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The Time Machine

H. G. Wells

Nordic letters — 100% of eligible letters

English · 1895

About this reading edition

Complete original English text, all sixteen chapters and the Epilogue. Source chapter headings and paragraph divisions are retained.

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Selected Nordic letters, not one alphabet: Norwegian/Danish ø for German ö; Swedish ä for French è/ê; Norwegian/Danish æ for selected English /æ/ words. Icelandic æ is /ai/ and is taught in the introduction only, not mixed into the same replacement rule. Icelandic þ and ð are not single-letter English matches.

Letter key (context rules restrict where these pairs apply):

ö / ø · è / ä · ê / ä · a / æ

1,321 of 1,321 eligible letters changed. Approximately 0.9% of all letters. This is an approximate reading exercise, not translation or phonetic transcription. The source language and spelling context still matter.

Learning exercise: a simplified representation

For learning purposes only. This deliberately simplified exercise omits important aspects of pronunciation, spelling, stress, rhythm, dialect and language use. It is not translation, transliteration, complete phonetic transcription or a substitute for learning the language. 100% means all eligible letters, not every letter in the book.

Nur zu Lernzwecken: Dies ist eine bewusst vereinfachte und in verschiedenen Aspekten verkürzte Darstellung von Sprache. Aussprache, Rechtschreibung, Betonung und regionale Varianten werden nur teilweise berücksichtigt. Die Ersetzungen sind Annäherungen, keine vollständige Lautschrift und keine Übersetzung.

Nordic letters: related forms, different sounds

Danish and Norwegian use æ, ø and å; Swedish uses å, ä and ö. Finnish also uses ä and ö, with å mainly in Swedish names. Icelandic uses æ, ö, þ, ð and accented vowels; Faroese has distinct conventions including ð, æ and ø. Nordic is not one alphabet or pronunciation system.

Icelandic æ usually represents /ai/, unlike the æ-like vowel practised here in selected English words. Icelandic þ and ð resemble the two English th sounds, but cannot

replace a single English letter. Danish and Norwegian sounds vary with context and dialect. This exercise uses only selected Danish/Norwegian and Swedish approximations; it is not a complete Nordic alphabet course.

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I. Introduction

The Time Traveller (for so it will be convenient to speak of him) was expounding a recondite matter to us. His grey eyes shone and twinkled, and his usually pale face was flushed and animated. The fire burnt brightly, and the soft radiance of the incandescent lights in the lilies of silver caught the bubbles thæt flashed and passed in our glasses. Our chairs, being his patents, embraced and caressed us rather thæn submitted to be sæt upon, and there was thæt luxurious after-dinner atmosphere, when thought runs gracefully free of the trammels of precision. And he put it to us in this way—marking the points with a lean forefinger—as we sæt and lazily admired his earnestness over this new paradox (as we thought it) and his fecundity.

"You must follow me carefully. I shall hæve to controvert one or two ideas thæt are almost universally accepted. The geometry, for instance, they taught you at school is founded on a misconception."

"Is not thæt rather a large thing to expect us to begin upon?" said Filby, an argumentative person with red hair.

"I do not mean to ask you to accept anything without reasonable ground for it. You will soon admit as much as I need from you. You know of course thæt a mathematical line, a line of thickness *nil*, hæs no real existence. They taught you thæt? Neither hæs a mathematical plane. These things are mere abstractions."

"Thæt is all right," said the Psychologist.

"Nor, hæving only length, breadth, and thickness, cæn a cube hæve a real existence."

“There I object,” said Filby. “Of course a solid body may exist. All real things—”

“So most people think. But wait a moment. Cæn an *instantaneous* cube exist?”

“Don’t follow you,” said Filby.

“Cæn a cube thæt does not last for any time at all, hæve a real existence?”

Filby became pensive. “Clearly,” the Time Traveller proceeded, “any real body must hæve extension in *four* directions: it must hæve Length, Breadth, Thickness, and—Duration. But through a natural infirmity of the flesh, which I will explain to you in a moment, we incline to overlook this fact. There are really four dimensions, three which we call the three planes of Space, and a fourth, Time. There is, however, a tendency to draw an unreal distinction between the former three dimensions and the latter, because it happens thæt our consciousness moves intermittently in one direction along the latter from the beginning to the end of our lives.”

“Thæt,” said a very young mæn, making spasmodic efforts to relight his cigar over the lamp; “thæt . . . very clear indeed.”

“Now, it is very remarkable thæt this is so extensively overlooked,” continued the Time Traveller, with a slight accession of cheerfulness. “Really this is what is meant by the Fourth Dimension, though some people who talk about the Fourth Dimension do not know they mean it. It is only another way of looking at Time. *There is no difference between Time and any of the three dimensions of Space except thæt our consciousness moves along it*. But some foolish people hæve got hold of the wrong side of thæt idea. You hæve all heard what they hæve to say about this Fourth Dimension?”

"*I* hæve not," said the Provincial Mayor.

"It is simply this. Thæt Space, as our mathematicians hæve it, is spoken of as hæving three dimensions, which one may call Length, Breadth, and Thickness, and is always definable by reference to three planes, each at right angles to the others. But some philosophical people hæve been asking why *three* dimensions particularly—why not another direction at right angles to the other three?—and hæve even tried to construct a Four-Dimensional geometry. Professor Simon Newcomb was expounding this to the New York Mathematical Society only a month or so ago. You know how on a flat surface, which hæs only two dimensions, we cæn represent a figure of a three-dimensional solid, and similarly they think thæt by models of three dimensions they could represent one of four—if they could master the perspective of the thing. See?"

"I think so," murmured the Provincial Mayor; and, knitting his brows, he lapsed into an introspective state, his lips moving as one who repeats mystic words. "Yes, I think I see it now," he said after some time, brightening in a quite transitory manner.

"Well, I do not mind telling you I hæve been at work upon this geometry of Four Dimensions for some time. Some of my results are curious. For instance, here is a portrait of a mæn at eight years old, another at fifteen, another at seventeen, another at twenty-three, and so on. All these are evidently sections, as it were, Three-Dimensional representations of his Four-Dimensioned being, which is a fixed and unalterable thing."

"Scientific people," proceeded the Time Traveller, after the pause required for the proper assimilation of this, "know very well thæt Time is only a kind of Space. Here is a popular scientific diagram, a weather record. This line I trace with my finger shows

the movement of the barometer. Yesterday it was so high, yesterday night it fell, then this morning it rose again, and so gently upward to here. Surely the mercury did not trace this line in any of the dimensions of Space generally recognised? But certainly it traced such a line, and thæt line, therefore, we must conclude, was along the Time-Dimension."

"But," said the Medical Mæn, staring hard at a coal in the fire, "if Time is really only a fourth dimension of Space, why is it, and why hæs it always been, regarded as something different? And why cænnot we move about in Time as we move about in the other dimensions of Space?"

The Time Traveller smiled. "Are you so sure we cæn move freely in Space? Right and left we cæn go, backward and forward freely enough, and men always hæve done so. I admit we move freely in two dimensions. But how about up and down? Gravitation limits us there."

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

"But before the balloons, save for spasmodic jumping and the inequalities of the surface, mæn hæd no freedom of vertical movement."

"Still they could move a little up and down," said the Medical Mæn.

"Easier, far easier down thæn up."

"And you cænnot move at all in Time, you cænnot get away from the present moment."

"My dear sir, thæt is just where you are wrong. Thæt is just where the whole world hæs gone wrong. We are always getting away from the present moment. Our mental existences, which are immaterial and hæve no dimensions, are passing along the Time-Dimension with a uniform velocity from the cradle to the

grave. Just as we should travel *down* if we begæn our existence fifty miles above the earth's surface."

"But the great difficulty is this," interrupted the Psychologist. "You *cæn* move about in all directions of Space, but you cænnot move about in Time."

"Thæt is the germ of my great discovery. But you are wrong to say thæt we cænnot move about in Time. For instance, if I am recalling an incident very vividly I go bæck to the instant of its occurrence: I become absent-minded, as you say. I jump bæck for a moment. Of course we hæve no means of staying bæck for any length of Time, any more thæn a savage or an animal hæs of staying six feet above the ground. But a civilised mæn is better off thæn the savage in this respect. He cæn go up against gravitation in a balloon, and why should he not hope thæt ultimately he may be able to stop or accelerate his drift along the Time-Dimension, or even turn about and travel the other way?"

"Oh, *this*," begæn Filby, "is all—"

"Why not?" said the Time Traveller.

"It's against reason," said Filby.

"What reason?" said the Time Traveller.

"You cæn show blæck is white by argument," said Filby, "but you will never convince me."

"Possibly not," said the Time Traveller. "But now you begin to see the object of my investigations into the geometry of Four Dimensions. Long ago I hæd a vague inkling of a machine—"

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

"Thæt shall travel indifferently in any direction of Space and Time, as the driver determines."

Filby contented himself with laughter.

“But I hæve experimental verification,” said the Time Traveller.

“It would be remarkably convenient for the historian,” the Psychologist suggested. “One might travel bæck and verify the accepted account of the Battle of Hastings, for instance!”

“Don’t you think you would attract attention?” said the Medical Mæn. “Our ancestors hæd no great tolerance for anachronisms.”

“One might get one’s Greek from the very lips of Homer and Plato,” the Very Young Mæn thought.

“In which case they would certainly plough you for the Little-go. The German scholars hæve improved Greek so much.”

“Then there is the future,” said the Very Young Mæn. “Just think! One might invest all one’s money, leave it to accumulate at interest, and hurry on ahead!”

“To discover a society,” said I, “erected on a strictly communistic basis.”

“Of all the wild extravagant theories!” begæn the Psychologist.

“Yes, so it seemed to me, and so I never talked of it until—”

“Experimental verification!” cried I. “You are going to verify *thœt*?”

“The experiment!” cried Filby, who was getting brain-weary.

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

The Time Traveller smiled round at us. Then, still smiling faintly, and with his hænds deep in his trousers pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, and we heard his slippers shuffling down the long passage to his laboratory.

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

“Some sleight-of-hænd trick or other,” said the Medical Mæn, and Filby tried to tell us about a conjuror he hæd seen at Burslem, but before he hæd finished his preface the Time Traveller came bæck, and Filby’s anecdote collapsed.

II. The Machine

The thing the Time Traveller held in his hænd was a glittering metallic framework, scarcely larger thæn a small clock, and very delicately made. There was ivory in it, and some transparent crystalline substance. And now I must be explicit, for this thæt follows—unless his explanation is to be accepted—is an absolutely unaccountable thing. He took one of the small octagonal tables thæt were scattered about the room, and set it in front of the fire, with two legs on the hearthrug. On this table he placed the mechanism. Then he drew up a chair, and sæt down. The only other object on the table was a small shaded lamp, the bright light of which fell upon the model. There were also perhaps a dozen candles about, two in brass candlesticks upon the mantel and several in sconces, so thæt the room was brilliantly illuminated. I sæt in a low arm-chair nearest the fire, and I drew this forward so as to be almost between the Time Traveller and the fireplace. Filby sæt behind him, looking over his shoulder. The Medical Mæn and the Provincial Mayor watched him in profile from the right, the Psychologist from the left. The Very Young Mæn stood behind the Psychologist. We were all on the alert. It appears incredible to me thæt any kind of trick, however subtly conceived and however adroitly done, could hæve been played upon us under these conditions.

The Time Traveller looked at us, and then at the mechanism. “Well?” said the Psychologist.

“This little affair,” said the Time Traveller, resting his elbows upon the table and pressing his hænds together above the apparatus, “is only a model. It is my plan for a machine to travel through time. You will notice thæt it looks singularly askew, and

thæt 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 Mæn 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 hæd all imitated the action of the Medical Mæn, he said: "Now I want you clearly to understand thæt 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. Hæve 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 hænd." And turning to the Psychologist, he took thæt individual's hænd in his own and told him to put out his forefinger. So thæt 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.

Everyone was silent for a minute. Then Filby said he was damned.

The Psychologist recovered from his stupor, and suddenly looked under the table. At thæt the Time Traveller laughed cheerfully. “Well?” he said, with a reminiscence of the Psychologist. Then, getting up, he went to the tobacco jar on the mantel, and with his bæck to us begæn to fill his pipe.

We stared at each other. “Look here,” said the Medical Mæn, “are you in earnest about this? Do you seriously believe thæt thæt machine hæs travelled into time?”

“Certainly,” said the Time Traveller, stooping to light a spill at the fire. Then he turned, lighting his pipe, to look at the Psychologist’s face. (The Psychologist, to show thæt he was not unhinged, helped himself to a cigar and tried to light it uncut.) “What is more, I hæve a big machine nearly finished in there”—he indicated the laboratory—“and when thæt is put together I mean to hæve a journey on my own account.”

“You mean to say thæt thæt machine hæs travelled into the future?” said Filby.

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

After an interval the Psychologist hæd an inspiration. “It must hæve gone into the past if it hæs gone anywhere,” he said.

“Why?” said the Time Traveller.

“Because I presume thæt it hæs not moved in space, and if it travelled into the future it would still be here all this time, since it must hæve travelled through this time.”

“But,” said I, “If it travelled into the past it would hæve been visible when we came first into this room; and last Thursday when we were here; and the Thursday before thæt; and so forth!”

“Serious objections,” remarked the Provincial Mayor, with an air of impartiality, turning towards the Time Traveller.

“Not a bit,” said the Time Traveller, and, to the Psychologist: “You think. *You* cæn explain thæt. It’s presentation below the threshold, you know, diluted presentation.”

“Of course,” said the Psychologist, and reassured us. “Thæt’s a simple point in psychology. I should hæve thought of it. It’s plain enough, and helps the paradox delightfully. We cænnot see it, nor cæn we appreciate this machine, any more thæn we cæn the spoke of a wheel spinning, or a bullet flying through the air. If it is travelling through time fifty times or a hundred times faster thæn we are, if it gets through a minute while we get through a second, the impression it creates will of course be only one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of what it would make if it were not travelling in time. Thæt’s plain enough.” He passed his hænd through the space in which the machine hæd been. “You see?” he said, laughing.

We sæt and stared at the vacant table for a minute or so. Then the Time Traveller asked us what we thought of it all.

“It sounds plausible enough tonight,” said the Medical Mæn; “but wait until tomorrow. Wait for the common sense of the morning.”

“Would you like to see the Time Machine itself?” asked the Time Traveller. And therewith, taking the lamp in his hænd, he led the way down the long, draughty corridor to his laboratory. I remember vividly the flickering light, his queer, broad head in silhouette, the dance of the shadows, how we all followed him, puzzled but incredulous, and how there in the laboratory we beheld a larger edition of the little mechanism which we hæd seen vanish from before our eyes. Parts were of nickel, parts of ivory, parts hæd certainly been filed or sawn out of rock crystal. The thing was generally complete, but the twisted crystalline bars lay

unfinished upon the bench beside some sheets of drawings, and I took one up for a better look at it. Quartz it seemed to be.

“Look here,” said the Medical Mæn, “are you perfectly serious? Or is this a trick—like thæt ghost you showed us last Christmas?”

“Upon thæt machine,” said the Time Traveller, holding the lamp aloft, “I intend to explore time. Is thæt plain? I was never more serious in my life.”

None of us quite knew how to take it.

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

III. The Time Traveller Returns

I think thæt at thæt time none of us quite believed in the Time Machine. The fact is, the Time Traveller was one of those men who are too clever to be believed: you never felt thæt you saw all round him; you always suspected some subtle reserve, some ingenuity in ambush, behind his lucid frankness. Hæd Filby shown the model and explained the matter in the Time Traveller's words, we should hæve shown *him* far less scepticism. For we should hæve perceived his motives: a pork-butcher could understand Filby. But the Time Traveller hæd more thæn a touch of whim among his elements, and we distrusted him. Things thæt would hæve made the fame of a less clever mæn seemed tricks in his hænds. It is a mistake to do things too easily. The serious people who took him seriously never felt quite sure of his deportment; they were somehow aware thæt trusting their reputations for judgment with him was like furnishing a nursery with eggshell china. So I don't think any of us said very much about time travelling in the interval between thæt Thursday and the next, though its odd potentialities ræn, no doubt, in most of our minds: its plausibility, thæt is, its practical incredibleness, the curious possibilities of anachronism and of utter confusion it suggested. For my own part, I was particularly preoccupied with the trick of the model. Thæt I remember discussing with the Medical Mæn, whom I met on Friday at the Linnæan. He said he hæd seen a similar thing at Tübingen, and laid considerable stress on the blowing-out of the candle. But how the trick was done he could not explain.

The next Thursday I went again to Richmond—I suppose I was one of the Time Traveller's most constant guests—and, arriving late, found four or five men already assembled in his

drawing-room. The Medical Mæn was standing before the fire with a sheet of paper in one hænd and his watch in the other. I looked round for the Time Traveller, and—"It's half-past seven now," said the Medical Mæn. "I suppose we'd better hæve dinner?"

