

CONTINUED ON NEXT ROCK

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Up in the Big Lime country there is an upthrust, a chimney rock that is half fallen against a newer hill. It is formed of what is sometimes called Dawson Sandstone and is interlaced with tough shell. It was formed during the glacial and recent ages in the bottomlands of Crow Creek and Green River when these streams (at least five times) were mighty rivers.

“The chimney rock is only a little older than mankind, only a little younger than grass. Its formation had been upthrust and then eroded away again, all but such harder parts as itself and other chimneys and blocks. A party of five persons came to this place where the chimney rock had fallen against a newer hill. The people of the party did not care about the deep limestone below: they were not geologists. They did care about the newer hill (it was man-made) and they did care a little about the rock chimney; they were archeologists. Here was time heaped up, bulging out in casing and accumulation, and not in line sequence. And here also was striated and banded time, grown tall, and then shattered and broken.

The five party members came to the site early in the afternoon, bringing the working trailer down a dry creek bed. They unloaded many things and made a camp there. It wasn't really necessary to make a

camp on the ground. There was a good motel two miles away on the highway; there was a road along the ridge above. They could have lived in comfort and made the trip to the site in five minutes every morning. Terrence Burdock, however, believed that one could not get the feel of a digging unless he lived on the ground with it day and night. The five persons were Terrence Burdock, his wife Ethyl, Robert Derby, and Howard Steinleser: four beautiful and balanced people. And Magdalen Mobley who was neither beautiful nor balanced. But she was electric; she was special. They roused around in the formations a little after they had made camp and while there was still light. All of them had seen the formations before and had guessed that there was promise in them. "That peculiar fluting in the broken chimney is almost like a core sample," Terrence said, "and it differs from the rest of it. It's like a lightning bolt through the whole length. It's already exposed for us. I believe we will re-move the chimney entirely. It covers the perfect access for the slash in the mound, and it is the mound in which we are really interested. But we'll study the chimney first. It is so available for study."

"Oh, I can tell you everything that's in the chimney," Magdalen said crossly. "I can tell you everything that's in the mound too."

"I wonder why we take the trouble to dig if you already know what we will find," Ethyl sounded archly. "I wonder too," Magdalen grumbled. "But we will need the evidence and the artifacts to show. You can't get appropriations without evidence and artifacts. Robert, go kill that deer in the brush about forty yards northeast of the chimney. We may as well have deer meat if we're living primitive."

"This isn't deer season," Robert Derby objected. "And there isn't any deer there. Or, if there is, it's down in the draw where you couldn't see it. And if there's one there, it's probably a doe."

"No, Robert, it is a two-year-old buck and a very big one. Of course it's in the draw where I can't see it. Forty yards northeast of the chimney would have to be in the draw. If I could see it, the rest of you could see it too. Now go kill it! Are you a man or a mus microtus? Howard, cut poles and set up a tripod to string and dress the deer on."

"You had better try the thing, Robert," Ethyl Burdock said, "or we'll have no peace this evening." Robert Derby took a carbine and went northeastward of the chimney, descending into the draw at forty yards. There was the high ping of the carbine shot. And after some moments, Robert returned with a curious grin. "You didn't miss him, Robert, you killed him," Magdalen called loudly. "You got him with a good shot through the throat and up into the brain when he tossed his head high like they do. Why didn't you bring him? Go back and get him!"

"Get him? I couldn't even lift the thing. Terrence and Howard, come with me and we'll slash it to a pole and get it here somehow."

"Oh Robert, you're out of your beautiful mind," Magdalen abided. "It only weighs a hundred and ninety pounds. Oh, I'll get it."

Magdalen Mobley went and got the big buck. She brought it back, carrying it listlessly across her shoulders and getting herself bloodied, stopping sometimes to examine rocks and kick them with her foot, coming on easily with her load. It looked as if it might weigh two hundred and fifty pounds; but if Magdalen said it weighed a hundred and ninety, that is what it weighed. Howard Steinleser had out poles and made a tripod. He knew better than not to. They strung the buck up, skinned it off, ripped up its belly, drew lit, and worked it over in an almost professional manner. "Cook it. Ethyl," Magdalen said.

Later, as they sat on the ground around the fire and it had turned dark. Ethyl brought the buck's brains to Magdalen, messy and not half cooked, believing that she was playing an evil trick. And Magdalen ate

them avidly. They were her due. She had discovered the buck. If you wonder how Magdalen knew what invisible things were where, so did the other members of the party always wonder.

“It bedevils me sometimes why I am the only one to notice the analogy between historical geology and depth psychology,” Terrence Burdock mused as they grew lightly profound around the campfire. “The isostatic principle applies to the mind and the under-mind as well as it does to the surface and undersurface of the earth. The mind has its erosions and weatherings going on along with its deposits and accumulations. It also has its upthrusts and its stresses. It floats on a similar magma. In extreme cases it has its volcanic eruptions and its mountain build-ing.”

“And it has its glaciations,” Ethyl Burdock said, and perhaps she was looking at her husband in the dark. “The mind has its hard sandstone, sometimes trans-muted to quartz, or half transmuted into flint, from the drifting and floating sand of daily events. It has its shale from the old mud of daily ineptitudes and inertias. It has limestone out of its more vivid experiences, for lime is the remnant of what was once animate: and this limestone may be true marble if it is the deposit of rich enough emotion, or even travertine if it has bubbled sufficiently through agonized and evocative rivers of the under-mind. The mind has its sulphur and its gemstones” Terrence bubbled on sufficiently, and Magdalen cut him off. “Say simply that we have rocks in ‘our ‘heads,” she said. “But they’re random rocks, I tell you, and the same ones keep coming back. It isn’t the same with us as it is with the earth. The world gets new rocks all the time. But it’s the same people who keep turning up, and the same minds. Damn, one of the samest of them just turned up again! I wish he’d leave me alone. The answer is still no.” Very often Magdalen said things that made no sense. Ethyl Burdock assured herself that neither her husband, nor Robert, nor Howard, had slipped over to Magdalen in the dark. Ethyl was jealous of the chunky and surly girl.

