

Weird Tales

REGISTERED IN U.S. PATENT OFFICE



A MAGAZINE of the

BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

NUMBER 4

Published monthly by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company, 317 Baldwin Building, Indianapolis, Ind. Entered as second-class matter March 20, 1923, at the postoffice at Indianapolis, Ind., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies, 25 cents. Subscription, \$2.50 a year in the United States; \$3.00 a year in Canada. 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. FARNSWORTH WRIGHT, Editor. Copyright, 1925, by the Popular Fiction Publishing Company

Contents for April, 1925

Cover Design.....	Andrew Brosnatch	
When the Green Star Waned.....	Nietzin Dyalhis	3
<i>Evil Beings From the Dark Side of the Moon Attack Aerth</i>		
Bloody Moon.....	Harry Harrison Kroll	13
<i>A Thrilling Tale of the Kentucky Caves</i>		
The Lure of Atlantis.....	Joel Martin Nichols, Jr.	17
<i>Beneath the Sargasso Sea, in the Grave of Missing Ships</i>		
Deaf, Dumb and Blind.....	C. M. Eddy, Jr.	25
<i>A Grisly Story of the Obscene Legions of Evil</i>		
The Soul-Catching Cord.....	J. W. Bennett and K. L. Soong	31
<i>A Chinese Occultist—and an Evil Apparition</i>		
The Grim Passenger.....	Donald Edward Keyhoe	37
<i>Was the Steamship Titanic Destroyed by an Egyptian Curse?</i>		
Little Island.....	H. Thompson Rich	42
<i>A Pacific Hurricane Hurlled It Into the Ocean One Night</i>		
Servants of Satan.....	Seabury Quinn	49
No. 2. Giles and Martha Corey.		
<i>True Tale of Salem Witchcraft</i>		

(Continued on Next Page)

(Continued from Preceding Page)

The Dark Interval	J. B. Powell	55
<i>His Spirit Was Tied to Earth Until He Made Amends</i>		
Sleigh Bells	Hasan Vokine	59
<i>Snow-bound, Besieged by Wolves in a Russian Winter</i>		
Invaders From the Dark (First Installment)	Greya La Spina	61
<i>A Novel of Werewolves and Occult Evil</i>		
The Wind That Tramps the World	Frank Owen	99
<i>A Tale of Sweetness and Light and Exquisite Music</i>		
Treasure	Alexander Snyder	107
<i>A Thug—a Physician—and a Mistake</i>		
Back From Dust	Frank K. Shaw	109
<i>The Shadow of the Guillotine Hung Over an American Courtroom</i>		
Strange Tales From Santo Domingo	Arthur J. Burks	113
No. 3. Daylight Shadows. <i>Desert Heat and Madness</i>		
The Dark Pool	Francis Hard	118
<i>Verse</i>		
The Haunting Eyes	Eudora Ramsay Richardson	119
<i>They Came Back From the Grave to Torture and Save Him</i>		
The Headless Horror	Robert Eugene Ulmer	127
<i>A Tale of Thrills—and the Severed Head of a Murderer</i>		
Through the Horn Gate	Walter G. Detrick	131
<i>McIvor Meets Peggy Odel in the Golden Horn</i>		
The Electronic Plague	Edward Hades	136
<i>A Scientist's Mad Brain Looses a Radio Horror Upon the World</i>		
The Last of the Teeheemen (Conclusion)	Arthur Thatcher	141
<i>Two-part Serial—Weird Adventures Among Dog-faced Savages</i>		
The White Scar	Nellie Cravey Gillmore	158
<i>A Dream Showed Him His Wife's Murderer</i>		
Grisley's Reception	William Sanford	162
<i>Fate Took a Hand in the Convict's Attempt to Escape</i>		
The Eyrie		164
<i>A Chat With the Readers</i>		

For Advertising Rates in WEIRD TALES Apply to

W. B. ZIFF CO.

Transportation Building
Chicago

Architects Building
New York

Bryant Building
Kansas City

THE WIND THAT TRAMPS THE WORLD

by Frank Owen



Author of "Hunger," "The Man Who Lived Next Door to Himself," etc.

