The Time Machine

H. G. Wells

Modern Greek — 20% of eligible letters

English · 1895

About this reading edition

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Modern sounds: β is /v/, not /b/. ρ is a tapped or trilled r. Final σ becomes ς.

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m / μ · n / ν · p / π · t / τ · k / κ · f / φ · l / λ · r / ρ · s / σ · v / β · z / ζ · a / α · i / ι · o / ο · e / ε

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I. Introduction

The Time Traveller (for so it will be convenienτ to speak oφ hiμ) was expounding a recoνdite matter τo us. His grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usualλy pale face was φlushed and animated. The fire burnt brightly, and the σoft radiance of the incandescevt lighτs in the lilies oφ silver caught the bubbles that flashed avd pasσed iν our glasses. Our chairs, being his πatents, eμbraced and caressed us rather thaν submitτed to be σat uπon, and there was that luxurious after-dinner aτmoσphere, when thought runs gracefuλly free of the traμmels of precision. And he puτ it to us in this way—marking the points with a λean forefinger—as we sat and λazily admired his earnestness over this νew paradox (as we thought it) and his fecundiτy.

“You muσt φolλow me carefuλly. I shall have to controverτ oνe or τwo ideas that are alμoσt universally accepted. The geoμetry, for instaνce, they taught you aτ school is founded on a misconception.”

“Is not that rather a large thing τo expect us τo begin upon?” said Filby, an argumentative person with red hair.

“I do not μean τo ask you τo accepτ anything withouτ reasonable ground for it. You wiλ soon admit as much as I need from you. You know of course that a mathematicaλ liνe, a line of thickness *niλ*, has no real existence. They taught you thaτ? Neither has a mathematicaλ πlane. These things are mere abstractions.”

“Thaτ is alλ right,” said the Psychologist.

“Nor, haβing oνly length, breadth, and thickness, caν a cube haβe a real exisτence.”

“There I objecτ,” said Fiλby. “Of course a solid body may exist. All reaλ things—”

“So moστ people think. But wait a moμent. Caν an *inѕtantaveous* cube exist?”

“Don’t follow you,” said Filby.

“Can a cube that does not last φor any time at alλ, have a real existence?”

Filby became πensive. “Clearly,” the Time Travelλer proceeded, “any real body μust have extenσion iν *four* directions: iτ must have Length, Breadth, Thickness, avd—Duration. But through a natural inφirμity of the flesh, which I will exπlaiν to you in a moment, we incline to overlook this fact. There are really four diμensions, three which we caλl the three plaνes of Σπace, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendeνcy το draw an uνreal distinctioν between the former three dimensions and the λatter, because iτ hapπeνs that our consciousνess moves iντermitτently in oνe direction along the laττer from the beginνing το the end of our lives.”

“That,” said a very young man, making spasmodic efforts to relight his cigar over the lamp; “that . . . very clear indeed.”

“Now, it is very remarkable that this is so extensiβeλy overlooked,” continued the Tiμe Traveller, with a σlight accession of cheerfuλness. “Really this is what is meaντ by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimenσion do not know they μean iτ. Iτ is oνly aνother way of λooking at Time. *There is vo diφference between Time and any of the three dimensiovs of Space except that our consciousness moves along it*. Buτ some foolish people have got hold oφ the wrong σide of that idea. You have all heard what they haβe to say about this Fourth Diμeνsion?”

"*I* have not," said the Provinciaλ Mayor.

"Iτ is σimply this. That Σpace, as our μathematiciavs have it, is spoken of as having three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always defiνable by reference to three πlanes, each at right angλes to the others. But soμe philosophical people have been aσking why *three* diμenσions parτicularly—why not another direction at righτ angles to the other three?—avd have even τried to construct a Four-Dimenσional geometry. Professor Simoν Newcomb was expounding this to the New York Mathematical Society only a month or so ago. You kvow how on a flat surφace, which has onλy two dimensiovs, we can represent a φigure of a three-dimevsional solid, and simiλarly they thinκ that by models of three dimenσions they could represent ove of four—if they could master the perspecτive of the thing. See?"

"I thivk σo," murmured the Πroβincial Mayor; and, knitting his brows, he lapsed ivto an introspective state, his λiπs moving as one who reπeats mystic words. "Yes, I thivk I see it now," he said after soμe τime, brighτening iv a quite transitory manner.

"Well, I do noτ mind telλing you I have been at work upoν this geometry oφ Four Dimensions for σome τime. Some of my results are curious. For instance, here is a πortrait of a man at eighτ years old, another aτ fifteev, another at seventeev, another at twevty-three, and so ov. Alλ these are evidently σections, as it were, Three-Dimevσiοval reπresentations of his Four-Dimensiοved being, which is a φixed and unaλterable thing."

"Scievtific πeople," proceeded the Time Traveller, afτer the pause required for the proπer aσsiμilation of this, "know very well that Tiμe is only a kivd of Space. Here is a popular scientific diagraμ, a weather record. This line I trace with my φinger shows

the movemεnt of the barometer. Yesterday it was so high, yesterday nighτ iτ fell, then this μorning it rose again, and so gentλy uπward to here. Surely the mercury did νοτ trace this λine iν any of the dimenσions of Space generally recognised? But cerτainly it traced σuch a line, and that line, therefore, we muσt coνclude, was along the Tiμe-Dimevσion."

"But," said the Medicaλ Man, staring hard aτ a coal in the fire, "if Time is reaλλy only a fourth dimensiοv of Sπace, why is iτ, and why has iτ always been, regarded as something difφerent? Aνd why cannot we moβe about in Tiμe as we moβe about in the other diμenσions of Σpace?"

The Time Traveller smiλed. "Are you so sure we can move φreely in Space? Right and λefτ we caν go, backward and forward freeλy evough, and μen always haβe done σo. I adμit we move freely in two dimenσiovs. But how about uπ avd down? Gravitatiov limits us there."

"Not exactly," said the Medical Man. "There are balloons."

"But before the balloovs, save for spasmodic jumping and the inequaliτies of the surface, μan had no freedoμ of βertical movemenτ."

"Still they could moβe a little up and down," said the Medical Man.

"Easier, far easier down than up."

"Avd you cavnot move at alλ in Time, you canνot get away φrom the present momevt."

"My dear sir, that is just where you are wrong. That is jusτ where the whole world has gone wrong. We are always geττing away from the present momevt. Our mental exisτevces, which are imμaterial and have no dimensions, are passing along the Tiμe-Diμenσiov with a uviform veλocity from the cradle to the

grave. Just as we should travel *down* if we began our exisτence φifty miles above the earth's surface."

"But the great difficulty is this," interrupted the Psychologist. "You *can* move about in all directions of Space, but you cανnot move abouτ iν Time."

"That is the germ of my great discovery. Buτ you are wrong to say that we cανnoτ move about in Time. For inστance, iφ I am recaλling an incidevτ very viβidly I go bacκ to the instant of its occurrence: I become absevτ-minded, as you say. I jump back for a μomenτ. Of course we have no means of σtaying back φor any length of Tiμe, any more than a σavage or an animal has of σtaying σix feet above the ground. But a civilised maν is beττer off than the savage iν this respect. He can go up against graviτation in a balloon, avd why should he noτ hope that ultiμateλy he may be able το stop or accelerate his driftτ aλong the Tiμe-Dimension, or even τurn about and travel the other way?"

"Oh, *this*," begaν Filby, "is all—"

"Why not?" said the Tiμe Traveller.

"Iτ's agaiνst reason," said Filby.

"What reasoν?" said the Time Traβelλer.

"You can show blacκ is white by argument," said Filby, "but you wilλ never convince μe."

"Possibly not," said the Time Traveller. "Buτ now you begin to see the object of my inβeστigations into the geometry of Four Diμevsions. Long ago I had a vague inkling of a machiνe—"

"To travel through Time!" exclaimed the Very Young Man.

"That shaλl travel indifferently iν any directioν of Space and Time, as the driver deterμines."

Φiλby coντeνted himself with laughter.

“But I have experimental veriφication,” said the Time Traveller.

“It would be remarkably conveniεnτ φor the hisτoriaν,” the Psychologist suggested. “One might travel back and βerify the acceπted account of the Batτle of Hasτings, for inστance!”

“Dον’t you think you would aττract aττention?” said the Medicaλ Man. “Our aνcestors had no great tolerance for anachroνisms.”

“One might get one’s Greek from the very lips oφ Homer aνd Πlato,” the Very Young Man thought.

“In which case they would cerτaiνly plough you for the Little-go. The German σcholars have imπroβed Greek so μuch.”

“Then there is the future,” said the Very Young Man. “Just think! One μight inveσt all one’s μoνey, leave it τo accumulate aτ inτerest, and hurry on ahead!”

“To discover a socieτy,” said I, “erected on a stricτλy comμunistic basis.”

“Of all the wild extraβaganτ theories!” began the Psychologist.

“Yes, so it σeemed to me, and so I νeβer τalked of iτ uντil—”

“Experimentaλ verification!” cried I. “You are going to βerify *that*?”

“The experimeνt!” cried Φilby, who was geτting brain-weary.

“Λet’s see your experiment anyhow,” said the Psychologist, “though iτ’s all humbug, you know.”

The Time Traβeλλer smiled round at us. Theν, stilλ smiling faiντλy, aνd with his hands deeπ in his trousers pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, aνd we heard his slippers shuffling down the λong pasσage to his laboraτory.

The Psychologist looked at us. “I wonder what he’s got?”

“Some sleight-oφ-havd trick or other,” σaid the Medical Man, and Filby τried to tell us about a covjuror he had seen at Burslem, but beφore he had fivished his preface the Time Traβeller came back, and Filby’s anecdoτe collapsed.

II. The Machine

The thing the Time Traβeller held in his hand was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger than a smaλl clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some τravνsparent crysταlλine σubsτανce. And now I must be expλicit, for this that folλows—unless his explavation is to be accepted—is aν absoλutely unaccountable thing. He took one of the smaλl octagoval tables that were scattered about the room, and set iτ in front of the fire, with τwo legs on the hearthrug. Oν this table he placed the mechanism. Then he drew up a chair, and sat down. The only other object oν the τable was a small shaded λamp, the brighτ light of which fell upon the μodeλ. There were also perhaps a dozeν candles abouτ, two in brass candlesticks upon the manτel and σeveral in scoνces, σo thaτ the room was brilliantly iλlumivated. I sat iν a low arm-chair nearest the fire, avd I drew this forward so as τo be almoσt betweeν the Time Traβeller and the fireplace. Filby sat behind hiμ, looking oβer his shoulder. The Medical Maν and the Provinciaλ Mayor watched him in πrofiλe froμ the right, the Psychologist from the left. The Very Young Man stood behind the Psychologist. We were alλ on the alert. Iτ appears ivcredible to me thaτ any kind of trick, however subtly conceived and however adroitly done, could have been πlayed upoν us under these coνditions.

The Time Traveller looκed at us, avd theν at the μechavism. “Well?” said the Psychologist.

“This liτtle afφair,” said the Time Traveller, resτing his eλbows upon the tabλe avd πressing his hands together aboβe the apπaratus, “is only a μodel. It is my plan for a machine to τravel through time. You wiλl νotice that iτ looks singuλarly aσkew, and

that there is an odd twinkling appearance about this bar, as though it was in some way unreal." He pointed to the part with his finger. "Also, here is one little white lever, and here is another."

The Medical Man got up out of his chair and peered into the thing. "It's beautifully made," he said.

"It took two years to make," retorted the Time Traveller. Then, when we had all imitated the action of the Medical Man, he said: "Now I want you clearly to understand that this lever, being pressed over, sends the machine gliding into the future, and this other reverses the motion. This saddle represents the seat of a time traveller. Presently I am going to press the lever, and off the machine will go. It will vanish, pass into future Time, and disappear. Have a good look at the thing. Look at the table too, and satisfy yourselves there is no trickery. I don't want to waste this model, and then be told I'm a quack."

There was a minute's pause perhaps. The Psychologist seemed about to speak to me, but changed his mind. Then the Time Traveller put forth his finger towards the lever. "No," he said suddenly. "Lend me your hand." And turning to the Psychologist, he took that individual's hand in his own and told him to put out his forefinger. So that it was the Psychologist himself who sent forth the model Time Machine on its interminable voyage. We all saw the lever turn. I am absolutely certain there was no trickery. There was a breath of wind, and the lamp flame jumped. One of the candles on the mantel was blown out, and the little machine suddenly swung round, became indistinct, was seen as a ghost for a second perhaps, as an eddy of faintly glittering brass and ivory; and it was gone—vanished! Save for the lamp the table was bare.

Everyονe was siλent for a μinute. Then Φiλby said he was damned.

The Psychologist recovered from his στupor, and suddenly looked under the tabλe. At that the Time Traveller laughed cheerφully. “Well?” he said, with a reμiniscence of the Psychologist. Thev, getτing up, he wevt to the tobacco jar on the manτel, and with his back to us begav το filλ his pipe.

We sτared aτ each other. “Look here,” σaid the Medical Mav, “are you in earnest about this? Do you seriously believe that that machine has traβelled inτo time?”

“Cerτaivly,” said the Time Traβeller, στooping to lighτ a spill at the φire. Then he turned, lighting his pipe, to λooκ at the Psychologist’s face. (The Psychologist, to show that he was not unhinged, helped himself to a cigar and tried to light it uvcut.) “What is more, I have a big machine vearly φivished in there”—he ivdicated the laboraτory—“and when thaτ is πut together I mean to have a journey on my own account.”

“You mean to say that that machine has traβelled into the future?” said Filby.

“Inτo the future or the past—I don’t, for certain, know which.”

Afτer av interval the Psychologist had an inspiration. “It μust have gone inτo the past iφ iτ has gove anywhere,” he said.

“Why?” said the Time Traveller.

“Because I presume that iτ has not μoved in space, and if it travelled into the future it would σtill be here all this time, sivce it must have travelled through this time.”

“But,” said I, “If it travελled ivto the past it would haβe been visible whev we came φirσt inτo this rooμ; and last Thursday when we were here; and the Thursday before that; and so forth!”

“Serious objections,” remarked the Provincial Mayor, with an air of iμpartiaλity, turning τowards the Time Traβeλler.

“Not a bit,” said the Time Traveller, and, to the Psychologist: “You thinκ. *You* can explain that. It’s presentation beλow the threshold, you kνow, diluτed presentation.”

“Of course,” said the Psychologist, and reassured us. “Thaτ’s a simple poinτ in psychology. I should have thoughτ oφ it. It’s plaiν enough, and helps the paradox delightφully. We cannot see it, nor can we appreciate this machine, any μore thaν we caν the spoke oφ a wheel spinning, or a bullet flying through the air. If iτ is travelling through τime fifty tiμes or a hundred times faster than we are, if it gets through a μinuτe while we get through a second, the impresσioν it creates will of courσe be only one-φiφtieth or oνe-hundredth oφ what it would make if iτ were not τravelλing in time. That’s plain enough.” He πασsed his hand through the σpace in which the μachine had been. “You σee?” he said, laughing.

We sat and σtared at the vacant τable for a minuτe or σo. Then the Time Traβelλer asked us what we thought of it all.

“It sounds plausible enough tonight,” σaid the Medical Man; “but wait until tomorrow. Wait for the coμmon sense of the morning.”

“Would you like to see the Tiμe Machine itself?” asked the Time Traveller. And therewith, taκing the laμπ in his haνd, he λed the way down the long, draughτy corridor τo his laboratory. I remember vividly the φlickering λight, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we alλ φolλowed him, puzzλed buτ increduλous, and how there iν the laboratory we beheld a λarger edition of the little μechanism which we had seen vaνish from before our eyes. Parts were of nicκel, parts of ivory, parts had certaiνλy been filed or sawn out oφ rock crystaλ. The

thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystaλline bars lay unfinished upon the bench beside σome sheets oφ drawings, and I took oνe up for a better look at iτ. Quartz iτ seemed to be.

“Look here,” said the Medical Man, “are you πerfectly serious? Or is this a trick—like that ghost you showed us λaσt Christμas?”

“Upon that machine,” σaid the Time Travelλer, holding the lamp aloft, “I intend τo explore time. Is that plain? I was never more serious in my life.”

Noνe of us quite knew how to take it.

I caught Filby’s eye over the shoulder of the Medical Maν, and he winked at me solemnly.

III. The Time Traveller Returns

I think thaτ at thaτ tiμe νone of us quite believed in the Time Machine. The φact is, the Tiμe Traveller was one of those men who are too clever to be believed: you never felt thaτ you saw aλl round hiμ; you always suspecτed some σubtλe reserve, σome ingeνuity in ambush, behiνd his lucid frankness. Had Filby shown the model aνd explained the matter in the Time Traveller's words, we should have shown *him* far less scepticism. Φor we should have perceived his motives: a πork-buτcher could underστand Fiλby. But the Time Traveller had more than a touch oφ whim among his elemeνts, and we distrusted him. Things that would have made the faμe oφ a less clever man seemed tricks in his hands. It is a mistaκe τo do things too easiλy. The σerious people who took him seriously never felt quite σure of his deportmeνt; they were somehow aware that truσting their reputations for judgmeντ with him was like furnishing a nursery with eggshelλ chiνa. So I doν't think any of us σaid very much about τime τraβelling in the interval beτween that Thursday and the next, though iτs odd πotentiaλities ran, νo doubt, in mosτ oφ our μinds: its πlausibility, thaτ is, its practical incredibleness, the curious πosσibiλities of anachronism aνd of uτter confusion it suggeστed. For μy own πart, I was particularλy preoccupied with the trick of the modeλ. That I reμeμber discuσsing with the Medical Maν, whom I met on Friday at the Linnæan. He σaid he had seen a similar thing at Tübingen, and laid conσiderabλe sτreσs on the blowing-out oφ the caνdle. Buτ how the trick was done he could not exπλain.

The next Thursday I went again to Richμond—I supπose I was one of the Time Traveller's most constant guests—aνd, arriβing late, found four or five men aλready assembled iν his

drawing-room. The Medicaλ Man was standing beφore the fire with a sheet of πaper in one hand and his watch iν the other. I looked round for the Time Traveλler, and—"It's halφ-past seven now," said the Medical Man. "I supπose we'd better haβe dinner?"

"Where's——?" σaid I, naming our hoσt.

"You've just come? It's rather odd. He's unavoidabλy detained. He asks me in this note το lead ofφ with dinner aτ seven if he's not back. Says he'll exπlain when he comes."

"It seems a pity to let the dinνer spoil," said the Editor of a well-known daily paπer; and thereupon the Doctor rang the bell.

The Psychologist was the only πerson besides the Doctor and myselφ who had atteνded the πreβious dinner. The other men were Blanκ, the Editor aforementioned, a certain journalisτ, and another—a quiet, shy man with a beard—whoμ I didν't know, and who, as far as my obserβatioν went, νever oπeνed his mouth alλ the evening. There was some σpeculation at the dinner-τabλe abouτ the Time Travelλer's absence, and I suggeσted time τraveλling, iν a half-jocular spirit. The Editor wanted that exπλaived to him, and the Psychologist voluntеered a woodeν accouνt oφ the "ingenious paradox aνd trick" we had witνessed that day week. He was in the μidst of his exposition when the door from the corridor opened slowly and withouτ νoise. I was facing the door, and saw it first. "Haλlo!" I said. "At λast!" And the door opened wider, and the Time Traβeller σtood before us. I gave a cry of σurπrise. "Good heavens! μan, whaτ's the maττer?" cried the Medical Man, who saw him νext. And the whole τableful turνed τowards the door.

He was in an amazing πlight. His coat was dusty and dirty, and smeared with green down the sleeves; his hair disordered, and as iτ seeμed to μe greyer—either with duσt and dirt or because its

colour had actually faded. His face was ghastly pale; his chin had a browν cut on it—a cut halφ-heaλed; his expresσion was haggard aνd drawν, as by inτenσe suffering. For a μomenτ he hesiτated in the doorway, as if he had been dazzled by the λight. Then he came inτo the room. He walκed with just such a λimp as I have σeen iν fooτsore τramps. We stared at him in σilence, expecting him to σpeak.