“I am hoping that this will be as rich as Spiro Mound,” Howard Steinleser hoped. “It could be, you know. I’m told that there was never a less prepossessing site than that, or a trickier one. I wish we had someone who ‘had dug at Spiro.”

“Oh, he dug at Spiro,” Magdalen said with contempt. “He? Who?” Terrence Burdock asked. “No one of us was at Spiro. Magdalen, you weren’t even ‘born yet when that mound was opened. What could you know about it?” “Yeah, I remember him at Spiro,” Magdalen said, “always turning up his own things and pointing them out.” “Were you at Spiro?” Terrence suddenly asked a piece of the darkness. For some time, they had all been-vaguely aware that there were six, and not five, persons around the fire.

“Yeah, I was at Spiro,” the man said. “I dig there. I dig at a lot of the digs. I dig real well, and I always know when we come to something that will be important. You give me a job.”

“Who are you?” Terrence asked him. The man was pretty visible now. The flame of the fire seemed to lean toward ‘him as if he compelled it.

“Oh, I’m just a rich old poor man who keeps following and hoping and asking. There is one who is worth it all forever, so I solicit that one forever. And sometimes I am other things. Two hours ago I was the deer in the draw. It is an odd thing to munch one’s own flesh.” And the man was munching a joint of the deer, unasked. “Him and ‘his damn cheap poetry!” Magdalen cried angrily.

“What’s your name?” Terrence asked him. “Manypenny. Anteros Manypenny is my name for-ever.”

“What are you?”

“Oh, just Indian. Shawnee. Choc, Creek, Anadarko, Caddo and pre-Caddo. Lots of things.” “How could anyone be pre-Caddo?”

“Like me. I am.”

“Is Anteros a Creek name?”

“No. Greek. Man, I am a going Jessie, I am one dig-ging man! I show you tomorrow.”

Man, he was one digging man! He showed them to-morrow. With a short-handled rose hoe he began the gash in the bottom of the mound, working too swiftly to ‘be believed.

“He will smash anything that is there. He will not know what he comes to,” Ethyl Burdock complained. “Woman, I will not smash whatever is there,” Anteros said. “You can hide a wren’s egg in one cubic meter of sand. I will move all the sand in one minute. I will un-cover ‘the egg wherever it is. And I will not crack the egg. I sense these things. I come now to a small pot of the proto-Plano period. It is broken, of course, but I do not break it. It is in six pieces and they will fit together perfectly. I tell you this beforehand. Now I reveal it.” And Anteros revealed it. There was something wrong about it even before he uncovered it. But it was surely a find, and perhaps it was of the proto-Plano period. The six shards came out. They were roughly cleaned and set. It was apparent that they would fit wonderfully.

“Why, it is perfect!” Ethyl exclaimed. “It is too perfect!” Howard Steinleser protested. “It was a turned pot, and who had turned pots in America without the potter’s wheel? But the glyphs pressed into it do correspond to proto-Plano glyphs. It is fishy.” Stein-leser was in a twitchy humor today and his face was livid. “Yes, it is the ripple and the spinosity, the fish-glyph,” Anteros pointed out. “And the sun-sign is riding upon it. It is fish-god.”

“It’s fishy in another way,” Steinleser insisted. “Nobody finds a thing like that in the first sixty seconds of a dig. And there could not be such a .pot. I wouldn’t ‘believe it was proto-Plano unless points were found in the exact site with it.”

“Oh here,” Anteros said. “One can smell the very shape of the flint points already. Two large points, one small ‘one. Surely you get the whiff of them already? Four more hoe cuts and I come to ‘them.”

Four more hoe cuts, and Anteros did come to them. He uncovered two large points and ‘one .small one, spear-heads and arrowhead. Lanceolate they were, with ribbon flaking. They were late Folsom, or .they were proto-Plano; they were what you will.

“This cannot be,” Stemleser groaned. “They’re the missing chips, the transition pieces. They fill the missing place too well. I won’t believe it. I’d hardly believe ‘it if mastodon bones were found on the same level here.” “In a moment,” said Anteros, beginning to use the hoe again. “Hey, those old ‘beasts did smell funny! An ele-phant isn’t in it with them. And a lot ‘of it still clings to their ‘bones. Will a sixth ‘thoracic bone do? I’m pretty sure that’s what it is. I don’t know where the rest of the animal is. Probably somebody gnawed the thoracic here. Nine hoe cuts, and then very careful.”

Nine hoe cuts and then Anteros, using a mason’s trowel, unearthed the old gnawed bone very carefully. Yes, Howard said almost angrily, it was a sixth thoracic of a mastodon. Robert Derby said it was a fifth or a sixth; it is not easy to tell.

“Leave the digging for a while, Anteros,” Steinleser said. “I want to record and photograph and take a few measurements here.”

Terrence Burdock and Magdalen Mobley were work-ing at the bottom of the chimney rock, at the

bottom of the fluting ‘that ran the whole height of it like a core sample.