THE little City of the Big Winds lies on the very roof of the world, among the bleak, storm-blown peaks of the Himalayas, as if flung there by some monstrous, frenzied hand, or snapped from the tip of a whip in the hand of a giant. A grayer or more desolate spot would be hard to imagine, or a spot where the tumult of discord is more frightful.

At first John Stepling had been unable to sleep upon his arrival in the city. It was like being in another world, living in a cloudland of drifting shadows where every breath was an effort, and prolonged exertion almost a physical impossibility. He felt like an empty box, strained to the breaking point by external things, in danger of collapsing at any moment. At night as he gazed toward the stars, he felt as if he could extend his hand and pick them out of the sky, much as one might pick flowers in a fragrant garden. The sky was so intensely clear that it made him gasp, though possibly the rarefied air would have made him gasp in any case.

He had arrived at the city quite by chance during an exploring expedition in northern India. He had in-

tended to remain in the weird little town only for a single day, and yet somehow he could not bring himself to leave it. It held a wild attraction which he could not define.

For the most part the inhabitants of the city were as poor as church mice—poorer, in truth, for they had only the roughest type of mud-thatched huts wherein to live. By occupation they were shepherds. They watched over thin and sickly flocks of sheep and goats that scraped out a meager existence from the barren, half-frozen soil. They were filthy-looking, illiterate, and stolid. In lieu of bathing they smeared their bodies with grease. Water was scarce, and they did not waste it; besides, the grease had a tendency to keep them warm. It kept them odoriferous, as well; but to people unused to the sweet perfumes of which the inhabitants of the lands lying south of them were so fond, the odor did not matter.

Among all the shepherds, Stepling could not find a single one who understood his language, nor did any of them seem to care. So long as they did not bother him, he did not bother them. Their visions were so limited that they were unable to grasp any-

thing beyond their usual scope. When a girl married, she married all the brothers of the family. Naturally, in their connubial arrangements, most of the brothers were diplomatic enough to be away much of the time.

Stepling was charmed by the spirit of mystery that hovered over everything. He longed to get beneath the mask which each person seemed to wear. These people seemed to lack personality: yet personality of some sort they must have had. When they went into their huts, did they just pass into blackness like candles blown out? Did they have any home life at all? He doubted it. Were their affections, hopes, desires, loves, all blunted? Did they ever read? It was like being in a dead city. No one approached him. No one talked to him. He seldom heard a human voice, for the voices of the people were usually drowned by the frightful screeching of the wind through the mountain passes.

Fortunately he had sufficient food with him to last him another month. When that was gone he intended to try to buy food from the natives. In what currency could he pay for it? English currency would be of little use among these savage hillmen. He was outside British domains. The people did not value money. What they gloated over was food. Although illiterate and dull, they were able to appreciate how fundamentally useless gold is, after all.

Each day Stepling roamed for hours about the wind-swept mountain passes. He climbed to lofty pinnacles almost as sharp as needles. Sometimes he rambled over a tableland of rock so vast that the greatest giants of legend might have sat down comfortably around it without bumping elbows. Not infrequently he even ventured to walk about the native haunts of the city, where sod-thatched huts attested the poverty of the people. But the inhabitants looked at

him with hostile glances as he passed. They were not pleased with his manner. They did not like his scrutiny. He, on his part, did not mind their attitude. He had traveled much. He was used to eccentricities. And yet he felt ill at ease.

ONE day he walked farther than usual. The city was small and the houses became less frequent, until finally he arrived at the country beyond. Even then he did not stop until he had reached a long, low house, Chinese in style. In the center was a tall pagoda, whose colorful façade was at strange variance with the drab little city through which he had just passed.

Before the doorway of the house sat an old Chinaman. He was so old, shriveled and shrunken, and his face was so crisscrossed with lines that he appeared like a mummy. Age seemed to have turned him to stone. He sat without blinking. His parchmentlike face was as brown as tanned leather. On his chin was a wisp of beard which eddied fantastically about in the sun. His lips were compressed into a thin line. His eyes looked dully out from beneath half-closed lids. His slant brows would have made his face distinctive even if it had not been distinctive otherwise. He was completely wrapped in a great cloak of alluring color. It was blue, like the midnight sky; yet sometimes, as the light struck it, it seemed to flame green. On his head was a square hat, small and black, like a great black ebony domino.

