered accurate, as it is partly based on the testimony of witnesses who were, at the time, half mad with fear. Afterward, however, measurements were made by municipal surveyors which showed fairly definitely the extent of damage to the timber, and from these measurements it would appear that the impressions left in the wood by the feet of the figure were upwards of three thousand feet in length.

From the time it had stepped from the garden to the center of the wood the figure had not moved. It stood as if anxious not to cause any more panic than would be unavoidable by reason of the fear occasioned by its Gargantuan size. In fact, Captain Riley remembered later having remarked that, "It doesn't seem to want to squash anybody, does it?"

All at once, people noticed that the sounds from the forest had ceased. No one

was able to recall exactly when they ceased—rather most people remembered that their attention was drawn from the rending of live wood to the more homely sounds about them: the chattering of nerve-wracked voices, the clatter of rifle-butts, and the sickish sucking of tires on sticky macadam. But the forest was silent. No more trees fell.

The figure still grew.

The first fright began to leave the majority of those who watched. They spread out along the hedge beside the road, and waited, looking toward the wood. They moved and talked as though they dreamed, as though their dreams were nightmares which had failed to develop the maximum of horror. This curious mass reaction was no doubt due to a subconscious lessening of fear of the figure, which had not threatened them in any way.

The figure rapidly reached such proportions that any attempt to estimate its actual size by comparing the statements of eyewitnesses becomes absurd. The feet and legs towered out of the wood, which they had almost completely hidden, and the rest of the figure was so foreshortened by the nearness of the people huddling beneath it that the upper part of the body was beyond view.

It was possible to watch, almost foot by foot, the steady growth of the colossus. Rank after rank of treetops disappeared, soundlessly, apparently vanishing within the solid leather of the boots. It was not until the feet, after swelling entirely out of the wood, had begun to advance across the pasture that those watching observed an incredibility.

It was as if the wood and pasture-land became a part of the figure, or, conversely, the figure became a part of the landscape, without harm to either! Amazed, the people watched, and saw that a tree, merging into the colossus, would not tremble even in its tiniest leaf, but, on the contrary, would stand erect as if the monster engulfing it were no more than impalpable fog.

Then a man, more sharp-eyed than most, shouted, "The damned thing's transparent!"

Presently all of those who watched saw that this was so. As the great boots, like monstrous ramparts of leather, advanced over the meadows they saw that they could

discern the outlines of trees and rocks *within* their surface, as though encased in brown ice.

The boot-soles, a thousand feet high, had advanced halfway across the meadows. The police began to clear the road. Captain Riley and his men, spread a mile or so up and down the road, continued to watch the sheer brown mountain that, grown out of all semblance to anything describable, towered into infinity a scant hundred yards away. Their automobiles, drawn up alongside the road, stood with motors idling, ready to speed them to safety.

Two state policemen, as though gripped abruptly by a common impulse, vaulted the hedge and cautiously advanced across the meadow. They approached within a hundred feet of the billowing brown wall. Then one drew his automatic, dubiously emptied its magazine into the advancing mass. Turning, he looked at the policemen scattered along the road, and grinned. Then, waving his hand, he walked directly into the tawny transparent immensity.

For possibly twenty or thirty feet he continued. Once or twice he put his hand before his eyes, as a man, walking in a thick smudge, might do. Then he came out, and held his hands high over his head to show that he was unhurt.

He talked to his companion. They stood close together. The city police clambered over the hedge and came toward them. The brownish wall continued to advance. It filled half the sky, like a great cloud.

The *thing* was becoming colorless, and more and more transparent. It reached the policemen, and crossed the road. There was nothing solid about it. The men walked in it as they might walk in a dirty, fine rain. It had become a faint *brownishness* that tinted faces, houses, trees, the sky and the earth alike, but that had no reality to it.

WITHIN the hour the vanguard of a swarm of reporters and sensation hunters began to arrive. They were disappointed, for there was nothing to see. Except for an unusual brownish tint which hung in the sky, and which made the late afternoon heavens strikingly beautiful, there was nothing, nothing at all.

"What was it?" the papers asked, later.

"A hoax? Mass hypnotism? What caused the destruction in the forest? Why the great footprints, etched in splintered trees?"

Captain Riley, seeing that the danger, if any had ever existed, was over, sent his men back to the city. He was about to clamber into his car himself when he saw Beecham. He remembered that Beecham had told him something crazy.

"Hey, you! What's this you said to me about knowing *that*?" He waved an ineffectual arm in a half-circle that took in half the world.

Beecham licked his lips.

"I said it looked like Dr. Severance," he mumbled.