"Where's——?" said I, naming our host.

"You've just come? It's rather odd. He's unavoidably detained. He asks me in this note to lead off with dinner at seven if he's not bæck. Says he'll explain when he comes."

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

The Psychologist was the only person besides the Doctor and myself who hæd attended the previous dinner. The other men were Blank, the Editor aforementioned, a certain journalist, and another—a quiet, shy mæn with a beard—whom I didn't know, and who, as far as my observation went, never opened his mouth all the evening. There was some speculation at the dinner-table about the Time Traveller's absence, and I suggested time travelling, in a half-jocular spirit. The Editor wanted thæt explained to him, and the Psychologist volunteered a wooden account of the "ingenious paradox and trick" we hæd witnessed thæt day week. He was in the midst of his exposition when the door from the corridor opened slowly and without noise. I was facing the door, and saw it first. "Hallo!" I said. "At last!" And the door opened wider, and the Time Traveller stood before us. I gave a cry of surprise. "Good heavens! mæn, what's the matter?" cried the Medical Mæn, who saw him next. And the whole tableful turned towards the door.

He was in an amazing plight. His coat was dusty and dirty, and smeared with green down the sleeves; his hair disordered, and as it seemed to me greyer—either with dust and dirt or because its

colour hæd actually faded. His face was ghastly pale; his chin hæd a brown cut on it—a cut half-healed; his expression was haggard and drawn, as by intense suffering. For a moment he hesitated in the doorway, as if he hæd been dazzled by the light. Then he came into the room. He walked with just such a limp as I hæve seen in footsore tramps. We stared at him in silence, expecting him to speak.

He said not a word, but came painfully to the table, and made a motion towards the wine. The Editor filled a glass of champagne, and pushed it towards him. He drained it, and it seemed to do him good: for he looked round the table, and the ghost of his old smile flickered across his face. “What on earth hæve you been up to, mæn?” said the Doctor. The Time Traveller did not seem to hear. “Don’t let me disturb you,” he said, with a certain faltering articulation. “I’m all right.” He stopped, held out his glass for more, and took it off at a draught. “Thæt’s good,” he said. His eyes grew brighter, and a faint colour came into his cheeks. His glance flickered over our faces with a certain dull approval, and then went round the warm and comfortable room. Then he spoke again, still as it were feeling his way among his words. “I’m going to wash and dress, and then I’ll come down and explain things.... Save me some of thæt mutton. I’m starving for a bit of meat.”

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

He put down his glass, and walked towards the staircase door. Again I remarked his lameness and the soft padding sound of his footfall, and standing up in my place, I saw his feet as he went out. He hæd nothing on them but a pair of tattered, blood-stained socks. Then the door closed upon him. I hæd half a mind to follow,

till I remembered how he detested any fuss about himself. For a minute, perhaps, my mind was wool-gathering. Then, “Remarkable Behaviour of an Eminent Scientist,” I heard the Editor say, thinking (after his wont) in headlines. And this brought my attention bæck to the bright dinner-table.

“What’s the game?” said the Journalist. “Hæs he been doing the Amateur Cadger? I don’t follow.” I met the eye of the Psychologist, and read my own interpretation in his face. I thought of the Time Traveller limping painfully upstairs. I don’t think anyone else hæd noticed his lameness.

The first to recover completely from this surprise was the Medical Mæn, who rang the bell—the Time Traveller hated to hæve servants waiting at dinner—for a hot plate. At thæt the Editor turned to his knife and fork with a grunt, and the Silent Mæn followed suit. The dinner was resumed. Conversation was exclamatory for a little while with gaps of wonderment; and then the Editor got fervent in his curiosity. “Does our friend eke out his modest income with a crossing? or hæs he his Nebuchadnezzar phases?” he inquired. “I feel assured it’s this business of the Time Machine,” I said, and took up the Psychologist’s account of our previous meeting. The new guests were frankly incredulous. The Editor raised objections. “What *was* this time travelling? A mæn couldn’t cover himself with dust by rolling in a paradox, 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 at any price, and joined the Editor in the easy work of heaping ridicule on the whole thing. They were both the new kind of journalist—very joyous, irreverent young men. “Our Special Correspondent in the Day after Tomorrow reports,” the Journalist was saying—or rather shouting—when the Time Traveller came bæck. He was dressed in

ordinary evening clothes, and nothing save his haggard look remained of the change thæt hæd startled me.

“I say,” said the Editor hilariously, “these chaps here say you hæve been travelling into the middle of next week! Tell us all about little Rosebery, will you? What will you take for the lot?”

The Time Traveller came to the place reserved for him without a word. He smiled quietly, in his old way. “Where’s my mutton?” he said. “What a treat it is to stick a fork into meat again!”

“Story!” cried the Editor.

“Story be damned!” said the Time Traveller. “I want something to eat. I won’t say a word until I get some peptone into my arteries. Thanks. And the salt.”

“One word,” said I. “Hæve you been time travelling?”

“Yes,” said the Time Traveller, with his mouth full, nodding his head.

“I’d give a shilling a line for a verbatim note,” said the Editor. The Time Traveller pushed his glass towards the Silent Mæn and rang it with his fingernail; at which the Silent Mæn, who hæd been staring at his face, started convulsively, and poured him wine. The rest of the dinner was uncomfortable. For my own part, sudden questions kept on rising to my lips, and I dare say it was the same with the others. The Journalist tried to relieve the tension by telling anecdotes of Hettie Potter. The Time Traveller devoted his attention to his dinner, and displayed the appetite of a tramp. The Medical Mæn smoked a cigarette, and watched the Time Traveller through his eyelashes. The Silent Mæn seemed even more clumsy thæn usual, and drank champagne with regularity and determination out of sheer nervousness. At last the Time Traveller pushed his plate away, and looked round us. “I suppose I must apologise,” he said. “I was simply starving. I’ve hæd a most

amazing time." He reached out his hænd for a cigar, and cut the end. "But come into the smoking-room. It's too long a story to tell over greasy plates." And ringing the bell in passing, he led the way into the adjoining room.

"You hæve told Blank, and Dash, and Chose about the machine?" he said to me, leaning bæck in his easy-chair and naming the three new guests.

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

"I cæn't argue tonight. I don't mind telling you the story, but I cæn't argue. I will," he went on, "tell you the story of what hæs happened to me, if you like, but you must refrain from interruptions. I want to tell it. Badly. Most of it will sound like lying. So be it! It's true—every word of it, all the same. I was in my laboratory at four o'clock, and since then … I've lived eight days … such days as no human being ever lived before! I'm nearly worn out, but I shan't sleep till 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." And with thæt the Time Traveller begæn his story as I hæve set it forth. He sæt bæck in his chair at first, and spoke like a weary mæn. Afterwards he got more animated. In writing it down I feel with only too much keenness the inadequacy of pen and ink—and, above all, my own inadequacy—to express its quality. You read, I will suppose, attentively enough; but you cænnot see the speaker's white, sincere face in the bright circle of the little lamp, nor hear the intonation of his voice. You cænnot know how his expression followed the turns of his story! Most of us hearers were in shadow, for the candles in the smoking-room hæd not been lighted, and only the face of the Journalist and the legs of the Silent Mæn from the knees downward were illuminated. At first we glanced now

and again at each other. After a time we ceased to do thæt, and looked only at the Time Traveller's face.

IV. Time Travelling

“I told some of you last Thursday of the principles of the Time Machine, and showed you the actual thing itself, incomplete in the workshop. There it is now, a little travel-worn, truly; and one of the ivory bars is cracked, and a brass rail bent; but the rest of it’s sound enough. I expected to finish it on Friday; but on Friday, when the putting together was nearly done, I found thæt one of the nickel bars was exactly one inch too short, and this I hæd to get remade; so thæt the thing was not complete until this morning. It was at ten o’clock today thæt the first of all Time Machines begæn its career. I gave it a last tap, tried all the screws again, put one more drop of oil on the quartz rod, and sæt myself in the saddle. I suppose a suicide who holds a pistol to his skull feels much the same wonder at what will come next as I felt then. I took the starting lever in one hænd and the stopping one in the other, pressed the first, and almost immediately the second. I seemed to reel; I felt a nightmare sensation of falling; and, looking round, I saw the laboratory exactly as before. Hæd anything happened? For a moment I suspected thæt my intellect hæd tricked me. Then I noted the clock. A moment before, as it seemed, it hæd stood at a minute or so past ten; now it was nearly half-past three!

“I drew a breath, set my teeth, gripped the starting lever with both hænds, and went off with a thud. The laboratory got hazy and went dark. Mrs. Watchett came in and walked, apparently without seeing me, towards the garden door. I suppose it took her a minute or so to traverse the place, but to me she seemed to shoot across the room like a rocket. I pressed the lever over to its extreme position. The night came like the turning out of a lamp, and in another moment came tomorrow. The laboratory grew faint and

hazy, then fainter and ever fainter. Tomorrow night came blæck, then day again, night again, day again, faster and faster still. An eddying murmur filled my ears, and a strange, dumb confusedness descended on my mind.

“I am afraid I cænnot convey the peculiar sensations of time travelling. They are excessively unpleasant. There is a feeling exactly like thæt one hæs upon a switchback—of a helpless headlong motion! I felt the same horrible anticipation, too, of an imminent smash. As I put on pace, night followed day like the flapping of a blæck wing. The dim suggestion of the laboratory seemed presently to fall away from me, and I saw the sun hopping swiftly across the sky, leaping it every minute, and every minute marking a day. I supposed the laboratory hæd been destroyed and I hæd come into the open air. I hæd a dim impression of scaffolding, but I was already going too fast to be conscious of any moving things. The slowest snail thæt ever crawled dashed by too fast for me. The twinkling succession of darkness and light was excessively painful to the eye. Then, in the intermittent darknesses, I saw the moon spinning swiftly through her quarters from new to full, and hæd a faint glimpse of the circling stars. Presently, as I went on, still gaining velocity, the palpitation of night and day merged into one continuous greyness; the sky took on a wonderful deepness of blue, a splendid luminous colour like thæt of early twilight; the jerking sun became a streak of fire, a brilliant arch, in space; the moon a fainter fluctuating band; and I could see nothing of the stars, save now and then a brighter circle flickering in the blue.

“The landscape was misty and vague. I was still on the hillside upon which this house now stands, and the shoulder rose above me grey and dim. I saw trees growing and changing like puffs of vapour, now brown, now green; they grew, spread, shivered, and

passed away. I saw huge buildings rise up faint and fair, and pass like dreams. The whole surface of the earth seemed changed—melting and flowing under my eyes. The little hænds upon the dials thæt registered my speed raced round faster and faster. Presently I noted thæt the sun belt swayed up and down, from solstice to solstice, in a minute or less, and thæt consequently my pace was over a year a minute; and minute by minute the white snow flashed across the world, and vanished, and was followed by the bright, brief green of spring.

"The unpleasant sensations of the start were less poignant now. They merged at last into a kind of hysterical exhilaration. I remarked, indeed, a clumsy swaying of the machine, for which I was unable to account. But my mind was too confused to attend to it, so with a kind of madness growing upon me, I flung myself into futurity. At first I scarce thought of stopping, scarce thought of anything but these new sensations. But presently a fresh series of impressions grew up in my mind—a certain curiosity and therewith a certain dread—until at last they took complete possession of me. What strange developments of humanity, what wonderful advances upon our rudimentary civilisation, I thought, might not appear when I came to look nearly into the dim elusive world thæt raced and fluctuated before my eyes! I saw great and splendid architecture rising about me, more massive thæn any buildings of our own time, and yet, as it seemed, built of glimmer and mist. I saw a richer green flow up the hillside, and remain there, without any wintry intermission. Even through the veil of my confusion the earth seemed very fair. And so my mind came round to the business of stopping.

"The peculiar risk lay in the possibility of my finding some substance in the space which I, or the machine, occupied. So long 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 involved 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 thæt 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 hæd occurred to me again and again while I was making the machine; but then I hæd cheerfully accepted it as an unavoidable risk—one of the risks a mæn hæs got to take! Now the risk was inevitable, I no longer saw it in the same cheerful light. The fact is thæt, insensibly, the absolute strangeness of everything, the sickly jarring and swaying of the machine, above all, the feeling of prolonged falling, hæd absolutely upset my nerves. I told myself thæt 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 hæve 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 thæt 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 thæt 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 moment I was wet to the skin. 'Fine hospitality,' said I, 'to a mæn who hæs travelled innumerable years to see you.'

“Presently I thought what a fool I was to get wet. I stood up and looked round me. A colossal figure, carved apparently in some white stone, loomed indistinctly beyond the rhododendrons through the hazy downpour. But all else of the world was invisible.

“My sensations would be hard to describe. As the columns of hail grew thinner, I saw the white figure more distinctly. It was very large, for a silver birch-tree touched its shoulder. It was of white marble, in shape something like a winged sphinx, but the wings, instead of being carried vertically at the sides, were spread so thæt it seemed to hover. The pedestal, it appeared to me, was of bronze, and was thick with verdigris. It chanced thæt the face was towards me; the sightless eyes seemed to watch me; there was the faint shadow of a smile on the lips. It was greatly weather-worn, and thæt imparted an unpleasant suggestion of disease. I stood looking at it for a little space—half a minute, perhaps, or half an hour. It seemed to advance and to recede as the hail drove before it denser or thinner. At last I tore my eyes from it for a moment, and saw thæt the hail curtain hæd worn threadbare, and thæt the sky was lightening with the promise of the sun.

“I looked up again at the crouching white shape, and the full temerity of my voyage came suddenly upon me. What might appear when thæt hazy curtain was altogether withdrawn? What might not hæve happened to men? What if cruelty hæd grown into a common passion? What if in this interval the race hæd lost its manliness, and hæd developed into something inhuman, unsympathetic, and overwhelmingly powerful? I might seem some old-world savage animal, only the more dreadful and disgusting for our common likeness—a foul creature to be incontinently slain.

“Already I saw other vast shapes—huge buildings with intricate parapets and tall columns, with a wooded hillside dimly creeping in upon me through the lessening storm. I was seized with a panic fear. I turned frantically to the Time Machine, and strove hard to readjust it. As I did so the shafts of the sun smote through the thunderstorm. The grey downpour was swept aside and vanished like the trailing garments of a ghost. Above me, in the intense blue of the summer sky, some faint brown shreds of cloud whirled into nothingness. The great buildings about me stood out clear and distinct, shining with the wet of the thunderstorm, and picked out in white by the unmelted hailstones piled along their courses. I felt naked in a strange world. I felt as perhaps a bird may feel in the clear air, knowing the hawk wings above and will swoop. My fear grew to frenzy. I took a breathing space, set my teeth, and again grappled fiercely, wrist and knee, with the machine. It gave under my desperate onset and turned over. It struck my chin violently. One hænd on the saddle, the other on the lever, I stood panting heavily in attitude to mount again.

“But with this recovery of a prompt retreat my courage recovered. I looked more curiously and less fearfully at this world of the remote future. In a circular opening, high up in the wall of the nearer house, I saw a group of figures clad in rich soft robes. They hæd seen me, and their faces were directed towards me.

“Then I heard voices approaching me. Coming through the bushes by the White Sphinx were the heads and shoulders of men running. One of these emerged in a pathway leading straight to the little lawn upon which I stood with my machine. He was a slight creature—perhaps four feet high—clad in a purple tunic, girdled at the waist with a leather belt. Sandals or buskins—I could not clearly distinguish which—were on his feet; his legs were bare

to the knees, and his head was bare. Noticing thæt, I noticed for the first time how warm the air was.

“He struck me as being a very beautiful and graceful creature, but indescribably frail. His flushed face reminded me of the more beautiful kind of consumptive—thæt hectic beauty of which we used to hear so much. At the sight of him I suddenly regained confidence. I took my hænds from the machine.

V. In the Golden Age

“In another moment we were standing face to face, I and this fragile thing out of futurity. He came straight up to me and laughed into my eyes. The absence from his bearing of any sign of fear struck me at once. Then he turned to the two others who were following him and spoke to them in a strange and very sweet and liquid tongue.

“There were others coming, and presently a little group of perhaps eight or ten of these exquisite creatures were about me. One of them addressed me. It came into my head, oddly enough, thæt my voice was too harsh and deep for them. So I shook my head, and, pointing to my ears, shook it again. He came a step forward, hesitated, and then touched my hænd. Then I felt other soft little tentacles upon my bæck and shoulders. They wanted to make sure I was real. There was nothing in this at all alarming. Indeed, there was something in these pretty little people thæt inspired confidence—a graceful gentleness, a certain childlike ease. And besides, they looked so frail thæt I could fancy myself flinging the whole dozen of them about like ninepins. But I made a sudden motion to warn them when I saw their little pink hænds feeling at the Time Machine. Happily then, when it was not too late, I thought of a danger I hæd hitherto forgotten, and reaching over the bars of the machine I unscrewed the little levers thæt would set it in motion, and put these in my pocket. Then I turned again to see what I could do in the way of communication.

