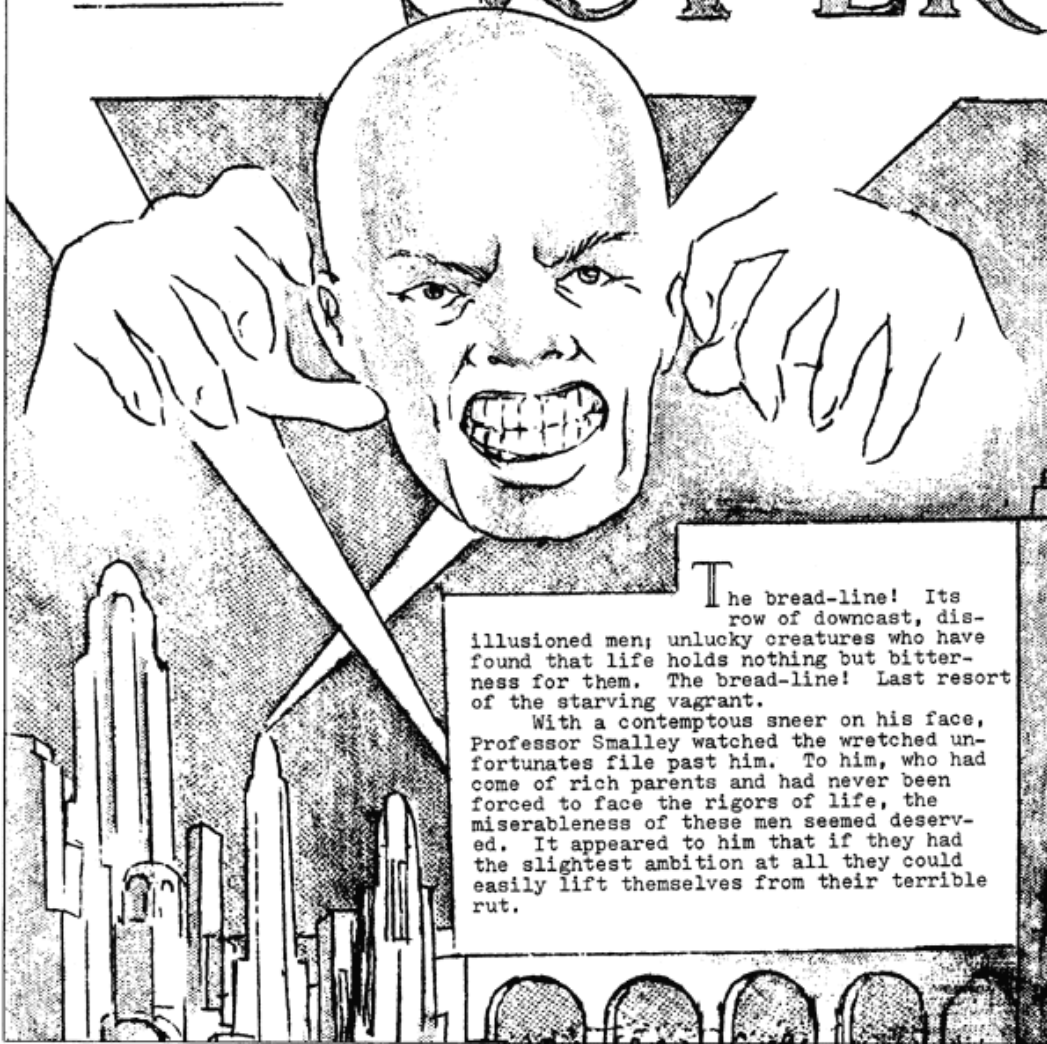


The REIGN SUPER

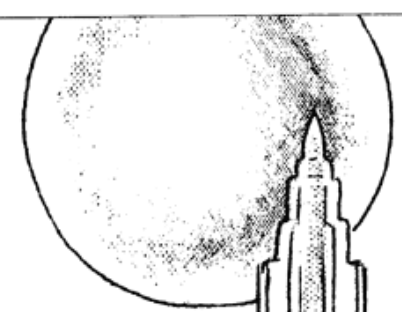
By
Herbert S. Pine



The bread-line! Its row of downcast, disillusioned men; unlucky creatures who have found that life holds nothing but bitterness for them. The bread-line! Last resort of the starving vagrant.

With a contemptuous sneer on his face, Professor Smalley watched the wretched unfortunates file past him. To him, who had come of rich parents and had never been forced to face the rigors of life, the miserableness of these men seemed deserved. It appeared to him that if they had the slightest ambition at all they could easily lift themselves from their terrible rut.

