

AMAZING STORIES

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Our Cover

depicts a scene from the story entitled "Men Without Shadows,"
by Stanton A. Coblentz, drawn by Morey.

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Theft of the Washington Monument

By ROBERT ARTHUR, JR.

This story gives us a strange picture of time travel, and of a mysterious machine of great power. Two of the characters of the story take possession of the Washington Monument in the National Capital and take themselves within it off thousands of years into the future. In one place it is subjected to an attack by rays which they fear will be turned upon themselves if they remain, so they resume the flight into the future and going many more years ahead find themselves upon an absolutely desert earth. They are on the point of seeing destructive collisions between an asteroid, the moon and the earth itself when they go back in time and they and the monument once more find themselves in Washington, and time has receded with them to the present day. The story is highly imaginative and is an excellent fantasy of time travel.

Illustrated by MOREY

AT 11:23 P. M. on the night of May 6, two men carrying three large suitcases walked rapidly up to the base of the Washington Monument and quickly forced an entrance. They were Professor Lysander Green, eminent scientist, and Arthur Hayson, the most intimate of his small circle of friends, and they were upon a curious errand. In short, they were going to steal the Washington Monument. They proceeded at once up the many steps, and arrived at the top at 11:47 P. M. precisely.

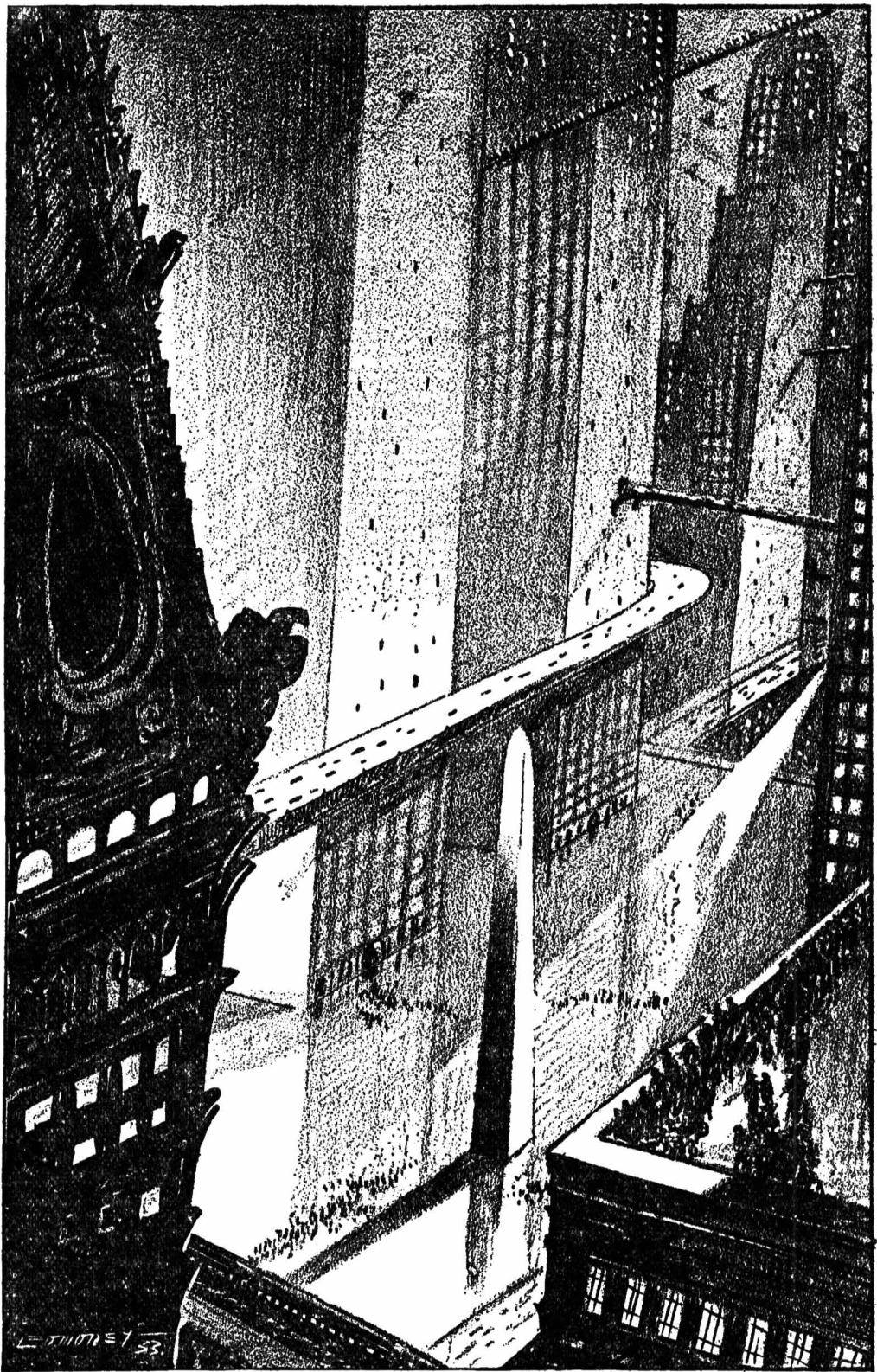
"Open those two bags and get out what's inside, if you don't mind," said the Professor to his friend.