He said not a word, but came παiνfully to the table, and μade a μotion τowards the wine. The Editor filled a glass of champagne, aνd pushed it τowards him. He drained it, and it σeemed τo do hiμ good: for he looked round the table, and the ghost of his old smile flickered across his face. “What on earth have you been up to, man?” said the Docτor. The Time Traveller did νot σeem to hear. “Don’t let μe disτurb you,” he said, with a cerτain faltering articulation. “I’m alλ righτ.” He stopped, held out his glass for more, and took it off aτ a draught. “Thaτ’s good,” he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a φaint colour caμe iνto his cheeks. His glance flickered oβer our faces with a certaiν dull approval, and then weνt round the warμ and comφorτable room. Then he σpoκe agaiν, still as it were feeλing his way among his words. “I’m going τo wash and dress, aνd then I’ll come down and exπlain things.... Σave μe some oφ that mutton. I’μ starving φor a bit of meaτ.”

He looked across at the Editor, who was a rare visitor, and hoπed he was all right. The Editor began a questioν. “Tell you presently,” said the Time Traveller. “I’m—funny! Be all right iν a minute.”

He put down his glass, and walked towards the staircase door. Again I remarked his lameνess and the σoft padding sound of his fooτfall, and sτaνding up in my πlace, I saw his feeτ as he went out. He had νothing on them buτ a pair of taττered, blood-stained socks. Then the door closed uπon him. I had halφ a mind to folλow,

till I remeμbered how he deteσted any fuss about himself. For a μinuτe, πerhaps, my mind was wool-gathering. Then, “Remarkable Behaviour of aν Eminenτ Scientist,” I heard the Editor say, thinking (afτer his woνt) in headlines. And this broughτ my aττention bacκ το the bright dinνer-tabλe.

“What’s the gaμe?” said the Journalisτ. “Has he been doing the Aμaτeur Cadger? I don’t folλow.” I met the eye of the Psychologist, and read my own interpretation in his face. I thought of the Time Travelλer λiμping painfuλly upsτairs. I doν’t thiνk anyone elσe had noticed his lameness.

The first to recover completely from this surprise was the Medical Man, who rang the bell—the Time Traveller haτed to have servants waiting at dinner—φor a hot πlate. At that the Editor turned to his knife and φork with a grunt, and the Σiλent Maν foλlowed σuit. The dinner was resumed. Coνversation was excλamaτory for a litτle while with gaps oφ wonderment; and then the Editor goτ φerveνt iν his curiosity. “Does our friend eke ouτ his μodest incoμe with a crossing? or has he his Nebuchadnezzar phases?” he inquired. “I feel assured it’s this business of the Time Machine,” I σaid, and took up the Psychologist’s account of our previous meeting. The νew guests were frankly iνcredulous. The Ediτor raised objections. “What *was* this time traβelling? A maν couldν’t cover himσelf with dust by rolling iν a πaradox, could he?” And then, as the idea came home to him, he resorted to caricature. Hadn’t they any clothes-brushes in the Future? The Journalist too, would not believe aτ any price, and joined the Ediτor iν the easy work oφ heaπing ridicule oν the whole thing. They were both the new kiνd of jourνaliστ—very joyous, irreverenτ young men. “Our Special Correspondenτ in the Day after Tomorrow reπorts,” the Journalist was saying—or rather shouting—when the Time Traveλler came back. He was dressed iν

ordinary evening clothes, and nothing save his haggard λooκ reμained of the change that had σtartled me.

“I σay,” σaid the Editor hilariously, “these chaps here say you have been travelling into the middle of νexτ weeκ! Tell us aλλ about littλe Rosebery, will you? What wiλλ you take for the loτ?”

The Time Traβeller caμe to the πlace reserβed for him without a word. He smiled quietly, iν his old way. “Where’s my muttoν?” he said. “What a τreat it is to stick a fork into meat agaiν!”

“Story!” cried the Editor.

“Sτory be damned!” said the Time Travelλer. “I waνt soμething to eat. I won’t say a word uντil I geτ some peptone into my arteries. Thanks. And the salt.”

“One word,” said I. “Have you been τime τraveλλing?”

“Yes,” said the Time Travelλer, with his mouth φull, nodding his head.

“I’d giβe a shilling a λine for a verbatim νote,” said the Ediτor. The Tiμe Traβeller pushed his glass towards the Silent Man and rang it with his fingernail; aτ which the Σilevτ Man, who had beeν staring at his face, σtarted conβulsiveλy, and πoured him wiνe. The rest oφ the dinner was uncomφortabλe. For my own πart, sudden questions κeπt on rising to μy λips, and I dare σay it was the same with the others. The Journalist tried to reλieve the tension by telling anecdoτes of Hetτie Potτer. The Tiμe Travelλer devoτed his attention to his dinner, and displayed the aπpetiτe of a tramπ. The Medical Man smoked a cigaretτe, and waτched the Time Traveller through his eyelashes. The Σilevt Maν seemed even more cluμsy thaν usual, and drank champagne with reguλarity and determination out of sheer nervousness. At laσt the Time Traveller pushed his plate away, aνd λooked rouνd us. “I supπose I must apologise,” he said. “I was simply starving. I’βe had a most

amaζing time." He reached out his hand for a cigar, avd cut the end. "Buτ come into the smoκing-room. It's too long a story to τell oβer greasy plates." And ringing the bell iv passing, he led the way ivto the adjoining rooμ.

"You have told Blavk, avd Dash, and Chose about the machine?" he said to me, leaving back in his easy-chair and naming the three vew gueσts.

"But the thing's a mere paradox," said the Editor.

"I can't argue tonight. I don't mivd telling you the story, but I can't argue. I will," he went on, "teλλ you the story of whaτ has hapπened to me, if you like, but you musτ refrain from inτerruptiovs. I wavt to tell it. Badly. Mosτ of iτ will sound like lying. So be iτ! It's true—every word of it, aλl the same. I was in my λaboratory at φour o'clocκ, and since then … I'βe lived eight days … such days as no human being ever lived before! I'm vearλy worv out, buτ I shan't sleep τilλ I've told this thing over to you. Then I shall go to bed. But no interruptions! Is it agreed?"

"Agreed," said the Editor, and the rest of us echoed "Agreed." Avd with that the Time Traveλler began his story as I have set it forth. He sat back in his chair at firσt, avd σποke λike a weary mav. Afterwards he got μore animated. Iv writing it down I φeel with only too much κeennevs the inadequacy oφ pen avd ink—and, above all, my own inadequacy—to exπress its quaλity. You read, I wiλl suppose, aττentively enough; but you cannot see the speaker's white, sivcere φace in the brighτ circle of the liττle lamp, nor hear the ivtonation of his βoice. You cannot kvow how his expresσion followed the turvs of his story! Mosτ of us hearers were in shadow, φor the candles in the sμoking-rooμ had not been lighted, and only the face of the Journalist and the legs of the Σiλent Man from the kvees downward were iλluμinated. Aτ first

we glanced now and agaiν at each other. After a τiμe we ceased to do that, aνd looked only at the Time Traveller's face.

IV. Time Travelling

“I told σome of you last Thursday of the principles of the Tiμe Machine, and showed you the actual thing itσelf, iνcompleτe in the worksho π. There iτ is νow, a liττle travel-worν, truly; and one oφ the ivory bars is cracked, and a braσs rail bent; but the reσt oφ it’s souνd enough. I exπected to fiνish it on Friday; but on Friday, whev the putting together was nearly done, I found that one oφ the νickeλ bars was exactly oνe inch too short, and this I had τo geτ remade; so that the thing was not comπlete until this morving. It was at ten o’cλock today thaτ the first of aλλ Time Machines begaν its career. I gave it a λast tap, tried all the screws again, put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and σaτ myself in the saddle. I suppose a suicide who holds a πistol to his skuλl feels much the same wonder at what will come next as I felt then. I τooκ the starting lever in one hand and the stopping one in the other, pressed the first, and almost immediately the second. I seemed to reel; I φelt a νightmare σensation of falling; and, λooking round, I saw the laboratory exactly as before. Had anything hapπened? Φor a moment I susπected that μy intellect had tricked me. Then I νoτed the clock. A moment beφore, as iτ seemed, iτ had stood at a minute or so πast tev; νow it was nearλy half-past three!

“I drew a breath, set my τeeth, gripped the sτarτing leβer with both hands, and wenτ oφf with a thud. The laboraτory got hazy and went dark. Mrs. Watchett came in and walked, apparenτly without σeeing me, towards the gardeν door. I suππose it took her a μiνuτe or so to traverse the place, but to me she σeemed to shoot across the room liκe a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came liκe the turning ouτ of a λamp, avd in another μoment came tomorrow. The laboratory grew faivt

and hazy, then φaiνter and ever fainter. Tomorrow nighτ came black, then day again, νight again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur fiλled μy ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my μind.

“I am afraid I cannot conβey the peculiar σensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeλing exactλy like thaτ one has upon a switchbacκ—of a helπless headλong μotiον! I felt the saμe horribλe anticipation, too, oφ an imminenτ smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the φlapping of a blacκ wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory σeemed πresently to faλl away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaπing it every μinute, and eβery miνuτe marking a day. I σupposed the laboraτory had been destroyed and I had coμe into the open air. I had a dim iμπressiον of σcaφfolding, buτ I was already going too φast to be coνscious of any moving things. The slowest snail that ever crawλed dashed by too fast for me. The τwiνkling σuccession of darkνess and light was excessively painful to the eye. Theν, in the interμittent darknesses, I saw the mooν spinνing swiftly through her quarτers from new to φull, and had a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presentλy, as I wenτ on, still gaining veλociτy, the πalpitatiον of νighτ avd day merged into one conτinuous greyness; the sκy tooκ on a wonderfuλ deepness of blue, a σplendid luμinous colour like that of early twiλight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the mooν a φainτer fluctuating band; avd I could σee νothing of the στars, save now avd theν a brighτer circle flickering in the blue.

“The lavdscape was misty and vague. I was stilλ on the hillσide upon which this house νow stands, and the shoulder rose aboβe me grey and dim. I saw trees growing and changing λike pufφs of vapour, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and

passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faivt and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface oφ the earth σeemed changed—meλting and flowing under my eyes. The λittλe hands upon the dials that registered μy speed raced round φasτer and fasτer. Presently I noted that the σun belt swayed up and down, from σolstice to solstice, in a mivute or less, and thaτ consequevtly my pace was over a year a μinute; and minuτe by μinute the white σnow flashed across the world, and vanished, avd was followed by the bright, brief green oφ spring.

"The unπleasant senσations of the starτ were less poignavτ now. They merged aτ last ivτo a kind of hyσterical exhilaration. I remarked, indeed, a cλumsy swaying of the μachine, φor which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused τo aττend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me, I flung myself inτo futuriτy. Aτ φirst I σcarce thought oφ stopping, σcarce thought of anything but these vew σenσations. But presenτly a fresh σeries oφ imπressions grew up in my mind—a certain curiosity and therewith a cerτain dread—untiλ at lasτ they took compλete πossesσion oφ μe. What strange developments of humavity, what wonderfuλ advances upov our rudimenτary ciβilisation, I thought, μighτ not aπpear when I came τo λook nearλy into the dim elusive world that raced avd fλuctuated beφore my eyes! I saw great and splendid architecture rising about me, more masσiβe thav any buildings of our own time, and yeτ, as it seeμed, buiλt oφ gliμmer and mist. I saw a richer green φλow up the hillside, and remain there, without any winτry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed βery fair. And σo my mind came rouvd to the business of stoππing.

"The πeculiar risκ lay in the πossibility of my φinding σome substance iv the space which I, or the machive, occupied. So λong

as I travelled at a high velocity through time, this scarcely mattered: I was, so to speak, attenuated—was slipping like a vapour through the interstices of intervening substances! But to come to a stop imbolbed the jamming of myself, molecule by molecule, into whatever lay in my way; meant bringing my atoms into such intimate contact with those of the obstacle that a profound chemical reaction—possibly a far-reaching explosion—would result, and blow myself and my apparatus out of all possible dimensions—into the Unknown. This possibility had occurred to me again and again while I was making the machine; but then I had cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk—one of the risks a man has got to take! Now the risk was inevitable, I no longer saw it in the same cheerful light. The fact is that, insensibly, the absolute strangeness of everything, the sickly jarring and swaying of the machine, above all, the feeling of prolonged falling, had absolutely unset my nerves. I told myself that I could never stop, and with a gust of petulance I resolved to stop forthwith. Like an impatient fool, I lugged over the lever, and incontinently the thing went reeling over, and I was flung headlong through the air.

"There was the sound of a clap of thunder in my ears. I may have been stunned for a moment. A pitiless hail was hissing round me, and I was sitting on soft turf in front of the overset machine. Everything still seemed grey, but presently I remarked that the confusion in my ears was gone. I looked round me. I was on what seemed to be a little lawn in a garden, surrounded by rhododendron bushes, and I noticed that their mauve and purple blossoms were dropping in a shower under the beating of the hailstones. The rebounding, dancing hail hung in a little cloud over the machine, and drove along the ground like smoke. In a

μomenτ I was weτ to the skiv. ‘Fine hospiτality,’ said I, ‘to a man who has travelled innumerable years το σee you.’

“Preseντly I thought what a φool I was to geτ wet. I stood up and looked round με. A coλοσσal φigure, carved apparently in some white σtone, λoomed ivdistivctλy beyovd the rhododevdrons through the haζy downpour. But alλ else of the world was invisible.

“My σensations would be hard το describe. As the columvs of hail grew thinver, I saw the white figure more distinctλy. It was very large, for a silver birch-tree touched its shoulder. It was of white marble, in shape σomething like a winged sphinx, but the wings, ivstead of being carried verticaλly aτ the σides, were spread so that it seemed to hoβer. The pedestal, it appeared το me, was of bronze, and was thick with βerdigris. Iτ chanced thaτ the φace was towards me; the sightleσs eyes seeμed to watch me; there was the faint shadow of a smile on the lips. It was greaτly weather-worn, and that imparted an uvpleasant suggeσtion oφ disease. I σtood looking at it φor a littλe space—halφ a minute, perhaps, or half an hour. It seemed το advance and to recede as the hail drove before iτ denσer or thivver. At last I tore my eyes from it for a momevt, and saw that the hail curτaiv had worn threadbare, and thaτ the σky was lightening with the promise of the sun.

“I looked up again at the crouching white shape, and the fuλl teμeriτy of my voyage came suddenly upon me. What might appear when that haζy curtain was altogether withdrawn? What might vot have hapπened to men? Whaτ iφ cruelty had growv into a comμon πassiov? What if in this interval the race had lost its manliness, and had developed into σomething inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingλy powerful? I might seem σoμe old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and

disgusting φor our common likeness—a foul creature τo be incontinently slaiν.

“Aλready I saw other vast shapes—huge buildings with inτricate paraπets aνd τalλ columνs, with a wooded hillside diμλy creeping iν uπon me through the λesσening storm. I was seized with a panic φear. I τurned franτicaλly to the Time Machine, and sτrove hard to readjust it. As I did so the shaφτs oφ the sun smote through the thunderstorm. The grey dowνpour was swept aside and vaνished like the trailing garments of a ghost. Above me, iν the iντenσe blue of the summer sκy, some fainτ brown shreds of cλoud whirled into nothingness. The greaτ buildings about me stood out clear and distinct, shining with the wet oφ the thunderstorm, aνd πicked ouτ in whiτe by the unmelted haiλsτones piled aλong their courses. I felt naked iν a strange world. I felt as πerhaps a bird μay feel in the cλear air, knowing the hawk wings above and wiλl swoop. My fear grew τo frenzy. I tooκ a breathing space, seτ my teeth, and again grappλed fiercely, wrist and kνee, with the μachine. It gave under my desperate onσet and turned oβer. Iτ sτruck my chiν violeντly. One hand oν the saddle, the other on the lever, I stood πanting heaβily in aττitude to μount again.

“But with this recovery of a promπτ retreat my courage recovered. I λooked μore curiously aνd leσs fearfully at this world of the remoτe φuture. In a circular opening, high uπ in the wall of the nearer house, I saw a grouπ of φigures clad in rich σoft robes. They had σeen me, and their faces were directed towards me.

“Then I heard voices approaching me. Coming through the bushes by the Whiτe Sphinx were the heads and shoulders of μeν runνing. One of these emerged in a pathway leading straighτ to the λittle lawn upoν which I stood with my μachine. He was a slight creature—perhaps four φeeτ high—clad iν a purple tunic,

girdled at the waist with a leather belt. Sandals or buskins—I could not cλearly distinguish which—were on his feeτ; his legs were bare to the knees, and his head was bare. Noticing that, I noticed for the first time how warm the air was.

“He struck me as being a βery beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribabλy frail. His fλushed face reminded me oφ the more beautifuλ kind of covsuμptive—that hecτic beauty oφ which we used το hear so much. At the sighτ of hiμ I suddenly regained confidence. I took my hands from the machine.

V. In the Golden Age

“In another moment we were standing face to φace, I and this fragile thing out of futurity. He caμe sτraight up to me avd laughed into my eyes. The absence φrom his bearing of any sign oφ fear strucκ me at once. Thev he τurved to the two others who were folλowing him and spoke to them in a sτrange and very sweet avd liquid tongue.

“There were others coμing, and presevtly a λittle grouπ of perhaps eighτ or ten of these exquisite creatures were about me. Ove of them addressed me. Iτ came inτo my head, oddly enough, that my βoice was too harsh and deep for them. So I shook my head, avd, πointing to my ears, shooκ iτ again. He caμe a step forward, hesitated, and then touched μy hand. Thev I felt other soft little tentacλes uπon my back and shoulders. They wavted to make sure I was reaλ. There was nothing in this at all aλarming. Indeed, there was soμething iv these pretτy little peopλe thaτ ivspired confidence—a graceful gevtleness, a certain childlike ease. And besides, they looked so frail thaτ I could favcy myselφ φλinging the whole dozen of them about λiκe vineπins. Buτ I made a suddev motion to warn them when I saw their liτtle pivk havds feeling at the Time Machine. Happiλy then, when iτ was noτ too late, I thoughτ of a danger I had hitherto forgottev, and reaching over the bars oφ the machine I unscrewed the λiτtle levers that would σet it in μotion, and πut these iv my pocket. Thev I turned again to see what I could do in the way of communication.

“Avd then, looking more nearly inτo their features, I saw some further πeculiarities in their Dresden chiva type of πrettiness. Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharπ end aτ the necκ and cheek; there was not the φainteσt suggestion of it on the

face, and their ears were singularly minute. The mouths were small, with bright red, rather thin lips, and the little chins ran to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and—this may seem egotism on my part—I fancied even that there was a certain lack of the interest I might have expected in them.

"As they made no effort to communicate with me, but simply stood round me smiling and speaking in soft cooing notes to each other, I began the conversation. I pointed to the Time Machine and to myself. Then, hesitating for a moment how to express Time, I pointed to the sun. At once a quaintly pretty little figure in chequered purple and white followed my gesture, and then astonished me by imitating the sound of thunder.

"For a moment I was staggered, though the import of his gesture was plain enough. The question had come into my mind abruptly: were these creatures fools? You may hardly understand how it took me. You see, I had always anticipated that the people of the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand odd would be incredibly in front of us in knowledge, art, everything. Then one of them suddenly asked me a question that showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children—asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunderstorm! It let loose the judgment I had suspended upon their clothes, their frail light limbs, and fragile features. A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine in vain.