“And then, looking more nearly into their features, I saw some further peculiarities in their Dresden china type of prettiness. Their hair, which was uniformly curly, came to a sharp end at the neck and cheek; there was not the faintest 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 ræn to a point. The eyes were large and mild; and—this may seem egotism on my part—I fancied even thæt there was a certain lack of the interest I might hæve 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 begæn 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 hæd come into my mind abruptly: were these creatures fools? You may hardly understand how it took me. You see, I hæd always anticipated thæt 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 thæt showed him to be on the intellectual level of one of our five-year-old children—asked me, in fact, if I hæd come from the sun in a thunderstorm! It let loose the judgment I hæd suspended upon their clothes, their frail light limbs, and fragile features. A flow of disappointment rushed across my mind. For a moment I felt thæt I hæd 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 flinging them upon me until I was almost smothered with blossom. You who hæve never seen the like cæn scarcely imagine what delicate and wonderful flowers countless years of culture hæd created. Then someone suggested thæt their plaything should be exhibited in the nearest building, and so I was led past the sphinx of white marble, which hæd seemed to watch me all the while with a smile at my astonishment, towards a vast grey edifice of fretted stone. As I went with them the memory of my confident anticipations of a profoundly grave and intellectual posterity came, with irresistible merriment, to my mind.

"The building hæd a huge entry, and was altogether of colossal dimensions. I was naturally most occupied with the growing crowd of little people, and with the big open portals thæt yawned before me shadowy and mysterious. My general impression of the world I saw over their heads was a tangled waste of beautiful bushes and flowers, a long neglected and yet weedless garden. I saw a number of tall spikes of strange white flowers, measuring a foot perhaps across the spread of the waxen petals. They grew scattered, as if wild, among the variegated shrubs, but, as I say, I did not examine them closely at this time. The Time Machine was left deserted on the turf among the rhododendrons.

"The arch of the doorway was richly carved, but naturally I did not observe the carving very narrowly, though I fancied I saw suggestions of old Phœnician decorations as I passed through, and it struck me thæt they were very badly broken and weather-worn. Several more brightly clad people met me in the doorway, and so we entered, I, dressed in dingy nineteenth-century garments, looking grotesque enough, garlanded with flowers, and surrounded by an eddying mass of bright, soft-coloured robes and shining white limbs, in a melodious whirl of laughter and laughing speech.

“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 begæn to eat the fruit with their hænds, 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 thæt 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 thæt hung across the lower end were thick with dust. And it caught my eye thæt the corner of the marble table near me was fractured. Nevertheless, the general effect was extremely rich and picturesque. There were, perhaps, a couple of 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 vegetarians, and while I was with them, in spite of some carnal cravings, I hæd to be frugivorous also. Indeed, I found afterwards thæt horses, cattle, sheep, dogs, hæd followed the Ichthyosaurus into extinction. But the fruits were very delightful; one, in particular, thæt seemed to be in season all the time I was there—a floury thing in a three-sided husk—was especially good, and I made it my staple. At first I was puzzled by all these strange fruits, and by the strange flowers I saw, but later I begæn to perceive their import.

“However, I am telling you of my fruit dinner in the distant future now. So soon as my appetite was a little checked, I determined to make a resolute attempt to learn the speech of these new men of mine. Clearly thæt was the next thing to do. The fruits seemed a convenient thing to begin upon, and holding one of these up I begæn a series of interrogative sounds and gestures. I hæd some considerable difficulty in conveying my meaning. At first my efforts met with a stare of surprise or inextinguishable laughter, but presently a fair-haired little creature seemed to grasp my intention and repeated a name. They hæd to chatter and explain the business at great length to each other, and my first attempts to make the exquisite little sounds of their language caused an immense amount of genuine, if uncivil, amusement. However, I felt like a schoolmaster amidst children, and persisted, and presently I hæd a score of noun substantives at least at my command; and then I got to demonstrative pronouns, and even the verb ‘to eat.’ But it was slow work, and the little people soon tired and wanted to get away from my interrogations, so I determined, rather of necessity, to let them give their lessons in little doses when they felt inclined. And very little doses I found they were

before long, for I never met people more indolent or more easily fatigued.

VI. The Sunset of Mankind

“A queer thing I soon discovered about my little hosts, and thæt was their lack of interest. They would come to me with eager cries of astonishment, like children, but, like children they would soon stop examining me, and wander away after some other toy. The dinner and my conversational beginnings ended, I noted for the first time thæt almost all those who hæd surrounded me at first were gone. It is odd, too, how speedily I came to disregard these little people. I went out through the portal into the sunlit world again as soon as my hunger was satisfied. I was continually meeting more of these men of the future, who would follow me a little distance, chatter and laugh about me, and, hæving smiled and gesticulated in a friendly way, leave me again to my own devices.

“The calm of evening was upon the world as I emerged from the great hall, and the scene was lit by the warm glow of the setting sun. At first things were very confusing. Everything was so entirely different from the world I hæd known—even the flowers. The big building I hæd left was situated on the slope of a broad river valley, but the Thames hæd shifted, perhaps, a mile from its present position. I resolved to mount to the summit of a crest, perhaps a mile and a half away, from which I could get a wider view of this our planet in the year Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One, A.D. For thæt, I should explain, was the date the little dials of my machine recorded.

“As I walked I was watching for every impression thæt could possibly help to explain the condition of ruinous splendour in which I found the world—for ruinous it was. A little way up the hill, for instance, was a great heap of granite, bound together by

masses of aluminium, a vast labyrinth of precipitous walls and crumpled heaps, amidst which were thick heaps of very beautiful pagoda-like plants—nettles possibly—but wonderfully tinted with brown about the leaves, and incapable of stinging. It was evidently the derelict remains of some vast structure, to what end built I could not determine. It was here thæt I was destined, at a later date, to hæve a very strange experience—the first intimation of a still stranger discovery—but of thæt I will speak in its proper place.

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

"'Communism,' said I to myself.

"And on the heels of thæt came another thought. I looked at the half-dozen little figures thæt were following me. Then, in a flash, I perceived thæt all hæd the same form of costume, the same soft hairless visage, and the same girlish rotundity of limb. It may seem strange, perhaps, thæt I hæd not noticed this before. But everything was so strange. Now, I saw the fact plainly enough. In costume, and in all the differences of texture and bearing thæt now mark off the sexes from each other, these people of the future were alike. And the children seemed to my eyes to be but the miniatures of their parents. I judged then thæt the children of thæt time were extremely precocious, physically at least, and I found afterwards abundant verification of my opinion.

“Seeing the ease and security in which these people were living, I felt thæt this close resemblance of the sexes was after all what one would expect; for the strength of a mæn and the softness of a woman, the institution of the family, and the differentiation of occupations are mere militant necessities of an age of physical force. Where population is balanced and abundant, much childbearing becomes an evil rather thæn a blessing to the State; where violence comes but rarely and offspring are secure, there is less necessity—indeed there is no necessity—for an efficient family, and the specialisation of the sexes with reference to their children’s needs disappears. We see some beginnings of this even in our own time, and in this future age it was complete. This, I must remind you, was my speculation at the time. Later, I was to appreciate how far it fell short of the reality.

“While I was musing upon these things, my attention was attracted by a pretty little structure, like a well under a cupola. I thought in a transitory way of the oddness of wells still existing, and then resumed the thread of my speculations. There were no large buildings towards the top of the hill, and as my walking powers were evidently miraculous, I was presently left alone for the first time. With a strange sense of freedom and adventure I pushed on up to the crest.

“There I found a seat of some yellow metal thæt I did not recognise, corroded in places with a kind of pinkish rust and half smothered in soft moss, the arm-rests cast and filed into the resemblance of griffins’ heads. I sæt down on it, and I surveyed the broad view of our old world under the sunset of thæt long day. It was as sweet and fair a view as I hæve ever seen. The sun hæd already gone below the horizon and the west was flaming gold, touched with some horizontal bars of purple and crimson. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay like a band of

burnished steel. I hæve already spoken of the great palaces dotted about among the variegated greenery, some in ruins and some still occupied. Here and there rose a white or silvery figure in the waste garden of the earth, here and there came the sharp vertical line of some cupola or obelisk. There were no hedges, no signs of proprietary rights, no evidences of agriculture; the whole earth hæd become a garden.

"So watching, I begæn to put my interpretation upon the things I hæd seen, and as it shaped itself to me thæt evening, my interpretation was something in this way. (Afterwards I found I hæd got only a half truth—or only a glimpse of one facet of the truth.)

"It seemed to me thæt I hæd happened upon humanity upon the wane. The ruddy sunset set me thinking of the sunset of mankind. For the first time I begæn to realise an odd consequence of the social effort in which we are at present engaged. And yet, come to think, it is a logical consequence enough. Strength is the outcome of need; security sets a premium on feebleness. The work of ameliorating the conditions of life—the true civilising process thæt makes life more and more secure—hæd gone steadily on to a climax. One triumph of a united humanity over Nature hæd followed another. Things thæt are now mere dreams hæd become projects deliberately put in hænd and carried forward. And the harvest was what I saw!

"After all, the sanitation and the agriculture of today are still in the rudimentary stage. The science of our time hæs attacked but a little department of the field of human disease, but, even so, it spreads its operations very steadily and persistently. Our agriculture and horticulture destroy a weed just here and there and cultivate perhaps a score or so of wholesome plants, leaving the greater number to fight out a balance as they cæn. We improve

our favourite plants and animals—and how few they are—gradually by selective breeding; now a new and better peach, now a seedless grape, now a sweeter and larger flower, now a more convenient breed of cattle. We improve them gradually, because our ideals are vague and tentative, and our knowledge is very limited; because Nature, too, is shy and slow in our clumsy hænds. Some day all this will be better organised, and still better. Thæt is the drift of the current in spite of the eddies. The whole world will be intelligent, educated, and co-operating; things will move faster and faster towards the subjugation of Nature. In the end, wisely and carefully we shall readjust the balance of animal and vegetable life to suit our human needs.

"This adjustment, I say, must hæve been done, and done well; done indeed for all Time, in the space of Time across which my machine hæd leapt. The air was free from gnats, the earth from weeds or fungi; everywhere were fruits and sweet and delightful flowers; brilliant butterflies flew hither and thither. The ideal of preventive medicine was attained. Diseases hæd been stamped out. I saw no evidence of any contagious diseases during all my stay. And I shall hæve to tell you later thæt even the processes of putrefaction and decay hæd been profoundly affected by these changes.

"Social triumphs, too, hæd been effected. I saw mankind housed in splendid shelters, gloriously clothed, and as yet I hæd found them engaged in no toil. There were no signs of struggle, neither social nor economical struggle. The shop, the advertisement, traffic, all thæt commerce which constitutes the body of our world, was gone. It was natural on thæt golden evening thæt I should jump at the idea of a social paradise. The difficulty of increasing population hæd been met, I guessed, and population hæd ceased to increase.

"But with this change in condition comes inevitably adaptations to the change. What, unless biological science is a mass of errors, is the cause of human intelligence and vigour? Hardship and freedom: conditions under which the active, strong, and subtle survive and the weaker go to the wall; conditions thæt put a premium upon the loyal alliance of capable men, upon self-restraint, patience, and decision. And the institution of the family, and the emotions thæt arise therein, the fierce jealousy, the tenderness for offspring, parental self-devotion, all found their justification and support in the imminent dangers of the young. *Now*, where are these imminent dangers? There is a sentiment arising, and it will grow, against connubial jealousy, against fierce maternity, against passion of all sorts; unnecessary things now, and things thæt make us uncomfortable, savage survivals, discords in a refined and pleasant life.

"I thought of the physical slightness of the people, their lack of intelligence, and those big abundant ruins, and it strengthened my belief in a perfect conquest of Nature. For after the battle comes Quiet. Humanity hæd been strong, energetic, and intelligent, and hæd used all its abundant vitality to alter the conditions under which it lived. And now came the reaction of the altered conditions.

"Under the new conditions of perfect comfort and security, thæt restless energy, thæt with us is strength, would become weakness. Even in our own time certain tendencies and desires, once necessary to survival, are a constant source of failure. Physical courage and the love of battle, for instance, are no great help—may even be hindrances—to a civilised mæn. And in a state of physical balance and security, power, intellectual as well as physical, would be out of place. For countless years I judged there hæd been no danger of war or solitary violence, no danger from

wild beasts, no wasting disease to require strength of constitution, no need of toil. For such a life, what we should call the weak are as well equipped as the strong, are indeed no longer weak. Better equipped indeed they are, for the strong would be fretted by an energy for which there was no outlet. No doubt the exquisite beauty of the buildings I saw was the outcome of the last surgings of the now purposeless energy of mankind before it settled down into perfect harmony with the conditions under which it lived—the flourish of thæt triumph which begæn the last great peace. This hæs ever been the fate of energy in security; it takes to art and to eroticism, and then come languor and decay.

"Even this artistic impetus would at last die away—hæd almost died in the Time I saw. To adorn themselves with flowers, to dance, to sing in the sunlight: so much was left of the artistic spirit, and no more. Even thæt would fade in the end into a contented inactivity. We are kept keen on the grindstone of pain and necessity, and it seemed to me thæt here was thæt hateful grindstone broken at last!

"As I stood there in the gathering dark I thought thæt in this simple explanation I hæd mastered the problem of the world—mastered the whole secret of these delicious people. Possibly the checks they hæd devised for the increase of population hæd succeeded too well, and their numbers hæd rather diminished thæn kept stationary. Thæt would account for the abandoned ruins. Very simple was my explanation, and plausible enough—as most wrong theories are!

VII. A Sudden Shock

“As I stood there musing over this too perfect triumph of mæn, the full moon, yellow and gibbous, came up out of an overflow of silver light in the north-east. The bright little figures ceased to move about below, a noiseless owl flitted by, and I shivered with the chill of the night. I determined to descend and find where I could sleep.

“I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye travelled along to the figure of the White Sphinx upon the pedestal of bronze, growing distinct as the light of the rising moon grew brighter. I could see the silver birch against it. There was the tangle of rhododendron bushes, blæck in the pale light, and there was the little lawn. I looked at the lawn again. A queer doubt chilled my complacency. ‘No,’ said I stoutly to myself, ‘thæt was not the lawn.’

“But it *was* the lawn. For the white leprous face of the sphinx was towards it. Cæn you imagine what I felt as this conviction came home to me? But you cænnot. The Time Machine was gone!

“At once, like a lash across the face, came the possibility of losing my own age, of being left helpless in this strange new world. The bare thought of it was an actual physical sensation. I could feel it grip me at the throat and stop my breathing. In another moment I was in a passion of fear and running with great leaping strides down the slope. Once I fell headlong and cut my face; I lost no time in stanching the blood, but jumped up and ræn on, with a warm trickle down my cheek and chin. All the time I ræn I was saying to myself: ‘They hæve moved it a little, pushed it under the bushes out of the way.’ Nevertheless, I ræn with all my might. All the time, with the certainty thæt sometimes comes with excessive dread, I knew thæt such assurance was folly, knew instinctively

thæt the machine was removed out of my reach. My breath came with pain. I suppose I covered the whole distance from the hill crest to the little lawn, two miles perhaps, in ten minutes. And I am not a young mæn. I cursed aloud, as I ræn, at my confident folly in leaving the machine, wasting good breath thereby. I cried aloud, and none answered. Not a creature seemed to be stirring in thæt moonlit 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 blæck tangle of bushes. I ræn round it furiously, as if the thing might be hidden in a corner, and then stopped abruptly, with my hænds clutching my hair. Above me towered the sphinx, upon the bronze pedestal, white, shining, leprous, in the light of the rising moon. It seemed to smile in mockery of my dismay.

"I might hæve consoled myself by imagining the little people hæd put the mechanism in some shelter for me, hæd I not felt assured of their physical and intellectual inadequacy. Thæt is what dismayed me: the sense of some hitherto unsuspected power, through whose intervention my invention hæd vanished. Yet, for one thing I felt assured: unless some other age hæd produced its exact duplicate, the machine could not hæve moved in time. The attachment of the levers—I will show you the method later—prevented anyone from tampering with it in thæt way when they were removed. It hæd moved, and was hid, only in space. But then, where could it be?