The old man sat and gazed before him. He seemed to be peering into the future, an old prognosticator crouching before his house. John Stepling stood and stared at the ancient figure. The Chinaman was so small that he resembled a child, a very old child with a wisp of beard.

Stepling was curious. Who was this ancient stranger, this man so different from all the other inhabit-

ants of the desolate city? Nothing he had beheld since crossing the mountain barriers had so completely captivated his interest. Perhaps, he thought, this man understands English. Despite the Chinaman's extreme age there was an undeniable air of culture about him.

"I wonder," said Stepling, "why they call this town the City of the Big Winds."

The old man did not stir. He seemed carved of stone.

Stepling repeated the sentence. No response. Then he repeated it again in a louder voice.

Finally the old man turned. He shook his shoulders in a peculiar manner, as if trying to escape from his reveries, from the visions which his imagination had conjured up for him.

"What do you wish?" he asked at last, in quaintly accented English.

Stepling did not know what to answer. He was surprised that the old Chinaman understood English. So long had it been since he had conversed with anyone, the question was rather a shock to him.

"If I am not presuming," he said, "I should like to know what you are gazing at so intently."

The old man's eyes were like slits. They gleamed in his rough brown face as if they were lighted lamps.

"Looking?" he repeated slowly. "Looking? I was not looking. I was listening to the ceaseless voices of the wind. Most men of earth who believe their sense of hearing is very acute are in reality stone-deaf. To listen truly is a fine art. Anyone can hear a mountain fall, but only a genius can hear the music of a flower unfolding in the sun."

He paused, and gazed off toward the jagged, knife-edged cliffs. Presently he spoke again.

"I am Hi Ling," he said. "To my house you are welcome. No human soul dwells with me. And yet there

are other voices besides my own, constantly echoing through my house, for every night I open my windows so that all the great winds can blow through. They are whispering, forever they are whispering. Can you not stay with me a while?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure," replied Stepling quickly, and he felt as if he could howl with glee. But he was careful to hide the intensity of his jubilant spirits.

WITH keen elation he followed the old Chinaman, who now arose and entered the house, if house it could be called, for it was a huge, ambling affair of mystery and shadows. Together they groped their way through multitudinous rooms, silent, weird, vast, through which scarcely even the faintest suggestion of daylight penetrated.

"I keep my house forever dark and shadowy," explained Hi Ling, "so that it may always be in harmony with life."

"You think, then," said Stepling, "that life is clothed in shadows?"

"I do indeed," was the quick response. "The shadows of earth quite outweigh the pleasures. Over almost everyone there is a shadow constantly hanging."

As he spoke they emerged into a great room. The air was fragrant with the pungent perfumes of the East, the incense of aloeswood and musk. In the center of a black platform stood a jade-green vase. In the vase was a single branch, withered and old, a branch whose shriveled appearance suggested the gaunt face of Hi Ling. The flower, if flower there had been, had long ago fallen from it. Above the vase hung a soft-toned yellow lantern, as round and coolly brilliant as an autumn moon rising above a range of mist-crested hills.

Hi Ling prostrated himself. Lying flat on his face before the altar, he chanted in a sad monotone. For per-

haps ten minutes he remained thus. Then he rose to his feet. Without a word he walked across the room and threw open a great, heavily-draped window; then he opened a similar window on the other side of the room.

Instantly pandemonium broke loose. It was as if all the winds of earth had congregated outside that window and now came crashing through. They shrieked and laughed in a thousand fantastic tongues. The discord was frightful because it was so intense, so unrestrained. Once Steppling detected a low moan in the wind, almost a sob, but at once it was drowned by the awful laughter.

The wind crashed madly through, as if it would wreck the very building. It caught up the fragrant perfume from the musk-scented air and bore it off into measureless distances. The yellow moon-lantern swayed back and forth as ceaselessly as a pendulum. Only the jade vase remained stationary. The entire building shuddered, but still the vase did not move.

Steppling gripped Hi Ling's arm. "What does it mean?" he cried.

He pitched his voice to the highest key possible, and even then it seemed as weak as a whisper.

"Is it a tornado, a cyclone?"

Hi Ling shook his head. His ghastly brown face looked more like that of a mummy than ever.

