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PORTRAYING HIS IMMORTALITY

AMAZING STORIES

Scientific Fiction

Vol. 5

July, 1930

No. 4

In Our Next Issue

SKYLARK THREE, by Edward E. Smith, Ph.D. (A Serial in three parts.) Part I. Just about two years ago—specifically two years ago in the August issue—we began that much lauded story, "The Skylark of Space." Since that story was completed there were innumerable requests for a sequel. Beginning with the next issue—August—we begin the sequel in a serial in three parts. "Skylark Three" is more magnificent, swifter and more thrilling than the other. We suggest that you order your magazines now to make sure you get them.

WORLD ATAVISM, by Edmond Hamilton. We know that the sun's rays play an all-important part in life processes, and in the present story it is taken that they are constantly improving and evolving a higher race of man. In this short story, Mr. Hamilton uses, for him, an unusual theme, which he weaves dexterously into a tale of considerable importance.

THE INFERIORITY COMPLEX, by Miles J. Breuer, M.D. According to the views of some of us, a great many complacent people would be better off if they had a strong infusion of the inferiority complex given to them. Here we have an eminent authority giving us a wonderful bit of fantasy based on higher physiological and psychical science. This story is not only a romance of literary value, but is really a treatise on various complexes of human mentality.

THE LAST WAR, by Capt. S. P. Meek, U. S. A. Who should be more authorized to write a story on the wars of the future than an army man? Capt. Meek is an army man. He has evolved a most ingenious treatise on what man may do in the future to conquer nations. It seems almost prophetic.

SOUTH POLE BERYLLIUM, LIMITED, by Peter van Dresser. Beryllium is a metallic base of the emerald and it is a metal which bids fair to enter into industry, in a sense, the last development in metallurgy, or about to be such. Admiral Byrd, establishing himself at the South Pole, mapped those almost unknown regions, so that the Antarctic is now familiar to us. This story is particularly opportune at this time. Both subjects are fresh topics in the world of science.

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Our Cover

this month depicts a scene from the story entitled, "The Message from Space," by David M. Speaker, in which an inhabitant from one of our satellites, which the author calls Astrax, is seen trying to escape from the conquering intelligences of a neighboring planet.

Cover Illustration by Morey

Published monthly by The Experimenter Publications, Inc., at 184-10 Jamaica Ave., Jamaica, N. Y.
B. A. MACKINNON, President H. K. FLY, Vice-President and Treasurer

Price 25c a copy; subscription \$3.00 a year in U. S. A., \$3.50 a year in Canada, \$4.00 in all foreign countries.

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Editorial and Executive Offices, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

A Visit to Suari

A Martian Comes to Earth

By A. Hyatt Verrill

Author of "The Bridge of Light," "Death From the Skies," etc.

IT is undoubtedly a novel idea—on which this story is based—the separation of the protons and electrons and their transfer through space, to be recombined into their original form; that is, with reservations. The discovery of a means of transportation by means of disintegration would certainly solve a great many problems on interplanetary travel—to say nothing of shorter distance transportation. Mr. Verrill comes forward once more with an unusual treatment of a subject that is familiar to so many of us by this time—even to those who are not yet readers of AMAZING STORIES. What are the other planets and their inhabitants like? What beings live upon them if they are inhabited? In "A Visit to Suari" our author gives us a touch of sarcasm that is pleasantly reminiscent of Dean Swift.

Illustrated by BRIGGS

CHAPTER I

Kespi-Nanay Returns

EXCITEMENT, speculation, wonder and interest ran high in Sonko-Huara, for news had been spread that Kespi-Nanay had returned. It was almost as though a person had returned from the dead. In a way, it was more amazing, for persons *had been* known to be resuscitated; moreover, everyone knew that death was merely a state and that the spirit that left one body took possession of another. But Kespi-Nanay had *not* died. He had merely disappeared—vanished completely—three Chukitis (years) before, after declaring that he intended to visit Suari, that great, glowing, mysterious planet that from the very beginning of history had been a source of wonder, of study and of baffling mystery to laymen and scientists alike. It was the nearest planet to Sonko-Huara—near, however, only by comparison—and separated by some forty-odd million Tuppus (miles) of space. Yet through the ages the astronomers of Sonko-Huara had learned much about their great, glowing neighbor, that, like their own planet, raced about the sun and rotated upon its own axis, so that the Sonko-Huaran scientists knew that the seasons, the climate, the alternating days and nights of Suari must be very similar to their own.

Through their telescopes the astronomers of ancient times had studied Suari; they had viewed its surface from pole to pole and completely around its circumfer-

ence, for unlike Quilla (the moon), that presented only one side to view as far as Suari is concerned, Suari presented every portion of its surface to the eyes of the studious and curious inhabitants of Sonko-Huara. Often, however, strange masses of dense vapor obscured the big planet. Often, for long periods of time, certain portions of Suari were completely blanketed by these impenetrable masses that so puzzled the scientists. Yet always there were certain portions of its surface that were free from the vapor. Innumerable speculations had been raised by this phenomenon, for no such tenuous veil ever hung over and above the surface of Sonko-Huara.

Always the sunshine or the moonlight streamed upon it from a cloudless sky, and often, on moonless nights, for they had their own moons, the glow from Suari illuminated the planet. Through the ages, too, much had been learned of the surface of Suari. Over two-thirds of the planet was covered with water (an amazing discovery for the Sonko-Huarans whose planet was woefully short of water and was, with the exception of polar seas and inland seas, all land). Vast mountain ranges, great canals (crooked and winding in most remarkable manner) had been studied and mapped; immense masses of ice had been seen to cover the polar regions, and the astronomers were both astonished and puzzled to note that the appearance of the land masses changed continually. At times they were white, at others brown, at others green. Gradually they noticed that these alterations followed a regular sequence, that they were repeated at fixed intervals and that they bore a direct rela-



Excitement, speculation, wonder and interest ran high in Sonko-Huara, for news had been spread that Kespi-Nanay had returned.

relationship to the position of the planet in reference to the sun. Suddenly the Sonko-Huaran astronomers had had an inspiration. Their neighboring planet must be inhabited! It must be populated by intelligent beings not unlike themselves! The change in colors must be the result of these beings cultivating the land!

The Sonko-Huaran astronomers, the scientists, even the common people became greatly excited and intensely interested in this theory. What manner of creatures could dwell upon Suari? What unthinkably strange and

primitive beings they must be to till the soil and raise crops—industries that had been abandoned, forgotten by the Sonko-Huarans countless ages ago.

Discussions ran high as to what these dwellers on the other planet might be like. Were they formed like the inhabitants of Sonko-Huara? Were they weird, monstrous, fearsome creatures? Or were they totally unlike anything ever known or seen?

Yet years had passed, centuries, as we measure them, had slipped by before the suspicions of the Sonko-Huaran scientists had been confirmed, before instruments has been perfected to such a state that the observers on Sonko-Huara could prove that Suari was inhabited. Gradually the other planet had been brought visually closer. It was an epochal discovery when lights had been detected upon the dark area of Suari, lights

obviously artificial. It had been a still more epochal discovery when an astronomer of Sonko-Huara had seen a city on the other planet. With each new discovery of this sort, each announcement that there was some new and indisputable proof of the existence of sentient, intelligent beings on Suari, efforts to obtain a more intimate knowledge had been redoubled.

Ages before the return of Kespi-Nanay, after his mysterious absence, the surface of Suari had been brought optically within a few thousand miles of Sonko-Huara. It was by this time an established fact that the other planet was thickly populated by some sort of intelligent beings. They had cities, towns, lights. They moved from place to place. They dug canals, they leveled mountains, they transformed the surface of their lands over vast areas. Yet all the constant minute studies devoted to them tended more and more to prove to the inhabitants of Sonko-Huara that their neighbors forty million miles away were immeasurably backward and behind-hand, that, assuming them to be in the least similar to the Sonko-Huarans, they were more or less in the same state of civilization as the inhabitants of Sonko-Huara had been in their prehistoric days. Their stupidity, as assumed through reasoning and experiments, was absolutely astounding. Not only was it evident that they still made use of the archaic method of obtaining foods and other necessities by agriculture, but in addition their cities, as far as could be determined, were marvelous examples of the survival of ancient, long-abandoned barbarism.

And despite every effort on the part of the denizens of Sonko-Huara, the unintelligent creatures on Suari failed to respond to the plain and simple signals that had been devised to attract their attentions. The simplest and most readily read messages had been formed on the surface of Sonko-Huara and had been displayed day after day when the two planets were nearest to each other, yet there had been no response, no answering signals. To be sure, the watchers had noticed strange masses and groups of lights, but they were meaningless; they conveyed nothing and it was decided they were merely to illuminate some great gathering of the Suarans.

THEN had come the strange, mysterious but wholly undecipherable sounds that had first been detected and reported by Kespi-Nanay, the greatest of living scientists on Sonko-Huara. That they came from Suari, he was convinced, and despite the scoffs of fellow scientists, he boldly declared his conviction that they were signals of some sort, sent out by the dwellers on Suari. He pointed out that the sounds were articulate, that they were not mechanical and hence must have originated in the throat of some living creature. He also proved that the same sounds were constantly repeated with carefully timed intervals between each series of sounds. But he was derided, ridiculed when he promulgated the theory that beings on Suari—especially such barbarous, primitive, stupid beings as all agreed they must be—could project their voices across millions of miles of space.