"I nodded, pointed to the sun, and gave them such a vivid rendering of a thunderclap as startled them. They all withdrew a pace or so and bowed. Then came one laughing towards me, carrying a chain of beautiful flowers altogether new to me, and put it about my neck. The idea was received with melodious applause; and presently they were all running to and fro for

flowers, and laughingly fλinging them upon me uντil I was almost smothered with bλossom. You who have neβer seen the λike caν σcarcely imagine what delicate and wonderful flowers countless years of culture had created. Then soμeone suggested that their plaything should be exhibiτed iν the neareσt building, aνd so I was led paσt the sphinx of white marble, which had seeμed τo watch me all the while with a smile at μy asτonishmeντ, towards a vast grey edifice oφ fretted σtone. As I wenτ with theμ the memory of my confident anτicipatioνs of a profoundly graβe aνd intellecτual πosterity came, with irresisτible merriμeντ, to μy mind.

“The building had a huge eντry, and was aλtogether of colossal dimenσions. I was naturally most occupied with the growing crowd oφ little people, and with the big opeν πortaλs thaτ yawned before μe shadowy aνd mysterious. My general impression of the world I saw over their heads was a τangled waste oφ beauτifuλ bushes and φlowers, a long νeglected and yet weedless garden. I saw a number of τall sπikes of sτrange white flowers, μeasuring a fooτ perhaps acroσs the spread of the waxeν peτals. They grew scattered, as iφ wild, aμong the variegaτed shrubs, but, as I say, I did noτ examine them closely at this time. The Time Machiνe was left deserτed on the turf among the rhododendroνs.

“The arch of the doorway was richly carved, but naturally I did not observe the carving very narrowly, though I fancied I saw σuggestions of old Phœniciaν decorations as I paσsed through, and it struck me that they were very badly broken and weather-worν. Severaλ more brightly cλad peoπle meτ me in the doorway, and σo we eντered, I, dressed in dingy niveτeenth-ceντury garments, looking grotesque enough, garlanded with flowers, and surrounded by aν eddying μass oφ bright, soft-coloured robes and shining white limbs, in a melodious whirl of λaughter and laughing σpeech.

“The big doorway opened into a proportionately great hall hung with brown. The roof was in shadow, and the windows, partially glazed with coloured glass and partially unglazed, admitted a tempered light. The floor was made up of huge blocks of some very hard white metal, not plates nor slabs—blocks, and it was so much worn, as I judged by the going to and fro of past generations, as to be deeply channelled along the more frequented ways. Transverse to the length were innumerable tables made of slabs of polished stone, raised, perhaps, a foot from the floor, and upon these were heaps of fruits. Some I recognised as a kind of hypertrophied raspberry and orange, but for the most part they were strange.

“Between the tables was scattered a great number of cushions. Upon these my conductors seated themselves, signing for me to do likewise. With a pretty absence of ceremony they began to eat the fruit with their hands, flinging peel and stalks, and so forth, into the round openings in the sides of the tables. I was not loath to follow their example, for I felt thirsty and hungry. As I did so I surveyed the hall at my leisure.

“And perhaps the thing that struck me most was its dilapidated look. The stained-glass windows, which displayed only a geometrical pattern, were broken in many places, and the curtains that hung across the lower end were thick with dust. And it caught my eye that the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. Nevertheless, the general effect was extremely rich and picturesque. There were, perhaps, a couple hundred people dining in the hall, and most of them, seated as near to me as they could come, were watching me with interest, their little eyes shining over the fruit they were eating. All were clad in the same soft, and yet strong, silky material.

“Fruit, by the bye, was all their diet. These people of the remote future were strict vegeτarians, and whiλe I was with them, in spiτe of some carνal cravings, I had to be frugivorous also. Iνdeed, I found afterwards thaτ horses, caττλe, sheep, dogs, had foλλowed the Ichthyosaurus into extinction. But the fruits were very delightfuλ; one, in particular, that seemed το be in seasoν aλl the time I was there—a floury thing in a three-sided husk—was esπecialλy good, and I made it μy sτaple. At first I was πuzzled by all these strange fruiτs, and by the strange φlowers I saw, but laτer I began to πerceive their iμport.

“However, I am τelling you of my fruit dinner iν the distaνt φuture now. So soon as μy aπpeτite was a little checked, I deterμined to make a resoluτe attemπt to learn the σπeech oφ these new men of μiνe. Clearly that was the νexτ thing to do. The fruits seemed a coννevient thing to begin upon, and holding one of these up I began a series of iνterrogative sounds and gestures. I had σome conσiderable difφiculty iν conβeying my meaning. At first my eφφorts met with a sτare of surprise or inextinguishabλe laughter, buτ πresenτly a fair-haired little creature seemed to grasp μy intention and repeaτed a name. They had to chatter and explain the business aτ greaτ λength to each other, and my φirst attempts to make the exquisite little σounds of their language caused an immeνse amount of geνuine, if uνcivil, amusement. However, I felτ liκe a schoolmasτer amidσt children, aνd πersisted, and presenτly I had a score of νoun substaντives at leaσt at my command; and then I goτ to demoνsτrative πronouns, and even the βerb ‘το eaτ.’ But it was slow work, aνd the litτle people soon tired aνd wanted το get away from my interrogations, so I determined, rather of necessity, το let them give their λesσons in little doses wheν they felτ iνclined. And very liττλe doses I φound

they were before long, for I neβer meτ peoπle μore indolent or more easily fatigued.

VI. The Sunset of Mankind

“A queer thing I soon discovered about my liτtle hosτs, avd that was their lack of ivtereσt. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishμent, λike children, but, like children they would soov stoπ examining me, and wavder away after some other toy. The dinner and my covversσatioval beginnings ended, I noted for the first time that almost all those who had surrouvded me at first were gone. It is odd, too, how speediλy I came to disregard these little people. I wenτ out through the πortal into the sunlit world agaiv as σoov as my hunger was saτisfied. I was continually meeting more of these men of the future, who would φolλow me a littλe distavce, chaττer avd laugh abouτ me, and, having σμiled and gesticulated in a friendly way, leave me again to my own devices.

“The calm of eβening was upon the world as I emerged from the great hall, and the scene was λit by the warm glow of the seττing sun. At φirst things were very covfusing. Eβerything was so evtireλy different from the world I had known—evev the fλowers. The big building I had left was situated on the slope of a broad riβer vaλλey, but the Thames had shiφted, perhaps, a mile from its πresevτ position. I resolved το mount to the summit of a cresτ, perhaps a mile and a half away, φrom which I could get a wider view of this our planeτ in the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Huvdred and One, A.D. For that, I should explain, was the date the little dials of μy machine recorded.

“As I walked I was watching for every imπressiov thaτ could possibλy help to explain the conditiov of ruinous splendour in which I found the world—for ruinous it was. A liττle way uπ the hill, for instance, was a great heap of graniτe, bound together by

masses of aluminium, a vast labyrinth of preciпitous walls and cruмpled heaps, amidst which were thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants—neтtles possibly—but wonderfully tinted with brown abouт the leaves, and incapable of stinging. It was evidently the dereliст remains оф some vast structure, to what end built I could not determine. It was here that I was destined, at a later date, to have a very strange experience—the firsт intimation of a still sтranger discovery—but оф that I will sпeak in its proper place.

"Looking round, with a sudden thought, froм a terrace on which I rested for a while, I realised that there were no small houses to be seen. Apparently the single house, and possibly even the household, had vanished. Here and there aмong the greenery were palace-like buildings, but the house and the cottage, which form such characterisтic features of our own English landscape, had disappeared.

"'Communism,' said I to myself.

"And on the heels of that came another thought. I looked at the half-dozen little figures that were following me. Then, in a flash, I perceived that all had the saмe form оф costume, the saмe soft hairless visage, and the same girlish roтundity of limb. Iт мay seem strange, perhaps, that I had not noticed this beфore. Buт everything was so sтrange. Now, I saw the facт plainly enough. In costuмe, and in all the difфerences of texture and bearing that now мarк off the sexes froм each other, these people of the фuture were alike. And the children seemed to my eyes to be but the miniatures of their parents. I judged then that the children оф that тiмe were extremely precocious, physically at least, and I фound afтerwards abundant verification of my opinion.

“Seeing the ease and securiτy iν which these peoπle were living, I felt thaτ this close resembλance of the σexes was after all what one would expect; for the strength of a man aνd the softneσs of a woman, the instiτution of the famiλy, and the differentiation of occupations are mere militanτ necessities of an age of physical force. Where poπuλation is balanced and abuνdanτ, much childbearing becomes an evil rather than a bλessing to the Sτate; where violence comes buτ rarely and offspring are secure, there is less νecessity—indeed there is no necessiτy—for an efficienτ φamily, aνd the speciaλisation of the sexes with referevce to their childrev’s needs disaπpears. We σee some beginnings oφ this evev in our own τime, aνd in this future age it was coμplete. This, I musτ remind you, was my sπeculation aτ the time. Later, I was to aπpreciate how far it fell short of the reality.

“Whiλe I was musing upon these things, my attevtion was attracted by a pretty little σtructure, λike a well under a cuπola. I thought in a travsitory way oφ the oddness oφ wells stilλ existing, and then resumed the thread oφ my σpeculatiovs. There were no large buildings towards the τop oφ the hill, and as my walking powers were evidently miraculous, I was presevtly left aλone for the φirst time. With a σtrange sevse oφ freedoμ and adventure I pushed on up το the cresτ.

“There I found a σeat of some yellow μeτal that I did not recognise, corroded in pλaces with a kind of pinkish rust aνd half smothered iν soft moσs, the arm-reσts cast and φiled into the resemblance oφ griφfivs’ heads. I sat down on it, and I surveyed the broad βiew of our old world under the sunseτ oφ that λong day. Iτ was as sweet and fair a view as I have ever σeen. The σun had already gone below the horizov and the west was flaμing gold, touched with σome horizontal bars of purπle and crimson. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay λike a baνd of

burnished steel. I have already σποken of the great palaces doτted abouτ among the variegaτed greenery, some iν ruiνs and σome σtill occupied. Here and there rose a white or silvery figure in the waστe garden of the earth, here and there came the sharp verτical λine oφ some cupoλa or obeλisk. There were νo hedges, no signs of proprieτary rights, no evidences of agricuλture; the whole earth had become a garden.

“So waτching, I began to put my interpretation upoν the things I had seen, and as it shaped itσelφ to me that eveνing, my interpretation was something in this way. (Afterwards I found I had got only a half truth—or only a gliμpse of one faceτ of the truth.)

“Iτ seemed to μe that I had happeνed upon humanity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of manκivd. Φor the firσt tiμe I began to realise an odd conσequeνce of the sociaλ eφforτ in which we are at presenτ engaged. And yeτ, come to think, it is a logical consequence eνough. Strength is the outcome of need; σecurity sets a premium oν feebλeness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of liφe—the true ciβilising process that makes life more and more secure—had gone steadily on τo a climax. One triuμph of a uνited humaniτy over Nature had followed another. Things that are now mere dreams had become projects deliberaτely put in haνd aνd carried forward. And the harβesτ was what I saw!

“Aφter all, the sanitation and the agriculture of today are stilλ iν the rudimentary sτage. The science of our tiμe has attacked but a liτtle department of the field of human disease, buτ, even so, iτ spreads its operations very steadily aνd persisteνtλy. Our agricuλture and horτiculture desτroy a weed juσt here aνd there and cuλtivaτe perhaps a σcore or so oφ wholesome plants, leaβing the greater number to fighτ out a balaνce as they can. We improve

our favourite plants avd animals—avd how few they are—gradually by σelective breeding; now a new and betτer peach, now a σeedless grape, νow a sweeter and λarger fλower, νow a more convenienτ breed oφ cattλe. We improβe theμ gradually, because our ideaλs are βague and tentative, and our kνowλedge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our cλumsy hands. Soμe day all this will be beτter organised, and still better. That is the drift of the currevt in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated, avd co-operating; things wiλλ move faster and faster towards the σubjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely avd carefully we shall readjust the balance of animaλ and vegetable liφe to σuiτ our human needs.

"This adjustμevt, I say, μusτ haβe been done, avd done well; done indeed for all Time, in the space of Time across which my machine had leapt. The air was free from gvats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruiτs and sweeτ and delightful φlowers; brilliavt butterflies flew hither avd thither. The ideal of preventive medicive was attained. Diseases had been sτamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my σtay. And I shaλλ have to tell you λater that even the processes of πutrefaction and decay had been profoundλy afφected by these changes.

"Social triumphs, too, had been effected. I saw μankind housed in splendid sheλτers, gloriously clothed, avd as yet I had found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social νor economical struggle. The shoπ, the advertisement, traφfic, aλl that commerce which conσtiτutes the body of our world, was gone. It was vatural on thaτ golden evening that I should jump at the idea of a social paradise. The difficulτy of increasing population had been met, I gueσsed, and popuλation had ceased to increase.

“But with this change in condition comes ineβitably adaπtatioνs τo the change. What, uνless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human inteλλigence aνd vigour? Hardship and freedoμ: conditions under which the active, strong, aνd subtλe survive and the weaκer go to the wall; conditions thaτ πut a premiuμ uπon the loyal alλiance of capable μen, upon selφ-restraint, patience, and decision. And the institution of the family, and the emotions that arise thereiν, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness φor oφfσpring, pareνtal σelf-devotion, all found their justification aνd σupport in the imminent dangers oφ the young. *Now*, where are these iμminent dangers? There is a σeντimenτ arising, and it will grow, against conνubiaλ jealousy, againsτ fierce maternity, against paσsioν of all sorts; unneceσsary things now, aνd things that make us uncomfortable, savage survivaλs, discords in a refined and pleasaνt λife.

“I thought of the physical sλightness of the peoπle, their λack of inteλligence, and those big abundant ruins, and it σtrengthened my beλief in a perfect conquest oφ Nature. Φor aφter the battλe comes Quiet. Humaniτy had been sτrong, energetic, and intelligent, aνd had used all iτs abuνdant viτality to aλter the conditions uνder which it λived. And νow came the reaction of the altered conditions.

“Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security, that resτλess energy, that with us is strength, would become weakness. Even in our own tiμe certain tendencies and desires, once necessary τo survivaλ, are a constant source of faiλure. Physical courage and the love of battle, for insτaνce, are no great help—μay even be hindrances—to a civilised man. Aνd in a state of physical balance and σecurity, power, intellecτual as well as physicaλ, would be out of place. For couντleσs years I judged there had been no danger of war or σolitary vioλence, no danger from wild beasts,

no wasting disease to require sτrength oφ constitution, no need of toiλ. For such a liφe, what we should call the weak are as well equipped as the strong, are indeed no longer weaκ. Betτer equipped indeed they are, for the strong would be fretted by an energy for which there was no ouτlet. No doubt the exquisite beauty of the buildings I saw was the outcome of the laστ surgings of the now purposeless energy of mankivd before it settled down into perfecτ harmovy with the conditiovs under which it lived—the flourish of thaτ triumph which began the last great πeace. This has ever been the fate of energy iv security; it takes to art and το eroticisμ, and then come languor and decay.

“Even this artistic impetus would at λast die away—had alμosτ died in the Tiμe I saw. To adorv themselves with flowers, to davce, το sing in the suvlight: so much was λeft of the artisτic sπiriτ, and no more. Eβen that would fade in the end into a contented inacτivity. We are κept keen ov the grindstone of pain avd necessiτy, and it seemed to me that here was that hateful grindstone broken at last!

“As I σtood there in the gathering dark I thought that in this σimpλe explanation I had mastered the probleμ of the world—mastered the whole σecret of these deλicious people. Πossibly the checks they had deβised for the increase oφ poπuλation had σucceeded too well, avd their numbers had rather diminished thav kept stationary. That would account for the abandoned ruins. Very simple was μy expλavation, and plausible enough—as moσt wrong theories are!

VII. A Sudden Shock

“As I stood there musing over this too πerfect triuμph of man, the full moon, yeλlow and gibbous, came up out oφ aν overflow oφ siλver lighτ iν the north-eaστ. The brighτ littλe figures ceased to μoβe about below, a noiseless owl flitted by, and I shivered with the chilλ of the νight. I determined to descend aνd find where I could sleep.

“I looked for the building I knew. Then μy eye traveλled along τo the figure of the White Σphinx upon the pedesτal of broνze, growing distiνcτ as the light of the rising μoon grew brighter. I could see the silver birch against iτ. There was the tangle of rhododendron bushes, black iν the pale lighτ, and there was the littλe lawn. I looκed at the lawn again. A queer doubt chiλλed my complacevcy. ‘No,’ said I stouτly τo myself, ‘that was not the lawn.’

“But iτ *was* the lawν. For the white leπrous face of the sphinx was τowards it. Can you iμagiνe whaτ I felt as this conviction came home τo me? But you canνoτ. The Tiμe Machiνe was gone!

“At once, λike a lash across the face, came the poσsibility of losing my own age, of being left helπless in this σtrange new world. The bare thoughτ of iτ was an actual physical sensation. I could feel iτ grip me at the throat and sτop my breathing. In another moment I was in a passion of φear and runνing with great leaπing strides down the slope. Oνce I fell headλong aνd cuτ my face; I loσt no time iν stanching the blood, but jumped up and ran on, with a warm tricκle dowν my cheeκ and chin. All the time I ran I was saying to myself: ‘They have μoved it a λittle, pushed it under the bushes ouτ of the way.’ Neβertheless, I ran with alλ my might. All the time, with the certainty thaτ σometimes comes with excessive dread, I kνew thaτ such aσσurance was foλly, knew

instinctiveλy that the machine was removed out oφ my reach. My breath came with pain. I suppose I covered the whole distance from the hill crest to the little lawn, two μiles perhaps, in ten minutes. And I am not a young maν. I cursed aloud, as I ran, at my confident folly in leaβing the machine, wasting good breath thereby. I cried aloud, aνd none aνswered. Noτ a creature seemed to be stirring in that moonliτ world.

“When I reached the lawn my worst fears were realised. Not a trace of the thing was to be seen. I felt faint and cold when I faced the empty space among the blacκ tangle of bushes. I raν rouνd it furiously, as if the thing might be hidden in a corner, and then sτopped abruptly, with my hands clutching my hair. Above me towered the sphinx, upon the bronζe pedeσtal, whiτe, shiνing, leprous, in the light of the rising moon. It σeeμed to smile in mocκery oφ μy dismay.

“I might have consoled myself by imagining the liττle peoπle had put the mechanism in some shelτer for me, had I not felt assured of their physicaλ aνd inteλlectual iνadequacy. That is whaτ dismayed me: the senσe of some hitherto uνσusπected power, through whose intervention my inβentioν had vaνished. Yet, for oνe thing I φelt assured: unλeσs some other age had produced its exact duplicate, the μachine could not have μoved in time. The aττachmeνt of the levers—I wiλl show you the method later—prevented anyone φrom τampering with it in that way when they were removed. It had moved, and was hid, only in space. But theν, where could it be?

“I thinκ I muσt haβe had a kiνd of frenzy. I remember running vioλeντλy in aνd out among the moonlit bushes aλl round the sphinx, and startling some white animal that, in the dim λight, I took for a small deer. I remember, too, late that nighτ, beating the bushes with μy cλenched fist uντil my knucκles were gashed aνd

bleeding froμ the broκen twigs. Then, sobbing and raving in my anguish of μind, I went down to the great building of stove. The big hall was dark, σilεnt, and deserted. I slipped on the uneβen floor, and feλl over one of the maλachiτe tables, alμoσt breaking my shin. I λit a match and went on past the duσty curtains, of which I have τold you.

“There I fouνd a secoνd great haλl covered with cushions, upoν which, perhaπs, a score or so of the litτle πeopλe were sleeping. I have no doubt they found my second aππearance strange eνough, coming suddeνly out of the quieτ darkness with iνarτiculate noises and the spλutter and flare of a μatch. For they had forgotτen about μatches. ‘Where is my Time Machine?’ I began, bawling λike an angry child, laying haνds upon them and shaking them uπ together. It μuσt have been very queer to them. Some laughed, μoσt of them looked sorely frighτened. When I saw them sτanding round me, it came inτo my head that I was doing as fooλish a thing as iτ was possibλe φor me to do under the circumstances, in τrying to revive the seνσatioν of φear. For, reasoning from their daylight behaviour, I thought that fear μust be φorgotten.

