

All

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ALL

I

John Reid rose slowly as the radio clicked into silence under Grant's fingers. The nine other men at the table moved restlessly. John Reid the younger snubbed out a cigarette with a grinding, heavy persistence, slow and inexorable.

"It is done," said old John Reid slowly. "America, last to fall, is fallen to Asia." He shook his massive white head slowly. "And by Fate's unkindest mockery, we reach our goal, reach it at the end of a course as difficult and as long as the course Asia's Nijihua led her men to reach their goal-the Asian World, simultaneous in birth with America's death.

"Our goal is reached, Scientists. Before you the atom burns to silver light, silver energy, so safely, so controllably, so irresistibly when we choose. The world needs it, needs it infinitely for peace as America needed it for war.

"Now-shall we sell it to Nijihua-and the world? Give it to the world-and Nijihua?"

Young John Reid rose slowly. His face was keen and his eyes intense; there was in his slowness of movement not the slowness of defeat and age and despair. His was of absolute determination, and known power. Blue eyes, young and strong, starred in the silver star-flecked light of the golden lamp, looked down the table to blue eyes under silver hair, thin and silky. "No," he said, soft and cold, "we will not sell, we will not give. At the crook of our finger, at the whisper of a word Nijihua would heap honor, power, on the one who mentioned the secret of the Atom to him. But Asians will come. They will find us here, even here. But it will be months, three months, six; for this Research Department 7-A was chosen by the American Government not unwisely, not without secrecy. We will have time before they find this lone, lost canyon. And when they come this will not be American Research Department 7-A. It will be something very, very different. And that we must work out. For we have tools, we have machines, and we have that Lamp of the Atoms, which is not a lamp alone. Inadequate they are to strike direct

at Nijihua and the Asian World we know, and useless when the spirit of America's unity is crushed.

"One thing we have done, we have lighted the lamp. Two things we must do; rebuild America into a unit, and strike at Nijihua. Now for this we have a tool, and the lamp we have lighted lights unguessed caverns of knowledge. Three days it has burned for us, and in that time we have seen lead melt to gold, raw rock to flaming radium, seen tearing bolts that shattered rock and metal. But does any man know this infinitely important thing; Why, three days ago, when Warren Lewellyn first lit that lamp, seven of us died in sudden silent rigidity while we eleven, who stood beside and among them, are here this hour?"

"I know, radiations, radiations we have stopped by brute shielding, and brute ignorance. But we did not die, and they did. We know nothing of the thing we have found. But-I have thoughts on that.

"We will do much invention in these three months, and some will be artistic and some will be fantastic, some will be-the exploration of the caverns the light of the lamp reveals.

"We must have men, men of our own race to back us and aid us and hold what we conquer for them. And we must have something that will withstand the might of Nijihua's armies, and nothing will do that. Therefore we must deflect their fury until the time comes that we are ready.

"Now we would build a firm-knit political union of our people, and Nijihua would build a firm-knit union of all peoples for the benefit of his own. To do this, Nijihua has taken a leaf from the ancient books, and from Rome he has learned and from Persia, from Macedonia and Egypt who ruled world-girdling empires. All these have taught him many things, and the first of these is this: it is not swords which hold or overthrow empires, nor mighty leaders alone, but emotions and mobs and mass. It is the race, not the man. A well-fed and sheltered slave is a safer companion than the freest of starving wretches. The freedom man wants, is freedom to work and eat and live and think as he wills. To rule an empire then, each man must have his way in those things that matter no whit to the empire, and matter so much to the man. You have read the promises of the Emperor. What does he say?"

"To each man a home, a wife, a living, and peace to enjoy these things. To each man the right to learn, to think, to live, to worship as he will, so only he does not disturb the peace of the Emperor," old John Reid quoted slowly.

"To worship as we please! That, and that alone I shall demand!"

The nine men looked from father to son in puzzlement John Reid the younger pointed to the star-flecked silver lance of light that leapt in frozen grace from the golden lamp, and slowly their eyes deepened, and their faces set in a grim, sure knowledge.

"We want no converts of an alien race," said David Muir slowly. "How, John, do we turn them away?"

"If my guess be more than guess, though he come in skin-dyed white as ours, with hair like golden grain and eyes blue as liquid air, set straight and true across his face, though we make him gladly welcome, still no convert shall slip through to spy and warn and reveal!" said John Reid. "We have a thousand thousand inventions yet to make, and a hundred days to make them."

"Whom do we worship?" asked big, slow Tornsen.

"And that is not the least of our inventions," answered John Reid. "Let it be-All, Lord of Things that Are and Are to Be!"

"We build, then, the shrine of All, in whom everything that is, is." Old John Reid nodded slowly. "And All

is manifest in the Flame. Yes. We must invent the Service of All. Which will be the Service of America.

"The Temple will be built."

"But not too swiftly, not too swiftly," said young Reid softly, leaning forward. "We must study All. All has many faces, and His star-flecked flame is but one. By the lightest touch we show another phase of All-Lord of Destruction!" His long, slim fingers touched the base of the lamp, and in the instant the lancing flame darkened, shown iridescent, and was abruptly twin-forked, snake-tongued, crimson as new-let blood, so the dimmed cavern was washed with red that dripped from every rock and puddled on the great table, and the gold of the lamp itself was dark and red with it. The cavern was a place of terror, scarlet and black, for what would not reflect that angry terror-stirring red, must needs be black, for there was no other light save that to reflect. And every shining surface threw

back the snake-tongued flame that moved and waved so slow, so slow, so sinuous there, to some strange breeze unfelt by man, feeling never the stirring of the air in the great chamber.

"And," said Reid as the lithe, white fingers moved again, "All-Lord of Wisdom!"

And his color was blue, blue as the purest sapphire, cold and clear and gemlike, a tetrahedral flame, perfect as a mathematician's formula, straight-ruled as a clear, clear crystal of light. And the cavern walls were cold and blue as vast antarctic ice-caves, and black as spatial night, and every polished thing gave back the tetrahedral flame of blue, the flame of All, Lord of Wisdom.

## II

Major Nashiki halted in surprise that did not show on his hard-lined, immobile face. "Halt!" he snapped softly. Then he advanced over the low ridge of rock before him, scoured, beaten sandstone, red as the dust of Mars. A great gash in the hide of Earth fell away below him, red as the stone he trod, blue as distant hills, yellow as sea-sand and riotous with cloud and sun and shadow. Three quarters of a mile it dropped to some forgotten riverbed, deserted aeons since when a mighty slide had dammed the stream that carved that gash. But the bottom ringed by Titan columns of jutting rock-isolated island-pillars half a mile tall-was sand as smooth-and-white as silver-dust.

And that had not halted him. Country such as this, his miniature, he and his scouting party had traversed for three long weeks. But he halted, for on the farther wall, half a mile to his left, was a great patch of the rock wall that was not rock, but threw back the long rays of the sun in blinding light, white as salt. And in it were glints of purest raying color, blue, green, pearl and somber scarlet.

"Captain Tiashi, bring the American scout."

A trimly uniformed captain, a weary, dirty American in tattered rags, light chains on his arms, came forward.

"Tucker, what is that?" demanded the major.

Tucker looked silently for a long time. He answered slowly at length. "It's new to me." He folded his long legs, and settled down wearily. The small major, glared at him.

"Dog, what is it?" His hand struck out like a flash of light; the echo of the slap died out in infinite space.

The American looked at him through narrowed eyes, his face unmoving. "If I did know, I might and I

might not tell you. As it happens I don't, and I can't. If you want real bad to know, I'll show you how to get down there. But you'll have to take these gee-gaws off, because you get down there with your fingernails, and you pull your ears in so you don't blow off. Or you use wings."

"Captain, remove those irons. We will go down. Cap-

tain Tiashi, you will make camp here, and remain with your men. Shurimi, Hitsali, Kushkiani; you will come."

Five men started down. The American went first, long arms, long legs reaching for known holds, the little brown Orientals silently stretching themselves impossibly to reach holds easy for the lank American. Tucker led them a merry chase.

Far below, they struck an angling shelf that led down and down, then a short climb down bare, crumbling rock. Then a great slide, a terraced pillar. They walked the fine, white sand of the floor. Tucker looked about slowly, and moved on.

They were three miles from the dazzling whiteness of the strange wall; the sun was setting now, and in this deep canyon the dusk was coming. But there was light across there, silvery light that streamed through door and great carved windows. Tucker slogged wearily along. Behind, the others marched, the slipping sand making their instinctively assumed rhythm uneven.

A half mile from the great doors, the major halted. The intense sheen of the white wall had abated, and he saw now it was a perfect square of white. The square was edged with five-foot bands of crystal, crystal above that shone like a mighty sapphire, five hundred feet long, five feet wide; at the right, green as new-grown leaves. Light in it was swiftly growing, softly lambently gleaming. At the left, a vast, luminous and softly pulsing light like an acre of pearls. But across all the bottom was red, not ruby, but deeper, sullen crimson.

Nashiki pushed on. The light died in the canyon, and by hand torches they plodded on across the silver sands, while dim stars showed the mighty, black walls, and ahead the great crystals pulsed, and the whole vast face of the wall was faintly luminous, as though bright light shone within. The great doors stood open, and silvery light cascaded down the majestic steps.

Boldly Nashiki started up the great stairway, and it rang to his tread like mighty bells, deep and slumberous. Half up their fifty-foot climb he was, he and his little troop, when a figure appeared at the peak.

"Who comes?" The voice of the silhouette was deep as the voice of the stair.

"Major Nashiki of the World Imperial Army, Scouting

Division. Who are you, and what is this place?" he snapped.

"This is the Temple of All. If you be of Oriental blood, stop at the last step. It is the way of All, Lord of Life."

"The Temple of All? What sect is this? I do not know it."

"All is Lord of Life, and his phases are Dis, Lord of Death; and Mens, Lord of Wisdom; Tal, Lord of Peace; and Shan, Lord of Fulfillment. And his phases make All, Lord of Life."

Steadily Nashiki mounted the Singing Stair, and as he mounted, his troop behind him, the song became a welling melody. "It is new to me. This property lies in the Province of Colorado, and is unregistered. Why has it not been listed as the Emperor commands?"

"All, Lord of Life, alone commands. Nashiki, you have reached the top. Halt, for the Lord All admits none to his Temple save those of All."

"I shall enter," snapped Nashiki viciously. "The wrath of the Emperor shall be upon you if any interferes with my way." He strode forward.

The man loomed before him, enormous. A cloak of silver lined with a strange cloth of woven metallic threads, blue and red, silver and green, wrapped him. A strange headdress, set with a one-inch ornament of crystal, diamond-clear, sapphire, pearl and sullen crimson and green that held a bound silver cloth, gleamed in the light of the Temple. In his hand he carried a curious staff, wrought of silvery metal, three feet long and tapering from one inch upward to the four-inch cubed crystal at its head set flush with its sides, a strange crystal that glowed with sparkling light, silvery with star-flecks at the top, sullen red and iridescent pearl, green and sapphire on its sides. The man stood massive and unmoving, six feet three in height, as Nashiki halted to inspect him.

"Who are you?" demanded the Oriental.

"Tornsen, Server of All," said the man quietly. "No man shall halt you. But there is death in the air of the Temple of All for all save the People of All."

As he spoke, the staff in his hands glowed brighter. The silvery flame leapt in the crystal's crest a foot tall, silvery with bursting stars that floated and vanished in an instant, and from the glowing side of sullen red a vaguely seen,

vaguely stirring snake-tongued flame of deep crimson wavered and died as the brighter silver waned again.

Nashiki laughed softly. "So no man touches me, I have no great fear of Gods," he said. He strode forward again.

The giant blocked his way by a slow step. "It is Death," he said. And Nashiki looked through the great doors. Before him was a great cubed chamber of light. Five hundred feet on a side, it was, and the far wall was dark jet, against which stood a great graven altar, a mighty staff of gold, fifteen feet thick and topped by a Titan's crystal such as the man carried, cubed as his, colored as his. And from its peak lanced a silver flame, sparkling, coruscating. The right wall was green as the crystal's light, the left a vast pearl, the roof more luminously blue than a summer sky. And the floor was a sea of waving blood.

For a moment the sight had stopped Nashiki. He stepped forward again. "That is gold," he said. "All gold is the property of the Emperor, alloys are to be used for decoration."

Again the man was in front of him. "That is Death," he answered slowly. "That gold is 'the property of the Lord of Life.'"

Nashiki stepped back, and his movement was swift as the darting tongue of a chameleon; his revolver was in his hand. "Stand aside," he said. Tornsen stood away, his head bent slightly.

Nashiki stepped forward, across the threshold, to the  
sea of blood.

And fell dead.

He uttered no cry as he fell, nor did he twist; in all the Temple there was no sound nor change, save only that on the floor was a lax, empty sack, discarded by life.

His little troop started forward, rifles suddenly raised, and their voices were high and sharp with anger. Tornsen spoke again, his staff upraised. "Hold! I did not touch him. Dis, Lord of Death has destroyed him. I will bring him to you, for it is death for you to cross the threshold."

A man was thrust forward suddenly, a disheveled, ragged man, weary and emaciated. Three rifles pressed his back.

Tucker looked up into the broad calm face of Tornsen. "Is that-true?" he asked slowly. "I can cross."

"So you are American, All welcomes you," said Torn-sen.

Slowly, reluctantly, Tucker crossed the line, his eyes

fixed on the great cubed crystal of the altar. He crossed, stepped over the dead Oriental, and walked down the broad floor to the mighty crystal.

Tornsen stepped behind him. At twenty feet from the great crystal Tucker halted, and turned to look at the man behind him.

"All-All-" he said, "I never heard-"

"All, Lord of Life, one weary, worn stands' before your altar. All, Lord of Life, cleanse him with your flame, give him of your life! Tal, Lord of Peace, one distressed stands before your altar. Bring Life, Lord of Life. Bring Peace, oh Tal."

The motionless, silver flame washed higher, till, like a great fountain, it spilled over and fell in soft-glowing stars of light about them. The crystal turned with a vast majesty till the green facet shown toward them. As the silver died, green washed and spun within the crystal, soft green, restful emerald that reached out and through and about the two, and returned to the crystal.

In a moment Tucker turned, very slowly. His face was clear, his eyes bright with new life, new hope; his weary 'body stood straighter now, stronger. "All-All-" he said. Slowly he knelt before the softly glowing green of the crystal. "I have hope again-hope-something I thought gone for all time. Oh, God-let me stay, let me stay-"

The green washed out in a sudden whirling fire that wrapped him, and very slowly he sank to the floor, arranging himself comfortably.

Tornsen turned to the door. The Orientals stood staring, rifles lowered. But suddenly they lifted them. "We are coming, we are coming, for there is no death-some weapon-"

"It is Death for you," repeated Tornsens steadily.

"Come here," snapped one, "we will see! You will stand beside me, close to me-

Together, side by side, they stepped across the line. Soundlessly, the smaller man sank to the floor.

"It is Dis, Lord of Death," said Tornsens again. "I will bring them to you, and you must believe, for to not believe is Death. Tell me, then, what man can kill as these men died? Look at their eyes, look at their flesh."

He picked up the limp Nashiki, and bore him across the threshold. The two remaining Japanese bent over him quickly, with little half-smothered twitterings, their watch-

his eyes, the eyes of a long-dead fish; they examined his his eyes, the eyes of a long-dead fish; they examined his flesh, and it was like boiled flesh, stiff and strangely white. They backed away suddenly, twittering more intensely. Then abruptly their rifles were flung to their shoulders, centered on the white-robed man. Behind him, abruptly, the great crystal whirled noiselessly, instantaneously, and from its sullen red, a monstrous flame licked like a great rope of congealed, luminous blood, a snake-tongue of death that wrapped suddenly about the nearer Japanese, and flamed about Tornsens.

It flicked back, and the second Japanese stood frozen as his companion wilted slowly. Tornsens, bathed in the heart of the red flame, stood calm, unmoving.

"I thank Thee, Dis," the Server said as he bowed his

head slightly.