“Get Anteros over here and see what he can uncover in sixty seconds,” Terrenoe offered. “Oh, him! He’ll just uncover some of his own things.” “What do you mean, his own things? Nobody could have made an intrusion here. It’s hard sandstone.” “And harder flint here,” Magdalen said. “I might ‘have known it. Pass the damned thing up. I know just about what it says anyhow.”

“What it says? What do you mean? But it is marked!

And it’s large and dressed rough. Who’d carve in flint?” “Somebody real stubborn, just like flint,” Magdalen said. “All right then, let’s have it out. Anteros! Get this out in one piece. And do it without shattering it or tumbling the whole thing down on us. He can do it, you know, Terrence. He can do things like that.” “What do you know about his doings, Magdalen? You never saw or heard about the poor man till last night.” “Oh well, I know that it’ll turn out to be the same damned stuff.”

Anteros did get it out without shattering it ‘or bringing down the chimney column. A cleft with a digging bar, three sticks of ‘the stuff and a cap, and he touched the leads to the battery when he was almost on top of the charge. The blast, it sounded as if the whole sky were falling down on them, and some of those sky-blocks were quite large stones. The ancients wondered why fallen pieces of the sky should always be dark rock-stuff and never sky-blue clear stuff. The answer is that it is only pieces of the night sky that ever fall, even though they may sometimes be most of the daytime in falling, such is the distance. And the blast that Anteros set ‘off did bring down rocky hunks of the night sky even though it was broad daylight. They brought down darker rooks than any of which the chimney was composed.

Still, it was a small blast. The chimney tottered but did not collapse. It settled back uneasily on its base. And ‘the flint block was out in the clear.

“A thousand spearheads and arrowheads could be shattered and chipped out of that hunk,” Terrence mar-veled. “That flint block would have ‘been a primitive for-tune for a primitive man.”

“I had several such fortunes,” Anteros said dully, “and this ‘one I preserved and dedicated.” “They had all gathered around it.

“Oh the poor man!” Ethyl suddenly exclaimed. But she was not looking at any of the men. She was looking at the stone.

“I wish he’d get off that kick,” Magdalen sputtered angrily. “I don’t care how rich he is. I can pick up better stuff than him in the alleys.”

“What are the women chirping about?” Terrence asked. “But those do look like true glyphs. Almost like Aztec, are they not, Steinleser?”

“Nahuat-Tanoan, cousins-german to the Aztec, or should I say cousins-yaqui?”

“Call it anything, but can you read it?” “Probably. Give me eight or ten hours ‘on it and I should come up with a contingent reading of many of the glyphs. We can hardly expect a rational rendering of the message, however. All Nahuat-Tanoan translations so far have been gibberish.”

“And remember, Terrence, that Steinleser is a slow reader,” Magdalen said spitefully. “And he isn’t very good at ‘interpreting other signs either.” Steinleser was sullen and silent. How had his face come to bear those deep livid claw-marks today? They moved a lot of rock and rubble that morning, took quite a few

pictures, wrote up bulky notes. There were constant finds as the divided party worked up the shag-slash in the mound and the core-flute of the chim-ney. There were no more really startling discoveries; no more turned pots of the proto-Plano period; how could there be? "There were no mole predicted and perfect points of the late Folsom, but there were broken and unpredict-able points. No other mastodon thoracic was found, but bones were uncovered of bison latifrons, of dire wolf, of coyote, of man. There were some anomalies in the rela-tionships of the things discovered, but it was not as fishy as it had been in the early morning, not as fishy as when Anteros had announced and then dug out the shards of the pot, the three points, the mastodon bone. The [things now were as authentic as they were expected, and yet their very profusion had still the smell of a small fish. And that Anteros was one digging man. He moved the sand, he moved the stone, he missed nothing. And at noon he disappeared.

An hour later he reappeared in a glossy station wagon, coming out of a thicketed ravine where no one would have expected a way. He had been to town. He brought a variety of cold cuts, cheeses, relishes, and pastries, a couple cases of cold beer, and some V.O. "I thought you were a poor man, Anteros," Terrence chided.

"I told you that I was a rich old poor man. I have nine thousand acres of grassland, I have three thousand head of cattle, I have alfalfa land and clover land and coin land and hay-grazer land" "Oh, knock it off!" Magdalen snapped. "I have other things," Anteros finished sullenly. They ate, .they rested, they worked the afternoon. Mag-dalen worked as swiftly and solidly as did Anteros. She was young, she was stocky, she was light-burned-dark. She was not at all beautiful. (Ethyl was.) She could have any man there any .time she wanted to. (Ethyl couldn't.) She was Magdalen, the often unpleasant, the mostly casual, the suddenly intense one. She was .the tension of the party, the string of the bow.

"Anteros!" she called sharply just at sundown. "The turtle?" he asked. "The turtle that is under the ledge out of the current where the backwater curls in reverse? But he is fat and happy and he has never banned anything except for food or fun. I know you do not want me to get that turtle."

"I do! There's eighteen pounds of him. He's fat. 'He'll be good. Only eighty yards, where the bank crumbles down to Green River, under the lower ledge that's shale that looks like slate, two feet deep" "I know where he is. I will go get 'the fat turtle," An-feros said. "I myself am the fat turtle. I am the Green River." He went to get it.

"Oh that damned poetry of his!" Magdalen spat when he was gone.