Hayson did so. He produced some blankets, which he spread upon the floor, some canned vegetables, bottles of water, cooking utensils, and a small "canned heat" stove. These he stacked in a corner, and then turned to watch Professor Green. The Professor had opened

the remaining bag, and from it was carefully lifting a small and complicated piece of machinery. As far as Hayson could see, it might be almost anything. A tiny dynamo, minute but doubtless efficient, was connected to a maze of wires, transformers, condensers, and coils of many kinds, and these in turn were joined by a single wire to a heavily insulated box, the size and shape of an ordinary storage battery, with a small switch on the side. Hayson had an idea it might be a radio set of some kind and was leaning over to examine it more closely when Professor Green, looking up, said, "What do you think of it? I had to invent a name for it."

"Very interesting. Very interesting indeed. But what is it? And why are you bringing it here?"

"It is a temperator. It is the first temperator in the world, and it will probably be the last, for as far as I know there is no more material for another one. That



Undoubtedly the business section was in another quarter. But though the buildings towered above them to a height of three and four thousand feet, and for all they knew even a mile, one fact was soon apparent . . . what they saw was . . . one stupendous building.

is because it is made of meteoronium. Meteoronium is a very interesting metal. Extremely so. It has electrical properties that will surprise the whole world when I give out the secret of this little machine. As to why we are here? Tell me, do you remember the article that appeared in the papers a week or so ago, in which it was stated that I claimed to have conquered the secret of time? And do you recall the storm of satire and scorn that followed? Well, that is why we are here."

"Excuse me if I am dense, but I don't quite follow. What is a temperator anyhow? And I don't see how an article in the paper would bring you here."

"Of course you don't. But you will when I explain. You see, Arthur, you are probably the best friend I have, besides being a newspaper man yourself. That is why I invited you to help me in the great experiment I am about to perform. You trusted in me enough to do as I asked, even to breaking in here, without having any idea as to what it was all about, so it is only fair that I should enlighten you now and give you a chance to withdraw before it is too late. I warn you, it is going to be dangerous. How dangerous I can not even guess."

"THAT part's all right, professor. I wouldn't withdraw under any circumstances now, you have my curiosity so aroused, but I would like to have a hint as to what is going to happen."

"I was sure of that, Arthur, or I wouldn't have invited you in the first place. In brief, then, a temperator is a time machine, one of those things you have read about but never believed possible. And we are here to prove to the world that it is possible, and that I do not state a thing without being positive of it. You know how the papers ridiculed me, and how even my fellow scientists laughed. Very well, then, we are going

to give them a jolt that will shock them into seeing the truth. We are going to steal the Washington Monument."

"WHAT? Steal the Washington Monument?"

"Precisely. I am going to steal, or rather borrow, the Washington Monument for a few days. When I return I shall make public the details, and people will be able to do nothing but believe. In no other way than the true one, will they be able to account for its disappearance, for the Monument is really quite large, as you can easily see for yourself by just looking out one of the windows."