Riley considered. He felt empty, like a child who has seen a bubble blow up and burst. "Get in," he growled. "We're going over and have a talk with your Dr. Severance."

The car, Riley driving, with Beecham huddled beside him, hurtled savagely down the road and pulled up with a jerk before the Severance estate. Riley, mumbling angrily, gestured to Beecham to precede him up the walk. The screen door was unlatched.

Beecham entered, Riley close behind him. They walked through the library. There was no one in the room. At the far end of the library was a heavy, golden-oak door.

"Where's that go?"

Beecham hesitated. "That's Dr. Severance's study. He never lets me inside."

"You go ahead," Riley snarled. "By God, you open that door."

Beecham's trembling hands pushed open the door . . .

WHEN old Charles Severance, standing on the lawn beside his house, adjusted the straps about his body and threw certain small switches in the panel on his coat, he knew with a fair degree of certainty just what would happen. He knew that the mechanism, or rather the complexity of mechanisms, which he had devised was capable of doing two things. It built up a field, electrical in nature, yet which tapped sources of pure energy which were even more fundamental than electricity, which exerted an explosive force upon every proton and electron, on every fleck of energy,

within a certain radius. In non-technical language, it was a repulsive force, universal yet limited to its own boundaries, which caused every electron within those boundaries to recede from its proton, and every proton in turn to repulse every other proton. Thus any matter placed within its field, and acted upon, grew, retaining its original mass, diminishing in density; the apparatus itself, being within the field, also grew, and even the field itself, because its action was cumulative, grew. This entire process was progressive and proportionate.

Many scientists have long known that there is a universal yardstick of energy. Call it by any name—call it electricity, although we know that electricity is only a manifestation of it, as is gravitation—call it pure force—call it God; whatever it is, it is the building material of all the universes. Doctor Severance had discovered a way to pour this energy into his field. He had also observed that this pure force obeyed certain simple laws. It spread uniformly throughout a given space, like water, which seeks a common level, and maintains, within narrow limits, a certain density. Released within the confines of Doctor Severance' field, this force would immediately commence adding energy, or mass, to every proton and electron within the field until, should the process not be halted, the field itself, and everything it contained, would become a ball of pure force. The fundamental energy was apparently available, in limitless quantities, throughout all space.

Doctor Severance was well aware that he could never reverse the action of his apparatus. Energy once poured into its field could never be withdrawn. Once he subjected his body to its influence there was no going back. . . .

Standing on the lawn and growing, growing—Doctor Severance, with the thoroughness which was second nature with him, mentally recorded his sensations. He had synchronized his apparatus so that his density would increase in correct proportion to his mass.

He felt no bodily sensations whatever, no nausea, no dizziness, nothing. Yet the ground sank away from him on all sides, the houses shrank to doll-like proportions, and the road before his house became a

tiny black ribbon. He looked down. The traffic had stopped for a mile or more up and down the road, and one stumbling figure, seemingly an inch tall, in the greenish patch that was his garden, he knew to be Beecham. He smiled, but then, noticing that the lawn on which he stood was growing too small, he stepped into the wood.

Growing, growing, growing—he watched the landscape fall away from all about him and the hills became little ridges across the earth. All at once he noticed that the trees were crumbling beneath his feet, and, afraid that he might unwittingly destroy property and human life, he hurriedly switched off the tremendous surge of pure force which had, until that moment, kept his density constant. He did not know exactly what would happen; he might conceivably die, but it was better that he die than that the world be destroyed.

He looked about. The horizon was sweeping away from him, and hills and mountains climbed into view. Beneath him clouds billowed, and fragments of the earth were obscured.

As the ocean of air above him grew thinner the vault of heaven darkened and became purplish; the clouds beneath him were like the surface of a tumultuous sea, splashed with gold by the sunset.

He noticed that he was becoming dizzy. The sky above him was almost black. He fumbled beneath his shoulder for the nozzle of the oxygen tube, and fastened the mouthpiece across his face. The dizziness left him.

He looked at the sun, a blinding, bluish-white ball, with great vari-colored streamers writhing and tossing on its surface and far out in space. The sky had become completely black, and was spattered with millions of hard, unblinking stars of every color, each piercingly bright, each inconceivably remote.

The earth beneath his feet had become a great ball. Along its eastern edge there lay a belt of purplish darkness. He noticed that he could no longer feel it, as something solid, beneath him. He looked down once more, and saw that, like a great ball a hundred feet in diameter, it was moving slowly away from him. Half of it was bright and shining, like aluminum, while the other half

was a blackness against the stars. Across the edge of the earth the moon appeared. He could see it move. Apparently his time-mode was becoming slower. Watching the moon, it seemed for only a few minutes, he saw it come entirely within view. The earth had diminished to a ball the size of a house. The moon moved faster.