of the MAN



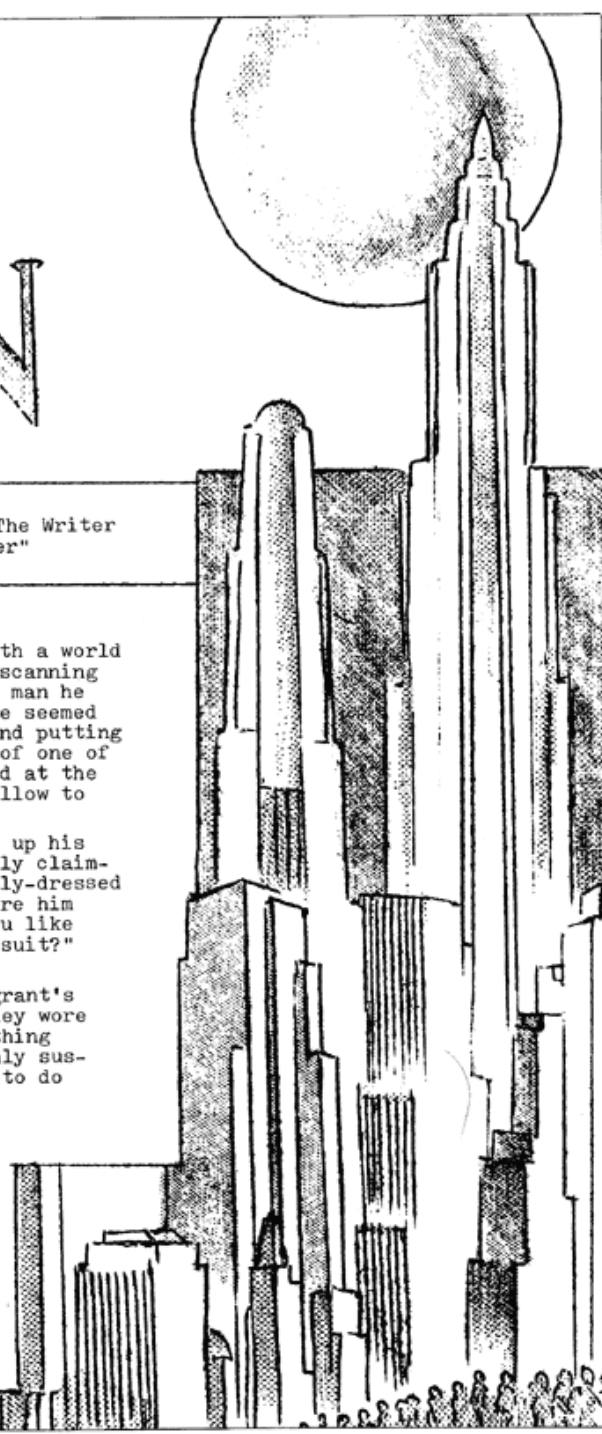
Another Thrilling Story By The Writer
of "Snaring The Master"

But while he eyed them with a world of condescension, he was busy scanning their faces, searching for the man he sought. Time and time again he seemed on the point of reaching out and putting a restraining arm on the hand of one of the men. But ever he hesitated at the last moment and allowed the fellow to file past.

At last, however, he gave up his search in despair and resignedly claimed the attention of the raggedly-dressed person who happened to be before him at that moment. "How would you like to have a real meal and a new suit?" he inquired.

The resentment in the vagrant's face died as he saw that Smalley wore costly apparel. "I'd like nothing better, mister." Then, suddenly suspicious--"What do you want me to do for you? Nothing crooked, I hope?"

Professor Smalley laughed. "I assure you my intentions are purely humanitarian. But if you doubt



"No, no," interrupted the man, stepping out of the line. "Indeed I don't, sir. But who are you?"

The professor introduced himself.

Ernest Smalley, a chemist."

The down-and-outter bowed in acknowledgement. "Bill Dunn, gentleman of the road, at your service!"

SMALLEY HAD no difficulty inducing Dunn to enter his car. When he drove off, something within him sang exultantly. In a few minutes he would be started upon the experiment which, he was sure, would bring most startling results. For now that he had secured a human subject, Smalley would see at first hand how his chemical would react upon the subject when taken internally.

All unwitting of the professor's sinister intentions Dunn sat beside him, complimenting himself upon his extraordinary luck.

Some time previous Smalley had secured a fragment of a meteor and upon subjecting to chemical analysis found the presence of what he suspected to be a new element.

Upon further investigation he had learned that it exerted a strange influence upon the laboratory animals to whom it was administered. Only a few grains of the precious substance were left. Dunn was going to be the recipient of one half of them, though he was not aware of that.

At length the professor drew up before his house. He hurried into it, followed by Dunn.

Smalley instructed the butler to furnish Dunn with one of the professor's suits.

When Dunn next met Smalley he seemed a far cry from the ragged stranger who had un-
easily entered the house. For the first time in weeks his face was cleanshaven. Clean, faultlessly pressed clothes had replaced his frayed garments. There was an air of confidence about him that surprised Smalley.

The professor greeted him with a warm smile. "What a great transformation! It seems impossible that you are the same man!" Dunn nodded. "Yes, it is possible for me to look respectable. Somehow it's hard for me to believe that you're doing this just out of the kindness of your heart."

"I've received too many hard knocks, I guess." Smalley's genial grin vanished and his eyes hardened. Did the man suspect--? Dunn continued awkwardly. "But I believe I've finally come up against what I doubted existed."

Once more Smalley was smirking.

"You said something about a meal,"

hinted Bill Dunn. "I haven't eaten for several days."

At once the professor was the perfect host. "Pardon me for my forgetfulness. Be seated, please."

He hurried from the room, and could Bill have seen the triumphant look upon his face, he would have had cause to worry.