He raised his eyes to look at the remaining Japanese. "Go," he said. "Bring your companions, and take these

bodies."

"I cannot leave," wailed the Oriental suddenly, "I cannot. I know no trail, he-the American-led us. It is night, I do not know the way."

Tornsens looked at the broken man. "Where are your companions? I will take you to them."

"No-no-I will not betray them-

"We hurt no man. We serve All, Lord of Life. Those who trespass against All, beware. I would help you."

The Oriental looked up at Tornsens's broad, calm face. "They are at the top of that great cliff. There-their fire-

"Oh Tal-bring peace!" Tornsens called softly. The staff in his hand spun, and the small man screamed as the green face glowed, a lapping green reached toward him. He tried to run down the steps, but the great song of the stair echoed in his ears as lethargy overcame him. He

slept.

He woke. His captain was shaking him, looking at him with angry eyes. "Shurimi, answer! How are you back? Where is your officer?"

Shurimi leapt to his feet. Hard red sandstone, age-old, lay beneath his feet, the great canyon swept out to the left. "Dead-" he gasped. "Dead, in the Temple of All!"

Sunlight, still faintly red with dawn, fell on the camp.

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Three vast feathers falling silent through the blue sky, great wings turning slow through still air, they settled vertically to silver sand between vast upflung walls of rioting color, sullen reds and slate blues, dull golds that shifted infinitely with shifting, lancing sunlight and cloud. Three great helicopters, the striking dragon of the Asian World flung bold across their sides. They touched and halted; slowly a stream of men came out to look across the gorge to the salt-white Temple of All with the bordering blue of Mens, the Green of Tal, the shifting pearl of Shan, and the sullen scarlet of Dis, Lord of Death.

The Commanding Officer came out a moment later, and behind him came thirty women in shabby clothes, torn and patched, half a dozen ragged children with them. He spoke swift orders to the men, then presently Lieutenant-General Hitsohi started up the mighty silver treads of the Singing Stair, glinting lancing light under the sun. The great treads echoed slumberously to his steps, a growing carillon as the eight men under Captain Chu Li followed, and a private, one Shurimi. And finally the American women came, and the peal of the Stair became a mighty chant that echoed infinitely through the rock-walled gorge.

At the top, Hitsohi halted as before him loomed the majestic figure of Tormsen, Server of All.

The Oriental turned to Shurimi. "This is the man?" he snapped.

"Yes, General."

"You brought about the deaths of Major Nashiki, and three men of the World Imperial Army?" he demanded, turning again to the giant.

"All, Lord of Life brought their deaths, Warrior. This is the Temple of All, and 'before the Cubed Crystal of All only ours may stand, for such is the will of All. No man may sway the will of God, Warrior."

"Never yet have I seen a God that killed, save through the hands of men. Further, there is report that aside from the violation of the Registration Edict, you have metallic

gold stored here, against the will of the Emperor and the laws of the Empire. Is this too, true?"

"Such is the base of the Cubed Crystal. All wills it. It will remain," said Tormsen simply. "Now I warn you, as I warned Nashiki, there is death on the Scarlet Floor of Dis. You do not believe, but believe me thus, that you, ignorant, cannot safely venture within the domain of mighty forces unknown to you, be they such things as man may understand or those things forever beyond man's finite mind, the will of Lord All."

Hitsohi stared cynically. "You are violating the Edicts of the Emperor, and you and your companions are under arrest for these, things, and for the assassination of Major Nashiki. The mighty forces of the



Empire, priest, are within the limits of any man's finite mind!"

"We violate no Edicts. This is the Temple of All, and so reads the Edict of Nijihua; that any temple or major religious edifice, not saleable, is not to be Registered or taxed. This is the Temple of All, eternal, unchanging. Never can it be sold. So it is not to be registered.

"And so reads the Edict of Nijihua; that any man or organization may retain and use gold for such purposes as gold alone may serve.

"We violate no Edict."

"You need gold because no other will serve! That is not true, you will use alloys, alloys which have the brilliance, the color, the incorruptible beauty of gold. No nobler metal is needed for ornament."

"Give me then, some bit of metal, Warrior. I will show wherefore the Temple of All uses gold."

"Shurimi, your bayonet. Pass it to him."

Reluctantly the man walked forward and handed the bayonet to the white-robed giant at arm's length. Tornsen took the metal, wrapped one end in a fold of his cloak and held up his cubed-tipped staff.

"All, Lord of Life, let thy flame play upon this metal, test Thou its baseness!"

The silver flame of the staff leapt and died, lanced upward eighteen inches and burned clear and cold, the dying stars of silver light tinkling very soft, tiny crystals shattering.

Tornsen drew the metal of the bayonet through the flame, and it washed about it, through it. He handed the weapon back to its owner.

"This is the way of All, Lord of Life. Test your blade, Warrior."

Reluctantly Shurimi received it back. In his hands he twisted it. With a note high and sharp, the death cry of shining crystals, the metal vanished, gone, a powder settling very slowly from the air.

In the silence the Server spoke. "The Edict says :•Man may retain and use gold for such purposes as gold alone may serve."

Shurimi slowly opened his hands, and a rain of finest dust fell downward, sparkling silver rain in lancing sun-rays. Hitsohi looked askance at the fear-struck private, then at the Server.

"Your staff is silver," snapped the Oriental suddenly. "Then gold is" not irreplaceable."

"My staff is of iridium and platinum," Tornsen answered. "Gladly we shall relinquish our gold if platinum, iridium, osmium or rhodium or other noble metals be given us. None others long endure the Flame of All, and even swifter is their vanishment beneath the snake-tongued flame of Dis, Lord of Destruction and Death.

"We violate no edicts, we obey only the command of Nijihua, the Emperor; that every man worship as seems good to him, and fitting."

"You are guilty of the assassination of Major Nashiki," insisted Hitsohi, but his voice was softer and less

harsh. "For this the Temple must be confiscated."

"I am not guilty, I warned Nashiki as I warned you that Death lies on the floor of Dis, and in the flame of All for all save the people of All. I laid no hand on him, but under the threat of his weapon I was ordered to admit him. He did not know the powers of All, and being ignorant entered, as would the savage to the mighty power-plant of the civilized engineer, not believing in death he could not see. I have no guilt."

Hitsohi's gaze was cynical. "So," he smiled, "so will you be forced to admit me. And my troop. But we guard against hidden members of your priesthood."

"Captain Chu Li, place the squad as ordered."

The pattern shifted like running sand. The thirty American women stood dull-eyed, hopeless in a rough circle about the Oriental troops, a living shield, shoulder to shoulder, through which no weapon could reach.

Hitsohi looked at the Server, and a tight smile crossed his thin lips. "Forward," he ordered.

They crossed the slate-white threshold and entered to the sullen crimson floor of Dis, Lord of Death. Three steps the women took before Captain Chu Li, in the lead of the Orientals, reached the Barrier of the Threshold. He stepped across, and soundlessly, so soundless they scarcely noticed, he slipped to the floor and rolled to his back, so his eyes stared up, white and dead, the eyes of a long-dead fish. Two men behind stepped over, and died before the others could halt.

Dull-faced, hopeless beyond caring, the women walked on unharmed, unhalted, unnoticed.

"It is death," the Server spoke soft in the hush. "There be powers here man may not understand, the will of AD, Lord of Life. But it is the will of All that the woman cross and it is not his will that you should cross."

The women crossed the threshold, stood silent, looking at the crystal with faces strangely peaceful and calm after the long months of agony, the years of terror the war had brought.

Tornsen stood beside them. "Tal, Lord of Peace brings strength again and refreshment"

A woman spoke, low and tense. "Can-can this All bring-health to the sick?" She held up her son, a six-year-old with spindly legs, scrawny neck and arms, his head a boney case far too large for his weakened body. "It- it is tuberculosis, brought on by the war-gas."

"All is Lord of Life. Come forward, woman." The silver fountain sparkled, silent and steady as Tornsen led her around a great crystal to a flight of golden stairs that chimed soft and deep to each tread, till they were on a level with the top of the crystal and it lay a vast sheet of diamond-clear light below them.

Tornsen took the child in his arms, a frightened child that clung to the strength of his great arms. "Lie here," said the Server gently, and the boy lay amidst the pulsing silver light, breathing in the shining star-bursts. "All, Lord of Life, one weak and enfrailed by the wastage of disease lies on your crystal, bathed in your flame. Let Thy great forces play through him, let health return!"

The silver flame rushed up and through him, soundless beauty of light, till the boy was hidden in its shining sheath. Then it was gone, and the boy sat up slowly.

"Mother," he said, "Mother, take me down! I'm-I'm hungry-" He began to cry softly.

The woman looked at Tornsen half afraid, half worshipful, as she took the boy back in her arms. "All brings health, he brings strength and refreshment. Carron, Lord of Time, who is another phase of All, brings full healing." The crystal in his hands spun till the shifting, swelling pearly light of Shan, Lord of Fulfillment and Happiness faced the mother, reached out to her and bathed her. Suddenly her tired face broke into lines of relief; she laughed.

"He-he's well. He's hungry again!"

The Server smiled. "The child is healed. Come closer, women of All, that the Flame of All may bring you strength."

Slowly the women came forward as the great silvery flame gushed up to fall in star-sprinkled spray over and through them. A new strength came to them, weariness dropped from them as water from the swimmer's back as he reaches the farther shore.

Tornsen went toward the gateway of the Temple, and the Japanese woke to life from their brooding melancholy as Tornsen stood before them, the blue flame of Mens pulsing in his staff.

Hitsohi stared suddenly, and his revolver whipped up. "What weapon is that you bear?" he demanded. "Give me that crystal."

"It is the Crystal of All. To you, it would be the Crystal of Death."

"Give me that crystal," snapped the Japanese. His revolver muzzle trained on Tornsen's eyes, steady as the rocks of the canyon.

Tornsen smiled. "Fire, Warrior. No shot can reach the bearer of the Staff of All."

Hitsohi fired. The Server stood unmoved. Again the Japanese fired, and again. The men behind him muttered and pointed. Hitsohi looked, and saw at Tornsen's feet three leaden pellets, rolling slowly, unharmed, undented, moving lightly on the salt-white stone.

"The crystal is Death," said Tornsen quietly. "I tell you this, and because you insist, I will hand it to one of your men, for you must report this thing in truth. Therefore I hand it not to you, but this I tell you; not five full seconds will he hold it in safety."

"Shurimi, take the crystal," snapped the officer after an instant's pause.

"He speaks true-it is a God-a God-" wailed the man, turning away, pleading.

Hitsohi's revolver spoke again. Shurimi spun, rolled, and the Singing Stair echoed and spoke softly as his body rolled from tread to tread till the whole great stair sang its carillon song of mourning.

"Tashistu, take the crystal," said Hitsohi softly.

The man stepped forward as though to death, and took from Tornsen's hand the flaming crystal. The staff was warm in his hand, and heavy, very heavy. It seemed to hum softly, a growing, echoing hum that

soothed and was music, soft and deadening like heavy smoke of the poppy, till his arm grew numb and his legs, and his eyes were heavy-heavy-heavy-

Tornsen tore the staff from the man's grip as he fell to the threshold. "It would be Death, he has not deid, for not two seconds did he hold it, and it may be that I can revive him."

The Crystal of All in his hands flamed silvery, and its filaments writhed and twisted to the man. He twitched and writhed with them, and rose suddenly crying in pain and terror, crying out in his native tongue and rolling on the salt-white stone.

"The radiance of All burns those not of our race, and even at best is painful. But it heals for all that. The pain will go in a day, and the healing will last," said Tornsen slowly.

"Now go, and may Mens, Lord of Reason, bring you wisdom."

The staff in his hands spun till the cold blue of Mens' tetrahedral flame looked into Hitsohi's eyes and its radiance bathed him. Very clear seemed all things to Hitsohi, and he caught a glimpse of an infinite understanding, so that the Temple was transparent to his mind, and within it mighty beings moved, and their bodies were streamers and flames of unguessed force, immense and irresistible, and the vast Temple was too small for them, looming, thousand-foot Titans who watched over it and its men.

And to his understanding, the patterns of the atoms were clear and precise, and the workings of men, and the meaning of radiation. And he was infinite and all-understanding, watching this scene from afar. And the thoughts

of his men and the calm assurance of this man before him were known. All Earth, all Infinity was a well-laid pattern, clear to his mind. And he knew that All was space itself, in whom all things that are, or are to be, have their "being."

He turned without word or backward glance and marched down the Singing Stair and the men behind followed him slowly, so that the gorge rang to the rhelody of the Stair.

#### IV

Nishaki looked blandly upon Lieutenant General Hit-sohi, and smiled. "The report is interesting, General Hit-sohi. But it is quite meaningless. The details you have given me are of no interest, their hypnotic methods do not in the slightest interest the World Empire. You will answer, please, accurately and concisely three questions? Yes?"

"The edifice is a major religious building, not to be sold, and hence not taxable, nor registerable?"

"Yes," said Hitsohi, softly. "That is true."

"They have gold ornaments, but the nature of their use is such that under Section twelve-B of the Edict of July, the gold is irreplaceable by alloy?"

"Such would be my report, made, perhaps under hypnosis, as you suggest. But the metal was dust, and it floated in the air. The gold was claimed under the Edict's exception; the investigator is satisfied."

"Is the investigator satisfied that the deaths in the building do not make the edifice confiscate under the World Empire's laws?"

Hitsohi stood before the Council, and he was silent, his face motionless as weathered stone. The stone-walled room grew silent, and the men stared steadily at the testifier. At length he spoke, and his words were audible only for the stillness of the place.

"No hand of man, or weapon of man that is known or conceivable to the investigator brought their deaths. They crossed the threshold and-died. Beside them crossed the Americans, and-lived. And they that died, died without sound or move, and their tissues were as though boiled. The science department has reported every nerve and cell and tissue coagulated. The investigator believes- no man brought about their deaths. Is the investigator's report complete to the best of his poor ability?"

"The report is complete," said Nishaki pleasantly. "The Council does not accept nor approve the report. The investigator is dismissed."

Hitsohi bowed stiffly, straightened and walked from

the room. In his barracks office, he did as the Council expected of a Japanese officer under the circumstances, and he died with fear and sorrow in his heart, for All was very real, and not for him or his race, as he had known and understood hi the Flame of Mens, Lord of Wisdom.

V

Tornsen, the Server, stood upon the great Crystal of All, and the silver Flame of All washed up and through and about him. His voice was deep, and rolled softly in the great Temple,

"In the Temple of All, only the sworn servants of All may remain. This, then, I must bid you. Who will, may enter the Temple. Whom All wills may remain in the Temple for his prayer. Them, he will welcome to his Temple, and to their prayers he will listen, though not always will he answer them in full, nor ever is this to be hoped, for the plans of All and the judgments of All must remain true to the judgment of His phase, Carron, Lord of Infinite Time. The good of the moment, and the good of the man, All will not uphold if it be the sacrifice of the Infinite Time, and the race.

"They who enter the Temple must go forth again. Always there is refreshment and sanctuary and healing, All will bring you health, Tal, Lord of Peace shall bring you comfort.

"But now you are refreshed. Tal has brought hope again to your eyes and hearts, and All has brought strength to your limbs. Return now. Amos Tucker will guide you, and the trails are smooth and the way easy. For this night and the next and the next, this Crystal of All I give you will glow, but on the fourth night the crystal will be dark, and its flames will die. Leave it then, for on the sixth night it will shatter and blaze fiercely as Dis the Destroyer takes leave of it.

"Go now, to your homes. All be with you."

"We-we can return, Server?" a woman's clear, anxious voice echoed in the Temple.

Slowly the great crystal on which the Server stood rotated, the green face of Tal turned past, and the red face of Dis, the pearly light of Shan, till the sapphire light of Mens, Lord of Wisdom faced them.

"The temple of All, and Mens is ever open to you," said Tornsen, and the crystal glowed till all the

temple was cold, and every detail lined with a certainty and

clearness unearthly. The assembled company breathed quickly once-and the blue of Mens, Lord of Wisdom and Understanding died.