Anteros brought back the fat turtle. He looked as if he'd weigh twenty-five pounds, but if Magdalen said he weighed eighteen pounds, then it was eighteen. "Start cooking. Ethyl," Magdalen .said. Magdalen was a mere undergraduate girl permitted on the digging by sheer good fortune. The others of the party were all archeologists of moment. Magdalen had no right to give orders to anyone, except her 'born right. "I don't know how to cook a turtle," Ethyl complained.

"Anteros will show you how."

"The late evening smell of newly exposed excavation!" Terrence Burdock burbled as they lounged around 'the campfire a little later, full of turtle and V.O. and feeling rakishly wise. "The exposed age can be guessed by the very timbre of the smell, I believe." "Timbre of the smell! What is your nose wired up to?" from Magdalen.

And, indeed, there was something time-evocative about the smell of the 'diggings: cool, at the same time musty and musky, ripe with old stratified water and compressed death. Stratified time.

“It helps if you really know what the exposed age is,” said Howard Steinleser. “Here there is an anomaly. The chimney sometimes acts as if it were younger than the mound. The chimney cannot be young enough to include written rock, but it is.”

“Archeology is made up entirely of anomalies,” said Terrence, “rearranged to make them fit in a fluky pattern. There’d be no system to it otherwise.” “Every science is made up entirely of anomalies re-arranged to fit,” said Robert Derby. “Have you unriddled the glyph-stone, Howard?”

“Yes, pretty well. Better than I expected. Charles August can verify it, of course, when we get it back to the university. It is a non-royal, non-tribal, non-warfare, non-hunt declaration. It does not come under any of the usual radical signs, any of the categories. It can only be categorized as uncategorized or personal. The translation will be rough.”

“Rocky is the word,” said Magdalen.

“On with it, Howard,” Ethyl cried.

“‘You are the freedom of wild pigs in the sour-grass, and the nobility of badgers. You are the brightness of serpents and the soaring of vultures. You are passion on mesquite bushes on fire with lightning. You are serenity of toads.’” “‘You’ve got to admit he’s got a different line,” said Ethyl. “Your own love notes were less acrid, Terrence.” “What kind of thing is it, Steinleser?” Terrence questioned. “It must have a category.”

“I believe Ethyl is right. It’s a love poem. ‘You are the water in lock cisterns and the secret spiders in that water. You are the dead coyote lying half in the stream, and you are the old entrapped dreams of the coyote’s brains oozing liquid through the broken eyesocket. You are the happy ravens about that broken socket.’” “‘Oh, hold it, Steinleser,” Robert Derby cried. “You can’t have gotten all dial from scratches on flint. What is ‘entrapped dreams’ in Nahuat-Tanoan glyph-writing?” “The solid-person sign next to the hollow-person sign, both enclosed in the night sign that has always been interpreted as the dream glyph. And here the dream glyph is ‘enclosed in the glyph of the deadfall trap. Yes, I believe it means entrapped dreams. To continue: ‘You are the corn-worm in the dark heart of the corn, the naked small bird in the nest. You are the pustules on the sick rabbit, devouring life and flesh and turning lit into your own serum. You are stars compressed into charcoal. But you cannot give, you cannot take. Once again you will be broken at the foot of the cliff, and the word will remain unsaid in your swollen and purpled tongue.’” “‘A love poem, perhaps, but with a difference,” said Robert Derby.

“I never was able to go his stuff, and I tried, I really tried,” Magdalen moaned.

“Here is the change of person-subject shown by the canted-eye glyph linked with the self-glyph,” Stemleser explained. “It is now a first-person talk. I own ten thousand back-loads of corn. I own gold and beans and nine buffalo horns full of watermelon seeds. I own the loin-cloth that the sun wore on his fourth journey across the sky. Only three loincloths in the world are older and more valued than this. I cry out to you in a big voice like the hammering of herons’ (that sound-verb-particle is badly translated, the hammer being not a modern pound-ing hammer but a rock angling, chipping hammer) and the belching of buffalos. My love is sinewy as entwined snakes, it is steadfast as the sloth, it is like a feathered arrow shot into your abdomen—such is my love. Why is my love unrequited?” “‘I challenge you, Steinleser,” Terrence Burdock cut in. ‘What is ‘the glyph for ‘unrequited’?’” “The glyph of the extended hand—with all the fingers bent backwards. It goes on, I roar to you. Do not throw yourself down. You believe you are on the banging sky bridge, but you are on the terminal cliff. I grovel before you. I am no more than dog-droppings.’” “‘You’ll notice he said that and not me,” Magdalen burst out. “There was always a fundamental incoherence about Magdalen.”

“Ah—continue, Steinleser,” said Terrence. “The girl is daft, or she dreams out loud.”

“That is all of the inscription, Terrence, except for a final glyph which I don’t understand. Glyph writing takes a lot of room. That’s all the stone would hold.” “What is the glyph that you don’t understand, How-ard?”

“It’s the spear-thrower glyph entwined with the time glyph. It sometimes means ‘flung forward or beyond.’ But what does it mean here?”

“It means ‘continued,’ dummy, ‘continued,’” Magdalen said. “Do not fear. There’ll be more stones.” “I think it’s beautiful,” said Ethyl Burdock, “in its own context, of course.”

“Then why don’t you take ‘him on, Ethyl, in his own context, of course?” Magdalen asked. “Myself, I don’t care how many back-loads of corn he owns. I’ve had it.” “Take whom on, dear?” Ethyl asked. “Howard Stem-leser can interpret the stones, but who can interpret our Magdalen?”

“Oh, I can read her like a rook,” Terrence Burdock smiled. But he couldn’t.