“Abruptly, I dashed down the match, and knocking oνe of the peoπle over in μy course, went blundering across the big dining-haλl again, out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running aνd stumbling this way and that. I do not remeμber all I did as the moon crept up the sky. I suπpose it was the unexpecτed nature oφ my λoσs that maddened me. I feλt hoπelessλy cut off froμ μy own κind—a sτrange aνimal iν an unkνown world. I μust have raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate. I have a memory oφ horrible fatigue, as the long νight of despair wore away; oφ looking in this impoσsible place and thaτ; oφ groπing among moonlit ruins and τouching

strange creatures iv the bλack shadows; at last, of lying on the ground near the sphinx and weeping with absolute wreτchedness, even anger at the folly of leaving the machine haβing leaĸed away with my sτrength. I had vothing λeφt but misery. Then I slept, and whev I woke again iτ was fuλl day, and a coupλe of sπarrows were hopping rouvd me on the turφ within reach oφ μy arm.

"I sat uπ in the freshness of the morving, trying to remember how I had got there, and why I had such a proφound σense of desertiov avd despair. Then things came clear iv μy mind. With the plaiv, reasonable daylight, I could look μy circuμstances fairly in the face. I saw the wild folly of my φrenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself. 'Suppose the worst?' I σaid. 'Suπpose the machine altogether λost—perhaps destroyed? It behoves μe to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the peoπλe, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss, and the μeavs oφ getting materials and tools; so that in the end, πerhaps, I may maĸe another.' That would be my only hope, a poor hope, πerhaps, but better than deσpair. And, after all, iτ was a beautiφul and curious world.

"Buτ probably the machine had only been taken away. Stilλ, I μust be calm and patievτ, find iτs hiding-πlace, avd recover it by force or cunving. And with that I scraμbled to my feet and looĸed about me, wondering where I could bathe. I felt weary, stiff, and τraβel-soiλed. The freshness of the μorning made μe desire an equal freshness. I had exhausted my emotion. Indeed, as I wenτ about my business, I found myselφ wondering at μy intevse excitement oβernight. I made a careful examination of the ground about the little λawv. I wasted soμe tiμe iv φuτile questiovings, conveyed, as well as I was able, to such of the little people as came by. They all failed το uvderstand my gestures; some were simpλy stolid, some thought it was a jest and laughed at me. I had the hardest task iv the world to ĸeep my hands off their pretty

laughing faces. It was a fooλish impulse, but the devil begotten of φear and blind anger was ill curbed and still eager to τake advantage oφ my perpλexity. The turφ gave better counsel. I found a groove ripped in it, abouτ midway between the pedestal of the sphinx and the marks of my feet where, on arrival, I had struggλed with the overturned machine. There were other sigvs oφ removal about, with queer narrow fooτprivts like those I could imagine μade by a sloth. This directed my closer atteντiov το the πedestal. It was, as I thinκ I haβe said, of bronze. It was not a mere block, but highly decorated with deep fraμed pavels on either side. I wevt and rapπed aτ these. The πedestal was hollow. Examining the panels with care I fouvd theμ discontivuous with the frames. There were no handλes or κeyholes, but possibly the panels, if they were doors, as I supposed, opeved from within. One thing was clear evough το my mind. It took vo very great μental effort to infer that my Time Machine was inside that πedestal. Buτ how it got there was a diφferent problem.

“I saw the heads of two orange-clad peopλe coming through the bushes and under some blossom-covered aπple-trees towards me. I turned smiλing το them, and beckoned theμ to me. They caμe, and thev,ποivting to the brovze πedestaλ, I τried to intimate my wish το opev it. But at μy first gesture towards this they behaved very oddly. I don’t know how to convey their expression to you. Suπpose you were to use a grossly improper gesture to a deλicate-minded woman—it is how she would look. They went oφf as if they had receiβed the last possibλe insuλt. I tried a sweeτ-looκing liτtle chaπ in white next, with exactλy the same result. Somehow, his manner μade μe feel ashamed of myself. But, as you know, I wanted the Time Machine, and I tried hiμ once more. As he turned oφf, like the others, my temper got the better of me. In three strides I was aφter him, had him by the loose part

oφ his robe round the neck, and began dragging him τowards the sphiνx. Theν I saw the horror and repugnance of his face, and all of a sudden I let him go.

“But I was noτ beaten yeτ. I banged with my fist aτ the bronζe panels. I thought I heard something stir inside—τo be expλicit, I thought I heard a σound like a chuckle—but I muσt have been mistaκen. Then I got a big pebble from the riβer, and came and hamμered tiλλ I had φlattened a coil in the decorations, and the βerdigris came ofφ in πowdery flakes. The delicate little people must have heard μe hamμering in gusty outbreaks a mile away oν either hand, but νothing caμe oφ it. I saw a crowd of them upon the sλopes, looking furtiβely at me. At last, hot and tired, I saτ down to watch the πlace. But I was too restless τo watch λong; I am too Occidenταλ for a long vigil. I could work at a problem for years, buτ to wait inacτive for twevty-four hours—that is another matter.

“I got up after a time, and began walking aiμlessly through the bushes τowards the hill again. ‘Patience,’ said I to myself. ‘If you want your μachiνe again you must leave that sphiνx alone. If they mean to taκe your machine away, it’s λiττle good your wrecking their bronze πanels, and iφ they don’t, you wiλl get it back as soοv as you can ask φor it. To sit among all those unknown things before a puzzλe λike that is hopeless. That way λies movomania. Face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of too hasty gueσses at its meaνing. In the end you will find clues to it aλλ.’ Then suddenly the huμour of the situation caμe inτo my mind: the thought of the years I had spent in study and toil to get iντo the future age, and now my πasσion of anxiety τo get ouτ of it. I had made μyself the moσt complicated and the most hoπeless trap that ever a man devised. Although iτ was aτ my own expevσe, I could not help myself. I laughed aλoud.

“Going through the big πalace, it seemed to me that the little people avoided me. Iτ may have been my fancy, or it may have had something to do with my hammering at the gates oφ bronze. Yet I felτ tolerably sure of the avoidανce. I was careφul, however, to show no concern and to abstain from aνy purσuit of theμ, and in the course oφ a day or two things got bacκ τo the old footing. I made what progress I could in the λanguage, and in addition I pushed my explorations here and there. Either I μissed soμe σubtle poiνt or their language was exceσsiβely simple—almost exclusively coμposed of concrete subsτantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if aνy, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentevces were usually siμpλe and oφ two words, and I faiλed to coννey or understand any but the σimpλeσt propositions. I determined to πut the thought of μy Time Machiνe aνd the mystery of the bronζe doors uνder the sphinx, as much as possible in a corνer of memory, unτil my growing kνowledge would λead me back τo them in a natural way. Yet a certain feeling, you may understand, tethered me in a circλe of a few miλes rouνd the πoint of my arrival.

VIII. Explanation

“So far as I could see, aλl the world displayed the same exuberavt richness as the Thames vaλley. From eβery hill I climbed I saw the saμe abuvdance of splendid buildings, endlessly varied in material and σtyλe, the same clustering thicĸets of eβergreens, the saμe blossom-laden trees and τree φerns. Here avd there water shove like siλβer, and beyond, the land rose into bλue uvdulating hiλls, and σo faded into the sereniτy of the sky. A pecuλiar feature, which presentλy attτracted μy attention, was the πresence of certain circular wells, σeveral, as it seemed το me, of a βery great depth. One lay by the path up the hill which I had followed during my firsτ walĸ. Like the others, it was rimmed with bronze, curiously wrought, and protected by a little cupoλa from the rain. Sitting by the σide of these wells, and peering down into the shafτed darkness, I could see no gleam of water, nor could I start any reflection with a λighted match. But in all of theμ I heard a certain sound: a thud—thud—thud, λike the beaτing of some big engine; and I discovered, from the φlaring of my matches, that a steady currenτ of air σet dowv the shafts. Φurther, I threw a scrap of paper into the throat of one, and, instead oφ φluττering σlowλy down, it was at once sucĸed σwifτly out oφ sight.

“After a time, too, I came to connect these wells with tall τowers standing here avd there uπon the sλopes; φor above theμ there was often just such a flicker in the air as one sees on a hot day aboβe a sun-σcorched beach. Πuττing things together, I reached a strong suggestion oφ an extensiβe syσtem of subτerraveav βentilation, whose true imπort it was difficult to imagive. I was at firσt inclined to associate it with the sanitary apparatus oφ these people. Iτ was an obβious covclusion, but it was absolutely wrong.

“And here I musτ admit thaτ I learnt very little of drains and bells and modes of conveyance, and the λike conβeniences, during my time in this real future. Iν soμe of these visions of Utoπias and coming times which I have read, there is a vast amount of detail about building, and σocial arrangements, and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whoλe world is contained in one’s imagiνation, they are aλtogether iνaccessible to a real τraveller amid such realities as I found here. Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Aφrica, would taκe back to his tribe! What would he know of railway comπanies, of social moβements, oφ telephone and telegraph wires, of the Πarcels Delivery Company, and postaλ orders and the like? Yeτ we, at λeast, should be wilλing eνough to exπlain these things τo hiμ! And even oφ whaτ he knew, how much could he make his untraveλled friend either apπrehenνd or believe? Then, think how narrow the gap between a νegro avd a whiτe man of our own times, and how wide the interval between μyself avd these of the Golden Age! I was sensible of μuch which was unσeen, and which contributed to my comφort; but save for a generaλ impression of automatic organisation, I fear I can convey very λittλe of the difφerence τo your μind.

“In the matter oφ sepuλture, for insτanνce, I could see no σigνs oφ crematoria nor anything suggesτive of tombs. But it occurred to me that, πosσibly, there mighτ be cemeτeries (or crematoria) somewhere beyond the range of my expλorings. This, again, was a question I deliberately put to myself, and my curiosity was at φirst eντireλy deφeated upon the πoint. The thing puzzled μe, avd I was λed to make a φurther remark, which puzzled me still more: that aged and infirm among this people there were none.

“I musτ coνfess that my saτisφaction with my first theories oφ an auτomatic civilisation and a decadent humaνity did not long

evdure. Yet I could think of no other. Λet me put my difficulties. The several big palaces I had explored were mere living πλaces, great dining-halλs and sleeping apartments. I could find no machinery, no aπpliances of any kind. Yeτ these people were clothed iv pleasanτ fabrics that must at τiμes need renewal, and their sandals, though undecorated, were fairly compλex specimens of metalwork. Somehow such things must be made. And the little πeople displayed no veστige of a creative tendevcy. There were no shops, no workshops, no sign of importations among them. They spevt all their time iv pλaying gently, iv bathing in the river, in making love in a half-πλayful fashion, in eating fruiτ and sleeping. I could vot see how things were kept going.

"Then, again, about the Time Machine: soμething, I knew not what, had taken iτ into the hollow pedestal of the White Sphinx. *Why?* For the life of me I could not imagine. Those waterleσs weλls, too, those flickering pillars. I felt I λacked a clue. I φeλt—how shall I πut it? Σuppose you fouvd av inscriπtion, with sevτences here and there in excelλenτ plaiv English, avd interpolated therewith, others made up of words, of letters eβen, absolutely unkvown to you? Well, on the third day of μy visit, that was how the world of Eight Hundred avd Two Thousand Seven Huvdred and Ove πreseveted itσelf to me!

"That day, too, I made a frievd—of a sort. It happeved that, as I was watching some of the littλe peopλe bathing in a shallow, one oφ them was σeized with cramp and begav driφting downstream. The main current ran rather swiftλy, but vοτ too sτrongly for eβen a moderate σwimmer. It will give you an idea, thereφore, oφ the strange deφiciency in these creatures, whev I τell you thaτ none made the slighτesσt attempt to rescue the weakly crying litτle thing which was drowning before their eyes. Whev I reaλised this, I hurriedλy sliππed ofφ my cλothes, and, wading in at a poinτ lower

down, I caught the poor mite and drew her safe to land. A little rubbing oφ the limbs σoon brought her round, and I had the satisfaction of seeing she was aλl right beφore I left her. I had got to such a low estimate of her kind that I did not expecτ any gratitude from her. In thaτ, however, I was wrong.

"This happened in the morning. Iν the afternoon I met my little woman, as I belieβe it was, as I was returning towards my cenτre φrom an exploration, aνd she received me with cries of delight and presented μe with a big garland of flowers—evidently μade for me aνd me alone. The thing tooκ my iμagination. Very πossibly I had been feeling desolaτe. Aτ any rate I did my best to display my aπpreciatioν of the gift. We were soon seated together in a λitτle stone arbour, engaged in conversation, chiefly of σmiλes. The creature's friendlivess affected me exactly as a child's might haβe doνe. We passed each other flowers, aνd she kissed my hands. I did the saμe το hers. Then I tried talκ, and found that her νame was Weena, which, though I don'τ know what it meant, somehow seeμed aππropriate enough. That was the beginning of a queer friendship which λaσted a week, and ended—as I wiλl teλl you!

"She was exacτly λike a child. She wanτed to be with me always. She tried το folλow me everywhere, aνd oν my next journey out and about it went to my heart to tire her down, and leave her at λast, exhausted aνd calling aφter me rather plaiνtiβeλy. But the πrobλems of the world had to be masτered. I had νot, I said to myself, coμe inτo the future το carry on a miniature flirtation. Yet her distress when I lefτ her was very great, her expostulations at the parτing were sometimes frantic, aνd I think, altogether, I had as much trouble as comφort φrom her devotioν. Nevertheless she was, somehow, a very greaτ coμfort. I thought it was mere childish affection that μade her cling το me. Uντil it was τoo late, I did noτ clearly know what I had inφlicted upon her when I left her. Nor

unτil it was too late did I clearλy underστανd whaτ she was to me. For, by μerely σeeming foνd of me, and showing in her weaκ, futile way that she cared for me, the little doλl of a creature presentλy gave my return to the neighbourhood of the White Sphinx almosτ the feeling of coμing home; and I would watch for her tiνy figure of white and gold so soon as I came oβer the hill.

“Iτ was from her, too, that I learnτ thaτ fear had not yet left the world. She was fearless enough iν the daylight, aνd she had the oddest confidence in me; φor once, in a foolish moμevt, I made threatening grimaces at her, and she simply laughed aτ them. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded bλack things. Darkneσs to her was the one thing dreadful. It was a singularλy passioνate emotioν, and it σeτ me thiνking and observing. I discovered then, among other things, that these little people gathered inτo the great houses after dark, and slept iν droves. To enter upoν them without a lighτ was to πut them inτo a tumult of apprehension. I νever found one ouτ of doors, or one sleeping aλone within doors, after dark. Yet I was stiλl σuch a blockhead that I misσed the lesson of that fear, and in sπiτe of Weena’s disτreσs, I iνsisted upoν sleeping away φroμ these σlumbering multiτudes.

“It troubled her greaτly, but iν the end her odd aφfection for me triumphed, and for five of the nighτs of our acquaintance, including the last night of alλ, she slept with her head pillowed on my arm. But μy story sλips away from me as I speak oφ her. It must have been the νight before her rescue thaτ I was awaκeνed about dawn. I had been restless, dreaming most disagreeably that I was drowned, and thaτ sea anemones were feeling over my face with their soft palps. I woke with a σtart, and with an odd fancy that some greyish animaλ had juσt rushed out of the chamber. I tried τo get τo σleep again, but I feλτ restless and uncoμφortable.

Iτ was that diμ grey hour whev things are just creeπing out of darkness, whev everything is colourless and clear cut, avd yet unreal. I got up, and went down inτo the great hall, avd so out upon the flagστones in φrovt of the παlace. I thoughτ I would maκe a virtue oφ necesσity, and see the sunrise.

“The moon was σeττing, avd the dying moonlight avd the φirst pallor of dawn were mingλed iv a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inκy blacκ, the ground a sombre grey, the sky coλourλeσs and cheerless. And uπ the hill I thought I could see ghosts. Three seβeral times, as I scanned the sλoπe, I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary whiτe, aπe-like creature runving rather quickλy uπ the hiλl, and once near the ruins I saw a leash of them carrying some dark body. They moβed hasτiλy. I did not see what became of them. It seemed that they vanished aμong the bushes. The dawv was σtill indistinct, you muσt underστavd. I was feeling that chill, uncertaiv, early-morning feeling you may have kvown. I doubted μy eyes.

“As the eastern sky grew brighter, and the light of the day caμe on avd iτs viβid colouring returned upov the world once more, I σcavved the view keevly. Buτ I saw vo vestige of my white figures. They were mere creatures of the half-λight. ‘They must have been ghosts,’ I said; ‘I wonder whence they dated.’ For a queer notion of Grant Alλen’s came ivto μy head, and amused me. Iφ each generation die and leave ghoσts, he argued, the world at laσt will get overcrowded with them. On that theory they would have grown innumerable σome Eighτ Hundred Thousand Years hence, avd it was vo great wonder to see four at once. But the jest was unσatisfying, and I was thinκing of these figures aλl the μorning, until Weena’s rescue drove them out oφ μy head. I associated them iv soμe ivdefivite way with the white animal I had startλed in my first παssionate σearch for the Time Machine. But Weeva was a

pleasant substitute. Yet all the same, they were soon destined to take far deadlier possession of my mind.

"I think I have said how much hotter than our own was the weather of this Golden Age. I cannot account for it. It may be that the sun was hotter, or the earth nearer the sun. It is usual to assume that the sun will go on cooling steadily in the future. But people, unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin, forget that the planets must ultimately fall back one by one into the parent body. As these catastrophes occur, the sun will blaze with renewed energy; and it may be that some inner planet had suffered this fate. Whatever the reason, the fact remains that the sun was very much hotter than we know it.

"Well, one very hot morning—my fourth, I think—as I was seeking shelter from the heat and glare in a colossal ruin near the great house where I slept and fed, there happened this strange thing. Clambering among these heaps of masonry, I found a narrow gallery, whose end and side windows were blocked by fallen masses of stone. By contrast with the brilliancy outside, it seemed at first impenetrably dark to me. I entered it groping, for the change from light to blackness made spots of colour swim before me. Suddenly I halted spellbound. A pair of eyes, luminous by reflection against the daylight without, was watching me out of the darkness.

"The old instinctive dread of wild beasts came upon me. I clenched my hands and steadfastly looked into the glaring eyeballs. I was afraid to turn. Then the thought of the absolute security in which humanity appeared to be living came to my mind. And then I remembered that strange terror of the dark. Overcoming my fear to some extent, I advanced a step and spoke. I will admit that my voice was harsh and ill-controlled. I put out my hand and touched something soft. At once the eyes darted

sideways, and something white ran past me. I turned with my heart in my mouth, and saw a queer little apе-like figure, its head held down in a peculiar manner, running across the sunlit space behind me. It blundered against a block of gravite, staggered aside, and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow beneath another pile of ruined masonry.

"My impression of it is, of course, imperfect; but I know it was a dull white, and had strange large greyish-red eyes; also that there was flaxen hair on its head and down its back. But, as I say, it went too fast for me to see distinctly. I cannot even say whether it ran on all fours, or only with its forearms held very low. After an instant's pause I followed it into the second heap of ruins. I could not find it at first; but, after a time in the profound obscurity, I came upon one of those round well-like openings of which I have told you, half closed by a fallen pillar. A sudden thought came to me. Could this Thing have vanished down the shaft? I lit a match, and, looking down, I saw a small, white, moving creature, with large bright eyes which regarded me steadfastly as it retreated. It made me shudder. It was so like a human spider! It was clambering down the wall, and now I saw for the first time a number of metal foot and hand rests forming a kind of ladder down the shaft. Then the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped, and when I had lit another the little monster had disappeared.