Slowly, silently they turned and made their way from the Temple, each bearing with her a little pack of silvery metal threads, and in each pack were half a hundred tiny rounded nuggets of very heavy, very beautiful metal, for gold was forbidden the people, though the other 'noble metals were not

Tucker, lean and rangy, browned in the sun and wind stood alone and last hi the Temple. Alone before the mighty, glowing crystal.

"Tucker," said Tormsen softly, so that the great room whispered in his voice, "you will lead them?"

"I will lead them, Server."

"You will protect them with your life?"

"I will protect them with my life, Server."

"To you I will give the crystal. Though, if it should that you and the others must die, the crystal of All must not fall into the hands of the enemy. It would explode with deadly flame. And this more I tell you. If danger threatens you cannot overcome, hold the crystal so that the eye of Dis faces this danger, and call unto Dis that he may protect you, saying only, 'Protect thy people, Lord Dis!' and Dis shall serve you then five times.

"When the sun sinks, the silver light of All shall rise to guide you and light you for two hours yet, and for the dark hours his warmth shall beat forth so that cold night nor dark shall oppress you. Remember these things then, and that on the coming of the sixth night, the crystal shall disintegrate. Do you remember this, Amos Tucker?"

"I shall remember, Server. I-I may return? Bring others here? The weak and the ailing, the tired-of-life?"

"So they be of All's people, they shall be welcome. You may go your way, Amos Tucker."

From the platform of gold beside the crystal of AD, Tormsen, the Server, lifted a crystal, cubed, four inches on a side, silver and sapphire, pearl and green and sullen scarlet, resting on a graven base of silvery metal. It was lifeless now, but as he held it in the star-fire of All he spoke low words over it and the fire of All leapt in a mighty tongue of lancing light, and as it died, the crystal hi his hands glowed with life of its own. He

handed it down to Tucker and stood silent, watching the man across the sullen scarlet of the Temple floor.

"They have gone, John Reid," he said softly at last. The cubed crystal sank to a faint glow, the shining walls of Temple faded till a vari-colored dusk crept in, and the blue of Mens across the ceiling became a midnight sky, crystal clear. From a scarcely visible doorway in the wall of jet, John Reid the elder came in a robe of sapphire blue with cloak of azure metal threads, his silver hair hidden under a headdress similar to that which Tormsen, Server of All, wore save that it too was of blue metal, and the tiny, cubed crystal set in it was the five-faced cube of All, changed only in that the sapphire tetrahedral flame of Mens, Lord of Wisdom shone directly forward, blue as the steadfast eyes hi the lined old face. Behind

came the green-clad figure of Robert Blake, Tal, Lord of Peace. Tall as Torsen himself, but leaner, and the face under his headdress was lined and graven with the thousand marks of Carron, Lord of Time, cut deep and sharp with a chisel that Tammar, Lady of Mercy, had tempered and guided. His deep-set eyes were green as the cloak he wore, with a glow of human understanding behind them.

Young John Reid entered, his bronze hair hidden under the sullen color of Dis, Lord of Destruction, his stern, determined face gave warning of the character of the man, just to the ultimate but lacking somewhat in understanding of human failure. To him, where success belonged by all law of science and probability, no excuse of human weakness was sound. A man himself unlimited in endurance and determination willing, ready to drive his iron-muscled, iron-nerved body beyond human endurance in a cause he found just, he looked in others for the same, and catalogued it weakness when they failed.

John Reid wore the scarlet of Dis.

Behind him the others entered in the costumes of Temple Servers, simple robes with cape and headdress of spun metal. They wore the cubed crystals of All in their headdress, but their robes were of a simple white cloth.

"There were none satisfactory, Tal?" asked Torsen,

turning to Robert Blake.

Slowly the psychologist shook his head. "None, there will be others who come within the week."

"I suggested to none of them that they spread word of Temple of All."

"Wherefore the word will spread more swiftly, if that may be. And the lad, Charles Sherman went away healed, active. The simple cold men have disregarded too long to note as a miracle the cure that made three small girls stop coughing in five minutes time. But tuberculosis they know and dread, the aftereffects of the gas! There are many who suffer that and will seek this temple with all speed when Charles Sherman returns."

"They will scoff."

"And come that they may see through the trickery, and thus scoff louder. We need yet a Tammar, Lady of Mercy and Shan, Lord of Fulfillment Grant Murray of the Station is dead, dead in the mob that felled America at last, or Shan would be with us today.

"But it is not wise to make hasty choice."

"We are fortunate to find four who fitted so well," said old John quietly.

"We are fortunate, we built the Gods." Blake looked toward the old man, smiling. "We built to fit two patterns, a pattern of men and a pattern of forces, but there are limits to our molding. We will not lack for choice soon, I swear that."

"That is the need that created the gods," old John sighed. "Let they who come be strong, though, if we would do our work well and quickly."

VI

The sun was warmer when they came, not the strong, but the weak, for the strong of America were gone, or imprisoned workers rebuilding wrecked factories and drowned mines. They came down the dry gash of many colors along the silver sands as the sun sank and deep shadows crossed the gorge. Before them the shining crystal front shone, a mighty beacon, and the Singing Stair was a silvery cascade that shone in the light from the great doors of the Temple of All. Multicolored shadows lay on the sands, shadows in blue and green and pearly light.

Amos Tucker led them, a poor straggling of blasted men and broken women, and weary women with racked children in their arms or crying at their sides. These, the weak, believed, for it was hope, the only hope there was for them. The medicine of the World Empire was not for them yet. Their own medical men were gone, dead at war or concentrated in the hospitals of the workers by the World Empire's will and Nijihua's. There was no help for them, save here, and they did not truly believe it could be even here. But they would try.

The Singing Stair rang again to the tread of Amos Tucker, and the men behind him, and the women with them. Tornsen stood at the threshold and welcomed them as they entered. The Crystal of Shan, Lord of Hope and Fulfillment faced the entrance as they entered and their hearts lifted to its glow. As they entered their shoulders straightened, and the load of fatigue fell from them. In the empty air in the center of the great Cube Temple sound began to vibrate, soft, scarce audible minor notes that rose and rose from key to key, became joyful trumpetings with a vast chorus of half-understood voices shouting their joys. And where the music sang its crystal notes a light grew and increased as the music, a light pure green, green as fresh spring forests, and it waxed and waned slowly in the empty air as the people watched, quiet and untroubled.

From the jet wall, merging through it seemingly, Tal himself came, tall and clad in green, sparkling clear, and

his crystal glowed with his cool green light as he stepped up to the high altar, up the golden stair that sang, a great golden xylophone to his tread till he stood on the crystal in the silver of All, and the silvery light tinged slightly to the green of Tal, Lord of Peace.

Tornsen, the Server joined him, and as he stepped to the silvery light, the jet wall faded behind the sapphire blue shape of Mens, Lord of Wisdom. Slowly he climbed the stair, till he too stood on the Crystal of All. The music of the air became crystalline, precise movements of notes that marched and countermarched in ordered ranks hi the air, precise and perfect as the immutable laws of Truth. The Temple glowed in the blue light of Mens, and the blue crystal face shot out a tetrahedral crystal of light in salute to its Lord.

From the top of the crystal, Mens lowered his staff till the tetrahedral flame pointed toward the people on the Temple floor, and the blue light swept over them.

And in their minds came the understanding of the infinite Lord of Infinity, All, Lord of Life. They glimpsed the myriad worlds of infinity, and understood them, and they understood hi that instant their own longings, their own needs, and the infinite justice of All.

And the Flame of Mens died, and they were content in their understanding. The Server spoke.

"Amos Tucker has led ye here?"

"I led them, Server," the man bowed his head slightly.



"It is a long road for many. Have ye food?"

"We have food, enough for now. But there is no water, nor any we could find. Server of All, is there water for our many?"

Tornsen raised his staff slowly. "There shall be water. Amos, there are sick and crippled amongst these who have come?"

"Many, Server, and many more who would come, could they make this journey."

"Let those ailing of disease come forward first."

Eagerly a man who stood apart from the others hobbled forward, and the crowd made way hastily to his approach, his filthy rags flapping about his scarecrow frame. "Is there-is there hope for-even me?"

Tornsen looked down at him slowly, and smiled so his broad face welcomed the hideous outcast. "Not hope, Leper, health. In ten seconds your horror shall be

done with, and in ten days the sound flesh shall grow again. Come up, Leper, to the Crystal of All."

The man came forward, up the stair, faltering and afraid at the last, till Tornsen reached down and took the hideous, rotting thing that served the man for hand, and helped him up. All's light flamed silver, and the sparkling stars seemed angry as they beat at the man, and little tinkling vibrations of sound rang through his body. He sank to his knees, then rose as the Flame retreated.

"You are healed, Leper," said Tornsen. "Go down now, and join your fellow men. In a score of days, come once again to the Temple, and if the new flesh has not filled hi those scars that make you a monster, All will aid you further. Go."

Half uncertain, half doubting, the man went down and as he reached the base of the stair, walked away. Tal, Lord of Peace turned his staff upon him and the green glow pierced him. Gently he sank to sleep on the crimson Temple floor.

A woman called out, her hands at her breast. "I came to be healed of cancer, Server-and the pain left me between my crossing of the threshold, and my standing here. Am I-will I have life?"

"All, Lord of Life, has destroyed your cancer, woman. You can go home to your family now, if you so will, and never will cancer bother you."

So they came, and in the Temple of All were healed of disease, or the Crystal the Flame of All washed them and they lived again. Three hours they came, till all the diseased were gone forth again, whole or healing once more, and only the crippled remained.

Through the wall of jet they went, one by one, and behind the wall came to a chamber walled complete with the silvery crystal of All, and to two clad in the silvery cloth of All, carrying staffs like that of the Server, save that theirs were smaller, lighter. As one ailing entered the room, the green of Tal bathed him, and he slept deep, deep beyond all pain.

Then very swiftly, without mask or glove, with only clean, shining scalpels and instruments the two worked, cutting tissue and bone and sinew and re-arranging it as was right, and from the silvery walls of All came silvery lig'-t that tinkled and rustled eerily in the whispering silence of the chamber. Then the

staffs in their hands

glowed with strange lights, violet and amethyst, rose and pale amber that played and interplayed on the tissues. Before their eyes the life-stuff grew, the stretched bone thrust out swift new cells that knitted and built firm incredibly. New flesh grew on severed muscles, white threads of nerves shot out and lengthened under soft-glowing amethyst.

Half an hour, and the crippled walked out, straight and strong, rejoicing. Thin white scars, silvery sands outside they made camp, a full hundred of them, then two hundred, and little fires glowed; they spread blankets as the chill night crept through the valley on soft wind-rustled feet.

The Server came down the Stair, his Staff in his hands. Amos Tucker rose at his coming, and stepped forward to meet him. "They have had food, but there is no water?" asked the Server.

"They have had food, but no water. But they miss it not greatly. For each who came, ailed and is whole. They will not sleep this night for they must talk."

Tornsen looked about him, at the silver sands, and where a low, rounded shoulder of grey-green sandstone thrust a rugged mass upwards, he looked. "They shall have water," said Tornsen. He walked to the sandstone and climbed its three-foot dome. Fifty feet across it was, lowly rounded.

"Lord Dis, lend thy strength. Let there be a vessel that thy people may drink!" The sullen scarlet face of his staff brightened, murmurous light washed through it, then leapt out in a fifty-foot snake-tongued flame that hissed like monstrous serpents. The tongue split to many, many that circled and swirled, hissing spitefully, redly brilliant. The rock boiled upward in blue-shining luminescence, pulled softly and licked higher in hot, almost invisible blue flame. Softly the flames hissed, swirling and licking, and the rock glowed brilliant red and violet. Then abruptly the flames died. A soft sigh escaped the watching people, for in the sandstone mass was a hemispherical cup, smooth-walled, clean-cut, ten feet deep, ten feet across. Amos Tucker started forward.

"Hold," said the Server. "It would leak, thus, and it is not filled." Then soft words he spoke to the crystal, murmurous words they could not hear. Again the crystal glowed, but now but a single tongue of flame leapt forth,

needle-fine, a thread of intense, sullen scarlet. And its end crashed against the rock with shrieking lightning that swirled and circled in to dance over all the surface of the cup till it glowed white with the heat of the lightning. The flame died, and the white light of the cup died. It was a greenish milky cup of glass now, deep and smooth, very clear and clean.

"The cup is made, Lord Dis. Lord Mens, Lord of Knowledge and Wisdom, fill for us this cup!" The staff in Tornsen's hands seemed to leap of its own volition, spinning abruptly till the crystal of Mens faced the cup. Cold was his flame, cold and blue, and the soft radiance that spread from its tetrahedral crystalline faces crackled in the air suddenly chilled to an arctic cold. The people shivered in the chill that swept them, shivering in their light clothing. The air grew blue misty, and the hot glow of the cup faded abruptly. Very slowly a mathematically precise line extended itself from the apex of Mens' tetrahedron and bent a mathematically exact image to strike the geometric center of the cup. It rustled softly as it extended itself through the glassy wall, through the hard, age-old sandstone, down and down. Abruptly a new rustling came and the flame of Mens died. A soft, gurgling rustling that whistled a note higher and keener, stronger growing constantly-till it jetted clear water up and out, over the cup, till it was filled.

And a little stream led away down the silver sands, to sink presently in its dry thirstiness.

They camped there that night, and the next morning those who had families, those who felt their friends must know, went back. But many stayed. The next day more came, and more. In three days, the men came bearing the tents, and shelters, and behind them old, half-wrecked ammunition service cars, their tractor treads skimming over the sand. But they were loaded with food and materials. Fuel, too. But they threw out the fuel, save the gasoline they carried, for by the Cup of All stood a Crystal of Dis, Lord of Destruction-and fire. It glowed with sullen scarlet, warm and red at the top, but cool as the desert night at the sides, and the women cooked their food on that, and warmed the water and as night came on it glowed very dull over all its sides, so the entire gorge was faintly warmed and comfortable.

And more came in other trucks, and the needy went

away with metal nuggets that brought them food, and health that brought them strength to earn. Only once might any man be helped with gifts of wealth by All, but health was ever ready for him who asked.

They came to ask, and more, till the Gorge of All held a small city, served by the ancient ammunition service cars. Then Amos Tucker came before the Crystal again, with seven men of the little community.

"Server, we ask aid of All, gifts of platinum and precious metals."

"Once may men ask that of All, Amos Tucker. You, All has already helped, these seven who come with you may ask and receive."

"Server of All, we ask it not for ourselves, nor in amount that buys food and shelter till work is found. We ask twenty pounds of metal that roads may be built and trucks purchased that more may know All and reach Him and be healed. Americans have no wealth left, Server, and can earn it but slowly. The Empire favors the Emperor's race, and they may earn more swiftly, and have capital. We have no capital, for it is gone hi the defense of America.

"We would bring more to All, tBose who cannot walk, or ride the rough trucks we have been able to buy and run."

The Server nodded slowly. "For that, All grants capital. It is a loan, and must be repaid to All's people. As He helps those who have fallen to regain their feet, but will not carry strong men in His arms, so All will help enterprise to its feet, but will not carry it hi His arms. Those who have must help those who have not. The loan shall be repaid hi this way; that they who have not and cannot reach the Temple shall be carried here; they that have shall give to aid the others. It is understood?"

"Yes, Server. We thank All that this thing can be." Tucker nodded.

From the jet wall came blue-clad Mens, Lord of Wisdom, and in his -old arms an iridescently beautiful bar of metal, small and very heavy. This he gave to Amos Tucker, who saluted him with bowed head and took it.

"The roads shall come, and many who need the help of All," promised Tucker. "We thank Thee."

And they left.

It was three months before the first cars rolled hi,

bearing freight of paralyzed and sick; and some that came died, for All had so decreed in his infinite

understanding of what must be. "Change is the order of All, for as the pool that has no inlet nor outlet grows to a stinking slime, so would the race that had neither inlet of birth nor outlet of death. All may not let all live, for that way lies stagnation and rot. The pool that has inlet but no outlet grows salt and bitter and becomes sterile so no worthwhile thing may grow there.