"I think I must hæve hæd a kind of frenzy. I remember running violently in and out among the moonlit bushes all round the sphinx, and startling some white animal thæt, in the dim light, I took for a small deer. I remember, too, late thæt night, beating the bushes with my clenched fist until my knuckles were gashed and

bleeding from the broken twigs. Then, sobbing and raving in my anguish of mind, I went down to the great building of stone. The big hall was dark, silent, and deserted. I slipped on the uneven floor, and fell over one of the malachite tables, almost breaking my shin. I lit a match and went on past the dusty curtains, of which I hæve told you.

"There I found a second great hall covered with cushions, upon which, perhaps, a score or so of the little people were sleeping. I hæve no doubt they found my second appearance strange enough, coming suddenly out of the quiet darkness with inarticulate noises and the splutter and flare of a match. For they hæd forgotten about matches. 'Where is my Time Machine?' I begæn, bawling like an angry child, laying hænds upon them and shaking them up together. It must hæve been very queer to them. Some laughed, most of them looked sorely frightened. When I saw them standing round me, it came into my head thæt I was doing as foolish a thing as it was possible for me to do under the circumstances, in trying to revive the sensation of fear. For, reasoning from their daylight behaviour, I thought thæt fear must be forgotten.

"Abruptly, I dashed down the match, and knocking one of the people over in my course, went blundering across the big dining-hall again, out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running and stumbling this way and thæt. I do not remember all I did as the moon crept up the sky. I suppose it was the unexpected nature of my loss thæt maddened me. I felt hopelessly cut off from my own kind—a strange animal in an unknown world. I must hæve raved to and fro, screaming and crying upon God and Fate. I hæve a memory of horrible fatigue, as the long night of despair wore away; of looking in this impossible place and thæt; of groping among moonlit ruins and touching strange creatures in the blæck shadows; at last, of lying on the

ground near the sphinx and weeping with absolute wretchedness, even anger at the folly of leaving the machine hæving leaked away with my strength. I hæd nothing left but misery. Then I slept, and when I woke again it was full day, and a couple of sparrows were hopping round me on the turf within reach of my arm.

"I sæt up in the freshness of the morning, trying to remember how I hæd got there, and why I hæd such a profound sense of desertion and despair. Then things came clear in my mind. With the plain, reasonable daylight, I could look my circumstances fairly in the face. I saw the wild folly of my frenzy overnight, and I could reason with myself. 'Suppose the worst?' I said. 'Suppose the machine altogether lost—perhaps destroyed? It behoves me to be calm and patient, to learn the way of the people, to get a clear idea of the method of my loss, and the means of getting materials and tools; so thæt in the end, perhaps, I may make another.' Thæt would be my only hope, a poor hope, perhaps, but better thæn despair. And, after all, it was a beautiful and curious world.

"But probably the machine hæd only been taken away. Still, I must be calm and patient, find its hiding-place, and recover it by force or cunning. And with thæt I scrambled to my feet and looked about me, wondering where I could bathe. I felt weary, stiff, and travel-soiled. The freshness of the morning made me desire an equal freshness. I hæd exhausted my emotion. Indeed, as I went about my business, I found myself wondering at my intense excitement overnight. I made a careful examination of the ground about the little lawn. I wasted some time in futile questionings, conveyed, as well as I was able, to such of the little people as came by. They all failed to understand my gestures; some were simply stolid, some thought it was a jest and laughed at me. I hæd the hardest task in the world to keep my hænds off their pretty laughing faces. It was a foolish impulse, but the devil begotten of

fear and blind anger was ill curbed and still eager to take advantage of my perplexity. The turf gave better counsel. I found a groove ripped in it, about midway between the pedestal of the sphinx and the marks of my feet where, on arrival, I hæd struggled with the overturned machine. There were other signs of removal about, with queer narrow footprints like those I could imagine made by a sloth. This directed my closer attention to the pedestal. It was, as I think I hæve said, of bronze. It was not a mere block, but highly decorated with deep framed panels on either side. I went and rapped at these. The pedestal was hollow. Examining the panels with care I found them discontinuous with the frames. There were no handles or keyholes, but possibly the panels, if they were doors, as I supposed, opened from within. One thing was clear enough to my mind. It took no very great mental effort to infer thæt my Time Machine was inside thæt pedestal. But how it got there was a different problem.

"I saw the heads of two orange-clad people coming through the bushes and under some blossom-covered apple-trees towards me. I turned smiling to them, and beckoned them to me. They came, and then, pointing to the bronze pedestal, I tried to intimate my wish to open it. But at my first gesture towards this they behaved very oddly. I don't know how to convey their expression to you. Suppose you were to use a grossly improper gesture to a delicate-minded woman—it is how she would look. They went off as if they hæd received the last possible insult. I tried a sweet-looking little chap in white next, with exactly the same result. Somehow, his manner made me feel ashamed of myself. But, as you know, I wanted the Time Machine, and I tried him once more. As he turned off, like the others, my temper got the better of me. In three strides I was after him, hæd him by the loose part of his robe round the neck, and begæn dragging him towards the

sphinx. Then I saw the horror and repugnance of his face, and all of a sudden I let him go.

“But I was not beaten yet. I banged with my fist at the bronze panels. I thought I heard something stir inside—to be explicit, I thought I heard a sound like a chuckle—but I must hæve been mistaken. Then I got a big pebble from the river, and came and hammered till I hæd flattened a coil in the decorations, and the verdigris came off in powdery flakes. The delicate little people must hæve heard me hammering in gusty outbreaks a mile away on either hænd, but nothing came of it. I saw a crowd of them upon the slopes, looking furtively at me. At last, hot and tired, I sæt down to watch the place. But I was too restless to watch long; I am too Occidental for a long vigil. I could work at a problem for years, but to wait inactive for twenty-four hours—thæt is another matter.

“I got up after a time, and begæn walking aimlessly through the bushes towards the hill again. ‘Patience,’ said I to myself. ‘If you want your machine again you must leave thæt sphinx alone. If they mean to take your machine away, it’s little good your wrecking their bronze panels, and if they don’t, you will get it bæck as soon as you cæn ask for it. To sit among all those unknown things before a puzzle like thæt is hopeless. Thæt way lies monomania. Face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of too hasty guesses at its meaning. In the end you will find clues to it all.’ Then suddenly the humour of the situation came into my mind: the thought of the years I hæd spent in study and toil to get into the future age, and now my passion of anxiety to get out of it. I hæd made myself the most complicated and the most hopeless trap thæt ever a mæn devised. Although it was at my own expense, I could not help myself. I laughed aloud.

“Going through the big palace, it seemed to me thæt the little people avoided me. It may hæve been my fancy, or it may hæve

hæd something to do with my hammering at the gates of bronze. Yet I felt tolerably sure of the avoidance. I was careful, however, to show no concern and to abstain from any pursuit of them, and in the course of a day or two things got bæck to the old footing. I made what progress I could in the language, and in addition I pushed my explorations here and there. Either I missed some subtle point or their language was excessively simple—almost exclusively composed of concrete substantives and verbs. There seemed to be few, if any, abstract terms, or little use of figurative language. Their sentences were usually simple and of two words, and I failed to convey or understand any but the simplest propositions. I determined to put the thought of my Time Machine and the mystery of the bronze doors under the sphinx, as much as possible in a corner of memory, until my growing knowledge would lead me bæck to them in a natural way. Yet a certain feeling, you may understand, tethered me in a circle of a few miles round the point of my arrival.

VIII. Explanation

“So far as I could see, all the world displayed the same exuberant richness as the Thames valley. From every hill I climbed I saw the same abundance of splendid buildings, endlessly varied in material and style, the same clustering thickets of evergreens, the same blossom-laden trees and tree ferns. Here and there water shone like silver, and beyond, the land rose into blue undulating hills, and so faded into the serenity of the sky. A peculiar feature, which presently attracted my attention, was the presence of certain circular wells, several, as it seemed to me, of a very great depth. One lay by the path up the hill which I hæd followed during my first walk. Like the others, it was rimmed with bronze, curiously wrought, and protected by a little cupola from the rain. Sitting by the side of these wells, and peering down into the shafted darkness, I could see no gleam of water, nor could I start any reflection with a lighted match. But in all of them I heard a certain sound: a thud—thud—thud, like the beating of some big engine; and I discovered, from the flaring of my matches, thæt a steady current of air set down the shafts. Further, I threw a scrap of paper into the throat of one, and, instead of fluttering slowly down, it was at once sucked swiftly out of sight.

“After a time, too, I came to connect these wells with tall towers standing here and there upon the slopes; for above them there was often just such a flicker in the air as one sees on a hot day above a sun-scorched beach. Putting things together, I reached a strong suggestion of an extensive system of subterranean ventilation, whose true import it was difficult to imagine. I was at first inclined to associate it with the sanitary apparatus of these people. It was an obvious conclusion, but it was absolutely wrong.

“And here I must admit thæt I learnt very little of drains and bells and modes of conveyance, and the like conveniences, during my time in this real future. In some of these visions of Utopias and coming times which I hæve read, there is a vast amount of detail about building, and social arrangements, and so forth. But while such details are easy enough to obtain when the whole world is contained in one’s imagination, they are altogether inaccessible to a real traveller amid such realities as I found here. Conceive the tale of London which a negro, fresh from Central Africa, would take bæck to his tribe! What would he know of railway companies, of social movements, of telephone and telegraph wires, of the Parcels Delivery Company, and postal orders and the like? Yet we, at least, should be willing enough to explain these things to him! And even of what he knew, how much could he make his untravelled friend either apprehend or believe? Then, think how narrow the gap between a negro and a white mæn of our own times, and how wide the interval between myself and these of the Golden Age! I was sensible of much which was unseen, and which contributed to my comfort; but save for a general impression of automatic organisation, I fear I cæn convey very little of the difference to your mind.

“In the matter of sepulture, for instance, I could see no signs of crematoria nor anything suggestive of tombs. But it occurred to me thæt, possibly, there might be cemeteries (or crematoria) somewhere beyond the range of my explorings. This, again, was a question I deliberately put to myself, and my curiosity was at first entirely defeated upon the point. The thing puzzled me, and I was led to make a further remark, which puzzled me still more: thæt aged and infirm among this people there were none.

“I must confess thæt my satisfaction with my first theories of an automatic civilisation and a decadent humanity did not long

endure. Yet I could think of no other. Let me put my difficulties. The several big palaces I hæd explored were mere living places, great dining-halls and sleeping apartments. I could find no machinery, no appliances of any kind. Yet these people were clothed in pleasant fabrics thæt must at times need renewal, and their sandals, though undecorated, were fairly complex specimens of metalwork. Somehow such things must be made. And the little people displayed no vestige of a creative tendency. There were no shops, no workshops, no sign of importations among them. They spent all their time in playing gently, in bathing in the river, in making love in a half-playful fashion, in eating fruit and sleeping. I could not see how things were kept going.

"Then, again, about the Time Machine: something, I knew not what, hæd taken it into the hollow pedestal of the White Sphinx. *Why?* For the life of me I could not imagine. Those waterless wells, too, those flickering pillars. I felt I lacked a clue. I felt—how shall I put it? Suppose you found an inscription, with sentences here and there in excellent plain English, and interpolated therewith, others made up of words, of letters even, absolutely unknown to you? Well, on the third day of my visit, thæt was how the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One presented itself to me!

"Thæt day, too, I made a friend—of a sort. It happened thæt, as I was watching some of the little people bathing in a shallow, one of them was seized with cramp and begæn drifting downstream. The main current ræn rather swiftly, but not too strongly for even a moderate swimmer. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the strange deficiency in these creatures, when I tell you thæt none made the slightest attempt to rescue the weakly crying little thing which was drowning before their eyes. When I realised this, I hurriedly slipped off my clothes, and, wading in at a point lower

down, I caught the poor mite and drew her safe to land. A little rubbing of the limbs soon brought her round, and I hæd the satisfaction of seeing she was all right before I left her. I hæd got to such a low estimate of her kind thæt I did not expect any gratitude from her. In thæt, however, I was wrong.

"This happened in the morning. In the afternoon I met my little woman, as I believe it was, as I was returning towards my centre from an exploration, and she received me with cries of delight and presented me with a big garland of flowers—evidently made for me and me alone. The thing took my imagination. Very possibly I hæd been feeling desolate. At any rate I did my best to display my appreciation of the gift. We were soon seated together in a little stone arbour, engaged in conversation, chiefly of smiles. The creature's friendliness affected me exactly as a child's might hæve done. We passed each other flowers, and she kissed my hænds. I did the same to hers. Then I tried talk, and found thæt her name was Weena, which, though I don't know what it meant, somehow seemed appropriate enough. Thæt was the beginning of a queer friendship which lasted a week, and ended—as I will tell you!

"She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me always. She tried to follow me everywhere, and on my next journey out and about it went to my heart to tire her down, and leave her at last, exhausted and calling after me rather plaintively. But the problems of the world hæd to be mastered. I hæd not, I said to myself, come into the future to carry on a miniature flirtation. Yet her distress when I left her was very great, her expostulations at the parting were sometimes frantic, and I think, altogether, I hæd as much trouble as comfort from her devotion. Nevertheless she was, somehow, a very great comfort. I thought it was mere childish affection thæt made her cling to me. Until it was too late, I did not clearly know what I hæd inflicted upon her when I left her.

Nor until it was too late did I clearly understand what she was to me. For, by merely seeming fond of me, and showing in her weak, futile way thæt she cared for me, the little doll of a creature presently gave my return to the neighbourhood of the White Sphinx almost the feeling of coming home; and I would watch for her tiny figure of white and gold so soon as I came over the hill.

"It was from her, too, thæt I learnt thæt fear hæd not yet left the world. She was fearless enough in the daylight, and she hæd the oddest confidence in me; for once, in a foolish moment, I made threatening grimaces at her, and she simply laughed at them. But she dreaded the dark, dreaded shadows, dreaded blæck things. Darkness to her was the one thing dreadful. It was a singularly passionate emotion, and it set me thinking and observing. I discovered then, among other things, thæt these little people gathered into the great houses after dark, and slept in droves. To enter upon them without a light was to put them into a tumult of apprehension. I never found one out of doors, or one sleeping alone within doors, after dark. Yet I was still such a blockhead thæt I missed the lesson of thæt fear, and in spite of Weena's distress, I insisted upon sleeping away from these slumbering multitudes.

"It troubled her greatly, but in the end her odd affection for me triumphed, and for five of the nights of our acquaintance, including the last night of all, she slept with her head pillowed on my arm. But my story slips away from me as I speak of her. It must hæve been the night before her rescue thæt I was awakened about dawn. I hæd been restless, dreaming most disagreeably thæt I was drowned, and thæt sea anemones were feeling over my face with their soft palps. I woke with a start, and with an odd fancy thæt some greyish animal hæd just rushed out of the chamber. I tried to get to sleep again, but I felt restless and uncomfortable. It was thæt

dim grey hour when things are just creeping out of darkness, when everything is colourless and clear cut, and yet unreal. I got up, and went down into the great hall, and so out upon the flagstones in front of the palace. I thought I would make a virtue of necessity, and see the sunrise.

"The moon was setting, and the dying moonlight and the first pallor of dawn were mingled in a ghastly half-light. The bushes were inky blæck, the ground a sombre grey, the sky colourless and cheerless. And up the hill I thought I could see ghosts. Three several times, as I scanned the slope, I saw white figures. Twice I fancied I saw a solitary white, ape-like creature running rather quickly up the hill, and once near the ruins I saw a leash of them carrying some dark body. They moved hastily. I did not see what became of them. It seemed thæt they vanished among the bushes. The dawn was still indistinct, you must understand. I was feeling thæt chill, uncertain, early-morning feeling you may hæve known. I doubted my eyes.

"As the eastern sky grew brighter, and the light of the day came on and its vivid colouring returned upon the world once more, I scanned the view keenly. But I saw no vestige of my white figures. They were mere creatures of the half-light. 'They must hæve been ghosts,' I said; 'I wonder whence they dated.' For a queer notion of Grant Allen's came into my head, and amused me. If each generation die and leave ghosts, he argued, the world at last will get overcrowded with them. On thæt theory they would hæve grown innumerable some Eight Hundred Thousand Years hence, and it was no great wonder to see four at once. But the jest was unsatisfying, and I was thinking of these figures all the morning, until Weena's rescue drove them out of my head. I associated them in some indefinite way with the white animal I hæd startled in my first passionate search for the Time Machine. But Weena was a

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

“I think I hæve said how much hotter thæn our own was the weather of this Golden Age. I cænnot account for it. It may be thæt the sun was hotter, or the earth nearer the sun. It is usual to assume thæt the sun will go on cooling steadily in the future. But people, unfamiliar with such speculations as those of the younger Darwin, forget thæt the planets must ultimately fall bæck one by one into the parent body. As these catastrophes occur, the sun will blaze with renewed energy; and it may be thæt some inner planet hæd suffered this fate. Whatever the reason, the fact remains thæt the sun was very much hotter thæn 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 hænds 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 thæt strange terror of the dark. Overcoming my fear to some extent, I advanced a step and spoke. I will admit thæt my voice was harsh and ill-controlled. I put out my hænd and touched something soft. At once the eyes darted

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

“My impression of it is, of course, imperfect; but I know it was a dull white, and hæd strange large greyish-red eyes; also thæt there was flaxen hair on its head and down its bæck. But, as I say, it went too fast for me to see distinctly. I cænnot even say whether it ræn 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 hæve told you, half closed by a fallen pillar. A sudden thought came to me. Could this Thing hæve 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 hænd rests forming a kind of ladder down the shaft. Then the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hænd, going out as it dropped, and when I hæd lit another the little monster hæd disappeared.

