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BEFORE ATLANTIS WAS
by
H. F. ARNOLD

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"When Atlantis Was"

By H. F. ARNOLD

After a fine episode of the advanced tactics of the great navy of the United States, following the words of the story, we are taken to "Atlantis" and told of how it was populated in the ancient geological times.

TWO PART SERIAL—PART ONE

U. S. S. DESTROYER LEADER "FARRAGUT," officially No. 394, but affectionately known to the entire fleet as "the McGinty" for reasons which nobody ever bothered to explain, headed her squadron into the South Atlantic seas in battle formation at a speed of 25 knots. It was a clear cloudless day in early spring with just enough sea running to make her roll a little and to thump against her keel as she knifed through the crests.

Aboard the Farragut was her regular peace time complement of ninety officers and men; Lieutenant Commander Witherspoon commanding. Her fuel tanks, fortunately as it turned out, were at capacity, as she had just refuelled at a speed of 23 knots under war test conditions from the 10,000 ton cruiser, "Salt Lake City"; quite a feat if there happened to be much of a sea running. She had then some 400,000 gallons of "crude" aboard, enough to take her Diesels a third of the way around the world under normal speeds.

The "Farragut," or let us follow the example of the rest of the fleet and label her at once the "McGinty," was the latest product of the naval yards. She carried enough armament and ammunition to have destroyed all the navies in existence at the time of the civil war and could have done it without risk to herself. She could

reel off a speed of fifty knots and do it hour after hour in any reasonable sea. Her food lockers were full and her refrigerators would feed her ninety men in a pinch for three months.

In other words, to put it mildly, the "McGinty" was a ship, sleek, trim and dangerous, a "chooser of the slain" as the poet put it but a chooser capable of doing her own slaying as well.

Some such thoughts were in the mind of Commander Witherspoon and his executive officer, Lieutenant John Morgan, as, leaning against the bridge rail, they gave with the roll of the ship and waited for signals from their cruiser for the coming battle practice.

"She's a ship, Johnny," said the Commander, "and that shake down cruise was just what she needed. I'd back the old lady against Heaven or Hell if she's given half a chance."

"So would I," grunted Morgan, reaching for a stanchion as she rolled. "I wonder what she'd do if they'd let us open her up?"

"Blow us all to hell probably," laughed Witherspoon, "especially if they let you set the burners."

"You'd drive her, wouldn't you, Johnny?"

"I'd like to see," said his second, wistfully. "I'll bet she'd do seventy knots before she blew."



The reptile stood at least forty feet tall and as he halted for a second on the edge of the clearing before catching sight of them, Johnny saw that he was kangaroo-like with proportionally small forelegs and a huge long tail.

"It's 7:40," snapped the Commander, suddenly, "notify engine room to be ready with smoke screen and prepare to step up to thirty-five knots."

"Very good, sir." Morgan rang the engine room annunciator and repeated the warning while the operations officer, Lieutenant Hugh Malmson, passed on the preparatory command to the eleven squadron members in their wake.

In those tense minutes while waiting Johnny Morgan characteristically was wishing that he had command of the "McGinty" and an opportunity to open her up under those war-time conditions, for which they were always preparing but which never came. There had been six Morgans in the navy and all of them at one time or another had been court-martialed for recklessness, but all of them had won the navy cross also and three of them, the Congressional Medal of Honor. Their race bred men like that, sailors as trim and dangerous as the ships they commanded.

But their cruiser leader, the "Salt Lake," was signaling "Prepare to lay smoke screen." Being as the fleet was in battle formation and "the McGinty" led the left hand advance destroyer squadron, at the command "lay smoke screen" she would immediately put on full speed and dash ahead of the slower line of cruisers and battle wagons. The leading or "Point" squadron of destroyers would immediately execute a ninety degree turn and drive across the "McGinty's" bows as she circled. The right hand squadron which would also put on full speed, or rather as this was a peace time maneuver a speed of about forty knots, would do the full 180 degree circle ahead of the battle line and would also pass outside of the line led by

the "McGinty." In some three minutes after the start of the execution of the order the entire front of the fleet would be swathed in impenetrable smoke and, while the "McGinty" would be racing back in the opposite direction from which she started and on the other side of the battle line, the two squadrons would also be dashing down the row of battle wagons in the opposite direction from which they had started. Each squadron of destroyers then after passing ahead of the point of the fleet would, at a certain point, pass through the screen laid by their companion squadrons and lay a fresh screen on the outside thus eventually swathing the fleet in two or, in some cases, three layers of oily, greasy crude oil smoke impenetrability.

THESE maneuvers are, in the light of what later took place, of the greatest importance, the point which chiefly should be borne in mind being that at a certain instant in the maneuver, the "McGinty" would lead eleven other destroyers in line through the pall of battle smoke which would have a thickness at that moment of some 300 yards. As the "McGinty" would be making a speed of some 50 miles an hour, she would be in the fog about a minute at the most.

The day was clear and cool, visibility excellent, temperature 40 degrees, the date, May 1, 1934, time 7:43 a.m.

"Execute smoke screen, 7:45," rapped out the signalman on the bridge of the "McGinty" as he transcribed. Behind him the yeoman made the four "blue" copies of the order as a matter of navy record.

"Here we go," laughed Johnny Morgan, rather unorthodoxly in the ear of his captain and hung on to

the bridge stanchion when the "McGinty" bucked as the first surge of her tremendous power dug in at the waters of the South Atlantic.

"Change course 40 degrees," ordered the phlegmatic Witherspoon into the ear of the helmsman beside him.

"Forty degrees, it is, sir," repeated the quartermaster, spinning the wheel.

"Behind the "McGinty" her eleven sisters raced in her wake timing themselves in split seconds, turning as she turned so that no observer watching their wakes could have said a minute later, "there went the McGinty" and, "there went the twelfth ship in line."

Three minutes later the head of the battle line of capital ships was bathed in obscurity and the "McGinty" still at forty knots bore down on the wall of smoke laid by the right-hand squadron.

"Just like going into a tunnel in broad daylight," thought Johnny Morgan. "Hope we don't hit another subway train or run into a traffic block. Good old BRT system. Times Square in three weeks, boys."

"Here we go," said Witherspoon and prepared to hold on against the shock as they cut across the wash of the squadron that had laid the screen. It always confused him for a second to go into that pitch blankness from bright daylight and he instinctively shut his eyes as they hit the wall of darkness. The shock seemed to be delayed for a measurable instant. "Could the "McGinty" be off her course? Impossible! No, there it was, the second shock. Heavier than usual."

"But what was this?" There followed an instant of terrible blankness and then another shock. "The

other side of the wake? But why was it so terribly cold?"

And the next Commander Witherspoon realized was that he was swimming in mid ocean in bright daylight and that he was completely and entirely nude.

He dodged instinctively as the prow of a destroyer cut by his head with a roar and held his breath as her wake rolled him over and over and threw him a hundred feet. He was a strong man and he withstood the shock without losing consciousness and got his head clear in time to catch the thunder of the engines as the third ship in line roared by in a cloud of foamy smother that kept him blind.

It remained him somehow of Ben Hur and the Roman Tribune swimming in the gulf of Euripus in the midst of the dashing galleys of Rome and of the pirates.

"Four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven. That would be the last." His hand hit something cold and clammy. Instinctively his arms closed around it and he realized it was the body of a man nude like himself. He held on and waited for a smother of foam to clear his eyes. When the welter had passed he discovered that the body he was supporting was, oh ghastly, without a head!

As aforesaid, Commander Witherspoon was a strong man, but he relaxed his grip on the corpse with a shudder and found himself trembling all over. He retched horribly into the trough of the next sea and swallowed a quart of sea water before he could stop it. Then he turned over on his back and floated waiting to be picked up. He hoped that body hadn't been Johnny Morgan; he hoped it hadn't been anybody he knew. But, of course, it must have been. Some member of his crew decapitated by

one of those racing sets of twin screws that had swirled so near his own head. But why were they both nude?

Commander Witherspoon raised himself as far out of the sea as was possible and tried to catch a glimpse of his squadron but he was so low in the water that there was no visibility. Never mind. It was a clear day and calm, either he would be picked up or he wouldn't. There was nothing he could do about it. They were on the edge of the Gulf stream and the water, thank God, was warm. He could keep afloat for hours.

After a long time he saw a sharp prow cutting toward him and heard a hail. He raised an arm in acknowledgement and waited. He was a little hazy by then and thought himself again in the sea battle in the gulf of Euripus and that he was Tribune, Quintus Arrius.

"Can't surrender," he murmured. "Look for me? See if the galley has a helmet on her prow? If not, she's an enemy."

And then a strong arm caught him.

THE "McKee," Lieutenant Carl Donaldson commanding, had been the second ship in the line following the "McGinty" into the screen. Donaldson, on his bridge, felt the shock of the twin wakes of the destroyers whose paths they were cutting, like Witherspoon had done before him, and waited, hand shading his eyes, for the haze to thin ahead of them. It is always a ticklish moment following a destroyer through a screen as any error in course or speed is dangerous.

"Good, here we go," thought Donaldson as the haze thinned. "Now, boys, on our way."

He looked instinctively for the

"McGinty" to check his course and then gasped in awed amazement. Ahead of him was a deserted Atlantic sea, calm and with scarcely a swell. There wasn't even a wake visible.

The "McGinty," eight million dollars of government property and 90 officers and men had utterly disappeared! Donaldson blinked and passed his hand across his eyes in complete bewilderment. He even turned his head to look back at the smoke as if the impossible could happen and the ship yet emerge from the screen. Behind him, the bow of the "Daugherty" was just heaving into view, on the dot, according to schedule.

But of the "McGinty" there was no trace.

"Stop circling movement," he ordered tensely, "new course, 180 degrees left."

Back with the main fleet the row of battlewagons plowed steadily ahead into the pall of smoke and the broad wastes of the Atlantic. Leading the van were the cruisers deploying in line formation and foremost of all was the 10,000 ton cruiser, "Salt Lake City," temporarily acting as point for the fleet until the destroyers should complete their circling movement. It was to Rear Admiral Harmes, on the "Salt Lake," in the command of destroyer forces, that his communications officer reported four minutes later with the strange and disturbing message.

"Destroyer 'Farragut' disappeared with all hands while in smoke screen, Sector 254. Am halting circling movement and returning to spot last seen. McKee, Donaldson commanding."

The Rear Admiral noted that the message had arrived by radio and when he looked up, it was with an apparently idle query.

"Thought the radio was ordered silent during maneuvers?" he queried to his executive officer who was standing white and startled beside him.

"That's true, sir," said that officer, "but I suppose Donaldson thought that—under the circumstances."

"Precisely," said Harmes. "Any word from the fleet? The 'Farragut' may have gone out of control and be running wild through the screen."

"No word, yet, sir," said the executive. "But in that case, wouldn't she have been sighted or wouldn't she have reported by radio?"

"Check this message by 'D' beam," ordered his superior. "D" beam is a jealously guarded means of communication, never used by the fleet in peace time, except in a vital emergency. Sufficient to say it isn't radio or blinker or any other matter of common knowledge. The very fact that Harmes commanded its use showed his appreciation of the urgency as he chanced his commission in ordering the beam turned on.

"Very good," said the executive officer again. "Here's another from operations."

He opened the blue message blank and read its typewritten report aloud: "Engines on the 'Farragut' ceased vibrations instantly between 7:49 and 7:50 according to supersonic sound operator. No explosion or depth bomb reports were heard."

"He didn't blow up then," remarked Harmes unnecessarily, "and he isn't running wild. I wonder where in hell he is. You don't suppose they've all gone crazy, do you?"

"It doesn't seem likely, sir. But perhaps we have," the executive answered. "Fleet orders, sir."

He ripped open the envelope from the fleet commander and spread the message before the Rear Admiral.

"'D' beam disconnect immediately. No answer from 'Farragut.' All vessels execute 180 degrees left, 7:58 except Destroyer Squadron Six which will investigate. Emergency speed all vessels. All destroyer squadrons except otherwise ordered continue smoke screen at speed fifty knots. Message ends. Halsey, Admiral Commanding."

"There goes a career," thought the executive looking curiously at Harmes. "He never should have ordered that beam used. Direct violation."

CONSIDERING that his retirement was at stake the Rear Admiral seemed curiously unperturbed.

"'Fleet' seems to have acted fast, doesn't he? Order 'D' beam disconnected. Hmm. Emergency speed all ships. That'll shake up the battlewagons. Fifty knots on destroyers. Hope they don't blow any boilers. I wonder what did happen to the 'Farragut'?"

"Donaldson will find out if anybody can, sir," answered the executive, with a confidence he did not feel. "There we go, sir. We're starting the turn. What speed, sir?"

Harmes looked at him curiously. "You're looking flustered, McDonald," he said. "The 'Salt Lake' can't run away from the fleet. You know what fleet emergency speed is. Keep your head, man."

The executive took the reprimand as deserved.

"Here's a report from the 'Lexington,' sir," he said. "Her planes have landed and just before the 'D' beam was shut off she reported that the 'Farragut' never emerged from the smoke screen. She's sending up sea planes to help Squadron Six. And

here's a supplementary order from Fleet detaching Tenth Submarine Squadron to cooperate as well."

The Admiral looked at his watch. It was precisely eight o'clock or eight hours in the fleet 24 hour schedule. The "Salt Lake City" was already moving at fleet emergency speed of 26 knots. He knew that somewhere in the smoke screen through which they were now moving some 90 odd vessels had turned at the same moment and were proceeding at terrific speed directly away from the spot where the "Farragut" had disappeared, each vessel in the precise spot where she should be and each invisible to an enemy or any other ship of the Fleet as well in all likelihood. Running away. The United States battle fleet was running away from something unseen and unheard.

AND it had all happened in precisely fifteen minutes from the time the order had been given to lay a practice smoke screen in peace time; eleven minutes from that split second the "McGinty" had entered the smoke screen, a hundred and forty-five thousand men were leaving her to her fate at full speed. No, that wasn't precisely fair. Over the spot where the "McGinty" had vanished a dozen huge sea planes were already coursing, dipping low to the surface of the ocean through the curling slowly dissipating smoke. Deep under the surface a dozen submarines were sliding through the ever-dark depths their ears listening for something they could understand. And on the surface the eleven destroyers of Squadron Six were covering the sea with a minute scrutiny that no drifting life preserver, wreckage or body could possibly escape. Everything that could be done was being done.

Myer Harmes, Rear Admiral, U.S.N., put his chin in his hand and, lost in thought, considered the picture of all this.

"Any further orders, sir?" prompted his executive.

"What?" said the Admiral. "Orders? Why no, McDonald. I believe that everything is being done that can be done. I believe you might order us breakfast, here, of course."

"Very good." The executive buzzed his speaking tube and gave the order. Somehow he didn't believe he would have much appetite that morning. While they waited he came back to the table.

"What do you think, sir?" he queried in spite of himself. "What in hell do you suppose has happened to the 'Farragut'? What enemy could possibly have reached her with all this fleet in the area without anybody knowing? And if no enemy, what accident could have happened?"

The Admiral didn't reply and the executive went on with his thoughts aloud:

"There was the case of the 'Cyclops.' She disappeared at sea with all hands during the war and nobody ever knew what happened. But she was alone. A modern collier and two hundred men gone into the sea. And nobody ever knew. Only God."

"Only God," said the Admiral, "but some of us suspected."

"After the war, the German Admiralty denied all knowledge and so did the German War Office."

"Perhaps," said the Admiral softly, "there weren't any of them who knew enough to suspect."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"McDonald," said the Admiral, "it's a strange place, the sea. I've followed it for nearly forty years and

some strange things happen that none of us know enough to explain. And I don't mean that they are, necessarily, supernatural happenings, either. We just don't know enough. I doubt very much, unless we're heading for a lot of immediate trouble and the little fellows are trying out some unknown weapon, if we ever hear from the 'McGinty' or her crew again. But here's breakfast."

It was while the two officers were eating that the "McKee" and Donaldson located the swimming Commander Witherspoon and hoisted him aboard in a state of collapse. She found other men also, or parts of them, and the radio ban being lifted, hastened to report the facts to the "Salt Lake City."

"Hmm," mused the Admiral as he looked over the report. "Witherspoon living but unconscious and bodies of four men, the two radio operators, an oiler and a deck seaman. All bodies completely nude even to identification disks. Wonder how they knew who they were then? But Donaldson is definite. Some of the crew knew 'em probably. No wreckage at all and no sign of the 'Farragut.' Strange, very strange, that the bodies are those of men from all parts of the ship."

"Orders, sir?"

"Direct the 'McKee' to leave the rest of her squadron to continue the search. I want the ocean combed for every scrap of wreckage. Every scrap, mind. The 'McKee' is to bring the bodies and Witherspoon and report directly to Fleet aboard the 'Pennsylvania.' Full emergency speed."