But it fastened on them. It was all about them and through them: ‘the brightness of serpents and the serenity of toads, the secret spiders in the water, the entrapped dreams oozing ‘through the broken eyesocket, the pustules of the sick rabbit, the belching of buffalo, and the arrow shot into the abdomen. And ‘around it all was the night smell of flint and ‘turned earth ‘and chuckling streams, the mustiness, and the special muskiness which bears the name Nobility of Badgers.

They talked archeology and myth talk. Then it was steep night, and the morning of ‘the third day. Oh, the sample digging went well. This was already a richer mound than Spiro, though <he gash in it was but a small promise of things to come. And the curious twin of the mound, the broken chimney, confirmed and confounded and contradicted. There was time gone wrong in the chimney, or at least in the curious fluted core of it; the rest of it was normal enough, and .sterile enough. Anteros worked that day with a soft sullenness, and Magdalen brooded with a sort of lightning about her. “Beads, glass beads!” Terrence Burdock exploded angrily. “All right! Who is the hoaxer in our midst? I will not tolerate this at all.” Terrence had been angry of face all day. He was clawed deeply, as Steinleser had been the day before, and he was sour on the world. “There have been glass-bead caches ‘before, Terrence, hundreds of them,” Robert Derby said softly. “There have been hoaxers before, hundreds of them,” Terrence howled. “These have ‘Hong Kong Contemporary’ written all over them, damned cheap glass beads sold by the pound. They have no business in a stratum of around the year seven hundred. All right, who is guilty?” “I don’t believe that any ‘one of us is guilty, Terrence,” Ethyl put in mildly. “They are found four feet in from the slant surface of the mound. Why, we’ve cut through three hundred years of vegetable loam to get to them, and certainly the surface was eroded beyond that.” “We are scientists,” said Steinleser. “We find ‘these. Others have found such. Let us consider the improb-abilities of it.”

It was noon, so they ate and rested ‘and considered the improbabilities. Anteros had brought them a great joint of white pork, and they made sandwiches and drank beer and ate pickles.

“You know,” said Robert Derby, “that beyond the rank impossibility of glass beads found so many times where they could not be found, there is a real mystery about all early Indian beads, whether of bone, stone, or antler. There are millions ‘and millions of these fine beads with pierced holes finer than any piercer ever found. There are residues, there ‘are centers of every other Indian in-dustry, and there is evolution of every other tool. Why have there been these millions of pierced beads, and never one piercer? There was no technique to make so fine a piercer. How were they done?” Magdalen giggled.

“Bead-spitter,” she said. “Bead-spitter! You’re out of your fuzzy mind,” Terrence erupted. “That’s the silliest and least sophisticated of all Indian legends.”

“But it is the legend,” said Robert Derby, “the legend of more than thirty separate tribes. The Carib Indians of Cuba said that they got their beads from Bead-spitters. The Indians of Panama told Balboa the same thing. The Indians of the pueblos told the same story to Coronado. Every Indian community had an Indian who was its Bead-spitter. There are Creek ‘and Alabama and koasati stories of Bead-spitter; see Swanton’s collections. And his stories were taken down within living memory. “More than that, when European trade-beads were first introduced, there is one account of an Indian re-ceiving some and saying, I will take some to Bead-spitter. If he sees them, he can spit them too.’ And that Bead-spitter did then spit them by the bushel. There was never any other Indian account of the origin of their beads. All were spit by a Bead-spitter.” “Really, this is very unreal,” Ethyl said. Really it was. “Hog hokey! A Bead-spitter of around the year seven hundred could not spit future beads, he could not spit cheap Hong Kong glass beads of the present time!” Terrence was very angry.

“Pardon me, yes sir, he could,” said Anteros. “A Bead-spitter can spit future beads, if he faces North when he spits. That has always been known.” Terrence was angry, he fumed and poisoned the day for them, and the claw marks on his face stood out livid purple. He was angrier yet when he said that the curious dark capping rock on top of the chimney was dangerous, that it would fall and kill someone; and Anteros said that there was no such capping rock on the chimney, that Terrence’s eyes were deceiving him, that Terrence should go sit in the shade and rest. And Terrence became excessively angry when he discovered that Magdalen was trying to hide something that she had discovered in the fluted core of the chimney. It was a large and heavy shale-stone, too heavy even for Magdalen’s puzzling strength. She had dragged it out of the chimney flute, tumbled it down to the bottom, and was trying to cover it with rocks and scarp. “Robert, mark the extraction point!” Terrence called loudly. “It’s quite plain yet. Magdalen, stop that! What-ever it is, it must be examined now.” “Oh, it’s just more of the damned same thing! I wish he’d let me alone. With his kind of money he can get plenty girls. Besides, it’s private, Terrence. You don’t have any business reading it.”

“You are hysterical, Magdalen, and you may have to leave the digging site.”

“I wish I could leave. I can’t. I wish I could love. I can’t. Why isn’t it enough that I die?” “Howard, spend the afternoon on this,” Terrence ordered. “It has writing of a sort on it. If it’s what I think it is, it scares me. It’s too recent to be in any eroded chimney rock formation, Howard, and it comes from far below the top. Read it.”

“A few hours on it and I may come up with some-thing. I never saw anything like it either. What did you think it was, Terrence?”

“What do you think I think it is? It’s much later than the other, and that one was impossible. I’ll not be-the one to confess myself crazy first.”

Howard Steinleser went to work on the incised stone; and two hours before sundown they brought him another one, a gray soapstone block from higher up. Whatever this was covered with, it was not at all the same thing that covered the shale-stone.