"There must be birth; Shan, Lord of Fulfillment is a phase of All, Lord of Life. For these things are the Filler and the Emptier of Life, lest Life grow stagnant and bitter.

"Thy Father lives on, Son, hi thee, and shall live on in thy children, as in you lives the First Father of all life, passed on an undying torch whose fire is elder brother to the mountains which come and pass as must men, yea, not even the mountains are so eternal as life, nor is their shifting less rapid, for as surely as Death must empty thy own vessel of life eventually, so surely must this rocky gorge pass on to form new valleys of green and fertile land that life may continue its way, a thing more constant than the hills, and more immortal. Change is the order of All's universe, for All himself is Lord of Life and Change."

The City of All grew, and its fame spread among the people of All, so that many came and were healed. Five months after his first coming to the Temple of All, Amos Tucker entered it in the Service of All, and did not return to the city, and the people of the city did not see him for three months longer. Then Tucker appeared in the White of All's novitiate, beside some dozen others who had joined the Temple, some five women and seven men. Tucker's face was more kindly, yet more stern, and in its graven lines was a far deeper understanding and a strong light of resolve hi his eyes.

Amos Tucker had been introduced to the Mysteries of All, and knew All for more, and yet less. And on the pearly throne of Tammar, Lady of Mercy, there sat a woman now, some twenty-seven years of age, yet possessed of that ageless beauty of face and feature suffering can sometimes bring.

Her hair was glass wool, purely white, but live and

sparkling in the golden light of Tammar, Lady of Mercy. Doris Shane had come to the Temple in one of the first of the motor ambulances, -pain-racked, tortured through seven long years, paralyzed beyond possibility of hope, so the doctors found, by a flying needle of metal from a bursting bomb. Seven years of agony had turned gold to silver, had lined and softened her face, had forced upon her and into her soul an understanding and a human philosophy that made her-Tammar, Lady of Mercy.

Thus was the Fourth Lord come to All; so they sat when Amos Tucker saw them. They were five now, the Five Lords, and the Server of All. Old John Reid, Mens, Lord of Wisdom. Robert Blake, Tal, Lord of Peace. John Reid the younger, Dis, Lord of Death. Doris Shane, Tammar, Lady of Mercy. And Grant Loman was Shan, Lord of Fulfillment.

They were the Five.

And they were Six, for the Dread Lord, Barmak, the Black Lord of Nothingness was there, ever beside the Five, invisible, unmentioned, unknown even save to the Five Lords and to Torsen, the Server.

Grant Loman had come an old man, nearing seventy, his sparse hair grey and stiff, his face lined and seamed with a half-century of winters in the high ranges, a staunch old man who followed the trail Amos Tucker had carved out first seeking this fabled Temple of healing. It promised things he had ever hoped one day to see, healing all diseases and banishment of crippling ailments. Half a century he had worked among the lonely people of the high ranges, an apprentice doctor learning as they did before medical schools had been invented, from his father before him. Then medical colleges had brought him some new skills, but there was no science then of drawing back from Death those whom no chemical or drug could

aid. So he had known better than all the schools and had healed, he and his high ranges and his God, Nature. He'd seen the souls of men stripped bare by calamity and death, and healed those wounds too. Half a century he worked with the souls and bodies of his people, and longed for such things as the Temple of All had shown.

Grant Loman sat on the throne of Shan, and the Lords were Five to the people.

vn

Chu Liang nodded slightly to his pilot, and the ship began to settle slowly, vertically downward. Li Tsang spoke softly as the ship neared the settlement below. "The Americans seem to believe at any rate, Dr. Chu."

"Yes. There is probably some reason. The reports we received are unscientific in the highest degree, but I think I can trace a semblance of a highly ingenious plan. Obviously, any such organization must have political meaning, since the Asiatic Empire has conquered these people so recently. I think perhaps there exists some weapon which is aimed from above. From the condition of the bodies, I have hypothesized a radio-frequency heat-beam, an explanation of such startling simplicity that, of course, the warriors overlooked it completely. Undoubtedly the threshold is so equipped."

"I had thought of such a possibility. It is for this reason you brought the three condemned deserters?"

"Yes, and further experimentation. There will be Americans enough here. We will go out. Li T'sang, you will bring the recording instruments, I think. Pie Chan, the direct reading instruments. Captain Shikani, if you will see that the prisoners are brought under guard--"

Chu Liang stepped out to the silver sands, and looked across at the great Temple front. A score of Americans from the city of All were watching narrowly, and followed at a little distance as they crossed to the Singing Stair. Bright sun dimmed the glory of the Temple somewhat, but the flashing light on the great stairs was near blinding. Chu Liang looked upward to the giant form of the Server, wrapped in robe of silver cloth and silver cloak, his crystal staff gleaming slightly, lambent flame playing about it.

Chu Liang halted at the head of the stair, and looked through the mighty doorway of the Temple.

"All holds no welcome for your race, Scientists," said the Server softly. "That you know. You cannot analyze All, for reason as basic as that which prevents experimental measuring of the contraction of matter at extreme

speed. All is part of your instruments, as your instruments are part of All. You cannot measure the contraction, for your measuring stick contracts with it So it is here. You will find nothing, nothing save Death for such of your men as cross to the crystal floor of Dis, Lord of Death."

Chu Liang looked silently into the Temple, and his breath whistled softly over his teeth. "Your edifice is truly magnificent, Server, for so I understand you to be. Your lighting effects are exquisite. I am very stupid and lack finer understanding; I cannot believe in Gods, for such is the mind of science that always it must feel in some way to believe; that is the necessary basework of science. If I feel nothing, it proves nothing. If I can feel this God, then will I believe wholly. If it so be that it is compatible with the will of your Deity, I would make certain tests here, for even though the Deity enter into our instruments' construction, still it may be possible to discover his presence, as iron compass discovers hidden iron."

"Halt!" snapped the captain's voice. The ringing of the great Stair quieted slowly to a rolling echo as the

tread of the little squad ceased. "This is the place you choose, Dr. Chu Liang?"

"If it may be?" asked the Chinese softly, indicating the spot he preferred his assistants to set up the instruments. The Server nodded slowly. "All may give you some sign of His presence, Scientist; I know little of your instruments. Upon the Singing Stair, all men are welcome, and to all it is sanctuary. But All welcomes none save His own within the Temple."

Chu Liang looked within the temple, and the multicolored dusk of scarlet and blue and pearl and blue was very cool and very restful. The great Crystal flamed softly, and the stars that winked and lived and died in the Flame of All caught his eye, and his mind. From the wall of jet the Five emerged, slowly, and mounted the golden stair to the face of All's Crystal, to stand silent.

Dr. Chu Liang turned back to his assistants, and spoke

softly to them as their instruments were unpacked and

assembled on the salt-white stone at the peak of the

Singing Stair.

"There is radio-activity here," said Li Tsang softly.

"That may have something to do with the reported feeling of increased well-being. It is known that radio-active waters bring temporary feeling of health, before the blood-building tissues are destroyed."

"All the rock, I know, is radio-active. Sandstones are not normally so. It surprises me, yet the radio-activity cannot explain either the deaths of our Army Officers, nor the cures of disease. It is a surprising development. But not, I think, an answer. Try the radiation bolometer."

The younger man adjusted his instrument carefully, and set a small motor humming very softly. On a strip of white paper, a thin black line stretched out, rising and falling and shaping itself as the intensity of the varying wavelengths radiated varied".

Chu Liang looked at it silently for a moment, till, finally the snaking line dipped, reached zero, and remained. "It is interesting, Li T'sang. Focus the instrument on the floor nearby, that no light reach it from other sources."

Again the line traced, remaining on zero for long, then rising suddenly to a great peak, and falling as sharply. Then again it rose to a waving line at an extreme range.

"The red light is monochromatic," said Li Tsang in some interest. "I would expect more spectral lines. Only in the red and in the ultra-violet are there lines. There is strong ultra-violet, which may explain the healthy tan of the Americans here. But it neither cures nor kills save in vast concentration, where normal light would be near as effective, killing by sheer energy alone."

"It interests me, Li T'sang, that I have spent weary hours adjusting apparatus that I might receive a beam of monochromatic energy. The blue is pure, and the green is pure. The Line is confused by the radiation of the white wall and the white light of the top crystal." He turned to Tornsens slowly.

"Server, we have heard of this Flame of Dis that is said to bring death. How may we see this, then?"

Tornsen's face became stern. "Lord All does not parade his might in vain display. If you would see the Flame of Dis, attack the works of All, and it shall play, and play unhindered, unstayed, thru any screen or instrument you may turn upon it."

The Chinese consulted quietly, and looked upon the

records of their instruments. The captain joined them, and Chu Liang spoke to him. "There is no ray or radiation of death here. Let the prisoners earn their freedom as was ordained, and let two children of the Americans be brought, that they may be carried, as was ordained."

The captain moved. A score of Americans stood on the Singing Stair, quiet and watchful, a half-dozen children watched, intent-eyed.

The captain's orders were spoken hi Japanese, and his men turned instantly to obey. The Americans roared in anger and stepped forward menacingly as the troops seized two small children. The Server called out once, a strong, sharp syllable of command, and they halted, Oriental and American alike.

"To the people of All, I promise that the children will not be harmed or even frightened, for see, they shall be at peace." As he spoke, Tal, Lord of Peace, raised his staff on the distant Crystal of All, and green radiance shone over the group, so that a feeling of lethargy stilled them, while suddenly the children slept hi the arms of the troops. Chu Liang's voice was soft and intense as his assistants worked swiftly to mark the recording instruments.

The Server spoke again. "To the people of the World Empire, I promise also that the children will not be harmed, for the Lord of Life guards his own, whether he appear in his phase of Dis, Lord of Death, or Tal, Lord of Peace. But no act of yours shall harm the children."

The Chinese bowed slightly. "So let it be. Two men shall carry them. That is all."

The prisoners took the children in their arms, two sleeping children, and held them above their heads. At a snapped order they stepped forward. Tornsen stepped forward to meet them, staff upraised. "It is Death," he said softly. "All permits no enemy to cross to the Crystal Floor of Dis."

The Chinese said, "Unfortunately, it is death for them outside, a death they understand very well, and do not desire. They will enter, for they are condemned, and inside lies their only hope of life."

Tornsen looked at the two silently. "Carry the children, then, less high, for the fall might injure them."

Chu Liang felt in his heart a sudden triumph, as he

knew his guess was true. "They carry them high or die!"

"Let the two put down the children, for there is Sanctuary upon the Singing Stair for all men," cried Tammar, Lady of Mercy. "They shall be free upon the Stair, and none there shall hurt them."

The strong, deep voice of old Mens, Lord of Wisdom spoke. "Such is the law, for those who seek sanctuary for justice. These two have sought justice, and justice finds them condemned. They be not seekers of justice, but refugees from it. The Sanctuary of the Stairs is not for them, Lady Tammar."

Tammar bowed her head. "Aye, Lord of Wisdom."

"Step forward, and if you would live, carry the children high, for the weapon that kills is above!" cried Chu Liang. And the two stepped forward as the Server stepped to meet them. They stepped across the threshold, so that the sullen scarlet of Dis lay beneath their feet-and died. From their lax hands, softened suddenly by Dis, Lord of Death, the Server caught the children in his great hands, and lowered them to the floor.

"Lady Tammar, bring awakening," called the Server, and the golden staff, tipped with amber light that was the staff of Tammar, Lady of Mercy dipped, a lancing flame of golden light touched the children. They rose, and hurried, frightened, away and down the Stair to their homes.

"There is death in the Temple for all save All's people."

Chu Liang bowed his head slightly. "Yes," he said softly. "We go now. Give us those we cannot reach, if such be the will of your Deity."

Two Americans stepped forward into the Temple at the Server's gesture, and the troops of the World Empire carried the lax bodies down the Stair in the thrumming silence. Chu Liang and his assistants packed the instruments into their cases and marked them carefully.

"It is quite useless," said Chu Liang quietly as the great stair sang its triumph in their ears and through the gorge. "I do not in any way understand, but this I know; there is a god there, and a much greater god than ours. We have a god. It is Science. Theirs is a greater god."

Li T'sang looked at him thoughtfully. "A greater Science you mean, Dr. Chu?"

"I did not say," Chu Liang replied softly. "We will examine the bodies of the men at once, upon reaching the plane. Li T'sang will perform microscopic sectioning work on the tissue of the muscles, skin, hair and such cells as have the lowest forms of life. I will examine and test the muscles for galvanic effects. There remains physical examination of the bodies, which Pie Chan will perform."

"Will you not examine the recording instruments?" asked Li T'sang in some disappointment.

Old Chu Liang shook his head. "Science is our god, Li Tsang, and gods have infinity to work. Their work must not, then, be hurried and spoiled by their hurry. Our recorded films must be developed under optimum conditions, which we do not obtain on our laboratory plane, complete as its facilities are. The body of the smaller one, you may take to your laboratory, Li T'sang."

"Yes, Master." The younger man signaled to the two warriors who carried the body and followed them to his laboratory. Presently he brought Chu Liang certain muscles, very white-seeming, cold and yet with the appearance of freshly boiled tissues, completely coagulated. He returned silently.

Chu Liang entered his laboratory some time later, as the helicopter rode smoothly east to the American Department Capital at Chicago. Li Tsang looked up at the elder man and shook his head blankly. "It is very peculiar, Master. There is no living cell in all the body, neither skin, nor muscle, nor even lowest hair cell. And that is perhaps understandable. But in all the body there is no living thing! The bacteria of mouth and nose and intestine are dead, the bacteria of skin and feet are dead. Only a few very small colonies on the surface of the body live, implanted perhaps by the hands of those who carried the body here. But I think that as it lay on the temple floor it was more sterile than any surgical instrument."

Chu Liang looked silently through the microscope at the slides his assistant had prepared. "Not even in the tartar from the teeth is there any living thing. Man needs certain bacteria for healthy existence. You



know this better than I, Li T'sang. Tell me then, were all living organisms save those human organisms that make up and defend the body, the corpuscles of blood and tissue,

the cells of nerve and muscle and brain, were all save those destroyed, could man long survive?"

Li T'sang looked thoughtfully at the microscope for many seconds then his voice came hesitant and thoughtful. "If in all the world this were done, man could not live, for there are many non-human organisms needed, the many life-forms in the intestine that break down the foodstuff we eat but cannot digest, to a form we can digest. There are very many others. But if only the individual man were so completely sterilized, he would quickly regain his natural balance thru inevitable ingestion of these bacteria, as must the new-born infant. Man enters this world near sterile, yet within hours the baby has gathered those necessary, bacterial colonies. Probably no man would even know that this, sterilization of his body had taken place, were it possible. But it is not, for any chemical strong enough to destroy the bacteria would destroy man as well, unless a degree of specificity almost never attained were possible for an almost infinite horde of invaders, while leaving the body untouched. We have but three species of this type, one furnished -by nature's accident, quinine, which is hundreds of times . more poisonous to the malarial parasite than to human tissue, one by the blind experimenting of man, salvarsan, hundreds of times more poisonous to the syphillis organism than to man, and one developed by years of laborious analysis of the human antibodies, kappasol which is vastly poisonous to typhoid fever, but harmless to man. And these are one third the gift of nature, one third imitation of nature, and one third blind and infinitely laborious research. Now in the centuries of chemical medicine, if but three have been found, how then, could man find the specifics for thousands, and compound them in half a decade?"

"But there exist, then, chemicals which have the property of destroying only non-human life-forms?"

"No, only those three, an exception as unimportant as oxygen of atomic weight 17. Oxygen atoms have a weight of sixteen, save for one in millions."

"But the principle is vastly important. What man has done once, man may do not only again, but many times. Even, perhaps, improve to such an extent that specifics that differentiate between native Americans and Asians might be found. Is it not so?"