IN A moment Smalley returned, pushing a small stand before him. On the rolling platform was a platter of steaming food. "Help yourself," he invited.

Dunn lost no time in accepting. He did away with fancy preliminaries and got down to business at once. He ate his food like a famished creature. Convention was forgotten.

He swallowed a large sandwich in four gigantic bites.

The professor's eyes smoldered queerly as Dunn gulped down his coffee. For the great experiment had begun! Smalley's chemical preparation had been placed in that coffee.

Not much later Dunn leaned back in his chair, a frown upon his face. "Feel dizzy," he complained. "Must have eaten too much."

"Perhaps you'd better retire," advised Smalley solicitously. "I can talk to you in the morning about a position I plan to offer you. One moment, while I summon the butler, I'll be right back."

Though his mind whirled under a terrific pressure, Dunn sensed the aura of evil triumph surrounding the professor. It occurred to him for the first time that Smalley might have made him the unwitting subject of some sinister and terrible experiment. As the professor left the room, he was filled with a wild desire to flee. His roving, frantic eyes fastened themselves upon a window.

When Smalley returned to the room with the butler, Dunn was not in sight. With a smug satisfaction within him, Smalley concluded that Dunn had collapsed upon the floor. But when he scanned the floor and found no trace of his victim, then searched the room with mounting alarm and horror, he knew positively that something had gone wrong. And when the flapping of the wind-buffed curtains drew his attention to the open window, he cursed heartily. Dunn had escaped!

SCARCELY REALIZING what he did or where he was bound, Dunn staggered down the streets. As he approached people, they shrank away, believing him to be under the influence of some powerful stimulant. Fate or extremely good luck kept him away from the vigilant eye of officers of the law. Soon Dunn was babbling incoherently and dashing along the streets at full speed, disregarding any who might be in his way. The professor's residence was situated near a public park. He was soon rushing into its shadows, tearing through the desolate park, like an escaped lunatic. In his blind dash he noted no obstacles. When he crashed unexpectedly into a tree, therefore, he received the full force of the violent contact. He toppled to the ground, dazed and half-conscious.

Suddenly, as he lay there on the ground, a veritable holocaust of confusion burst upon his mind. "I tell you, we've got to use a little strategy. Brains is what this gang needs, and brains is what it ain't got." "The damn fool, I thought she said she could play bridge." "I gotta have that dough, Ma. I gotta have it!" "I'll wait until he turns around and then I'll let him have it in the back." "He's just a kid, Name. Why don't you let him alone?" "Listen, you we don't stand for welchers in this burg, see?" "I wonder what she thinks I am; a sap for her to wipe her dirty shoes on?" "Listen, Chief, get this straight. It was Maretti who did the killin', not me. I wouldn't squeal on a pal, but--" "So I tells the umpchay I'm not that kind ova dame. Well, he just looks at me and laughs himself blue in the face. And say, dearie, did I get mad!"

What gibberish was this that darted into his brain like thousands of little light-rays?

"Gentlemen, this is a serious problem that confronts us." "I'd better watch that guy. He looks bad. Maybe he's followed me from Chicago." "To hell with the anarchists!" "I'd starve before I'd go back to that brute." "I wish he'd keep on his own feet. A helluva nerve he had asking a swell dancer like me to fox trot with a palooka like him." "Look here, punk. You may be the star reporter on this rag but unless you turn in your copy by three o'clock you'll be out in the street peddling shoelaces." "I must not forget to wake up early tomorrow morning."

Dunn shook his head. He wished that the terrible noise raging within his head would cease. Scarcely had he conceived the desire, before the pestilence disappeared. Abruptly he caught himself wondering what Professor Smalley was thinking at that moment, how he had taken Dunn's escape.

AT THE same moment a voice within him began to speak, a voice that undoubtedly belonged to none other than--Professor Smalley himself. "He's gone and the chances are ten to one that I'll never locate him again. What infernal luck. My precious chemical wasted! I'll get him somehow. Why did the fool have to run away? How could he have suspected my motive? Perhaps I should inform the police, hire detectives. Tell them he's a dangerous maniac. Either that or I'll put some crime upon him, frame him. God knows what may happen to him; he may be transformed to an imbecile, but on the other hand--"

Abruptly the voice ceased speaking. Dunn gasped. Was he going crazy, or, sterner possibility, was he already insane?

And then the solution occurred to him; the monstrous, unbelievable truth. Somehow, some way, Professor Smalley had treated him with some chemical that had reacted upon him in this manner, had sharpened his mind so that he could hear thoughts! But was that all? The five senses! Were they all influenced?

Sound -- Yes!
Touch -- (Dunn touched himself. He noted no new sensation.)

No!
Scent -- No.
Taste -- (Dunn raised a pinch of dirt and dropped it into his mouth. He spat it out quickly.)
No!

Sight -----
Dunn considered the problem of sight. Was it improved? How could he determine whether it was or not?

He happened to look up into the sky and his roving eyes caught sight of a brilliant red point of light. His interest grew as he regarded it. Within his mind a dry, metallic voice spoke mechanically, unconcernedly: "Mars!"

What was occurring up there, wondered Dunn.

Faster than the speed of light came the answer to that rash thought.