And elsewhere things went well, too well. The old fishiness was back on it. No series of finds could be so perfect, no petrification could be so well ordered. “Robert,” Magdalen called down to Robert Derby just at sunset, “in the high meadow above the shore, about four hundred yards down, just past the old fence line” “there is a badger hole, Magdalen. Now you have me doing it, seeing invisible things at a distance. And if I take a carbine and stroll down there quietly, the badger will stick his head out just as I

get there (I being strongly downwind of him), and I'll blame him between the eyes. He'll be a big one, fifty pounds."

"Thirty. Bring 'him, Robert. You're showing a little un-derstanding at last."

"But, Magdalen, badger is rampant meat. It's seldom eaten."

"May not the condemned girl have what she wishes for her last meal? Go get it, Robert." Robert went. The voice of the little carbine was barely heard at that distance. Soon, Robert brought back the dead badger.

"Cook it Ethyl," Magdalen ordered. "Yes, I know. And if I don't know how, Anteros will show me." But Anteros was gone. Robert found him on a sundown knoll with his shoulders bunched. The odd man was sobbing silently and his face seemed to be made out of dull pumice stone. But he came back to aid Ethyl in preparing the badger.

"If the first of today's stones scared you, the second should have lifted the hair right off your head, Terrence," Howard Steinleser said.

"It does, it does. All the stones are too recent to be in a chimney formation, but this last one is 'an insult. It isn't two hundred years old, but there's a thousand years of strata above it. What time is deposited there?" They had eaten rampant badger meat and drunk inferior whisky (which Anteros, who had given it to them, didn't know was inferior), and the muskiness was both inside them and around them. The campfire sometimes spit angrily with small explosions, and its glare reached high when it did so. By one such leaping glare, Terrence Burdock saw that the curious dark capping rock was once more on the top of the chimney. He thought he had seen it there in the daytime; but it had not been there after he had sat in the shade and rested, and it had abso-lutely not been there when he climbed the chimney it-self to be sure.

"Let's have the second chapter and then the third, Howard," Ethyl said. "It's neater that way." "Yes. Well, the second chapter (the first and lowest and apparently the earliest rock we came on today) is written in a language that no one ever saw written be-fore; and yet it's no great trouble to read it. Even Terrence guessed what it was and it scared him. It is Anadarko-Caddo hand-talk graven in stone. It is what is called the sign language of the Plains Indians copied down in formalized pictograms. And it has to be very recent, within the last three hundred years. Hand-talk was frag-mentary at the first coming of the Spanish, and well de-veloped at 'the first coming of the French. It was an explosive development, as such things go, worked out within a hundred years. This rock has to be younger than its situs, but it was absolutely found in place." "Read it, Howard, read it," Robert Derby called. Robert was feeling fine and the rest of them were gloomy tonight.

"I own three hundred ponies," Steinleser read the rock out of his memory. "I own two days' ride north and east 'and south, and one day's ride west. I give you all. I blast out with a big voice like fire in tall trees, like the explosion of crowning pine trees. I cry like closing-in wolves, like the high voice of the lion, like the hoarse scream of torn calves. Do you not destroy yourself again! You are the dew on crazy-weed in the morning. You are the swift crooked wings of the night-hawk, the dainty feet of the skunk, you are 'the juice of the sour-squash. Why can you not take or give? I am the humpbacked bull of the high plains, I am the river itself and the stagnant pools left by the river, I am the raw earth and the rocks. Come to me, but do not come so violently as to destroy yourself."

"Ah, that was 'the text of the first rock of the day, the Anadarko Caddo hand-talk graven in stone. And final pictograms which I don't understand: a shot-arrow sign, and a boulder beyond."

“ ‘Continued ‘on next rock,’ of course,” said Robert Derby. “Well, why wasn’t hand-talk ever written down? The signs are simple and easily stylized and they were ‘ understood by many different tribes. It would have been natural to write it.”

“Alphabetical writing was in the region before hand-talk was well developed,” Terrence Burdock said. “In fact, it was the coming of the Spanish that gave the impetus to hand-talk. It was really developed for communication between Spanish and Indian, not between Indian and Indian. And yet, I believe, hand-talk was written down once; it was the beginning of the Chinese photographs. And there also it had its beginning as communication ‘between differing peoples. Depend on it, if all mankind had always been of a single language, there would never have been any written language developed at all. Writing always began as a bridge, and there had to be some chasm for it to bridge.”

“We have one bridge here,” said Steinleser. “That whole chimney is full of rotten smoke. The ‘highest part of it should ‘be older than the lowest part of the mound, since the mound was built ‘on a base eroded away from the chimney formation. But in many ways they seem to be contemporary. We must all be under a spell here. We’ve worked two days on this, parts of three days, and the total impossibility of the situation hasn’t struck us yet.

“The old Nahuatl glyphs for Time are the chimney glyphs. Present time is a lower part of a chimney and fire burning at the base. Past time is black smoke from a chimney, and future time is white smoke from a chimney. There was a ‘signature glyph running ‘through our yester-day’s stone which I didn’t and don’t understand. It seemed to indicate something coming down ‘out of the chimney rather than going up it.”

“It really doesn’t look much like a chimney,” Magdalen said.

“And a maiden doesn’t look much like dew on crazy-weed in the morning, Magdalen,” Robert Derby said, “but we recognize ‘these identities.” They talked a while about the impossibility of the whole business.

“There are scales on our eyes,” Steinleser said. “The fluted core of the chimney is wrong. I’m not even sure the rest of the chimney is right.”