"It is only the wind," he said. "Listen intently. Can you not hear voices calling?"

How long the havoc continued Steppling did not know. Time had lost its importance. Something supernatural seemed to have clutched them up in its grip. He felt numb and weak, almost without the power to move.

At last Hi Ling walked across the room and closed the windows. He had to fight until he was practically exhausted to get the mad wind out again. But at last the windows were tightly barred, and peace seemed to touch the room like a caress. The

yellow lantern ceased its swaying. The pungent perfume bloomed forth again.

THAT night John Steppling sat down to the simplest meal he had ever partaken of in his life. It was composed of rice cakes and tea. The rice cakes were as crisp as mountain air, and the tea was as pungent as it was delicious. They supped in a room lit only by a single lamp, which spluttered feebly as if protesting against the darkness that enveloped the house like a shroud.

After the meal was finished, the old man produced several pipes. They were very black and ominously small. Into the bowl of each he rolled a black, gummy pellet which he had shaped in the palms of his hand.

He held out one to John Steppling. "Smoke?" he asked, curtly.

But Steppling refused the proffered pipe.

"I would prefer to hear you talk," he said.

"Why do you not listen to the myriads of voices in the wind?" asked Hi Ling drowsily.

"Because my ear is not attuned to catch the sound."

"You do not try. If you really listened, you could hear."

"I would rather hear your voice."

"That is foolish," declared Hi Ling. "No human voice is as softly alluring as the voices one sometimes discovers in the wind."

"Nevertheless," repeated Steppling stubbornly, "I would rather hear you talk."

Hi Ling shrugged his shoulders. He could not understand how anyone should prefer the natural voice to magic.

"What do you wish me to say?" he asked finally.

"Tell me the story of your life," replied John Steppling bluntly, "the story of the jade vase, and of the moon lantern."

Hi Ling hesitated.

"I have never told that to a living soul," he said slowly.

"Nevertheless, you must tell it to me."

"You would only smile," said Hi Ling. "You would hold my story up to ridicule, and if you did I would kill you. I should hate to do that. Never in my life has the blood of any animal been upon my hands."

"Scarcely a compliment," drawled Stepling, "to call me an animal."

He was not angry. He merely made the comment to draw on conversation.

"I meant no offense," Hi Ling assured him. "I spoke the truth, for surely, if you are neither a fish nor a fowl, you must be an animal."

"You are right," agreed Stepling. "I agree with you on every point. Therefore I think it but fitting that you tell me your story."

Again Hi Ling hesitated. But finally he acquiesced.

"YEARS ago," Hi Ling began, "I lived in southern China. I was very wealthy. My ancestors had all contributed their share to the measure of my holdings. By profession I was a horticulturist. Even though forty years have passed, the glory of my gardens is still recounted throughout southern China in innumerable quaint tales of fantasy. I raised all sorts of flowers, but I specialized in jasmine, eglantine and wistaria blossoms, particularly wistaria. I had a passion for the flowers, as great as that of any sultan for the veiled ladies of his harem. So intent was I on the contemplation of my flowers, that I seldom left the garden. Sometimes I did not even return to my house to sleep. Instead, I reclined in a charming grove at the back of my buildings, where I could hear the tinkle of a tiny rivulet, and where hundreds of gorgeous flowers breathed into the air a perfume that made me drowsy and caressed me to sleep.

"To me that garden was filled with soft-sweet voices. Flowers talk, or perhaps it would be more descriptive to say, they sing; but it is given to few people of earth to hear their wondrous melodies. Of this few, I was one.

"Day by day I studied the language of flowers. I became a hermit. As time went on I never left my garden. All else was forgotten in the contemplation of gorgeous orchids, sweet-scented jasmine and seductive eglantine. I forsook human life for floral, and in my renouncing I gained much.

"In my garden there grew a single fragile flower, orchidlike in glory, but of a species quite different from any I had ever chanced upon before. It had the soft, warm color of a tea rose, with a tint of carmine faintly suggested in the petals, which were as velvet-soft as the cheek of a maiden.