In less time than it takes an eyelid to blink, Dunn was viewing a weird, fascinating scene that was not of Earth.

It seemed to Dunn that he was hovering a short distance above the red, parched surface of the ground in an invisible body. Below him and stretching out from both sides of him to infinite distances was a straight unmarred plain. Except for two objects, and the pale sky, nothing else was in sight. The two objects instantly attracted his interest and attention. Both were--beings! One was a giant tree-like creature, the other a thirty-foot high thin streak of red light.

AS DUNN watched they covered the short distance separating them from each other. Both seemed to flow, rather than to walk across the soil. The moment they came within striking distance, the tree-creature flung out a limb-like tentacle that agilely wrapped itself about the red-intelligence. Other limbs flashed out, encircled the red flame and drew it against the tree's breast. In that instant the two alien monstrosities shook with their mighty efforts to destroy each other.

And Dunn, while still on Earth, was witnessing this incredible scene, this sight which was transpiring 35,000,000 miles from where he lay motionless in the park.

The red intelligence now brought into use a power which it had not used before. Suddenly it expanded. The twig-like tentacles of the tree-monster snapped brittlely under the unexpected attack. Entirely engulfed by its adversary it could be faintly seen within the red body that imprisoned it. Then suddenly it had vanished, was gone. Where before there had been two creatures there now was but--the red-intelligence.

The Martian sight suddenly disappeared. Once more Dunn, white and trembling at the strangeness of the vision he had glimpsed was in the shadows of the park.

The strain and excitement, the influence of the drug, was too much for Dunn to withstand. Exhausted to his very soul, he dropped off into a troubled sleep.

WHEN THE thing that had been Bill Dunn awoke the next morning, it recorded its surroundings and its

clothes unfamiliarly. Memory abruptly flooded back. With a chuckle of sheer amusement, it rose to its feet and stretched its arms. Then it began to follow the road toward more densely populated districts. As it walked, it spoke to itself.

"Fool! Why did you sleep on the ground when there were thousands of unoccupied beds in the world! Money, obviously, was the reason. You lacked money. How hilarious! Money is the easiest thing that can be secured upon this planet! And you have spent a full year in idle wastefulness when you could have been living the life of a Prince, an existence incomparable in its ease. It is the greatest sin. I must atone for that;

I must remedy my financial condition. That will not be difficult."
A grin of superiority crossed the Superman's face.

I can do four things that no one else of the planet can emulate. They are: intercept interplanetary messages, read the mind of anyone I desire, by sheer mental concentration force ideas into people's heads, and throw my vision to any spot in the universe.

"Furthermore," he added, "during the night my mind has assimilated all the knowledge that exists in the universe. I know as much about Pluto as its inhabitants whose information I absorbed. I am a virtual sponge that absorbs every secret ever created. Every science is known to me and the most abstruse questions are mere child'splay to my staggering intellect. I am a veritable God!"

Thoughts of his mental achievements swelled him with confidence. He strode along the road arrogantly, his head erect, aggressive. One might have supposed his pockets were overflowing with banknotes of tremendous denominations rather than the empty air.

He stopped the first man he met and inquired where the nearest public library was located. Upon receiving the information desired, he strode off without word of thanks. It seemed perfectly natural to him that people should do as he directed.

ENTERING THE library, he took the elevator to the third floor and hurried into the Science and Technology Room.
"Professor Einstein's book on 'The Expanding Universe,'" he instructed an attendant.

The attendant returned with the copy in her hand. "Our only one," she explained, "but it's printed in German."

"What do I care?" snapped the Superman and snatched the book from the astounded attendant's hand, "I'd be able to read it if it were written in Portuguese, Beteguesian, Andromedian, or in the sands of time!"

He seated himself and began to read. A supercilious sneer flashed over his features. Suddenly he roared with laughter and slammed the book down on the table before him, with a mighty bang.
"Trash! Bosh!" he cried.

The attendant hurried up. "You will have to be quiet, sir," she cautioned. "There are others in this room who are concentrating. No disturbance will be tolerated."

The Superman bared his teeth. "If I had a ray-tube within reach, I'd blast you out of existence!" he hissed.

Quickly the attendant retreated, positive she was confronted by a madman. The Superman chuckled softly as he read her terrified thoughts.

An elderly gentleman entered the room and sat down beside the Superman. He shot a momentary glance of disdain at the Superman's dirty, wrinkled suit, made a motion as though to rise and change his seat, then sighed, and apparently changed his mind. He slipped a small magazine from his pocket and began to read. The

Superman read the following two words upon its cover: SCIENCE FICTION.

Suddenly the gentleman noted the Superman's stare. He reddened angrily, seemed on the point of speaking. The Superman read his thoughts: "I will humble this impertinent person by asking a difficult question which shall show him his ignorance. I shall say, 'My dear fellow, can you quote me the Fitzgerald Contract?'"

Before the gentleman had an opportunity to put the question, the Superman replied. "The Fitzgerald Contract," he stated calmly, "which was looked into by Lorentz and Larmor, has the following equation: $E = \sqrt{I-VZ}$." The elderly man stared unbelievably. His lips moved, but no words issued forth.

Laughing, the Superman rose to his feet and left the place.