"Well, Professor, all I can say is that you have quite a job ahead, if you are really in earnest. And how do you plan to make away with it? Load it into a truck and cart it away?"

"Really, Arthur, you are stupider than I thought. I shall not move the monument an inch. I thought you understood that, with the aid of my temperator here, I am going to transport the Monument into future time. Thus, as the Monument will be in the future, it will be as invisible as a house not yet constructed."

"OH, I see now. You mean we are to go touring into the future in this Monument, so that when we come back you can prove that you have really conquered the secret of time. Of course it was stupid of me not to catch your drift sooner, but I couldn't quite grasp the idea. Can you explain how it works?" And with eager interest Hayson bent over the temperator again. He noted the mass of wiring carefully, observed the unfamiliar appearance of the metal, and attempted to lift it, to find that it was extremely light. This was surprising to him, for he had expected something heavy. The Professor's voice brought him to his feet again.

"It is really rather difficult, Arthur, to explain. Even I haven't fully grasped all

the details yet, and I have been working on it for twenty years. Of course you know that for all these years, while you have been scribbling nonsense for the newspapers, I have been experimenting in my laboratory, and I have found out quite a number of things that no one else knows. This is one of them. What first put me on the track was the discovery of the metal meteoronium in a meteorite which plunged near the corner of my laboratory one night. I dug it out and took it inside and found that it was a lump of pure metal, unknown to us and not even oxidized on the surface, from the heat it had been subjected to in rushing through the atmosphere. I named the stuff meteoronium and made some tests with it. It is extremely light, weighs only three-fourths as much as aluminum, as a matter of fact, and wonderfully strong. Its melting point is very high, for only the electric arc will reduce it to a molten state. I suppose that is why it was not consumed while coming through the atmosphere. Really, it is a wonder metal. As far as I know it is not present upon the earth, and the spectrum does not show it to be present in any of the stars yet analyzed. It would be a great boon to mankind if it were to be found in large quantities upon the earth, but it isn't. This little in the temperator is all there is, and it is invaluable. You couldn't buy it from me for enough to pay the national debt of every country in the world.

BUT it is the electrical properties of meteoronium that are the most wonderful. As far as I can learn, it emits radiations of a most peculiar sort. I have not been able to learn if these radiations are in any way like X-rays, or cathode rays, but I am of the opinion that they are entirely different. Just how, I don't know, but in some manner these radiations affect time. Time, I have come to believe,

is a force or power of some kind, like electricity, about which we know nothing. It exists, but we are unable to do anything with it. But now I have found a means to control this time-force. When properly applied, electric currents sent through coils of meteoronium will set up a magnetic field which affects the time-force and causes it to be absorbed. I don't know the precise how or why, though I hope to find out some day but I know that it is so. Once while I was experimenting with coils of the metal, finding its electric resistance and so forth, the coils suddenly disappeared. I was dumbfounded, but of course the battery connection was broken when they vanished, and ten minutes later the coils reappeared upon the table as suddenly as they had disappeared. This set me to experimenting, and the result is the temperator. I have arranged it so that as the coils absorb the time-force, when the current is on, they store it in this time-battery. Of course, as the power of the machine forces the battery to absorb a great deal more time-force than it is ordinarily capable of, it will naturally release it as soon as it can. So to release the stored up time-force and return through time it is only necessary to throw this switch on the side of the battery case. Then the time-force is released through the coils in the same manner and at the same rate as it was absorbed. Another way would be to knock the insulation off the battery, but it would be destructive, for the enormous energy stored up would all escape at once and probably wreck the machine. This would be extremely sudden, and you would return through time hundreds of times faster than you had advanced. Of course, the coils themselves absorb a certain amount of time-force which they do not release, and so it is impossible to return to the exact minute at which you left. The difference will probably be a week or so.

“SO, if you follow me, you see that the temperator is capable of affecting the time over a certain limited area in such a manner that it will be removed and we will advance through time. This process is much like tearing down a stone wall to let you pass from one field to another. We tear down the time barrier that lies between us and to-morrow, or next week, or the next century. It is easily and quickly done, and I can control the force over quite a large area. All that is necessary is to start the dynamo, and at once we shoot through time. As soon as we stop the dynamo the time travel stops, and we are in a different time. It is quite simple, you see, my friend. And now are you still determined to come, knowing that something may happen to prevent us from returning from the future?”