"In a thousand centuries, yes. But even if analysis of all the anti-bodies were achieved, which is not the work of a man, but a thing to be done in an historical era, and the vaster task of synthesis as well, there is no anti-body which destroys Orientals but not Westerners, And even if this be so, no anti-body produces the effects we have witnessed. It may poison, it may dissolve, but it does not fry. The explanation of the Temple is' not there, Chu Liang, I fear."

"There is a greater god than ours, Li T'sang, and the day will come when our god can understand the God All. Our report to the Science Committee will be as unsatisfactory as the report of General Hitsobi's to the Rebellious Activities Control Commission."

"But of what importance is this temple to the government of the World State? To science its meaning may be profound, since we have no understanding of observable results, but of what importance is it to the State, this hidden temple in the wildest mountains of the American Province? There are hidden temples in the high passes of the Himalayas, the temples of the Tibetans, we do not investigate."

"There are hidden temples on all the Earth the Empire rules, but they are old beyond memory of man. This is not old. These other temples do not regularly make cures of hopeless paralysis by operations incredible and impossible, with healing hi a day that cannot take place in a year. These temples do not regularly cure cancer in the last, hopeless stage, nor tuberculosis of lung and bone.

"That is something of it. But this is more important. Few temples of the world forbid entrance to Asiatics. This temple not only refuses, but brings mysterious death. This you do not know, nor do the people of that temple city. Kimishti, one of the Empire's best men, has circulated freely through Occidental countries as an operative of the Asian State through all the years of the war. He has behind him respected standing of home and family, all standing. By operations, by hard work, he had become Occidental, his skin pink as an Englishman's, his eyes blue, his hair blonde and curled. He entered the Temple, suffering as he showed, from scarlet fever, feeling safe in their welcome. He was accepted and brought up

to the place by one of their ambulances. He died as he was carried across the threshold by a temple novice.

"I had thought he was recognized secretly perhaps, and executed. I know that the god All knew his difference and exacted toll of Death. The members of the Temple prayed over him, and read over him the Service of Dis and Shan, their burial service, and he was buried as an Occidental dead of heart disease, the after-effect of scarlet fever. The Server there knew him for Oriental though, since his tissues were-coagulated.

"And that is something more of it. It is a temple of death, with a god of power who acts. A god who does things so indisputably has never been since the world began, and was not expected when the Edict of Free Worship was given forth by Emperor Nijihua.

"But there is yet more in this: Nijihua seeks to make a true universal state, wherein all men recognize a common destiny and a common center of interest and leadership, the World State, in which each sees his only nationality. Nationalism of the most intense he desires, patriotism of the highest-but toward the World State. It is not oppression which will bring this, for that brings only revolt. Only common leadership, respected and honored, can unite men. Whether Oriental or Occidental, the leadership of the World State must be the leadership, the only common reality which men can form themselves about.

"Half he has succeeded. All Orientals today recognize him, and many Occidentals. And-in all the world today, there lives not one Occidental capable of political leadership. Every man with such abilities was killed in the general uprising of the mobs that brought the wars to an end, or he has died of cholera. The only leaders Nijihua has allowed are the leaders of the World Empire, since men generally must have leaders to be happy- the only leaders there are are the World Empire.

"The Temple of All has arisen. To it Occidentals turn for health and advice, comfort in life and death. It becomes more and more a center of man's many interests, and a center of Occidental interest, perforce not common to both Oriental and Occidental. It makes them separate peoples, divided by All, a God of power who acts positively for the benefit of his people, who favors them. Inevitably then there is crystallization of the loose, leader-

less mass of Occidentals about this new god, and his priests. Yet, they do not realize that they are being led, being separated from the World Empire, a race and a class apart. But they are! They are soaking in the pleasant idea that they are superior, god-chosen.

"Nijihua must act. He has acted. The Empire needs money. In a day and a day now, the World Empire issues a new Edict, the Edict of New Worshipers. It is a tax of one thousand dollars on each new worshiper to a religious faith-and must be paid in metal!"

Li Tsang nodded slowly. "The Temple of All will gain no new worshipers. No American can gain metal. In America alone has this new religion gained power, thus none of the rest of the Empire will greatly

revolt, since growing families can, I imagine, enter their children to their church untaxed."

"That is right. The Temple of All will be deserted in a week."

vra

The Lords sat on their high thrones, the sapphire of Mens in the center, the golden of Tammar on his right, and Shan on his left, the rich deep scarlet of Dis beyond pearly Shan; beyond Tammar the cool, freshening green of Tal, Lord of Peace. And unseen, below and in front of their semi-circle, visible only to the eyes of the Lords and the Server, sat Dread Barmak, the Black Lord on his lightless, rayless throne of black deeper than the night of Space itself.

For this was the inner Chamber of the Lords. Mens spoke, his voice deep and low in the multi-colored dusk of the Chamber. "This Edict is a weapon at the throat of All. For the people of All are oppressed and poor. All is possessed of vast treasures, and it comes to me that it were better that All disdain the collections of the tax, and give of his treasures to meet this imposition."

"Aye," said the Lords softly. "The treasures of All are infinite as is AH himself. Let this be the rule."

Shan, Lord of Fulfillment spoke. "This is the rule then, but let it be thus applied; the people of All who have wealth and ability to pay, shall pay, lest the infinitude of All's treasures be measured and beget covetousness in the heart of Nijihua.

"Now further, it seems the Emperor, wishing a healthy subject people, has decreed that only those who attend more than five times in the course of the year are true members of any temple. But he who speaks with the Server of a temple is not a member thereby unless he attend that temple. Thus we shall apply it; that there shall be Servers who go forth, and the members of the temple shall be selected by the Lord that they be good, else they pay the tax of their own ability. Thus shall the doors be open to all, and yet be closed to those of the people of All whom we don't find worthy."

Tornsen spoke, and his voice rumbled in the small, cubed, crystal chamber of the Lord. "The Edict harms All little thus, and All pays the tax from the infinite resources of the earth. The impost collector comes on the

morrow, and the Lords shall assemble then on the crystal, and the Server and the Novitiate shall bear to him the impost for the eighty and nine members who have joined the Temple."

The next day brought the plane of the World Empire, glowing golden, with scarlet dragons in the sun, as it lighted on the silver sands, and the Collector of Imposts mounted the Singing Stair before a squad of armed men.

"Halt there, man of the World Empire, for the Temple of All is closed to you. The tax shall be brought out."

"What is the roll of your temple?" snapped the Oriental.

"The roll is one hundred and three, and of these are the Five Lords and the Server, and certain others who have been here long. But there be eighty-and-nine for whom the tax is to be paid. There be many who have not joined, and cannot. But for the eighty-and-nine, tax shall be paid."

The Oriental looked at the man a bit surprised. "It must be paid in metal," he said warningly. "No goods

save precious metals."

"And the metals shall be rhodium and palladium, which are in the Empire Catalog of precious metals."

"Bring them forth, then," said the Collector, and on the salt-white stone his servant set up the small case which opened out to a work bench and a pair of scales. The Server brought to him the first ingot, two inches square and a foot long. The man looked at it, weighed it in his hand, for its mass was great, and spread upon the stair-top a sheet of fine-woven silk, then with a small saw he cut it through in six places and gathered the dust. The dust he dropped into a small tray and two pinches he tested with his reagents. Then with a tiny spectroscope of high power he examined the lines of the metal. Softly he drew in his breath.

"Your metal is pure, pure within the limits of the spectroscope, which is very pure indeed. While the metals are exceeding difficult to separate, the weight is such that four such bars exactly meet the tax."

Silently three of the Novitiate came forward bearing in their hands bars of metal of absolute purity and great weight. The tax impost collector gave to the Server a small sheet of paper bearing the crest of Nijihua and the quick brush-strokes of his signature.

"The impost is ~ met, and so must be met with each

new member of the Temple, Server. This you will remember under the penalties of Nijihua's Empire." "Aye," said the Server, "we understand." And the Collector left to go to another Temple, for such was his duty and not the understanding of the tensions that built about those four bars of utterly pure precious metal so readily supplied. Chu Liang understood, for to him came the metal for analysis, and he analyzed the ingots to one sole element each, and he fused the two elements together, nor all his science could draw the rhodium from the palladium with utter purity. For the metals were exceedingly intractable. And he frowned somewhat, for rhodium, in which the greater part of the payment was made was not as useful to Turn as was palladium, platinum

IX

His silver robes shimmered in the siin and wind like the ruffled surface of a clear lake under slanting evening sun, his turban-like headdress gleaming. In his hands he carried a Staff of All, silvery and intricately chased, mounted by the softly-glowing cubed crystal, greater mate to the crystal of his headdress.

The ambulance driver looked at him in some doubt and awe. "Then the Servants of All are going to leave the Valley?"

"Certain of them, the Teachers, that the people of the cities, unable to reach All, may be able to have his help. There will always be the Five Lords and the Server to aid All's people at the Temple. But the impost makes it needful that certain ones of us go out."

"Amos Tucker, where will you go?"

"Amos Tucker no more; a Teacher of All. I go by foot that more may know, first to the city whence you came, then on to the coast, probably to San Francisco. It is not determined by the Lords, since each is sent on his mission. But delay no longer, Driver, since those who ride behind go in need of help. Stay, I will bring a moment's peace to them; then you must go your way, and I mine. Farewell, in the grace of All."

The Teacher stopped a moment more to step inside the low ambulance body and let the green crystal of Tal shed its rays on the sick. Their harsh breathing relaxed and the soft moan of one died way in deep sleep. Then he stepped out and the vehicle moved on.

As it disappeared from sight, the Teacher raised his staff to his lips and spoke softly. "Sick come, seeking aid, Server."

The Crystal whispered reply. "We are ready for All. You are well."

"Yes, scarcely a day's journey out. I will reach the city by evening, however."

"Good. All aid you." The Crystal's slight hum died, and the Teacher strode on easily with the long lope of a trained desert man. The endless sand over which the road

ran glared in the sun, and presently the Teacher rested for a moment. The staff in his hand sent out a licking tongue of ruby flame and a patch of sand two feet across fused in blinding heat, sinking to a slight depression. The Teacher scooped a bit of sand into it, and the flame of All licked at it with shrieking, crashing star-dust. The depression boiled with white vapor-fumes, hissing and bubbling. For some seconds it continued, then burst into sharp blue flames, while the flame of All changed strangely violet. Instantly the rolling vapor vanished and the flames licked slowly and seemed to struggle against an opposing force. Presently they died and a moment later the Teacher knelt beside his cup and drank his fill of cold, clear and somewhat tasteless water. Then with a rested body he started on his way.

Toward evening the natural desolation gave way to man-made desolation, torn and racked, the deep craters hi the sand stained with red of iron and black of smoke, green virulent stains of exploded XR-78 gas-shells. More cars passed him now, and curious hybrids; an automobile chassis stripped to four wheels and a frame with weather-stained broken planks as a body, drawn by a decrepit horse, or a slow-moving ox. Tires too old and weak for automobiles shod them, tires in the last stages of decay, as with all the country. Broken buildings appeared and here and there a light, tinnily shiny, factory-made dwelling.

The Ranchers were filtering back, such as lived, or their women and children. Chinese and Japanese lived here now, they lived in the broken houses and farmed a few acres in their immemorial way. To them, no vision of the infinitude of rolling land brought relief from pressure, still they farmed to the fence-posts, and planted beans to climb the posts themselves. There was vast plenty, to them, and in their old way they ate the plenty, making no reserve against the time it might vanish. The men worked, and the women pulled the crude plows while the children set out seed. Other gangs of men worked at clearing the irrigation ditches for the water that would come when the engineers finished the restoration of war-blasted dams.

The Orientals paid no attention to the curiously garbed stranger, the Americans little. They looked, and then looked back to the work that engaged them, wearily.

America had no reserves, and they must compete with the Oriental mode of life. They used better tools, better methods. But the Oriental called the American's direst poverty vast prosperity.

The Teacher went on, into the city where more people looked at him. An Oriental policeman pacing his beat eyed him narrowly, and passed on; a few Americans turned to stare, and an expression of interest and sudden remembrance stirred in their eyes. Finally one stopped, turned and came to him.

"Server-" he cried.

"No, not the Server, John Graham. I am a Teacher of All. You are well?"

"Well and able, Teacher. The tuberculosis is gone from my lungs and my bones. I have been better and stronger than ever in my life before I stood in All's Temple. But -I did not know the servants of All left his Valley."

"Never have they, before. But the impost makes this necessary to the best good of All, so the Teachers go forth. I am the first. Many more will follow me across this road, till the robes of All become a familiar sight in the city here."

"It is near evening, Teacher. Can you-have you made arrangement for the night? Can you stay with me-and my wife?"

"My only arrangement was that I find some man who knew All and might take me in. Gladly then, I accept your offer."

"Come then," said the man eagerly, "It is but a block or two-I was just leaving my store for the evening-"

The man's wife greeted the Teacher timidly, uncertainly. "We have little for tonight-even among the merchants it is hard to get enough, but what we have we are glad indeed to share, for all we have we owe to John's health, which All gave him. I-I-I scarcely know how to address you-Your-But come in, come in and rest at any rate, for I am tired myself, and you who have been walking in the heat all day."

The Teacher smiled, and with his smile the pearly light of Shan waxed in his crystal, and the green of Tal. The women stood surprised for a second, then a stiffness went from her body, and a brighter light came to her eyes. "Oh-oh-" she cried. "There was truth in what John

said. I could not believe, myself, despite John's health. I feel-feel as though I'd slept for hours!"

"The Peace of Tal and the Fulfillment of Shan be on your house, John Graham. The Powers of All and the Phases of All are not easily credible, I know, Mrs. Graham. But they are more real than even John Graham who lived through them believes.

"But let us go in. I am not weary, for All goes with me." He smiled, raising his Staff slightly. "But I am a Teacher of All. Address me only as Teacher1."

"I did not know, Teacher. Will you be with us long?"

"Not long, for I must go on."

And in the morning, when they woke, he was gone, and in his place they found a little cube of silvery metal, very heavy and very beautifully iridescent in the morning sun. And amazingly heavy, more than twice as heavy as lead.

John Graham took it that morning to the little office of the Real Estate agent, John Mackenburg, who spent half his time interviewing those who would make the trip to All's Temple, and to him he gave the cube of metal, explaining how he came by it.

The Teacher stayed that night, and another and another at the homes of people who had heard of All or

had reason to bless All's Temple; and the fourth evening he came to San Francisco. It was not so badly ruined La appearance, rising now as an Oriental city from the ashes of the blasted city they had captured in the early years of the war. The busy city paid no attention to the Teacher as he wandered about, but evening found him staying in the home of a man who marveled still that he walked on two legs of flesh and bone where but one had been left him when he left the hospital of the American Army Medical Corps.

The next day he went down to the Empire building in the heart of new San Francisco and attended an auction that was going on, the selling of certain lands in the neighborhood of Golden Gate Park. And some of his friends went too, and purchased plots of land.

In two weeks the land was as level as it had been before the great shells of the Empire Fleet had reduced it to churned rubble. Five men seeded it and planted it, and a sixth walked about in curious robes bearing a curious staff of crystal. In two weeks, foliage more green, more

luxurious than San Francisco had ever seen grew there, and curious people stopped to look at it. And more curious Orientals examined the grass and the soil, and did not understand.

A building appeared, of white marble and red granite and curious blue, intensely blue stone that came from hitherto unknown quarries along with an intensely green stone. A great crated mass, five feet on an edge. Men came too, and set the stone and the crystal mass on a golden column that had come, and other thin crystal plates and curious lighting devices.

In six months, the House of All was built, and shone white and sapphire and emerald on the broad sweep of landscaped lawn. At first a few curious ones came. Then the sick, and then more ailing in streams, till every Westerner in San Francisco had visited it, and come out well and strong, and the Orientals complained slightly. But the Orientals who were in power took no notice of it, being too intelligent to be deluded by faith healers, and since their people were not a race used to complaining, but oppressed for countless generations by a dull drudgery, they merely looked on with envious dull eyes as the Occidental crippled limped in, and returned whole, and the pallid, feverish were carried in to walk out, eyes shining.