Both the earth and the moon were moving away. They became a pretty little mechanism the size of a dinner plate, the moon, like a white cherry, encircling the earth in the time it takes to draw a breath.

Presently they were lost in the glare of the sun.

He experienced no sensation of either cold or warmth.

Apparently a non-luminous body in free space could not radiate heat. He touched his hands together, and felt the pulse beating in his wrists. Looking downward at his body, he saw half of it bathed in bright sunlight, the other half outlined as a blackness across the stars.

Almost within arm's reach he noticed a ball the size of a small shot. It was vaguely reddish in color, and spinning so rapidly that the surface markings upon it were blurred. It rushed toward him. He knew that it was the planet Mars, and, full of a vast curiosity, he watched it bury itself in his side. He turned his head, and in a second saw it emerge from the small of his back. He chuckled.

WITHIN minutes the solar system swept by. Jupiter passed almost as close as did Mars, but seemed the size of a cherry-stone surrounded by whirling motes of light. Saturn, with her rings and galaxy of moons, he picked out against the blinding blanket of stars by her rapid progression across their motionless field. Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto he did not observe. The sun became only another star amid the multitude. For a moment, before he lost sight of it in the swarm, he believed that he saw it surrounded by rushing circles of light, which could only be the planets whirling about it, hundreds of times in each second.

Presently the very stars themselves were moving, at first slowly, and then with the speed of meteors. The little cluster in which he found himself became disk-shaped, and

then it was spinning, faster and faster. The individual stars had become indistinguishable, and he only saw them as clusters that, apparently, stretched on without end. A universe lay across his thumbnail; a multitude of universes spangled his body. And still there was no end to them; they merged into each other until even *they* were merely flecks of light surrounding him and extending onward into infinity.

Then a strange thing happened. He noticed that the universes were no longer giving out light. Perhaps they had been slowly dimming for several moments; he was not sure. But, nevertheless, they had become lightless while, paradoxically, it was becoming lighter all about! A faint, almost intangible glow was growing steadily, all about him. The individual universes, even as lightless motes, impalpable as dust, were no longer distinguishable. But in their place he saw vague clusters that seemed to be inanimate matter!

They were gigantic, and they filled his vision like gargantuan mountains. But, like the universes, they became swiftly smaller, and, as their size diminished, their outlines became more plain. At last, and beyond the possibility of doubt, he saw that he stood amid a cluster of huge rocks, apparently of pure quartz, that towered over his head.

He felt no surprise, but only a tremendous exaltation. He knew in that moment that he had successfully stepped upward a plane in the gigantic cosmic stairway, and that he was on another world! Those quartz-like rocks all about were, he knew, microscopic specks of sand. He stood in their midst and watched them diminish and others like them come marching into his horizon.

Gingerly he turned on his universal force mechanism. He needed mass, the mass of a billion universes!

And still he grew, until he approximated what he believed to be the height of a man. Then he turned off his mechanism.

All about him stretched a wilderness of sand, a desert of limitless expanse, rolling away, lifeless, flat, and heat-tortured, to the horizon. The sky overhead was a deep blackish blue, and no cloud broke the monotony of its vaulted arching. Halfway

down the sky hung a dwarfish, blue sun, crackling out the heyday of its youth like an electric flame.

The sun was not old, but the planet was already old and dead, burned to death, most likely, he thought. Without doubt there was no place for him on this sunbaked world. He was already becoming faint from the heat. He glanced at the dial on his oxygen tank, which registered three-fourths capacity, and, with a regretful glance about him, turned on his mechanism.

He had learned so pitifully little about this new universe into which he had cast himself! Able to step upward from universe to universe at will, able to encircle within the confines of his field an entire cosmos, yet, his apparatus at rest, he became, on the surface of any world to which chance brought him, merely a halting, stumbling, defenseless old man.

The sum total of the knowledge he had gathered about this world, this universe, he was leaving, was negligible. He could not know if the desert in which he had stood covered the entire surface of the planet, or was limited in extent. He could not tell if the blue sun blazed fifty million or a billion miles away.

He watched the planet dwindle and vanish, the sun merge amid others that blanketed the black sky with unfamiliar constellations; he watched those constellations themselves fall together into puffs of light that merged into other puffs of light. And presently he felt himself developing into another space.