"NOW," THE Superman informed himself, "I will proceed to collect a large sum of money."

He approached a drug-store and stood by the scales. A man approached. The Superman stopped him. "What is your name?" he inquired.

"Smith," replied the puzzled fellow.

"Hello, Smith!" greeted the Superman and slapped him on the back. "Fine weather we're having these days, don't you think?"

Smith nodded, puzzled.

"Say, Smith, how about returning the ten dollars you owe me? I've waited long enough."

Smith started to protest, but suddenly it occurred to him that he did owe this stranger ten dollars.

"Who are you?" he asked, "I've forgotten your name."

"I am your grandfather," the Superman stated, without cracking a smile.

Strangely enough, Smith grinned genially. "Well, darned if you aren't! What a fool I was to forget! Where have you been?"

"I've just returned from a polar bear hunt in South Africa. But how about the ten dollars?"

"Two five dollar bills exchanged hands. "I wager I can guess your weight," the Superman abruptly said.

"Five bucks says you can't."

"Fine!" The Superman searched the man's mind. When Smith had stepped on a scale yesterday, he had registered one hundred and fifty pounds. "You weigh 150 lbs."

Smith stepped on the scale. One hundred and fifty pounds....

The Superman now had fifteen dollars. When Smith reached home, something snapped within him. For the first time it occurred to him how nonsensically he had acted.

The Superman approached the clerk at the drug-counter.

The clerk thought: "I wonder if he wants some booze, too?"

"I'd like a pint," the Superman whispered.

"I don't understand," the clerk said evasively, cautiously. Dunn leaned forward. "It's all right," he said under his breath.

"Smith, the guy who just left, is a close friend of mine. He put me wise." The clerk reached under the counter and his hand reappeared with a wrapped bottle. "Ten smackers," he whispered. Suddenly an authoritative gleam appeared in the Superman's eyes. "I got the goods on you!" he exclaimed.

The clerk snatched for the bottle, but the Superman, divining his intention beat him to it. "I'm a Federal Agent," he hissed. "Come along or--" He winked.

"How much?" inquired the clerk hoarsely.

"One hundred dollars!"

"Robber!" "Come across or to the cooler you go."

The Superman left the drug-store with one hundred fifteen dollars in his pocket. "A paltry sum," he told himself. "How can I increase it?"

His forehead furrowed with the intensity of his thoughts. At last he relaxed. "It all depends upon the drug," he muttered. "If I can give rise to this power, nothing can stand in my way toward universal domination."

Dunn stopped walking and approached the side of a building. He braced his back against it. And then his face screwed up with the intensity of his concentration. Abruptly he stiffened.

A vision floated before his eyes. It was of a man sitting on a park bench, reading the daily newspaper. The date on the newspaper was March the twenty-first. The day happened to be the twentieth. The Superman was looking twenty-four hours into the future!

Eagerly the Superman focused his attention upon an article.

"GAMBLERS MAKE BIG DOUGH

GOD OF FORTUNE FAVORABLE

Following the race-track, we find that the heavy betters cleaned up when Blue Angel came in first when odds against it were ten to one. The shock was great and the bookies were hit hard.

"Followers of another, but more popular gamble, the stock market, who owned shares of the formerly valueless Colorado Fruits, got a break today, too. When morning came, the brokers found out Colorado Fruits had shot sky-high overnight. A lot of newly rich were created."

Abruptly the vision vanished.

Dunn had accomplished the impossible. He had looked into the future! It was only within his power to see several hours ahead, but that was enough.

"After all," the Superman mused. "Time is simply duration, and duration is an illusion of the mind."

ALONE IN his laboratory sat the chemist, Smalley. In his hand he clutched the latest edition of a newspaper.

His face was white and strained; a light, bordering on madness, flamed in his eyes.

An hour previous he had fired his butler. He wanted to be alone, away from prying eyes.

On the page he so tightly clutched was a picture. The photograph was of Bill Dunn, the man he had administered his drug to.

Under the picture was the following article: "Into the public eye has stepped a mysterious figure, the man who calls himself William Dunn. No one knows from where he has come and he refused to offer any information. But the fact remains that through gambling circles he has amassed a tremendous fortune.

"No one can understand his extraordinary luck. Ever since he appeared, he has been reaping thousands from incredibly fortunate investments. His luck is almost supernatural in its unflinching-

ness.

"The man himself is a queer type. He is exceedingly alert, snaps back answers almost before questions are completed. But he has an overbearing conceit that is almost stifling....."

On another page was a short notice which, while it might have been insignificant to anyone, was of great importance in the eyes of Smalley.

"Clyde Kornau of 1131 Grantwood Rd. came to Police Headquarters with a strange story this morning. He says that while sitting in his study yesterday, he suddenly caught himself in the act of writing a check for forty-thousand dollars in favor of William Dunn.

"The police are puzzled. Kornau is too wealthy and powerful a citizen to lie for the sake of cheap publicity. A psychologist informed Kornau that his action had been the unconscious result of reading a great deal about Dunn. Kornau replied that he had never heard of William Dunn."