"By the hour I used to sit and listen to the sweet singing of that perfect flower. The tinkle of a fairy bell would almost seem harsh by comparison. Is it any wonder, then, that I fell in love with that flower? The wonder is that the flower seemed equally enamored of me. It glowed more beautifully as I approached it. It swayed toward me. As I put down my head to breathe of the exotic fragrance, it gently caressed my lips, and the caress was softer than the kiss of the loveliest woman.

"In time I grew to call the flower 'Dawn-Girl'. No lover of romance was more enraptured by his dear one than I. That garden became for me a sacred place. Great peace stole into my heart. The miracle of love had been performed anew. Like night and day it goes on endlessly. When love dies out on earth, then will the sun grow cold.

"I was supremely happy, but my happiness was not to last. Into my life, as into the life of every man,

there came a shadow. 'The Wind that Tramps the World' chanced to blow through the garden. He beheld the exquisite beauty of 'Dawn-Girl,' and he paused. For the first time in years he was subdued and silent. He had tramped through every country and clime of the world, over every mountain and every sea. He had beheld the grandeur of Greece and Rome and all the other fabulous cities, but never had he chanced upon any lovely sight comparable to that of 'Dawn-Girl.'

"From that day forth he wooed her ardently. Each night he came to the garden, singing fervid love lyrics. He brought her all the rarest jewels and tapestries of dazzling sunlight, which he tossed upon the ground before her. He even impregnated the cool night dew with all the famed perfumes of earth, so that as it fell upon her it would be more enticing than even the sun-glare. But it availed him not. She cared not at all for his gifts, continuing to bend toward me, as of yore. This greatly incensed 'The Wind that Tramps the World'. He who had wrecked cities, had leveled trees and stately palaces, now was impotent before this lovely girl-flower.

"His anger was frightful. He roared about the city so ferociously that people fled to their homes in fear, dreading the force of the tropical storm which they imagined was about to engulf them. The great Wind planned vengeance. One night while I slept, he whisked 'Dawn-Girl' from her branch and sped off on his old, old tramp which never ends.

"In the morning I awoke with an unaccountable fear clutching my heart. As usual, I had slept in the grove. I jumped to my feet and rushed toward the bush where 'Dawn-Girl' dwelt, but it was empty. And my heart, my life, was empty also. The shadow of doom had descended upon me. For three days I wept in the garden, and all my flower friends closed their glorious blooms in sympathy.

The entire garden wept. It was a place of mourning. Some of the flowers even died of grief.

"On the morning of the fourth day I went with heavy step to the house of an old Hindoo philosopher who had lived for a hundred and forty years. He was said to be the oldest living man in the world, and also the wisest. He listened to my story. When I had finished, he told me to come to this city in the Himalayas, where all the great winds congregate. Here comes every wind of importance at some time or other. To this place, he declared, must some day come 'The Wind that Tramps the World'. When I does, he suggested that I steal 'Dawn-Girl' from the Wind, even as the Wind had stolen 'Dawn-Girl' from me.

"So I sold my garden, although it tore my soul to do so, and came up here to 'The City of the Big Winds'. I had this huge house built. It cost a vast sum of money. All the wood and material it contains had to be carried laboriously over the winding mountain passes that divide this country from India. I had two great windows built in the room of the jade vase. When these windows are flung open all the winds come crashing through.

"I have been here for forty years. Forty years have I failed, but I have not lost courage. There is always tomorrow, and tomorrow, on endlessly. Some day 'The Wind that Tramps the World' will come, and when he does, I shall be ready for him."

Thus the old Chinaman ended his story, and Stepling did not comment upon it. There seemed nothing to say. He was surprised at the story, but then he had traveled much in the world, and much had he heard that surprised him. It set many unanswerable queries floating in his mind. Was Hi Ling sane? For that matter, was he sane himself?

ALL through the night he sat at the door of the house of Hi Ling. He could not sleep. His brain was a cauldron of seething, fantastic thoughts. He was on the roof of the world. Much could he see that was invisible to the millions of people down in the valleys of Earth. The sky was as brilliant as a diamond-studded crown. It bore down upon him, crushing him beneath the weight of its splendor. He was breathing hard. The air was so rarefied that even in the night he could see for miles about him. From the jagged mountain peaks came the constant din and babble of the winds. On up they came from the valleys on a constant trail that is very old—no body knows how old.