But the rulers were intelligent and paid little attention to faith healers, being far too busy attempting to establish a very new political control over a vast area.

And their work was not to complain and object to a religion that obeyed the Edicts of the Emperor in every way, and turned in nearly two hundred and forty thousand dollars of precious metal in the course of six months from the House of All in San Francisco. And those originally interested lost interest as time passed, and nothing new or startling developed, save amazingly good revenues.

Another House of All rose under the direction of the First Teacher in Denver, and another in Seattle. And hundreds of thousands of dollars were paid, while tens of thousands of sick were healed. The stores of precious metals in Nijihua's treasury were augmented by the receipts from nearly seven hundred members of the House of All, in that year.

X

The Server stood before the Lords, and the First Teacher stood beside him.

"Lords, you have heard the tale. Eleven Houses have been established in these two years, and the First Teacher has worked fairly and well, these two years. Now he grows weary of this work, and would, if it

meets the approval of the Five Lords, rest in the House of All in Chicago as the Server of All."

Mens, Lord of Wisdom spoke from his great, crystal throne. "The First Teacher has done well, and no one of his sending has been excluded from the Works of All, whereby is shown his wisdom of human understanding. The Lord of Wisdom is pleased."

Tammar, Lady of Mercy spoke. "Many he has helped, and through his spreading of All's houses, many have learned of All's works. Tammar, Lady of Mercy is pleased."

Shan, Lord of Fulfillment spoke: "In no way has he failed in his words given us, the Lords of All. The Lord of Fulfillment is content."

So they spoke, and agreeing, Amos Tucker, the First Teacher, was made Server of All in Chicago, the American Capital of the World Empire.

Lord Mens spoke again. "Your work, Server, must not cease, for you must instruct many and introduce them to the Mysteries of All. You have shown complete competence in the handling of these things which a Server of All must understand. But every man of our race whom you believe competent must be sent here for final education in All's Mysteries. We have but two Houses east of the Mississippi, and you, who have done so much of this work must aid others in the work, not by your presence but by your constant advice. The Crystal of the Server reaches to every Crystal of All, and speaks with it at will. This remember, and aid in every way, as we know you will. Your work has been exceedingly good."

The Second Server bowed to the Lords. "I cannot understand fully these mysteries, as I know better even than

you. But to the utmost of my abilities I will apply the knowledge and understanding of the human mysteries, to the betterment of All.

"I go now to Chicago, but I will pause at Denver, where the Seventh Teacher is setting out soon for Boston that a new House of All may be built. He has purchased, through his agents, Corey Hill, which overlooks all Boston. I find his plans good."

The Lords nodded agreement. "I know the city," spoke Tammar, Lady of Mercy. "It is an excellent position."

The First Server stepped forward again. "Now there comes to me that a more pressing business yet demands attention. For a year and a year we have escaped great notice from the Empire, the work of consolidation being very great for them, and their need of revenue being very pressing."

"They sought to destroy us with their tax," said Lord Mens softly, "which was not the way of wisdom, with All of infinite resource, and they have sold themselves for a bribe instead. They fear to harm us now, who have in two years brought them eight and one third millions of dollars in precious metal, metals very rare and difficult to collect. This year we build our membership by eleven thousand men and women. They will not quickly destroy the bringer of so much revenue, nor the source of so much excellent health and good-nature among the people of the country they own.

"But therefore I say this: The work of consolidation nears its end, and the need of our revenue becomes less pressing as normal industry swells, and its revenues swell, and some measure of prosperity returns. This third year, therefore, let us expand to the limit Lord All may permit us.



"The Council of Lords is ended?"

"Aye," said the Lords.

And now Amos Tucker raised his new Staff of the Server, and held it before his eyes, by chance, and he started back, his face frozen in sudden surprise. There was a Sixth Lord! The Black Lord, Dread Barmak, a silhouette of utter jet that seemed to stare straight to his heart, and dip slowly his massive head in greeting to the new Server of All.

Frozen fingers gripped the heart of the Second Server as he turned stiffly to the First Server. Tornsen smiled

gravely, and for an instant Tucker caught a fleeting twinkle in the kindly old eyes of Shan, Lord of Fulfillment ere he filed away with the others to his chamber.

"Come," said Tornsen, "there are further things that the Server of All should understand."

"Aye-Aye, indeed," sighed Amos Tucker unsteadily.

XI

Chu Liang sat with unmoving face as the Shaman of the Western District bored in upon the curiously garbed witness in the Testifier's Stand. There had been little result of the Shaman's persistent questionings.

The Shaman's voice was growing sharper. "How old, though, is this sect, Server?"

"A religion, Shaman, is ageless. A deity is everlasting, without knowable beginning, without knowable end. These exist in the mist of creation and the mist of the ultimate dissolution."

"The religion is not older than men, for without man there is no religion. This is not as old as man, and therefore I ask its earliest inception, Server."

"The earliest inception began about three thousand years ago in Greece. It developed very slowly, till this day came when the better understanding of All, and his message to men, the great need of his race all combined to make his understanding of man and man's understanding of him better."

"The active spread of the religion is but three years old though, Amos Tucker?"

"I have no name, save that of Server, Shaman. It has become my title and my name. The great growth of All's Initiate has taken place in these three years of stress, but his understanding has increased greatly and steadily over the period of a hundred years, since the year 1890 of the old calender."

"Eleven thousand, nine hundred and eighty-seven members have joined the church during this year, and paid the initiate tax of one thousand dollars. It is said this tax is paid in large part by the Temple, yet no known source of revenue is hi evidence. How then, has this revenue been gathered, this sum of over eleven millions of dollars, and the greater sums spent in the construction of the Temples, thirty-seven this year, and investment not less than seventy millions of dollars I am told."

"The resources of All are infinite. I am of the Server

class, and such is not within my province. I cannot answer you that, Shaman."

"Who then is responsible for this thing?" "That is the province of Mens, Lord of Wisdom." "He is forbidden by the religion's laws to leave the valley?"

"Yes. He does not leave the Temple." The Shaman's face was not so smoothly impassive as it had been. "We have heard the testimony of Chu Liang upon the destruction of life within the temple, and upon the complete sterilization of the bodies."

The Second Server interrupted smoothly and gravely. "The works of Dis, Lord of Death are not understood by men. As the people of All are welcomed within the Temple, unfortunately the other peoples are not. That is the will of All, which I serve, but do not influence."

"The Hindus have entered, an Oriental people, dark of skin," said the Shaman softly.

"The understanding of All's will is not to men." "You understand sufficiently to make efficient use of the Crystal of Life, and the Staff which you bear with you so constantly."

"That is an achievement attained after three thousand years of study and thought and deepest sincerity of purpose. The day may come when the entire will of All is understood. To us, these things are greatly valued, and not to be cast aside, for in them, in the crystals, resides something of the living All, The Infinite, perceptible in his living flame."

And as he spoke, the silver Flame of All lanced upward, the dying stars coruscating and vanishing.

"You and your people have been consistent in your refusal to part with this symbol of All."

"Only once, under the order of an officer of the Empire has any man of All parted with his staff. The report has been read in this room that All whispered in the crystal, and the man dropped dying saved only by the beneficial effects of All's crystal in the hands of its owner, Tornsen the Server. All is not a destroyer needlessly, and the people of All attempt to prevent such suffering as the release of the Staff brings. Such is the will of All."

The Shaman tried for long hours, and at the close of the long day's session dismissed the Server, who had appeared voluntarily, and exasperatedly watched him leave

the room, to be joined by a dozen Novitiates of the House of All. A dozen others appeared around him, calling softly. Gently his voice floated back, clear and sharp. "It is not wise that the Flame be used here, since there are those other than All's who would suffer by it. The House of All is open to all men of his race, and the Teachers of All will come at any man's call if need be." And the Shaman spoke softly to his colleagues. "I am informed that the Council of American Military Affairs wishes us to cease inquiry at this time," he said.

Chu Liang went quietly from the room to the building at the other end of the Empire Park, and into the small room where two dozen men sat quietly supping. Dark fell presently and they sat talking softly of many things. And a man came in quietly, his face very white and his eyes seeming glazed and unseeing. He was guided by the hands of two who stood on either side of him, uniformed guards, and he was not alone in his paleness. The two at his side saluted, but he in the center stared only ahead, dull-eyed.

"Yokishi, you report?" asked Commander Torisuti.

"Yokishi, yes. Yes, I report Commander. The thing was done, and I am done."

"You apprehended the Teacher who went out?"

"Yes, yes, we apprehended the Teacher. From the Singing Stair of the House of All he went down, to the call of the one who demanded aid, as was ordained, and Lieutenant Tsi Chian accompanied me to the mean dark streets of the American Section. The darkness closed in as we closed in, as noiseless as we. The lights of the street grew further apart, and the houses more cramped and decayed, and the Teacher continued but about him shone light, for the Staff he carried glowed with silver light and green, and sapphire blue and pearl, and was very beautiful to look on, but tore at the nerves and deadened them. Lieutenant Tsi Chian went forward as was agreed, and with the silent pistol fired at him, but as was known the Teacher was not stayed nor hurt nor even aware of the firing. So then did I advance with the apparatus Chu Liang had designed for me, and did as he had directed in the starting of it, and as he directed I tried its power on a dog that appeared slinking through the alleys, and he died as was told to me, lying down without a sound.

"I advanced upon the Teacher, and trained the projector upon him, and the tubes glowed properly, and the

meters were correctly set upon the base of the weapon. Then I depressed the contact, and the Teacher before me did not stumble or halt, nor even seem aware, for behind him, directly between him and the weapon I bore, appeared a soft glow of violet that seemed a wavering disc of light, and slightly brighter the Flame of All glowed on his staff. The sparks were sharp and hot in my hands, so I was forced to drop the thing."

"The clatter warned him, for he turned slowly, and we stood revealed by the silver light. Lieutenant Tsi Chian made to dart away as did I, hoping to escape recognition in the foul clothes we wore, but from the staff he carried green light reached out, and we were overcome by a lethargy and a paralysis such as made us slump to the ground while he came back to us. He smiled as he saw the weapon I had carried, and from his staff a snake-tongue of scarlet lanced to touch the thing Chu Liang had fashioned. It touched it, and it was gone, only an instantaneous glow of intense violet light lingered for a moment to mark its passage, and a shallow depression in the hardpacked earth of the roadway."

"'All protects his people, Warrior' he said quietly, looking upon us. 'It was not the will of All that your weapon should injure me, so it did not. Go now, back to Commander Torisuti who awaits you in the room of Decisions in the Hall of War.'

"He pointed his staff upon us, and the pearly light touched us, so we rose and darted into the shadows. He walked on."

"That is your report?" asked the Commander silkily. "No, that is not my report, Commander, for we knew then that his diligence would be at low ebb, having overcome one attack, and would not be strong to aid him. We followed him then to the house of the ailing one, and the Teacher was inside for half an hour. Then we knew, as he came out, his Staff must be at low ebb also, and no protection against material things since he must move through the narrow doorway of the squalid place.

"His silver light came before him, bright upon the darkness of the place. As he followed through, Lieutenant Tsi Chian stood upon the right, and I upon the left, and Tsi Chian had a section of heavy metal he had found, and I a broken beam, hoping that great mass might accomplish on his weakened screen what no bullet might.

"Tsi Chian struck, and his metal bar shot lightnings, so that he was hurled to one side, writhing. My wooden beam was slowed, as though striking water a foot from his head, and ran aside, but so great was its mass that it moved still, and struck him upon the shoulder.

"He fell to his knees, dropping the Staff of All, but it dropped not swiftly, but slowly to the ground as though feather-light. I leapt upon the Teacher as he kneeled, half stunned while Tsi Chian leapt upon the Staff. Tsi Chian grasped it, and I rose to follow as he went swiftly down the roadway to a place of safety, for there are many Americans in the Section. I was close behind him when he stumbled to the ground, turned over-and slept with the staff beside him.

"I grasped it and ran on, but a numbness came into my arms as I ran, a great numbness so that presently I felt my feet as those of another, and it seemed I ran on for, many hours while a single house dropped back. And for many more hours till, weary, I stumbled as Tsi Chian had, and lay with the numbing creeping from my arm to my heart and my eyes. The silver light grew dimmer to my eyes, then vanished, and suddenly a searing, unbearable pain shot through my arm, so my eyes opened again. All the Staff glowed violet, and the Crystal was shattered.

"Lightning gushed from the end of the staff, so that the ground fused, and the air rocked at the roarings of them. The crystal was gone, and as I watched, helpless to move, the Staff glowed more intensely violet, then blue flames rushed up from it and the heat seared me and my hand. But the hand felt no pain now, nor did my side presently, and the lack of pain was spreading, while the blue flames rushed higher-and then were gone. Commander, it had vanished utterly, so that no scrap of metal or ash rested in my hand."

"That is your report?" asked the Commander again.

"That is my report, Commander, save that presently the Teacher came again, and stood over me. He spoke again and said: 'Your hands, and the release of the Spirit of All within the Staff, which is the Spirit of the Lord of Life, brought a false life to you. You are dead, Warrior. Now I will give you the peace of Tal, that you may endure to reach your commander. But it is not the will of All that you, who have attacked a Teacher of All,

shall live, nor can any of us of All bring life to you, into whom the Fire of All has penetrated.'

"And as he spoke, the fire was eating at me, so that my body burned, and all of me from my skin to my innermost part flamed with the agony of it, like the Death of a Thousand Cuts, so that I groaned. From the crystal of his headdress, a pencil of green light reached down, and touched my head so that the fire died there, and in a moment I felt no fire, or any other thing in all my body. " 'Now the fire is not dead, but your senses are dead,' he said softly, 'nor will they ever return. Your eyes see, and your ears hear, but neither touch, nor taste, nor smell is with you. For an hour and at most another hour, the Fire of All will leak from you, then when it is gone you will be dead indeed. Now for those who speak with you, know this; when the Fire of All is gone from you, and you die, there yet remains an hour while the Fire of All is within the atoms of your body. Then this fire too returns to All, who is the essence of the Infinity, so that it be best your body be far from men. Go now, to your commander.'

"And now he turned on me a ray of red, such as that that had licked at the weapon of Chu Liang. The ground beneath me hissed to it, and shrieked; it dissolved so that I felt myself sinking, and the snake-tongued flame wrapped about me and clung like the cocoon of the silkmaker. Then blue fire licked from my body, and fought with it, and presently I felt strength come to me again, save in the arm and the side where the staff had lain and touched. Then blue flame and red, snaked-tongued ray died together, and I stood up and came swiftly away. I ran, and was tireless. A fence was before me, and I grasped its top with the hand which would act to my will, and lightly flew over it to the strain of my muscles, while the

planking dented between my fingers.

"Now look, and say you whether I am as before." The young Oriental grasped the oaken door-frame, and between his fingers it splintered as though in the grip of a vise. Suddenly they knew he was shining over all his body, with iridescent whirling rainbows, luminous oil on water.

"The strength is going from me, and I know that All, Lord of Life, is leaving me. Oh, All, Mighty Lord-I believe-I understand-let me-take me-"

And the men of the Council started abruptly to their

feet as his body stiffened suddenly, with a curious cry-talinity as the light burst out in eye-searing brilliance, and--died. A voice spoke, slumberous and deep, in the language he had used, as perfect in enunciation, in phrasing, in accent as his own, but it spoke, not from his lips, but from all his body.

"There is no place for you, nor your people with All and the people of All."

The man beside him recoiled suddenly, and body swayed slightly, slipped and shattered to a thousand pieces that cried out in brittle anguish.

Chu Liang bowed his head. "It is an infinitely greater god than ours. Lest we regret a decision, let his body and all parts of it to the tiniest scrap, be found and carried out to the center of the great court, and a guard be established for two hours at range of two hundred yards."

"You advise this, Chu Liang? Then, guard, let that be an order, and see that it is obeyed." The two saluted, and went away hurriedly. They were not among those who came to pick up the scattered fragments.