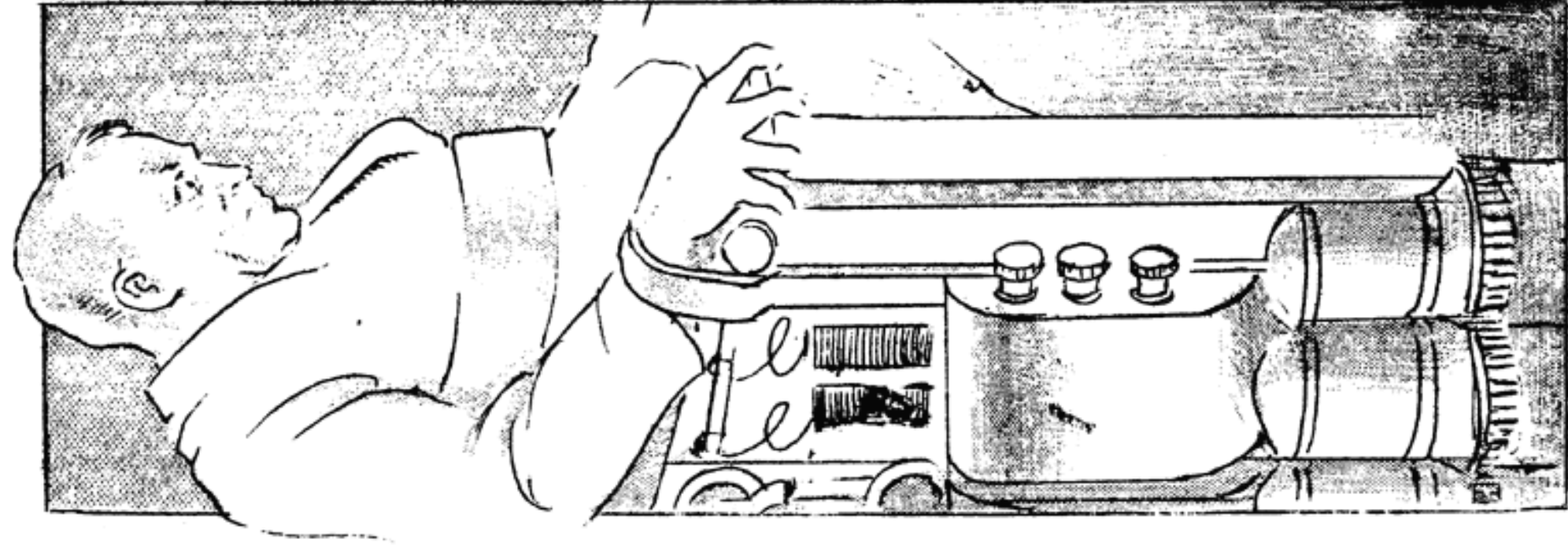
Suddenly Smalley leapt to his feet with a bellow of anger and rage. "I'll tell the whole world the truth about Dunn," he swore, "and they'll put him where he can't do any harm!"

He secured pencil and paper and began to write a long, heated letter. He old how he had taken Dunn from the headline to make him the noble subject of the greatest experiment of the century. He told of how the chemical had been administered and Dunn's subsequent vanishing. "And," he concluded, "unless this creature is snared and shot dead like a beast, he will grow, his powers will strengthen, increase, until he will hold the fate of the world in the palm of his hand!"

When the letter was completed, he placed it in an envelope, addressed it to the City Editor of the largest newspaper, then left the laboratory and mailed it.

Upon returning to his laboratory, Professor Smalley began to think. He began to envy the power of the Superman, as much as he hated the being itself. Visions of world domination rose before his eyes. Why should he not assume the position he had dreaded the Superman would take? The longer he thought, the stronger the temptation grew.

The desire had grown so strong soon that he began to mechanically go about the procedure of preparing the chemical. Then,



with a visible shock, he realized what he was doing, he went to work with a will that was almost savage.

Quickly he hurried from tube to vessel, working with the rapidity and recklessness of a maniac. Gradually his task neared completion, and finally he poured a thin liquid into a flask and put it away to cool off.

Several minutes later, when the preparation had cooled sufficiently, he raised the flask and prepared to take the draught that would transform him into a Superman. At that moment the bell to his home rang.

Ordinarily he would have disregarded it, but some instinct informed him that Dunn had returned.

With an evil leer upon his thin features, Smalley lowered the flask and left the room.

Smalley's surmise had been correct. The Superman was standing at the entrance when he opened the door. He stepped out and Dunn entered.

The two walked silently to the laboratory, then Smalley spoke for the first time. "Report what has happened to you." The Superman did, revealed everything, concealed nothing. He had a motive for telling the entire truth. It was that he had determined to murder the professor before he left the room.

As Dunn related his marvelous experiences one after another, Smalley's greed grew. He visioned what he would do when he had the same powers.

"Dunn," he said, when the Superman had finished speaking, "I am going to drink my preparation, now. That means that between the both of us, with our two gigantic brains, we shall rule the universe!"

The Superman read his mind, which spoke as follows: "And after I take the drug I'm going to dispose of my friend here. Only one Superman can exist, and that will be me!"

Thought the Superman. "Now is the time to kill this creature of such abysmal intelligence who seeks to oppose and replace me."