During the days that followed John Stepling felt as if he were living in a dream. The house, the moon-lantern, Hi Ling, all seemed but wraiths in a rather pleasant sleep. Hi Ling took his continued presence as a matter of course. Every night before they supped, Hi Ling opened the massive windows of the room of the jade vase, and the winds came tumbling through. Night after night the selfsame happenings were repeated and yet they never seemed to grow monotonous. Hi Ling endeavored to teach him the art of listening, but his efforts were in vain.

ONE night, as Hi Ling opened the windows, the blast that drove in was so intense that it shook the house as if it had been on rockers. It belled and roared like a lion with a thorn in its foot. By comparison, the other winds which had drifted through seemed to possess much culture. The moon-lantern swayed perilously.

Hi Ling seized Stepling's arm. His face was more cadaverous and drawn than ever. His fingers bit into the flesh like talons.

"It is the Wind," he muttered hoarsely.

How can one describe the events that followed? Hi Ling seemed to have gone stark mad. He pranced about the room with as much agility as an ape in a jungle swamp. His mouth was drawn back until his decayed yellow teeth showed like fangs. All the while he chanted a wild, weird refrain which occasionally rose above the howling of 'The Wind that Tramps the World'.

Involuntarily John Stepling shrank back into the shadows of the farthest corner of the room. He shivered. He was gripped by a crushing fear, which he could not shake from him. He knew that events of great portent in the life of Hi Ling were about to happen. For forty years Hi Ling had waited for this moment.

Fascinated, Stepling watched the actions of the old Chinaman. At times Hi Ling gyrated like a whirling dervish. Sometimes he sprang into the air as if clutching the moon-lantern. Froth foamed horribly in the corners of his lips.

As the actions of Hi Ling grew more fanatical, the intensity of the wind increased. It struck against the ears like something solid. And all the time Stepling listened intently, more intently than he had ever listened before. He thought he heard the sound of singing, in a voice sweet-low and sadder than the autumn breeze through the treetops. He strained every effort. His heart even slowed down to catch the melody, so superb was its beauty. At first he imagined that his ears were at fault, that the beautiful notes existed only in his subconscious mind, but even as the thought occurred to him, he banished it. A sound so beautiful could not be buried in his subconsciousness, for never in his life had he heard music of such haunting beauty. At that moment he became almost as mad as Hi Ling. He knew that he had heard the voice of 'Dawn-Girl', and he did not wonder that Hi Ling had

renounced all else in the world for love of her.

For a while longer the singing continued, then it ceased. It ended on a final beautiful note that was almost a moan.

With a start, Stepling came back to reality. The room was now in total darkness. The moon-lantern had been ruthlessly torn from its hanging. Now the fury of the wind increased, if increase it could. Occasionally Hi Ling uttered a cry of excitement, of anger or delight. And the wind roared back in a tremendous voice which Stepling construed as a threat. How long the fight continued Stepling could not tell. He crouched in his corner, as nervous as a newborn kitten that is snatched from its mother.

DAWN came at last. As it did so the Wind passed out of the window, to return no more. As the first shafts of the sun cut over the jagged mountain peaks and crept into the room, John Stepling gazed cautiously about him. Hi Ling lay prone on the floor before the altar. Stepling rushed to his side. He turned the limp body over, but it was useless.

The chest had been completely crushed. Hi Ling had collapsed, even as an old frail house might collapse in a cyclone.

For a moment Stepling gazed down upon the face, but it was no longer old and lined with age. It was the face of a youth. There was a bit of warm red color in the cheeks, and the mouth was smiling. Stepling gazed slowly toward the jade vase. The withered branch was withered no longer. Life had come to it again, for on the branch was a flower of the soft warm color of a tea rose, but unlike any flower he had ever known before. The fragrant, cool petals were as velvet-soft as the cheek of any maiden.

Again John Stepling turned to Hi Ling, and he was not surprized that even in death he looked young. For youth had come to him in the return of 'Dawn-Girl'. Old age at best is mainly a matter of attitude.

An hour later John Stepling left the long, ambling old house. But before he went, he again lighted the moon-lantern and placed the lovely flower on the breast of Hi Ling. Even as he left he heard the sound of singing, and the notes were joyous and wonderfully sweet.