A FEW hours later the "McKee" pulled up alongside the flagship and Witherspoon was transferred on

a stretcher. Immediately as though in the opinion of Fleet, all immediate danger had passed, the order was given to moderate speed and the squadrons proceeded toward New York harbor. There, only a few weeks later the entire fleet was paraded in grand review before a President of the United States. But in one destroyer squadron there were only eleven ships and if some of the keen eyed newspapermen who noticed the omission were inclined to ask questions, they found themselves facing the navy barrier of silence. Among the thousands who knew that the "McGinty" had disappeared even naval discipline was unable to prevent rumors and the news crept around the world.

In far corners of the earth inconspicuous men of the service of naval intelligence asked quiet questions and yellow men asked questions of white men in other places and suspicion was even directed at a black man in an almost inaccessible spot. As a result dozens of men died, uselessly, and their absence was never mourned or even noticed. But no one outside ever learned more than was known after that conference which began when the surgeon on the "Pennsylvania" assisted Commander Witherspoon into the headquarters of the Fleet.

The Admiral commanding was kindly but brusque.

"Feel able to talk, Commander?" he queried and when Witherspoon nodded. "Then tell us."

When the brief recital was ended the staff sat a moment in silence.

"We've very little to go on," said the Admiral finally, "the instantaneous nature of the affair, the absence of wreckage and the fact that those whose bodies were seen again

were robbed even of identification disks. There is also the fact that they apparently came from all parts of the ship. Queer. Since there was no wake seen the ship seemingly was stopped dead in its tracks. It was neither blown up or sucked down. We've dragged the area fairly thoroughly. It would lead us to the assumption that it was dissolved. Accidental? Impossible. Some new weapon of an enemy? It seems the only likely answer but what—I hardly need to ask, who? And why should they stop with one destroyer?"

"Perhaps," suggested an officer, "it was just a tryout."

"That is ridiculous," said the Admiral. "Any nation capable of perfecting such a weapon would have ample means of trying it out and would keep it secret until they were ready to use it."

There was another long silence.

"There is a possibility," suggested the executive officer of the "Salt Lake" who had been mulling over the possibility in his mind, "that they were using it for a purpose. To get us to reveal just what we did reveal."

"You mean?"

"The 'D' beam," said McDonald, looking vindictively at Harmes.

"That possibility can only be determined by the future," decided the Admiral. "Gentlemen, we can only listen and wait. In the meantime, gentlemen, the 'D' beam will never be used again until the actual outbreak of hostilities except on definite orders from Fleet."

The final verdict of the court was: "During maneuvers in the Southern Atlantic at 7:45 May 4, 1934, the U.S.S. Farragut was lost at sea with all hands, excepting Lieutenant Commander Thomas Witherspoon. Rea-

sons for the loss of this ship are unknown."

But this verdict was never made public and relatives of the various members of the crew were merely informed that death had occurred as the result of an "unpreventable accident at sea." Rear Admiral Harmes was quietly retired. Witherspoon was acquitted of all blame but was not returned to sea duty.

And the inconspicuous men in the service of the United States continued to listen—and die—but the International Situation for the time, continued unchanged.

And through it all the "McGinty" continued to sail the seven seas or at least a considerable part of them and her crew met with the strangest adventures that ever met a crew, and at the last one man guessed a partial explanation of the mystery—but that man never talked, and fifty thousand years later a man in a metal box descended five miles to the ocean bed and came closer to the whole truth than anybody—but that man never knew. And, although it seems contradictory, he made his descent in the fall of 1995.

BUT to come back to Lieutenant Johnny Morgan and that moment at 7:48 a. m. on the morning of May 4, 1934, when the "McGinty" entered the smoke screen. Johnny as aforesaid was clinging to a stanchion on the bridge waiting for the twin shocks that were to indicate that they had passed through the destroyer wakes. As did Witherspoon he felt the first shock that jolted as though the "McGinty" had hit a stone wall and stopped dead for a second before forging ahead.

"Derelict," thought Johnny swiftly, "by gad, we've hit something!"

It was only then he noticed that they had run out of the screen and that Witherspoon had disappeared from the bridge. "That's odd," Johnny thought. "He sure did a quick slope."

Well that left him in temporary command. He turned swiftly to check the course and run parallel to the screen. The cloud of smoke through which they had passed had vanished.

"Wow," he said aloud, "somebody must have shut off the stacks for a minute."

And then it all drove home to him at once. The screen was gone, the fleet was gone, and—he turned to make one more check—there was no squadron of destroyers following in his wake. He reached for the engine room tube. "Shut down to hold speed on both engines, Mac," he half whispered. "The world has gone to hell."

As he spoke he turned to survey the deck of the destroyer. Except for the absence of Witherspoon it looked normal enough. Hugh Malmson, the operations officer, was walking down the bridge toward him, a good jump away.

"Something's the matter, Johnny," he said puzzledly. "I can't get any answer from radio. Where's the old man?"

"Never mind the Captain," said Johnny, "where's the fleet?"

Uncomprehending Malmson swung around to survey the horizon. He was one of those quiet, studious officers who seemed created to furnish the answers while the rest of the world acts on them. He looked back at their wake where the remainder of the squadron should have been, cocked an eye forward toward where the main line of battlewagons should have been rolling up, looked up at the sun and blinked his eyes and

looked again in puzzlement. Finally he walked over to the side of the bridge and cocked his eye at the water which rolled by them.

"Hmm," he said, "it doesn't seem likely, does it?"

"Boy," said Johnny, "you sure are given to understatement. It doesn't."

But Malmson was not waiting for a reply. In fact he wasn't waiting for anything. Still concerned with his problem, he had dropped down the companionway, only to appear on deck, a minute later with an ocean thermometer which he dropped over the side. Holding it carefully by the cord, he looked back at Johnny.

"You might as well stop both engines until I can get a reading," he said with perfect casualness.

"Listen, my lad, these are battle maneuvers," Johnny megaphoned, "we can't wait for—" And then he stopped his own voice. Battle maneuvers in an empty ocean were an obvious impossibility.

"Shut 'em down, Mac," he ordered into the tube, "and come topside until we can figure what this is all about. And if you see the Cap'n on the way, you might bring him along."

By the time Chief Engineer Officer, Lieutenant McSaunders, reached the bridge, Malmson had pulled up the thermometer and was scrutinizing it carefully. By that time the "McGinty" had virtually lost headway and begun to roll gently in the tranquil sea.

"I can't find Witherspoon," said McSaunders. "I'm sorry but he isn't aboard."

"Isn't aboard?" snorted Johnny Morgan. "You fellows are certainly taking this thing damned casually. We lose eleven destroyers, a smoke screen and a battle fleet—and now you tell me with complete noncha-

lance that we've lost a captain."

"Well," began McSaunders, in self-defense, "anyway I never did like him much, the 'stuck-up'—"

"Can it, Mac," — Malmson was returning to the bridge. "You might as well have the rest of it, Johnny." He turned to the signalman, the only member of the crew on the bridge, and then remembered to look back at Johnny Morgan for a mute permission to go ahead. "Galloway, report aft to the CPO and tell him to muster the crew, complete, on the forecastle. You can shut off all engines and leave 'em. We won't even need steerageway."

"That goes for you too, Hannan," said Johnny to the quartermaster at the wheel, catching the idea that Malmson wished the bridge deserted for some reason.

"You might as well have it all at once, Johnny," Malmson went on as soon as they were alone. "We've two radio operators missing — and the Gulf stream."

"The Gulf stream?"

Malmson nodded. "I thought when I looked over the side that it wasn't the right color and then I tested with a thermometer. The water is too hot and there's no drift."

"But," protested Johnny, "the Gulf stream is naturally hotter than the rest of the ocean. It's a warm current."

Mac was looking over the side.

"Yes, you dope. I get it. There isn't any current at all and besides even the air is getting hotter than 'Billy be damned.' It's only 8 a.m. but it might as well be noon."

"It's over 90 degrees," said Malmson. "Did you ever hear of sea water in this latitude or any other reaching 90 degrees centigrade?"

"No," Johnny admitted, "I never

did. Nor nobody else ever did either. Let's muster the crew and set 'em to searching the ship for Witherspoon and the others."

BY this time the ship's company had assembled on the fore deck and Johnny stepped forward to address them briefly. While discipline is not more slack on a destroyer than on the cruisers and battlewagons, since officers and men inevitably come into closer contact, it is conducted somewhat differently.

"Cap'n's disappeared." Johnny said briefly, "Anybody else missing?"

A quick check showed the absence of the deck hand, the oiler and the two radio men whose bodies were shortly later to be picked up by the "McKee."

"Okay," said Johnny, when the check was completed, "scatter and search the ship for 'em. Don't miss a spot. Uniform for the search, and the day, considerin' the weather will be skivy shirts and shorts. Step on it and muster back here in twenty minutes."

His orders given he returned to the bridge and his two companions. Leaning over the rail they had heard the result of the check as quickly as he.

"Well," he said, "have you figured what it's all about?"

"Hugh's going to shoot the sun," Mac announced, "it's my suggestion. It grew out of the too much heat idea."

Malmson stepped out on the bridge with his sextant and Johnny stepped forward to hold the stop watch for him. When he'd finished they worked out the ship's position together. Checked it and rechecked it. Then they looked at each other.

"It's all right," said Johnny, "except we can't be there."

"Why not?" demanded the Chief Engineer. "We are."

"Put us right in the middle of Cuba," Malmson explained.

"Do it again," Mac suggested and to satisfy him Johnny took another sight and they worked out the figures again.

"One of three factors is wrong," said the engineer looking over their shoulders, "you guys, the sun, or the Nautical Almanac."

"Throwing out the last two, what does that get you?" Johnny demanded.

The crew had been re-mustering and one of the seamen, although no watch had been ordered, happened to look over the rail.

"Submarine dead ahead!" he bawled and Johnny jumped for the bridge.

"All crews to stations," he belted. "Speed on both engines, Mac. Jump to it!" As the crews vanished he leaned over and megaphoned to the crews around the five inch guns. "Ready with shrapnel or HE* as ordered, was ammunition."

Malmson was already whistling down the annunciator for war-head torpedoes in all four forward tubes as Johnny picked up his glasses and focussed them. He took a long look and then another, before he dropped the glasses and laughed.

"Submarine nothing. It's a whale and a big baby, too."

"Whales in this latitude? I don't believe it. Let me look?"

"Yeah," said Johnny, handing over the binoculars, "right in the middle of Florida. I don't either."

In his turn, Malmson peered at the mammal which, when sighted, had been sounding lazily a mile to the northward.

"Better get ready with the five inch with HE, Johnny," said Malmson, suddenly. "Whale or no whale, he's going to attack, and quick."

It was true. Even as he spoke the animal swung and headed full speed for the "McGinty." From a dead stop he jumped into high speed with a rapidity that McSaunders, if he could have seen it, would certainly have envied.

"Boy, what engines he has," Johnny muttered enviously. "He must be making sixty miles an hour and I'll bet he weighs darn near as much as we do."

"He is and does," said Malmson dryly, "but I wouldn't wait too long, Johnny, I think I know that fellow and if I do, he'll attack until we rip him apart."

"Ready with the starboard five inch HE, range 1500. Independent fire when ready," called Johnny.

The five inch with its twenty shot per minute capacity boomed sharply as they started to bracket. The first shot was under the monster and he was coming in so fast the gunner didn't even try to elevate but kept his range and started to pump HE.

"Golly," Johnny said, as the five inch shell cracked the water apparently directly under the whale and seemingly failed to bother him. "He certainly can take it, can't he? Ready with an ash can* there on the stern! Set it for thirty feet!"

"That's cutting it short," said Malmson, "but you'll need it. That baby can turn in his own length."

"So can we," said Johnny, grimly.

BY this time Mac was ready with the engines and the "McGinty" was under way.

"Ready for emergency speed?"

* High Explosive.

* A depth bomb.

Johnny queried down the announciator.

"All you want," was the prompt reply. "What's all the shootin' fer?"

"Whale," Johnny replied briefly and looked up just as a cheer came from the gun crew. A five inch shell had landed fair and square on the streamlined head and virtually blown away the first thirty feet of body.

"Okay," Johnny megaphoned to the gun crew, "he's out of control. Cease firing."

It was true. The monster was yawing to and fro erratically across the Atlantic waters. Even so he had enough momentum left to coast to a stop a few hundred yards from the "McGinty" before he turned belly up.

"Leave a crew at the burners and come topside," Johnny called to the engine room, and a few seconds later the three officers met at the gangway where a boat's crew was mustering for a possible closer inspection.

"Know what it is, Johnny?" asked Malmson.

"Whale, isn't it?"

"Of a sort. Grampus. Killer whale. The fiercest thing that floats. He's been called the 'tiger of the sea' and he's plenty tough."

"We've got a submarine named that," said McSaunders, "and its crew is plenty tough, too. Sure you ain't shot our sub, Johnny?"

"Listen, you two," said Johnny. "There's a time for everything including Mac's wisecracks. But it isn't now. Let's get serious. What's unreal about this beast, Hugh?"

"Its size," exclaimed Malmson. "They've never been known to attain a size much bigger than twenty feet. One of these babies would attack a whole school of whales, follow 'em for weeks and kill them one by

one. This fellow is well over two hundred feet. He's too big. Way too big."

"He must eat ocean liners," suggested Mac, and then apologized. "I'm sorry, Johnny, I won't do it again."

"All okay, Hugh," Johnny said, brushing a fly off his nose. "What, in your opinion does it all add up to? What does it mean?"

"Wait a minute," said Malmson, making a dive for the fly. After a chase down the deck he killed it without crushing it too badly and brought it back in the palm of his hand. He looked at it carefully.

"Unchanged. Well, that's something, anyhow. I was beginning to wonder. Of course, we may have brought it with us."

"What's a fly got to do with it," said McSaunders?

"It proves something I was beginning to wonder about. Insect life once it develops is virtually changeless. There have been house flies just like this fellow found in bits of amber. It proves we're still on earth, anyhow."

"Well," said McSaunders, "that's something. Did you have any doubt of it?"

"Some," said Malmson. "There's a lot of things wrong, you know. Sun too hot, position wrong, fleet disappeared, screen gone, the size of that fellow there. There's only one conclusion I can figure out."

"What's that?"

"We've been moved! Some force or other has snatched us up and moved us, 'McGinty' and all. But where—well that's another story. There's only several guesses I can make. We've either been moved to some spot on earth where conditions are different than anything anybody ever encountered before; we've been taken from

the earth to somewhere else; or we've been moved in time. And by golly, I'll swear the last is the answer."

"Aw," McSaunders muttered, "you're nuts."

"Perhaps I am. There's one factor that makes that a puzzle, too."

"What?" Johnny asked.

"Why the force should take 85 of us and leave five behind. Come here a minute."

He led them up on the bridge. Flung down carelessly in one corner was an officer's uniform.

"Witherspoon's naturally," said Hugh. "Look here. The force that moved us took every stitch of duds he had on him, every bit of metal, his identification disk, even the gold fillings out of his teeth."

"If he's alive anywhere I'll bet that will annoy him," said McSaunders.

"If we look," Malmson announced, "I'm willing to bet that the clothing of the other four will be found in the spots where they were last standing. For some reason I can't figure, Witherspoon and the others were left in our space. But their clothes were not taken along."

"Maybe we'll figure out an answer someday," Johnny decided. "But meanwhile the important job is to find out where we are. This leaves me in command of course, and the responsibility is mine. How are we going to find out where we are?"

"If what you fellows have said is true and judging by the facts, I know where we are," said McSaunders.

"Where?"

"Just about a mile and a half from where we left the smoke screen allowing for drift and our little affair with the gentleman over there."

"But our position figures show—that is if we are correct that—"

"Oh," said Mac, "your figures are

correct enough. Hugh, if we were moved somewhere in time as you have suggested, your nautical almanac wouldn't be worth a damn, would it?"

"Of course not. I believe you've got it, Mac. We've moved in time."

"Then the next thing to figure is—have we gone forward or back?"

"That isn't so easy. Off hand, from the size of the grampus, and the heat, I'd say back. But the earth has had hot and then cold periods several times, and might easily have them again. There's a way to find out, though. I'll give you an answer tonight. There's one thing certain. We've made quite a jump."

"How far?"

"Anywhere from 50,000 years up. Earth changes take time."

"How are you going to tell which way?" McSaunders was curious.

Johnny had guessed the answer. "It's simple. By the stars, of course. There's the astronomical books in the library that we used at the Academy. They give star charts past and future. All we have to do is compare them with the stars as they are tonight."

"For that matter," said Malmson, "there's an encyclopedia in the library, too. I reckon I could make my own charts if I had to."

"We'll go on that basis then," Johnny decided. "As soon as it gets dark we'll know which way we've gone. Now let's be practical and get together with the crew there. They're going nuts with curiosity." He leaned over the bridge rail and called to Jorgensen, his CPO.