Smalley made a move to raise the flask which contained the last dose of his chemical. But before he could reach it, Dunn stepped forward and knocked his hand aside.

Instantly the professor leapt for the Superman's throat. Dunn fell back under the sudden attack, then, with a sudden roar, sprang forward and wrapped his arms about Smalley. The chemist struggled and flung the Superman off his balance. They both crashed to the floor.

Over and over they rolled, first one on top, then the other. It was a battle with an almost inconceivable stake. For to the victor would go the rule of the universe.

Abruptly Professor Smalley tore himself loose from his adversary's grip, jumped to his feet, and flew toward the table upon which lay the flask.....

THE INTERNATIONAL Conciliatory Council was in session. Gathered in the great hall were the representatives of all the world's nations, both large and small. This was the greatest Peace Conference of all time. Chairman Warren Mansfield was thundering at the top of his voice "--and as we have

gathered here, sit beside each other with no enmity between us, so shall our respective nations be in the future; friendly, brotherly."

As Mansfield seated himself, thunderous handclapping acclaimed him.

Chinaman and Jap, Frenchman and Englishman, American and Mexican, all smiled genially at each other. They saw that for the first time in the history of the globe, all races were to be joined into one tremendous, everlasting fraternity.

Chairman Mansfield rapped his gavel for silence. "Our first speaker," he announced, "will be Italy's messenger of peace, Anthony Ferroti!"

Ferroti rose to his feet and grinned engagingly. "It is with great pleasure that I announce--" Abruptly his face underwent a startling transformation. The amiable smile disappeared. His eyes snapped cruelly. His teeth were revealed in a sneer.

"--that Balvania is a hotbed of dirty anarchists!"

The silence in the room was stifling. Every man was thunderstruck.

Balvania's representative recovered from his astonishment. Angrily he leapt upright and screamed a flow of bitter denunciation. Someone gave him a violent shove and sent him crashing against another individual. In another moment the hall was in an uproar. Dignified old gentlemen were bellowing with rage and clutching at the throats of life-long friends. They who had come to make the final peace settlement were now attacking each other like mad hate-filled wolves.

FORREST ACKERMAN listened patiently to his City Editor.

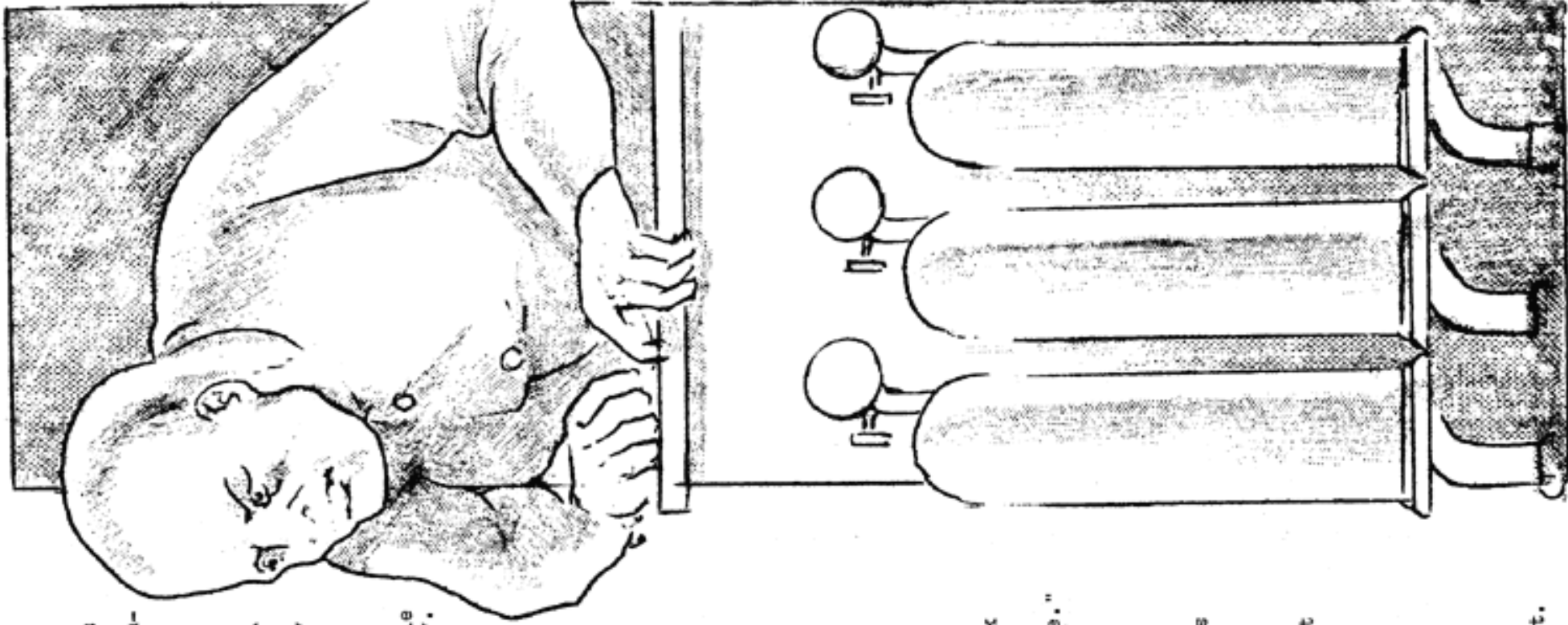
"The Chief gave me this letter and recommended that I pass it on to you. At first he thought it was just the work of a nut, but in view of how things have been developing lately, he suggested that I pass it on to you, and instruct you to look into the matter. Well, that's your assignment. Keep your mouth shut about it. If there's anything to it, we want an exclusive."