The Professor's words had at first amazed Arthur Hayson, but soon the Professor's enthusiasm communicated itself to him and with even more ardor than to Professor Green himself. Hayson was anxious to set out on this amazing trip through time. “Hurrah for the temperator!” he shouted in an excess of enthusiasm. “Quick, Professor! Let us get started before someone comes to stop us!”

“Ah, that is the spirit, Arthur. You are right. We must get going. Some one may possibly have seen us enter and may attempt to prevent us from carrying out our experiment. We will commence!”

“And will we travel through time like the heroes of those stories that novelists write?” eagerly inquired Hayson of Professor Green. “Will we see the sun rise and set twice a minute and see buildings grow up around us and all that?”

“No, no. Nothing of that sort. It is only in the imagination of the authors that time machines speed up time so that the sun rises and sets so fast you can't

see it. We will travel very differently. We are not going to travel through time, we are going to remove it from before us. We will be traveling in dead darkness and absolute quiet the whole time for we will be tunneling through this same time as we would tunnel under a mountain. But we will get tired and hungry, so after we have started we will sleep for a few hours, and then we will be fully prepared to face the future, in a new sense of the words.”

With Hayson as an eager observer, Professor Green set about the task of starting the temperator. He carefully adjusted what he explained to be the power rheostat, and set the direction pointers which controlled the space to be affected by the rays. A minute or so sufficed for this, and he was ready to start the minute generator. It started with a hum as he threw the switch, and immediately the temperator sprang into brilliance like an electric light bulb switched on. Every inch of wire glowed brilliantly. Following the Professor's example, Hayson touched the wires, to find that no heat was noticeable. This cold light then must be the visible evidence of the rays that were even now shooting out into the space around them. The strange glow lighted up the little room at the top of the Monument, so that flashlights were no longer needed. But when he went to the windows Hayson could see nothing. Outside it was blacker than black. There was a total absence of light. A strange quiet was also over everything. The rustling of the trees, the moon-light upon the ground below, the night noises and sights, all had been utterly cut out. Hayson turned back to the Professor, strangely excited and elated. He had not known such a thrill in years. “We are off!” he cried.

“YES,” chuckled the Professor, “we are off. I wonder what they will

say in the morning when they wake up and find their monument gone. There will be a great fuss, I have no doubt. But when we return there will be an even greater one."

"How fast are we going?" inquired Hayson.

"About a thousand years per hour. There are ten power stages, with the highest twenty thousand years an hour and the lowest one thousand years. We are on the lowest stage. It is my plan to continue at the same rate for about six hours, during which we can sleep. I don't want to get too far into the future before stopping, and I think that six thousand years will be a good length of time. We can shut off the power as soon as we awaken. What do you think?"

To Hayson this was a splendid idea, and he said so. In his exalted mood he would have liked to travel a full rate for hundreds of thousands of years, but he too wished to see what lay in the near future. (There would be time enough later to travel faster and farther. Before he fell asleep he made a mental calculation. There were supplies for several days, and fuel for the dynamo for thirty-five running hours. Twenty-five hours at twenty thousand years an hour, say, and ten at one thousand years, that would give more than 500,000 years.

"FIVE hundred thousand years!" he murmured ecstatically and fell asleep.

But the strange quiet had an unforeseen effect upon the two men. Undisturbed by any noise but the hum of the dynamo, they slept longer than they had planned, and it was fully ten hours later that Hayson awoke and sleepily rubbed his eyes. He sat up and saw that Professor Green was already awake, was getting a meal ready. The Professor turned for a moment from his labors and tossed a cheery greeting.

"Hello," he said. "It's about time for you to be getting up. You've been asleep for ten hours. I overslept, too, and we want to stop as soon as possible, so come and help."