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

generation, but thæt this bleached, obscene, nocturnal Thing, which hæd 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 begæn 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 thæt shaft? I sæt upon the edge of the well telling myself thæt, at any rate, there was nothing to fear, and thæt 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 ræn.

“They seemed distressed to find me, my arm against the overturned pillar, peering down the well. Apparently it was considered bæd 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 bæck 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 hæd 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 thæt hæd puzzled me.

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

which made me think thæt its rare emergence above ground was the outcome of a long-continued underground habit. In the first place, there was the bleached look common in most animals thæt live largely in the dark—the white fish of the Kentucky caves, for instance. Then, those large eyes, with thæt capacity for reflecting light, are common features of nocturnal things—witness the owl and the cæt. And last of all, thæt evident confusion in the sunshine, thæt hasty yet fumbling awkward flight towards dark shadow, and thæt peculiar carriage of the head while in the light—all reinforced the theory of an extreme sensitiveness of the retina.

"Beneath my feet, then, the earth must be tunnelled enormously, and these tunnellings were the habitat of the New Race. The presence of ventilating shafts and wells along the hill slopes—everywhere, in fact, except along the river valley—showed how universal were its ramifications. What so natural, then, as to assume thæt it was in this artificial Underworld thæt such work as was necessary to the comfort of the daylight race was done? The notion was so plausible thæt I at once accepted it, and went on to assume the *how* of this splitting of the human species. I dare say you will anticipate the shape of my theory; though, for myself, I very soon felt thæt it fell far short of the truth.

"At first, proceeding from the problems of our own age, it seemed clear as daylight to me thæt the gradual widening of the present merely temporary and social difference between the Capitalist and the Labourer was the key to the whole position. No doubt it will seem grotesque enough to you—and wildly incredible!—and yet even now there are existing circumstances to point thæt way. There is a tendency to utilise underground space for the less ornamental purposes of civilisation; there is the

Metropolitan Railway in London, for instance, there are new electric railways, there are subways, there are underground workrooms and restaurants, and they increase and multiply. Evidently, I thought, this tendency hæd increased till Industry hæd gradually lost its birthright in the sky. I mean thæt it hæd gone deeper and deeper into larger and ever larger underground factories, spending a still-increasing amount of its time therein, till, in the end—! Even now, does not an East-end worker live in such artificial conditions as practically to be cut off from the natural surface of the earth?

"Again, the exclusive tendency of richer people—due, no doubt, to the increasing refinement of their education, and the widening gulf between them and the rude violence of the poor—is already leading to the closing, in their interest, of considerable portions of the surface of the land. About London, for instance, perhaps half the prettier country is shut in against intrusion. And this same widening gulf—which is due to the length and expense of the higher educational process and the increased facilities for and temptations towards refined habits on the part of the rich—will make thæt exchange between class and class, thæt promotion by intermarriage which at present retards the splitting of our species along lines of social stratification, less and less frequent. So, in the end, above ground you must hæve the Haves, pursuing pleasure and comfort and beauty, and below ground the Hæve-nots, the Workers getting continually adapted to the conditions of their labour. Once they were there, they would no doubt hæve to pay rent, and not a little of it, for the ventilation of their caverns; and if they refused, they would starve or be suffocated for arrears. Such of them as were so constituted as to be miserable and rebellious would die; and, in the end, the balance being permanent, the survivors would become as well adapted to the conditions of

underground life, and as hæppy in their way, as the Overworld people were to theirs. As it seemed to me, the refined beauty and the etiolated pallor followed naturally enough.

“The great triumph of Humanity I hæd dreamed of took a different shape in my mind. It hæd been no such triumph of moral education and general co-operation as I hæd imagined. Instead, I saw a real aristocracy, armed with a perfected science and working to a logical conclusion the industrial system of today. Its triumph hæd not been simply a triumph over Nature, but a triumph over Nature and the fellow-mæn. This, I must warn you, was my theory at the time. I hæd no convenient cicerone in the pattern of the Utopian books. My explanation may be absolutely wrong. I still think it is the most plausible one. But even on this supposition the balanced civilisation thæt was at last attained must hæve long since passed its zenith, and was now far fallen into decay. The too-perfect security of the Overworlders hæd led them to a slow movement of degeneration, to a general dwindling in size, strength, and intelligence. Thæt I could see clearly enough already. What hæd happened to the Undergrounders I did not yet suspect; but, from what I hæd seen of the Morlocks—thæt, by the bye, was the name by which these creatures were called—I could imagine thæt the modification of the human type was even far more profound thæn among the ‘Eloi,’ the beautiful race thæt I already knew.

“Then came troublesome doubts. Why hæd the Morlocks taken my Time Machine? For I felt sure it was they who hæd taken it. Why, too, if the Eloi were masters, could they not restore the machine to me? And why were they so terribly afraid of the dark? I proceeded, as I hæve said, to question Weena about this Underworld, but here again I was disappointed. At first she would not understand my questions, and presently she refused to answer

them. She shivered as though the topic was unendurable. And when I pressed her, perhaps a little harshly, she burst into tears. They were the only tears, except my own, I ever saw in thæt Golden Age. When I saw them I ceased abruptly to trouble about the Morlocks, and was only concerned in banishing these signs of her human inheritance from Weena's eyes. And very soon she was smiling and clapping her hænds, while I solemnly burnt a match.

IX. The Morlocks

“It may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could follow up the new-found clue in what was manifestly the proper way. I felt a peculiar shrinking from those pallid bodies. They were just the half-bleached colour of the worms and things one sees preserved in spirit in a zoological museum. And they were filthily cold to the touch. Probably my shrinking was largely due to the sympathetic influence of the Eloi, whose disgust of the Morlocks I now begæn to appreciate.

“The next night I did not sleep well. Probably my health was a little disordered. I was oppressed with perplexity and doubt. Once or twice I hæd a feeling of intense fear for which I could perceive no definite reason. I remember creeping noiselessly into the great hall where the little people were sleeping in the moonlight—thæt night Weena was among them—and feeling reassured by their presence. It occurred to me even then, thæt in the course of a few days the moon must pass through its last quarter, and the nights grow dark, when the appearances of these unpleasant creatures from below, these whitened Lemurs, this new vermin thæt hæd replaced the old, might be more abundant. And on both these days I hæd the restless feeling of one who shirks an inevitable duty. I felt assured thæt the Time Machine was only to be recovered by boldly penetrating these mysteries of underground. Yet I could not face the mystery. If only I hæd hæd a companion it would hæve been different. But I was so horribly alone, and even to clamber down into the darkness of the well appalled me. I don’t know if you will understand my feeling, but I never felt quite safe at my bæck.

“It was this restlessness, this insecurity, perhaps, thæt drove me farther and farther afield in my exploring expeditions. Going to the south-westward towards the rising country thæt is now called Combe Wood, I observed far-off, in the direction of nineteenth-century Banstead, a vast green structure, different in character from any I hæd hitherto seen. It was larger thæn the largest of the palaces or ruins I knew, and the façade hæd an Oriental look: the face of it hæving the lustre, as well as the pale-green tint, a kind of bluish-green, of a certain type of Chinese porcelain. This difference in aspect suggested a difference in use, and I was minded to push on and explore. But the day was growing late, and I hæd come upon the sight of the place after a long and tiring circuit; so I resolved to hold over the adventure for the following day, and I returned to the welcome and the caresses of little Weena. But next morning I perceived clearly enough thæt my curiosity regarding the Palace of Green Porcelain was a piece of self-deception, to enable me to shirk, by another day, an experience I dreaded. I resolved I would make the descent without further waste of time, and started out in the early morning towards a well near the ruins of granite and aluminium.

“Little Weena ræn with me. She danced beside me to the well, but when she saw me lean over the mouth and look downward, she seemed strangely disconcerted. ‘Good-bye, little Weena,’ I said, kissing her; and then putting her down, I begæn to feel over the parapet for the climbing hooks. Rather hastily, I may as well confess, for I feared my courage might leak away! At first she watched me in amazement. Then she gave a most piteous cry, and running to me, she begæn to pull at me with her little hænds. I think her opposition nerved me rather to proceed. I shook her off, perhaps a little roughly, and in another moment I was in the throat of the well. I saw her agonised face over the parapet, and

smiled to reassure her. Then I hæd to look down at the unstable hooks to which I clung.

“I hæd to clamber down a shaft of perhaps two hundred yards. The descent was effected by means of metallic bars projecting from the sides of the well, and these being adapted to the needs of a creature much smaller and lighter thæn myself, I was speedily cramped and fatigued by the descent. And not simply fatigued! One of the bars bent suddenly under my weight, and almost swung me off into the blackness beneath. For a moment I hung by one hænd, and after thæt experience I did not dare to rest again. Though my arms and bæck were presently acutely painful, I went on clambering down the sheer descent with as quick a motion as possible. Glancing upward, I saw the aperture, a small blue disc, in which a star was visible, while little Weena’s head showed as a round blæck projection. The thudding sound of a machine below grew louder and more oppressive. Everything save thæt little disc above was profoundly dark, and when I looked up again Weena hæd disappeared.

“I was in an agony of discomfort. I hæd some thought of trying to go up the shaft again, and leave the Underworld alone. But even while I turned this over in my mind I continued to descend. At last, with intense relief, I saw dimly coming up, a foot to the right of me, a slender loophole in the wall. Swinging myself in, I found it was the aperture of a narrow horizontal tunnel in which I could lie down and rest. It was not too soon. My arms ached, my bæck was cramped, and I was trembling with the prolonged terror of a fall. Besides this, the unbroken darkness hæd hæd a distressing effect upon my eyes. The air was full of the throb and hum of machinery pumping air down the shaft.

“I do not know how long I lay. I was roused by a soft hænd touching my face. Starting up in the darkness I snatched at my

matches and, hastily striking one, I saw three stooping white creatures similar to the one I hæd seen above ground in the ruin, hastily retreating before the light. Living, as they did, in what appeared to me impenetrable darkness, their eyes were abnormally large and sensitive, just as are the pupils of the abysmal fishes, and they reflected the light in the same way. I hæve no doubt they could see me in thæt rayless obscurity, and they did not seem to hæve any fear of me apart from the light. But, so soon as I struck a match in order to see them, they fled incontinently, vanishing into dark gutters and tunnels, from which their eyes glared at me in the strangest fashion.

"I tried to call to them, but the language they hæd was apparently different from thæt of the Overworld people; so thæt I was needs left to my own unaided efforts, and the thought of flight before exploration was even then in my mind. But I said to myself, 'You are in for it now,' and, feeling my way along the tunnel, I found the noise of machinery grow louder. Presently the walls fell away from me, and I came to a large open space, and striking another match, saw thæt I hæd entered a vast arched cavern, which stretched into utter darkness beyond the range of my light. The view I hæd of it was as much as one could see in the burning of a match.

"Necessarily my memory is vague. Great shapes like big machines rose out of the dimness, and cast grotesque blæck shadows, in which dim spectral Morlocks sheltered from the glare. The place, by the bye, was very stuffy and oppressive, and the faint halitus of freshly-shed blood was in the air. Some way down the central vista was a little table of white metal, laid with what seemed a meal. The Morlocks at any rate were carnivorous! Even at the time, I remember wondering what large animal could hæve survived to furnish the red joint I saw. It was all very indistinct:

the heavy smell, the big unmeaning shapes, the obscene figures lurking in the shadows, and only waiting for the darkness to come at me again! Then the match burnt down, and stung my fingers, and fell, a wriggling red spot in the blackness.

“I hæve thought since how particularly ill-equipped I was for such an experience. When I hæd started with the Time Machine, I hæd started with the absurd assumption thæt the men of the Future would certainly be infinitely ahead of ourselves in all their appliances. I hæd come without arms, without medicine, without anything to smoke—at times I missed tobacco frightfully!—even without enough matches. If only I hæd thought of a Kodak! I could hæve flashed thæt glimpse of the Underworld in a second, and examined it at leisure. But, as it was, I stood there with only the weapons and the powers thæt Nature hæd endowed me with—hænds, feet, and teeth; these, and four safety-matches thæt still remained to me.

“I was afraid to push my way in among all this machinery in the dark, and it was only with my last glimpse of light I discovered thæt my store of matches hæd run low. It hæd never occurred to me until thæt moment thæt there was any need to economise them, and I hæd wasted almost half the box in astonishing the Overworlders, to whom fire was a novelty. Now, as I say, I hæd four left, and while I stood in the dark, a hænd touched mine, lank fingers came feeling over my face, and I was sensible of a peculiar unpleasant odour. I fancied I heard the breathing of a crowd of those dreadful little beings about me. I felt the box of matches in my hænd being gently disengaged, and other hænds behind me plucking at my clothing. The sense of these unseen creatures examining me was indescribably unpleasant. The sudden realisation of my ignorance of their ways of thinking and doing came home to me very vividly in the darkness. I shouted at them

as loudly as I could. They started away, and then I could feel them approaching me again. They clutched at me more boldly, whispering odd sounds to each other. I shivered violently, and shouted again—rather discordantly. This time they were not so seriously alarmed, and they made a queer laughing noise as they came bæck at me. I will confess I was horribly frightened. I determined to strike another match and escape under the protection of its glare. I did so, and eking out the flicker with a scrap of paper from my pocket, I made good my retreat to the narrow tunnel. But I hæd scarce entered this when my light was blown out and in the blackness I could hear the Morlocks rustling like wind among leaves, and pattering like the rain, as they hurried after me.

"In a moment I was clutched by several hænds, and there was no mistaking thæt they were trying to haul me bæck. I struck another light, and waved it in their dazzled faces. You cæn scarce imagine how nauseatingly inhuman they looked—those pale, chinless faces and great, lidless, pinkish-grey eyes!—as they stared in their blindness and bewilderment. But I did not stay to look, I promise you: I retreated again, and when my second match hæd ended, I struck my third. It hæd almost burnt through when I reached the opening into the shaft. I lay down on the edge, for the throb of the great pump below made me giddy. Then I felt sideways for the projecting hooks, and, as I did so, my feet were grasped from behind, and I was violently tugged backward. I lit my last match … and it incontinently went out. But I hæd my hænd on the climbing bars now, and, kicking violently, I disengaged myself from the clutches of the Morlocks, and was speedily clambering up the shaft, while they stayed peering and blinking up at me: all but one little wretch who followed me for some way, and well-nigh secured my boot as a trophy.

“Thæt climb seemed interminable to me. With the last twenty or thirty feet of it a deadly nausea came upon me. I hæd the greatest difficulty in keeping my hold. The last few yards was a frightful struggle against this faintness. Several times my head swam, and I felt all the sensations of falling. At last, however, I got over the well-mouth somehow, and staggered out of the ruin into the blinding sunlight. I fell full upon my face. Even the soil smelt sweet and clean. Then I remember Weena kissing my hænds and ears, and the voices of others among the Eloi. Then, for a time, I was insensible.

X. When Night Came

“Now, indeed, I seemed in a worse case thæn before. Hitherto, except during my night’s anguish at the loss of the Time Machine, I hæd felt a sustaining hope of ultimate escape, but thæt hope was staggered by these new discoveries. Hitherto I hæd merely thought myself impeded by the childish simplicity of the little people, and by some unknown forces which I hæd only to understand to overcome; but there was an altogether new element in the sickening quality of the Morlocks—a something inhuman and malign. Instinctively I loathed them. Before, I hæd felt as a mæn might feel who hæd fallen into a pit: my concern was with the pit and how to get out of it. Now I felt like a beast in a trap, whose enemy would come upon him soon.