Ackerman accepted the proffered letter and glanced through it. As he read, his interest quickened. He whistled. "Sounds screwy."

"It's up to you to discover whether it is or isn't. Get going!"

As Forrest drove to Professor Smalley's home, he considered the relationship of this letter to the recent world-stirring events. If what the professor stated was true, it was likely that his Superman was behind the bitterness between nations. What might the Superman's motives be? Was it simply that his nature demanded he bring evilness and death upon humanity, or more likely, did he hope to gain control of it by first breaking down its strength by pitting it against itself?

He had come to no definite conclusion when he drew up before Smalley's residence. Leaving his car, he climbed the steps and rang the bell. He waited and no response came. He repeated the act. The same result. Impatiently he put his hand on the door-knob, turning it. The door swung open. For



a moment he hesitated, then he entered. He walked from room to room meeting no one. And then he entered a laboratory. His first glimpse told him that he had stumbled upon something important. The whole room was in terrible shape. Chairs, tables, cabinets were upset. Glassware was smashed. There were evident signs of a battle. A gasp escaped the reporter as he came upon a large crimson spot on the floor. Hardened blood!

But whose? Ideas rushed through his mind, some incoherent, others complete. But several were not to be denied. Professor Smalley had been one of the men involved in the struggle. It seemed likely that the other had been Dunn, the Superman. But who had won the battle? Whose blood marked the floor? A possibility occurred to him. Smalley might have conceived the ambition to rule the world. Perhaps there had been a quarrel and the resulting fight in which one of the two had been killed. Who, then, had been the victor? And whoever the victor might be, was it he who was to blame for the world being on the point of war?

Forrest ran from the house and sprang into his car. In a moment it was started and he was tearing along the streets toward the offices of his paper. But he had scarcely gone several dozen blocks before he behaved uncomprehensibly. Instead of continuing along the thoroughfare that would have taken him directly to his destination, he turned into a side street and after that into another thoroughfare which was directly parallel to the one upon which he had been travelling previously. He was headed in the opposite direction! Abruptly he forgot the startling discovery he had made. Instead, the impression had come to him that he was following an assignment which was to take him to a certain street-number.

In a few minutes he drew up before a building. He entered it. He was met by a cordial, beaming man who led him into a dusty office. "Mr. Dunn?" Forrest inquired.

"Yes. Be seated." Forrest complied. Instantly, bars of metal sprang about him from the chair's side, grasping his arms, chest, and legs, in an unbearably grip. At the same moment Forrest realized what had happened. He had been brought here under the power of the Superman's will.

The Superman had seated himself at his table and was facing the reporter. "Who are you?" Forrest cried. "Smalley or Dunn?"

The Superman did not answer at once. He seemed lost in concentration. Abruptly he seemed to become aware that Forrest had asked a question. "Smalley or Dunn?" he repeated, puzzled. Memory flowed back. "Ah--yes. Dunn."

"You killed Smalley?"

"I killed Smalley."

"And--and what are you going to do with me?"

"I have a little matter to attend to before I dispose of you." His tone was flat. Forrest's mind reeled at this calm declaration of his death.

"I am about to send the armies of the world to total annihilation against each other."

And then something snapped within Forrest. He cursed at the inhuman monster, called him every insulting epithet that occurred to him, swore to crush him if he broke loose.

The Superman paid no attention to the screaming, pleading man. He clenched his fists and stared before him. As he concentrated, his face slowly twisted itself into such a visage of hate and cruelty that Forrest was appalled. The Superman was broadcasting thoughts of hate which would plunge the Earth into a living hell.

In this moment of dread and terror the reporter sent a silent prayer up to the Creator of the threatened world. He beseeched the Omnipotent One to blot out this blaspheming devil.

Was it true that Forrest saw the look of hate swept from the Superman's face and terror replace it, or was it mere fancy?

Suddenly the Superman leapt to his feet. The chair he had been sitting upon crashed back. "No!" he cried. "No!" Forrest saw he was shouting at the empty air.

"That vision! That glimpse into the future! Myself tomorrow--sleeping in the park. Once more just Dunn--Dunn the va-grant, the down-and-outer!" The Superman drew a hand across his eyes. "It's the drug! It's influence will be gone in an hour, exhausted! And I can't duplicate the drug unless I can reach the Dark Planet where lies the needed element. And there is not time enough for that!"

The arrogant, confident figure had departed. Instead, there now stood, a drooping, disillusioned man.

Dunn raised his head and regarded the mute reporter. "I see, now, how wrong I was. If I had worked for the good of humanity, my name would have gone down in history with a blessing--instead of a curse." He approached the chair and tampered with some mechanism on its side. "In fifteen minutes you will be automatically released and I--" he grinned wryly, "I shall be--back in the bread-line!"

The End.



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