“No, it isn’t,” said Robert Derby. “We can identify most of the strata of the chimney with known periods of the river and stream. I was above and below today. There is one stretch where the sandstone was not eroded at all, where it stands three hundred yards back from the shifted river and is overlaid with a hundred years of loam and sod. There are other sections where the stone is out away variously. We can tell when most of the chimney was laid down, we can find its correspondences up to a few hundred years ago. But when were the top ten feet of it laid down? There were no correspondences any-where to that. The centuries represented by the strata of the top of the chimney, people, those centuries haven’t happened yet.”

“And when was the dark capping rock on ‘top of it all formed?” Terrence began. “Ah, I’m out of my mind. It isn’t there. I’m demented.”

“No more ‘than the rest of us,” said Steinleser. “I saw it too, I thought, today. And then I didn’t see it again.” “The rock-writing, it’s like an old novel that I only half remember,” said Ethyl.

“Oh, that’s what it is, yes,” Magdalen murmured. “But I don’t remember what happened to the girl in it.”

“/ remember what happened to her. Ethyl,” Magdalen said.

“Give us the third chapter, Howard,” Ethyl asked. “I want to see how it comes out.”

“First you should all have whisky for those colds,” An-teros suggested humbly.

“But none of us have colds,” Ethyl objected. “You take your own medical advice, Ethyl, and I’ll take mine.” Terrence said. “I will have whisky. My cold is not rheum ‘but fear-chill.”

They all had whisky. They talked a while, and some of them dozed.

“It’s late, Howard,” Ethyl said after a while. “Let’s , have the next chapter. Is it the last chapter? Then we’ll sleep. We have honest digging to do tomorrow.”

‘ “Our third stone, our second stone of the day just past, is another and even later form of writing and it has never teen ‘seen in stone before. It is Kiowa picture writing. The Kiowas did their out-turning spiral writing on buffalo skins dressed ‘almost as fine ‘as vellum. In its more sophisticated form (and if his is a copy of that) it is quite late. The Kiowa picture writing probably did not ‘arrive at its excellence until influenced by white ‘artists.”

“How late, Steinleser?” Robert Derby asked.

“Not more than a hundred and fifty years old. But I have never seen it copied in stone before. It simply isn’t stone-styled. There’s a lot of things ‘around here lately that I haven’t seen before.

“Well then, to the text, ‘or should I ‘say .the pictography? ‘You fear the earth, you fear rough ground and rocks, you fear moister earth and rotting flesh, you fear the flesh itself, all flesh is rotting flesh. If you love not rotting flesh, you love not at all. You ‘believe the bridge

hanging in the sky, the bridge hung 'by tendrils and woody vines that diminish as they go up and up till they are no thicker than 'hairs. There is no' sky-bridge, you cannot go upon it. Did you believe that the roots 'of love grow upside down? They come out of deep earth that is old flesh and brains and hearts and entrails, that is old buffalo bowels and snakes' pizzles, that is black blood and rot and moaning underground. This is old and worn-out and bloody time, and the roots of love grow 'out of its gore.' "

"You seem to give remarkable detailed translations of the simple spiral pictures, Steinleser, but I begin to get in the mood of it," Terrence said.

"Ah, perhaps I cheat a little," said Steinleser.

"You lie a lot," Magdalen challenged.

"No, I do not. There is some basis for every phrase I've used. It goes on: I own twenty-two trade rifles. I own ponies. I own Mexico silver, eight-bit pieces. I am rich in all ways. I give 'all to you. I cry out with big voice like a bear full of mad-weed, like a bullfrog in love, like a stallion rearing against a puma. It is the earth that calls you. I am the earth, woollier than wolves and rougher than rocks. I am the bog earth .that sucks you in. You cannot give, you cannot take, you cannot love, you think there is something else, you think there is a sky-bridge you

may loiter on without crashing down. I am bristled-boar
earth, there is no other. You will come to me in the
morning. You will come to me easy and with grace. Or
you will come to me reluctant and you be shattered in
every bone and member of you. You be broken by our
encounter. You be shattered as by a lightning bolt striking
up from the earth. I am the red calf which is in the
writings. I am the rotting red earth. Live in the morning or
die in the morning, but remember that love in death is
better than no love at all.’ “

“Oh brother! Nobody gets that stuff from such kid ‘pic-
tures, Steinleser,” Robert Derby moaned.

“Ah well, that’s the end of the spiral picture. And a
Kiowa spiral photograph ends with either an in-sweep or
an out-sweep line. This ends with an out-sweep, which
means”

“Continued on next rock,’ that’s what it means,”

Terrence cried roughly.

“You won’t find the next rocks,” Magdalen said.

“They’re hidden, and most of the ‘time they’re not there
yet, but they will go on and on. But for all that, you’ll
read it in .the rocks tomorrow morning. I want it to be
over with. Oh, I don’t know what I want!”

“I believe I know what you want tonight, Magdalen,”

Robert Derby said.

But he didn’t.

The talk 'trailed off, the fire burned down, they went to
'their sleeping sacks.

Then it was long jagged night, and the morning of the
fourth day. But wait! In Nahuat-Tanoan legend, the world
ends on the fourth morning. All the lives we lived or
thought we lived had been but dreams of third night. The
loincloth that the sun wore on the fourth day's journey
was not so valuable as one has made out. It was worn for
no more than an hour or so.