"Forget about that animal for awhile, Jorgensen, and muster all the crew again. I'll talk to them in five minutes." He turned to his officers. "Just for moral effect, fellows, get into whites and freshen up."

At the end of five minutes the men of the "McGinty" with the exception of a skeleton engine room force, McSaunders didn't intend to be caught napping twice, were mustered aft and three officers, spick and span, stepped out in front.

"At ease, men," Johnny began, "this is going to be quite a talk and you might as well relax and be comfortable. Sit down, if you like, anywhere, just so you can hear me. You can smoke."

He relaxed himself against the rail and waited.

"Men, I'm not going to make any speeches. You're the picked crew—thank God—of the 'McGinty' and the best damned destroyer outfit in the fleet. And it's a good thing you are, for we're up against the strangest problem that ever hit a Navy crew.

"You've all noticed a lot of queer happenings this morning. We've lost the screen, our squadron and the battle fleet. The Gulf stream has disappeared and we've had to kill a whale that was bigger than anybody ever saw before. Besides it is too hot for this latitude. We've had four men and Commander Witherspoon disappear leaving every stitch of their clothing behind them."

Johnny grinned. "All that, as some of you wise guys would remark, 'ain't natural'."

The crew laughed and relaxed.

"We've been trying to figure out what's happened and you're entitled to our guess. Men, the ship has been moved by some force we don't know anything about. We've been moved not in space, but in time. We're either living far in the future or far in the past—we'll tell you which tonight. And all the rest of our outfit have been left behind."

They took it very well.

"Any chance of getting back, sir?" asked Jorgensen.

"I don't know. None of us can guess. As long as we are alive we will try. Every man of us."

"Any idea at all what happened, sir? Was it some enemy fleet that did it?"

"Off hand I would say, no. Perhaps Lieutenant Malmson has a theory."

Malmson stepped forward.

"It's only a guess at best. There's a little to go on. Lots of articles and even men have disappeared in the past without leaving a trace, just as we did. You'll all remember the 'Cyclops'"—they nodded—"You've most of you heard of the theory behind the fourth dimension as to what it is. Briefly the idea is that of another plane surface capable of rotating at right angles to all of the three dimensions we know, those of length, breadth and thickness. I'm not sure I understand the math. behind it myself, but there are theories that there are other dimensions in addition to the fourth, perhaps revolving planes at right angles to the fourth. The theory is that one of these dimensions might be that of time." He paused.

"Go on, Lieutenant," approved Johnny. "This is all new to me, too."

"Very good. The theory concludes that there is a possibility that the time dimension might brush against our three dimensions much as a buzz saw hits a piece of wood and if we happened to be at the point of contact at the precise instant it might pick us up and give us a jog in time. Just as a piece of sawdust might be moved by the revolving saw a fraction of an inch from the top of the board toward the bottom."

"Sounds simple," said McSaunders. "All we have to do to get back is to

reverse the buzz saw. Didja ever try it?"

The crew laughed and the tension was easier.

"Any chance of us meeting up with the 'Cyclops,' sir?" queried Held, the Chief Gunner's Mate.

"We don't know, of course. There's damned little we do know yet. We didn't ask Providence to give us this 'time,' but they've certainly done it. We'll have to find out what we can about this 'time' as we go along. I want everyone of you to keep his eyes open for anything unusual and report it instantly. We'll keep you posted as to our guesses. Is there anything else?"

"The 'McGinty,' sir. What are we going to do with her and where are we going to go?" Held asked.

"That's easy. We were headed for New York and we'll go where New York was or will be. Maybe we'll meet up with some of your many descendents, Held?"

The crew chuckled again, for Held's amorous proclivities while in port were every day jests. The gunner grinned sheepishly.

"That's it then. Oh, there's one thing more. I don't want one article expended unnecessarily. I'd advise you men to go slow on smokes for nobody knows where we'll get any more. And cooks, after today's dinner—and make that a good one—we'll have to reduce to emergency rations. We're going to stay in this neighborhood for a day or two until we see if anything more is apt to happen, so a fishing party will take off in half an hour. Lieutenant Malmson, is that baby submarine of yours good to eat?"

The crew sniggered and Malmson shook his head.

"I don't believe so except in an ab-

solute emergency. You see he is really a whale. He's not a variety of shark and—"

"We'll concentrate on something smaller today then. Jorgensen, you seem to be eager, so you take charge of the fishing party. Lieutenant McCaunders, I know it isn't in your department, but we haven't any departments any more, so will you take charge of unfurling awnings and rigging some extra ones since we're due to loaf here for a day or so. Lieutenant Malmson will report to me on the bridge and we'll talk things over. Jorgensen, on second thought, you're out of the fishing racket today. I want you to take all your NCO's* and furnish me by this evening a complete inventory of every article aboard. We must know precisely what we have to work with. The ship's service yeoman will turn over all supplies to the commissary steward. The rest of you will handle the daily routine as already assigned. Carry on."

THE crew, happy to have something to do, scurried away to the familiar jobs. After all, no matter where they were, the "McGinty" was there too. And where the "McGinty" was, was home. Johnny hurried Malmson away to the bridge for their conference.

"Any truth in that explanation of yours?" he demanded.

The Lieutenant grinned. "How should I know? Not much, I guess. It seemed to satisfy them though, didn't it? It was okay up until the place where I tried to explain the time dimension and then I improvised a bit to make it understandable."

"Good idea. Make any mystery seem common and ordinary enough

*Non-commissioned officers.

and people will accept it as an every day occurrence. Think we'll have any trouble with the men?"

"Not for a good long while at any rate. We're fortunate we have a picked destroyer crew, most of them second hitch men and with an unusual number of mechanical experts. Give us the raw materials to work with and with the tools we have aboard, we can do anything in time. Of course when the men realize that they'll never get back and have to stay in this epoch for the remainder of their lives it may be different. After we get settled down ashore, well, remember the crew of the 'Bounty'?"

The thought made the two men sober and serious. The story of the tragic end in the eighteenth century of the mutineers on Pitcairn Island was familiar enough.

"You think then that there really isn't any chance of getting back?" Johnny asked.

Malmson shook his head. "This isn't any Jules Verne trip to the moon where you fall around the satellite and then obligingly fall back to the earth again. No, my lad, if things are the way I believe, this is the real article and there'll be no happy ending to our story unless we make it ourselves. The chances were at least one in a hundred million of the 'McGinty' being in the spot she was when the time dimension scraped the earth at the precise instant it touched it. There's just the same chance of our being in the right spot again and as many more of our being returned to our own time if we were. No, we're here for good."

"Then the best we can do is to take the men to where New York was or will be and let 'em see for themselves. After that we'll pick out an island—that is, if we first don't

meet up with human beings we like, and who like us—and establish ourselves a base. I'll look after food supplies and quarters. You'll figure out some way of getting fuel for the 'McGinty' and McSaunders will build us a plane so we can go look see what this world is like."

"And after that?"

"There's no sense in trying to look too far ahead, but I should say, 'women.' I've got 85 men of the best white blood I know of and I'm not going to let the race become extinct if I can help it. If necessary we'll go and take 'em. Duplicate the stunt of the Romans and the Sabine women, if we can't get what we want any other way. There's no use being sentimental about it."

"That's a long way off," said Malmson.

"I'll say it is. One thing I'm thankful for is that we have the latest edition encyclopedia aboard. There's a lot of knowledge in those books. As soon as we get started places I'm going to divide them up and make each one of us responsible for some specialty and know all they can tell us on that specialty. It'll give us all something to do and we'll soon have as fine a group of experts on most anything as we could wish."

"Good idea," grunted Malmson. "By the way, don't worry too much about fuel oil. We can run the 'McGinty' on grain alcohol or whale oil if necessary if you'll find me a spot to build a refinery. High test gasoline for the plane that Mac is going to build is a little more trouble but we've plenty aboard for awhile from the supplies for our auxiliaries and we'll manage. Now if you'll pardon me, I'm going to brush up on our astronomy so that tonight I can tell you 'when' we are if not 'where.'"

He accepted Johnny Morgan's nod with a flip of his hand and strode off whistling. Johnny stepped to the back of the bridge, as a crew of McSaunders' men arrived to unfurl awnings, and looked at his watch.

IT was eleven o'clock. It seemed incredible. Three hours and fifteen minutes before he had been a senior lieutenant wishing he had the "McGinty" as his command and a chance to see what she could do. Now he had her and the greatest opportunity any Navy man could ever dream of. The ship lolled lazily in the hot tropical sea. A couple of hundred yards away the fishing crews in a trio of lifeboats were having excellent luck and exchanging cheerful chaff with the working parties on deck. The sun was bright and warm but McSaunders' crews were rapidly changing the "McGinty" into a floating yacht as far as tropic comfort was concerned. The usual details were doing the daily chores and below him a working party was rigging stages and preparing to paint the foremast.

It seemed incredible and impossible that they were drifting in an unknown time in an unknown sea confronted with unknown terrors and that he, Johnny Morgan, was responsible for the lives and happiness of all these men. He had experience enough to realize that the longer he could maintain that atmosphere of casualness and regularity, the happier and more contented everyone would be. But they were Navy men and the pick of a fleet. When dangers had to come they would take it. For a moment he thought of his father and mother that he had expected to see at his home in Roanoke, the Roanoke he would never see again. And being human, he thought also of the

girl with whom he spent a week-end at Coronado just before the "McGinty" left "Dago." Then the boatswain's mate piped "mess" and his steward (white, the "McGinty" had sent their little Philipinos all ashore) brought him a lemonade, and he felt better. He made a mental note to have the electrician install arrangements for the broadcasting of phonograph records over the crew's radio that afternoon and was glad he had a trunkful of new records purchased for the girl on the week-end at Coronado. McSaunders came up the companionway and dropped into a deck chair for his lemonade.

"Well, you bloomin' yachtsman, it isn't a bad world, no matter what time you find it, is it?" he demanded.

"No," said Johnny, "but you better keep steam up." He sniffed and reached for the speaking tube. "I hope your skeleton engine room crew can give us enough pep to keep away from Hugh's fish."

"They can," said McSaunders lazily, without moving from his chair. "Johnny, I've just remembered something. I had a wife in 'Dago'."

"You don't seem very perturbed about it."

"And just before the fleet left, she filed suit for divorce. The judge gave her half my salary as temporary alimony. What a laugh!"

"I wouldn't laugh too much." Malmson was climbing up the companionway. "You idiot! Don't you realize that now she'll get a pension?"

And then they went to lunch.

The "McGinty" held parade and inspection that night and when the flag came down and was furled they were all saddened for a few minutes. None of them would have omitted the ceremony; the double rank of white-clad

men and the three officers, all at the salute. It meant regularity and accustomedness to them, but it also meant wives and sweethearts and cities that none of them would ever see again. McSaunders felt the mood as much as any and shortly after appeared on the bridge with a half dozen bottles.

"I know it's against all Navy regulations, sir," he said, "but may I have the commander's permission to serve out a tot o' grog. It's what's left of a case I bought at Christobal."

"Don't you realize," said Johnny, "that you'll probably never see Bacardi rum again and that what you have there is undoubtedly all there is in the world."

McSaunders grinned. "No, 'tain't. I saved a bottle out for us. Anyhow, I doubt if it will ever go better than right now and I feel like buying the boys a drink. What say?"

"Carry on," said Johnny. "I'll admit they probably can do with it—and so can I."

The three men had dinner served on the bridge because of the heat and waited afterwards in silence with their cigarettes for the coming of darkness.

"Just so Hugh can tell us how old we are," said McSaunders, who appeared to have recovered his spirits, if indeed he had ever really lost them.

WHEN the sun dropped with the usual tropic abruptness, they unanimously stopped talking and when the familiar Southern Cross appeared in a strangely twisted formation, everyone heaved a sigh.

Malmson immediately got busy with his charts and measurements and Johnny helped him with his star sights, but McSaunders had nothing to do but wait. Below them the white

clad shapes of the crew loomed out of the darkness as those off duty grouped themselves noiselessly on the forecandle. Most of the men had sufficient education to make an approximate guess as to what was going on and they had inevitably passed on their information to the others.

"What's the idea of the big assembly?" Johnny asked once during a recess between observations.

"We've told 'em we'd find out where we are tonight," said McSaunders, "and naturally they figured out how we'd check it. It didn't seem fair to keep them in suspense so I told them that if you approved and found out anything definite, we'd let them know right away. Poor devils, they're entitled to it. One of my gang had a wife who was about to have a baby and now he'll never know whether it was a boy or girl. Those are the chaps I feel sorry for."

Conversation stopped then as Malmson called Johnny to resume their observations. Finally Hugh leaned over the table and pointed with his pencil to two charts, the one they were making and the other in one of their astronomical books.

"Check that, Johnny," he said, quietly, "and that, and, that, and that. There's no doubt of it. I haven't been absolutely accurate, naturally. One can't be with these instruments. But it's right within a thousand years."

"Close enough," said Mac. "What could happen in that short while? Gentlemen, 'at this historic moment, facing an uncertain destiny, the brave man lighted a cigarette and faced his fate unmoved.' How old am I?"

"You aren't," said Johnny. "You haven't been born yet and won't be for about fifty thousand years. Perhaps a little more or less."

"Gosh," said McSaunders, "I'm my own ancestor!"

His attempted humor sounded strained but the point of light from his cigarette was unwavering in the darkness. There was an interval which lengthened into minutes as the three of them tried to realize to themselves just what the discovery actually meant. McSaunders broke the silence first and he wasn't trying to be funny.

"I'm just a mechanic and I don't know much. Suppose you fellows tell me what our world is like."

Hugh Malmson answered him.

"It's a much warmer world, Mac, than it will be when you are born. We found that out today. Somewhere up in the Arctic the next ice pack is just beginning to move down as the world cools off. It's the end of the age of reptiles. Somewhere in the swamps there still live a few specimens, perhaps many, of Tyrannosaurus Rex and in the Gobi where someday Roy Shipman Andrews will find them, dinosaurs are laying eggs. In what the forests of Northern Europe will someday become, the Neanderthal man is in some stage of his struggle with what will in our time be known as the Guttenberg and Pilt-down man. Our forefathers have left the trees and taken to the caves and they've found fire. Of that much we're nearly sure."

"And there isn't a good looking woman on earth?"

"Almost certainly not. Most of the land is steamy swamps where nature is making coal and the oil that Fall will someday try to steal from the Navy from Teapot Dome."

"Wish we had him here with us now."

"And in the seas are monsters such as you were pleased to call my 'fish'

and quite possibly there exists the sea serpent which our breed of men have talked about for centuries but never seen. We may get the chance. And in the north on the edge of the ice pack the shaggy mastodon feeds on the tundra moss and in the south is the sabre tooth tiger."

"We ought to get some grand hunting," Johnny interjected in an effort to break the tension.

McSaunders refused to accept the hint.

"And men who follow my trade aren't born yet? There isn't a good mechanic, an electrician, or an engineer on earth?"

"Not except for the ones we have on this ship."

Mac arose and stretched himself lazily and with characteristic wastefulness his cigarette butt described a sparkling arc through the night.

"All I can say is that you are wrong somewhere in your calculations. Because I hear an airplane motor and it's coming closer fast."

He leaned over the rail. "Jorgensen!"

The man answered the call instantly.

"Break out a signal rocket and stand ready with a searchlight in a hurry. There's an airplane approaching and it's coming closer fast. Look alive, men, we don't want him to miss us."

Johnny turned to Malmson.

"Radio, Hugh! You'll have to handle it yourself so step on it." But Malmson had already vaulted down the companionway steps to take the place of his vanished operators.

JOHNNY MORGAN swept the skies with his night glass and strained his ears. It was amazing, unbelievable, it couldn't be and yet it

was. From somewhere out there in the night a plane was headed almost directly for the "McGinty." He buzzed the engineerroom.

"Ready there with steam? We may have to pick them up."

McSaunders voice answered him.

"We're ready when you need us."

And still he couldn't believe. There was something wrong. He leaned forward with his megaphone.

"Give him a rocket and stand ready with both searchlights."

The rocket shot up with its long arc of flame and burst with a glare of light over the primordial sea. As the flare died, the searchlights of the "McGinty" cast their questioning fingers aloft, searching the skies for something be it man or beast.

A boy thrust a message blank into the commander's hand at almost the same instant that the lights located an object and clung.

Johnny gasped and then suddenly the explanation of the mystery was made clear. The plane was a Grauman two seated scout from the "Lexington," an amphibian. He opened the note. The message was from Malmson.

"Lieutenants Ellington and Morrison of the 'Lexington' are coming in. Take the lights off and they'll come in alongside using their own beams."

Johnny snapped the order and then settled down to wait. The searchlights swung away from the plane and lay flat on the sea to illuminate the stretch of water adjoining the "McGinty." The pilot cut his motor and circled to come in with a long swinging glide.

Johnny raised his megaphone again.