ALL about him billowed a sea of intensely crimson light. He could not feel it, because he was impalpable, and it flowed through him without harming him as molten iron flows in a vacuum. He did not dare admit pure force within the atoms of his body until he definitely knew the nature of the substance surrounding him, and that it could not harm him, so, after a brief pause he continued on, growing, growing, growing, while the crimson flow swirled about him and through him.

Presently he felt the red fire washing through and about his eyeballs, thinning above him, giving him the sensation a swimmer might experience while emerging, with

opened eyes, from beneath the surface of water. He looked out upon a sea of leaping fire, extending in every direction as had the sandy desert a few moments before. Above his head was a lake of blackness, strewn with stars.

He knew then that he had been within a sun. And so he went on, and that sun shrank within him until it became like a red orange lying within his chest, and the stars and universes moved toward him once more, and became little clouds of energy that passed within his body, and a new space opened about him once again.

He saw that he was enveloped in a grayish fog, lying thick and dark about his feet and legs and up to his waist, but thinning to a dirty darkness about his head and shoulders. He could see no more than a few feet in any direction, and the sliminess in which he stood was agitated, now and again, as if by the passage of some form of life through it. Shuddering, he continued his growth until he stood in the grayness like a man in a limitless puddle. Mist swirled about his face, and he could barely see his shoetops.

He allowed energy greater than that of the universe he had encompassed to flow into him, and watched the dirty slime stir momentarily beneath his feet as the atoms of his body pushed it aside. Then he stepped out briskly and aimlessly, eager to explore this strange world.

He realized that he was in some form of bog which, because of its shallowness, could not be very extensive. He was right, for he had scarcely walked fifty paces when the ground beneath him shelved upward very slightly, and he found himself waist deep in a forest of lush, whitish, fern-like vegetation. He continued struggling onward through the luxuriant growth for another hundred yards, searching for an open space, but the ground, flat and featureless as a dinner plate, remained encumbered with the forestlike growth. He frequently heard the crashing of heavy bodies through the forest, and knew that this young, moisture-drenched planet thronged with life.

At no previous time had he regretted his infirmities so much as now. Here, all about him, stretched a young world, rich in vegetation, rich in atmosphere, rich in animal

life. He longed to walk beneath the pallid, gigantic vegetation, but he could not, for he already towered above it! To ensure his safety, he had increased his stature to an extent that prohibited adventure. He was a giant, unable to do more than peer down into a weird, gloomy world.

His old muscles ached from the exertion of walking, and, seeing no sign of an open space where he might sit, he turned on his mechanism again until the great vegetation beneath him was no more than grass, inches high. Then he sat down, and held his forehead in his hands. He was deathly tired.

HE MADE atmospheric tests, for sooner or later he must find a world on which he could live. The atmosphere was rich in oxygen, saturated with water vapor, capable of supporting human life. He recharged his oxygen tanks, and standing erect, looked about him.

The fog was so thick that he could not see the ground beneath his feet. He went on growing, growing, until his head topped the clouds. But there was no break in their ranks. They extended onward, like a mournful sea, in every direction. He started walking, in three-mile strides, and went on until he was tired. Occasionally he felt uneven hummocks beneath his feet, and knew them to be hills and mountains; again he felt water sopping his boots, and knew that he walked in rivers and lakes. But there was no end to the blanket of cloud.

So, again, he looked into the heavens, at the great yellow sun warming this watery world, at the unfamiliar stars that would soon be atoms within his body, and slowly, tiredly, sent himself onward into the infinite.

While he grew, and while universes and yet other universes became pinpoints of light within him, he slept.

When he awoke it was to the same kaleidoscopic change he knew would be. Star clusters all about him leaped into view, diminished and vanished in puffs of light. He craned his head and read the dial of his oxygen tank. He had slept (although it is absurd to speak of time when everywhere, except within his field, time flowed like a millrace) possibly twenty hours. With-

in a short time he would have to replenish his oxygen, or perish.

Again the stars dimmed about him; the light from overhead strengthened. Once more he was surrounded by mountainous grains of sand, shrinking away from him as he grew, and he knew that he was upon the surface of a world. Here he found air, water, pleasant fields and gentle beasts, and he stayed on this planet many days.

But because there was no life with which he could exchange ideas he became lonely, and presently he went on once more. Beyond time, beyond space, beyond all things except himself, he climbed the awful ladder he had built into infinity. The gray left his hair, and it was white.

He lost count of the worlds he visited, and of the universes shrinking and growing before his eyes. He lost count of the times he slept, and of the food he ate, and of the things he saw. His life was a constant halting, and going on. The prime motive in it was the oxygen tank, which he filled unnumerable times.

So years, as his body knew years, passed. . . .