Torisuti turned again to Chu Liang. "What was your weapon?"

"An efficient and effective short-wave radio projector of unequaled power. It was very deadly. It was the best our science could offer."

"Their God seems peculiarly real. I-I cannot understand such a god."

Chu Liang smiled slowly. "The unwritten definition of a god includes the phrase, in every mind, that a god is one who promises, but never acts, and if he acts is not a God. There is no room in our civilization for a being above the known laws of cause and effect. We are unfortunate to meet one. Particularly one selectively opposed to our race, and one selectively helpful to theirs."

"Has your science nothing to offer which is selectively opposed to their race?" snapped Commander Torisuti.

Chu Liang shook his head slowly, then paused suddenly, as a thought came to his mind. "There may be, on second thought. But be it remembered that our science is in no way to be compared with the powers that their God has displayed."

"What then? The radio-weapon, perhaps. I do not understand that, but perhaps you may make it tune in on them, which is a thought my mind may grasp."

"No, the radio weapon is merely heat, excessive heat. That miniature set the man who has just been

carried was a power unequalled in any hand-portable set in our science or, I would have said, in any science. For it gen atom and four hydrogens that act hi many ways as killed nearly seven hundred horsepower, truly a vast amount to train upon an animal body, a disruptive power. Yet we know now that this must certainly have doubled, since the weapon burned out, and in all probability, trebled. Hence we say that the Staff of Life born by the Teachers is capable of generating two thousand horsepower, for the one who reported stated that the Flame of All increased but slightly."

"No meaning. The staff was damaged, and disintegrated within the hour. Tell me, too, how this may be?"

"I can suggest, but no more, and this is what my mind makes credible: that the staff is made, not of pure metal, but of an alloy, and the alloy is not one I can duplicate. There is a compound, ammonium, consisting of one nitrogen atom and four hydrogens that act in many way as a metal, silvery in color and very light. Now it may be formed in mercury to make an amalgam, which is very soft, but solid and, at low temperatures, somewhat stable. This staff then, may have been an alloy of platinum and ammonium, intended that we may not have the thing to analyze and investigate. Now when certain conditions were fulfilled, or certain tune elapsed, or a hidden stud of the carving was not depressed, the stuff became unstable, and the ammonium freed itself as gas. The gas of ammonium in the presence of finely divided platinum burns with a blue light in air to a gas. If this be true, then the platinum would be dust finer than the motes in sunlight beams, and would cause the burning, while the metal would glow with red heat, and the blue names with the red glow would be violet light.

"Thus it would be if it were science. But, Commander, we deal with a god, who is beyond laws as we know them, and may have destroyed the platinum. This, I suggest, for neither ammonium nor platinum, nor the gases released turn men to crystal that shatters, nor make the hands of men to crush solid, oaken beams." He nodded slowly to the crushed doorframe.

"Enough of that. It is, evidently, beyond your science,, and I am beginning to fear that this thing is in truth a

god, which is not good for the cause of the World Empire. Tell me though, what is that thing you mentioned, which attacks the Westerners, but not us?"

"I hesitate for two reasons; it attacks not the whites alone, but both, races, though to a far greater degree the whites. However, many of our people will die. The other, that it will divide the whites from the Empire forever, if we point out that there is a god which protects and favors the Asiatic races."

"What is this thing?" demanded the Commander.

"Cholera. Asiatic Cholera. The white races are twenty times more susceptible, and if an epidemic of mild cholera be spread, nine tenths of the whites shall die, and one hundredth of our people."

"And those of ours who do die, I believe, will be the weakest of the race," said the Commander softly.

"Yes," said Chu Liang.

xn

The Four Servers stood before the thrones of the Five in the Temple of All, their faces grave and careworn. The First Server spoke. "The Lords know well the thousands who have besieged this Temple and been healed, till their five visits of the year are gone. And still they are sick, nor have they the thousand dollars to pay the Initiate Impost. So many as we will, we can heal, and so many as the

Teachers can reach can be healed, so that cholera does not take them. But this brings trouble: that the healing by the Flame of All is not permanent, but merely a destruction of the disease as it exists, leaving the man open again to its dread attack.

"And the Empire is spreading and allowing the spread of the disease, while their people laugh at it, for having lived with it a thousand generations. We have not Teachers to reach every home in the time needed; we must accept as members the seventy-three thousand that are on our lists, and are capable of being made Teachers and of proven worth."

Lord Mens spoke. "This we could do, for the Impost could be met from the infinite resources of All, yet this would mean a payment of seventy-three millions of dollars, many tons of metal, and the Empire would notice quickly. There are now in this country, some thirty-five million people of All, and due to the tenets of the Empire, there are neither feeble-minded nor insane nor recurrently criminal among them, though many are stupid drawers of waters and hewers of wood. Yet we must save them. So the Impost shall be met, and the Teachers shall join. But let them not all be Teachers, but only Members, whose Staffs are of the Sixth Order, capable of healing, but not of generation of All's powers, their powers dying with the day. Thus faulty members shall not lay open the mysteries of All to the Empire.

"And in this emergency the Flame of All shall burn at the Eighth Magnitude in all the Houses of All, day and night both. Now be it known also, to the Servers, that the Staffs of the Lords can bring life to the dead, and

under the Staffs of the Lords, Lord Dis relinquishes his claim, if the body of the dead one be in condition to be again life's vessel, and not a thing of horror. So too, shall the Staff of the First Server be, and as soon as may be, the Staffs of the Four Servers, though the staffs of the Servers, save the First Server, are of a degree lower than the Staffs of the Masters.

"Now I, Lord of Wisdom, do find it time fittirig, that the Servers and the First Teachers of the Houses know the full might of Dis, Lord of Death. Take thou, Dis, Lord of Death, these Servers, to the Crystal of All and teach them full the Services of Dis."

"Aye," said the Lords.

Lord Dis rose in a burning cloak of scarlet, and his staff flamed and licked with angry snake-tongues of fire; tiny crystalline trumpeting resounded from its lighten-ings as he led the way to the great Crystal of All. For the first time, the doors of the Temple swung shut, while the Lords themselves stood without, bringing health to the hundreds who climbed the mighty Singing Stair. Its song was a song of dread to the City of All now, for it rang day and night to the tread of hundreds afflicted with the cholera.

Lord Dis stood on the high altar of the Crystal of All, and to the Four Servers repeated the full service of Dis. The great crystal shimmered, and the blue of Mens and the Green of Tal faded as his voice rolled on, then the pearl of Shan, and even the silver starburst of All grew dim, and the sullen scarlet of Dis spread all the great crystal while trumpeting lightnings licked and danced about the altar and the crystal and the man. The scarlet floor wove and danced to foot-long streamers that writhed and muttered in angry murmur, and the long Service of Dis reached near its end.

And Lord Dis stopped. "Thus is the Service of Dis," he said, and his voice rolled in the Temple, powerful and deep. "But that is not the ending. Now these are the words of the ending, and they must be learned. I continue not the Service of Dis now, for the powers of Dis in his full might are- not lightly to be summoned. Remember this, and remember too, that only in the ultimate extreme are the full words of the Service of Dis to ring in the chamber of the Crystal. Remember this, for their power is mighty beyond any

powers of Earth, for

All, in his phase of Dis, strikes then with all his might, and it is not given that men should behold this thing lightly, nor much. And these are the final words, for the Service is broken now, and the Mighty Lord has retreated for the time."

As he had spoken the flames of Dis had died lower, • and the floor of Dis was quiescent, flaming softly, and^the silver and blue and green and pearl were returned to the crystal, tinged still with the angry scarlet of Dis.

Lord Dis spoke again. "The enemy attack, Lord Dis, and the walls resound to their march. Lord Dis, mightiest of the Lords, give answer now, to their threats, thrust forth thy banners, and thy flames of Death, snake-tongued to pierce our enemies, in the name of All, Lord of Life, strike, Lord Dis!"

The Service was broken, and not full in its power, but as his voice roared still in the stone-walled Temple, the light vanished, swallowed in rolling thunders of blackness, till only scarlet gloom remained, pierced and shattered with Titan lashes of scarlet fire, cold, the awful cold of the Dread Black Lord, Barmak, the Unseen, the Unmentioned, swept through the Temple, and the air was night, stabbed through by sunset rays of scarlet Dis, whirling, shrieking, trumpeting mad crystalline destruction.

And they died. White-faced the Servers stood; silence came at length, and Lord Dis spoke again from the altar. "Now these are the powers of Dis," he said very softly, so his voice was barely audible, and the silver of All crept in, and the blue and green and pearl. "The Lord Dis protects his own, but when the might of Dis is so great, the lives of even his people are as ants in the path of a warring God. Know this, then; within the Temple, when the full might of Dis is loose, let no man attempt to stand, save he be clothed in the scarlet robe of Dis, and wear the scarlet crystal of Dis. His staff must glow with the anger of Dis. Beyond the Temple walls, men of Western blood may stand, but if there be admixture of Oriental, his death is not less certain than the death of Oriental on that floor now.

"But this you must remember; let not these forces loose till there hovers danger above, men without, and enemies on every side, and that enemy attacks. For when the might of Dis is loose, nor All himself, nor Tal, the Lord of Peace may stay that anger. Only Tammar, Lady of

Mercy, has power then, and her power extends not infinitely. . . ,

"Now remember these things, and let the Teachers of each House of All and Dis know them well."

"Aye, Lord," said the Servers faintly.

xra

"Your metal is pure, pure indeed, too pure. Server, we, the examiners of the World Empire, demand knowledge of this thing, and further, we demand admittance to this Temple in safety and peace!"

"That cannot be," the Server spoke sternly. "Lord All denies you admittance, and men cannot sway the will of All. The metal is good, so be it good, where is your complaint?"

"Then, Server, listen well. Emperor Nijihua himself takes notice of your Temple, having come to America this day, and this is his Edict; that any temple growing in membership more than ten thousand men in the last year shall pay an Impost of one million dollars for each member!"



The Server stood white-faced, his face stern as the mighty mountain ridges ringing the Temple. Finally Torn-sen spoke again. His voice was soft and very low. "Return to your royal master and tell him then, this. That at each House of All, there must be a vehicle within twelve hours capable of bearing twenty tons of metal, and at this house a greater vehicle. Go."

The Oriental went, dazed and knowing not what to say, for in all the world, there was not eighty-four billions of dollars in hard metal.

The vehicles appeared as was ordained, and there were fourteen great freight planes in the City of All in the Valley of All.

Nijihua had not been troubled for he slept, it being night now, and only the collection service had been impressed. Uncomprehending men going in answer to an order. The Valley flamed with dull and ominous scarlet, hot with the warmth of the great fire-shot crystal of Dis, by the Cup of All.

The Collector came to the Singing Stair and mounted it, behind him the squad of laborers. The Temple flamed with the light of All, mighty and bright, a lance-flame that reached full hundred feet, steady and motionless with bursting stars of light, shattering crystals of light

that gave forth a low, ominous rumble of grinding sound. The floor of Dis wavered with a thousand thousand snake-tongued flames of angry scarlet.

The Collector halted, for on the great crystal floor were stacked ingots of metal. They were foot-thick bars, square of" end and six feet long, and they lay rank on rank, three hundred feet they stretched, side by side, six feet long, and they towered twenty feet into the air, a mighty wall of precious metal such as man never conceived, all down one side of the great Temple. And down all the other wall of the Temple they stacked, save only at the far end, where men came now guiding other mighty bars, men in long lines, one behind another, and more behind, while another file returned empty-handed. One man moved those bars, those four-tone bars, and in his hand glowed the Flame of All, and the mighty ingots rested on it and floated, glowing faint with crimson light. The Collector stopped, dumb-struck at the threshold. And shrieked, leaping back as the great Cubed Crystal spun savagely and the snake-tongued flame of Dis crashed a bolt of scarlet, licking lightning, to shatter in roaring crystalline wrath at the Barrier of the Threshold.

"Stop there!" ordered the Server. The Five Lords emerged through the jet wall, and their crystals flamed angrily, the Staff of Lord Dis crackling and shouting crystalline wrath, his robes and cloak shimmering under their angry licking.

"No further, Oriental," Tornsen rumbled. "It is Death, for the Lord Dis is angry this night. The ingots will be brought to you, and these ingots stand that you may see the infinite resources of All, Lord of Life. Beneath this floor lie the vaults of All, and they stretch a thousand and a thousand feet into the Earth, and a thousand and a thousand feet on every side. Now these are the metals of All, the Creator, and more he creates at will as he created those few scraps the world has know. These be osmium, osmium all. And in the vaults lie indium and platinum, palladium and rhodium in vaster amounts, and there are all the metals of earth in what quantity we would.

"Now look you, the Flame of All is the essence of the Lord of Life, the Creator, and it is greater than any manifestation of his works, such as matter, or gravity,

which it dissipates so that one man carries in his hands the great ingot. One of these ingots you may test."

The Server moved, and his Staff pointed toward the great wall of ingots, the Flame of All shot out, lancing, and a pencil line of intense violet pierced it through, leading it so it touched an ingot and the ingot burst into crimson, lifted and floated down the Flame. Tornsen turned his Staff, and the mighty ingot followed till it crossed the Barrier and hung above the salt-white stone outside. With a booming clang it dropped.

"Test that, Collector," snapped the Server.

The Collector moved swiftly and his tiny saw gnawed at the mighty thing, and a scrap came free. Swiftly with spectroscope and reagent he tested it. "It is purest osmium," he said at length. "Weigh it I cannot, for its mass is far beyond my scales."

"Then watch, Collector," snapped the Server. The crimson crystal of Dis glowed on his staff, and the forked tongue was keen as a knife's edge. It traced a line, and the ingot shrieked in tortured anguish, and-and became two, four, eight, sixteen pieces.

The Collector stared dumbly, and started forward. "Stop," said the Server. "What metal would your royal master have?"

"Gold-" said the Collector. "Gold-he has much platinum but men like better yellow gold."

"Stand back, Oriental, for All speaks his will, and he is Lord of All Things as well as Men."

The Flame of All lashed out from his crystal in mighty clashing discord, and struck the ingot and retired. The Collector looked at it dully, for it was yellow, yellow as butter of cows in lush pasture. And as he cut at it, it gummed his saw, so soft it was. With his knife he pared a great strip off.

Two ingots he loaded in the planes, and went away- the planes staggering with the concentrated load of mighty blocks of yellow buttery metal. The Server stood at the peak of the Singing Stair, and stared after them, while in the Valley, the Crystal of Dis pulsed mad scarlet flames that chimed and chattered and crashed angrily, and the clouding sky reflected their angry glory.

In two-score cities that night, two-score collectors looked upon vast treasures, while the Emperor slept.

He woke in the morning, and the clamour of his offi-

cers brought him out The city, his city, roared and murmured with strange, riotous sounds, shrieks and howls and crying mobs of men. Careworn and brightened were his officers as he emerged.

"Lord Nijihua-Your Highness-The Temple of All-"

"What," snapped the Emperor in clipped syllables. "General Torisuti, report."

"Lord Nijihua the Temple of All replied that they would meet the impost-"

Nijihua started. "Would meet it! Impossible! For in the world, save in my treasury, such treasure does not exist."

Torisuti giggled softly. "Your Highness, they met it. They paid it with ingots of gold, platinum and palladium and rhodium, and the ingots were six feet by one foot by one foot, solid metal and pure. The Collectors returned with eyes dazed and blank, and they told of walls of metal in each Temple that

stretched encj to end and made of tens of thousands of such ingots! That-

"There is not such metal on earth," Nijihua snapped. "They were plated base metals. What is the howling of this mob that disturbed my sleep?"

"It is the army and lie citizens and the peasants, Highness. There may not have been such metal, but-look." Nijihua stared through the window of the corridor. The American Provincial Treasury building stood beyond, and it gleamed and glowed in the sun, like yellow butter, and its roof was fallen in, its mighty pillars slumped under their own weight. A half melted building

of butter.