"Boatswain's Mate, call away a lifeboat with full crew. Take extra

boathooks, two submachine guns and two auto-rifles. Service ammunition. Get moving, men."

The crew of the "McGinty" jumped as though for a fleet competition.

"Jorgensen, get a crew on that forward five inch. These lights will attract fish. Be ready to douse all searchlights on order."

The crew of the lifeboat got away as the Grauman hit the water and were ready as she taxied up.

A mile away in the glare of the lights a huge black blotch broke the surface of the sea and reflected the glare of the incandescents in monstrous gleaming eyes.

"There's your target, range 1700, get going," howled Johnny. "Man all fifty calibre machine guns on the starboard side. Fire at anything that shows."

He focused his glass on the blotch. The creature was on the surface now and moving leisurely toward them as if curious. Leisurely was hardly the word, it was obviously capable of tremendous speed.

The five inch gun let loose with a "wham" and a fifty calibre followed with its stuttering roar. The plane was in close now and the boat crew was rowing madly to pull it alongside the "McGinty."

Johnny megaphoned again.

"Jorgensen, get ready the forward hoisting derrick. We're going to have to take that plane aboard somehow."

BEHIND that horrible approaching head the sea vibrated with a series of hundred yard long undulating coils. A shell from the five-inch lit almost under the grotesque bewhiskered head. A near hit. The monster flinched visibly and then dived without a sound.

"Lights out," Johnny ordered and except for the gleam of the rising moon, the sea was again a blank. Two men came over the rail and Johnny leaped down the companionway to greet them.

"I'm Lieutenant Morgan, in command," he said. The foremost grasped his hand.

"Thank God," he said, "we're back with men."

McSaunders jumped out of the hatchway with part of his engine-room crew and took over the job of hoisting the amphibian aboard. The "McGinty" was never meant to handle planes but with a bit of prying and pushing they contrived to squeeze it in. Then the five officers met on the bridge deck as the "McGinty" got slowly under way, cruising to the north. McSaunders had known Ellington at Annapolis and they staged an impromptu reunion. Ahead of the destroyer the searchlights swept the sea in brief wavering arcs, on for ten seconds and then shut down for a minute as no one wished to attract more of the sea monsters if it could be avoided.

"Guess the first thing should be to rustle you some grub?" Johnny suggested. "I don't suppose you've had anything except emergency rations since you left the 'Lexington'?"

Ellington nodded and McSaunders dropped down the companionway again to rout out the cooks. Not that this was especially necessary as the entire crew of the destroyer was again mustering on the foredeck, curious as only sailors can be, for news of the arrivals.

The two flying lieutenants were half starved and out of courtesy the three officers of the "McGinty" smoked in silence until they had finished eating. Out in the east a tropi-

cal full moon was rising slowly from the water as at last Ellington pushed back his plate with a sigh of satisfaction.

"That's that," he said, "now the next thing is, where are we and what's happened?"

"Suppose you give us a report first and then we'll tell you what we've figured out and guessed at," Johnny suggested.

Ellington nodded. "Very good. We took off from the 'Lexington' at about five o'clock this morning. Our mission was to scout ahead of the fleet on the lookout for the usual mythical 'Blue' forces. We were to report back to the 'Lexington' at about eight hours. Solo reconnaissance.

"It was a lovely morning and we were heading back to the fleet at about 7:45 when we saw the destroyer squadrons start to lay a screen. I'd say we were about thirty miles away and flying at about 12,000. All of a sudden we hit the worst bump I've ever encountered in a ship and we both went out cold.

"Morrison, here, woke up just before we would have crashed and managed to get the ship under control enough to set her down. In landing we broke a feed line and the oil pressure system went haywire. We'd instructions not to use radio so we decided to sit there until the fleet came up. There was no sea to speak of and we broke out some emergency rations and decided to have breakfast. Then we got ourselves attacked by mermaids."

"Mermaids!" The three officers leaned forward in incredulity. Ellington nodded.

"I guess that's what they were but Morrison insists they were mermen instead and certainly—but this is what happened. We were sitting there

in the cockpit as nice as you please having an after breakfast cigarette when it occurred to me that the fleet should have hove into sight by then. I turned around to say as much to Morrison and there were two of the biggest, slimiest looking creatures I've ever seen climbing up from under the bottom wing. They were on the pontoons already and their weight was nearly sinking us. I was so astonished for a moment that I could only gape at them. Damn it all, they had arms and hands instead of fins.

"Lookit," I managed to blurt out to Morrison. "Stew! We've got company!"

"He turned around and let out a yell you could have heard from one end of the 'Lexington' to the other, and went for his pistol. Because of the angle, we couldn't use the fifty calibres on them and there was nothing to do but shoot it out with the automatics. Golly, they were tough, show 'em, Stew!"

Morrison stood up and turned around and they saw a tear in his flying coat which ran from his collar to his waist and left a red welt on his skin.

"That's where the first baby got ahold of me," he said. "Ellington finally managed to shoot him off my back and the creature cried like a child. After that the second one was easy but there was a whole Sunday School around us. For awhile we'd take pot shots with the .45's but they learned to dive when we shot and it didn't do much good. So we decided to make temporary repairs ourselves and get the hell out of there. We finally managed to patch up the Grauman just before dusk and took off and was I glad when she finally lifted from the step. Those babies, men or maids,

were getting ready to rush us and we'd have lasted about ten minutes after dark when we couldn't see 'em.

"When we lifted, the air was dead and after listening for a minute we decided to radio the 'Lexington' and get her position. Couldn't get any answer but after we'd cruised around for half an hour we saw your rocket and decided to come down. If it didn't seem so unusual with the fleet missing and everything, we'd never dare tell what happened. Imagine a Navy fighter being attacked by mermaids. The whole fleet will be laughing."

"I thought you said they were mer-men?"

Morrison nodded. "They were men all right, at least the one that grabbed me had a beard. Ugh!" He shuddered at the recollection.

"Never mind about that," said Ellington. "Where's the fleet and how do we get back to the 'Lexington'?"

McSaunders chuckled. "According to my respected superiors the fleet won't come into existence for some 50,000 years and you ain't agoin' to ever get back."

Ellington scratched a match for his cigarette and looked disgusted.

"What's the idea? Are you fellows looney too or are we all nuts together?"

Johnny Morgan shook his head.

"When we sighted you we'd just finished making preliminary star maps. I'm afraid there's no doubt of it. We checked carefully and the stars are in approximately the positions they occupied 50,000 years ago. We can't tell accurately with the instruments we have to work with but there's no doubt of the approximate result."

Ellington jumped to his feet. "I'm not doubting your word for it, but

let me see for myself. It seems incredible."

Malmson cut into the conversation.

"Incredible or not, it's true. When the time dimension scraped the ocean, you fellows must have run into one side of it as we did the other. That would give the point of impact a breadth of about twenty miles. It only was here a fraction of a second or we'd none of us be anywhere to tell about it. Just a 'whoosh' and it was gone somewhere into inter-stellar space. But that instant was enough. It looks as though your plane and the 'McGinty' are the only two craft that moved in time—but it sure did plenty to us."

Ellington shivered. "I'll say it did."

Disregarding the star-maps he turned in his chair to make a long survey of the heavens with his naked eye.

"They do look different, don't they? Whew! Say, have you noticed that?"

Malmson chuckled. "I was wondering when all of you would notice that. Yes, my lads, I'd advise you all to look carefully at our lunar neighbor."

WHILE they had been talking the moon had risen well above the horizon and now hung in the sky in gorgeous full-blown beauty.

Morrison cocked an eye aloft. "What's the matter with it? It looks all right to me."

"Nothing's the matter except that it's moved in. If the old lady is 240,000 miles away now, I'm a Marine. I'll bet she isn't more than a hundred thousand miles distant if she's a mile. And hey, wait a minute." He dashed down from the bridge to get the most powerful telescope aboard, a five inch affair that was his personal property. They waited until he brought up the instrument and fo-

cused it. "I thought so," he said finally, "but who would have believed it?"

Johnny Morgan shoved him aside. "Let's look," he said. "It is probably quicker to do that than to get you to explain understandably."

Malmson paced up and down the bridge in excitement while his commander took a series of sights.

"Who would have thought it," Johnny said at last. "And Hugh, I'll swear I can see clouds."

"Will you two stop jabbering and tell us what all this means?" Morrison and Ellington made the demand in unison. Johnny Morgan answered them.

"Sure," he said. "It's the same old moon you boys used to neck under on Flirtation Walk but you're looking at a side of her that nobody ever saw before."

"The dark side of the moon," gasped Morrison. Johnny nodded.

"Yeah. More than that, she's still revolving, very slowly, but revolving just the same. And I'm convinced that I've detected clouds, just the remnants of an atmosphere. Hugh, here, will make spectroscopic tests of her as soon as we can get together the apparatus and then we'll know for sure."

"D'you mean then," said McSaunders, "that she might still be inhabited?"

"Probably not, but if she is, the poor devils haven't got long to live. She's moving away fast and will continue to do so until she gets into a state of equilibrium at 240,000 miles. That means she's now leaking air from her atmosphere like a bum diving suit. You notice there's few meteoric craters as yet but as soon as she loses enough air the iron babies'll begin to break through her atmosphere. And then—curtains!"

"Poor devils—if there are any," said Malmson.

Johnny nodded. "You're telling me? They must have seen it coming for centuries. Oh, well, it's not our funeral and probably they all died thousands of years ago."

He got up with an air of decision. "It's been a hard day and you fellows are all in. I'd suggest that you, Ellington, see if your plane is safely lashed down in case it should come on to blow a little before morning. Hugh, you tell the men forward what we believe we are sure of and leave out what we suspect. Mac, be sure your staff is on their toes and can give me plenty of power in an emergency. Remember huge fish. We don't want to tackle another of those babies under bare steerageway. I'll take the first watch and we'll talk the dope over again in the morning."

"Okay, sir," said Ellington, as he and Morrison started down the companionway, "but may I ask where we're going?"

"Sure," said Johnny, "we're under orders to go to New York. So first of all we'll head in to where we're supposed to be fifty thousand years from now. After that we'll figure."

Ellington stopped and looked at him for a long moment and then saluted before he descended to the deck.

"That's okay by me," he said.

CRUISING slowly to the north under bare steerageway, the "McGinty" quieted into her accustomed nightly ghostliness. There is something dangerous about a destroyer under way at night, a sensation of leashed deadliness, of tremendous power and fearful efficiency. Sliding through the night without a sound, invisible except for her tiny side

lights, she is enough to make any man feel impressed. But this night, in this world, there were no men to catch a glimpse of her in the clear light of the monster moon riding close overhead. And if anywhere on that primordial earth there were men who might have seen her, there would be none to understand.

For a while Johnny listened to the rumble of Malmson's voice as he related the adventures of the amphibian to the sailors forward. Then the white clad figures dispersed into the gloom and, except for the usual watches, the "McGinty" was deserted. Johnny leaned his elbows against the bridge rail and looked ahead. Somewhere, a mile or so in advance, there came a vast, roaring snort as some forgotten creature wallowed in the warm sea. He waited and as the sound was not repeated, he turned to Hugh's neglected telescope and focused it upon the moon.

More than anything else, the sight of that huge round orb hanging so fearfully close overhead served to convince him that this was really true. He, Johnny Morgan, was off on his big adventure at last and none of his watchfulness could foresee and no man living could foretell what perils they might encounter.

He bent again for another glance through the 'scope and then jumped. Some object had come between his lens and the moon. He reached for his binoculars and focused them. High above the "McGinty," almost directly overhead and paralleling her course was a squadron of ghostly flyers passing north by west.

There must have been fifty in the fleet, long narrow batlike wings of 30 to 40 foot spread, the fuselage was narrow and long with a prolongation out front. The ships seemed to

vary in size but one and all were noiseless. Or—he put down the night glass and listened intently. From far overhead came faintly a harsh, vulture-like croak.

A fleet of pterodactyls, those flying lizards of a primeval world, had just passed over the "McGinty." It was many minutes before he resumed his pacing of the bridge and, after Malmson had relieved him, it was nearly dawn before he stopped his tossing in his bunk and relaxed in sleep.

Johnny Morgan, rash youngster of the Naval Academy, football hero, brash, incautious officer of the United States battle fleet, was becoming mature at last.

Responsibility ages all men and never was that more true, than with the five young officers aboard the "McGinty" during the next three days, as that destroyer steamed slowly northward. Under Johnny's orders they slowed to bare steerageway at night as none of them could have any idea as to the present contour of the coastline. Anyway they were none of them in any hurry. As McSaunders put it, they had all the time there was and no matter how much they wasted, they could never use it up.

The weather continued excellent and every evening there was an astronomical session on the bridge-deck where all of them under Malmson's tutelage reviewed their knowledge and studied the huge glowing disk overhead which sometimes hung so low over them that it seemed to be about to brush the water.

The daytimes were filled to overflowing with the innumerable details to be supervised. At dawn the "McGinty" hove to, while fishing parties put away in an effort to conserve food supplies. They found good hunting but saw no more of the monsters

although Jorgensen shot a number of gigantic seals.

JOHNNY'S inventory of the supplies aboard ship was completed and revealed, as he told Malmson, almost as varied an assortment of goods as those the Swiss Family Robinson* had landed with—and equipment to make everything else. One of the crew even turned up with an assortment of government seeds both flower and vegetable that, in line with the desire so many sailors profess to eventually settle down on a farm somewhere, he had collected from a beneficent government. They salvaged and put carefully aside, a peck or so of wheat, corn and oats that somebody had once purchased for some birds that had been aboard as pets. Malmson insisted that when they became farmers the seed would probably grow.

Weapons and ammunition were, naturally, plentiful. They still had enough fuel for five thousand miles of cruising. There was enough "high test" to keep the Graumman in the air for at least a hundred hours and Ellington and Morrison had completed their repairs. Food shortage wouldn't begin to bother them for at least a couple of months although Johnny cut down the rations a third—which was easily made up by the fishermen.

It was when they tried to figure the conditions they might encounter that they finally gave up and decided to "wait and see," and meanwhile to be prepared for anything. By nightfall of the third day their dead reckoning put their position as some hundred miles off New York and they

* This is the name of a famous juvenile story or novel that met with high appreciation a number of years ago. The author was Johann Wyss, a Swiss (1781-1842).

decided to lie to and wait for morning before chancing a closed approach. It was well they did for when the dawn mists lifted they found themselves some twenty miles offshore. The five officers gathered on the bridge.

"Well, gentlemen," said Johnny, "there she is, but where we actually are is more than I can figure."

"Some navigator, aren't you," grunted McSaunders. "Okay, what's the procedure?"

"Simple enough. We'll move in as close as we can and look for where Long and Manhattan Islands ought to be. If our figures are right the Hudson must be in existence and it must empty into the ocean somewhere. We'll find it and see if there isn't a harbor. I don't much like the looks of the weather."

As they moved in closer they found that the shoreline was a series of tremendous bluffs, varying from four to six hundred feet in height.

"Swing her a little to the north, Johnny," suggested Malmson. "I believe I can see silt in the water."

They cruised a couple of miles to the north and rounding a headland saw before them an opening that looked like the mouth of a large river.

"Just in time if I'm any judge of flying weather," said Ellington. "My lads, it's coming on to blow."

And blow it did. The storm hit them before they could possibly have expected it. Before the haze had obscured the sun they felt that dead calm which precedes hurricane wind.

"What'll we do, Hugh?" asked Johnny. "Put about and run for it or chance our finding a harbor?"

"We're too close in," decided Malmson. "I don't believe we'll have time to run. Give her all she's got and take a chance."

With all of them praying there were no bars in the river channel, Johnny gave the "McGinty" all the speed he dared and they dashed for shelter. Behind them the white caps were already sweeping shoreward in tidal wave size as they rounded the bluff and before them opened a landlocked harbor.

"Way enough," ordered Johnny, as they shot between the headlands, "ready with both anchors! Now! Let fall!"

As the "McGinty" swung around the hurricane hit. Although Jorgensen and a deck crew had been working frantically to furl awnings, two of them blew away with a thundering scream at the impact of the wind. None of the officers had ever before seen such blasts. They had hardly lost steerageway before it was blowing a hundred miles an hour and gaining strength every minute. Ashore, on the opposite side of the bay where the storm had a clear sweep the tremendous tropical trees were crashing to earth in a resounding procession.

"I'm glad we didn't try to stay outside," Johnny screamed in Malmson's ear as they dived for shelter, "I'll bet there is a two hundred mile wind behind that headland."

Malmson nodded. "I knew we'd see tremendous storms but never as bad as this. I'm glad we didn't run into this weather at sea."

AS the rain came with the ebb of the first blasts, Morrison and Ellington joined them in the "McGinty's" wardroom. Having secured the lashings on their plane they were both wringing wet.

"Gentlemen," said Johnny, "I give you the Hudson River. We're home. Like it?"

Ellington nodded. "Good navigating. It doesn't look much like home though, but I will say that your welcoming demonstration seems to be magnificent enough."