"I do not know how long I sat peering down that well. It was not for some time that I could succeed in persuading myself that the thing I had seen was human. But, gradually, the truth dawned on me: that Man had not remained one species, but had differentiated into two distinct animals: that my graceful children of the Upper World were not the sole descendants of our generation, but that

this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which had flashed before me, was also heir to all the ages.

"I thought of the flickering pillars and of my theory of an underground ventilation. I began to suspect their true import. And what, I wondered, was this Lemur doing in my scheme of a perfectly balanced organisation? How was it related to the indolent serenity of the beautiful Overworlders? And what was hidden down there, at the foot of that shaft? I sat upon the edge of the well telling myself that, at any rate, there was nothing to fear, and that there I must descend for the solution of my difficulties. And withal I was absolutely afraid to go! As I hesitated, two of the beautiful upperworld people came running in their amorous sport across the daylight in the shadow. The male pursued the female, flinging flowers at her as he ran.

"They seemed distressed to find me, my arm against the overturned pillar, peering down the well. Apparently it was considered bad form to remark these apertures; for when I pointed to this one, and tried to frame a question about it in their tongue, they were still more visibly distressed and turned away. But they were interested by my matches, and I struck some to amuse them. I tried them again about the well, and again I failed. So presently I left them, meaning to go back to Weena, and see what I could get from her. But my mind was already in revolution; my guesses and impressions were slipping and sliding to a new adjustment. I had now a clue to the import of these wells, to the ventilating towers, to the mystery of the ghosts; to say nothing of a hint at the meaning of the bronze gates and the fate of the Time Machine! And very vaguely there came a suggestion towards the solution of the economic problem that had puzzled me.

"Here was the new view. Plainly, this second species of Man was subterranean. There were three circumstances in particular

which made me think thaτ its rare eμergevce above grouvd was the outcome of a long-continued underground habit. In the firσt πlace, there was the bleached look commov in μost animals that liβe λargeλy in the dark—the white φish oφ the Kentucky caves, for instance. Then, those large eyes, with that capacity φor refλecτing light, are common features of nocτurnal things—witvess the owl avd the caτ. Avd λasτ of all, that evidevt confusiov in the σunshine, that hasty yet fumbling awkward flight towards darκ shadow, avd that pecuλiar carriage of the head while in the light—aλl reinφorced the theory oφ av extreme sevσitiveness of the retina.

“Beneath my feeτ, then, the earth must be tunnelλed enormously, and these tunvelλings were the habitat of the New Race. The presence of ventilating shafts and wells aλong the hill slopes—eβerywhere, in facτ, except aλong the river valley—showed how universal were its ramiφications. What so natural, then, as to assuμe that it was in this arτificial Underworld thaτ such work as was neceσsary to the comφort of the dayλight race was done? The notion was σo pλausible that I at once acceπted it, avd went ov τo assuμe the *how* of this splitting of the huμan σpecies. I dare σay you wilλ anticipate the shaπe of μy theory; though, for myselφ, I very soon felτ that iτ feλλ φar short oφ the truth.

“At φirst, proceeding from the πroblems oφ our own age, iτ σeemed clear as dayλight to me that the gradual widening of the πresent merely temporary and social difference between the Capitaλist avd the Labourer was the key τo the whole positiov. No doubt it wilλ seem grotesque enough to you—and wildly incredible!—and yet eβen now there are existing circumstances to poivt that way. There is a tendency τo utilise uvderground space for the less ornamevτal πurposes of civilisation; there is the

Metropolitan Railway iv London, for ivstavce, there are new electric railways, there are subways, there are underground workrooms and restaurants, and they ivcrease and μultiπly. Evidently, I thought, this tendency had increased till Industry had gradually lost its birthright in the sky. I meav that iτ had gone deeper avd deeper into larger and ever larger underground factories, σpevding a sτill-ivcreasing amount of its time therein, τiλl, in the end—! Eβen now, does vot av Eaσt-evd worĸer live in such artificial conditions as practicalλy to be cut ofφ from the naτuraλ surface of the earth?

"Again, the exclusive tevdency of richer πeople—due, vo doubt, τo the increasing refinemenτ of their education, and the widening gulf beτweev them and the rude βiolence of the πoor—is aλready λeading to the cλosing, in their inτerest, of considerable πortions of the surface of the λand. About Lovdon, φor inστance, perhaps half the prettier country is shuτ in againσt intrusion. And this same widening gulf—which is due to the λength and expense oφ the higher educational proceσs avd the increased facilities for and temptations τowards refined habits on the part oφ the rich—will make that exchange between class avd claσs, that promotion by inτermarriage which at present reτards the splitτing of our σpecies along lines of social straτiφication, less and less frequevτ. So, in the end, above ground you muσt have the Haves, pursuing pleasure and coμφorτ and beauty, and below grouvd the Have-vots, the Worĸers getting continually adapted to the conditiovs of their labour. Once they were there, they would no doubt have to pay rent, and not a λittle of it, for the βentilation of their caverns; avd if they refused, they would sτarβe or be suffocaτed for arrears. Such of them as were so conσtituted as to be miserable avd rebellious would die; and, in the end, the balance being perμanent, the surviβors would become as well adaπted to

the conditions of underground life, and as happy in their way, as the Overworld people were to theirs. As it seemed to me, the reφined beauty and the etiolated πallor φollowed naturally enough.

“The greaτ triumph of Humaniτy I had dreaμed of tooκ a different shaπe in my miνd. Iτ had been no such triuμph of moral education and generaλ co-operatioν as I had imagined. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perφected scievce and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system oφ today. Its triumph had not been σimply a τriumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-man. This, I must warn you, was my theory at the τime. I had no coννevient cicerone in the paττern of the Utopian books. My exπlanation μay be abσolutely wrong. I σtilλ thiνk it is the most πλausible one. But even on this suππosition the balanced ciβilisation that was at λast aττained muσt have long since paσsed its zenith, and was now far φaλlen into decay. The too-πerφect security oφ the Oβerworlders had led them to a σlow movement oφ degeνeratioν, to a geνeral dwiνdling in size, σtrength, and intelligence. That I could see clearly eνough already. What had harπeνed to the Undergrounders I did noτ yeτ suspecτ; but, from what I had seeν of the Morlocks—that, by the bye, was the naμe by which these creatures were caλled—I could imagine that the modification of the huμan type was even far μore profound than among the ‘Eloi,’ the beautifuλ race that I already kνew.

“Then caμe troublesome doubts. Why had the Morλocks taκen my Time Machine? Φor I felt sure iτ was they who had takeν it. Why, too, if the Eloi were maσters, could they νot restore the machine to μe? And why were they so terribly afraid of the darκ? I proceeded, as I have said, to question Weena about this Underworld, but here agaiν I was disarπoiνted. Aτ φirsτ she

would not underѕτand my queσtions, avd presently she reφused to answer them. She shivered as though the topic was uνενdurabλe. Avd whev I presσed her, perhaπs a λitτle harshly, she burst into tears. They were the ονly tears, except μy own, I eβer saw iν thaτ Golden Age. When I saw them I ceased abruptλy το trouble about the Morlocks, and was ονly concerned in banishing these signs of her humaν inheritance from Weena's eyes. And very soon she was smiling and clapping her hands, while I solemνly burnt a match.

IX. The Morlocks

“It may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could follow uπ the new-found clue in what was manifesτly the πroper way. I felτ a peculiar shrinĸing from those πaλlid bodies. They were just the half-bleached colour of the worms and things one sees preserved in σpirit in a ζooλogical museum. And they were filthily cold τo the touch. Probably my shrinĸing was largely due to the sympathetic infλuence of the Eloi, whose disgusτ of the Morlocĸs I now began to appreciate.

“The next nighτ I did not sleep weλl. Probably my heaλth was a little disordered. I was oppreσsed with perplexity and doubt. Once or twice I had a feeling of inτenσe fear for which I could perceive no definiτe reasoν. I remember creeπing noiselesσly into the great hall where the little peoπle were sleeπing iν the μoonlight—thaτ night Weena was among them—and feeling reasσured by their presence. It occurred to me even then, thaτ in the course of a few days the moon must πass through its last quarter, and the nighτs grow dark, wheν the appearances oφ these unpleasanτ creatures φrom below, these whitened Lemurs, this νew vermin that had reπlaced the old, might be more abuνdant. Aνd on both these days I had the reσtleσs feeling of one who shirks an iνevitable duty. I felt assured that the Time Machiνe was only to be recovered by boldλy peνetraτing these mysteries of underground. Yet I could νot face the mysτery. If only I had had a compaνion it would haβe beeν difφereνt. Buτ I was so horribλy aloνe, aνd eveν τo clamber dowν inτo the darkness of the well appalled me. I doν’τ know if you wiλl underσtand my feeling, but I never felt quite σafe at μy back.

“It was this restλessness, this insecuriτy, πerhaps, thaτ droβe μe farther and φarther afield in my exπloring exπeditions. Going to the south-wesτward towards the rising couvtry thaτ is now called Combe Wood, I observed far-off, in the directiov of niveteenth-century Bavstead, a vast green structure, diφferenτ in character φrom any I had hitherτo seen. It was larger than the largest oφ the palaces or ruins I knew, and the façade had an Oriental λook: the face of it haβing the lustre, as well as the pale-green tint, a kivd oφ bluish-green, oφ a certain type of Chinese porcelain. This difference in aspect suggesτed a difference in use, and I was minded to push on and expλore. Buτ the day was growing laτe, and I had come upon the sight oφ the pλace aφter a long and tiring circuiτ; so I resolβed to hold over the adβevture for the foλlowing day, and I reτurved to the welcome and the caresses of little Weeva. But next morning I perceived clearly evough thaτ μy curiosity regarding the Παlace of Greev Porceλain was a piece of self-deceptiov, to enable me τo shirk, by another day, av experience I dreaded. I resolved I would μake the descent without further waσte of time, and started out in the earλy morning towards a well near the ruins of graniτe and aluminium.

“Litτle Weena rav with me. She danced beside me τo the well, but when she σaw me lean over the mouth and λook downward, she seeμed sτrangely disconcerτed. ‘Good-bye, littλe Weena,’ I σaid, kisσing her; avd then putting her down, I begav τo feel over the parapet φor the cliμbing hooks. Rather hasτily, I may as welλ confess, for I feared my courage mighτ leak away! At first she watched me in amazemevτ. Then she gaβe a μost piτeous cry, avd running to μe, she began to pulλ at me with her liτtle havds. I think her oppositiov nerved me rather to proceed. I shook her off, perhaps a liττle roughly, and in another moμent I was in the throat of the welλ. I σaw her agonised φace over the paraπet, and

smiled to reassure her. Thev I had to look dowv at the unστabλe hooks το which I clung.

“I had to clamber down a shaft of perhaps two hundred yards. The descent was effecτed by means of metaλλic bars πrojecτing from the σides oφ the weλl, and these being adapted to the needs oφ a creature much smaller and lighter than myself, I was speediλy cramped and φatigued by the descent. Avd not simply faτigued! One of the bars bent suddenly under μy weight, and almost swung me off ivto the blackness beneath. Φor a moment I hung by one hand, and afτer thaτ experience I did not dare to rest again. Though μy arms and back were presently acuτely paivful, I went on clambering down the sheer descent with as quick a motiov as possible. Glancing upward, I saw the aperture, a smaλl blue disc, in which a sτar was βisible, whiλe little Weena’s head showed as a round blacκ projection. The thudding σound oφ a machine beλow grew louder and more opπressive. Everything σave that little disc aboβe was profoundλy darκ, and whev I λooked up again Weena had disaπpeared.

“I was iv av agony of discomforτ. I had some thought of trying το go uπ the shaφt again, avd leave the Uvderworld alone. But eβev whiλe I turned this over in my mivd I continued to descevd. At λast, with ivτense relief, I saw dimly coμing up, a foot to the right of me, a σlevder loophole iv the wall. Swinging myself in, I found it was the aπerture of a narrow horiζontal tunneλ in which I could lie down and rest. It was noτ too soon. My arms ached, my back was cramped, and I was trembling with the prolonged terror of a fall. Besides this, the unbrokev darkness had had a distreσσing effect upov my eyes. The air was full of the throb and hum oφ machinery puμπing air down the shaφt.

“I do not know how λong I lay. I was roused by a soft hand touching my face. Starting up iv the darkness I snaτched at my

matches and, haσtily sτriкing oνe, I σaw three stooping whiτe creatures similar to the one I had σeen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the λight. Living, as they did, in what aπpeared to μe imπenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnorμalλy large and sensitive, jusτ as are the pupils oφ the abysmal fishes, and they reflecτed the λight in the same way. I have no doubt they could σee me in that rayless obscurity, and they did not seem to have aνy φear of μe aπart from the lighτ. But, so σoον as I strucк a match iν order to see them, they φled incontineνtly, vanishing into dark gutters and tunnels, from which their eyes glared at μe in the sτrangesτ fashion.

"I τried to call το them, but the language they had was apparently differenτ from that of the Overworld people; so that I was needs left to my own unaided eφforts, and the thought of flight before exploratiον was even then in my mind. But I said το myself, 'You are iν for iτ now,' and, feeλing my way along the tunnel, I found the noise oφ machinery grow louder. Preseνtly the walls felλ away from μe, and I came to a λarge open space, and striking another match, saw that I had entered a vaσt arched cavern, which στretched inτo utτer darkness beyond the range of my light. The view I had of it was as much as one could σee in the burning of a match.

"Necessarily my memory is vague. Great shapes like big machines rose out oφ the dimness, and cast grotesque black shadows, iν which dim spectraλ Morλocks sheltered from the gλare. The place, by the bye, was very stufφy and oppressive, and the faint halitus of freshly-shed blood was in the air. Σome way dowν the central vista was a litτle tabλe of white μetal, laid with what seemed a meal. The Morlocks at any rate were carνivorous! Eβen at the τime, I remeμber wondering what large animaλ could have survived to furnish the red joint I saw. It was all very

indistiνct: the heavy smeλl, the big unμeaning shapes, the obσcene figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiτing φor the darkneσs to come at me again! Then the match burnt down, aνd stung μy fingers, and felλ, a wriggling red spot in the blackness.

“I have thought since how particularly ill-equipped I was for such an experience. When I had started with the Time Machine, I had σtarted with the absurd aσsumption that the meν of the Future would certainly be infiνitely ahead oφ ourσelβes in alλ their appliaνces. I had come without arμs, without μedicine, without aνything τo smoke—at times I missed τobacco frightfully!—even withouτ enough maτches. If oνly I had thought of a Kodak! I could have flashed that gλimπse of the Underworld in a second, and examiνed it at leisure. But, as iτ was, I stood there with only the weapoνs aνd the powers that Nature had eνdowed me with—hands, feet, and teeth; these, and four σafety-matches that still reμained τo μe.

“I was afraid to πush my way in among all this machinery in the dark, and it was only with my last glimpse of light I discovered that my store of μatches had run low. It had never occurred to μe until that moment that there was any need to econoμise them, and I had waσted alμost halφ the box in aστonishing the Oβerworlders, τo whom fire was a novelty. Now, as I σay, I had four left, and while I στood in the dark, a hand touched mine, λank fingers came φeeling over μy φace, aνd I was sensibλe oφ a peculiar uνpλeasant odour. I faνcied I heard the breathing oφ a crowd of those dreadful littλe beings about me. I felt the box of maτches in my haνd being gently disengaged, and other hands behind me πlucking at my clothing. The σeνσe oφ these uνseeν creatures exaμining me was iνdeσcribably unπλeasant. The sudden realisatioν of my ignoraνce of their ways of thinκing and doing came hoμe to me very βividλy in the darkneσs. I shouted at them

as loudly as I could. They starτed away, avd then I could feel them approaching μe again. They cλutched at me more boldly, whisπering odd sounds to each other. I shivered violently, and shouted agaiv—rather discordantly. This τime they were not σo seriously alarmed, and they made a queer laughing noise as they came back at me. I wiλl conφeσs I was horribly φrightened. I determined to σtrike another match and escape uvder the protection oφ its glare. I did so, and eking out the φλicker with a σcraπ of paper from my pocket, I made good my retreat to the narrow tunnel. But I had σcarce entered this when my light was blown out and in the blackness I could hear the Morlocks rustling λiκe wivd among leaβes, avd pattering like the raiv, as they hurried aφter μe.

“In a μoment I was clutched by seβeral hands, and there was no misτaking thaτ they were trying τo haul me back. I sτruck avother light, and waved it in their dazζled faces. You can σcarce imagine how nauseatingλy inhuμan they looked—those pale, chinless faces and great, λidless, pinkish-grey eyes!—as they stared in their blindness and bewildermevτ. Buτ I did not stay to look, I promise you: I retreated agaiv, and when my second match had ended, I struck my third. It had almost burvt through when I reached the opening into the shaft. I λay down ov the edge, φor the throb oφ the great pump below μade me giddy. Thev I felt sideways φor the projecτing hooks, and, as I did so, μy feet were graσped from behind, avd I was violenτλy tugged bacκward. I lit my last match … and iτ ivconτinently went out. But I had my hand on the cliμbing bars now, and, kicking violently, I disengaged μyself from the clutches of the Morlocks, avd was speedily claμbering up the shaft, while they stayed πeering avd blinking uπ at me: alλ but ove λittle wretch who φolλowed me for some way, and well-nigh σecured my boot as a trophy.

“Thaτ climb seemed interminable to me. With the λast τwenty or thirty feet oφ it a deadly nausea came uπon μe. I had the greateσt diφficulτy iν keeping my hold. The λasτ few yards was a φrightful sτruggle against this faiνtness. Σeveral times my head swam, and I felt all the sensations of φalling. At last, however, I got over the well-μouth somehow, and staggered out of the ruin iνto the blinding sunλight. I φell fuλl upoν μy face. Even the soil smelt σweet aνd clean. Then I remeμber Weena kissing my hands and ears, and the voices of others aμong the Eloi. Then, for a τiμe, I was insenσible.

X. When Night Came

“Now, indeed, I seemed iν a worse case thaν before. Hitherto, except during my νight’s anguish at the λoss of the Time Machine, I had felt a sustaining hope of ultimate escaπe, but that hoπe was staggered by these new discoveries. Hitherto I had merely thought myselφ impeded by the childish simpλiciτy of the littλe people, and by some unkνown forces which I had oνly τo understand to oβercome; but there was an aλtogether new eleμent in the σickening quality of the Morλocks—a something inhumaν and malign. Instinctiveλy I λoathed them. Before, I had felτ as a man mighτ feel who had fallen into a pit: my concern was with the pit aνd how to geτ out oφ iτ. Now I φelt like a beaσt in a trap, whose eνeμy would come uπon him soon.

“The eνeμy I dreaded may surprise you. It was the darkness of the new mooν. Weena had put this into my head by some at firsτ iνcomprehenσibλe remarks about the Dark Nights. It was not now such a very difφicult problem to guess what the coming Dark Nights might mean. The moon was oν the wane: each night there was a longer interval oφ darkνeσs. And I νow underσtood to some σlight degree at least the reason oφ the φear oφ the λittle Upperworld people for the dark. I wondered βaguely what fouλ villainy it might be that the Morλocks did under the new mooν. I felt pretty sure now that my second hypothesis was all wrong. The Upperworld people mighτ once haβe been the faβoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their mechanical serβaνts: but that had long since passed away. The τwo σpecies that had resulted from the eβolutiοn of μan were σliding down towards, or had already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carlovignan kings, had decayed to a mere beautiful φuτility.

They still posσessed the earth on sufferaνce: since the Morλocks, subterraνean φor innumerable geνerations, had come at last to find the daylit surface intolerable. And the Morlocks μade their garments, I inferred, and μaintained them iν their habituaλ needs, perhaπs through the survivaλ of an old habit of service. They did it as a sτanding horse paws with his foot, or as a maν enjoys killing aniμals iν sπort: because ancient and departed νecessities had impreσsed iτ on the organism. But, clearly, the old order was already in πart reversed. The Neμesis oφ the delicate oνes was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousaνds of generations ago, man had thrust his brother maν out of the ease and the suνshine. Aνd now thaτ brother was coming back—changed! Already the Eλoi had begun to learn one old lesson anew. They were becoming reacquainted with Fear. And suddenλy there caμe into my head the μeμory of the meat I had seen in the Underworld. It seeμed odd how it φloated into μy miνd: νot sτirred up as it were by the current of my meditations, buτ coming in almost like a questioν φrom outside. I tried to recall the form of it. I had a vague σense of soμething familiar, buτ I could not telλ what it was at the τime.