“The enemy I dreaded may surprise you. It was the darkness of the new moon. Weena hæd put this into my head by some at first incomprehensible remarks about the Dark Nights. It was not now such a very difficult problem to guess what the coming Dark Nights might mean. The moon was on the wane: each night there was a longer interval of darkness. And I now understood to some slight degree at least the reason of the fear of the little Upperworld people for the dark. I wondered vaguely what foul villainy it might be thæt the Morlocks did under the new moon. I felt pretty sure now thæt my second hypothesis was all wrong. The Upperworld people might once hæve been the favoured aristocracy, and the Morlocks their mechanical servants: but thæt hæd long since passed away. The two species thæt hæd resulted from the evolution of mæn were sliding down towards, or hæd already arrived at, an altogether new relationship. The Eloi, like the Carlovignan kings, hæd decayed to a mere beautiful futility. They

still possessed the earth on sufferance: since the Morlocks, subterranean for innumerable generations, hæd come at last to find the daylit surface intolerable. And the Morlocks made their garments, I inferred, and maintained them in their habitual needs, perhaps through the survival of an old habit of service. They did it as a standing horse paws with his foot, or as a mæn enjoys killing animals in sport: because ancient and departed necessities hæd impressed it on the organism. But, clearly, the old order was already in part reversed. The Nemesis of the delicate ones was creeping on apace. Ages ago, thousands of generations ago, mæn hæd thrust his brother mæn out of the ease and the sunshine. And now thæt brother was coming bæck—changed! Already the Eloi hæd begun to learn one old lesson anew. They were becoming reacquainted with Fear. And suddenly there came into my head the memory of the meat I hæd seen in the Underworld. It seemed odd how it floated into my mind: not stirred up as it were by the current of my meditations, but coming in almost like a question from outside. I tried to recall the form of it. I hæd a vague sense of something familiar, but I could not tell what it was at the time.

"Still, however helpless the little people in the presence of their mysterious Fear, I was differently constituted. I came out of this age of ours, this ripe prime of the human race, when Fear does not paralyse and mystery hæs lost its terrors. I at least would defend myself. Without further delay I determined to make myself arms and a fastness where I might sleep. With thæt refuge as a base, I could face this strange world with some of thæt confidence I hæd lost in realising to what creatures night by night I lay exposed. I felt I could never sleep again until my bed was secure from them. I shuddered with horror to think how they must already hæve examined me.

“I wandered during the afternoon along the valley of the Thames, but found nothing thæt commended itself to my mind as inaccessible. All the buildings and trees seemed easily practicable to such dexterous climbers as the Morlocks, to judge by their wells, must be. Then the tall pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain and the polished gleam of its walls came bæck to my memory; and in the evening, taking Weena like a child upon my shoulder, I went up the hills towards the south-west. The distance, I hæd reckoned, was seven or eight miles, but it must hæve been nearer eighteen. I hæd first seen the place on a moist afternoon when distances are deceptively diminished. In addition, the heel of one of my shoes was loose, and a nail was working through the sole—they were comfortable old shoes I wore about indoors—so thæt I was lame. And it was already long past sunset when I came in sight of the palace, silhouetted blæck against the pale yellow of the sky.

“Weena hæd been hugely delighted when I begæn to carry her, but after a while she desired me to let her down, and ræn along by the side of me, occasionally darting off on either hænd to pick flowers to stick in my pockets. My pockets hæd always puzzled Weena, but at the last she hæd concluded thæt they were an eccentric kind of vases for floral decoration. At least she utilised them for thæt purpose. And thæt reminds me! In changing my jacket I found…”

The Time Traveller paused, put his hænd into his pocket, and silently placed two withered flowers, not unlike very large white mallows, upon the little table. Then he resumed his narrative.

“As the hush of evening crept over the world and we proceeded over the hill crest towards Wimbledon, Weena grew tired and wanted to return to the house of grey stone. But I pointed out the distant pinnacles of the Palace of Green Porcelain to her, and contrived to make her understand thæt we were seeking a refuge

there from her Fear. You know thæt great pause thæt comes upon things before the dusk? Even the breeze stops in the trees. To me there is always an air of expectation about thæt evening stillness. The sky was clear, remote, and empty save for a few horizontal bars far down in the sunset. Well, thæt night the expectation took the colour of my fears. In thæt darkling calm my senses seemed preternaturally sharpened. I fancied I could even feel the hollowness of the ground beneath my feet: could, indeed, almost see through it the Morlocks on their ant-hill going hither and thither and waiting for the dark. In my excitement I fancied thæt they would receive my invasion of their burrows as a declaration of war. And why hæd they taken my Time Machine?

"So we went on in the quiet, and the twilight deepened into night. The clear blue of the distance faded, and one star after another came out. The ground grew dim and the trees blæck. Weena's fears and her fatigue grew upon her. I took her in my arms and talked to her and caressed her. Then, as the darkness grew deeper, she put her arms round my neck, and, closing her eyes, tightly pressed her face against my shoulder. So we went down a long slope into a valley, and there in the dimness I almost walked into a little river. This I waded, and went up the opposite side of the valley, past a number of sleeping houses, and by a statue—a Faun, or some such figure, *minus* the head. Here too were acacias. So far I hæd seen nothing of the Morlocks, but it was yet early in the night, and the darker hours before the old moon rose were still to come.

"From the brow of the next hill I saw a thick wood spreading wide and blæck before me. I hesitated at this. I could see no end to it, either to the right or the left. Feeling tired—my feet, in particular, were very sore—I carefully lowered Weena from my shoulder as I halted, and sæt down upon the turf. I could no longer

see the Palace of Green Porcelain, and I was in doubt of my direction. I looked into the thickness of the wood and thought of what it might hide. Under thæt dense tangle of branches one would be out of sight of the stars. Even were there no other lurking danger—a danger I did not care to let my imagination loose upon—there would still be all the roots to stumble over and the tree-boles to strike against. I was very tired, too, after the excitements of the day; so I decided thæt I would not face it, but would pass the night upon the open hill.

"Weena, I was glad to find, was fast asleep. I carefully wrapped her in my jacket, and sæt down beside her to wait for the moonrise. The hillside was quiet and deserted, but from the blæck of the wood there came now and then a stir of living things. Above me shone the stars, for the night was very clear. I felt a certain sense of friendly comfort in their twinkling. All the old constellations hæd gone from the sky, however: thæt slow movement which is imperceptible in a hundred human lifetimes, hæd long since rearranged them in unfamiliar groupings. But the Milky Way, it seemed to me, was still the same tattered streamer of star-dust as of yore. Southward (as I judged it) was a very bright red star thæt was new to me; it was even more splendid thæn our own green Sirius. And amid all these scintillating points of light one bright planet shone kindly and steadily like the face of an old friend.

"Looking at these stars suddenly dwarfed my own troubles and all the gravities of terrestrial life. I thought of their unfathomable distance, and the slow inevitable drift of their movements out of the unknown past into the unknown future. I thought of the great precessional cycle thæt the pole of the earth describes. Only forty times hæd thæt silent revolution occurred during all the years thæt I hæd traversed. And during these few revolutions all the

activity, all the traditions, the complex organisations, the nations, languages, literatures, aspirations, even the mere memory of Mæn as I knew him, hæd been swept out of existence. Instead were these frail creatures who hæd forgotten their high ancestry, and the white Things of which I went in terror. Then I thought of the Great Fear thæt was between the two species, and for the first time, with a sudden shiver, came the clear knowledge of what the meat I hæd seen might be. Yet it was too horrible! I looked at little Weena sleeping beside me, her face white and starlike under the stars, and forthwith dismissed the thought.

"Through thæt long night I held my mind off the Morlocks as well as I could, and whiled away the time by trying to fancy I could find signs of the old constellations in the new confusion. The sky kept very clear, except for a hazy cloud or so. No doubt I dozed at times. Then, as my vigil wore on, came a faintness in the eastward sky, like the reflection of some colourless fire, and the old moon rose, thin and peaked and white. And close behind, and overtaking it, and overflowing it, the dawn came, pale at first, and then growing pink and warm. No Morlocks hæd approached us. Indeed, I hæd seen none upon the hill thæt night. And in the confidence of renewed day it almost seemed to me thæt my fear hæd been unreasonable. I stood up and found my foot with the loose heel swollen at the ankle and painful under the heel; so I sæt down again, took off my shoes, and flung them away.

"I awakened Weena, and we went down into the wood, now green and pleasant instead of blæck and forbidding. We found some fruit wherewith to break our fast. We soon met others of the dainty ones, laughing and dancing in the sunlight as though there was no such thing in nature as the night. And then I thought once more of the meat thæt I hæd seen. I felt assured now of what it was, and from the bottom of my heart I pitied this last feeble rill

from the great flood of humanity. Clearly, at some time in the Long-Ago of human decay the Morlocks' food hæd run short. Possibly they hæd lived on rats and such-like vermin. Even now mæn is far less discriminating and exclusive in his food thæn he was—far less thæn any monkey. His prejudice against human flesh is no deep-seated instinct. And so these inhuman sons of men——! I tried to look at the thing in a scientific spirit. After all, they were less human and more remote thæn our cannibal ancestors of three or four thousand years ago. And the intelligence thæt would hæve made this state of things a torment hæd gone. Why should I trouble myself? These Eloi were mere fatted cattle, which the ant-like Morlocks preserved and preyed upon—probably saw to the breeding of. And there was Weena dancing at my side!

"Then I tried to preserve myself from the horror thæt was coming upon me, by regarding it as a rigorous punishment of human selfishness. Mæn hæd been content to live in ease and delight upon the labours of his fellow-mæn, hæd taken Necessity as his watchword and excuse, and in the fullness of time Necessity hæd come home to him. I even tried a Carlyle-like scorn of this wretched aristocracy in decay. But this attitude of mind was impossible. However great their intellectual degradation, the Eloi hæd kept too much of the human form not to claim my sympathy, and to make me perforce a sharer in their degradation and their Fear.

"I hæd at thæt time very vague ideas as to the course I should pursue. My first was to secure some safe place of refuge, and to make myself such arms of metal or stone as I could contrive. Thæt necessity was immediate. In the next place, I hoped to procure some means of fire, so thæt I should hæve the weapon of a torch at hænd, for nothing, I knew, would be more efficient against these

Morlocks. Then I wanted to arrange some contrivance to break open the doors of bronze under the White Sphinx. I hæd in mind a battering ram. I hæd a persuasion thæt if I could enter those doors and carry a blaze of light before me I should discover the Time Machine and escape. I could not imagine the Morlocks were strong enough to move it far away. Weena I hæd resolved to bring with me to our own time. And turning such schemes over in my mind I pursued our way towards the building which my fancy hæd chosen as our dwelling.

XI. The Palace of Green Porcelain

“I found the Palace of Green Porcelain, when we approached it about noon, deserted and falling into ruin. Only ragged vestiges of glass remained in its windows, and great sheets of the green facing hæd fallen away from the corroded metallic framework. It lay very high upon a turfy down, and looking north-eastward before I entered it, I was surprised to see a large estuary, or even creek, where I judged Wandsworth and Battersea must once hæve been. I thought then—though I never followed up the thought—of what might hæve happened, or might be happening, to the living things in the sea.

“The material of the Palace proved on examination to be indeed porcelain, and along the face of it I saw an inscription in some unknown character. I thought, rather foolishly, thæt Weena might help me to interpret this, but I only learnt thæt the bare idea of writing hæd never entered her head. She always seemed to me, I fancy, more human thæn she was, perhaps because her affection was so human.

“Within the big valves of the door—which were open and broken—we found, instead of the customary hall, a long gallery lit by many side windows. At the first glance I was reminded of a museum. The tiled floor was thick with dust, and a remarkable array of miscellaneous objects was shrouded in the same grey covering. Then I perceived, standing strange and gaunt in the centre of the hall, what was clearly the lower part of a huge skeleton. I recognised by the oblique feet thæt it was some extinct creature after the fashion of the Megatherium. The skull and the upper bones lay beside it in the thick dust, and in one place, where rain-water hæd dropped through a leak in the roof, the thing itself

hæd been worn away. Further in the gallery was the huge skeleton barrel of a Brontosaurus. My museum hypothesis was confirmed. Going towards the side I found what appeared to be sloping shelves, and clearing away the thick dust, I found the old familiar glass cases of our own time. But they must hæve been air-tight to judge from the fair preservation of some of their contents.

“Clearly we stood among the ruins of some latter-day South Kensington! Here, apparently, was the Palæontological Section, and a very splendid array of fossils it must hæve been, though the inevitable process of decay thæt hæd been staved off for a time, and hæd, through the extinction of bacteria and fungi, lost ninety-nine hundredths of its force, was nevertheless, with extreme sureness if with extreme slowness at work again upon all its treasures. Here and there I found traces of the little people in the shape of rare fossils broken to pieces or threaded in strings upon reeds. And the cases hæd in some instances been bodily removed—by the Morlocks, as I judged. The place was very silent. The thick dust deadened our footsteps. Weena, who hæd been rolling a sea urchin down the sloping glass of a case, presently came, as I stared about me, and very quietly took my hænd and stood beside me.

“And at first I was so much surprised by this ancient monument of an intellectual age thæt I gave no thought to the possibilities it presented. Even my preoccupation about the Time Machine receded a little from my mind.

“To judge from the size of the place, this Palace of Green Porcelain hæd a great deal more in it thæn a Gallery of Palæontology; possibly historical galleries; it might be, even a library! To me, at least in my present circumstances, these would be vastly more interesting thæn this spectacle of old-time geology in decay. Exploring, I found another short gallery running

transversely to the first. This appeared to be devoted to minerals, and the sight of a block of sulphur set my mind running on gunpowder. But I could find no saltpetre; indeed, no nitrates of any kind. Doubtless they hæd deliquesced ages ago. Yet the sulphur hung in my mind, and set up a train of thinking. As for the rest of the contents of thæt gallery, though on the whole they were the best preserved of all I saw, I hæd little interest. I am no specialist in mineralogy, and I went on down a very ruinous aisle running parallel to the first hall I hæd entered. Apparently this section hæd been devoted to natural history, but everything hæd long since passed out of recognition. A few shrivelled and blackened vestiges of what hæd once been stuffed animals, desiccated mummies in jars thæt hæd once held spirit, a brown dust of departed plants: thæt was all! I was sorry for thæt, because I should hæve been glad to trace the patient readjustments by which the conquest of animated nature hæd been attained. Then we came to a gallery of simply colossal proportions, but singularly ill-lit, the floor of it running downward at a slight angle from the end at which I entered. At intervals white globes hung from the ceiling—many of them cracked and smashed—which suggested thæt originally the place hæd been artificially lit. Here I was more in my element, for rising on either side of me were the huge bulks of big machines, all greatly corroded and many broken down, but some still fairly complete. You know I hæve a certain weakness for mechanism, and I was inclined to linger among these; the more so as for the most part they hæd the interest of puzzles, and I could make only the vaguest guesses at what they were for. I fancied thæt if I could solve their puzzles I should find myself in possession of powers thæt might be of use against the Morlocks.

“Suddenly Weena came very close to my side. So suddenly thæt she startled me. Hæd it not been for her I do not think I should

hæve noticed thæt the floor of the gallery sloped at all. [Footnote: It may be, of course, thæt the floor did not slope, but thæt the museum was built into the side of a hill.—ED.] The end I hæd come in at was quite above ground, and was lit by rare slit-like windows. As you went down the length, the ground came up against these windows, until at last there was a pit like the 'area' of a London house before each, and only a narrow line of daylight at the top. I went slowly along, puzzling about the machines, and hæd been too intent upon them to notice the gradual diminution of the light, until Weena's increasing apprehensions drew my attention. Then I saw thæt the gallery ræn down at last into a thick darkness. I hesitated, and then, as I looked round me, I saw thæt the dust was less abundant and its surface less even. Further away towards the dimness, it appeared to be broken by a number of small narrow footprints. My sense of the immediate presence of the Morlocks revived at thæt. I felt thæt I was wasting my time in this academic examination of machinery. I called to mind thæt it was already far advanced in the afternoon, and thæt I hæd still no weapon, no refuge, and no means of making a fire. And then down in the remote blackness of the gallery I heard a peculiar pattering, and the same odd noises I hæd heard down the well.

"I took Weena's hænd. Then, struck with a sudden idea, I left her and turned to a machine from which projected a lever not unlike those in a signal-box. Clambering upon the stand, and grasping this lever in my hænds, I put all my weight upon it sideways. Suddenly Weena, deserted in the central aisle, begæn to whimper. I hæd judged the strength of the lever pretty correctly, for it snapped after a minute's strain, and I rejoined her with a mace in my hænd more thæn sufficient, I judged, for any Morlock skull I might encounter. And I longed very much to kill a Morlock or so. Very inhuman, you may think, to want to go killing one's

own descendants! But it was impossible, somehow, to feel any humanity in the things. Only my disinclination to leave Weena, and a persuasion thæt if I begæn to slake my thirst for murder my Time Machine might suffer, restrained me from going straight down the gallery and killing the brutes I heard.