Even the Sonko-Huarans could not perform any such feat and—asked one of the news-dispersers—if Kespi-Nanay deemed the sounds to be voices, why, with his superior knowledge, could he not interpret the words? But despite the fact that Kespi's theories and beliefs found few followers, interest, that had flagged for years, was revived, and once more Suari became the center of all interest, all speculations, all studies.

Various wild schemes were suggested for visiting the other planet. Learned scientists spent days and weeks in abstruse calculations to prove that a trip to Suari was not, scientifically speaking, impossible. All the ultra-advanced knowledge of the inventors and scientists was employed in trying to devise some means for making the journey. There were gravitationally impelled machines, machines that were designed to be hurled into space by the rotational movement of the planet, machines of endless types. Yet in every case there was some impediment, some fatal fault that proved conclusively that none would serve.

Despite the logical warnings of the experts, several actually were tried. One machine, impelled by the power of a decomposing atom, left the surface of the planet. It gathered speed so swiftly that it became invisible, but, a few moments later, a terrific explosion in the upper atmosphere told the anxious and hopeful watchers of its fate. Another machine, designed to eliminate gravity as was done in the case of the ordinary machines used for every-day travel, but with devices to enable it to fly off at a tangent by the momentum of the planet's rotation, became incandescent and was transformed to gas by its friction through the upper air. Still another, by far the largest and most carefully planned of all, was impelled and controlled by the recently discovered Ethmic force and succeeded in winning clear of Sonko-Huara's atmospheric envelope. For the first twenty-four hours its progress through space was watched with bated breaths, and it seemed as if at last a successful voyage to Suari was to be accomplished.

But, about the thirtieth hour, it was seen that the machine's course had changed. It was veering away from the orbit of Suari and presently, to the horror of the Sonko-Huarans, it was determined that beyond any possibility of doubt the apparatus had become a satellite of the planet and was doomed forever to move around and around the sphere like an attendant moon.

Then, when everyone had given up all ideas of ever being able to visit the fascinatingly mysterious Suari, Kespi-Nanay had come out with his absolutely astounding statements. Matter, he declared, was all imaginary. It did not actually exist. It was merely a combination or grouping of protons and electrons. This was by no means a new theory. In fact, generations before Kespi had been incubated and brought into existence, other Sonko-Huaran scientists had promulgated exactly the same theory. But nothing had ever come of it, no one had ever been able conclusively to prove it. But Kespi-Nanay claimed he could; he averred he had; and he insisted that his discovery paved the way to visit Suari and to return in safety.

Naturally he once more became the target of derision, ridicule, jokes and incredulity. To do a thing was not enough; the important matter was to convince others. Achievement amounts to nothing unless the public admits the fact of that achievement. Kespi was determined that his astonishing achievement should be admitted.

So he announced that he would give a public demonstration of the truth of his claims. His promise was more than fulfilled. Before a vast gathering—in fact, before all the inhabitants, for by means of the universally employed vision-disseminators or Muri-Willyas, the demonstration was visible everywhere upon the planet—Kespi-Nanay caused a cube of metal, a tablet of Chocli-Hanca or concentrated food, and even a Pilcu bird (the

only wild fowl on Sonko-Huara) to vanish before everyone's eyes. Then, as the people listened most attentively, he stated that he had gone further with his experiments than he had revealed hitherto. Not only, he informed them, was matter merely the result of certain arrangements of protons and electrons, each form of matter so-called being the result of slightly varying combinations, any or all of which might at will be broken up into the independent quanta and so rendered invisible; but, he went on, the same electrons could, by properly devised instruments and treatment, be summoned back into their original places with the protons.

At these words an exclamation of incredulity arose from thousands of lips. It might be possible—in fact, was possible, as they had seen—that matter could be forced to disappear. It was not so very remarkable after all, they decided, for water was matter and yet it could be made to evaporate and vanish. Moruli was matter, yet it could be consumed by flame and made to vanish without leaving a trace of ashes. But that matter, once it had vanished, could be restored to its original state was too incredible.

The next moment they began to have their doubts as to their conviction. Kespi, as if reading their thoughts, was speaking of these very things. Water, he was pointing out, could be recovered—was not this precisely what happened daily? Did the sun not evaporate water, cause it to vanish? Most assuredly. Yet did that water not fall again as rain? And salts, dissolved in water and hence destroyed as matter in their particular forms, could, as all knew, be readily recovered. Why then, he reminded them, was it so incredible to believe that metal, living flesh—any object—could not be reformed by summoning the protons and electrons, of which such matter had been composed, and forcing them to group themselves as in the first place?

Hardly had he spoken when, by seemingly magical means, the cube of metal, the heap of food, the bird were once again before him—conjured from nothingness, from the air.

A deafening roar of approbation and applause greeted his demonstration and drowned his next words. When order and silence had been restored, he made his most astonishing statement of all. Not only could an object be restored, rebuilt from its original protons and electrons, but he informed the amazed people it could be rebuilt in a totally different locality from that in which it had been disintegrated. And to prove this incredible statement, he proceeded to cause the three objects to vanish and to reappear almost instantaneously several hundred feet distant.

The people by this time were beyond expressing their wonder. But still more astonishing things were to be vouchsafed them. "My discovery," observed Kespi, "will be the means of solving that ages-old problem of making a visit to Suari. Because, my friends, whereas matter, as we know it, may not travel through space by any known means—and if it were possible for it to do so ages would be required for it to traverse such a Tuppu as separates us from Suari—the constituent electrons and protons of matter can traverse space unharmed and with such extreme speed that they may be said to travel instantaneously. Hence an object may be reduced to its free quanta or portions here on Sonko-Huara and within an inconceivably short time afterwards they may be reassembled in the original material form on Suari or elsewhere. Distance, space has no effect upon them. Ah,

you ask, how do I know this? By reasoning, by logic, by the unalterable laws of the universe," he exclaimed. "I can assure you that I can make this metallic cube vanish, and before you have realized it has gone, it will be in its original form somewhere upon the surface of Suari. But—" with a laugh, "of course it might be beneath the waters of that planet, and equally, of course, you could not see such a small object on distant Suari, and hence I could not prove my claims. But"—his tones were so impressive, so earnest that everyone awaited breathlessly for his next words—"but," he repeated, "so sure am I of my deductions, so convinced that my reasoning is correct, that I plan to test the matter on myself. Tomorrow I shall cause myself to be disintegrated, and—if all goes well—shall cause myself to be reassembled upon Suari. In other words, I shall be transported—not as a body of matter but as countless trillions of electronic and protonic units—through forty million Tuppus of space and will find myself in material form upon that mysterious planet.

"Of course," he smiled, "I run a slight risk. I, like the metallic cube, might be reassembled in the water. I might be reformed in some other equally unpleasant and fatal situation. But that is a chance I must take. The promise of the adventure is worth risks. Personally, however, I do not foresee any such difficulties. My experiments have proved to my own satisfaction that I can cause an object, reduced to its constituent electrons and protons, to form again within a very restricted area, predetermined by myself. I have selected the area on Suari, where, if all goes well, I shall be reformed. It is a spot that is somewhat remote from the strange collections of structures, which we assume to be refuges of the Suarians, and in an area that—not having presented the alternating colors indicating the presence of living beings—is, we assume, uninhabited. I do not"—he smiled—"particularly desire to appear suddenly and as if by some supernatural means in the immediate vicinity of a Suarian or of several Suarians. We may feel fairly certain from our observations and studies that they are a primitive, backward and not over-intelligent lot, and probably therefore as superstitious and as readily startled as were our own ancestors in the remote past when they, too, depended upon the cultivation of the soil for their livelihood. I might be struck down—even devoured by the creatures before I had an opportunity to make my friendly intentions and my physical actuality understood. Moreover, as we have no conception of the physical peculiarities of the inhabitants of Suari, I might, and probably would, appear as a strange, bizarre and monstrous creature to them. Naturally we assume that, as Suari is many times the bulk of Sonko-Huara, its inhabitants will be proportionately gigantic, and hence I would be completely at their mercy.

"But"—with a sigh—"I shall take the risks. My greatest fear is that I may not find it possible to return to Sonko-Huara. Conditions on Suari may preclude the possibility of my reversing the process by which I leave here and reappear on Suari. Naturally I shall take my instruments with me, but atmospheric, electrical, gravitational—a thousand conditions—may interfere with their proper operation on that planet. However, we have no reason to think that such conditions are not very similar to our own. The examinations and tests we have been able to make convince us of that. So, my friends and fellow Sonko-Huarans, tomorrow at the time of Kora-Ma, when Suari is nearest to us in its orbit, I shall

cause myself to vanish. I may never return or again I may reappear among you at any time. But if I do not, my loss will amount to little, whereas if I do, I shall have learned the truth of our neighboring planet."

KESPI had kept his word. In sight of all, at the hour of Kora-Ma, he had bade the public farewell and, an instant later, he and his compact instruments had vanished before their eyes.

And now, three Chukitis after that dramatic disappearance, Kespi-Nanay had returned! Micchu-Tay had been the first to see him. The old fellow had been inspecting the local vitamin plant near Ir-Chu when a slight sound had attracted him, and wheeling about, he saw Kespi-Nanay standing almost by his side. But as fear, fright, superstition and the sensation of being startled had, ages before, been lost to the Sonko-Huarans, Micchu-Tay had merely expressed mild astonishment, and instantly had sent the news flying throughout the planet by means of the thought disseminator, which he, like everyone else, carried always with him.