As he munched the meal, called breakfast for no reason save that their last meal had been supper, Hayson watched the glowing machine before them. Ten thousand years! To think that they were already in the year 12000! It took perhaps fifteen minutes to eat and clear away the scraps, which they did by simply throwing them out the window into some other time, and then they were ready for the great moment. Hayson took his position at one of the north windows while the Professor made everything ready. With a curious excitement stealing over him Hayson saw the professor throw the dynamo switch. The glow of the temperator died suddenly, and without warning a great glow of light and a mighty wave of sound rolled over them. The terrific suddenness, after the long hours of dark and quiet, staggered them both for a few moments, then as their eyes adjusted themselves to the light a wonderful scene spread before them.

BEFORE them was a mighty avenue, lined on both sides with a solid wall of giant buildings. As far as the eye could see the blaze of electric lights came from the windows of huge buildings stretching down the avenue into the distance. It was night, but so powerful was the illumination that at first their impression was that it was daytime. But it did not take them long to make out the true details. The light was coming from the windows of titanic skyscrapers surrounding them, skyscrapers that dwarfed the Washington Monument into insignificance as a giant oak would dwarf a match stick. The glaring of the lights made many things hard to make out. Daylight

would have given a much better view. But this much at least they were able to make out.

They were at the intersection of two great streets, presumably in the apartment section of the city. At least that was the impression that Hayson somehow received. He was convinced that these amazing buildings were not office buildings, as we have them now, but great hives in which the cramped humanity spent the night. Undoubtedly the business section was in another quarter. But though the buildings towered above them to a height of three and four thousand feet, and for all they knew even a mile, one fact was soon apparent. The fact was just this: what they saw was not a collection of enormous buildings, as it seemed, but one stupendous building. True, at different points the roof level varied hundreds of feet, but the whole mass was connected. At about every four hundred feet in height and every three hundred yards in length there were massive connecting bridges that joined the apartments on opposite sides of the street. These bridges served as a double purpose. They were both connecting links and supporting girders, a sort of flying buttresses. They were heavy, solid girders that joined the mass together in one solid pile, and so made great heights possible without the necessity for building in pyramid fashion, with many levels, each smaller than the one below. Thus, with a foundation that may have been easily six thousand square miles in area, it is perfectly possible that a great tower, which they saw three miles to the north, might have been of the stupendous height Hayson estimated, between three and four miles. To us it sounds wildly impossible, but remembering the conditions, there is no reason that it could not have been even higher. The use of the huge tower is more or less of a mystery. Hayson thinks that it may have

served either as a signal and beacon tower, for a great light shone on top of it, or a lookout tower. Perhaps both. Either is reasonable, especially as there were swarms of aircraft about it.

BUT the attention of Professor Green and Arthur Hayson was directed more especially to the objects immediately around them. Directly to the north, a little above the level of their windows, and perhaps twenty-five yards distant, one of the connecting bridges was located. It consisted of both an interior passage, and an external one, the latter for foot travel only. Through one of the many windows in this structure Hayson was sure that he saw an automobile cross his view, and it is conceivable that there were indeed actual roads for vehicles within the great building. It is, in fact, most probable. Upon the pedestrian walk on the outside there were several persons crossing, and these were naturally greatly astonished when the huge stone shaft appeared suddenly. Most of them fled immediately, and probably reported the occurrence to whatever authorities there were, for it was not two minutes before a battery of searchlights somewhere on the top of the buildings was playing over the Monument. In another minute or two the bridge was crowded with spirits hardier than those who had fled. To them the monument must have been a wonderful mystery, etched out in blazing white as it was. Who can tell what their emotions were? Probably curiosity was among them. At least, it was not long before the crowd on the bridge was dangerously large, with more struggling to push their way on. From what he could see of them, Hayson describes them as being quite ordinary looking, not differing noticeably from the people of to-day, except, perhaps, that they were below the average size. Conflicting emotions gripped the two as they watched

the scene. All were wildly excited,

"Washington of the future!" cried Professor Green, in the wildest ecstasy.

"After ten thousand years!" shouted Hayson.

It is no wonder that they were overwhelmed, but it was not long before the Professor regained his customary calm.

"WE appear to have been placed in one of the streets of the future Washington," he observed. "It is lucky we did not happen to be inside of one of these buildings. I do not know what would have happened then. It is a danger I did not think of."