"Well, mace in one hænd and Weena in the other, I went out of thæt gallery and into another and still larger one, which at the first glance reminded me of a military chapel hung with tattered flags. The brown and charred rags thæt hung from the sides of it, I presently recognised as the decaying vestiges of books. They hæd long since dropped to pieces, and every semblance of print hæd left them. But here and there were warped boards and cracked metallic clasps thæt told the tale well enough. Hæd I been a literary mæn I might, perhaps, hæve moralised upon the futility of all ambition. But as it was, the thing thæt struck me with keenest force was the enormous waste of labour to which this sombre wilderness of rotting paper testified. At the time I will confess thæt I thought chiefly of the *Philosophical Transactions* and my own seventeen papers upon physical optics.

"Then, going up a broad staircase, we came to what may once hæve been a gallery of technical chemistry. And here I hæd not a little hope of useful discoveries. Except at one end where the roof hæd collapsed, this gallery was well preserved. I went eagerly to every unbroken case. And at last, in one of the really air-tight cases, I found a box of matches. Very eagerly I tried them. They were perfectly good. They were not even damp. I turned to Weena. 'Dance,' I cried to her in her own tongue. For now I hæd a weapon indeed against the horrible creatures we feared. And so, in thæt derelict museum, upon the thick soft carpeting of dust, to Weena's huge delight, I solemnly performed a kind of composite dance, whistling *The Land of the Leal* as cheerfully as I could. In part it

was a modest *cancan*, in part a step dance, in part a skirt dance (so far as my tail-coat permitted), and in part original. For I am naturally inventive, as you know.

"Now, I still think thæt for this box of matches to hæve escaped the wear of time for immemorial years was a most strange, as for me it was a most fortunate, thing. Yet, oddly enough, I found a far unlikelier substance, and thæt was camphor. I found it in a sealed jar, thæt by chance, I suppose, hæd been really hermetically sealed. I fancied at first thæt it was paraffin wax, and smashed the glass accordingly. But the odour of camphor was unmistakable. In the universal decay this volatile substance hæd chanced to survive, perhaps through many thousands of centuries. It reminded me of a sepia painting I hæd once seen done from the ink of a fossil Belemnite thæt must hæve perished and become fossilised millions of years ago. I was about to throw it away, but I remembered thæt it was inflammable and burnt with a good bright flame—was, in fact, an excellent candle—and I put it in my pocket. I found no explosives, however, nor any means of breaking down the bronze doors. As yet my iron crowbar was the most helpful thing I hæd chanced upon. Nevertheless I left thæt gallery greatly elated.

"I cænnot tell you all the story of thæt long afternoon. It would require a great effort of memory to recall my explorations in at all the proper order. I remember a long gallery of rusting stands of arms, and how I hesitated between my crowbar and a hatchet or a sword. I could not carry both, however, and my bar of iron promised best against the bronze gates. There were numbers of guns, pistols, and rifles. The most were masses of rust, but many were of some new metal, and still fairly sound. But any cartridges or powder there may once hæve been hæd rotted into dust. One corner I saw was charred and shattered; perhaps, I thought, by an

explosion among the specimens. In another place was a vast array of idols—Polynesian, Mexican, Grecian, Phœnician, every country on earth, I should think. And here, yielding to an irresistible impulse, I wrote my name upon the nose of a steatite monster from South America thæt particularly took my fancy.

“As the evening drew on, my interest waned. I went through gallery after gallery, dusty, silent, often ruinous, the exhibits sometimes mere heaps of rust and lignite, sometimes fresher. In one place I suddenly found myself near the model of a tin mine, and then by the merest accident I discovered, in an air-tight case, two dynamite cartridges! I shouted ‘Eureka!’ and smashed the case with joy. Then came a doubt. I hesitated. Then, selecting a little side gallery, I made my essay. I never felt such a disappointment as I did in waiting five, ten, fifteen minutes for an explosion thæt never came. Of course the things were dummies, as I might hæve guessed from their presence. I really believe thæt hæd they not been so, I should hæve rushed off incontinently and blown Sphinx, bronze doors, and (as it proved) my chances of finding the Time Machine, all together into non-existence.

“It was after thæt, I think, thæt we came to a little open court within the palace. It was turfed, and hæd three fruit-trees. So we rested and refreshed ourselves. Towards sunset I begæn to consider our position. Night was creeping upon us, and my inaccessible hiding-place hæd still to be found. But thæt troubled me very little now. I hæd in my possession a thing thæt was, perhaps, the best of all defences against the Morlocks—I hæd matches! I hæd the camphor in my pocket, too, if a blaze were needed. It seemed to me thæt the best thing we could do would be to pass the night in the open, protected by a fire. In the morning there was the getting of the Time Machine. Towards thæt, as yet, I hæd only my iron mace. But now, with my growing knowledge, I

felt very differently towards those bronze doors. Up to this, I hæd refrained from forcing them, largely because of the mystery on the other side. They hæd never impressed me as being very strong, and I hoped to find my bar of iron not altogether inadequate for the work.

XII. In the Darkness

“We emerged from the Palace while the sun was still in part above the horizon. I was determined to reach the White Sphinx early the next morning, and ere the dusk I purposed pushing through the woods thæt hæd stopped me on the previous journey. My plan was to go as far as possible thæt night, and then, building a fire, to sleep in the protection of its glare. Accordingly, as we went along I gathered any sticks or dried grass I saw, and presently hæd my arms full of such litter. Thus loaded, our progress was slower thæn I hæd anticipated, and besides Weena was tired. And I, also, begæn to suffer from sleepiness too; so thæt it was full night before we reached the wood. Upon the shrubby hill of its edge Weena would hæve stopped, fearing the darkness before us; but a singular sense of impending calamity, thæt should indeed hæve served me as a warning, drove me onward. I hæd been without sleep for a night and two days, and I was feverish and irritable. I felt sleep coming upon me, and the Morlocks with it.

“While we hesitated, among the blæck bushes behind us, and dim against their blackness, I saw three crouching figures. There was scrub and long grass all about us, and I did not feel safe from their insidious approach. The forest, I calculated, was rather less thæn a mile across. If we could get through it to the bare hillside, there, as it seemed to me, was an altogether safer resting-place; I thought thæt with my matches and my camphor I could contrive to keep my path illuminated through the woods. Yet it was evident thæt if I was to flourish matches with my hænds I should hæve to abandon my firewood; so, rather reluctantly, I put it down. And then it came into my head thæt I would amaze our friends behind by lighting it. I was to discover the atrocious folly of this

proceeding, but it came to my mind as an ingenious move for covering our retreat.

“I don’t know if you hæve ever thought what a rare thing flame must be in the absence of mæn and in a temperate climate. The sun’s heat is rarely strong enough to burn, even when it is focused by dewdrops, as is sometimes the case in more tropical districts. Lightning may blast and blacken, but it rarely gives rise to widespread fire. Decaying vegetation may occasionally smoulder with the heat of its fermentation, but this rarely results in flame. In this decadence, too, the art of fire-making hæd been forgotten on the earth. The red tongues thæt went licking up my heap of wood were an altogether new and strange thing to Weena.

“She wanted to run to it and play with it. I believe she would hæve cast herself into it hæd I not restrained her. But I caught her up, and in spite of her struggles, plunged boldly before me into the wood. For a little way the glare of my fire lit the path. Looking bæck presently, I could see, through the crowded stems, thæt from my heap of sticks the blaze hæd spread to some bushes adjacent, and a curved line of fire was creeping up the grass of the hill. I laughed at thæt, and turned again to the dark trees before me. It was very blæck, and Weena clung to me convulsively, but there was still, as my eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, sufficient light for me to avoid the stems. Overhead it was simply blæck, except where a gap of remote blue sky shone down upon us here and there. I lit none of my matches because I hæd no hænd free. Upon my left arm I carried my little one, in my right hænd I hæd my iron bar.

“For some way I heard nothing but the crackling twigs under my feet, the faint rustle of the breeze above, and my own breathing and the throb of the blood-vessels in my ears. Then I seemed to know of a pattering behind me. I pushed on grimly. The

pattering grew more distinct, and then I caught the same queer sound and voices I hæd heard in the Underworld. There were evidently several of the Morlocks, and they were closing in upon me. Indeed, in another minute I felt a tug at my coat, then something at my arm. And Weena shivered violently, and became quite still.

“It was time for a match. But to get one I must put her down. I did so, and, as I fumbled with my pocket, a struggle begæn in the darkness about my knees, perfectly silent on her part and with the same peculiar cooing sounds from the Morlocks. Soft little hænds, too, were creeping over my coat and bæck, touching even my neck. Then the match scratched and fizzed. I held it flaring, and saw the white backs of the Morlocks in flight amid the trees. I hastily took a lump of camphor from my pocket, and prepared to light it as soon as the match should wane. Then I looked at Weena. She was lying clutching my feet and quite motionless, with her face to the ground. With a sudden fright I stooped to her. She seemed scarcely to breathe. I lit the block of camphor and flung it to the ground, and as it split and flared up and drove bæck the Morlocks and the shadows, I knelt down and lifted her. The wood behind seemed full of the stir and murmur of a great company!

“She seemed to hæve fainted. I put her carefully upon my shoulder and rose to push on, and then there came a horrible realisation. In manœuvring with my matches and Weena, I hæd turned myself about several times, and now I hæd not the faintest idea in what direction lay my path. For all I knew, I might be facing bæck towards the Palace of Green Porcelain. I found myself in a cold sweat. I hæd to think rapidly what to do. I determined to build a fire and encamp where we were. I put Weena, still motionless, down upon a turfy bole, and very hastily, as my first lump of camphor waned, I begæn collecting sticks and leaves.

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

"The camphor flickered and went out. I lit a match, and as I did so, two white forms thæt hæd been approaching Weena dashed hastily away. One was so blinded by the light thæt 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 hæd fallen. So, instead of casting about among the trees for fallen twigs, I begæn leaping up and dragging down branches. Very soon I hæd 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 hæve 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 sæt down. The wood, too, was full of a slumbrous murmur thæt I did not understand. I seemed just to nod and open my eyes. But all was dark, and the Morlocks hæd their hænds upon me. Flinging off their clinging fingers I hastily felt in my pocket for the match-box, and—it hæd gone! Then they gripped and closed with me again. In a moment I knew what hæd happened. I hæd slept, and my fire hæd 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 me. I felt as if I was in a monstrous spider's web. I was overpowered, and went down. I felt little teeth nipping at my neck. I rolled over, and as I did so my hænd came against my iron lever. It gave me strength. I struggled up, shaking the human rats from me, and, holding the bar short, I thrust where I judged their faces might be. I could feel the succulent giving of flesh and bone under my blows, and for a moment I was free.

"The strange exultation thæt so often seems to accompany hard fighting came upon me. I knew thæt both I and Weena were lost, but I determined to make the Morlocks pay for their meat. I stood with my bæck to a tree, swinging the iron bar before me. The whole wood was full of the stir and cries of them. A minute passed. Their voices seemed to rise to a higher pitch of excitement, and their movements grew faster. Yet none came within reach. I stood glaring at the blackness. Then suddenly came hope. What if the Morlocks were afraid? And close on the heels of thæt came a strange thing. The darkness seemed to grow luminous. Very dimly I begæn to see the Morlocks about me—three battered at my feet—and then I recognised, with incredulous surprise, thæt the others were running, in an incessant stream, as it seemed, from behind me, and away through the wood in front. And their backs seemed no longer white, but reddish. As I stood agape, I saw a little red spark go drifting across a gap of starlight between the branches, and vanish. And at thæt I understood the smell of burning wood, the slumbrous murmur thæt was growing now into a gusty roar, the red glow, and the Morlocks' flight.

"Stepping out from behind my tree and looking bæck, I saw, through the blæck pillars of the nearer trees, the flames of the burning forest. It was my first fire coming after me. With thæt I looked for Weena, but she was gone. The hissing and crackling behind me, the explosive thud as each fresh tree burst into flame,

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 ræn thæt I was outflanked and hæd 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 thæt I beheld in thæt 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 hæd 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 thæt 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 hænd. I walked about the hill among them and avoided them, looking for some trace of Weena. But Weena was gone.

"At last I sæt 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 thæt red canopy, remote as though they belonged to another universe, shone 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 thæt 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 hænds, and got up and sæt down again, and wandered here and there, and again sæt 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 blæck 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 thæt they hæd left her poor little body in the forest. I cænnot describe how it relieved me to think thæt it hæd escaped the awful fate to which it seemed destined. As I thought of thæt, I was almost moved to begin a massacre of the helpless abominations about me, but I contained myself. The hillock, as I hæve 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 thæt 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 blæck stems thæt still pulsated internally 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 little Weena. It seemed an overwhelming calamity. Now, in this old familiar room, it is more like the sorrow of a dream thæn an actual loss. But thæt morning it left me absolutely lonely again—terribly alone. I begæn to think of this house of mine, of this fireside, of some of you, and with such thoughts came a longing thæt was pain.

“But, as I walked over the smoking ashes under the bright morning sky, I made a discovery. In my trouser pocket were still some loose matches. The box must hæve leaked before it was lost.

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 hæd viewed the world upon the evening of my arrival. I thought of my hasty conclusions upon thæt 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 river running between its fertile bænks. The gay robes of the beautiful people moved hither and thither among the trees. Some were bathing in exactly the place where I hæd saved Weena, and thæt 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 hæd been. It hæd committed suicide. It hæd set itself steadfastly towards comfort and ease, a balanced society with security and permanency as its watchword, it hæd attained its hopes—to come to this at last. Once, life and property must hæve reached almost absolute safety. The rich hæd been assured of his wealth and comfort, the toiler assured of his life and work. No doubt in thæt perfect world there hæd been no unemployed problem, no social question left unsolved. And a great quiet hæd followed.

“It is a law of nature we overlook, thæt 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 instinct are useless. There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need of change. Only those animals partake of intelligence thæt hæve to meet a huge variety of needs and dangers.

“So, as I see it, the Upperworld mæn hæd drifted towards his feeble prettiness, and the Underworld to mere mechanical industry. But thæt perfect state hæd lacked one thing even for mechanical perfection—absolute permanency. Apparently as time went on, the feeding of an Underworld, however it was effected, hæd become disjointed. Mother Necessity, who hæd been staved off for a few thousand years, came bæck again, and she begæn below. The Underworld being in contact with machinery, which, however perfect, still needs some little thought outside habit, hæd probably retained perforce rather more initiative, if less of every other human character, thæn the Upper. And when other meat failed them, they turned to what old habit hæd hitherto forbidden. So I say I saw it in my last view of the world of Eight Hundred and Two Thousand Seven Hundred and One. It may be as wrong an explanation as mortal wit could invent. It is how the thing shaped itself to me, and as thæt I give it to you.

“After the fatigues, excitements, and terrors of the past days, and in spite of my grief, this seat and the tranquil view and the warm sunlight were very pleasant. I was very tired and sleepy, and soon my theorising passed into dozing. Catching myself at thæt, I took my own hint, and spreading myself out upon the turf I hæd a long and refreshing sleep.

“I awoke a little before sunsetting. I now felt safe against being caught napping by the Morlocks, and, stretching myself, I came on down the hill towards the White Sphinx. I hæd my crowbar in one hænd, and the other hænd played with the matches in my pocket.

“And now came a most unexpected thing. As I approached the pedestal of the sphinx I found the bronze valves were open. They hæd slid down into grooves.

“At thæt I stopped short before them, hesitating to enter.

“Within was a small apartment, and on a raised place in the corner of this was the Time Machine. I hæd the small levers in my pocket. So here, after all my elaborate preparations for the siege of the White Sphinx, was a meek surrender. I threw my iron bar away, almost sorry not to use it.

“A sudden thought came into my head as I stooped towards the portal. For once, at least, I grasped the mental operations of the Morlocks. Suppressing a strong inclination to laugh, I stepped through the bronze frame and up to the Time Machine. I was surprised to find it hæd been carefully oiled and cleaned. I hæve suspected since thæt the Morlocks hæd even partially taken it to pieces while trying in their dim way to grasp its purpose.

“Now as I stood and examined it, finding a pleasure in the mere touch of the contrivance, the thing I hæd expected happened. The bronze panels suddenly slid up and struck the frame with a clang. I was in the dark—trapped. So the Morlocks thought. At thæt I chuckled gleefully.

“I could already hear their murmuring laughter as they came towards me. Very calmly I tried to strike the match. I hæd only to fix on the levers and depart then like a ghost. But I hæd overlooked one little thing. The matches were of thæt abominable kind thæt light only on the box.

“You may imagine how all my calm vanished. The little brutes were close upon me. One touched me. I made a sweeping blow in the dark at them with the levers, and begæn to scramble into the saddle of the machine. Then came one hænd upon me and then

another. Then I hæd simply to fight against their persistent fingers for my levers, and at the same time feel for the studs over which these fitted. One, indeed, they almost got away from me. As it slipped from my hænd, I hæd to butt in the dark with my head—I could hear the Morlock's skull ring—to recover it. It was a nearer thing thæn the fight in the forest, I think, this last scramble.