McSaunders joined them. "This is better than the fireboats and the Mayor turning out," he said, cheerfully. "Two skyscrapers have blown over already and one of them's the Empire State.* This storm of yours is enough to make Miss Liberty put out her torch."

He looked around at their somber faces.

"Well, who's for going ashore? I want a cocktail at the Ritz and I'd like to see a good show."

"Cut it out, Mac," said Johnny, wearily, "we're all too damned homesick. And to think how little we appreciated it when we had it."

They were all affected the same way and they stood at the ports watching the slanting rain drive into the boiling swells. Home. The home that none of them would ever see again.

Johnny Morgan was the first to snap out of it.

"We'll have to stage our own welcome," he said. "Let's be drawing up plans for our landing party. We'll be going ashore as soon as this moderates."

But it was two days before the weather calmed enough for them to consider a landing. Long before then their plans were matured and as soon as it was agreed to be safe, the "McGinty" weighed anchor and stood up the river.

"Is this the Hudson or the upper Amazon?" demanded Johnny as, with Malmson beside him, he stared at the

steaming jungle which grew clear to the water's edge on both shores.

"Perhaps it is neither one," said Malmson, "although it looks about like I'd expected. I'd suggest you drop anchor about here. I believe we can work a landing party up that shoulder to the crest and perhaps have a look around."

While the two aviators were again overhauling their plane which had suffered some damage as a result of the storm, it had been decided to send a small party to "see what they could see." Everybody wanted a chance to stretch their legs and Johnny had some difficulty in selecting who was to go. He'd decided to leave Malmson in command of the ship and risk no more than fifteen men, ten of whom would remain on the river bank in sight of the ship as a covering party.

McSaunders, who strangely had done big game hunting and was a keen sportsman, had begged to go along and although it would be impossible to replace him in the event of his becoming a casualty, Johnny had finally given in, principally because he was the most resourceful man aboard ship. They got away by mid-morning in one of the auxiliary launches towing a lifeboat, and made their landing without difficulty. Under McSaunders' direction, the covering party chopped down trees and constructed a rough barricade to serve as a base.

That completed, Johnny sent one of the crew, who claimed to be an experienced woodsman, on in advance as a scout and with McSaunders and three men, he started the climb to the heights. The whole party was heavily armed, two of the men wheeling a fifty calibre machine gun which, because of the impossibility of carrying water for it, would undoubt-

* A tall building on Fifth Avenue, New York. It exceeds the Eiffel Tower in height. It is occupied by office

edly jam after a minute or so of firing, but at the same time gave more protection than any other weapon available. The two leaders carried grenades and auto-rifles which, because of their greater penetrating power, had been selected in preference to sub-machine guns. The third man packed rifle grenades.

In this fashion they progressed slowly upward toward the beginning of the shoulder which seemed to be some quarter mile in the jungle. The underbrush was thick and they kept the advance man in sight with difficulty.

"What was that?" demanded Johnny suddenly after they had advanced over three or four hundred yards in the bush. Off to their right had come a tremendous crashing as some huge body forced its way through the thickets. Simultaneously there came a yell from the scout who had again disappeared from view.

The crashing on the right was repeated. It was so thunderous that a whole tree must have been beaten to the ground and the earth itself shook.

"That," said McSaunders, cocking an ear, "is either a tank or one of Hugh's fishes given shore-leave. It's coming closer. Beat it for that clearing at the right."

It was coming closer, and fast. Burdened with the machine gun the party made a dash for a hundred yard wide open space to their right. Acting without orders, the grenadier dropped on one foot and lobbed a rifle grenade into the forest behind them where it burst with a thunderous crash and resulted only in a tremendous threshing and shrill roars of anger.

IN the momentary delay the machine gunners reached the far edge of the clearing and stopped to

set up their weapon. The grenadier sent a second grenade to follow his first just as a tremendous beast burst through the trees. They first saw his head through the treetops as he shouldered his way through the last fringe of forest. To Johnny Morgan that head with its triple row of fangs resembled, except for the lack of smoke coming from the nostrils, nothing so much as the fabled dragon, and even in that tremendous moment his thoughts went back to a colored picture in a childish story book. The reptile stood at least forty feet tall and as he halted for a second on the edge of the clearing before catching sight of them. Johnny saw that he was kangaroo-like with proportionally small forelegs and a huge long tail. McSaunders' face went white and he fumbled with his blouse as the machine gun burst into fire with a roar and the grenadier tried to dodge the leaps of the creature by running to the left.

"Fire at his head, you idiots, you'll never slow him down in the body!" Johnny shouted and at the same time the grenadier stumbled and fell and McSaunders plucked an object from his blouse and heaved it with a slow overhand arc as he dropped to the ground.

"Down everybody," he shouted. The monster made one tremendous leap forward and there was a terrific explosion.

For a minute Johnny Morgan thought every man in his party had been killed and then, as the cordite fumes and smoke cleared away he rose on one knee and peered forward. The giant lizard still stood upright, its head and half its neck completely blown away. Even as he looked it made one spasmodic bound high in the air and fell kicking on its side.

"You idiot," Johnny shouted, "did you want to kill us all? What of the grenadier?"

"We'd never have stopped him and you know it. And there's three of you and only one of him."

Regardless of the still plunging body he likewise got to his feet and started forward.

"You wanted tyrannosaurus rex, Johnny," he said. "Well, you got him."

"What was that you heaved?" demanded one of the gunners as they started forward. Johnny spoke over his shoulder without looking backward.

"Latest type trench mortar shell, of course. Nobody ever dared to heave one by hand before. Only an idiot would try it."

McSaunders walked around the body critically.

"Good job I did or none of us would have been here now." He stepped casually between the plunging hind legs and avoiding the lashing tail by inches, emerged with the body of the grenadier as casually as though he had entered his own engine room.

"Poor devil," he said, "first casual-

ty. Well he knows now if his wife had a boy or girl."

It was the husband of the expectant mother he had previously mentioned on the "McGinty." Miraculously although the man had been almost directly under the plunging body there was not a mark on him.

"Concussion got him," said Mac, laying the body on the ground. "My fault, of course."

"It is," agreed Morgan. "Hard lines, but it's better to lose one man than five and he'd have got it anyway. He isn't the only one. There'll be others before we're done."

"I'll bet," said one of the machine gunners, "he never expected to get his in a scrap with a thing like that. Baby, what a boxer that fellow would make."

He was regarding the body of the tyrannosaurus curiously.

"His forearms are short so that when he isn't scrapping he can pull down tree tops and eat 'em. He's omnivorous, and the fiercest of all the reptiles," said Johnny brusquely. "Pick up the body of Morton there and let's be on our way. We've got to find out what happened to our advance man."

END OF PART I

AMAZING STORIES

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Our cover depicts a scene from the story "Zagribud"

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"When Atlantis Was"

By H. F. ARNOLD

CONCLUSION

The story of the adventures of the "McGinty" and of their intercourse with the beautiful beings is told quite entrancingly in the concluding portion of the story.

What's Gone Before:

Our story is distinctly divisible into two parts. The first part has told us of a fleet of United States Navy ships, including a very fast Destroyer which turns out to be the principal feature of the story, carrying the characters through a series of wonderful adventures. At first everything seems as it ought to be, practice maneuvers are going on and the Destroyer the "Farragut" is taking her part in a perfectly normal manner. A smoke screen is ordered and the "Farragut" called affectionately the "McGinty" by her crew dashes into the smoke screen's pitchy darkness and eventually emerges into broad daylight and loses all track of the fleet. The commander finds himself in the water, not knowing how he got there and the mysteries of the story begin. He is rescued and the "McGinty" finds everything so strange and only to be accounted for by her being in some past geologic age. In spite of the utter mystification of her crew and officers, she proceeds on her way

and at last finds herself in what was afterwards to be the harbor of New York. She finds shelter there in time to escape a violent storm. It is determined that there must be an exploring party to investigate their land-fall. They find themselves on what was to be Manhattan Island. They are armed for defense and make what may be called some narrow escapes from animals of the geologic ages. One of the party succumbs. They encounter a huge saurian, an indication of what they may expect to find in what is really a prehistoric era. A great air vehicle comes down out of the sky and makes a landing and a most interesting lot of passengers are released from her cabins, many of them women. They have come from a distant planet and the sailors, true to the nature of the animal, are greatly attracted by the beautiful arrivals. They make their acquaintances, manage to pick up something of the language and what happens next will be told in this issue.

As they stooped for the body there was the sound of a shot some distance ahead and the scout came running toward them from the upper end of the clearing.

"Lieutenant," he gasped as he approached. "Come quick! I've just shot a man!"

"Impossible," snorted the commander, but signing to one of the sailors to set up the machine gun and guard the body of Morton, he set out with the rest of the party in the direction of the advance.

It was true. Flat on his face in a

little glade some four hundred yards from the scene of their battle with the lizzard was the figure of a man. The body was unclothed, almost hairless and although of a deep tan was undoubtedly white.

"Where there's men, there's women," said McSaunders, turning the body over with the butt of his rifle. Beneath the body was a large and heavy battle axe of crude flint. The corpse had a bullet in the back.

Morgan dropped to his knees by the savage and made some quick calculations.

"No, Mac," he said, at last, "this isn't a man. Or rather it isn't a man of any race that existed in our day. Look at the proportions of leg length to arm length. And look at the size. Man, he's nearly seven feet tall."

"What is he then? He looks human to me."

"Oh, he's human enough all right," said the commander, dusting off his knees as he rose to his feet. "He's Cro-Magnon, member of an extinct race, that died out some 25,000 years ago, and nobody ever knew that his race reached the North American continent."

"If this is it," said McSaunders grimly, "I'm beginning to think it's nightmare land instead. Let's get back before we have to fight off a unicorn or a diplodocus or something."

"I think we'd better," Johnny decided. "Advancing through this sort of country is too dangerous. We'll send the plane out to scout. Fellows like the lizard you blew up can only exist in low lying swamp land. We'll look for higher ground."

Leaving the body of the Cro-Magnon where he fell they started the return to the posted machine gunner.

"How did it happen, Wheeler?" asked Morgan interestedly.

The scout, a small man, not over five feet six in height but well and broadly built had seized on the war club of his late opponent and had insisted on bringing it with him as a souvenir.

"You see, Sir, it was this way," he began. "Lieutenant Malmson had told us, before we started out, that if we saw anything that looked human we were to try not to hurt it and to bring it back alive. So I tried."

McSaunders and Morgan laughed almost hysterically. With the terrific

strain that they were under the idea of this pygmy Jack-the-giant-killer deliberately planning not to hurt a Cro-Magnon giant, was amazing.

"You weren't precisely successful," said Johnny.

"No, Sir, I wasn't," said the scout, "but it was all his own fault. You see, Sir, I met him back there in the woods and he let out a yell and started toward me with this sledge hammer here. I didn't want to hurt him so I ducked under his guard and let him have the butt under the chin. Not hard, just enough to knock him out. He went on past me and flopped on his face.

"Just then I heard an explosion and the fifty calibre began. Well, I kicked him a couple of times and we got up and we started to go help you. I had my sticker against his back so he couldn't turn, when darned if he didn't start to run. He oughta known better."

"And then what did you do?" gasped Mac, his face red with laughing.

"Why I followed regulations. I shouted 'Halt' three times and then let him have it."

"Good work," approved his commander ignoring the now purple faced engineer. "You did right. I'll explain to Lieutenant Malmson."

THEY found the situation as they had left it at the machine gun emplacement and bringing with them the body of Morton started their return to the landing. As they neared the log walls they were greeted by a crackle of machine gun fire.

"Another lizard?" demanded McSaunders.

"No," decided Morgan, "they're shooting toward the river. Hurry, perhaps they need help."

As they broke into a run, the firing died down and then ceased entirely. Jorgensen, whom Johnny had left in charge of the covering party, stepped out to greet them.

"Seen any monsters?" demanded McSaunders.

Jorgensen shook his head. "Not precisely, Sir. We've been attacked by crocodiles, although they are certainly big ones."

He explained, as they neared the land spit, that a dozen or so crocodiles had evidently been in the habit of taking their daily sun bath there and resented the presence of the gobs. A brief set-to had followed after which the crocs drew off with casualties.

Johnny forbade any more unnecessary firing and after burying the body of Morton they re-embarked for the "McGinty," where they found the crew busily constructing mosquito-proof shelters to protect themselves from the hordes of insects that were attacking them.

After baths and dinner, it was decided to drop the "McGinty" down river to avoid the flies and any possible night attacks. As the destroyer slipped down stream with the tide, which because of the nearness of the moon had proved tremendous, the two officers of the landing party gave an account of their adventure.

"I reckon it's up to us," said Ellington as the story was finished. "The plane's ready and set to go. So tomorrow if you'll assign us a direction for reconnoitering we'll push off at dawn."

It was the dark of the moon and the McGinty had been carefully tied up for the night near the river mouth before Johnny and Hugh Malmson had a chance to relax on the bridge deck. Morrison and Ellington had

gone down to fuel their plane and McSaunders had gone forward with them to give his usual ironic advice.

"What's the best thing to do, Hugh?" asked the commander finally. "Shall I let them go? If they should get forced down we'll probably never find them and yet land expeditions, as today's affair proved, are damnably dangerous. I'll never forgive myself for poor Morton."

"It's a chance we're all taking, Johnny. They've got to go, certainly. We've got to establish a permanent base where it's safe. We must get some idea as to where we are and the nature of the terrain. Say, what's that?"

Behind them, over the crest of the headland, a faint glow had begun to appear in the sky.

"The moon, naturally," said Johnny, and then realized that for the next few days there would be no moon. "A meteor," he hazarded.

Malmson shook his head! "No it isn't. Listen!"

He cupped his hand to his ear and now both men heard distinctly a low rumbling roar.

"Thunder? An electrical storm?"

Malmson held up his hand for silence.

As they waited the sky in the east grew brighter while the roar each instant increased its volume, louder, ever louder. Deck-lights went on all over the "McGinty," as members of the crew, awakened by the tumult, started running to quarters without orders.

And then a hissing tumult which queerly seemed to stutter, filled the entire sky and a long narrow cylindrical object so nearly red hot that it scorched vegetation raced low over the headlands and darted above the funnels of the McGinty to disappear

into the west. It was followed in its passing by a comet of flame.

As swiftly as the quarter mile long cylinder had appeared it vanished and the night was again deafened by the howls, bellows and screams of the frightened monsters. Lieutenant McSaunders bounced up the companionway to come to an exaggerated attention before them and salute.

"Lieutenant McSaunders has the honor to report, Sir, that the 1950 model mail rocket, London to San Francisco has just passed over. And all's well."

He collapsed into a chair and fanned his heated face with his cap.

"Boy, this combination of Cro-Magnon and 21st Century is getting me down," he finished.

Ellington and Morrison were two jumps behind him.

"Did you see it?" shouted the former "Lord what a sight. A rocket ship a quarter of a mile long and hitting 800 if she was making a mile an hour."

"And she was in trouble, too," added Morrison. "Her port stern rockets were barely flaming. I'll bet she's down within two hundred miles. And did you notice how the repulsion rockets on her bow were hitting it off. She was braking for all she was worth. And great guns, what power."

Malmson got to his feet at last. "Wait a minute, all of you. That must have been a meteor. It must have been."

Ellington laughed scornfully.

"Meteor, nothing. I've sat in on too many rocket design experiments to be kidded. But she's far and away ahead of anything we've got or expected to have for fifty years. And Morrison is right. She was in trouble and coming down. Let's get out the

ship and follow her. Man what a chance." He turned to shout an order at a group of sailors.

Morgan interrupted.

"Wait a minute, I'm in command here and we'll have no night-flying. If that was a rocket and you're right about its coming down, there's no hurry. We'll be able to trace it in the morning by the forest fire it'll start. Sit down and talk this over."

THE conference continued until Johnny finally called a halt in exasperation. Ellington, Morrison and McSaunders were confident that what they had seen had been a rocket ship, while Malmson persisted in his meteor theory. The younger men were sure that by some miracle they had been transported back to their own age or one slightly in advance of it, but the technical expert ridiculed the idea as out of the question.

"Just listen to those beasts," he reminded. "If the earth really was settled by civilized men capable of building rocket-ships, do you suppose they would let such monstrosities as those continue to exist. Use your heads."

It was then that Morgan stepped in and exercising his prerogative as superior officer, stopped the discussion. But his own uncertainty of mind possibly explained why, when Ellington took off on the reconnaissance flight at dawn the next morning he had as a passenger in his front cockpit Lieutenant John Morgan U. S. Navy. Johnny was going to see for himself. And when the two seater lifted from the step and they were high enough to make out the contours of the country ahead, he was glad indeed that he had come. He reached for the communication mouthpiece and leaned forward.

"Notice anything unusual about the country ahead?" he queried.

Ellington took a long look over the side and then shook his head.