Yes, Kespi-Nanay had unquestionably returned. He had altered in no way, and he declared that he had been on Suari for three Chukitis; moreover he would publicly relate all his experiences in the Muru-Ti, so that all the inhabitants of the planet might, if they so desired, both see and hear him, for the Muru-Ti or public auditorium was equipped with the vision-disseminators as well as the audio-extensors that rendered him both visible and audible to all on the planet, who cared to adjust their instruments for the purpose.

CHAPTER II

First Impressions

NEVER in the historic eras of Sonko-Huara had there been greater, more wide-spread interest and expectation than were caused by Kespi-Nanay's announcement. At last, after ages of surmises, of studies, of deductions, none of which had answered the puzzle, the truth of Suari and its denizens would be learned. No one doubted for a moment that Kespi had actually visited the other planet. His demonstrations, three years earlier, had removed all doubts as to his claim, and while everyone had long since come to the conclusion that he had either failed to materialize on Suari or, having materialized thereon, had been destroyed or had been unable to return, the fact that he *had* returned convinced them that his amazing undertaking had been a complete success.

A universal holiday had been announced, to continue until Kespi had completed his narrative. But this was really superfluous, for no one would have attended to his or her duties anyway and, moreover, the Apus and Amautus, even the Tarancas, could be counted on to be present to hear and see the returned interplanetary wanderer, and without them the public would have been as helpless and as futile in accomplishment as an ant without its antennae.

Hence practically every being on Sonko-Huara gave undivided attention to Kespi-Nanay when he entered the great auditorium of Muru-Ti and, seating himself between the Amautu-Ka and the Apu-Inki, proceeded to tell his fellow Sonko-Huarans of his amazing and almost incredible discoveries and experiences on Suari. And often, as he spoke, his listeners unconsciously and in-

voluntarily glanced, half-fearfully, at the great golden hemisphere of Suari in the sky, as if actually expecting to see some of the strange beings or marvelous sights that Kespi-Nanay was describing. "As you all know," he began, "I caused my material body, together with my instruments, to be disintegrated here three Chukitis ago. Of that disruption of my protonic and electronic component parts, or of my instantaneous flight through space I have no recollections. I have a dim memory, like that of an evasive dream, of strange sensations, of whirling madly like a bit of dust. But my next actual concrete sensation, after I turned on my disintegrating and projecting device, was one of standing in a strange place. I felt so natural, so precisely as if nothing had happened that, for a fleeting moment, I feared nothing *had* happened, that my experiment had failed. But a glance at my surroundings reassured me. Nothing was familiar. Never had I imagined such a spot. I was standing on a far-reaching area of rocky sand. Above me was the blue sky, and across it stretched masses of the same white vapor we have seen so often about Suari. Also, there in the sky, was Quilla, but appearing very small and far away.

"On one side rose high, bare mountains, on the other the plain stretched to the horizon, and within a short distance of where I stood I saw an amazing sight. There, staring at me, curiously but apparently unafraid, and not even surprised, were a number of the inhabitants of the land. Never had I seen such impossible creatures. No Sonko-Huaran imagination could have conceived of such beings, and even if I describe them to you, my friends, you cannot picture them to yourselves. They were brown or black, shaggy-skinned and stood on four legs. Their necks were long, thin and bore elongated heads with immense ears and large dark eyes. They appeared intelligent, and judging that they must be more intelligent than we of Sonko-Huara had thought, I addressed them. They evidently heard my words, for they moved their ears, but they made no reply. Of course I was not surprised. I had hardly expected that the Suarians would understand our language. So I made signals, but the Suarians showed no signs of understanding.

"They appeared peaceful and quite harmless, so cautiously I approached them. I was quite close to them when they turned abruptly and moved off. Evidently they were suspicious of me, and desiring to let them know I intended no harm, I spoke again. This time they turned about and took a few steps in my direction. I was delighted. I felt that they must understand my tones, even if not the meaning of my words.

"Then a most amazing thing happened. Another creature appeared from behind a rock. He was much smaller than the first inhabitants and he stood upon two legs! Ah, I know you will find it hard to credit that statement, but it is the truth. And you can find it no more difficult to believe, as I tell it, than I found it, as I saw it. A living intelligent being on two feet like a bird, and other living intelligent beings on four feet! Obviously we had never guessed the truth, Suari was inhabited by two forms of beings, and I wondered if it could be possible both were the same species—if one were male, the other female or if one was the young of the other. But the two-legged creature differed in every respect from those of four legs. He, too, I noticed, possessed four limbs but he stood on but two and used the other two for grasping objects, as we use our members, whereas the creatures on four legs possessed no limbs for grasping.

Moreover, the two-legged being was red in color, his skin appeared to hang in loose folds from his neck, and yet his limbs were of a different brown color and of a distinct texture. Neither was his neck long nor his head elongated. On the contrary, he had scarcely any neck. His head was round but rose to a point at the top; his ears were deformed until they were scarcely more than orifices; he had no horns; his eyes were but two in number, and in the front of his head; the rear portion being covered with a rough wool or fur; and his mouth showed no tusks.

"He stared at me for a space and then spoke, and to my astonishment I found I could comprehend his words, even though they were different from our own. I gathered that he asked who I was and whence I came. So I replied that my name was Kespi-Nanay and that I came from Sonko-Huara. His mouth widened in a most remarkable manner; he appeared to understand. But all this time I was filled with astonishment. He did not appear to be terrified or even amazed at my appearance, as I had expected he would be at seeing for the first time a visitor from another sphere. Surely, I thought, my form—I glanced down at myself and gasped in utter amazement. I was *not* myself. I had but two legs, two arms! Half-fearfully I raised my hand to my head. My horns had vanished, my soft pendant ears had disappeared, my magnificent tusks no longer protruded from my lips, my tentacular antennae were missing! Fur, not scales, covered my head, my ears were mere holes; in short I was the exact counterpart of the two-legged creature before me. I was dumbfounded. I felt as if in a dream. Then suddenly, I understood. The constituent electrons of my being, when reassembled with my protons upon Suari, had produced my material body in the form of a Suarian.

"It was a contingency I had not foreseen; yet, now I considered it, it seemed perfectly natural. The conditions of Suari that had resulted in the molding of such puny, underdeveloped, physically imperfect beings as the creature before me (and myself) controlled the combining of the electrons and forced them to produce Suarian forms. No doubt, I decided, were a Suarian to be transported to Sonko-Huara by the methods I had used, he would be materialized in the form of a Sonko-Huaran. But I was thankful that I had assumed the form of the two-legged inhabitant rather than that of the beings with four legs, who—though they appeared far more intelligent—seemed dumb, for as yet they had uttered no sound. I was astonished also that I could converse with the strange creature of the two legs. For a space I thought that possibly the same laws and conditions that had so altered my body to a Suarian form had affected my mind and my speech to a similar extent. But no, the words the other being used were so familiar, so nearly identical with those of my own tongue, I cast aside that theory. By some amazing coincidence, or for some unknown reason which I might yet discover, there was a very close relationship between the two languages.

BUT my speculations on such matters were interrupted by the appearance of two more beings. One was precisely like the first two-legged being, the other was quite different. The head was similar, but the colors of the strangely loose skin were brilliant and the creature appeared to have no legs, the body extending in a solid mass to within a short distance of the ground. This was the more remarkable as the being possessed feet

that appeared to move back and forth under the solid body in a most amazing manner. It was not until much later that I learned that this being was the female of the others and that it actually possessed legs, which were concealed by artificial layers of skin that the Suarians call 'clothes.' In fact, I found to my astonishment that all the loose, bright-colored coverings I had seen were artificial and that the true skin fitted the body closely and was very smooth, soft and pleasing in shade, although, as I shall explain, the tint ranged from a very dark, blackish-brown to almost pure white, a truly remarkable condition. It was also, I learned, considered very wrong and a proof of barbarism to appear without the artificial skin over one's body, and the beings I first met, stared at me and uttered strange sounds with their mouths widely open, because I was not provided with such coverings. Presently, however, the creature, who, I found later was the female spoke to one of the others who pulled a portion of the coverings from his own person and placed it over me. The others added more pieces until I was covered similarly to themselves. To me these things were most uncomfortable, feeling very rough and irritating to my body, and I would have liked to have cast them off. But I wished to remain on friendly terms with the strange beings and (at the time) thinking it was perhaps a rite or ceremony indicative of friendship, I bore the discomfort. Why these beings of Suari should have developed such habits is beyond me. Their bodies, ugly and deformed as they were, were far more symmetrical and admirable without the artificial coverings, but I was not so much surprised when, later, I found that some such protection was required for the creatures' bodies, their skins being most tender and easily injured, not being guarded like our own by strong scales that are replaced by new growths when injured. In fact, injuries which we would consider slight often caused the total disability or death of these Suarians, for they are so low in the scale of nature and so primitive in their development, that they cannot replace even a lost appendage or limb with new growths like ourselves. Moreover, although the variations in their climate are not as great as on Sonko-Huara, yet as these miserable beings do not alter their natural bodies to suit conditions, but remain always the same, they are, perforce, compelled to adapt themselves to the weather by varying the artificial skins or 'clothing'.