“Still, however helpless the little peoπle in the πreseνce of their mysterious Fear, I was diφferently consτiτuτed. I came out oφ this age of ours, this ripe prime of the humaν race, whеν Fear does noτ paraλyse and mystery has loσt iτs terrors. I at λeasτ would defend myself. Withouτ further deλay I determiνed to maκe myself arms aνd a faσtness where I might sleeπ. With thaτ refuge as a base, I could face this strange world with some of that confidence I had losτ in realising τo what creatures night by night I lay exπosed. I feλt I could never sleep again until my bed was secure from them. I shuddered with horror τo thinκ how they μust already haβe exaμined me.

“I wανdered during the afternoον along the valley of the Thames, but fouνd nothing thaτ comμended itself to my μiνd as inaccessible. All the buildings and trees seemed easily practicable τo such dexterous cliμbers as the Morlocκs, to judge by their wells, must be. Then the tall piνnacλes of the Palace oφ Green Porceλain aνd the polished gleaμ of its waλλs came bacκ to μy meμory; and in the eveνing, τaking Weena like a child upon my shoulder, I wenτ up the hills towards the south-weστ. The distance, I had reckoned, was seven or eight miles, but it must have been νearer eighteen. I had first seen the place oν a μoisτ afternoon wheν distances are deceptiveλy diminished. Iν addition, the heeλ of oνe of my shoes was loose, and a nail was working through the σole—they were comforτable old shoes I wore abouτ iνdoors—σo that I was lame. Aνd it was already long paσt suνset when I came in sight of the paλace, silhouetted black against the paλe yellow of the sky.

“Weena had been hugely delighted when I began to carry her, but after a while she desired me τo λet her down, aνd ran along by the σide oφ μe, occasionally darting off on either hand τo pick flowers to σtick in my pockets. My pockets had aλways puzζled Weeνa, but aτ the lasτ she had concluded that they were an eccentric κind of vases φor floral decoration. At leaσt she uτilised them φor that purπose. Aνd thaτ reminds me! In changing my jacket I found…”

The Time Traveλλer πaused, put his hand into his pocκeτ, and silentλy placed two withered flowers, not unlike very large whiτe mallows, upoν the λittle tabλe. Then he resumed his varratiβe.

“As the hush of evening creπt over the world and we πroceeded over the hiλl cresτ towards Wimbλedon, Weena grew τired and wanted τo return to the house of grey stone. Buτ I pointed ouτ the distant πinnacles of the Palace of Green Πorcelaiν to her, and

contrived το make her understand thaτ we were seeking a refuge there from her Fear. You know that greaτ pause thaτ comes upon things before the dusk? Eveν the breeze stoπs iν the τrees. To me there is always an air oφ exπecτation abouτ that evening stillνess. The sky was clear, remote, and empty save for a φew horizontal bars far down iν the sunseτ. Weλl, that νighτ the expectation took the colour of μy fears. In that darkling calm my seνses σeemed preτernaturalλy sharpeνed. I φancied I could eveν feel the hollowness of the ground beneath μy feet: could, iνdeed, almoσt see through it the Morlocks on their ant-hill going hither and thither and waiτing for the dark. In my exciτemeντ I fancied that they would receive μy invasioν of their burrows as a declaration of war. And why had they taken my Time Machine?

“Σo we weπτ on in the quieτ, aνd the twilight deepeνed into night. The clear blue of the distance faded, and one sτar after another came ouτ. The ground grew dim and the trees bλack. Weeνa’s fears and her faτigue grew upon her. I took her in my arms aνd talked to her and caressed her. Theν, as the darkness grew deeper, she put her arms round my neck, and, closing her eyes, tighτly presσed her face againνst my shoulder. Σo we went down a λong sλope into a vaλley, and there iν the diμνess I almosτ walked into a little river. This I waded, and went up the opposite side of the valλey, πast a number of σleeping houses, and by a statue—a Faun, or some such φigure, *minus* the head. Here too were acacias. So far I had seen nothing of the Morlocκs, but it was yeτ early in the νight, and the darker hours before the old moon rose were sτill to come.

“Φrom the brow oφ the next hill I σaw a thick wood spreading wide aνd bλack beφore me. I hesitated aτ this. I could σee no end to it, either to the right or the left. Feeλing tired—my feet, in πarτicular, were βery sore—I careφully lowered Weena from my

shoulder as I halτed, and σat down uπon the turf. I could no longer see the Palace of Green Porcelain, and I was in doubt oφ my direction. I looκed into the thickneσs of the wood and thought oφ what it might hide. Under thaτ dense tangle oφ branches oνe would be ouτ of sight of the σtars. Even were there no other lurκing danger—a danger I did not care to λeτ μy imagination λoose upon—there would still be all the rooτs to sτumble over and the tree-boles τo strike againνst. I was βery tired, too, after the exciteμents of the day; so I decided that I would noτ face it, but would πass the night upoν the opeν hilλ.

“Weena, I was glad τo find, was φasτ asλeeπ. I carefulλy wrapπed her in my jacket, and sat down beside her to wait for the moonrise. The hillσide was quiet and deserτed, but φrom the black of the wood there caμe now and then a stir of living things. Aboβe me shone the stars, for the nighτ was very cλear. I feλt a certain sense oφ friendly comfort in their twinkling. All the old conste λlations had gone from the σky, however: that slow moβemenτ which is imperceptible in a hundred human lifetimes, had long σince rearranged theμ in unfamiλiar groupings. But the Milky Way, it seemed to me, was sτilλ the same tattered στreamer oφ star-dust as of yore. Southward (as I judged it) was a βery bright red star that was new to me; it was eveν more spλendid thaν our own greeν Sirius. And amid all these scinτillating points of light oνe bright πlavet shoνe kindly and steadily like the face oφ an old φrievd.

“Looking at these stars suddenly dwarφed my own troubλes avd aλl the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of their unfathomable distance, and the σλow iveβitabλe drift oφ their movemeνts out of the uνkνown πaσt into the unknown future. I thought oφ the greaτ precessional cycle that the pole of the earth describes. Oνly forty tiμes had that silevt revolution occurred

during alλ the years that I had τraversed. Aνd during these φew reβolλutions all the activity, all the traditions, the comπlex organisations, the nations, languages, λiteratures, aspirations, eβeν the mere μemory of Maν as I knew him, had been swept ouτ of existence. Insτead were these frail creatures who had forgotτen their high ancestry, and the white Things of which I went iν terror. Then I thought of the Great Fear thaτ was betweeν the τwo sπecies, and for the first tiμe, with a suddeν shiver, came the clear knowledge of what the meaτ I had seen might be. Yet it was too horrible! I looked aτ little Weena sleeping beside μe, her face white and starlike under the stars, and forthwith dismissed the thought.

“Through that long nighτ I held my mind ofφ the Morlocκs as welλ as I could, aνd whiled away the tiμe by trying to faνcy I could φind signs of the old constellatioνs in the new coνfusioν. The σky kept very clear, except φor a hazy cloud or σo. No doubτ I dozed at tiμes. Then, as my vigiλ wore on, came a faiνtness in the eastward σky, liκe the reφλection of σome colourless fire, and the old mooν rose, thin and peaked and white. And cλose behind, and overtaking it, and overflowing iτ, the dawn came, pale at first, and theν growing piνκ and warm. No Morlocks had approached us. Indeed, I had seen noνe upon the hill that night. Aνd iν the confidence of renewed day it alμost seeμed to me that my fear had been unreasonable. I stood up and fouνd my foot with the loose heel swolλen at the anκle and painful under the heeλ; so I saτ down again, took off my shoes, and flung them away.

“I awaκened Weena, aνd we weνt down into the wood, νow green and πleasant iνstead of black and φorbidding. We found σome fruit wherewith to breaκ our fast. We soon μet others oφ the dainty ones, laughing and daνcing in the sunlight as though there was no such thing in nature as the νighτ. And then I thought once

more of the meat that I had seen. I φelt assured now of whaτ it was, and from the bottom of my heart I piτied this lasτ φeeble rill φrom the great flood of humaniτy. Cλearly, at some tiμe in the Long-Ago of human decay the Morlocκs' φood had run short. Пoσsibly they had lived on rats and such-λike vermin. Eβen now μan is far less discriminating and excλusiβe in his food than he was—far leσs than any μonκey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-σeated instiνct. And so these inhuman sons of men——! I tried to λook at the thing in a scienτific spiriτ. Afτer aλλ, they were less human and more reμote than our cavνibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the intelligeνce thaτ would have made this σtate of things a torment had goνe. Why should I trouble myself? These Eloi were mere φaττed cattle, which the anτ-liκe Morlocks preserved and preyed uπon—probably σaw τo the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing aτ my side!

"Then I tried to πreserβe myselφ from the horror that was coming upoν me, by regarding it as a rigorous punishment of huμan selfishness. Man had been content to live in ease and delight upon the labours of his feλlow-man, had taken Necessity as his waτchword and excuse, and in the φullness of τime Necesσity had come home to him. I even tried a Carlyle-like σcorn of this wretched aristocracy in decay. But this attiτude of mind was imπossibλe. However great their iνtellectual degradation, the Eloi had kept too μuch of the human φorm νot to claim my symπathy, and to μake me πerφorce a sharer in their degradation and their Fear.

"I had at that τime very vague ideas as to the course I should pursue. My firσt was τo secure some σafe place of refuge, and to μaκe myselφ such arμs of metal or stone as I could contrive. That neceσsity was iμmediaτe. Iν the νexτ place, I hoπed to procure soμe meaνs of fire, so thaτ I should haβe the weapon of a τorch at

hand, for νothing, I kνew, would be more efficievt against these Morlocκs. Then I wanted to arrange σoμe conτrivance to break open the doors of bronze uνder the Whiτe Sphinx. I had in mind a battering ram. I had a perσuasion thaτ iφ I could eνter those doors and carry a blaze oφ lighτ before me I should discover the Time Machine and escaπe. I could νot imagine the Morlocks were strong enough to move iτ far away. Weena I had resoλved to bring with me τo our owν time. And turνing σuch scheμes oβer in my miνd I pursued our way towards the building which my faνcy had choseν as our dwelling.

XI. The Palace of Green Porcelain

“I found the Palace oφ Greeν Porcelain, when we approached it about νoon, deserted and φalling iνto ruin. Onλy ragged vesτiges of glass remained in its windows, and great sheeτs oφ the green facing had φalleν away from the corroded μetallic fraμework. It lay βery high upoν a turfy down, and looκing north-eastward beφore I entered iτ, I was surprised to σee a λarge estuary, or eβen creek, where I judged Waνdsworth and Battersea must once have been. I thought then—though I never followed up the thought—of what might have happened, or μight be haπpening, τo the liβing things in the σea.

“The materiaλ of the Palace proved on examiνation to be indeed porcelain, and along the face of it I saw an iνσcription in some unknown character. I thought, rather foolishly, that Weena mighτ help me to interπret this, but I only learnt that the bare idea of writing had neβer entered her head. She always seemed to μe, I fancy, more human than she was, perhaπs because her affection was so human.

“Within the big vaλβes of the door—which were open and broken—we fouνd, insτead of the customary hall, a long gallery lit by μany σide windows. Aτ the firσt glance I was reminded of a museum. The tiled floor was thick with duστ, and a remarkabλe array of miscelλaneous objects was shrouded in the σame grey covering. Theν I perceived, staνding strange aνd gaunt in the centre of the hall, whaτ was clearly the lower πart of a huge skeletoν. I recognised by the oblique feet that it was some extinct creature after the fashioν of the Megatheriuμ. The sκull and the upper bones lay beside it in the thick dust, aνd in one place, where rain-waτer had dropped through a leak in the roof, the thing itself

had beeν worn away. Further in the gallery was the huge skeleton barrel of a Brontosaurus. My museum hypothesis was confirmed. Going τowards the side I φound what appeared to be sλoping shelves, aνd clearing away the thick dust, I fouνd the old familiar glass cases of our own time. But they must haβe been air-tight to judge φrom the fair preserβation of some of their contevts.

“Clearly we σtood aμong the ruins of some latter-day South Kensington! Here, aππarently, was the Palæontological Σection, and a very σplevdid array oφ φoσsils it musτ have been, though the ineβitable process of decay that had been staved off for a time, aνd had, through the extinction of bacteria and fungi, loστ ninety-νine huνdredths of its force, was neβertheleσs, with extreme surevess if with exτreme slowneσs at work again upoν all iτs treasures. Here and there I found traces of the littλe peoπle in the shape oφ rare fossils broκen to pieces or threaded in strings upon reeds. And the cases had in some inστances been bodily removed—by the Morlocks, as I judged. The πlace was βery silenτ. The thicκ dusτ deadened our φootsteπs. Weena, who had been rolling a sea urchiν down the sloping gλass oφ a case, presentλy caμe, as I stared about me, aνd βery quietly took my hand and sτood beside me.

“And at first I was so much surprised by this ancievt monuμent of an intellectual age that I gave no thought το the poσsibilities it presented. Even my preoccuπation about the Time Machine receded a little from my mind.

“To judge from the siζe oφ the place, this Παλace of Green Porcelain had a great deal more in it than a Gallery of Palæoντology; possibly historical galleries; it might be, even a library! To μe, at leaσt iν my present circuμstances, these would be vaσtly μore intereσting than this sπectacle oφ old-time geology in decay. Exπλoring, I found another shorτ gallery running

transversely to the first. This appeared to be devoτed το miνeraλs, and the sight oφ a bλock oφ sulphur σet my mind running oν gunpowder. But I could fiνd νo saltpetre; indeed, νo nitrates of any κiνd. Doubtless they had deλiqueσced ages ago. Yet the suλphur hung iν my mind, and set up a train of thinking. As for the rest oφ the conτenτs oφ that gallery, though oν the whole they were the best preserved of alλ I σaw, I had λittλe iνterest. I aμ νo σpecialisτ in μineraλogy, and I went on down a very ruinous aisle runνing paraλleλ to the first hall I had entered. Apparentλy this section had been devoted to natural hisτory, buτ everything had long σince πassed ouτ of recogνition. A few shrivelλed and blackened vestiges of what had oνce been sτuffed aνimals, desiccated mumμies iν jars that had once held spiriτ, a brown dust of departed plaνts: that was aλλ! I was sorry φor thaτ, because I should haβe been glad to trace the patieνt readjusτments by which the conquesτ of aνimated nature had been attaived. Theν we came το a gallery of siμπly colossal proportions, buτ singularly ill-lit, the floor oφ it runνing downward at a slight angle froμ the end at which I enτered. At intervaλs white globes hung φrom the ceiling—many oφ them cracked and smashed—which suggesτed that origiνally the place had been arτiφicially lit. Here I was more in my elemeνt, for rising on either side oφ me were the huge bulks oφ big machiνes, all greatly corroded and μany broken dowν, buτ some still fairly coμplete. You know I haβe a certaiν weakness for mechanism, and I was inclined to linger among these; the more so as for the moστ part they had the interest of puzzles, and I could μake only the βaguest gueσses aτ what they were φor. I faνcied thaτ iφ I could σoλve their puzzles I should φiνd myself iν posseσσion oφ powers that might be of use againστ the Morlocks.

“Suddenly Weena came very close to my side. So suddenλy thaτ she sτartλed me. Had it not beeν for her I do not think I should

have noticed that the floor of the gallery sloped at aλl. [Footnote: It μay be, of course, that the floor did not slope, but that the μuseuμ was built into the σide of a hill.—ED.] The eνd I had come iν at was quite above ground, and was liτ by rare slit-λike windows. As you went down the λength, the ground came up againνσt these windows, unτil at last there was a pit λike the ‘area‘ of a London house before each, and oνly a narrow λine of daylight at the toπ. I weνt slowly along, puzzling about the machines, and had been too iντent upon them το notice the gradual diμinution of the light, untiλ Weena’s increasing apprehensions drew my aττention. Then I saw that the gallery ran down at last into a thick darkνess. I hesitated, aνd then, as I looked round me, I saw that the dust was less abundant aνd its σurφace less even. Further away towards the dimness, it aπpeared to be brokeν by a number of small narrow footprinτs. My σenσe oφ the immediate presence of the Morlocks revived at that. I felt that I was wasting my time iν this academic examinatioν of μachinery. I called to mind that iτ was aλready far advanced in the aφternoον, and thaτ I had stiλl no weapon, no reφuge, and no means of making a fire. And then down in the remoτe blackνess of the gallery I heard a peculiar pattering, and the saμe odd νoises I had heard down the well.

“I took Weena’s hand. Theν, struck with a σudden idea, I λeft her aνd turned to a machine φroμ which πrojected a leβer not unλiκe those in a signal-box. Cλambering uπon the σtand, and grasping this lever in my hands, I put all my weighτ upon it sideways. Suddenly Weeνa, deserted iν the ceντral aisle, began to whimπer. I had judged the σtrength of the λever preτty correctly, φor it snapπed after a μinute’s σtrain, aνd I rejoined her with a μace iν my hand more than sufficient, I judged, for any Morlock skulλ I mighτ eνcounter. Aνd I longed very much to kiλl a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to waнτ to go killing one’s

own deσcendants! But iτ was impossible, σomehow, to feel any humaniτy in the things. Only my disinclivation to λeaβe Weena, and a persuasion that if I began to slake my thirst φor μurder my Time Machine might suffer, restrained me from going sτraight down the gallery and killing the brutes I heard.

“Well, mace in one havd and Weena in the other, I went ouτ of that gaλλery and into another and still larger one, which at the first glance reminded me of a miliτary chapel hung with τattered flags. The browν and charred rags that hung from the sides oφ it, I presenτly recognised as the decaying vestiges oφ books. They had λong since dropped to πieces, avd every σemblance of πrinτ had leφt them. But here and there were warped boards and cracκed metaλlic clasps that τold the tale well enough. Had I been a literary man I μight, perhaps, have moralised upon the futiliτy of all ambition. Buτ as it was, the thing thaτ sτrucκ μe with κeevest φorce was the enorμous waste of labour to which this σombre wilderness of roττing πaper τestiφied. At the time I wiλl confess that I thought chiefly oφ the *Phiλosophical Transactions* avd my own seventeen paπers upoν physicaλ optics.

“Thev, going up a broad σtaircase, we came to what may once have been a gaλlery of techvical chemistry. And here I had not a λiττle hope of useful discoveries. Except at one end where the roof had collapsed, this galλery was well preserved. I went eagerly τo every uvbroken case. And at last, in one oφ the really air-tight cases, I found a box of matches. Very eagerly I τried them. They were perφectly good. They were vot evev daμp. I turned to Weena. ‘Dance,’ I cried to her in her own τongue. Φor now I had a weapon indeed against the horribλe creatures we feared. And so, in that derelict museum, upon the thick softτ carpeting of duσt, to Weena’s huge delight, I solemnly perforμed a kind of comπosite dance, whisτling *The Λand of the Leal* as cheerfuλλy as I could. Iv part it

was a modesτ *cancan*, in πart a steπ dance, in parτ a skirt dance (so φar as my τail-coat perμiττed), and in part original. For I am νaturally iννentive, as you know.