"You probably wouldn't but I've been through that gap ahead too many times to be mistaken," shouted the commander. "It's six thousand feet in the air now but someday that gap ahead there will be the Narrows. We're just about over the lightship and in ten minutes we'll be over Hell Gate and the site of the Statue of Liberty—and over Manhattan. It doesn't seem real but I know where we are."

Ellington swung the Grauman in a long curve to pass over the contours of Long Island, studied the topography for ten minutes of their flight and finally nodded his head. It seemed incredible but it was true.

Then he jazzed the motor and pointed far ahead where rose a tiny wisp of smoke.

"And if that isn't our visitor of last night what do you make of it?" he demanded.

In another ten minutes they located the smoke toward the uptown end of Manhattan Island just about where Riverside Drive goes overhead well uptown, and then Ellington nosed the plane down to look for signs of their visitor.

The traces of its passage were followed easily enough. The rocket ship, if such it was, had come in hard and hot, leaving an immense scar on the earth and a trail of smouldering forest where it had scraped the tree tops. It rested now in the middle of a charred meadow, a quarter mile length of dull lifeless looking metal. Even at that altitude it was evident that it had been created by some intelligent mind, as the traces of the stream lines of the rocket jets were

obvious, although no portholes could be seen. Ellington cut his motor again and shouted:

"Plenty of room to put the Grauman right down beside her if you want to take a chance? How about it?"

Morgan considered. It was possible enough that the crew of the rocket might, if any of them had survived the impact of landing, be unfriendly. On the other hand they had selected, accidentally or otherwise, the only safe landing field in miles and any attempt to fight a pathway through the jungle would probably result in contact with definitely unfriendly beasts.

"Why not," he shouted. "Put us down at the 72nd street subway station and we'll walk over."

It seemed strange to be picking out location spots on a Manhattan Island covered with tall trees and wavy meadows. A sort of homesick jest at the fates that had brought them there. As the plane rolled to a stop, Johnny remembered how many times he had covered this ground hurrying up to call on a girl in a hotel on 73rd street. It was a strange business this adventure.

Ellington had brought them to a halt near the nose of the ship, the propeller machine guns covering the long slim rocket. The craft, Morgan noted, had almost the same relation of length to breadth as the earlier Zeppelins. He motioned to Ellington not to cut the gun and they waited there for a long five minutes for the craft to show some signs of life. They noticed again the absence of any ports and wondered how the occupants managed navigation.

"She's still a little warm," said Ellington, finally, "perhaps they're afraid to come out."

"There's another 'perhaps' too and that is that they're all dead," said

Johnny. "She sure took an awful rap when she came in. I don't believe anything is going to happen. Cut her out, Ellington."

ELLINGTON snapped off his switch and the two men climbed out and with machine guns at the ready started for the rocket.

Suddenly Ellington raised his gun and cut loose with a terrific clatter and Johnny Morgan jumped as a piercing scream sounded from overhead. It was only when a dark shadow fell across his path and he tried to jump two ways at once, like a chicken trying to dodge a hawk, that he was aware that the always sky-conscious birdman had fired not at the rocket but into the air.

Almost at the same instant he heard the flapping of tremendous wings and a huge object struck the earth with a thud, stirring up a hundred yard cloud of ashes in the smouldering rubbish before him.

"Run," yelled Ellington. "Quick! Under the edge of the rocket!"

As they jumped to get under the protecting overhang of the bulging sides of the strange ship, Johnny was conscious of a pale blue radiance which seemed to be emanating from the rocket into the atmosphere around them. They waited for several minutes, machine guns questioning for a target, while the dust slowly settled and visibility returned.

"Good Lord, where did they go? What became of them?" queried Ellington as soon as they could see with some clearness.

"What became of whom?"

"Our air-minded friends, of course. Don't tell me you didn't see them? There must have been a hundred at least. They were diving on us when I got the leader. He cracked up over

there. But what became of the rest of them?"

The pale blue radiance had vanished, Morgan noted as the two men stepped from the side of the rocket and gazed aloft. The sky was clear and blue and unoccupied. They walked over to the fallen object.

"One of our old friends, the pterodactyls," said Johnny, identifying it instantly.

"Then it ain't a machine? It was alive?" Ellington looked disgusted as Johnny nodded his head.

"Hell and I thought we'd met some brother airmen."

Johnny remembered then, that he had neglected to tell any of his staff of the strange monsters that had flown over the "McGinty" that night at sea. In a few words he acquainted Ellington with what he had seen and the two men examined the huge lizard curiously. The wings were ribbed, batlike structures covered with scales, while the body was armored as was the neck and heavy toothed head.

"Nice little beastie," said Ellington lifting one of the wing tips. "But he must have some motor to get off the ground with all that weight."

"Probably he doesn't take off from the level," Johnny explained. "With those claw-like feet he could climb a rockpile somewhere and start soaring. They're not very fast in the air."

"He gets up somehow," decided Ellington, "but I'd still like to know what chased 'em away. Hey, our bigger friend over there is making us welcome or something."

A narrow gangway had dropped down the side of the rocket ship and they started to run across the hundred foot stretch which separated them from it. As they neared the ship, the commander stopped suddenly and put out an arm to halt Ellington.

"Wait a minute," he ordered. "There's something coming out."

They stopped instantly and trained their submachine guns on the dark hole in the ship from which an object was slowly emerging into the light. The figure advanced slowly and evidently with the expenditure of great effort. As it came into the full light of the sun they saw that it was a man crawling on his hands and knees.

"He's been hurt," shouted Ellington, dropping his gun and hurrying forward. Johnny reached his side as he shoved his arms under the shoulders and aided him to his feet.

"Crackup get you, old chap?" he was demanding. "Where yuh hurt?"

The stranger shoved him away and leaned against the wall of the entrance as he shook his head. For an appreciable moment he stood there without speaking, regarding them with a fearful and excited awe. At last he seemed to convince himself that what he saw was really there for he raised his arm, palm of the hand outward, in greeting and said something in an apologetic tone in a language they had never heard before.

"He's white all right, but he don't talk English," said Ellington whose specialty that morning seemed to be the saying of the obvious. "How you feeling, old fellow?"

The man's movements were certainly those of a person of great age, although his features were smooth and unlined. He delivered a short address, probably a greeting, after which he bowed and invited them with a gesture into the interior of the ship.

"He's asking us aboard," said Ellington, "let's go."

TAKING their weapons along, to which the stranger seemed to have no objection, they helped him

to re-ascend the gangway and enter the interior. The ship was well lighted with a pale white radiance which shone equally from walls and ceilings. It was divided into a number of compartments and the huge metallic rings, which made up the inner skin were heavily braced.

Helping their guide toward the bow which was the direction he indicated, they passed through several sizable chambers on the floor of which were bodies of men and women, either dead or unconscious, for they failed to move. Suspended from the walls in hammocks were many other bodies, some of them of persons alive and conscious for they were conversing with each other in the same melodious, almost sing-song language, in which their guide had addressed them.

"Funny way to travel," commented Ellington as they took a moment to make a quick survey of the rooms as they passed through. "Those hammocks are suspended on some sort of springs. They must have anticipated a shock, but not so much of a one as they got. Look, a lot of the springs broke when they crashed."

Indeed at that moment they were compelled to détour around several bodies still swathed in the silken mesh of their shock absorbers.

"In this heat, the place will have to be cleaned out quickly," Johnny whispered. "They had damned good heat insulation whatever it was, but now that the outer door is open this place will reek of death in an hour. We've got a job laid out for us."

He didn't say more for the guide had paused before a doorway covered by a silken hanging. He voiced a low query and a feminine tone answered him, obviously inviting them to enter.

"Office of the Commander," Johnny

guessed and leaving Ellington to assist the injured guide he pulled aside the hanging and stepped inside. It was a large cylindrical apartment but it didn't seem to have any walls and for a second Johnny thought they had made a mistake and stepped back into the outer air. Then he realized that they had been brought into the control room of the cruiser and by some method the solid walls reflected the scene of the outside world in perfect proportions, sky, earth, ahead and to the rear, all in perfect relations. The illumination in the apartment was the white light of sunshine but slightly subdued. In the center of the strange room was a couch, on which rested a body in the remains of one of the silken slings.

Johnny stepped forward, guessing that he was in the presence of the commander, and bent low over the couch. With surprise he realized that the commander was a woman and that he was staring straight into the violet eyes of the most beautiful girl he had ever seen; a long, slim blonde girl with closely clipped hair and her eyebrows and lashes tinted to emphasize her eyes.

She rested her arm across a huge bank of pushbuttons and extended a hand to him as though she were very weak.

"We're happy to have found you in time," he said, and then did the most un-American act of his brash young life, for he turned the hand over and pressed his lips to the velvet smooth back of it. The "why" of his action he never attempted to explain, even to himself.

Clearly she was surprised and startled, for he felt her instinctively struggle to jerk her hand away from his as she tried to sit up. He stepped back and bowed and then, as she con-

tinued her effort, he jumped forward to support her.

"I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to displease you. Please forgive me." As she persisted in trying to release herself from any contact with him, he piled pillows to support her back and then moved away. She sensed the friendliness of his voice for, after looking at her hand quizzically for a moment, she smiled at him and pointed at herself.

"Vania," she said, and pointed at him.

"Johnny Morgan," he said and pointing at Ellington, he named him. Ellington bowed and the girl pointed at their guide and said "Tsar."

"I guess that dispenses with all the formalities," said Ellington who had been regarding the previous scene with much amusement. "Madame, you are sure a peach, and how my friend, McSaunders would have liked to be here."

"Quiet, you jackass, or I'll send you back to the plane," said Johnny. "Let me handle this."

"She didn't seem to care for your 'handling'" grinned Ellington, "or perhaps I was mistaken."

Not having an effective answer Johnny turned again to the girl to find that a case had snapped out of the wall beside her and that she was motioning him forward. He helped her remove the pile of papers it contained and at her gesture seated himself on the side of her couch. She must have been indeed weak for she relaxed against the pillows and with a final effort placed his hand on the papers.

"Golly," said Ellington, "She fainted. Get a doctor and some water quick."

"Where?" asked Johnny practically. "Nothing is going to happen to

her for a little while. Let's look at what she was trying to show us."

The first map on the top of the stack was that of the solar system showing the sun and nine planets in their proper orbits each with their present number of satellites. A mark had been added at the side of the satellite of the third planet evidently by another and later hand.

"Lord," said Johnny, "now I know we're all crazy."

"Why any more than we have been?" Ellington demanded as he and the man known as Tsar came closer to inspect the map.

Johnny pointed at the satellite of the third planet and then at Tsar, who nodded.

"They're trying to tell us they came from the moon," said Johnny.

"Well, why not? It's only a hundred thousand miles now. Even Wiley Post or Roscoe Turner could have flown that far in a month, and this baby could do it in three or four days or less. I don't see that the idea is screwy."

Without answering, Johnny turned to the next map. It was a contour map of the moon as they had mapped its surface in the last few days. Another mark had been added near the edge of what they had decided was a dead sea on the "dark side."

"That must be where they came from," decided Johnny. Tsar nodded again and said something in his soft voice.

THE third sketch was a beautiful contour map of the earth, which Johnny recognized instantly although the outlines of the continents were much changed.

"That's us," he said. "And wow! Here's something I didn't expect." Without waiting to explain he passed

on to the next picture. It was a drawing of the interior of the space cruiser, for that was what the rocket ship must be. A mark showed the commander's control cabin where they were then standing. The next picture showed a man, dressed like Tsar, standing at the open doorway and beckoning to a crowd of strong looking men. The next picture showed the same men carrying out broken hammocks and their occupants into the open air. The last in the series showed them back in the ship, ministering to those still in their hammocks from rubberlike bottles which they plucked from wall brackets beside each hammock. The next sheet was blank.

"They're certainly thorough in telling us where they came from and what they want us to do," Johnny remarked and turning to Tsar he nodded in comprehension. Once he found that his requests had been understood and would be obeyed, the man was so overcome by the strain of what he had undergone, that he slumped and would have slipped to the floor but for Ellington's arm.

"Gee, but he's light," remarked the pilot as he eased the body to the floor. "I'll bet he doesn't weigh more than forty pounds."

"Why should he?" Johnny demanded. "Where he came from they have only one sixth the gravity we have. I'm surprised he can move at all. But come on. This is our busy day."

He reached down by the side of Vania's couch and found one of the rubber bottles. It contained a light and very aromatic liquid, smelling of a spice resembling cloves. The Commander slid his arms under her shoulders again and, following a hunch, held the bottle under her nose and let her inhale the aroma. Her eyes opened and she smiled at him and,

when he held the bottle to her lips, she drank eagerly and deeply.

"Correct procedure, evidently. First thing they want us to do, as I figure it, is to remove the dead to the outside and then aid those who are still in their hammocks and alive."

Between them they carried out, and laid, in long rows close to the ship, the bodies of 48 dead. Alive, in their hammocks and able to take nourishment were 82 women and eight men. Three other women were so badly crushed that death seemed inevitable. Most of the dead were found in the corridors and what must have been the engine room of the space ship. All except five were wearing what was evidently a uniform and were men. There were no arrangements made for slings to protect these men in the event of a crash.

"Good men," said Johnny, as they carried out the last of them. "These were the crew and if they cracked up they expected to go down with their ship—and they did." He touched his hand to his helmet in a brief salute before they turned to re-enter the rocket.

"I make it we have 83 women and 9 men aboard, who have a chance of living including Vania and Tsar," said Ellington. "Well, now we've got 'em what are we going to do with them?"

"It's only 15 hours," said Johnny, "and we've three hours of daylight left so let's waste a little of it talking the situation over with Vania. We can't leave these people here, so there's only one thing to do."

"Do you call it a waste of time talking things over with that dame?" Ellington demanded. "I wouldn't. You seem to have the inside track, so go ahead. I'll see what I can do to make the injured more comfortable."

JOHNNY retraced his steps to the control cabin where he found Vania much recovered and in eager conversation with Tsar. She looked up as he entered. He noticed that once again she was greeting him with extended hand. This time he took the little palm in his own capable fingers and stood looking down at her with friendly interest. She was not tiny, he noted with some surprise, but only built with extreme lightness. Her slightness seemed to be of bony structure rather than of muscle. Her complexion was creamy, rather than a pure white, and her eyebrows had been dyed a slightly darker shade of violet than were her eyes. She must have been about five feet two inches in height and his first impression persisted that she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. She gave an impression of competence combined with fragility, the sort of a woman a man would want to take care of.

He gave her fingers a friendly little pressure, and it was only when he caught the flicker of pain in her eyes that he remembered that his strength was some six times as great as the average moon-man, and that he must have hurt her. He squeezed his own fingers in his other hand and apologized with his eyes, and she evidently comprehended for she smiled at him again.

Tsar had watched this little tableau with an interest beyond any importance that it could possibly warrant, and Johnny thought he was pleased with the termination of the episode and wondered why. But there was no time to waste in speculation. He sat down again on the edge of the couch and reached in his pocket for a pad and pencil. Picture writing wasn't a bad method of communication, he thought.

While they watched, he drew a quick sketch of the "McGinty" and pointed to the ship and then to himself. They nodded. He pointed at the destroyer and then through the transparency which, for want of a better word, he termed a window, at the Graumman scout airplane outside. They nodded again and Johnny pulled out his watch and indicated the second hand. They watched it complete a full revolution and he showed that the minute hand had moved also. They caught the idea again and when he indicated thirty minutes, pointed to ship and to plane and then to the space cruiser, he was sure that they understood.

He next drew a quick sketch of the plane and another of himself and Ellington in their flying suits carrying Lunarites to the Graumman. He pointed at the plane out of the window and then to the sketch of the "McGinty." They again understood the idea and immediately there was a violent disagreement between the two. While they argued, Johnny drew sketches of such pre-historic monsters as he could remember and a couple he imagined. He drew a man beside each of them to indicate the proportions. He sketched these in a circle and made a drawing of the space cruiser inside it. He showed them the picture and they both nodded, convinced that it would be dangerous for them to stay with their ship.

Last of all, Johnny took the map of the earth they had given him and indicated a spot on its surface, pointing from the sketch of the "McGinty" to the spot he had located. Again they nodded.

It was enough. He stood up and pointed at Tsar and then at the Graumman to indicate that he would be the first Lunarite to make

the trip. There was another disagreement ending with Tsar's nodding acceptance. Johnny assisted him out of the control room, pausing to bow at Vania at the doorway, and indicate that he would return, a courtesy which obviously pleased her.

They found Ellington in the middle of a row of hammocks aiding the helpless Lunarites, and Johnny explained his decision.

"We can't let them stay here," he said, "or, in their weak condition, men or beasts would kill them off or they'd starve to death. Our best chance is to ferry them to the 'McGinty.' It'll take two or three days but we can't help that. I'll stay here for the present and you bring McSaunders over when you come in the morning."