"But to return to the strange beings I first met. Having been covered with the objects, as I have stated, and thus made to appear even more like the three creatures, they seemed to be more friendly, and one of them did a most astounding thing. He produced a peculiar object which he inserted in his mouth. Then, to my unbounded astonishment, he magically caused fire to spring into being in his hand, and placing the flame against the object in his mouth, he breathed in the fire and emitted smoke from his nostrils. Never would I have believed such a feat possible had I not witnessed it with my own eyes, yet the others appeared not to be surprised. In fact they also produced their own fire-machines and soon all three were breathing fire. I noticed, however, that the four-legged beings did not do so, which convinced me that they were the superior beings and that the others were probably servants or inferiors. Yet this thought troubled me, for in that case I had been reformed on Suari not as the superior but as the inferior type, which would indicate that the Sonko-Huarans were inferior to the Suarians. But I had little time to dwell on this, for

one of the two-legged creatures was offering me a fire-machine. I drew back in horror at the thought of breathing flame, but the being appeared so perturbed by my act that, feeling I must use every care to retain their friendship if I were to learn all I desired of their ways, I summoned all my courage and placed the machine in my lips. To my surprise there was no fire nor heat, and though I carefully breathed in smoke, the sensation was not unpleasant, although it caused me to cough and choke somewhat. Obviously, I concluded, this breathing of smoke was a ceremony, perhaps indicative of friendship, for presently the three laid aside their machines, as I did mine, without as far as I could determine having accomplished anything. But, I thought, if this strange custom is universal among the Suarians (as I found later it was) and if the planet was thickly inhabited, it explained the masses of vapor that hung above Suari's surface and had so greatly puzzled us of Sonko-Huara.

"Having ended the smoke ceremony, the three rose from where they had been seated, and inviting me to accompany them, they moved forward. To my amazement, the four-legged beasts moved with them. In fact, the two-legged creatures appeared to command the obedience of the superior four-legged creatures, and though the latter were far larger and stronger than those with two legs, they made no resistance, even when the others struck them with rods to urge them onwards. And now my mind was quite upset, for here was proof that those I had mistaken for inferior beings were the superior inhabitants of Suari. However, it made me feel a bit easier, for it proved that the form I had assumed *was* that of the superior beings.

"Presently we approached some great masses of stone that were in ruins, but which it was evident had been erected by living beings, and I stopped and stared with incredulous eyes, for upon one of the stones was carved the figure of a Sonko-Huara! It was quite unmistakable. The numerous appendages and tentacles, the horns, tusks, lobe-like ears, even the scales and other details were distinct. What did it mean? Were there beings like ourselves upon Suari—perhaps the rulers of the planet!

"I turned to one of the two-legged creatures and asked him. For a moment he seemed puzzled. Then he replied that the figure on the stone had been there always, that in past ages it had been adored by his ancestors and regarded as a god. I asked him if similar beings lived near and at that he and his companions made strange bellowing sounds and their mouths opened until their short useless teeth were exposed, and they said there were no such creatures in existence, even if there ever had been in the past. I told them they were quite wrong; that upon my planet all beings were of that sort and that I myself was the same when on Sonko-Huara. They regarded me with most peculiar expressions, obviously with unbelief, and presently again gave way to their strange sounds, which I may as well explain were their indications of derision and hilarity. Evidently they thought my words were a great joke.

"AS we continued on our way, my mind was busy wondering: if there were no Sonko-Huarans on Suari, how could the inhabitants ages before have been familiar with the appearance of our race? Then I recalled the ancient legend of our people, wherein it is told a great Apu named Pakak produced magic, and to escape his enemies, flew with his followers from Sonko-Huara and vanished forever. Was it not possible that there was

truth in the tale and that Pakak and his fellows might have reached Suari? I do not know, but throughout the portion of Suari where first I arrived I found many images and statues of the Sonko-Huara forms, and in the traditions of the people, there was a being they called Pachak. But I had so many other strange and astonishing things to interest me that I gave little thought to such speculations. We soon came to a deep valley and there the brown earth was hidden under rich green, and water flowed in canals as it does on Sonko-Huara. But the canals were tiny affairs and the green was, as we have long ago surmised, the color of the vegetation of Suari. In the valley also, was the collection of structures wherein the Suarians dwelt, for incredible as it may seem, these beings dwell in cubicles closely placed in groups and herd together like swarms of insects. Their strange reasons for so doing I learned later and I will leave the explanation until I speak of the larger groups of structures that I visited subsequently.

"In this first group were hordes of the two-legged creatures, males, females and young, but no two exactly alike, for not only do the Suarians vary individually, but, as I found later, there are many races of them, varying in color, in size and in every respect, even as to intelligence and culture—all working at cross-purposes and even fighting with one another. But in this first place I visited all were of one color or nearly so and of one race, although their artificial skins varied in color and form.

"Also, to my amazement, I discovered that the four-legged beasts were *not* artificially covered, but that the shaggy coverings actually grew upon them, yet they were inferior creatures and mere slaves of the two-legged beings. More surprising still, I found that these were not the only slaves. There were giant creatures with horns upon their heads; there were smaller beings with immensely large ears and big heads that served the two-legged creatures as beasts of burden; there were still smaller four-legged Suarians that possessed sharp teeth and that appeared savage and uttered sharp barking sounds when strangers approached, but were docile with those they knew; and there were many other four-legged things as well as hosts of birds larger than the Pilcus. All of these I learned were kept in captivity by the two-legged beings and were forced to labor for them, which was most strange, for many were superior in intelligence and in senses to their stupid and backward masters. Although you may not believe it, yet it is a fact that the two-legged inhabitants of Suari—men and women as they are called—are so deficient in sense development that they cannot see scent nor sound; they cannot hear light nor scent, and they cannot smell sound nor light. Their eyes, of which they have but two, are used only for seeing that which is the result of light waves. Their ears, which are mere holes in their heads, are useful only in detecting sound vibrations, and their noses which also are holes in their heads, can only detect odors. Moreover, being thus deficient and unable to use their three sense organs in unison or to substantiate one another, the Suarians are lamentably deficient in sight, hearing and scent. Many of their captive creatures are far superior to them in these respects, and it is a most amazing fact that the so-called superior beings actually keep the so-called inferior creatures (especially those with the sharp teeth and barking sounds) because the latter possess keener sight, hearing and scent than their masters and hence serve as additional ears, noses and eyes and warn their masters

of many events and perils of which otherwise they would be ignorant.

"Of course, being materialized in the form of a Suarian, I was to a great extent like them, but in my mind and my senses I had not changed, and though the alteration in the structure of my eyes, ears and nose rendered me less sensitive than normally and though lacking my horns I could not receive thought messages—still I could detect many things that the Suarians could not. For example, I was aware that the various four-legged creatures were conversing among themselves, and while I could not understand their languages, it proved how degenerate and undeveloped were the two-legged people, for in all my travels I found none who could hear the voices of the four-legged creatures when they conversed in normal tones.

"When I first reached the abiding place of the three beings I had met on the plain, I found many of the females performing mysterious rites over fires. At first I thought that sacrifices were being offered, so you may judge of my astonishment when I discovered that they actually were preparing food! To these benighted backward and stupid beings sustenance is the main object in their life. All their efforts are bent towards providing food. They labor and strive and live with the one end of keeping life in their bodies by means of food. And imagine, if you can, what their food is! We have long ago decided that the Suarians must still adhere to the prehistoric, archaic method of cultivating the soil and raising crops for sustenance. This I found was the case, but they go even farther back. They actually kill their captive beasts and birds and devour them! And the poor, deluded, ignorant creatures have never learned that all they obtain in the way of food by such roundabout means may be secured with little effort and no waste from the air, water and earth direct.

IMAGINE, laboring to prepare the soil, sowing seeds, raising vegetation and devouring the resulting plants in order to supply their bodies with the elements that are derived from the air, earth and water by the plants! And imagine, if you can, the still more roundabout, clumsy and wasteful method of rearing such plants, feeding them to beasts and then killing the beasts in order to extract the few atoms of sustenance needed, and which have been gathered by means of the plants and transferred to the flesh of the beasts! And the beasts' carcasses, the waste material of the crops, are used to supply the elements for more plants and more beasts to provide more sustenance for these Suarians in a vicious, never-ending circle. You would be absolutely astounded were I to describe what and how these beings eat. So great is the waste material in all they call food that one family is forced to devour daily material whose bulk would equal the amount of concentrated foods required to feed our entire population! Though they boastfully declare themselves intelligent, highly civilized beings, even scientists, yet never have they learned that all elements of life, force, energy are distributed about them and may be extracted directly and with little effort from their surroundings, without being put through the clumsy extraction process of plants, flesh and fowl. Though their more learned members realize that all energy and power is derived from the sun, yet never have they learned how to employ the energy and power of the sun directly. Instead, they follow the same roundabout methods as in producing food products.

They burn materials, release the stored energy, waste the greater part of it by the employment of crude mechanisms, capture and control a small percentage of the energy they have released, and by a complicated, involved method make use of this small remaining portion of the energy for their purposes.

"I was simply appalled at the terrific, criminal waste everywhere. Fortunate indeed are the Suarians in possessing a large planet still young and rich in its natural resources and elements. Yet even so the waste is so stupendous that, within a short time, the Suarians will have exhausted the life essentials of their planet and will perish miserably from their own lack of foresight, if they do not advance and improve intellectually to the point reached by our forefathers countless ages ago. But all these things I learned little by little as I moved about, for in that first nest of the beings I learned very little. In fact I soon discovered that the beings I had by chance first encountered were a very inferior and backward lot, for unlike ourselves, all of whom are given the same intelligence, the same senses, the identical bodily powers, the denizens of Suari are of innumerable grades of intelligence, of bodily development and of sense acuteness. Partially these variations are due to race, partly they are due to climate, partly to surroundings, but very largely to the fact that the Suarians, no matter of what race, learn only by example, by being taught by others. They have no instinctive knowledge and the offspring of the most intelligent and advanced, if reared apart or amid the inferior members of the population, reach maturity as stupid and backward as the offspring of those about them. On the other hand, the young of inferior and unintelligent beings, if reared and taught by those of the superior classes, may and often do, excel their mentors in attainments.