And, in fact, there was something terminal about fourth
morning. Anteros had disappeared. Magdalen had disap-
peared. The chimney rock looked greatly diminished in
~ its bulk (something had gone out of it) and much crazier
in its broken height. The sun had come up 'a garish gray-
orange color through fog. The signaiture-glyph of the first
stone dominated the ambient. It was as if something were
coming down from the chimney, .a horrifying smoke; but
it was only noisome morning fog.

No- it wasn't. There was something else coming down
from the chimney, or from the hidden sky: pebbles,
stones, indescribable bits of foul oozings, the less fastid-
ious pieces of .the sky; a light nightmare rain had begun
to fall there; the chimney was apparently beginning to
crumble.

"It's the damnedest thing I ever heard about," Robert

Derby growled. "Do you think that Magdalen really went off with Anteros?" Derby was bitter and fuming this morning and his face was badly clawed.

"Who is Magdalen? Who is Anteros?" Ethyl Burdock asked.

Terrence Burdock was hooting from high on the mound.

"All come up," he called. "Here is a find that will make it all worthwhile. We'll have to photo and sketch and measure and record and witness. It's the fieriest basalt head I've ever seen, man-sized, and I suspect that there's a man-sized body attached to it. We'll soon clean it and clear it. Gah! What a weird fellow he was!"

But Howard Stemleser was studying a brightly colored something that he held in his two hands.

"What is it, Howard? What are you doing?" Derby demanded.

"Ah, I believe this is the next stone in sequence. The writing is alphabetical but deformed, there is an element missing. I believe it is in modern English, and I will solve the deformity and see it true in a minute. The text of it seems to be"

Rocks and stones were coming down from the chimney. and fog, amnesic and wit-stealing fog.

"Stemleser, are you all right?" Robert Derby asked with compassion. "That isn't a stone that you hold in your hand."

“It isn’t a stone. I thought it was. What is it then?”

“It is the fruit of ‘the Osage orange tree, the American Meraceous. It isn’t a stone, Howard.” And the thing was a tough, woody, wrinkled mock-orange, as big as a small melon.

“You have to admit that the wrinkles look a little bit like writing, Robert.”

“Yes, they look a little like writing, Howard. Let us go up where Terrence is bawling for us. You’ve read too many stones. And it isn’t safe here.”

“Why go up, Howard? The other thing is coming down.”

It was the bristle-boar earth reaching up with a rumble. It was a lightning bolt struck upward out of the earth, and it got its prey. There was explosion and roar. The dark capping rock was jerked from the top of the chimney and slammed with terrible force to the earth, shattering with a great shock. And something else that had been on that capping rock. And the whole chimney collapsed about them.

She was broken by the encounter. She was shattered in every bone and member of her. And she was dead.

“Who who is she?” Howard Steinleser stuttered.

“Oh God! Magdalen, of course!” Robert Derby cried.

“I remember her a little bit. Didn’t understand her. She put out like an evoking moth but she wouldn’t ‘be had.

Near clawed the face off me the other night when I nits- understood the signals. She believed there was a sky- bridge. It's in a lot of the mythologies. But there 'isn't one, you know. Oh well."

"The girl is dead! Damnation! What are you doing grubbing in those stones?"

"Maybe she isn't dead in them yet, Robert. I'm going to read what's here before something happens to .them. This capping rock that fell and broke, it's impossible, of course. It's a stratum that hasn't been laid down yet. I always did want to read the future 'and I may never get another chance."

"You fool! The girl's dead! Does nobody care? Terrence, atop bellowing 'about your find. Come down. The girl's dead."

"Come up, Robert and Howard," Terrence insisted.

"Leave 'that broken stuff down there. It's worthless. But nobody ever saw anything like this."

"Do come up, men," Ethyl sang. "Oh, it's a wonderful piece! I never .saw anything like it in my life."

"Ethyl, is the whole morning mad?" Robert Derby demanded as he came up to her. "She's dead. Don't you really remember her? Don't you remember Magdalen?"

"I'm not sure. Is she the girl down .there? Isn't she the same girl who's been hanging around here a couple days? She shouldn't have been playing on that high rock. I'm

sorry she's dead. But just look what we're uncovering here!"

"Terrence. Don't you remember Magdalen?"

"The girl down there? She's a little bit like the girl that clawed the hell out of me the other night. Next time someone goes to town .they might mention to the sheriff that there's a dead girl here. Robert, did you ever see a face like this one? And it digs away to reveal the shoulders. I believe there's a whole man-sized figure here. Wonderful, wonderful!"

"Terrence, you're off your head. Well, do you remember Anteros?"

"Certainly, the twin of Eros, 'but nobody ever made much of the symbol of unsuccessful love. Thunder! That's the name for him! It fits him perfectly. We'll call him Anteros."

Well, it was Anteros, lifelike in basalt stone. His face was contorted. He was sobbing soundlessly and frozenly and 'his shoulders were hunched with emotion. The carving was fascinating in its miserable passion, his stony love unrequited. Perhaps he was more impressive now than he would be when he was cleaned. He was earth, he was earth itself. Whatever period the carving belonged to, it was outstanding in its power.

"The live Anteros, Terrence. Don't you remember our

digging man, Anteros Manypenny?"

"Sure. He didn't show up for work this morning, did he? Tell him he's fired."

"Magdalen is dead! She was one of us! Damn it, she was the main one of us!" Robert Derby cried. Terrence and Ethyl Burdock were earless to his outburst. They were busy uncovering the rest of the carving.

And down below, Howard Steinleser was studying dark broken rocks before they would disappear, studying a stratum that hadn't been laid down yet, reading a foggy future.