"It's okay with me," said Ellington, "whom else do I take on the first trip? Does it make any difference?"

"We-e-ll, it ought to be a woman. Have you any preference?"

Ellington actually reddened.

"In the sixth hammock from the hatch, there's the cutest kid you ever saw—and she acts like she thinks I'm a big shot. Okay?"

"If she wants to go," Johnny said, "come on and we'll find out."

He helped Tsar down to the hammock whose occupant sat up easily as they approached. She was indeed a "cute trick" thought Johnny, and obviously she and Ellington were already friends. By earth standards she was about 19, a blonde as were all the Lunarites, men and women.

He turned to Tsar and pointed to the girl, to Tsar, to Ellington and to the direction in which he had indicated the "McGinty" was anchored.

Tsar shot a volley of words at the girl who looked at Ellington with increased interest and nodded her head vigorously. Just as an earth girl might

if someone invited her out, Johnny thought. Ellington leaned over the hammock and picked her up in his arms, a procedure which first shocked and then amused her, and they hurried out the hatchway to the Graumman.

The two Lunarites regarded the ship with interest and when Ellington assisted the girl into his leather coat, helmet and goggles, all four of them laughed.

"Don't be rough, Ellington," Johnny cautioned, "remember these people have only about a sixth as much strength as we have, and are only used to a sixth as much gravity. Take it slow and easy, man!"

"I'd forgotten that," said the aviator, "but I'll bet I know one girl who gets acclimatized quick."

Johnny nodded. "With the whole crew of the 'McGinty' to baby her, she probably will," he said.

"Gee, maybe I'd better leave her for another trip," said Ellington.

"Get along with you," Johnny ordered, "and remember, nobody but McSaunders comes back tomorrow. And tell him to bring a portable wireless telephone with him so we can keep in touch."

AS he stood watching Ellington circle the field and head away from the space cruiser, he felt a moment of loneliness. It was the first time he had been entirely on his own, since that morning of battle practice. The responsibility was a heavy one and now he had some 90 odd invalids to increase the burdens of the "McGinty" and her crew. Well, he had broad shoulders. He shrugged and turned to re-enter the moon ship. There seemed to be no way he could close the gangway and keep marauding beasts out. He tried to shut the hatch but it was immovable. Finally he remembered

Vania and her row of push buttons.

With some difficulty he managed to indicate to her what was needed, and she smiled and touched one of the buttons beside her and nodded. Before eating any of the emergency rations which they had brought from the "McGinty," he decided to make a tour of the ship. Vania had so far recovered her strength that, when he indicated his intentions, she insisted on going with him. To his gratification she could not only stand alone, but was able to walk with only a hand on his arm to steady her. And so they started, precisely, he thought, as though they were strolling down an esplanade before dining in some expensive hotel.

For clothing she wore a loose fitting white jumper of some silk material with insignia on breast and arm. Her hair was clipped and she wore no jewelry or adornment of any sort except a dialed device resembling a wrist watch on either arm. Later, he discovered they were time and air conditioning indicators. From the deference with which the uninjured passengers and crew treated her, it was evident that she was not only the commander but some sort of a ruler as well. For they obviously loved her.

Several of the inmates of the hammocks had so far recovered, that they were able to move about and assist their fellow shipmates. Johnny was thankful for this, as he was not quite sure of the efficaciousness of the treatments he and Ellington had administered. The three badly injured women had already died, or perhaps they had been put out of their pain. There was no way of telling.

The two had started their inspection at the forward end of the cruiser and Morgan saw immediately that in all probability she would never fly

again. The bow plates had badly crushed when she hit, and the whole under row of rocket projectors was ruined. Before ending up on an even keel, she had skidded along the ground, as evidenced by the long scar he had noticed in the earth, and the result had been to crush in her keel plates badly. To fly, she would have to be completely rebuilt.

The ship had been constructed in three decks with a series of circular bulkheads running vertically, dividing it off into sections. The forward and stern rocket engines had been built full height of the ship and the fuel reservoirs for them had been placed between the inner and outer skins of the vessel itself. Much of the fuel, Vania indicated, had leaked out following the crash. He noted arrangements for rocket-projectors at the sides to keep the ship level or turn her in any desired direction, also stubby wings, which could be thrust out to increase the air support while in the atmosphere, and many other devices for which he could give no name or purpose.

Taken as a whole, however, he was greatly surprised to find that the ship was not as "different" as he had suspected. It was a great improvement over any similar vessel yet perfected on earth, but was not in any sense of the word a "visionary dream." McSaunders would probably have no difficulty in understanding the motors and power devices. It was the sort of ship considered in his own day, possible to exist in the 1950's and almost certain to exist by 1975.

Finally he realized that it was natural that the ship and its crew should be the way they were. Life on the moon had developed earlier but under almost similar conditions to life on earth, the natural laws were the

same, minds would develop in the same way. Why should he have expected anything strange and other-worldly? Similar conditions were bound to give similar results.

Another fact he noted was that this voyage so unhappily completed was not a voyage of discovery or exploration—it was a migration. One compartment of the ship was given over entirely to records, thin books bound in metal and printed on metal. The printing looked like a variation of shorthand.

Another compartment contained seeds and shrubs carefully packed for replanting. Still another was filled with livestock. He noted particularly a miniature sort of cattle with a hump on their back and a short stubby nose, several little animals like rabbits, and a woolly creature, that might have been the great grandfather of a sheep. The livestock seemed to have survived the voyage better than their masters, and most of them had already been relieved from their slings. Several Lunar men, easily distinguishable from the women by their heavier features and closer fitting costumes, were attending to their wants.

THE rough survey completed they returned to the control car and Johnny became conscious that he had not eaten since early morning "stand to." Almost shamefacedly he brought forth his sandwiches, chocolate, and thermos bottle of coffee, and, with an apologetic look at Vania, offered her a chocolate bar.

She looked at it curiously, but did not get its purpose until Johnny began to eat. Then she comprehended and laughed as she tasted it. Indeed she insisted on tasting everything he had in edibles and pushed one of her row of invaluable buttons, which

brought in a supply of Lunar foods.

She approved heartily of the chocolate, and likewise the peanut-butter sandwiches, but with a grimace expelled the bite of ham sandwich she tasted, into a very feminine handkerchief. The coffee also brought a wry look although the cream and sugar were both approved. The Lunar food, Johnny found, consisted largely of the liquid he had found in the bottles and a tough, pemmican-like substance made mostly of vegetables, which required lengthy chewing. Probably valuable for keeping their teeth in condition, he thought. They all had good teeth.

Coffee finished, he lit a cigarette, which surprised her again and made her choke before he could extinguish it.

"Now what?" said Johnny Morgan.

The answer was soon forthcoming. At a gesture from Vania, he came over and seated himself at her side on the couch and found himself thrilling to the touch of her fingers as she turned him so that he faced the foot of the couch.

The sun was setting and with a quick look outside Johnny noticed that a herd of strange creatures were approaching the cruiser. Curiosity drew them on probably. He indicated the herd to Vania and she smiled and nodded. She showed no fear.

"Stegosaurus," he said pointing out the queerly hump shaped armor-plate, forming a double crest on their backs, and the immense size. "We'd better do something. They're tough babies and one of 'em might ram a hole clear through us."

"Stegosaurus," she repeated pointing at the animals and then pointing at him, "Johnny?"

"Yes," he said, "Vania."

She smiled again and motioned for

him to pass her the table of push buttons. "What is this?" he thought, "Is she just quick to catch names or are we about to have a flirtation in the middle of a herd of dinosaurs?"

She pushed one of the buttons and again that pale blue radiance which he had noted at the time of the attack of the pterodactyls crept out from the side of the ship. This time it moved more slowly and seemed to surround them with an aura of protection. As he watched, the first of the reptiles reached the light-field and seemed to wade into it. As the ship was sound proofed, he could hear nothing but he could see that the stegosaurus stopped, as though he had hit something. The creature backed off and started to charge only to be thrown back on his haunches as though he had encountered a mountain.

"Gosh! They've some sort of a force field," he exclaimed, "and we were going to take care of these people who have enough power to stop a charging stegosaurus!"

Vania smiled at his words and touched another button and the outside world disappeared, leaving the two of them alone in the control room.

"Must get her to remember to turn that off before Ellington comes back at dawn. It wouldn't be any fun to hit that at 180," he thought, and without difficulty he conveyed the idea to her by means of his watch and the sketches of the plane and the "McGinty." Vania nodded again and patted him reassuringly on the shoulder.

"Okay, if you say so," said Johnny leaning back and making himself comfortable. "Go on with the show."

And a show it was as he soon discovered. Vania touched a button and the lights of the room dimmed while a series of motion pictures were thrown on the opposite wall. The oc-

cupants of the cruiser had evidently spared no pains to make any civilized citizens of earth they encountered understand the why and wherefore of their coming. The show began with a picture of the moon, evidently taken from a space cruiser some ten thousand miles from the surface and then skipped to a close "shot" of the surface of the moon, showing it as a thickly populated, well-watered group of countries, with herds of the miniature cattle and sheep, ornate cities and swiftly flying aircraft. Apparently there was only one human race, the blond whites, similar to the passengers on the cruiser.

SWIFTLY the scene changed, the seas were shown drying up, the cities being deserted, as the population moved closer to the receding waters. The ice caps of the planet disappeared. War broke out and man, using strange and deadly weapons, fought with man for possession of the vanishing water. The scene cut to a distant view of the earth, showing it as being extremely near to the moon and then seeming gradually to recede as the moon drew away. Next were a group of scientists making measurements with a queer machine and by similes of airplanes no longer able to fly, free balloons drifting inevitably downward, and other scenes showing complicated machinery which Johnny could not understand, they demonstrated the gradual escape of the air envelope from the planet. Then followed the coming of the first of the meteors with startling photographs showing how they struck the surface and dug their huge and eternal pits.

Last of all were shown the scenes of the construction of the cruiser with the group of scientists superintending its building and pointing from it to a

full earth in the sky above. The selection of crew and passengers by rigorous physical and mental tests from thousands of applicants was next shown, and last of all the loading of the ship with representative specimens of the best of flora, fauna and literature that the satellite had to offer. The picture concluded with the scenes of farewell as the scientists went from a giant telescope to the gangplank of the cruiser and bade adieu to the crew and their leaders, to Vania, Tsar and a tall, strong looking man, whom Johnny remembered to have carried out of the ship as a corpse that very morning. Throughout the showing the picture was accompanied by a low-speaking dramatic voice, which narrated the story in the Lunar language. The voice and the picture were so compelling, that long before the end of the account of the simple yet terrible tragedy with which earth itself must one day be faced, Vania put her head down on his shoulder and wept quietly with the muffled sobs of utter despair and even terror.

Johnny put his arm around her and patted her on the shoulder. Even if he knew how to say them, there were no words to console her for the tragedy of the approaching end of a race. His action was entirely impersonal. He was thinking only that these people were worthy; they had made the good fight and won to our planet and deserved the utmost in sympathy and cooperation that old mother earth could offer. He was proud that he was the man that was to be given the chance to aid, and to help them to save their heritage of knowledge from utter extinction.

When the screen went blank, he restrained her for a moment from switching on the lights; and sitting

there in the dark, just the two of them, he tried to tell her part of what he was thinking, and he thought somehow that she understood from his tones if not from his words. When he finished and she gently put his hand from hers to switch on the concealed beams, he found she was smiling bravely at him through her tears.

The show had lasted for hours, and he was very tired. She switched on the transparent "windows" for a moment and they saw that the clearing was deserted except for the blue radiance. He picked up the sketch of the Graumman to remind her that the rays must be shut off with the dawn and she nodded her head in comprehension. At her summons an officer whom Johnny had not yet seen, entered and nodded briefly at her orders. Johnny rose to accompany him when he left but she beckoned him back and motioned to a spot on the wide couch beside her.

"Maybe it's all okay on the moon," he thought, "but it's a little too sudden here."

He realized that she didn't wish to be left alone, so he drew a robe and a pillow from the low couch and spread them on the floor beside her. She seemed to understand for as he stretched himself on the robe she again extended her hand for him to kiss and the last thing he remembered as he grew drowsy was, that that same hand dropped off the couch and was resting gently on his hair.

And there, presently, in the glow of the blue radiance, in the cabin of that wrecked cruiser, they slept.

It was the touch of that same hand on his face that awakened him and he opened his eyes and looked up into the violet depths of hers, as she stood looking down at him. It was broad daylight and she must have awakened

some time before him, for she wore clean jumpers and had combed and brushed her short blonde hair. He jumped to his feet, ashamed of having overslept, and she laughed at his embarrassment as she pointed to the Graumman circling for a landing overhead. Ellington had returned and all was well.

He was hurrying for the gangway when she called him back to extend to him the sandwich and the last cup of coffee which he had saved from dinner the night before. The thermos bottle had kept it warm. As he took them, she rose from her couch and signified her desire to go with him.

Well, why not? When the Graumman rolled to a stop, McSaunders and Ellington saw their commander strolling up to them, a sandwich in one hand, a cup of coffee in the other and a beautiful blonde woman hanging on his arm. McSaunders leaped out before the ship came to a full stop and doffed his flying helmet in an extravagant bow.

"Good morning," he said, politely, "and how were the Scandals and the Central Park Casino? And why didn't you two breakfast at Childs?"

"Don't be an ass, Mac," returned his unabashed commander. "I had a very pleasant time thanks to the fact you weren't here, but don't get any quick impressions. This is Vania, I don't know the rest of her name, if there is any, and she's the bravest girl I know and just been through a hell of a tough time. Be gentle, fellow."

"Sorry, Commander. I didn't mean to be fresh but we've been fighting a flock of flying lizards all night without any sleep and here you two walk out as fresh as daisies and looking as though you would like to go for a stroll down Park Avenue."

He took the hand which Vania ex-

tended to him and shook it warmly. "I'm very glad to know any friend of Johnny's," he said. "I hope you had a nice trip."

Vania accepted the handshaking but shot a quick look at Johnny, which caused that pride of the battle fleet to redden, as he realized she had finally suspected that hand-kissing was not the ordinary form of salutation among earthlings.

"McSaunders." Johnny introduced him. "The ultimate in asses but a good engineer. He wants to know what makes your rocket tick"—and then to the engineer—"Get that portable radio out and working as quick as you can, will you? I want to talk to Malmson."

Mac jumped to work after suggesting that to save time, Johnny use the set on the Grauman at first. Ellington greeted the officer who had just emerged from the rocket and re-entered the ship with him to select his next passengers.

JOHNNY got through to Malmson without difficulty and found that Tsar was in the radio room and apparently approved of the arrangements that had been made to receive the rocket's passengers.

"He wants to talk to Vania, whatever she is," said Malmson, at the end of their talk. "Can you find her for him?"

"Sure," said Johnny, "she's right here. Wait a second." He reached over the side of the ship and said "Tsar." She appeared to comprehend immediately what was wanted and reached up her arms for him to swing her aboard. Johnny was glad to explain in sign language the use of the radio. She understood the idea immediately and soon was chatting briskly into the "mike" in her Lunar tongue.

When she finished, Johnny again took the phones and mouthpiece.

"That's it, Hugh, whatever she said to do is Okay. Tsar will explain. I'm ringing off now as the next load is leaving in a minute. Mac will be testing with you on the portable in a few minutes. You can leave Morrison in charge and come on over yourself if you think it's safe. Cheerio!"

He rang off and sat there a minute thinking. It would take several days to transfer the Lunarites and then what?

The next three days were busy ones. Ellington and in his turn, Morrison, made trip after trip in the amphibian, transporting the crew and passengers of the rocket to the shelter of the "McGinty," whose crew had willingly turned themselves out of their quarters to provide space for the newcomers. Malmson came over to the cruiser, and he and McSaunders spent hour after hour prowling through its intricacies under the supervision of the officer whose name turned out to sound something like "Dejar," but who soon answered to McSaunders' abbreviation of "Jim."

On the afternoon of the first day, Johnny and Mac had held a conference with him and with the aid of their ready pencil and sketchbook had managed to convey the necessity for immediate disposal of the bodies of those who had perished. As it would be impossible to bury them, they had been piled into an immense pyre and impregnated with oil from the cruiser's stores.

BEFORE dawn the next morning the two officers and the Lunarite stole out of the cruiser to attend to the final disposition. Johnny, who had moved his quarters into the radio

room with McSaunders, stole into the control room to shut off the blue radiance and found Vania sleeping. What was his surprise then, as the pyre was about to be fired, to see her appear in the companionway entrance and halt the proceedings. She knelt beside the pyre and, as Johnny and McSaunders bared their heads, she prayed to the new moon which shone in the east in the before dawn sky. When she had finished, Johnny repeated as much of the burial service as he could remember, and, with the feeling that he was doing the proper thing, handed her the torch which Mac had prepared.

She thanked him and, without a shudder, stepped forward and held it under the oil soaked wood, until the base of the pyre was well ignited.