There has been some effort made to bring about a general and universal improvement of the population by a system of education, but it has amounted to very little as far as I could judge by even careful study and observation.

"Mingled with the other strange and paradoxical features of these beings is a curious feeling of independence, a desire for personal liberty that, considering the conditions that exist, is most amusing. Though robbed completely of all real freedom, completely subservient to rulers, leaders, law makers and countless cunning members of their race; content to be ordered about, to be forced to sacrifice their lives and to destroy others at the demands of those they have never seen and do not know and with whose quarrels they have no concern, yet they rise and refuse to listen to any innovation that is for the good of their race, such as the regulation and rearing of their progeny by duly appointed authorities, the regulation of their food in quality and quantity, the destruction of the unfit—the imbeciles and cripples—and the thousand and one ideas that we of Sonko-Huara have long ago adopted and which, as proved by experience, appear to be the most admirable and beneficial rulings for the community as a whole.

"But I am getting too far ahead of my experiences. All these matters I learned long after I left the beings I first met and after I had found and mingled with the white Suarians who claim—and perhaps rightfully—to be the most intelligent and progressive of the inhabitants of the planet which they call the 'earth' or the 'world' and who call Sonko-Huara by the name of 'Mars'.

CHAPTER III

The Monsters of Suari

“ONE of the earliest discoveries I made was that all Suarians—or as they call themselves, ‘human beings’—were not of the same race and that no language was universal to all. This came about through the arrival of a remarkable being in the community where I had first arrived. He came across the plain, a gigantic, four-legged creature with two bodies and heads, the most terrifying monster it is possible to imagine. One body was rough, hairy, immense, with a heavy neck fringed with long hair, and bearing a great bony head with pointed ears, staring eyes, snorting nostrils and great yellow teeth. The other body resembled that of the two-legged beings but sprouted from the larger body’s back. It bore two arms and a small round head with features somewhat like those of the men I had seen, but covered with dark fur, and with the skin, where it showed, a peculiar pink. The monster came rushing onwards and to my amazement the beings of the place showed no fear nor did they endeavor to flee from the fury and destruction of the oncoming creature.

“Had I not been of Sonko-Huara I should have sought safety in flight, though so swift was the pace of the thing that it would have been hopeless. Even as it was I felt dread, yet I stood my ground, and was still more amazed to observe that the four-legged things, even those smaller ones with the sharp teeth and yelping voices, did not dash away in terror. On the contrary they ran snapping at the monster who made no attempt to destroy them. The next moment it was close at hand. It came to a halt and I stared, unable to credit my senses, for before my wondering eyes the monster separated into two portions. The smaller body with its head broke away from the other! It sprang to the ground, and to my utter amazement I discovered that it was a separate being, a creature with two legs, in form precisely like myself and the others, while the other portion was a distinct creature, a four-legged being unlike anything I had seen. The two-legged being spoke in an unknown tongue and at his bidding the beings about fled to obey him. They seized his four-legged companion, who seemed strangely docile for such a monster, and took him off; they led the two-legged being to a cubicle, and they hurried to bring him food and drink. Here indeed, was a strange happening. He seemed scarcely different from the others, he wore similar coverings upon his head and body and feet, and he appeared no more intelligent than those who treated him like a superior being.

“Why, I wondered, was he so regarded? I questioned one of the beings, who by now had come to regard me as one of themselves, and he looked at me with amazement. The being who had arrived upon the monster *was* a superior being, I was told, for he was white. Anxious to learn more of such a strange creature, I endeavored to converse with the ‘white,’ but to my surprise he made no reply and seemed not to understand my words. I felt I had been deceived, for he appeared most unintelligent and made loud coarse sounds through the fur over his mouth. But the others told me that the whites spoke another language, that, in order to converse with them, it was necessary to acquire that language. How strange, how different from Sonko-Huara where all speak the same tongue, where those attuned may converse by wordless thoughts!

“That was my first meeting with a white Suarian. Learning there were many of the race not far distant, that they were even more numerous than those beings of brown skin, and being told they were superior and ruled the whole of Suari, I devoted myself to acquiring a knowledge of their tongue from one of my friends. With my senses and mind so far above those of the Suarians, I found this an easy task and very soon knew all the being could teach me. By this time, however, the first white Suarian had departed, having again joined himself with his four-legged creature. I learned in which direction I must travel to reach the spot where the whites dwelt and I set forth.

“In my Sonko-Huaran form, with my many legs and limbs and my powerful body I would have found the journey trifling, but I possessed the puny form of the Suarians and the two feet, all that belonged to it, soon grew weary. To rest them I seated myself, and presently, in the distance, I beheld a cloud of dust. It approached nearer and I saw it was caused by a terrible, frightful, gigantic monster, beside which the creature of the white Suarian was nothing. It emitted terrifying roars and growls, it possessed immense, glaring, fiery eyes, and it breathed fire and smoke.

“It approached with amazing speed, and hopelessly I gazed about seeking some escape from its wrath. But I was too weary to run and the horrible, screaming thing was almost upon me. How can I describe the thoughts that flashed through my brain? How little had I dreamed that there would be so many forms, such terrifying creatures upon Suari! No wonder the beings I had met had remained primitive, archaic, had not developed any intelligence, when such monsters as that rushing on me were about!

“Had I had time I would have adjusted my instruments, would have caused my body to disintegrate and appear elsewhere. But I had no time. And yet, so swift are thoughts, that I found myself marveling that I had not thought to make use of my device in order to reach the place of the white Suarians, instead of wearily walking there. But it was too late, the devastating monster was upon me. I shook with terror, I, a Sonko-Huaran, but you must recall that I was, bodily, a Suarian. I felt my end had come, as with a screech and a roar the giant beast came to a halt close to where I stood. Even at a standstill it was terrifying. Yet I scarcely glanced at it, for my eyes were fixed upon something else I had not before seen. Upon the monster’s back was one of the white Suarians!

“Evidently he was the monster’s master. He held it under his control, just as the other white had controlled *his* monster. I breathed more freely, remembering the other. If the white being were friendly, he would not allow his ravenous creature to destroy me and all might be well. And I noticed now that the monster itself appeared quite docile, quite peaceful, staring fixedly ahead with its four round eyes, breathing heavily but remaining motionless. No wonder, I thought, the brown beings regard these whites as superior, if they can thus master such horrifying monsters. And as the white appeared friendly I gathered courage. Presently he spoke, using the tongue I had learned, and asking me whither I was going and if I was not weary. I replied that I was going to where I might find the whites and that my feet were weary; also that I had been terrified at his monster.

“For a moment he appeared puzzled, as if not understanding my newly acquired words. Then he gave vent

to those loud bellowing noises, the Suarians employ to denote mirth. At last he ceased. He made some remark of which I knew not the import, something about a 'queer fish.' Then he asked whence I came, and when I told him Sonko-Huara, he declared he had never heard of the place. Then he startled and amazed me by asking if I would care to 'hop-in,' meaning, I found, would I care to mount the monster, I drew back, asking if the creature might not resent my presence, at which he made more bellowing sounds and his skin turned curiously red.

"He assured me, however, that the monster was harmless and 'tame,' and with misgivings, but desiring to prove a Sonko-Huara knows no fear, I mounted the creature's back. Judge of my utter bewilderment when, as I did so, I discovered that the thing was no living creature but a machine!

"The next instant it was in motion; we were rushing across the plain and though the motion was rough and unpleasant compared to that of our projectors, yet I enjoyed its novelty. Undoubtedly, I was convinced, the whites *were* far superior to the browns, and I wondered if the monstrous creature on which the first white had appeared had also been a machine. But I learned it was not, when, in our mad rush, I saw others of the same sort with whites upon them. But also I saw others upon which were browns, and once we met a machine like that in which we were and in which, to my astonishment, was a brown-skinned being. I was hopelessly confused. As far as I could see the whites and browns seemed equal in intelligence.

"SOON we reached the place of the whites. Here were many of the cubicles, such as I had seen and in which lived browns. Between these we rushed on and presently came to more numerous and larger cubicles, some of immense size, and with whites everywhere. The machine stopped and I descended to the ground, as did the white being. I thanked him fittingly, and left him, but soon I regretted I had done so, for I found myself at a total loss as to how to proceed. Everything seemed confusion. Everyone was rushing about, everywhere were the great machines, such as the one in which I had come. Also I felt the need of nourishment, but I knew not where to seek sustenance. During my life with the browns I had learned to eat as they did, and presently, seeing a brown female seated beside such food, I drew near and asked for sustenance. She demanded that I should pay for it. At the time I knew not her meaning and was about to move on, when I noticed a brown being stop beside the female and give into her hand some pieces of bright metal, whereupon she gave him food.

"It was a strange and interesting transaction. What could she want with the metal? Was it possible that she could transform it into more food, or was she of some strange race that ate metal? I forgot my hunger in my interest and speculations. Another and another being stopped, handed her metal, secured food and moved on. Yet the female appeared not to desire the metal but dropped it into a receptacle of artificial skin. It was most fascinating, and at last, as she appeared to be friendly, I drew near, and using the tongue of the browns, I asked her what use she made of the metal.