HE MET and conversed with creatures more perfect than humans, and with creatures of intelligence more abased than devils. He saw holes in space made by suns so great that not even light could go forth from them. He saw living things, without minds, more huge than Betelgeuse; he stood upon a great green planet so vast that, with pure force filling his field until he could barely lift an arm, he remained still so impalpable that he could walk through metals. He met a mighty philosopher on a tiny, dying planet, who preferred to journey on with him. Together they constructed an hermetically sealed cabinet, which, philosopher and all, he could carry within his pocket.

They went on, and they might well enough have gone on together until they died, but for a strange thing.

Once again they saw the universes fading into lightless specks about them, and the brighter light flowing down from above. Once again the bits of inanimate matter became pebbles, and they stood in grass which towered above them like a great for-

est. The grass fell away from them, as they grew, and they looked upon a green world, into a blue, cloudless sky. They saw, halfway down the sky, a yellow sun. And they thought, "This world is good."

The forest of grass fell to Doctor Severance's knees, and then to his ankles. Looking about him, he felt that this world reminded him strangely of one he had left long ago. Then a few yards away, he saw the house he had lived in on Earth. . . .

There was no mistaking it. The warm, brownish brick walls, the leaded windows, the sloping, slate roof, the trellised walk leading to the garden, everything was there, as if he had only just stepped out of doors.

Dazedly, he snapped off his mechanism. Another strange thing happened. Everything became black, as though he were blinded. He could still feel the earth beneath his feet, but he could see nothing. He tried to take a step, and found that he could walk. Then, after he had taken a few steps, the sunlight burst upon his eyes again. Feeling slightly bewildered, he stumbled toward the house, a few feet ahead.

Mechanically he tapped upon the glass window in the small cabinet in which the Philosopher lived, and watched that circular transparency begin to revolve, as the Philosopher hastened to come out and join him.

Walking like one confronted by an incredibility, he entered the house, and went into his study. Nothing was changed, papers neatly piled beneath paperweights lay on his desk, and a warm midsummer's breeze came into the room from the garden. He sat down at his desk, pillowed his face upon his arms, and tried to think. He lost tract of time, but long minutes, a half hour, hours passed. The Philosopher waited.

There was a commotion at the front of the house, voices, footsteps. Beecham came in, followed by a policeman. . . .

Nothing of a dramatic nature occurred. Doctor Severance looked up mildly, and asked Beecham what he wanted, and who the gentleman was, and the utterly bewildered Beecham mumbled something, and Captain Riley, thinking that Beecham was a fool, mumbled something also. and both men left the room.

But before they went out they did not fail to notice the little metallic box on the table, with its circular window, and the many-legged, scaly thing that emerged from it and sat upon it, and watched them through black, bottomless eyes. And Beecham looked suspiciously at the curious harness on the floor just behind the desk, and remembered that it was very like the harness he had seen on the monstrous thing standing in the lawn, earlier in the afternoon.

In a very few days the apparition in the skies was forgotten. Beecham, alone, wondered why, in an afternoon, Doctor Severance's hair had grown completely white.

AND in the laboratory, the two beings, the Philosopher and Doctor Severance, studied and planned and wondered. They sought, among other things, to know what had become of the years during which they had wandered up the infinities. Dimly, they sensed behind that paradox a simple law, and, in the workings of that law, power.

They built a curious globe, and on it they ruled innumerable circles, which they called by many names. And on this globe time was a circle, and a certain energy was another. And they sought to prove that, as Doctor Severance had gone through all matter and through all energy, so had he progressed over all time, from the beginning to the ending of things. And that, con-

tinuing along the great circle drawn about the curious globe, representing energy, it necessarily followed that, reaching the point on its length from which he had started, the same point on the time circle would be in juxtaposition. What was time? They knew that our stellar universe had come and gone and come again a trillion times during each second they had lived on those other worlds.

They sought to solve another truth; that in their bodies were all the universes, while yet they remained tiny motes upon one small planet circling a minor sun; that in the heavens were all things and, too, in every speck of dust were all things, that were, and are, and ever shall be.

Now the Philosopher, who, despite his utter ugliness and loathsomeness (as judged by humans) was a great and noble soul, believed that, with more experience, might come a solution of the problems which evaded them. So it was that one evening Beecham, knocking at the study door and failing to receive an answer, went in, and found no one there. The strange harness was gone, and, although Beecham did not know, another like it. . . .

Beecham, looking in the corner, observed the curious box in which he had seen the Philosopher. As yet uncertain whether to call in the police, he picked it up idly, and caught himself wishing, with regret, that he had had a better look, that day, at the creature the master picked up in the garden.