"What a girl," whispered Mac. "She's seeing the last of eighty of her friends and she doesn't even flinch!"

Without a word the four of them stood and watched the flames shoot sky high while the animals in the nearby woods howled and screamed at the sight.

"It's as good a way to go as any," said Mac as the last flame died down. "Well, let's have breakfast."

And so the incident was finished.

It was when the transport job was nearly ended that Johnny made a surprising discovery. With the exception of Tsar, all the people flown to the "McGinty" were women. Not a Lunar man made the trip and—as he found out from Vania—they had no intentions of doing so, at least for the present.

"Someone has to stay and care for the animals and the records we brought with us," she explained, "so the males will stay under the leadership of Dejan. Perhaps someday they can be sent for. If not"—she shrugged

her white-clad shoulders—and tried to tell him another reason which he could not then understand.

She insisted on waiting with Johnny until the final trip. When Ellington brought in the Graumman for the last time, the two of them stood beside the plane and looked back at the wrecked space-ship. Dejan and his eight men were drawn up before the gangway to bid them farewell. Beside the vast bulk of the wrecked rocket, they looked very helpless and puny.

As Dejan raised his arm high overhead in a gesture of farewell, the two entered the plane which, with motor roaring, pivoted almost in its own length and swung off into the blue. It had been hard to go.

That evening there was a conference in the wardroom of the "McGinty," with the five earth officers, Vania and Tsar. Immediately on reaching the ship, Johnny Morgan, without explanation, had ordered "up anchor" and taken the "McGinty" to sea. They were now keeping well out and headed at normal cruising speed of fifteen knots in a south-easterly direction down the Atlantic Coast.

Johnny opened the conversation.

"I don't want you fellows to think that this interruption has made any change in our original plans," he said. "Except that we have 80 more mouths to feed our situation is just the same as it was before. We've got to establish a permanent base where we are safe from dinosaurs and pterodactyls and such. And where we can establish a city. Ellington, how much gas is left in the Graumman?"

"Enough for about twenty hours of flight."

"That will have to be enough then. I believe it would be anyhow, for all we need is a survey job."

"But where are we going?" demanded McSaunders. "We haven't fuel oil enough to steam all over the world."

"We're not going to," his commander answered, and drew out the folder of picture maps that Vania had first shown them in the control room of the rocket. "Hugh, did it ever seem queer to you that we found Manhattan Island a mile up in the air?"

Malmson nodded. "Yes it did. But I believe I've got a possible answer for it."

"What's that?"

"It means that in the next 50,000 years either the ocean level is going to be raised or volcanic disturbances will lower the land. Perhaps both."

"That's obvious. Now in the legends of antiquity of the human race, how many such disturbances are on record?"

Malmson smiled. "Only one, that we have any traditional record of. I see what you're driving at, Johnny."

"I thought you would. And if there's any possible beginnings of civilization at this early date, where would they be?"

"There's only one spot on the world that I can think of."

McSaunders interrupted.

"You mean—"

Johnny nodded. "Atlantis, of course. That's why we're headed South East. Look at this chart. The Lunarites had excellent telescopes and they mapped the earth's surface as it is at this time, very carefully. The island of Atlantis is plainly indicated. It's a mountainous and volcanic island about the size of Borneo and roughly the same shape as Australia. We're going there."

"To Atlantis! What an opportunity!" It was Ellington, who made the statement almost reverently. "I

wonder what the people will be like?"

"We'll find out," said Johnny. "They'll be in some early stage of civilization, I expect. But they'll take us in. They'll have to," he finished grimly.

"But what had that stuff about New York being a mile-high have to do with it?" demanded McSaunders.

"It was a pretty fair indication," said Malmson, "that even disregarding Vania's map, the continent of Atlantis has not yet been destroyed and raised the sea level as such tremendous settlements might."

"Oh," said Mac, "then we can count on a few years before that happens, can we? There's no use in our settling down and then having to move again right away."

"There'll be as many years as you'll need. At least 25 and probably nearer to 35 or 40 thousand."

"I guess that'll be time enough. When do we sight land, Johnny, and then what do we do?"

"We've got about five days steaming at this speed and I'm not going to risk a landing party again. Ellington and the Graumman will make an aerial survey and pick out the best spot for us to settle. Then we'll go there or as near there as we can get by sea, beach the 'McGinty' and dismantle her."

"Dismantle the 'McGinty'!" They were horrified.

"Certainly," said Johnny, "or perhaps I should say, wreck her. We're not going to be seafaring people for a while. We're going to be farmers and builders and live stock raisers. We can't expect any more help from the moon. Vania has told me that it was moving away so fast they could hardly expect time to build and launch a new rocket and it couldn't get there if they did. It's up to us

and we need the 'McGinty's' turbines for water power purposes, we need her metal for a thousand uses, smelters, refineries, work shops. We need her wiring system for our own lights ashore. We'll make anti-aircraft batteries of her guns in case the pterodactyls should pay us a visit. After awhile, when we are settled, McSaunders will build us a large air-ship and we'll go back for the records and crew of the rocket. But that's a couple of years away."

At first the idea appalled them, for the "McGinty" meant home to every man. But they were primarily practical and soon saw the wisdom, indeed the necessity of the proposal.

"But all that comes later," Johnny finished, "the first thing to do while we have time is to teach the Lunarites English. This is our world and the language used will be ours. I want every one of you—I hardly need to include the aviators and Mac in this—to pick himself out a girl and in his time off duty teach her English, just as fast as he can. And the first words she learns are not to be 'I love you' either. We've got a lot to do before there's any time for lovemaking."

It was on this note that the conference broke up and the aviators and McSaunders departed to inform the crew of their strange new duty. Malmson remained behind.

"Look here, Johnny," he said, "I've been spending a good bit of time on the 'McGinty' the last few days and you haven't. Do you really think that last order was necessary? If you do, you're dumber than I think."

Johnny laughed. "Of course not. These girls are too pretty and fragile and too much in need of somebody to take care of them. And the last part of it was wasted too. I'll bet every man aboard the 'McGinty' has picked

himself out a lady already and I'll bet that some way or other he is managing to talk to her too. But there won't be any trouble. These girls are too intelligent and too conscious of their high duty and purpose for that."

"What do you mean?"

"Vania here has been studying English at odd moments ever since we met. Lady, did you understand anything of what was said tonight?"

The moon girl nodded. "Quite a bit," she said unexpectedly, "Tsar too. He learn also."

"See, Hugh? Did it ever occur to you as strange that we left all the Lunar men behind? It did to me and I thought it was sort of brutal. As soon as I could figure out a way to get the idea across to Vania I asked her about it. And I found out. You see, Hugh, the moon people risked everything to perpetuate their race—and we haven't any women with us."

"And so?"

"And so the men sacrificed themselves, deliberately. There was nothing for them in the way of perpetuation of their race they could hope for. They'll hang on there at the rocket and guard their records until someday we can send for them. But if the moon race is to be preserved, we must do it."

"I haven't noted any holding back on the part of any of us, either," Malmson commented dryly. "Even our Commander."

Johnny Morgan reddened. "Come up on deck with me," he ordered. "I want to check our course."

THE weather continued perfect and the "McGinty" continued to steam slowly southward and eastward on her last voyage. Trim, sleek, last minute product of the Navy builders' art, she was going to the

junk yard, fifteen years ahead of her time. But her crew didn't care.

Just after dawn on the morning of the sixth day, Johnny Morgan and Malmson were again on the bridge when the snow-capped mountains of the island continent thrust their peaks above the horizon.

"There's home, Hugh," said Johnny, lowering his glasses after a preliminary survey. "Home at last." He quoted under his breath—"And the sailor home from the sea"—"But I guess we'll stay away from those babies." He gestured off to the east where a group of wisps of smoke floated lazily to the sky.

"I guess we'd better," nodded his second, "volcanoes, and big ones too. We'd better head south."

All that day the "McGinty" steamed slowly southward along a precipitous shore where the mountains seemed to extend clear to the water's edge. Just before nightfall they entered a tiny land-locked bay where a brisk mountain stream dropped hurriedly into the sea.

"If we stay here, Mac, there's your water power," commented the Commander pointing to the stream. The engineer sniffed delightedly.

"Pine trees! I thought I'd never smell 'em again. I'll bet there's bear in those forests and the great granddaddies of all trout in that brook."

"And we're almost under the equator at that," commented Malmson. "There's a cold current runs all along here, from the Antarctic probably, and of course those high mountains have something to do with it. It's ideal for us."

"At least we'll find out if it is tomorrow. Tell Ellington and Morrison to get ready to take off in the am-

phibian at dawn, but not to put her overside until morning. Then we'll know."

The "McGinty" dropped her anchors and somehow or other everyone heaved a sigh of relief. This cool quiet spot looked as if it belonged to them. A place where they could work and relax in peace, live the balanced lives that men should live and be happy. No one deceived himself as to the prospect of hard and perhaps uninteresting labor that confronted them. But they were ready to take it—in their stride.

Somehow the evening developed into an impromptu celebration. The women from the moon felt that their infinite journey was ended at last and that they had succeeded. The men of the "McGinty"—well most of them were in love and what more could they want?

Although the moon women had brought little with them except a change of clothes, several of them were accomplished musicians and had already learned to play earth tunes on the ship's musical instruments. As there was no fear of monsters in this shallow harbor, Johnny turned on all deck lights and the "McGinty" staged a ship's dance as nonchalantly as though she were still berthed at "Dago" harbor.

Ellington and Morrison approached Johnny at the height of the evening.

"We're going away in the morning, Sir?"

"Yes," said Johnny, "I know. Better turn in early."

"A ship's captain can marry people," Ellington blurted out. Johnny caught the idea at once and looked serious.

"I know you said there would be no weddings until after we were settled," said Morrison, "but we're going on a

dangerous flight and we'd like to be sure of 'em."

"Nuts," Johnny chided, "you just want to prove that the air-service can get ahead of the fleet again. All right, go get your dames. I've been expecting this and I've even located a prayer book. Vania will read the Lunar service."

Ellington had chosen the pert little miss he had brought as his first passenger and Morrison had managed to make an impression on the tallest moon maiden aboard, a damsel all of five feet four inches.

Before the entire assembled ship's company the four of them faced their Commander and Johnny read the familiar, old fashioned wedding service. When he had finished, Vania recited from memory the rites as they were prescribed on their lost world. And so they were married.

THE next day was spent in a fever of impatience. After the two bridegrooms got away on their voyage of exploration, swinging wide over the valley to the southeast and then banking sharply to climb over the mountain ridge, the usual work got under way. Fishing parties left early in an effort to refill the "McGinty's" larder, and on deck the usual work parties carried out their daily duties but many an eye was cocked aloft and many a swab was stilled as a deck hand listened for the throb of returning motors.

Just before dusk, after some fourteen hours in the air, the Grauman returned. She dropped slowly down to the harbor and pulled up beside the "McGinty" in her customary perfect landing. The pilot and observer made fast and came over the side to report to Morgan and Vania on the bridge.

"It's all right," said Ellington, cheerfully. "Or at least it looks all right to us. There are no monsters and no flying lizards, too high I guess. Lots of small game and we saw some deer. No cities though and not a sign of any inhabitant, not a darned thing. We believe the whole island is uninhabited. At least we covered some 2800 miles of it."

"Good," said Johnny, "even better than I had hoped. A quiet place, plenty of game and no one to disturb us. Tomorrow we'll land and explore."

And they did. When a three days' search of the area by half a dozen landing parties had revealed nothing more dangerous than bear, they decided to beach the "McGinty" and begin the construction of their village. Spring in those latitudes was just beginning or more probably the rainy season was just ending, and Malmson believed they could still get a crop from their scanty store of grain. In any event there was plenty of game and they could live.

The last evening, before they ran the ship ashore, Johnny Morgan and Malmson sat smoking in the latter's cabin.

"Tomorrow you get unanimously appointed as Atlantis' first mayor, Hugh," said Johnny.

"How come?"

"Well a ship captain can marry people in a pinch and so can mayors, but I never heard of a captain marrying himself. Did you?"

"Vania has finally said 'yes', eh?"

"Well she thought we ought to wait a little longer but I talked her out of it. Hugh, you know sometimes I can't really believe we are living 50,000 years too soon. It doesn't seem real somehow, does it? It might just as well be 1620 and tomorrow we would be making a landing on Plymouth

Rock or it might be 1935 and we were planting a colony on some undiscovered island."

Malmson smoked in silence.

"There's another fact that bothers me. This is the island of Atlantis all right, but where are the Atlanteans? According to the best guesses of our own archæologists they should be beginning their civilization about now."

Malmson took his pipe out of his mouth. "That's bothered me, too. But has it occurred to you that perhaps they are—and that we're it? Us, the Lunarites and the crew of the 'McGinty'?"

"That's ridiculous. Why we'd be our own ancestors, pulling ourselves up by our own bootstraps, so to speak. It would contradict the whole theory of evolution."

"Not necessarily. I've always thought there was a flaw in the Darwinian theory as he outlined it. It reads well but there's too great a gap between man and his next most intelligent neighbor. Man ought to be dumber or the chimpanzee more intelligent, one or the other."

"You believe then—?"

"I don't believe. I suspect. It seems possible to me that man evolved from the primitive all right but he needn't necessarily have done it on this earth. A good proof of that possibility lies asleep in your cabin right now; Vania. And perhaps people like her didn't even get their start on the moon, perhaps they were intelligent beings when they first arrived there, who knows?"

"But where did they come from then? From Mars?"

Malmson shrugged. "I haven't any basis even to guess with. Perhaps civilization advances crabwise with men being sent back through time to

help out backward peoples or even backward worlds. It's a wild guess but interesting to think about. But I don't believe that, if we are destined to become the great grandfathers of Atlanteans, we'd necessarily be our own ancestors."

"What else would you call us?"

"I don't know, but such a premise would explain why Witherspoon and the other four on the 'McGinty' couldn't travel through time with us. They WERE descended from some of the Atlanteans who escaped from the final tragedy. And so they couldn't go back."

THE two men smoked for awhile in silence.

"I'm just a simple sailor," Johnny said at last, "and you've got me dizzy. To think we'll never really know what happened to Witherspoon and the others. Or even whether the fleet escaped."

Malmson turned his chair with a scrape to look his commander straight in the eye.

"There's one chance in a million that we might find out," he said, "if you wish to authorize the experiment."

"Good Lord, what possible chance is there of communicating with people who don't even exist yet?"

"There's one chance in a million that we might be able to communicate. Did it ever occur to you to try the 'D' beam?"

"Don't be any crazier than you have to. I've listened to about all the wild ideas I can stand up under tonight."

"I'm not being crazy. No one knows anything about the 'D' beam except how to use it. It has some queer possibilities. I've been thinking about them for the last six weeks. There's a vague possibility that it might cut through the time dimension."

"But the beam hasn't been on. We'd have noticed."

"Remember we lost both our radio men. They may have tried it just after we disappeared. After that they wouldn't dare to try it would they?"

"Against general orders, of course. Do we dare to try it ourselves?"

"You're the commander. It's up to you."

"Come along." Johnny led the way to the radio room and they seated themselves at the transmitter.

"Wait a minute," said Johnny. "What good would it do? In the first place we can't get back and in the second they wouldn't believe us. Third it's against all orders and if by some miracle it worked, we might be giving away the secret of the beam to the little fellows. No, I guess not, Hugh."

"That's the conclusion I'd come to, too, but I thought as Commander of the 'McGinty' the final decision was up to you."

Johnny rose from the instrument table and stretched his legs.

"No, we'll carry on. We'll build our homes and found our cities and if we're destined to be the fathers of 'Atlantis' why—we'll be the best dads we know how. But we'll keep an operator on duty as long as 'Atlantis' lives, and if the beam ever comes on, we'll cut in and try to explain ourselves. That's the best we can do. Ho hum, too much talk has got me sleepy. Good night, Mayor."

Hugh Malmson repacked his pipe.

"Mayor," he said, and chuckled. "What swell people they all are. You can't get 'em down. The Navy carries on."

THE END

Epilogue

THE bathosphere dropped slowly through the inky seas of the south Atlantic, her searchlight beam cutting hazily through the blackness. It was a day in late autumn in 1935 and above the seas were roily. It would be the last descent of the year. Down, down, deeper than man had ever descended before. Bottom.

"We've hit," the man inside reported up the telephone cable. "What's the depth?"

"A little over 25,000 feet," came the voice from above. "What do you see around you?"

"Not a darned thing. I might as well be sitting on a hilltop. Nearly five miles down. Well, it's a record. Hoist away!"

And he was never to know that he had been perched on the highest tower of the principal city of "Atlantis," nor that a few feet under him were the time rusted remnants of a 'D' beam set at which for thousands of years a man had sat, waiting for a call that never came. And that a man had been there waiting on that day of catastrophe when "Atlantis" descended under the waves.

And if he had known, he wouldn't have believed.

FINIS