"She gazed at me in astonishment and then replied that she purchased food with it. But she had food, I reminded her. Yet did she insist that the metal was used to secure food, which she gave in exchange for more metal,

which she gave in return for more food. It was incomprehensible to me, yet I found that in this marvelous and preposterous manner do all the Suarians live and that their whole lives are made up of thus acquiring bits of metal which they give unto others in exchange for food and other things, which in turn are given to others for more metal.

"Those who have nothing to give, give their labor for the same bits of metal, yet the metal is of no use to them. It can be neither eaten nor drunk nor even transformed into the coverings for their skins. Yet ever, especially among the whites, are all ceaselessly, throughout their lives striving, toiling, even fighting and killing one another, to acquire the bits of metal, and even bits of paper, which pass ceaselessly from hand to hand. And yet I could not find that in the end there was any reason for it. Those who had acquired vast amounts of the metal and paper were no stronger, no healthier, no superior to those who had little. To be sure, they dwelt in larger cubicles, they moved about in the machines I have described, and in machines of other sorts; they covered themselves with more colorful and voluminous artificial skins, but they devoured the same food—the flesh of murdered, four-footed beings, the embryos of birds and the plant growths—that were devoured by those who had the least of the metal. And strangely enough, those who secured the most of the coveted stuff were not by any means the most advanced or intelligent. Often were they the lowest, most backward and most stupid of all the Suarians. While others who were intelligent, who were advanced, who were in fact scientists and should have been honored and followed, had little or none of the metal and paper.

"Of course I did not learn all this while watching the brown female with the food. Rather, my hunger again claiming my attention, I asked her how it was possible to secure the metal with which to obtain the food I craved, and she informed me I must exchange something I possessed for metal or must labor for it. As I stood there wondering what I might do to obtain food, the white being of the machine appeared, and seeing me standing before the female, and perhaps realizing my plight, he came forward and handed me a piece of metal. Thanking him, I gave it to the female who gasped, told me to eat my fill of her food and then returned to me more pieces of metal—together with some of paper—than I had given her. This was the most astonishing thing of all; that she should refuse me food until I gave her the metal and then, when I had done so and had taken the food, she should give back more metal than I had given her!

"But such I found was the custom of these strange denizens of Suari. To them certain pieces of metal and certain bits of paper have greater value than others and all things that are given for the metal or, as they call it, 'money' also have their values. For some much money is given, for others little. Even a being's labor has its value and varies with different beings. And if the 'money' of great value is given for something of little value, then is money of little value given with the thing so that all may be equal. For a long time I could see no object gained and no manner of purpose in all this, but in time I learned that each time the thing for which money was paid passed from one being to another, a greater value was placed upon it, so that each time the being who received the money gained somewhat over what money he had given for it. Yet always in the end whatsoever had been thus gained was again given out

for some other object. Yet so strongly fixed was this strange custom, especially with the whites, that none may live unless they follow it, and I myself was soon obliged to do the same. I had naught to give for money and I knew nothing of Suarian labor.

"For a time I was at a loss, until by chance one day I saw a being in an open space, with many beings of all colors about him. He was causing objects to disappear and to reappear at his command and for so doing was being given the money. So, standing near and adjusting my instrument, I so arranged it as to cause both the objects and the money before him to vanish and to be again materialized beside myself. So that I had no lack of money henceforth, nor of food, for with ease I could secure both by means of my device, which being beneath my coverings, attracted no notice, although great wonder was caused by the manner in which stores of food and of money would vanish from sight. Yet I could not see that anyone was harmed by my so doing, for the money that became mine would have been used but to be given for the food and the food would have been given for the money, and by removing both, nothing was lost. Also the money was of need given forth for other things, such as for a cubicle in which to dwell, for by observation and by questions I learned that it was a law of the whites that no being could sleep except in one of the structures. That was a most strange thing; also quite past understanding. I, or any being, might walk about in the open air throughout the night. I might seat myself and remain as long as I saw fit, but I could not repose and sleep within the confines of the nest of structures save within one of them.

THERE were many other laws and rules and customs equally strange. Though these beings bathed—there being an abundance of water in Suari—yet save in the privacy of a tiny cubicle they could not remove the artificial skins they called clothes in order to bathe. Yet neither could they bathe in the open air while thus covered. The clothes must be removed and others placed over their skins before entering the water. And while there were large pools of water convenient to hand within the nests of buildings wherein the beings dwelt, yet in these they could not bathe, but must go for a distance to certain waters allotted for the purpose. And though the coverings that they donned for the purpose of bathing were often beautiful, and revealed the most admirable portions of the bodies, especially of the females, yet there were laws saying that these coverings could not serve elsewhere, but must be discarded for others.

"Also, it was held barbaric and even punishable, for a male to appear not wholly covered with the artificial skins they called clothing; the females, however, appeared to have a great deal more freedom in that regard. There were many other rules as foolish as it seemed, yet never did I find a being of intelligence who could explain the reason for such things, for all of the beings of Suari are accustomed to yielding in all ways to strange manners and conventions promulgated by others. Thus, while all are much the same in form, they do ever strive to devise such coverings that one should differ from another; yet by the decree of some one, they must be all much the same. Also it was decreed that whereas the females might wear coverings of the most brilliant and beautiful hues, the males must wear clothes of dull and sombre shades.

"In their cubicles, or as they call them 'houses,' they do

the same. Each being will strive to make his home distinct from all others, yet in a way must all be alike. And with all their boasted intelligence and culture—which is that of our ancestors of the times before our history began—they persist in being uncomfortable and unhealthy by nesting together by thousands in these crowds of cubicles of every size. Often one will be erected upon another. Often they will be so small there is barely space to move about. Often they are as dark and dismal as burrows in the earth, yet within them the beings live and go to vast trouble and labor and give great sums in their money to be permitted to exist in such holes. Though there is no limit to the open air and sunshine, yet do they hide themselves away in these vaults and use tiny artificial suns of no value with which to have light. And by some strange twist of their minds they will, at great trouble and labor and expense, bring bits of earth and plants and vegetation within their clusters of houses, although on every side the land may be filled with countless things far more beautiful. Even wild birds that abound in the open air are held prisoners within these dwelling-places, and yet, at every occasion, the beings rush forth, and afoot or in their machines; leave the groups of buildings they call 'cities' and in great throngs fare into the outlying country for a day or a week or more and cry aloud and shout how wonderful it is, and yet hurry back once more to their dens, whereas all might dwell happily and free and much easier and better in separate nests amid the verdure and sunshine, which we of Sonko-Huara would give so much to have in such quantities as they exist on Suari.

"Why these beings should thus suffer I could never learn fully, but in a way it is due to fear, for fear is ever clutching at the hearts and minds of the Suarians. In the past, enemies were feared, and for protection the beings herded together and built stout walls and dwellings easy to protect. But now, though at times there are quarrels and even wars among the beings of Suari, the clusters of buildings are not needed, and in case of war would be of no avail. Yet the fear of being alone still abides in these beings, and fear of one kind or of another dogs them always. He who has little, fears he may never have more. He who has much, fears he may lose what he has. He who is in good health fears illness, and he who is ill fears he may never be in good health. No one is content; no one is satisfied and nearly all fear death. Yet do they tempt death scores of times each day. They glory in taking risks of health, of loss of life, of everything.

"Why they should fear death is still a mystery to me. They profess to believe as do we of Sonko-Huara that the spirit never dies but merely departs from the body to another state. Some believe as do we that it finds a place in another body; others believe that it goes to another planet; and some believe that it goes to some special spot where spirits rule, for in Suari there are endless beliefs, faiths and religions instead of one universal religion as with us. Yet despite this belief that death brings to the spirit a better life and that there is nothing to fear, they look upon death with horror and will go to the most extreme measures to preserve life. Even the imbeciles, the hopelessly injured and the crippled are preserved, instead of being mercifully disposed of, as is our custom. And their doctors will cut their bodies or their limbs into bits and will leave them crippled or helpless for the rest of their lives, merely to save them from death. It is not

the fear of pain, for they endure a hundred times the agony of death in order to avoid death. Mainly, I think, it is lack of faith in what they hold is their faith. They are never quite sure that their religion is the right one, that their spirits will be better off, which proves how much better it is to have but one faith for all, as do we of Sonko-Huara. And yet, in spite of their dread of death for themselves, they regard the deaths of others quite callously. They ruthlessly destroy thousands of their fellows in a war over some petty trifles or to satisfy the machinations of some men who avariciously desire to add to their power or their wealth. And they do not hesitate to put their fellows to death for the violation of certain laws which they themselves make. Though they thus constitute themselves the judges of their fellows, and claim the right to take that, which they cannot give and cannot restore, yet on the other hand, they will not permit one of the number to take his own life, when he desires death for any reason.

“AND while they see fit to meddle in many, in fact, most affairs of their fellows, and to subject themselves to innumerable ridiculous rules and regulations of no importance to themselves or to any one else, yet they avoid regulating and controlling the most important of all things—the births of their offspring and their rearing.

“Unlike our young that are incubated artificially and under scientific rules, the offspring of the Suarians are born alive, and each mother rears her own. Unfit parents are not only allowed to mate and to produce young, instead of limiting the reproduction of the race to scientifically selected parents, neither of whom is aware of the other's identity as with us, but they are permitted to rear their own misbegotten to maturity. As a result, there is no steady weeding out of the mentally and physically unfit, nor a gradual improvement of the whole race. Moreover, the puny, weak, imbecile, crippled and otherwise imperfect offspring are not only permitted to live, but are sedulously cared for, and every effort is made to keep them alive in spite of nature.

