

He looked up. "At her wish, I destroyed it."

"You did!" I exclaimed, all the journalist in me on edge. "Well, if it really was a reproduction of Delormel's I can only say it is a great pity."

He tossed off another glass. "No, Caxton had never seen Delormel's book."

"Then it was a translation of the esoteric manuscripts on which Delormel's book was founded?"

"No, Caxton had never seen them either."

"But," I protested, "if Caxton's book was not derived from Delormel's it must at least have come from the same source."

"So it did."

"Well, then?"

"But that source is the fourth dimension."

"Nonsense," I was sufficiently uncivil to exclaim. "The fourth dimension is merely a mathematical hypothesis."

He blinked at me. "To the mathematician, certainly. But not to the mystic. To the latter it is an actual plane in which any one may function, only to do so presupposes a development of the inner senses which enables the percipient to respond to other vibrations and, in so doing, to cognize matters to which the rest of us are blind. That is what Swedenborg did, what Delormel did; Caxton as well. Caxton saw the past and the future. But it was too much for him."

It was too much for me. Steadily Mores had been drinking, quite as though the bottle were his own, and, though I did not in the least object to that, I wondered could the liquor have gone to his head.

"Yes," he resumed, "narcosis resulted and death ensued."

"You did not advance that at the trial," I got in at him.

EXCITEDLY, with a gesture, he parried the thrust. "It would have been very foolish of me if I had. What jury would accept such a story? Even otherwise I did not know of it. At the time I did not know what had caused Caxton's death. Afterward I believed that Sherwood was right. I believed that it was venom that killed him. In any event I know now that it was that which killed her, or rather I know that I was the viper. Yes, for my eternal perdition, that is the truth. A woman gentler than Judith never lived. At first to be but near her was rapture to me. But, as you will realize, the trial had put its mark on her. Vibrant and supersensitive as she was, what else could one expect? The strain of the proceedings, the horror of them all, were such that when she put her hand in mine, it was as though she were a child, beaten and abused, who turned to any one, even to a stranger, for protection. But I! I misunderstood. I thought it was not only her hand but her heart she was giving me. Yet what heart could she have had save one too battered and broken to respond to any throbs of mine? I did not appreciate that. What I began to appreciate was Sherwood's arraignment in which he pictured her as insatiable of pleasure and, in pursuit of it, hesitating at nothing, even at crime. It seemed to me that if she did not care for me, she might treat me as perhaps she had treated Caxton. In my cups I said as much and it was that that killed her. There are men who in their cups become rascals, rascals do you hear me? And in my cups, my conduct was such — was such — my conduct — my cups — my —"

It trailed away. Mores, his mouth half open, was staring, not at me, but over and beyond, and in pitying him the tortures of his unavailing remorse, I pitied too the fair and wretched creature who had been harried, and doubly harried, to her death.

"The motor has come," some one suddenly and sharply called. "Why are n't you ready?"

I turned. In the doorway behind me was the woman whom I had seen earlier that day. She was tall, stout, veiled as before.

As she spoke, she strode toward us. I stood up, Mores did also.

"I will get my hat," he abashedly told her.

But the woman must have noticed the bottle, for at once she angrily addressed me. "You have been entertaining my husband and I had ordered, I had given strict instructions —"

"Your husband!" I exclaimed. I looked about. Mores had sidled away. "I thought — he told me —"

She cut me short. "He has been romancing as usual I suppose. That is your fault. Since the panic he has not been what he was and, if he drinks, he don't know what he says and does n't care. For that reason I had arranged that he was not to have anything."

"I am sorry," I said. "I did not know. I have not seen him for a long time, not since a trial in which —"

I got no further. She had raised her veil and at sight of her face I gasped. It was the face of a woman vulgar and obese, a face that time had coarsened and temper had marred, yet one which none the less instantly I recognized and it was then that I gasped.

There, metamorphosed, I judged, by Mores; deteriorated, I could but assume, by his atmosphere; transformed by association with him from phantom into ogress; there, with his own bulldog look in her eye, before me Judith Caxton stood.

A-moment only. Abruptly the veil fell. With a toss of the head, she turned, while I, astoundedly, beneath my breath, exclaimed:

"O tempora! O Mores!"

I found but that. Yet later on, during the evening, when I had had a glass or three of Sham Shoo, slowly but surely I began to appreciate what visions may come, not merely from Benares and the fourth dimension, but also and particularly from the wines of Cathay.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE NEXT NUMBER

A NEW kind of animal story is just about the rarest and most coveted thing that a magazine can obtain, and who but Charles G. D. Roberts could have made an enraged bull elk and an equally irate panther so tremendously funny as are the two dueling forest lords in *Hoof and Claw* — a thrilling serio-humorous feature of the next SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE? The author of *The Watchers of the Trails* and other animal story classics has fairly eclipsed himself with this stirring tale of the Great North Woods.

NOT so funny, but just as interesting and full of life, is a big-business article, *Landing the Big Job*, in which Cromwell Child tells how \$30,000 to \$50,000 jobs go begging sometimes and how some of them are landed.

NO matter whether you read the first adventure of Clare Kendall, *Woman Detective*, entitled *A Skirmish With the Occult*, published in the SEMI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE two weeks ago, you will simply revel in her second adventure, *The Pearl Doctor*, which Arthur B. Reeve contributes to the next number. That is, if you are fond of reading a real, live, rousing detective yarn, and who is not?

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