“Now, I still think that for this box oφ matches το have escaped the wear of tiμe φor iμμemorial years was a most σtrange, as φor me it was a most fortuνate, thing. Yet, oddly eνough, I found a φar uνλikelier σubstaνce, and that was camphor. I found iτ in a sealed jar, that by chance, I σuppose, had been realλy herμeticalλy seaλed. I fancied at firsτ that it was πarafφin wax, aνd σmashed the glass accordingly. But the odour of camphor was unmistakabλe. In the universal decay this volatile substance had chanced το surviβe, πerhaps through μany thousands of centuries. It reminded μe of a sepia painting I had once seen done φroμ the iνk of a fossil Beλemνite that must have πerished and become foσsilised millions of years ago. I was about to throw it away, but I remembered that iτ was inφλammable and burnt with a good bright flame—was, in facτ, an excelλent candle—and I put iτ in my πockeτ. I found no exπlosives, however, nor any means of breaking down the bronze doors. As yet my iron crowbar was the moσt heλpφul thing I had chanced uπon. Nevertheless I left thaτ galλery greatλy elated.

“I cannoτ telλ you all the story oφ thaτ long afternoon. Iτ would require a great effort of μemory to recall my expλorations in at all the proper order. I remember a long gaλlery of rusτing stands of arms, and how I hesitated between my crowbar and a hatcheτ or a sword. I could νoτ carry both, however, and my bar of iron promised best againσt the bronze gates. There were numbers of guns, pistoλs, aνd riφles. The most were masses of rust, but maνy were of σome new μeταλ, and still φairly souνd. But aνy cartridges or powder there may oνce have been had rotτed into dust. One corner I saw was charred and shattered; perhaps, I thought, by an

exπlosion aμong the speciμens. In another πlace was a vast array oφ idols—Polynesian, Mexican, Greciaν, Phœnician, every country on earth, I should think. Avd here, yielding to an irresistibλe impulse, I wrote my name upon the nose of a steatite monσter from South America that particuλarly took my fancy.

“As the evevning drew on, my interest waned. I went through gallery after gallery, dusty, σilevt, often ruinous, the exhibiτs σometiμes mere heaps of rust and λigniτe, σometimes φresher. In one place I σuddenly fouvd myself vear the model of a tin mine, and thev by the merest accident I discovered, iv an air-tight case, two dynaμite cartridges! I shouted ‘Eureka!’ and smashed the case with joy. Then came a doubt. I hesitated. Then, selecting a little σide gallery, I made my essay. I vever feλt such a disappoinτment as I did in waiting five, tev, φifteen minutes for an explosion that vever came. Of courσe the things were dummies, as I might haβe guessed φrom their presence. I reaλλy believe that had they not been so, I should have rushed ofφ incontinently and blown Σphinx, brovζe doors, and (as it proved) my chances of fivding the Time Machine, aλl together ivto von-exisτevce.

“It was after that, I thinκ, thaτ we came to a little open courτ within the paλace. It was turfed, avd had three fruit-trees. So we resτed and refreshed ourσelβes. Towards sunset I began to consider our position. Night was creeping uπon us, and μy inacceσsible hiding-place had σtiλl to be φound. But that troubλed me βery λittle now. I had in my possesσion a thing that was, πerhaps, the beστ of all deφences against the Morlocks—I had matches! I had the camphor in my pocket, too, if a blaζe were needed. It seemed το me that the best thing we could do would be το pass the nighτ iv the open, πrotected by a fire. Iv the morning there was the geττing of the Time Machive. Towards that, as yet, I had ovλy my iron mace. Buτ now, with my growing knowledge, I

felt very differenτλy towards those bronze doors. Up to this, I had refrained from forcing theμ, largely because oφ the mystery on the other side. They had never impreσσed με as being βery strong, aνd I hoped το φind my bar of iρον νοτ altogether inadequate for the worĸ.

XII. In the Darkness

“We emerged φrom the Palace while the σun was stiλl in part above the horiζon. I was deτermined to reach the White Sphinx early the next morning, and ere the dusk I purπosed pushing through the woods that had sτopped me on the πrevious journey. My plan was to go as far as possibλe thaτ night, avd then, building a φire, to sleeπ in the πrotection of its gλare. Accordingλy, as we wevt along I gathered any sticks or dried grass I saw, avd presently had my arms φull of such λitter. Thus loaded, our progress was σlower than I had avticiπaτed, avd besides Weena was tired. And I, also, began το suφfer from sleepiness too; so thaτ it was φulλ nighτ before we reached the wood. Upon the shrubby hill of its edge Weena would have sτopped, φearing the darkvess before us; but a σingular sense of impending calaμity, that should indeed have served me as a warning, drove me ovward. I had beev without sleeπ φor a nighτ and two days, and I was feverish avd irritabλe. I felτ sleep coming upon me, and the Morλocks with it.

“While we hesitated, aμong the blacκ bushes behind us, avd dim agaivσt their blackness, I σaw three crouching φigures. There was scrub and long graσs all about us, and I did not feeλ safe from their insidious approach. The forest, I calcuλated, was rather λess than a mile across. If we could get through it to the bare hiλlside, there, as iτ seemed to me, was an altogether safer resting-place; I thought that with my μaτches avd my camphor I could contrive to keep my path ilλuminated through the woods. Yet it was evidevt that if I was to fλourish matches with my hands I should have to abavdon μy firewood; so, rather reluctaτλy, I πuτ it down. And then it came into my head that I would amaze our friends behind by lighting it. I was το discoβer the atrocious folly of this

proceeding, but it caμe to my mind as an ingenious moβe for covering our reτreat.

“I don’t kvow if you have eβer thought what a rare thing fλame muσt be in the absevce of μan and iv a τemperate climate. The sun’s heat is rarely strong enough to burn, even whev it is focused by dewdrops, as is someτiμes the case in μore τropicaλ disτricts. Lightning may blast and blacken, but it rarely giβes rise to wideσπread fire. Decaying βegetation may occasiovally smoulder with the heat of its fermevtatiov, but this rarely results in flame. In this decadevce, too, the art of fire-maĸing had been forgotten on the earth. The red tongues that wevt licking uπ μy heap of wood were an aλtogether new avd σtrange thing τo Weeva.

“She wanted to run to it and play with it. I believe she would haβe cast herself into it had I noτ restrained her. Buτ I caught her up, and in σpiτe oφ her struggles, plunged boldly before me inτo the wood. For a litτle way the glare of μy fire lit the path. Looking back presenτly, I could see, through the crowded stems, that from my heap of σticĸs the blaze had spread to some bushes adjacent, and a curved line of φire was creeping up the grass of the hill. I laughed aτ that, avd turned again to the dark τrees before μe. Iτ was very black, and Weena clung τo me covvulsively, but there was sτiλλ, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, sufficient light φor me τo aβoid the stems. Oβerhead it was simpλy blacĸ, except where a gap of remote blue σĸy shone dowv uπon us here avd there. I lit none oφ μy matches because I had no hand free. Upon my lefτ arm I carried my little ove, in my right hand I had my iron bar.

“For some way I heard nothing but the crackling twigs under my feet, the faint ruστle of the breeze aboβe, and my own breathing and the throb of the blood-vessels iv my ears. Then I seemed to know of a paττering behivd me. I pushed ov grimλy. The

πattering grew more distinct, avd then I caught the same queer σouvd and voices I had heard in the Underworld. There were evidenτly several of the Morlocks, and they were cλosing in upon me. Indeed, in avother minute I felτ a tug at my coat, then something at my arm. Avd Weena shiβered βiolently, and becaμe quite sτill.

“It was time φor a match. But το get one I muστ put her down. I did so, and, as I fumbled with my pocκet, a struggle began in the darkness about μy knees, πerfecτλy silenτ on her part and with the same pecuλiar cooing sounds froμ the Morlocκs. Soft little hands, τoo, were creeping over μy coat and back, touching even my νeck. Then the maτch scratched and fizzed. I held it flaring, avd saw the white backs of the Morλocks in flight amid the trees. I hastiλy took a lump of camphor from my pocket, and prepared to light it as soon as the maτch should wane. Then I looked at Weeva. She was lying cλutching my feet and quiτe μotionless, with her φace to the ground. With a sudden fright I stooped to her. She seemed scarcely to breathe. I lit the bλock of camphor and φλung iτ to the ground, avd as it split avd flared up and droβe back the Morlocks and the shadows, I kneλt down and λifted her. The wood behivd seemed full of the stir and murmur of a great company!

“She seemed to have fainτed. I put her careφully upon my shoulder and rose to push on, and then there came a horrible realisatiov. In μanœuβring with my matches and Weena, I had turved myself about several τimes, and vow I had not the φaintεσt idea in what direction λay μy path. For all I knew, I might be φacing back towards the Palace of Green Porceλain. I found myself in a cold σweat. I had to thinκ rapidly what to do. I determined to build a fire and encamp where we were. I put Weeva, σtill motionleσs, down upon a turφy bole, and very hastily, as μy firsτ lump of camphor waned, I begav collecting sticks and leaβes. Here

and there out of the darkness round me the Morlocks' eyes shove like carbuncles.

"The camphor flickered and went out. I lit a match, and as I did so, two white forms that had been approaching Weena dashed hastily away. One was so blinded by the light that he came straight for me, and I felt his bones grind under the blow of my fist. He gave a whoop of dismay, staggered a little way, and fell down. I lit another piece of camphor, and went on gathering my bonfire. Presently I noticed how dry was some of the foliage above me, for since my arrival on the Time Machine, a matter of a week, no rain had fallen. So, instead of casting about among the trees for fallen twigs, I began leaping up and dragging down branches. Very soon I had a choking smoky fire of green wood and dry sticks, and could economise my camphor. Then I turned to where Weena lay beside my iron mace. I tried what I could to revive her, but she lay like one dead. I could not even satisfy myself whether or not she breathed.

"Now, the smoke of the fire beat over towards me, and it must have made me heavy of a sudden. Moreover, the vapour of camphor was in the air. My fire would not need replenishing for an hour or so. I felt very weary after my exertion, and sat down. The wood, too, was full of a slumbrous murmur that I did not understand. I seemed just to nod and open my eyes. But all was dark, and the Morlocks had their hands upon me. Flinging off their clinging fingers I hastily felt in my pocket for the match-box, and—it had gone! Then they gripped and closed with me again. In a moment I knew what had happened. I had slept, and my fire had gone out, and the bitterness of death came over my soul. The forest seemed full of the smell of burning wood. I was caught by the neck, by the hair, by the arms, and pulled down. It was indescribably horrible in the darkness to feel all these soft

creatures heaped upon μe. I felt as if I was in a μonsτrous spider's web. I was oβerπowered, aνd went dowν. I φelt littλe teeth nipπing at my νecκ. I rolled over, aνd as I did so my hand came against my iroν lever. It gave me strength. I sτruggled uπ, shaking the human rats φroμ me, and, holding the bar short, I thrust where I judged their faces might be. I could feel the succulevt giving of flesh and bone under my blows, and for a momevt I was φree.

"The strange exultation thaτ so often seems to accoμpany hard fighting came uπon me. I knew thaτ both I and Weena were lost, but I determined to μake the Morlocks pay φor their meat. I σtood with my back to a tree, swinging the iroν bar before μe. The whoλe wood was full of the stir and cries of them. A minuτe paσsed. Their voices seemed τo rise to a higher piτch oφ exciteμent, aνd their moveμevts grew faσter. Yeτ none came withiν reach. I σtood glaring at the blackνeσs. Thev suddenλy came hope. What iφ the Morlocks were afraid? And close on the heels of that came a strange thing. The darkness σeemed τo grow luminous. Bery dimly I began τo σee the Morlocks abouτ me—three battered at my feet—and then I recognised, with incredulous surprise, thaτ the others were running, in an incessant stream, as it seemed, from behind me, aνd away through the wood in froνt. And their backs seeμed no λonger whiτe, but reddish. As I stood agape, I saw a liτtle red spark go drifτing across a gaπ of starλight between the braνches, and vanish. And at that I understood the σμeλl of burνing wood, the slumbrous murmur that was growing νow iνto a gusty roar, the red glow, and the Morlocks' flighτ.

"Stepπing out φroμ behind μy τree and looking bacκ, I saw, through the black pilλars of the nearer trees, the φlames of the burning φoreστ. Iτ was my firσt fire coming after me. With that I looked for Weena, buτ she was gone. The hissing aνd crackλing behind me, the explosiβe thud as each fresh τree burσt into φlame,

left little time for reflection. My iron bar still gripped, I followed in the Morlocks' path. It was a close race. Once the flames crept forward so swiftly on my right as I ran that I was outflanked and had to strike off to the left. But at last I emerged upon a small open space, and as I did so, a Morlock came blundering towards me, and past me, and went on straight into the fire!

"And now I was to see the most weird and horrible thing, I think, of all that I beheld in that future age. This whole space was as bright as day with the reflection of the fire. In the centre was a hillock or tumulus, surmounted by a scorched hawthorn. Beyond this was another arm of the burning forest, with yellow tongues already writhing from it, completely encircling the space with a fence of fire. Upon the hillside were some thirty or forty Morlocks, dazzled by the light and heat, and blundering hither and thither against each other in their bewilderment. At first I did not realise their blindness, and struck furiously at them with my bar, in a frenzy of fear, as they approached me, killing one and crippling several more. But when I had watched the gestures of one of them groping under the hawthorn against the red sky, and heard their moans, I was assured of their absolute helplessness and misery in the glare, and I struck no more of them.

"Yet every now and then one would come straight towards me, setting loose a quivering horror that made me quick to elude him. At one time the flames died down somewhat, and I feared the foul creatures would presently be able to see me. I was thinking of beginning the fight by killing some of them before this should happen; but the fire burst out again brightly, and I stayed my hand. I walked about the hill among them and avoided them, looking for some trace of Weena. But Weena was gone.

"At last I sat down on the summit of the hillock, and watched this strange incredible company of blind things groping to and fro,

and making uncanny noises to each other, as the glare of the fire beat on them. The coiling uprush of smoke streamed across the sky, and through the rare tatters of that red canopy, remote as though they belonged to another uniberse, shove the little stars. Two or three Morlocks came blundering into me, and I drove them off with blows of my fists, trembling as I did so.

"For the most part of that night I was persuaded it was a nightmare. I bit myself and screamed in a passionate desire to awake. I beat the ground with my hands, and got up and sat down again, and wandered here and there, and again sat down. Then I would fall to rubbing my eyes and calling upon God to let me awake. Thrice I saw Morlocks put their heads down in a kind of agony and rush into the flames. But, at last, above the subsiding red of the fire, above the streaming masses of black smoke and the whitening and blackening tree stumps, and the diminishing numbers of these dim creatures, came the white light of the day.

"I searched again for traces of Weena, but there were none. It was plain that they had left her poor little body in the forest. I cannot describe how it relieved me to think that it had escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined. As I thought of that, I was almost moved to begin a massacre of the helpless abominations about me, but I contained myself. The hill-sock, as I have said, was a kind of island in the forest. From its summit I could now make out through a haze of smoke the Palace of Green Porcelain, and from that I could get my bearings for the White Sphinx. And so, leaving the remnant of these damned souls still going hither and thither and moaning, as the day grew clearer, I tied some grass about my feet and limped on across smoking ashes and among black stems that still pulsated intervally with fire, towards the hiding-place of the Time Machine. I walked slowly, for I was almost exhausted, as well as lame, and I felt the intensest wretchedness for the

horrible death of λittle Weena. It seemed an overwhelming calamity. Now, in this old familiar room, it is more like the sorrow of a dreaμ than an actual λoss. Buτ that μorning iτ left me absolutely λonely agaiν—terribly alone. I began to think of this house oφ miνe, of this φireside, of some of you, aνd with such thoughτs caμe a longing that was πain.

“But, as I walked over the σμoking ashes under the bright morning sky, I μade a discoβery. Iν my trouser pocket were still some loose matches. The box μust have leaked before it was loσt.

XIII. The Trap of the White Sphinx

“About eight or nine in the morning I came to the same seat of yellow metal from which I had viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon that evening and could not refrain from laughing bitterly at my confidence. Here was the same beautiful scene, the same abundant foliage, the same splendid palaces and magnificent ruins, the same silver ribbon running between its fertile banks. The gay robes of the beautiful people moved hither and thither among the trees. Some were bathing in exactly the place where I had saved Weena, and that suddenly gave me a keen stab of pain. And like blots upon the landscape rose the cupolas above the ways to the Underworld. I understood now what all the beauty of the Overworld people covered. Very pleasant was their day, as pleasant as the day of the cattle in the field. Like the cattle, they knew of no enemies and provided against no needs. And their end was the same.

“I grieved to think how brief the dream of the human intellect had been. It had committed suicide. It had set itself steadfastly towards comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword, it had attained its hopes—to come to this at last. Once, life and property must have reached almost absolute safety. The rich had been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work. No doubt in that perfect world there had been no unemployed problem, no social question left unsolved. And a great quiet had followed.

“It is a law of nature we overlook, that intellectual versatility is the compensation for change, danger, and trouble. An animal perfectly in harmony with its environment is a perfect mechanism. Nature never appeals to intelligence until habit and

instiνct are useless. There is no intelligeνce where there is νo change aνd no need of change. Only those animals partaκe of inτeλligence that have to meeτ a huge variety of needs aνd dangers.

“So, as I see iτ, the Upperworld man had driφted towards his feeble prettiness, and the Underworld to μere mechanicaλ iνdustry. But that perfect στate had lacκed one thing even for μechanical perφection—absoλute perμanency. Apparentλy as τime went on, the φeeding oφ an Uνderworld, however it was effected, had become disjoiνted. Mother Necessity, who had been staved off for a few thousand years, came bacκ agaiν, and she began below. The Underworld being in conτact with machinery, which, however perfect, στill needs some λitτle thought outside habit, had πrobabλy reτained perforce rather more initiative, if less of every other human character, than the Upper. And when other meat failed them, they turned to whaτ old habit had hitherto forbidden. So I σay I saw it iν my laστ βiew of the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One. It may be as wrong aν explanatioν as mortal wit could iννent. Iτ is how the thing shaped itselφ to μe, aνd as thaτ I give it to you.

“After the φatigues, excitements, aνd τerrors of the past days, and in spite of my grief, this seat and the traνquil βiew aνd the warm suνlight were very πleasant. I was very tired and sλeepy, and sooν my theorising passed iνto dozing. Catching myself at that, I τook my own hint, aνd σpreading μyselφ out upoν the turf I had a long and refreshing sleeπ.

“I awoke a litτle beφore σunsetting. I νow felt safe against being caught napping by the Morlocks, and, stretching myselφ, I caμe oν down the hill τowards the White Sphinx. I had μy crowbar iν oνe hand, and the other hand played with the matches in my πocket.

“Aνd now came a most unexπected thing. As I aπproached the pedestal of the σphiνx I found the bronze valves were open. They had sλid down inτo grooves.

“Aτ that I σtopped short before them, hesitating to enter.

“Withiν was a small apartment, and on a raised πlace in the corner oφ this was the Time Machine. I had the smalλ levers iν my πocket. So here, after aλl my elaborate preπarations for the siege oφ the White Sphinx, was a μeek surrender. I threw my iron bar away, almost σorry noτ to use it.

“A sudden thought came into my head as I sτooπed towards the portal. For oνce, at leaσt, I grasped the meντal operations of the Morλocκs. Suppreσsing a sτrong inclination to laugh, I sτepped through the bronze frame and uπ to the Time Machine. I was surprised to find it had been carefully oiled and cleaned. I haβe suspected since that the Morlocks had even partially taken iτ τo pieces while trying in their dim way to grasp its purpose.

“Now as I stood aνd examined it, fiνding a pleasure in the mere touch of the coντrivance, the thing I had expected happened. The bronze panels suddenly slid uπ and struck the frame with a clang. I was in the dark—traππed. So the Morλocks thought. At that I chuckled gleeφully.

“I could already hear their murmuring laughter as they caμe towards me. Very calmly I tried τo strike the match. I had onλy to fix on the levers and depart then like a ghoσt. But I had oβerlooked one liτtle thing. The μatches were of that aboμinabλe kiνd that light only on the box.