“As a result of this, no two are alike mentally, physically or in training, yet, when these strange beings educate their infinitely varying offspring, they are treated as if all were identical, as if all, like our own, had been scientifically and artificially produced, incubated and reared. There is no attempt to educate and train the young according to their aptitude or their suitability for certain careers. There is no such thing as saying this young being has peculiarities to warrant his becoming a mechanic; this one should be an artist, and then regulating their education and training with that end in view. No, all are put through the same courses of studies, and the ultimate career of each is left to the parents or to the immature being's choice. In this, as in nearly all vital matters concerning these inconceivably inferior Suarians, there is no system, no certainty; everything is left to chance.

The young Suarian, who decides to become a scientist, may become a good scientist and he may be a failure, it is a question of chance instead of being predetermined by searching analysis of his mentality, his physique, his origin and every other factor. Yet in nearly every other respect these beings are surrounded, buried, overwhelmed with laws. Numbers of beings are ceaselessly laboring to make laws and are being given great quantities of the metal discs called money to make these laws. So

many have been made in the past and so many are being made each day, that not even those who make them can remember them. For that reason they are preserved in massive volumes. And if those who make the laws are ignorant of them, it is natural that the other beings, who have no knowledge of what laws have been made, should be quite unaware of them. As a result, everyone is constantly violating some law. But this does not appear to matter, for apparently most of the laws are made to no purpose. Yet there are certain laws that may not be broken with impunity save by certain favored beings, and many of these seemed the most unreasonable and needless of all. No being may take that which belongs to another, even though he be starving and the other has more food than he can use; even though he has nothing and the other has much; even though he takes that which he must have in order to live from one who has taken more than he needs from some other. If a being transgresses this law he is set apart in a cubicle by himself, and is given abundance of food and is cared for, so that by his punishment he is rewarded with that which he sought to obtain. Yet he could not be thus housed and fed and provided for otherwise than by violating the law. But the being from whom the possessions have been taken receives nothing in return, nor is he who is set apart forced to return that which he took. And neither may the being who has been thus robbed of what was his, lay hands upon him who took it, nor take from him aught in return. So it would seem that the violator of the law is rewarded and he who suffers is punished. Neither may a being take the life of another being, no matter what provocation he may have, for if he does, then the law may take his life. Even though the one whose life is taken by the being who has been wronged is of the most inferior class and of no value to the community, whereas the being wronged is of the highest and most intelligent, yet the law demands that the valuable life be sacrificed. Yet may those who are favored, take lives as they may and suffer nothing.

“Among these beings there are certain ones whose duty is to see that the laws are not broken, yet often they are themselves the most ignorant of laws and the most inferior in intelligence among the beings. Yet should these beings, in their minds, imagine some being has violated some law—though its violation is not punishable by death—and the one suspected, being innocent, resists, the other may take his life with impunity. Nay, more, if the being employed to enforce the laws attempts to take the life of one violating the law, and instead destroys law-abiding beings who by chance are near at hand, he is not punished for having so destroyed them, nor can their families secure recompense. No, like other matters that concern life and death and even more important things, this too, is governed by chance.

“In the marriage also, which is the mating of the males and the females of these strange beings, all is governed by chance in the same manner. Neither science nor law enters into the beings choosing their mates, but when chosen the law declares them mated. Yet, should they, one wearying of the other, or finding the mating to have been ill chosen, desire to find other mates, they may not do so without breaking a law and being punished therefor. Yet, strangest of all perhaps, is a law that declares these beings may not partake of certain liquids of which some of the beings are fond. More yet, this law prevails in some portions of Suari and not in others, and of all

the laws this is the most often violated. Indeed, few beings there are who do not violate this strange law that controls the beings' own stomachs, and in so violating the law, they appear to gain much delight and pleasure. Though you may find it hard to believe, yet they will go to great trouble and expend many pieces of metal in order to violate this law, not so much that they are desirous of imbibing the proscribed liquids, but to show their derision of a law which they caused to be made.

"For a long time after I had been living among the whites I marveled greatly at these beings remaining so primitive as to need laws which we of Sonko-Huara abandoned ages ago as worthless things and as tending only to corrupt the morals of officials. But most of all I marveled that, having paid beings to make the laws, and laboring to obtain the metal wherewith to pay others for enforcing them, they should desire to break them at every turn and should find delight in so doing. But having learned more of the whites' ways, and having seen their amusements, I wondered no more, for I then saw clearly that such laws were made to provide a source of amusement, or as they call it in their tongue a 'sport,' sometimes also called a 'game.'

CHAPTER IV

Certain Traits Are Universal

BEFORE speaking of these amusements of the Suarians, I must tell you something of their strange characters and habits. Though they are so filled with conceit that they imagine themselves the superiors of all other races, even the superiors of all beings in the universe, and though they boast that they rule Suari, yet do their females rule them, and the strongest submit to the rule of weak, illiterate, unintelligent beings. Still, in a way, the whites do rule Suari, for so loudly do they cry out to all that they are the lords of their planet, that the others are made to believe it to be the truth and so submit to their wills. And though during my stay on Suari I lived for most of the time amidst these whites and mingled with all kinds, yet never could I learn why they should be so exalted in their opinions of themselves.

"Of all the inhabitants of Suari, they are the most superficial, the most artificial, the most inconsequential, the most illogical and paradoxical. They are as aimless in their lives as butterflies, as casual as drifting leaves. Like hordes of ants they scurry about, rushing madly to save a minute of time, yet in the midst of this wild bustle they will stop and gaze for hours upon some simple childish thing. Their lives are one ceaseless round of toil, for so primitive are they and so badly organized and so jealous of one another that they must toil to live. But even when by toil they have gathered more of the metal discs than they can use in their lives, yet do they continue to toil, working to live and living to work, but constantly crying out for a rest, for a chance to live without thus toiling. Yet when they cease for a space to labor, they entertain themselves by toiling. Even when, weary with the labor of day, they have a chance to rest, they spend the night rushing about, each male with a female, in great crowds, running and prancing over a floor, though they do not win the metal discs by so doing. Or when there is no need of toil, they will hurry and pant for great distances in the hottest sun, laboring to strike a small globule with

a crooked stick, or perchance with their feet kicking an object about and fighting amongst themselves, or striking a ball with a club and then dashing swiftly away trying to outpace the ball. Always they are laboring, even fighting to outdo something, even if by so doing nothing is gained. They strive and labor to outdo one another, and each toils to win more of the metal discs than the others, and they take great joy in watching two of their fellows struggle and fight with their hands until one outdoes the other and thereby wins vast stores of the metal discs and bits of paper they prize so greatly.

"To these beings of Suari nothing seems to afford so much pleasure and interest as for some one of them to outdo some other one, yet it is a foolish and ridiculous thing, for always, as fast as one outdoes another, so, surely, another will outdo that one. They even force the four-footed beings to strive to outdo one another, and because these beings are more intelligent and are superior to the others, and will not waste their strength by foolishly laboring to surpass one another, the two-legged beings mount upon their backs and beat and force them to do their bidding.

Often times too, these Suarians will remain for many hours seated at tables and passing bits of colored paper from hand to hand, and going without needed rest and sleep in a mad attempt to outdo one another in securing certain of the bits of paper. Many other strange ways do they have of occupying themselves, yet one of the strangest is that they will flock in great herds unto certain cubicles of large size, and will give up stores of the metal discs to gaze at certain of their fellows, both males and females, who standing upon a platform, do and say exactly the same things that these beings do each day. Moreover, when these beings cannot see their fellows thus repeating their actions and their words, they will flock to other places wherein are pictures of beings doing the same things. These pictures were at first a great puzzle to me, for I thought that they were reality and were like unto our vision-disseminators, for they both moved and spoke. But soon I found they were accomplished by means of machines, and though cleverly managed, were not real but merely images that were made to appear at will. Very often both the beings who appear upon the platforms, as well as the pictured beings, do and say things that are in violation of the laws, whereat those who watch show great pleasure and shout aloud and strike their hands together in delight, for so illogical are they that though they may make laws and may punish those who transgress them, yet ever are they overjoyed to see the laws broken. Yet in this are they no more illogical than in many other ways. Thus while they will give many discs to be delighted and made happy, they will give an equal number to be made sad, and of their own will they will gaze upon sights or will harken to music and because of these will weep and will find joy in weeping, which led me to feel at times that these strange beings are all imbeciles.

"Yet they do most amazing things and perform feats that we of Sonko-Huara cannot equal. They can project their voices and all other sounds for vast distances through the air and it was these that we heard here in Sonko-Huara, as I surmised), this being done by some means akin to the manner in which I transported myself to Suari and back. By devices which I do not fully comprehend even yet, the beings alter the sounds to electronic forces, by a reversal of the process transform the forces

into sounds, just as I may change a solid body into free electrons, and then may reform the free electrons to reproduce the original body.