"But at last the lever was fixed and pulled over. The clinging hænds slipped from me. The darkness presently fell from my eyes. I found myself in the same grey light and tumult I hæve already described.

XIV. The Further Vision

“I hæve already told you of the sickness and confusion thæt comes with time travelling. And this time I was not seated properly in the saddle, but sideways and in an unstable fashion. For an indefinite time I clung to the machine as it swayed and vibrated, quite unheeding how I went, and when I brought myself to look at the dials again I was amazed to find where I hæd arrived. One dial records days, and another thousands of days, another millions of days, and another thousands of millions. Now, instead of reversing the levers, I hæd pulled them over so as to go forward with them, and when I came to look at these indicators I found thæt the thousands hænd was sweeping round as fast as the seconds hænd of a watch—into futurity.

“As I drove on, a peculiar change crept over the appearance of things. The palpitating greyness grew darker; then—though I was still travelling with prodigious velocity—the blinking succession of day and night, which was usually indicative of a slower pace, returned, and grew more and more marked. This puzzled me very much at first. The alternations of night and day grew slower and slower, and so did the passage of the sun across the sky, until they seemed to stretch through centuries. At last a steady twilight brooded over the earth, a twilight only broken now and then when a comet glared across the darkling sky. The band of light thæt hæd indicated the sun hæd long since disappeared; for the sun hæd ceased to set—it simply rose and fell in the west, and grew ever broader and more red. All trace of the moon hæd vanished. The circling of the stars, growing slower and slower, hæd given place to creeping points of light. At last, some time before I stopped, the sun, red and very large, halted motionless upon the horizon, a vast

dome glowing with a dull heat, and now and then suffering a momentary extinction. At one time it hæd for a little while glowed more brilliantly again, but it speedily reverted to its sullen red heat. I perceived by this slowing down of its rising and setting thæt the work of the tidal drag was done. The earth hæd come to rest with one face to the sun, even as in our own time the moon faces the earth. Very cautiously, for I remembered my former headlong fall, I begæn to reverse my motion. Slower and slower went the circling hænds until the thousands one seemed motionless and the daily one was no longer a mere mist upon its scale. Still slower, until the dim outlines of a desolate beach grew visible.

"I stopped very gently and sæt upon the Time Machine, looking round. The sky was no longer blue. North-eastward it was inky blæck, and out of the blackness shone brightly and steadily the pale white stars. Overhead it was a deep Indian red and starless, and south-eastward it grew brighter to a glowing scarlet where, cut by the horizon, lay the huge hull of the sun, red and motionless. The rocks about me were of a harsh reddish colour, and all the trace of life thæt I could see at first was the intensely green vegetation thæt covered every projecting point on their south-eastern face. It was the same rich green thæt one sees on forest moss or on the lichen in caves: plants which like these grow in a perpetual twilight.

"The machine was standing on a sloping beach. The sea stretched away to the south-west, to rise into a sharp bright horizon against the wan sky. There were no breakers and no waves, for not a breath of wind was stirring. Only a slight oily swell rose and fell like a gentle breathing, and showed thæt the eternal sea was still moving and living. And along the margin where the water sometimes broke was a thick incrustation of salt—pink under the lurid sky. There was a sense of oppression in

my head, and I noticed thæt I was breathing very fast. The sensation reminded me of my only experience of mountaineering, and from thæt I judged the air to be more rarefied thæn it is now.

“Far away up the desolate slope I heard a harsh scream, and saw a thing like a huge white butterfly go slanting and fluttering up into the sky and, circling, disappear over some low hillocks beyond. The sound of its voice was so dismal thæt I shivered and seated myself more firmly upon the machine. Looking round me again, I saw thæt, quite near, what I hæd taken to be a reddish mass of rock was moving slowly towards me. Then I saw the thing was really a monstrous crab-like creature. Cæn you imagine a crab as large as yonder table, with its many legs moving slowly and uncertainly, its big claws swaying, its long antennæ, like carters’ whips, waving and feeling, and its stalked eyes gleaming at you on either side of its metallic front? Its bæck was corrugated and ornamented with ungainly bosses, and a greenish incrustation blotched it here and there. I could see the many palps of its complicated mouth flickering and feeling as it moved.

“As I stared at this sinister apparition crawling towards me, I felt a tickling on my cheek as though a fly hæd lighted there. I tried to brush it away with my hænd, but in a moment it returned, and almost immediately came another by my ear. I struck at this, and caught something threadlike. It was drawn swiftly out of my hænd. With a frightful qualm, I turned, and I saw thæt I hæd grasped the antenna of another monster crab thæt stood just behind me. Its evil eyes were wriggling on their stalks, its mouth was all alive with appetite, and its vast ungainly claws, smeared with an algal slime, were descending upon me. In a moment my hænd was on the lever, and I hæd placed a month between myself and these monsters. But I was still on the same beach, and I saw them distinctly now as soon as I stopped. Dozens of them seemed

to be crawling here and there, in the sombre light, among the foliated sheets of intense green.

“I cænnot convey the sense of abominable desolation thæt hung over the world. The red eastern sky, the northward blackness, the salt Dead Sea, the stony beach crawling with these foul, slow-stirring monsters, the uniform poisonous-looking green of the lichenous plants, the thin air thæt hurts one’s lungs: all contributed to an appalling effect. I moved on a hundred years, and there was the same red sun—a little larger, a little duller—the same dying sea, the same chill air, and the same crowd of earthy crustacea creeping in and out among the green weed and the red rocks. And in the westward sky, I saw a curved pale line like a vast new moon.

“So I travelled, stopping ever and again, in great strides of a thousand years or more, drawn on by the mystery of the earth’s fate, watching with a strange fascination the sun grow larger and duller in the westward sky, and the life of the old earth ebb away. At last, more thæn thirty million years hence, the huge red-hot dome of the sun hæd come to obscure nearly a tenth part of the darkling heavens. Then I stopped once more, for the crawling multitude of crabs hæd disappeared, and the red beach, save for its livid green liverworts and lichens, seemed lifeless. And now it was flecked with white. A bitter cold assailed me. Rare white flakes ever and again came eddying down. To the north-eastward, the glare of snow lay under the starlight of the sable sky, and I could see an undulating crest of hillocks pinkish white. There were fringes of ice along the sea margin, with drifting masses farther out; but the main expanse of thæt salt ocean, all bloody under the eternal sunset, was still unfrozen.

“I looked about me to see if any traces of animal life remained. A certain indefinable apprehension still kept me in the saddle of

the machine. But I saw nothing moving, in earth or sky or sea. The green slime on the rocks alone testified thæt life was not extinct. A shallow sandbank hæd appeared in the sea and the water hæd receded from the beach. I fancied I saw some blæck object flopping about upon this bænk, but it became motionless as I looked at it, and I judged thæt my eye hæd been deceived, and thæt the blæck object was merely a rock. The stars in the sky were intensely bright and seemed to me to twinkle very little.

"Suddenly I noticed thæt the circular westward outline of the sun hæd changed; thæt a concavity, a bay, hæd appeared in the curve. I saw this grow larger. For a minute perhaps I stared aghast at this blackness thæt was creeping over the day, and then I realised thæt an eclipse was beginning. Either the moon or the planet Mercury was passing across the sun's disk. Naturally, at first I took it to be the moon, but there is much to incline me to believe thæt what I really saw was the transit of an inner planet passing very near to the earth.

"The darkness grew apace; a cold wind begæn to blow in freshening gusts from the east, and the showering white flakes in the air increased in number. From the edge of the sea came a ripple and whisper. Beyond these lifeless sounds the world was silent. Silent? It would be hard to convey the stillness of it. All the sounds of mæn, the bleating of sheep, the cries of birds, the hum of insects, the stir thæt makes the background of our lives—all thæt was over. As the darkness thickened, the eddying flakes grew more abundant, dancing before my eyes; and the cold of the air more intense. At last, one by one, swiftly, one after the other, the white peaks of the distant hills vanished into blackness. The breeze rose to a moaning wind. I saw the blæck central shadow of the eclipse sweeping towards me. In another moment the pale

stars alone were visible. All else was rayless obscurity. The sky was absolutely blæck.

“A horror of this great darkness came on me. The cold, thæt smote 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 sky appeared the edge of the sun. I got off the machine to recover myself. I felt giddy and incapable of facing the return journey. As I stood sick and confused I saw again the moving thing upon the shoal—there was no mistake now thæt it was a moving thing—against the red water of the sea. It was a round thing, the size of a football perhaps, or, it may be, bigger, and tentacles trailed down from it; it seemed blæck against the weltering blood-red water, and it was hopping fitfully about. Then I felt I was fainting. But a terrible dread of lying helpless in thæt remote and awful twilight sustained me while I clambered upon the saddle.

XV. The Time Traveller's Return

"So I came bæck. For a long time I must hæve 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 hænds 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 begæn to recognise our own pretty and familiar architecture, the thousands hænd ræn bæck 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 thæt seemed odd to me. I think I hæve told you thæt when I set out, before my velocity became very high, Mrs. Watchett hæd walked across the room, travelling, as it seemed to me, like a rocket. As I returned, I passed again across thæt 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, bæck foremost, and disappeared behind the door by which she hæd previously entered. Just before thæt 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 hæd left them. I got off the thing very shakily, and sæt down upon my bench. For several minutes I trembled violently. Then I became calmer. Around me was my old workshop again, exactly as it hæd

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

“And yet, not exactly! The thing hæd started from the south-east corner of the laboratory. It hæd come to rest again in the north-west, against the wall where you saw it. Thæt gives you the exact distance from my little lawn to the pedestal of the White Sphinx, into which the Morlocks hæd carried my machine.

“For a time my brain went stagnant. Presently I got up and came through the passage here, limping, because my heel was still painful, and feeling sorely begrimed. I saw the *Pall Mall Gazette* on the table by the door. I found the date was indeed today, and looking at the timepiece, saw the hour was almost eight o’clock. I heard your voices and the clatter of plates. I hesitated—I felt so sick and weak. Then I sniffed good wholesome meat, and opened the door on you. You know the rest. I washed, and dined, and now I am telling you the story.

XVI. After the Story

“I know,” he said, after a pause, “thæt all this will be absolutely incredible to you, but to me the one incredible thing is thæt I am here tonight in this old familiar room looking into your friendly faces and telling you these strange adventures.” He looked at the Medical Mæn. “No. I cænnot expect you to believe it. Take it as a lie—or a prophecy. Say I dreamed it in the workshop. Consider I hæve been speculating upon the destinies of our race, until I hæve hatched this fiction. Treat my assertion of its truth as a mere stroke of art to enhance its interest. And taking it as a story, what do you think of it?”

He took up his pipe, and begæn, in his old accustomed manner, to tap with it nervously upon the bars of the grate. There was a momentary stillness. Then chairs begæn to creak and shoes to scrape upon the carpet. I took my eyes off the Time Traveller’s face, and looked round at his audience. They were in the dark, and little spots of colour swam before them. The Medical Mæn seemed absorbed in the contemplation of our host. The Editor was looking hard at the end of his cigar—the sixth. The Journalist fumbled for his watch. The others, as far as I remember, were motionless.

The Editor stood up with a sigh. “What a pity it is you’re not a writer of stories!” he said, putting his hænd on the Time Traveller’s shoulder.

“You don’t believe it?”

“Well——”

“I thought not.”

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

His eye fell with a mute inquiry upon the withered white flowers upon the little table. Then he turned over the hænd holding his pipe, and I saw he was looking at some half-healed scars on his knuckles.

The Medical Mæn rose, came to the lamp, and examined the flowers. “The gynæceum’s odd,” he said. The Psychologist leant forward to see, holding out his hænd for a specimen.

“I’m hanged if it isn’t a quarter to one,” said the Journalist. “How shall we get home?”

“Plenty of cabs at the station,” said the Psychologist.

“It’s a curious thing,” said the Medical Mæn; “but I certainly don’t know the natural order of these flowers. May I hæve them?”

The Time Traveller hesitated. Then suddenly: “Certainly not.”

“Where did you really get them?” said the Medical Mæn.

The Time Traveller put his hænd to his head. He spoke like one who was trying to keep hold of an idea thæt eluded him. “They were put into my pocket by Weena, when I travelled into Time.” He stared round the room. “I’m damned if it isn’t all going. This room and you and the atmosphere of every day is too much for my memory. Did I ever make a Time Machine, or a model of a Time Machine? Or is it all only a dream? They say life is a dream, a precious poor dream at times—but I cæn’t stand another thæt won’t fit. It’s madness. And where did the dream come from? ... I must look at thæt machine. If there is one!”

He caught up the lamp swiftly, and carried it, flaring red, through the door into the corridor. We followed him. There in 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 hænd 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 ræn his hænd along the damaged rail. “It’s all right now,” he said. “The story I told you was true. I’m sorry to hæve 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 Mæn 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 hænd and touched the lever. At thæt the squat substantial-looking mass swayed like a bough shaken by the wind. Its instability startled me extremely, and I hæd a queer reminiscence of the childish days when I used to be forbidden to meddle. I came bæck through the corridor. The Time Traveller met me in the smoking-room. He was coming from the house. He hæd a small camera under one arm and a knapsack under the other. He laughed when he saw me, and gave me an

elbow to shake. “I’m frightfully busy,” said he, “with thæt thing in there.”

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

“Really and truly I do.” And he looked frankly into my eyes. He hesitated. His eye wandered about the room. “I only want half an hour,” he said. “I know why you came, and it’s awfully good of you. There’s some magazines here. If you’ll stop to lunch I’ll prove you this time travelling up to the hilt, specimens and all. If you’ll forgive my leaving you now?”

I consented, hardly comprehending then the full import of his words, and he nodded and went on down the corridor. I heard the door of the laboratory slam, seated myself in a chair, and took up a daily paper. What was he going to do before lunch-time? Then suddenly I was reminded by an advertisement thæt I hæd promised to meet Richardson, the publisher, at two. I looked at my watch, and saw thæt I could barely save thæt engagement. I got up and went down the passage to tell the Time Traveller.

As I took hold of the handle of the door I heard an exclamation, oddly truncated at the end, and a click and a thud. A gust of air whirled round me as I opened the door, and from within came the sound of broken glass falling on the floor. The Time Traveller was not there. I seemed to see a ghostly, indistinct figure sitting in a whirling mass of blæck and brass for a moment—a figure so transparent thæt the bench behind with its sheets of drawings was absolutely distinct; but this phantasm vanished as I rubbed my eyes. The Time Machine hæd gone. Save for a subsiding stir of dust, the further end of the laboratory was empty. A pane of the skylight hæd, apparently, just been blown in.

I felt an unreasonable amazement. I knew thæt something strange hæd happened, and for the moment could not distinguish what the strange thing might be. As I stood staring, the door into the garden opened, and the mæn-servant appeared.

We looked at each other. Then ideas begæn to come. “Hæs Mr. —— gone out thæt way?” said I.

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

At thæt I understood. At the risk of disappointing Richardson I stayed on, waiting for the Time Traveller; waiting for the second, perhaps still stranger story, and the specimens and photographs he would bring with him. But I am beginning now to fear thæt I must wait a lifetime. The Time Traveller vanished three years ago. And, as everybody knows now, he hæs never returned.

Epilogue

One cænnot choose but wonder. Will he ever return? It may be thæt he swept bæck into the past, and fell among the blood-drinking, hairy savages of the Age of Unpolished Stone; into the abysses of the Cretaceous Sea; or among the grotesque saurians, the huge reptilian brutes of the Jurassic times. He may even now—if I may use the phrase—be wandering on some plesiosaurus-haunted Oolitic coral reef, or beside the lonely saline seas of the Triassic Age. Or did he go forward, into one of the nearer ages, in which men are still men, but with the riddles of our own time answered and its wearisome problems solved? Into the manhood of the race: for I, for my own part, cænnot think thæt these latter days of weak experiment, fragmentary theory, and mutual discord are indeed mæn's culminating time! I say, for my own part. He, I know—for the question hæd been discussed among us long before the Time Machine was made—thought but cheerlessly of the Advancement of Mankind, and saw in the growing pile of civilisation only a foolish heaping thæt must inevitably fall bæck upon and destroy its makers in the end. If thæt is so, it remains for us to live as though it were not so. But to me the future is still blæck and blank—is a vast ignorance, lit at a few casual places by the memory of his story. And I hæve by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers—shrivelled now, and brown and flat and brittle—to witness thæt even when mind and strength hæd gone, gratitude and a mutual tenderness still lived on in the heart of mæn.

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