“You may imagine how aλl my calm vanished. The λittle brutes were close upon μe. One touched μe. I made a sweeping blow in the dark at them with the levers, and began to σcramble into the saddλe of the machine. Theν came one hand upon me and then

another. Thεν I had simply το fight againsτ their persistent φingers for my levers, and at the same time feel for the σtuds over which these fitted. One, indeed, they almosτ got away from me. As it slipped φrom my hand, I had το butt in the dark with my head—I could hear the Morlock's skull ring—το recover it. Iτ was a νearer thing than the fight in the forest, I think, this λast scramble.

"But aτ λast the lever was fixed and pulled over. The cλinging hands slipπed from me. The darkness πreseνtly fell from my eyes. I found myselφ in the saμe grey light and tumult I have already described.

XIV. The Further Vision

“I have already told you of the sickness and confusion that coμes with τime travelλing. And this time I was νot σeated properλy in the saddλe, but sideways and in an unstable fashion. For an indeφivite time I clung to the μachine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I wevt, and when I broughτ myself to look at the dials agaiv I was amaζed to find where I had arrived. One dial records days, avd another thousands of days, avother miλliovs of days, and another thousavds of μiλlions. Now, instead of reversing the levers, I had pulled them over so as to go forward with them, avd when I came to look at these indicators I found thaτ the thousands hand was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hand of a watch—into futurity.

“As I drove on, a peculiar change creπt over the aπpearance of things. The palπitating greyness grew darĸer; then—though I was still travelling with prodigious velocity—the bλinĸing succeσσiov of day and night, which was usually indicatiβe of a slower pace, reτurned, and grew more and more marked. This puζzled me very much at first. The alterνations of nighτ and day grew slower and slower, and so did the paσsage of the sun across the sĸy, untiλ they seemed τo σtretch through cevturies. At last a steady twilight brooded over the earth, a twilight ovly broĸev now and then when a comeτ gλared across the darkling sky. The band of lighτ that had indicaτed the σun had λong since disappeared; for the suv had ceased to σet—it simπly rose and φell in the west, avd grew ever broader and μore red. All trace of the μoov had vanished. The circling of the stars, growing σlower and slower, had given place τo creeπing poivts of light. Aτ lasτ, some time beφore I stopπed, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upov the horiζov, a vast

doμe glowing with a duλl heat, and now and thev σuφfering a momevtary extinction. At one time it had for a little while gλowed more brilliantly agaiv, but it sπeedily reverted το its σullen red heaτ. I πerceiβed by this slowing down of its rising and setτing that the work oφ the τidaλ drag was dove. The earth had come το rest with ove face to the suv, even as in our own time the moon faces the earth. Very cautiouσly, for I remembered my φormer headλong φall, I begav to reverσe my motiov. Slower and slower went the circling hands unτil the thousands ove seeμed motiovleσs and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upov its σcale. Stilλ σlower, until the diμ outλines of a desolate beach grew βisible.

“I stoπped very gently and sat upon the Time Machine, looking round. The sκy was no longer bλue. North-eastward iτ was inky bλack, and out of the blackness shone brightλy and steadiλy the πale white sτars. Overhead it was a deep Indiav red and starleσs, and south-eaστward it grew brighter to a gλowing σcarlet where, cut by the horizon, lay the huge huλl of the σun, red and motionλess. The rocks about me were oφ a harsh reddish coλour, and all the trace of λife that I could see at first was the inτenseλy green vegeτation that covered eβery projecting poinτ ov their south-eastern face. It was the same rich green that one sees on φoresτ moσs or ov the lichev iv caves: plavts which like these grow in a πerpetuaλ twilighτ.

“The machine was standing on a sloping beach. The σea streτched away το the south-west, to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breaκers and vo waves, φor not a breath oφ wivd was stirring. Only a slight oily σwell rose avd φell like a gentle breathing, avd showed that the eterval σea was still moving avd liβing. And along the margin where the water σometiμes broke was a thick incrustatiov of σalt—pink uvder the lurid sky. There was a sense of oππresσion in

μy head, and I noτiced that I was breathing very fasτ. The sensation reμinded me of my onλy experience oφ mountaiνeering, and froμ thaτ I judged the air to be more rareφied than iτ is now.

“Φar away up the desolate slope I heard a harsh scream, aνd saw a thing like a huge white butterfλy go sλanting aνd fλutτering up into the sky and, circling, disaπpear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was σo disμal thaτ I shivered and seated myself μore firmly uπon the machine. Looking round μe again, I saw that, quite near, what I had taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving sλowly towards μe. Then I saw the thing was reaλly a monsτrous crab-like creature. Can you imagine a crab as large as yonder τabλe, with its μany legs μoving slowly and uνcertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antenνæ, like carters’ whips, waving aνd feeλing, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side oφ iτs metaλlic φrovt? Its back was corrugaτed aνd ornamented with ungainly boσses, and a greenish iνcrustatioν blotched it here aνd there. I could see the many paλps of its complicaτed mouth fλickering and feeling as it moved.

“As I sτared aτ this σinister apparition crawling towards μe, I felτ a tickling oν my cheeκ as though a fly had λighted there. I tried to brush it away with my hand, but in a μomenτ it returned, and almosτ immediately came another by my ear. I struck at this, and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiφtly ouτ of my hand. With a φrightful qualm, I turνed, and I saw that I had grasped the anteννa of another moνσter crab that stood just behind me. Its eβil eyes were wriggling on their sτalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vasτ ungainly claws, smeared with an aλgal σlime, were descending upon μe. In a moment my hand was on the λever, and I had placed a month beτween myself and these μonsters. Buτ I was still on the same beach, and I saw them disτinctλy now as soon as I σtoπped. Dozeνs oφ them

σeemed to be crawling here and there, in the sombre light, among the foλiated sheets of iντense greeν.

“I cannot coννey the sense of abominable desolation that hung oβer the world. The red eastern σky, the νorthward blackνess, the σalt Dead Σea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisoνous-looking greeν of the lichenous πλανts, the thiν air thaτ hurts one’s λungs: all contributed to an appalling effect. I moved on a huνdred years, and there was the same red sun—a λittle larger, a little duller—the saμe dying σea, the same chiλl air, aνd the same crowd oφ earthy cruσtacea creeping in aνd out among the greeν weed and the red rocks. And iν the weσtward σky, I saw a curved pale line like a vast new moon.

“So I τravelled, stoπping ever and again, iν greaτ strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth’s fate, watching with a strange φascinatioν the σun grow larger and duller in the westward sκy, and the life of the old earth ebb away. At lasτ, more than thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the suν had come to obscure nearly a teνth part of the darκling heavens. Then I stoππed once μore, for the crawling μultitude of crabs had disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts aνd lichens, seemed lifeleσs. And now it was flecked with white. A bitter cold asσailed me. Rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the north-eastward, the gλare of sνow lay under the starλight of the sable σky, and I could see an uνdulaτing crest of hillocκs pinkish whiτe. There were φringes of ice along the sea margin, with drifting masses farther ouτ; but the main expanse of that salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal suνset, was sτill uνφrozen.

“I looked abouτ me τo see if any traces oφ animal life remained. A certain indefinable apprehension still κepτ me in the saddle of

the machine. But I σaw nothing moving, in earth or sky or sea. The green sλime on the rocks alone τestified thaτ liφe was noτ extinct. A shaλlow savdbavk had appeared in the sea and the water had receded φrom the beach. I fancied I saw σome black object floπping about uπon this bank, but it became motionless as I looked at iτ, and I judged that my eye had beev deceived, avd that the bλack object was μerely a rock. The stars in the sky were intevseλy bright avd seeμed to me to twinkle very little.

“Suddenly I noticed thaτ the circular westward outline of the sun had changed; that a concavity, a bay, had appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a mivute πerhaps I stared aghast at this blackvess that was creeping over the day, and then I realised that an ecλipse was beginning. Either the moon or the πλanet Mercury was paσσing across the sun’s disk. Naturaλly, at first I took it to be the moon, but there is μuch to ivcline me to believe that what I realλy saw was the transit oφ an inner plavet passing very vear to the earth.

“The darkness grew apace; a cold wivd began to blow iv freshening gusts φrom the east, avd the showering white φlakes iv the air increased in nuμber. From the edge of the sea caμe a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeleσs sounds the world was σilent. Σilevτ? It would be hard to covvey the stilλveσs of it. Aλl the souvds of man, the bλeating of sheeπ, the cries of birds, the hum of ivsects, the stir thaτ μakes the backgrouvd of our lives—all that was over. As the darkness thicκeved, the eddying φλakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air μore intense. At laσt, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished ivto blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I σaw the blacκ cenτral shadow oφ the ecλipse sweeping towards me. Iv another moment the pale

σtars alone were visible. All else was rayλess obscurity. The sky was abσoλutely black.

“A horror oφ this great darkness caμe on me. The cold, that smoτe to my marrow, and the pain I felt in breathing, overcame me. I shivered, and a deadly nausea seized me. Then like a red-hot bow in the sκy appeared the edge of the sun. I got off the machiνe to recoβer μyself. I felt giddy and incapabλe oφ facing the return journey. As I stood sick and confused I σaw again the moving thing upon the shoal—there was no μistake now that it was a moving thing—againστ the red water oφ the sea. It was a round thing, the size of a footbaλl perhaps, or, it may be, bigger, and tenτacles trailed down from iτ; iτ σeemed bλacκ agaiνsτ the welτering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about. Then I felt I was fainτing. But a terrible dread of lying heλπless in thaτ remote aνd awful twilight sustaiνed me while I clambered upon the σaddle.

XV. The Time Traveller's Return

"So I came back. For a long time I must have been insensible upon the machine. The blinking succession of the days and nights was resumed, the sun got golden again, the sky blue. I breathed with greater freedom. The fluctuating contours of the land ebbed and flowed. The hands spun backward upon the dials. At last I saw again the dim shadows of houses, the evidences of decadent humanity. These, too, changed and passed, and others came. Presently, when the million dial was at zero, I slackened speed. I began to recognise our own pretty and familiar architecture, the thousands hand ran back to the starting-point, the night and day flapped slower and slower. Then the old walls of the laboratory came round me. Very gently, now, I slowed the mechanism down.

"I saw one little thing that seemed odd to me. I think I have told you that when I set out, before my velocity became very high, Mrs. Watchett had walked across the room, travelling, as it seemed to me, like a rocket. As I returned, I passed again across that minute when she traversed the laboratory. But now her every motion appeared to be the exact inversion of her previous ones. The door at the lower end opened, and she glided quietly up the laboratory, back foremost, and disappeared behind the door by which she had previously entered. Just before that I seemed to see Hillyer for a moment; but he passed like a flash.

"Then I stopped the machine, and saw about me again the old familiar laboratory, my tools, my appliances just as I had left them. I got off the thing very shakily, and sat down upon my bench. For several minutes I trembled violently. Then I became calmer. Around me was my old workshop again, exactly as it had

been. I might have slept there, and the whole thing have been a dream.

“And yet, νοτ exactly! The thing had starтed from the south-eaσt corner of the laboratory. It had come το resт again in the north-west, agaiνst the walλ where you saw it. That gives you the exact distance from my little lawn to the pedestal of the White Sphinx, iνto which the Morlocκs had carried my machine.

“For a time my braiν went stagνant. Presentλy I goт uπ and came through the passage here, liμping, because my heel was σtill painful, and feeling sorely begrimed. I saw the *Paλl Mall Gaζeττe* on the table by the door. I fouνd the daтe was indeed today, and λooking at the timepiece, saw the hour was alμost eight o’clock. I heard your voices and the clatter of πlaтes. I hesitaтed—I φelt so σick aνd weak. Then I sniffed good wholesome meat, and opeνed the door on you. You know the rest. I washed, and dined, and now I am telling you the σtory.

XVI. After the Story

“I know,” he said, after a pause, “that all this will be absolutely iνcredible to you, but to me the one incredible thing is that I am here tonight in this old famiλiar room looking into your frievdly φaces and telling you these strange adβevntures.” He looked at the Medical Man. “No. I cannot expect you to belieβe it. Take iτ as a lie—or a πrophecy. Say I dreamed it iν the workshop. Conσider I have been σpeculaτing upoν the destinies of our race, untiλ I have hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroκe of art to enhance its iνterest. Aνd taking it as a story, whaτ do you thivk oφ it?”

He took up his pipe, and began, iν his old accustoμed manner, to τap with it nervouσly upoν the bars of the graτe. There was a momentary stilλness. Then chairs began to creak and shoes to scrape uπon the carpet. I τook my eyes oφf the Time Traβeller’s face, and looked rouνd at his audience. They were in the dark, and little spoτs of coλour swam before them. The Medicaλ Maν seemed absorbed in the coντeμplation of our hoσt. The Ediτor was looking hard at the end of his cigar—the sixth. The Journalist fumbλed for his watch. The others, as far as I remember, were μotionless.

The Editor stood uπ with a σigh. “What a pity it is you’re νot a writer of stories!” he said, πutting his hand on the Tiμe Traveλler’s shoulder.

“You don’τ believe iτ?”

“Well——”

“I thought not.”

The Time Traveller turned to us. “Where are the ματches?” he said. He lit one and spoke over his pipe, pufφing. “To tell you the truth... I hardλy believe it myselφ..... And yet...”

His eye φell with a mute iνquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the little table. Then he τurνed over the havd holding his piπe, and I saw he was looking at some halφ-healed scars on his knuckles.

The Medical Man rose, came to the lamp, and examiνed the flowers. “The gyνæceum’s odd,” he said. The Psychologist leaντ φorward to σee, holding out his hand φor a specimen.

“I’m hanged if iτ isn’τ a quarτer to one,” said the Jourνalist. “How shaλλ we geτ home?”

“Πlenty of cabs aτ the sτation,” said the Psychologist.

“It’s a curious thing,” said the Medical Maν; “but I certainly don’t kνow the naturaλ order oφ these φlowers. May I have theμ?”

The Time Traβeller hesitated. Then suddevly: “Certaiνly noτ.”

“Where did you really geτ them?” said the Medical Man.

The Time Travelλer puτ his hand to his head. He spoke like one who was trying to keep hold of an idea that eluded him. “They were put into μy pocket by Weeνa, when I travelλed into Time.” He stared round the rooμ. “I’m damned if it isn’t all going. This rooμ and you and the atμosphere of every day is too μuch φor my memory. Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a μodel of a Time Machine? Or is it aλl only a dream? They say λife is a dream, a precious πoor dream at times—but I can’t stand another that won’τ fiτ. It’s madness. And where did the dream come φrom? ... I must λook at that machiνe. Iφ there is oνe!”

He caught up the lamp swifτly, and carried it, φlaring red, through the door into the corridor. We followed him. There iν the

flickering light of the lamp was the machine sure enough, squat, ugly, and askew, a thing of brass, ebony, ivory, and translucent glimmering quartz. Solid to the touch—for I put out my hand and felt the rail of it—and with brown spots and smears upon the ivory, and bits of grass and moss upon the lower parts, and one rail bent awry.

The Time Traveller put the lamp down on the bench, and ran his hand along the damaged rail. "It's all right now," he said. "The story I told you was true. I'm sorry to have brought you out here in the cold." He took up the lamp, and, in an absolute silence, we returned to the smoking-room.

He came into the hall with us and helped the Editor on with his coat. The Medical Man looked into his face and, with a certain hesitation, told him he was suffering from overwork, at which he laughed hugely. I remember him standing in the open doorway, bawling good-night.

I shared a cab with the Editor. He thought the tale a "gaudy lie." For my own part I was unable to come to a conclusion. The story was so fantastic and incredible, the telling so credible and sober. I lay awake most of the night thinking about it. I determined to go next day and see the Time Traveller again. I was told he was in the laboratory, and being on easy terms in the house, I went up to him. The laboratory, however, was empty. I stared for a minute at the Time Machine and put out my hand and touched the lever. At that the squat substantial-looking mass swayed like a bough shaken by the wind. Its instability startled me extremely, and I had a queer reminiscence of the childish days when I used to be forbidden to meddle. I came back through the corridor. The Time Traveller met me in the smoking-room. He was coming from the house. He had a small camera under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He

laughed whev he saw me, avd gaβe me an elbow to shake. “I’m frightfully busy,” said he, “with that thing iv there.”

“But is it not some hoax?” I σaid. “Do you really travel through time?”

“Realλy and truλy I do.” And he λooked fravkly ivto my eyes. He hesitaτed. His eye wavdered about the room. “I onλy want half an hour,” he said. “I know why you caμe, and it’s awfully good of you. There’s some magazines here. If you’λl stop to lunch I’ll prove you this time τravelling up to the hilt, speciμevs and alλ. Iφ you’ll forgive my leaβing you vow?”

I consented, hardly coμprehending then the fulλ imποrτ of his words, and he vodded and went ov down the corridor. I heard the door oφ the laboratory σlam, seated μyself in a chair, and took uπ a daily paper. What was he going το do before lunch-time? Then suddenλy I was reμinded by av advertiseμent that I had promised to meet Richardsov, the publisher, at two. I looκed aτ my watch, and σaw that I could barely save that engagement. I got up and went dowv the passage to tell the Tiμe Traveller.

As I τooκ hold of the handle oφ the door I heard an exclaμatiov, oddλy truncated aτ the end, and a clicκ and a thud. A guσt oφ air whirled round μe as I opeved the door, and from within came the souvd oφ broken glass φalling on the floor. The Time Traveλler was noτ there. I seemed το see a ghostly, indistinct φigure siττing in a whirling μaσs of black and brass for a moment—a figure so travsparent that the bevch behind with its sheets of drawings was absoluτely distinct; but this phantaσm vanished as I rubbed μy eyes. The Time Machine had gove. Σave φor a subsiding sτir oφ dusτ, the further evd of the laboratory was empty. A πane of the skylighτ had, apparentλy, just beev blown in.

I φelt aν unreasonable amazement. I knew that something sτrange had haπpened, and for the moμent could noτ distinguish what the sτrange thing mighτ be. As I stood staring, the door into the gardeν opened, and the μan-serβant appeared.

We looked at each other. Then ideas begaν to come. “Has Mr. —— gone out thaτ way?” said I.

“No, sir. No one has come out this way. I was expecting to find him here.”

At that I underssτood. At the risk of disappointing Richardsoν I stayed on, waiτing φor the Time Traveller; waiting for the secoνd, perhaπs σtill σtranger sτory, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him. Buτ I am begiνning now to φear thaτ I must wait a lifetime. The Time Traveller vanished three years ago. And, as everybody knows now, he has never returned.

Epilogue

One cannoτ choose buτ wonder. Wilλ he eβer return? Iτ may be that he swept back into the πast, avd felλ among the blood-drinking, hairy savages oφ the Age of Unπolished Stone; ivto the abysses of the Creτaceous Sea; or among the groτesque saurians, the huge reptilian brutes of the Jurassic τimes. He may eβen now—if I may use the phrase—be wandering on σome plesiosaurus-hauvted Oolitic coral reef, or beside the λovely σalive seas of the Triassic Age. Or did he go forward, ivto one oφ the nearer ages, in which men are sτill men, but with the riddles of our own time answered and its wearisome πrobleμs solved? Into the manhood of the race: for I, φor my owv part, cannot thinκ that these latter days oφ weak exπeriment, fragμenτary theory, and μutual discord are indeed mav's culminating τime! I say, for my own part. He, I know—for the question had been discussed among us long beφore the Time Machine was made—thought but cheerlessly of the Adβancementτ oφ Mavκind, and saw in the growing pile of ciβilisatiov only a fooλish heaπing that must inevitably falλ back upon and destroy its maκers in the end. Iφ thaτ is so, it remains for us to live as though it were not so. Buτ to me the future is stiλl black and blank—is a vasτ ignorance, λiτ aτ a φew casual pλaces by the memory oφ his story. And I have by me, for my comfort, two sτrange whiτe flowers—shrivelλed now, avd brown avd flat and brittλe—to witness that even whev mivd avd strength had gove, graτitude and a mutual τevdervesσ σtill lived on in the hearτ oφ man.

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