"And though they have never learned the secrets of our vision-disseminators and audio-extensors nor of our projectors by means of which we may move swiftly from spot to spot and may hear the voices and see the forms of others at great distances, and though they have not yet learned to draw all power, all sustenance and all that is needed for life directly from the sunshine and the atmosphere, yet they have devices that serve many purposes and that are unknown to us. Perchance, by the time their planet has been exhausted, as has Sonko-Huara, and the Suarians have by necessity been forced to develop their intelligences and have cast aside the foolish and inconsequential things, and have learned that uniformity of purpose, thought and act is essential to existence, they may reach to a plane comparable to ours at this time. I have already told you of the strange machines that rush over the earth and by means of which they move from place to place. In addition, they have other great machines that can move only upon metal rods laid upon the earth, and they possess immense projector-like devices that fly through the air.

"Unlike our projectors that may remain poised at any height and which are operated by the atomic power, these draw their power from fuel burned within them, and if by chance the fuel is exhausted or if any portion of the mechanism goes wrong, they crash to the ground and are destroyed.

"IT is written in our histories that our ancestors, some thousand Chukitis in the past, used similar means for traveling, and so it is possible that a thousand Chukitis hence the Suarians may learn to make projectors. But Suari, being so much greater than Sonko-Huara and hence with greater body-attraction, presents problems that we of Sonko-Huara do not face. Thus upon Suari there are, as all know, great bodies of water, and to cross these and to go from place to place separated by them, the beings use immense machines, carrying vast numbers of Suarians, that move swiftly upon the surface of the water and do not sink within it even though they are made of metal heavier than the water. This to us of Sonko-Huara seems more wonderful than would our projectors or our vision-disseminators to the Suarians, for we, having no great masses of water, and no need to cross such, know little of such matters, and in all things pertaining to water, the beings of Suari are in advance of us. Yet could I, even with my ignorance of such things, see plainly that in all these matters as in everything else the Suarians waste far more than they use, and do many things for the benefit of their own pride and pleasure rather than for the benefit of the race and posterity as a whole. Thus the structures in which they dwell and which, clustered together, form those spots that we of Sonko-Huara long ago recognized as made by intelligent beings, are often made of vast size and beauty, towering unto the skies, whereas for the purposes of the beings' lives and labors no beauty is required, and cubicles of no greater height than would accommodate the beings would serve as well. For that matter, such small structures, separately placed, would serve better, and with the sunshine and the air would greatly preserve the health of the dwellers within. Yet in their self-pride and glory the beings will erect the great structures and will nest them together by thousands,

thus shutting off the sunshine and air and rendering their dwelling places as dark and noisome as caverns in the earth. And the material that is needed to make such great structures would serve to make many thousand smaller cubicles for those beings who have not enough of the metal discs to obtain shelter. On the other hand, so commercial are the minds of these beings, so fixed on matters that result only in gain to themselves, so selfish in their attitude, that science is regarded with little respect and often with scorn. And those beings who have amassed great quantities of the metal they crave will give freely of what they have for such pleasures as they desire, but will bestow none upon those beings who delve in the mysteries of science and who devote their lives to the betterment of others by studies and by writings. There are some few who will bestow their discs in this way, else all the Suarian scientists and those of great intelligence would succumb.

"Yet even the scientists are ever filled with the conceit that possesses the two-legged inhabitants of Suari, and most of all, the whites.

"Though they possess means of studying the planets, and have devoted much time to studying our own Sonko-Huara, yet they know nothing in regard to them. Those signals that we of Sonko-Huara arranged to draw their eyes and to let them know that our planet was inhabited, were seen by those on Suari, yet they deemed them not signals—feeling assured no beings more intelligent than themselves could dwell here—that our signals were but natural formations. And then to apprise whatever beings might dwell on Sonko-Huara that more intelligent beings inhabited Suari, they caused great numbers of lights to be placed at night—which we saw—meaningless things carrying no message. And having projected their voices into space and having received no response (for they stupidly failed to arrange for replies and even failed to let us know they were striving to communicate with us) they decided that there were no intelligent beings.

"So conceited are they and so filled with their own importance and the belief that they are lords not only of Suari but of all the Universe, that they cannot conceive of any other form of intelligent beings. To them the denizens of Sonko-Huara or of any planet, must be like themselves—with but two legs and two arms, the same bodies, heads and features—or, in the minds of some few, perchance like certain four or six-legged creatures of Suari.

"And nothing can convince them of the contrary, nor can they be convinced that an inhabitant of Sonko-Huara could do what they cannot and visit another planet as I have done. For a long time after my arrival upon Suari I said nothing of who I was or whence I came, thinking it better to learn their ways and all regarding them, by mingling with them as one of their own kind. And when, after having talked with their scientists and those credited with being the most intelligent, I learned how vast was their ignorance of Sonko-Huara, I sought to set them right, none would listen to my words. In vain did I endeavor to tell them of the true facts, of how we of Sonko-Huara lived, of the customs and our ways, of how we obtained our power and our sustenance, of how our race was propagated and ever improved by science, and of how those strange marks, which they had thought were canals, were but the tracks made by our small areas of water as they were dragged across the surface of our planet by our two small satellites.

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"We of earth know that," the World-President said, "and our gratitude is for them as for you—our silence now for them as for you. But you who came back—you four who dared first of all men out through the void, and who came back to lead earth's forces out to the terrific struggle that saved us—is it gratitude only that earth can give you?"

Marlin half-turned, his eyes meeting our own. "There is nothing earth can give us, more," he said, "for we have that which never men have had before, have the space-fliers and have now all the solar system's worlds before us! For to us four could be no greater gift, no greater thing, than that—to be space-rovers once more together!"

And as Marlin's eyes met ours, standing there on the great building's brilliant-lit roof with all about us the

assembled masses of the World Congress, silent, with those other vast silent throngs in all the mighty city around us, we were looking together upward. Marlin with his brilliant eyes; Whitely with his calm, strong upturned face; Randall with a new light flaming into his tired eyes; I with a strange new eagerness clutching at my heart; we all were looking upward. Upward past the brilliant lights around us toward the constellations and toward the planets that shone among them, crimson Mars and yellow Saturn and white Jupiter! Upward with a sudden strange tenseness, forgetful for the moment of the hushed world around us that we had helped to save from doom, upward across the immensities of space where we four had roved toward the great planets that moved there across the star-sown summer sky!

THE END

A Visit to Suari

By A. Hyatt Verrill

(Continued from page 305)

"And when I told them of the form of ourselves they shook their heads and declared it was all but a tale, and asked where I had secured such wild and foolish ideas. Then, angered somewhat that they should doubt the truth of my words, I told them I was from Sonko-Huara and how I had come to Suari. At this they but scoffed and derided me the more, and argued that proof of the untruth of my words lay in the fact that I was like themselves in form, though I had said the denizens of Sonko-Huara were unlike any forms they had ever seen or imagined. In vain I argued and reasoned with

them, but they, being so inferior in intellect and so self-assured that they were right, demanded that I should give them proof. What better proof could they ask than that I was there on Suari? What more convincing that I could tell them of the Sonko-Huaran beings, of our lives, our customs, the things we have accomplished?

"Yet they were not convinced, they demanded more, and at last, out of patience and to prove I was no imposter, I adjusted my instruments and, before their incredulous eyes, vanished from their sight to materialize once more in our beloved Sonko-Huara."

THE END.



In this department we shall discuss, every month, topics of interest to readers. The editors invite correspondence on all subjects directly or indirectly related to the stories appearing in this magazine. In case a special personal answer is required, a nominal fee of 25c to cover time and postage is required.

THE SCIENCE CORRESPONDENCE CLUB ATLANTA BRANCH

Editor, AMAZING STORIES:

Many thanks for your kind favor of the 10th, in which you state "I assure you I was gratified in being elected an honorary member." I can assure you that all the members of the S.C.C. are gratified in your acceptance, and consider it an honor to have you associated with us.

This is your organization as well as anyone else's and any suggestions which you may offer, you can rest assured, will be acted upon and carried out. Yes, Dr. A. Hrdlicka and David B. Pickering are honorary members, and in addition there is that lovable Wm. Tyler Olcott. We are mighty proud of our honorary members.

Now, we have organized a branch of the S.C.C. here, known as the S. Lynn Rhorer Society of Greater Atlanta. It is possible that you have heard of the late Mr. Rhorer, the organizer of the Southern Cross Observatory, Miami, Florida,

and of this branch we are more than proud, as I think that I can say without going too far, that we have a branch which cannot be duplicated, or should say cannot be duplicated at the present time. We have our telescope (we are working on a ten-inch at the present time) over three hundred scientific books in our library, both modern and ancient books, Science Fiction magazines of all publishers, ores and rocks, which in itself is a large collection, and in addition a large collection of fossilized bones which I was fortunate in collecting myself, finding them all in the phosphate mines, a part being identified by the American Museum of Natural History (which reminds me: in a paper a few days ago there was an article regarding a Mr. Williams finding in Florida one of the teeth of a horse which greatly exceeded in size any of this date). We are equipping a laboratory, have a chemical

set and have regular meetings. (Please don't get tired as I wish to give you the whole story.) Our meetings are each Tuesday evening 7:30. We operate under astronomical time, and Julian dates. Mr. Olcott is an honorary member.

Mr. Olcott in one of his letters to me stated: "We cannot do too much for Mr. Rhorer." I do consider myself fortunate in organizing this branch, all live wires, deeply interested in science and fiction.

Our program for April was this:

Tuesday evening, April 15th, The Creation. The first form of life.

Tuesday evening, April 22nd, Evolution.

Tuesday evening, April 29th, Future.

In addition to discussions, the telescope is set up each meeting night, provided the seeing conditions are satisfactory. The lowest attendance

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