"And we seem to be attracting attention," added Hayson.

It was true. The near-by bridge was jammed with a pushing, shoving crowd of people endeavoring to catch sight of our hero and his friend. Already several persons had been shoved screaming over the guard rail, to plunge to their death in the streets below, without attracting more than casual notice from the others, so great was the universal excitement and curiosity concerning the strange apparitions. The number of searchlights played over them was increasing every minute, until the glare was so great that they had great difficulty in seeing anything at all.

"I wish they would shut off those blasted searchlights," growled Professor Green irritably. "I can't see a thing."

"What shall be do now?" asked Hayson.

"Wait until morning and make ourselves known to the authorities," said the Professor. "I think that if possible we will stay here many weeks. Time doesn't matter, you know, we can always return within a week or so of our departure. But the first thing to do is to let them know who and what we are. I'm going to drop a note. Somebody is sure to pick it up and take it to the authorities."

"But suppose they can't read your writing. It will probably be to them like very old English is to us, or worse."

"Then they'll take it to the authorities anyway. Here goes."

PROFESSOR GREEN leaned far out the window, and observing that as yet but few persons had gathered in the street, he waved to them and tossed a package he had prepared as far out as he could. It arched out and started to fall. One of the searchlights picked it up and followed it in its fall. Then suddenly from somewhere above them a new ray shot down. It was a glaring, eye-searing brilliance, as white as white hot platinum. Hayson describes it. It picked up the bundle and before he could realize it the bundle was gone. A tiny flash and a puff of smoke, and it was no more. Astonished beyond measure, they saw it vanish.

"The fools!" growled Professor Green. "What are they doing?"

At that moment the brilliant ray shifted and rested upon the base of the monument, then it started to move upwards. From below came a cracking sound of rocks splitting, and a wave of intense heat swept up upon their peering faces. Comprehension came to the professor first.

"Quick!" he cried. "It's a heat ray!"

"But what . . .?" began Hayson, puzzled.

"A heat ray!" the Professor shouted. "They take us for invaders and are bent upon destroying us. We'll have to leave, or that ray will be in the windows in a minute, and after that we'll go the way you saw the note go."

In a single leap he was beside the temperator and had thrown the dynamo switch. Even as the first wave of the terrible heat began to pour in, the welcome hum of the dynamo began. As though an electric light had been turned

out, blackness descended over them and the wonderful sight was blotted out.

HAYSON was dazed by the suddenness of it all, it took a minute or two for the full realization of their danger to percolate through his brain, then he gave a sudden gasp as he realized how narrow had been their escape. Suppose the ray had started at the top! Professor Green gave a sigh.

"Too bad! Too bad!" he murmured. I could have learned so much. But it was not to be. Oh, well, there will be other opportunities. What do you say, Arthur? Shall I turn on full power and run for a while at that rate?"

"Yes, by all means do."

By quick stages the power was increased until the little machine glowed like a living thing. The interior of the small room at the top of the Monument was lit as though by many electric lights, and the men could almost feel the powerful waves that were being emitted. These seemed to affect them in some manner. They began to grow excited. Both began to be impatient to go faster, but they could not. They grew restless, and eager for great lengths of time. They did not desire to stop, but wished to go on as far as they could through time. An hour passed then another, and another, but still neither made any suggestion that they should shut off the dynamo.

Suddenly Hayson shouted his feelings.

"Let us go until our fuel is gone! Let us not stop at these paltry lengths of time. What is ten, twenty, thirty thousand years, compared to a hundred thousand? Let us conquer a hundred thousand years, two hundred thousand, five hundred thousand! Half a million years! That is worth while! Why should we stop now? Let us continue!"

To this enthusiastic outburst, the Professor, also excited by the invisible rays, gave assent. He too wished for vast

stretches of time. So for a full twenty-five hours, or until their fuel gave out, the two intrepid voyagers sped on through time at the rate of twenty thousand years an hour. They slept but little, so excited had they become. They were neither tired nor hungry. Evidently the time affecting rays has unsuspected exhilarating powers, like those of pure oxygen.

At last only a few drops of the fuel were left. Suddenly the Professor was struck with an idea.

LET us carry everything down to ground level," he cried. "We can then observe what happens much better."

This was done, and with Professor Green bearing the precious machine, and Hayson loaded down with the other things, they descended the long flights of steps.

Hardly had they arranged everything at the foot of the stairs than the last drop of fuel was used.

Automatically the generator stopped, and, of course, the temperator. Their time flight was over.

With almost shocking suddenness light blazed about them. The two men rushed out into the open and gazed exultantly about them at the things they had come fully half a million years to see. They had travelled out of the depths of time to see—what?

As soon as their eyes were accustomed to the glare the men gave a gasp of surprise, or disappointment. They were in a dead world. They had realized that there would be many changes, but they had not been prepared for this. There was nothing. Absolutely nothing. Not a tree, not a shrub, not an animal, not a bird, not an insect. Only themselves. Underfoot was scorching white sand. Overhead a great, yellow sun slid across the heavens. That was all. As far as

the eye could see the sand extended to the north, west and south in gently undulating hills, fiercely reflecting the heat of the sun above. On the east was the sea.

The Monument was a few hundred feet back from the edge of a high, steep bluff, at whose feet waves were dashing thunderously. Save for these there was no motion or sound in the visible world. Sea and sand; that was all.

THE two men gazed about them with mixed emotions. Neither said a word, for their disappointment was great. They had expected to find a wonderful civilization, highly evolved men, great miracles of science, and instead they had come to what might have been a portion of a desert of to-day. But there was something else. Nothing tangible. They could see nothing, hear nothing, but they could feel something. A mysterious foretaste of some great event about to happen. They could not place the strange uneasiness that assailed them, or find a reason for it. But it was there.

Professor Green spoke first.

"Well!" he said.

For a time Hayson said nothing, then suddenly he exclaimed, "Do you feel it?"

"Yes," the Professor nodded. "I feel it."

"What is it?"

"I do not know."

"There is something great impending. Something terrible. I can feel it plainly."

Again the Professor nodded.

"What are we going to do?"

Professor Green considered. We have come far with great expectations, and I must confess I am disappointed. But something is going to happen. We will remain for a while and see what. Meanwhile we can formulate further plans. I am hungry. Let us eat."

Professor Green observed it first. The

day had passed and the sun had sunken out of sight to give way to the great moon, blood red in color, that rose, almost at full, into the sky. Hayson was complaining about the heat, when he saw that the Professor was paying no attention, but had his eyes fixed upon the sky. Hayson turned to look also. The moon was a third of the way up from the horizon, but what was just rising above the horizon? Could the earth have acquired another moon? Another disc was rising slowly. A disc fully a quarter as large as the almost full moon itself, shining with a white light. But no, not a moon.

THE Professor murmured, almost to himself, "A runaway planetoid!"

"A planetoid? It seems to me a comet," remarked Hayson.

"No it is not a comet. For one thing it has no tail, and for another, it is shining only by reflected sunlight. If it were a comet it would be self-luminous," replied the Professor.

"You mean that it is a planetoid that has somehow escaped from its orbit?" inquired Hayson.

"Yes, but not necessarily of the solar system. It is more likely to be some wanderer of space that has been attracted by our sun. In fact, that is much more likely than that one of the planetoids regularly circling the sun should have escaped from its orbit."

For several hours they stood there, gazing at the strange visitor. It had climbed to the zenith when Professor Green again spoke.

"It has grown larger!" he exclaimed sharply.

It had indeed. In the time it had taken to rise from the horizon to the zenith its diameter had appreciably increased.

"What does that mean?" asked Hayson.

The Professor's tone was serious.

"It means that it is rapidly approaching the earth," he answered.

"Well?"

"And the chances are that it will strike the earth in a very short time. In short, that body up there in the sky, probably deflected from its previous course by one of the other planets, has taken on a new one that will bring it and the earth together."

"And then what will happen?"

"Both the earth and the planetoid will become a flaming mass and will fall into the sun. It will be the end of our world!"

"What! You're not serious, Professor!"

"Indeed I am. Do you think I would joke about a matter like this? The only possible alternative is that this wanderer from space may strike the moon first, in which case both will be precipitated upon the earth, and the final results will be the same. And this will happen within a few hours. Look! it is larger already!"

"Then we have traveled to the end of the world!" exclaimed Hayson.

And they remained in awed silence until the mysterious visitor, now almost half as large as a full moon, set late in the dawn.

The day passed slowly. The sea was very agitated, but otherwise there was no evidence of the tragic drama rapidly coming to a close. The two men had resolved to remain till the last possible minute before discharging the time battery. In his scientific curiosity the possible fear of Professor Green was set aside, and Hayson, though with trepidation, agreed to remain until the end.

Finally the long day passed and the eager watchers saw the great red moon climb into the heavens. But now the other was before it, high in the sky before the moon appeared. Much larger than it had been, now much more than half as large as the moon. It was an impressive sight, but awesome, to the two watchers.

The dread visitor, rushing towards them from the unknown depths of time and space, crossed the zenith just ahead of the moon, and always growing larger. Now the two were two thirds of the way down to the horizon. It was evident that the end would be soon.

BUT now the forces of nature were rising in anger. Stirred by the unwonted approach of the wanderer, the earth was quivering and shaking slightly. From time to time a heavy shock ran through the ground, shaking the men violently and causing the Monument to quiver. The sea receded gradually until the waters were out of sight and the beach lay exposed for miles, but still the men watched on.

Now the planetoid was hidden from sight behind the moon itself. It was plain that the two would collide first, before the planetoid crashed into the earth, and both together would fall. Five minutes. Ten minutes. No longer.

But it was time to be leaving. When the crash came the great heat would crisp and sear everything upon the earth, leaving it dead before the final act in which it would itself become a ball of flame. Professor Green was reluctant, but at that instant nature herself forced him into precipitate action. A heavy quake shook the earth, and the Monument quivered like a reed. A great crack opened in the earth at his feet and swiftly widened, while from the sea a roar was heard as a great tidal wave swept in. The Professor leaped towards the Monument. Hayson was already there. The whole top of the cliff upon which they stood was beginning to slide towards the oncoming wave even as he got to the telegraph. With one swift jerk he threw over the switch on the time battery. Even as he did so there came the first great crash as the titanic wave swept against the face of the cliff and broke almost upon them.

But he was too violent. With scarcely any resistance the little switch tore loose from the battery and flew from his hand. *He could not lose the time!* There was a split second of utter despair and lightning-like thought, then the Professor acted.

Even as the outflung spray of the tidal wave swept about his heels, he lifted high the precious time-machine, and with almost a sob flung it with all the force he could exert upon the stone floor.

IN the second that it smashed both men saw in the sky a terrific blaze of light that covered the entire heavens as the deadly visitor and the moon locked in fiery embrace, and a frightful gust of heat crisped their skin, then with terrific suddenness darkness swept over them as the time battery insulation knocked off, released the stored up time at an enormous rate. And then Hayson, who had stood transfixed like a figure in a tableau, fainted.

Perhaps half a minute later he opened his eyes to find Professor Green bending over him. Outside he could see the full moon drifting across the sky, with a multitude of twinkling stars around it. A soft breeze drifted into them, and he saw the trees sway gently. The thought came to him that it was all a dream, these terri-

ble things he had seen, only to be dispelled by the Professor's voice.

"That was a close thing," Professor Green was saying calmly.

"It was indeed, Professor," Hayson answered, getting to his feet, ashamed to have fainted. "I feared we would not make it. What now. Shall we tell the world all this?"

"No,, Arthur, we can't. Much as I regret it, since my first object was to make public all that we might see, we must preserve silence. The machine is gone. Somehow it slid through the door when I broke the time insulation, and without it no one would ever believe. Even I can scarcely credit the things we have seen. And too, we should either be jailed for what has happened, much to my regret, to this noble monument, for it is fully two hundred feet out of position, and badly cracked, or else given a nice padded cell in some asylum. If I had the machine . . . but regrets are useless. What is done is done. Come. We must be going."

"Have you the bags?"

"They were empty and I threw them out. We are ready now."

"Then let us go."

And a moment later the two disappeared in the darkness.

THE END