A score of men were fighting and howling and shrieking as they struggled to bear away a statue, curiously lifelike statue of metal, scarcely twenty inches high, made of yellow, yellow metal. But its concentrated mass was immense, and they fought savagely over it. A soldier came and his rifle blazed. They fell, or ran, and another shot the soldier down to draw away the statuette. And over all, the mad melody of the treasure-mad city howled.

"That thing was a treasury guard last night," said Commander Torisuti. "The Building is gold, purest gold, and they howl and fight to hack it away with knives and axes. And the soldiers fight with them for it. The War Department buildings are of iridium, pure and strong, too hard to cut, so they howl about it and cannot cut it away. The streets are bordered by curbstones of gold,

and the bridges are sinking under their golden weight. The forts outside the city are lead, and the war-planes slump in ruin of leaden softness. The great coast defense guns at San Francisco and the bridges of New York run in liquid streams of mercury. The battleships anchored in the harbor burned last night with mighty tongues of violet flame and exploded in flaming ruin, and their solid metal ran liquid, hissing, burning on the water. All America is a mad joke on an insane, prankster god!

"And at dawn, when people woke to see the golden splendors a mighty voice roared over all the city, and commanded them to fight and slay and squabble for useless gold, for there were infinite resources in the treasuries of All. Over all the Province the cities are golden and platinum, and the weapons are leaden and mercury. Great forts slump like yellow, melted butter under their own weight."

The howling savagery of the city welled hi at the windows, and shrieked about their ears. "Commanders, gather your forces. The Temples of All must be destroyed instantly. Are there any great guns and planes, remaining?"

"A score in the city, of planes, a half dozen mobile guns, with these we can attack-

"Go, destroy the Temples, and every Teacher and Server in them." Nijihua sat in the windows of his palace, and stared at the city. Fire smoke climbed leaden into the sky, while the howls of the hunting packs drifted across the city. The city was no city, for a city is the center of an organized society, and Nijihua's heart was cold as he understood suddenly the powers of this mad god. His city was mad-mad as a lunatic howling his fury to the full moon.

Half a thousand men swept about the corner, a dozen trucks in their midst, armed soldiers. They opened fire as they reached the Great Court, and before they neared the Treasury Building, their numbers halved and none lived before them. They swept on howling, to the Treasury. A dozen power-saws squealed, and gunned down in the soft, clinging stuff. A hundred men loaded blocks and masses of yellow metal in the trucks. Then suddenly one collapsed under the vast load, and they distributed the loading better. But

they could not stop. A wild mob of citizens, ten thousand strong, swept in from all sides with ax and saw and knife and pistol. There were gas

shells there, and the soldiers died beneath hacking knife and ax. The peasant citizens swarmed over the trucks and loaded them further. They crunched and fell under the spilled yellow stuff.

Nijihua rose. An ordered roaring was coming from one end of the city. Presently he saw far down the Avenue of Nijihua the march of the organized troops coming, and because they were ordered strength, the 'peasant citizens were fighting them, fighting for the golden pavements and the golden houses with their golden people. But the troops wore masks and they were bathed in paralyzing-gas that stopped the citizens.

At the Palace, Nijihua joined them and went to the airfield. Planes drooped, lead color, like tired things on the field with broken wings, snapped stay wires, crushed landing gear and fallen engines. A score of saved planes turned over steadily with dull booming of death. Bombs lay in nestled racks beneath them. Mobile gas units were lined up. A strong guard surrounded the field.

And to the field came a Teacher, in silver cloak and gleaming headdress. The guards surrounded him in an instant, and brought him before the Emperor, smiling faintly.

"Well, man of All, what have you to say to your Emperor?"

The Teacher smiled slowly. His voice was easy and deep as he answered: "You are not my Emperor, Nijihua, for I obey but one ruler, All, Lord of Life. Now look you; All Lord of Life takes back this country for his people. It were best your men leave. You are greedy for the treasures of All, so in fullest measure he has given of them, to surfeiting and beyond, so that your people kill themselves for them and your army is disrupted by them."

"And," said Nijihua softly, "he has made them quite, quite worthless through their plenty. Aye, your God is a wise God, but I should like to know how this trick is done."

"It is done by All Things. It is not within the understanding of man. Now these things are done, and that is enough. Let your people withdraw, for this is the land of the people of All."

"In a day and a day," said Nijihua quietly, "there will be neither All nor people of All. So much I promise for

the things you and your priests have done. Is that well within the understanding of man, such a man as you?" asked Nijihua.

"It is not to be. Lord Dis, Lord of Death, stands ready to defend his people, Nijihua. I will go now, and when you would speak again with All's men, seek the Temple of All in the Valley of All. The Five Lords await you. I go."

He turned to walk away. "No," snapped Nijihua. "You stay. Take him, guard!" The guards reached forward- and stopped. For the man was gone. In an instant he vanished from their sight, leaping upward slightly, and though they ringed their hands and closed in where he had been, he was gone. A voice spoke from the air and Nijihua stood calm.

"The Lord All protects his people, which is to be remembered, and engraved in the scroll of your memory, Nijihua."

Nijihua turned to Commander Torisuti. "You will see that the planes take off at once."

#### XIV

"The planes come overhead, Server," said the Novice, returning from the threshold. His face was tense, and white with fright.

The Server nodded, grave of face and scarcely less firm within his heart. He stood in scarlet robes of Dis, and his crystal flamed with the red of Dis, as did the crystals of the Teachers within the Temple.

"Now go, John Kempson, and wait without, and see to that none attempts entry of the gates. For I summon Lord Dis in all his might"

The Novice closed the great gates behind him, looking back at the Server, who stood now on the golden altar of All and spoke in slow, rolling syllables. The air of the Temple was darkening, and red licked the flames of Dis about the Server's body.

John Kempson stood with seven of the Novitiate on the Singing Stair of the Temple facing the crowd of white-faced Americans below. "The Server summons Lord Dis," he cried out, "wait ye hear in safety. Lord All has maddened the Orientals with his gold and precious metals as he warned you, he has destroyed the fleet of the Emperor as was told you. Now the last weapons and the soldiers shall be destroyed, as was promised."

Behind him, the Temple glowed scarlet on all its faces, and the sapphire and emerald and pearl were gone. Only flaming angry scarlet remained and spread. Strange cold, like polar wastes, washed down from the Temple, and the sky grew dark, clouding swiftly. The clouds glared sullen in the light of the Temple, as it grew, and grew. The howling of the mob stilled over all the city, and the cold grew greater. Swiftly the black rolled up the sky, swifter and swifter, till all light was blotted out in rolling ink. Wave on wave of jet was rolling from the Temple, and it drank the light from all the city. The Crystals in the hands of the Novitiate were dulled and dim, and only the intense scarlet of the Temple pierced the jet that settled as Dis and Dread Barmak, Lord of Nothingness gained sway. The jet waves pushed out and the snake-

tongues of Dis rolled and curled about the Temple. The great piling of the clouds above pressed lower and the cold of the Black Lord washed out in deadening waves that paralyzed heart and mind.

Abruptly, within, the last words of the Service of the Summoning of Dis were done. Thunderous trumpet-ings of angry sound washed in from all Infinity-and a mighty Being snapped into existence.

Dis, Lord Dis towered above them, scarlet in his cloak, a mighty Titan God, looming a thousand feet, dwarfing the great towers of the Empire's buildings, the vast cloak flapping in heart-chilling breezes of another world. In his hands flamed a mighty staff of red metal, tipped by a snake-tongued crystal that washed and sprayed the frightful flame of Dis. They roared through the heavens, sunset rays of Death. Ten thousand feet crashed out to the mighty bombers of the Emperor. The ships vanished in unbearable wash of scarlet flame piercing even the utter jet of Barmak's veil that held the city.

That day, Dis stalked a thousand feet high, his mighty flames roared down and the buildings of the Empire flared and vanished and boiled hot in the black and cold. The bombers vanished from the air and Nijihua's weapons crumbled on the ground; and thousand-foot Dis roared out his warning, "All, Lord of Life, defends his own, and I am Dis, Lord of Death, defender of All. Ye die, this day, invaders, and the

country returns to the people of All, for All in his might, is angry. Now this is thy death!"

Mighty Dis thrust out the blazing crystal, and the flames from it rained down in hissing streams that rent the air, the rocks, the very waters. And as suddenly ceased. Stopped by a great glow of amber light.

Tammar, Lady of Mercy, stood before him, thousand foot high as he, in robes of gold, and about her wavered golden light that drove back the jet and scarlet of Dis and Barmak, Lord of Nothingness, who took much to him that day. Tammar spoke, and her voice rolled softly over the city. "Stop, Lord Dis. They shall go, for such is the will of All, but they need not go to the Black Lord. It be better and wiser and more just if they go to their own place, and their own gods. Cease thy wrath, and come again to the place of the Lords."

The jet and scarlet broke, and Mens, Lord of Wisdom,

came blue as sapphire. "Aye, Lord Dis. It is wisdom. I cannot halt ye, I have no power to stay ye, nor has any, save the Golden Lady. Come then, for it is wise as well as merciful."

Lord Dis' angry face calmed slowly. "Aye, I will go. And they will go. For if I be summoned by my people once again, I whip this land with the Flames of Dis till no thing lives save the people of All, and by my side shall walk the Black Lord, fully visible! By Mighty All I swear that, not shall Lady Tammar nor Lord Mens again stay our hands."

Thousand-foot Dis vanished, and the jet clouds that were with him vanished, rolling up before wave on wave of blissful heat, warmth God-sent. The jet vanished with the scarlet tongues of Dis. The sun broke through, so people were half blinded. And the city moaned, over all its streets and parks it moaned; then slowly the howl grew, and the shrieks of men that sought to escape on foot, in cars, in planes, in every way. For they dreaded death less than Thousand-foot Dis, of the scarlet lightnings, and the Unseen One of the black and cold.

## XV

The great, golden plane of Nijihua settled to the landing sands at the City of All, among the mighty cliffs of the valley. The Temple glowed with the sapphire of Mens and the emerald of Tal, the pearl of Shan and, faintly the scarlet of Dis.

Nijihua dismounted from his plane, and a score of Teachers of All, in their robes of silver, bearing the crystal staffs, came down the Singing Stair that boomed softly in the great gorge, to their tread. Nijihua stood on the sands by the plane, only seven elderly men beside him, his Council. The first Teacher of the Temple advanced toward him, and spoke softly. "Nijihua, you seek audience of the Five Lords?"

"Yes, Teacher of All. I must make some peace for my people in this continent. They destroy themselves in their mad rush for safety, and my army is more disorganized than the people squabbling over useless metal, so it is impossible for me to save them and their goods."

"The Lords shall meet, and shall judge you, Nijihua. Come thou, then, to the Temple of All."

Nijihua and his seven councilors followed, eight elderly men, upright and straight in their robes of state, come to enact what peace they might. They mounted the Singing Stair, and halted at the peak on the salt-white stone of the threshold. Before them gleamed the mighty Crystal of All, such as they had never seen. And on its top stood the Five Lords before their Five thrones. The glory of the Temple impressed itself upon the Oriental, its beauty of simplicity and lighting. Gradually something of its peace seeped into

him.

The Server stood before him, huge and straight. "You have come to audience with the Five Lords, Nijihua, and Tammar, Lady of Mercy has made promise for you."

Tammar spoke, and her golden voice rolled softly through the Temple. "It is death to Oriental who crosses the Barrier, but that these men may be truly and justly judged, it is best they be near to us. Wherefore, I do

promise them safety within the Temple for this time. Follow, Nijihua, in the golden light."

A star burst golden in the air of the room, a pinpoint of exploding light that expanded suddenly as it fell to a thirty-foot globe of golden radiance, settling light as a great bubble to the crimson floor, and halfway through it, till it was a hemispherical dome of golden radiance. Within its circle, the floor of Dis was dark black 'crystal, at the edge it shot tiny blue lightnings and over all the surface of the globe, blue lightnings played with a hissing crackle almost noiseless.

Nijihua and his Council were within it and they crossed the barrier, and walked a floor no Oriental foot had trod, till they stood near the great Crystal. The Five Lords seated themselves as the Server stood before the eight men.

"Now this is the peace with your people," said Mens, Lord of Wisdom. "That they leave this country with such things as they brought, and no more of goods, save only that they may take whatever quantities of gold and platinum and other precious metals as may delight them or be useful to them.

"But every man of your people shall leave, save those who have been in this country more than fifteen years. That is the peace with your people. All, Lord of Life needs no guarantee of non-aggression, no indemnity of materials for his resources are infinite, and no indemnity of goods, since it were better the people of All earn. The lives you have taken cannot be returned. That is the peace of All, Lord of Life, with your people.

"But All, Lord of Life, has further justice with you, Nijihua. Say first, Emperor and Council, are these terms with the people acceptable?"

Nijihua sighed softly. "Yes, Lord, these terms are acceptable, but what is this demand of Justice upon me?"

Dis, Lord of Death rose in his scarlet robes, and Nijihua shrank back. "Lord Dis!" he said softly.

"Lord Dis," answered the towering figure in scarlet. "I make this demand of justice. Without you and your council your people were good and earnest workers. With you, they became a deadly unnatural menace, a flowing ooze that crushed the nations of the Earth. Your life is forfeit for the many it has cost through heedless ambition."

The crystal staff in his hands dipped, and from it, snake-tongued flame lashed downward at the recoiling Emperor-and shattered on the golden globe about him.

Angry-browed Lord Dis turned to Tammar, Golden Lady of Mercy. "Tammar, ye builded better than I knew in this golden bubble. Shatter it, for his life is forfeit!"

Lady Tammar spoke then. "Nay, for as Mens has said, no taking of lives can return lives. It is not his life

that brings trouble to the world, but his ambition. Now I say with you, that this menace to peace and happiness shall be, and must be, removed. But this I say; that it need not be his life. Let it be his ambition."

Shan, Lord Shan of the pearly robes turned to the Golden Lady grave-faced and sorrowful. "That too is a stricture great in its weight. Let the man choose which he would have, for it may be that he would choose the death Lord Dis advises."

"Aye," said the Lords.

"Then choose, Nijihua," said Shan, softly. "And re-, member in your choosing that these are the choices, and there is no alternate. You die without knowing, on the floor of Dis, or you be robbed of emotion, of ambition, lost to you then is both hate and love, both ambition and despair, and intellect alone remains unimpaired and undirected by any ambition, any desire, any emotion whatsoever. And these are for these and your Council to decide."

"Lady Tammar promised safety," called out one of the Councilors.

"Safety to cross the barrier and win fair judgment," the Golden Lady replied gravely. "This you have. Choose."

Nijihua giggled softly. "Naturally if this thing you promise be done, I would choose-intellectual freedom."

"So be it," sighed the Lords.

And from the air above the Crystal, from the Silver Flame of All itself, a blackness condensed. A Sixth appeared, the Sixth Lord, the Invisible Lord, Barmak, Lord of Nothingness. His throne was black, blacker than jet, for no ray, no sparkling returned from it, no faintest glint of light. It was the blackness of Barmak. Lord of Blackness and Lack, the Unmentioned Lord of Despair. He was robed in blackness, not black. He was

blackness, having no face nor visible feature, only black form that was all essence of nothingness and annihilation. But from the blackness, a voice spoke, and from the utter night of this throne, Dread Barmak rose, towering tall, a hole of utter dark in the silver of All's flame, unilluminated by even this flame.

"So be it!" His voice was a~ great rumble that echoed mournful through the Temple suddenly chilled 'by his presence. His staff of blackness tipped downward, and from it lanced a bar of solid blackness that touched and curled about the man, lancing through and swallowing the golden flame of the Lady of Mercy.

Shrill rang Nijihua's scream. "Ai-ai-ai-the cold- ai-" And the Emperor of the World lay stretched on the blackened crystal floor.

And the flame of All was whole; Dread Barmak, power of Nothingness was gone.

Lord Mens rose again. His blue staff gleamed, and its tetrahedral flame reached out a glow that penetrated and mingled with Lady Tammar's globe. And Nijihua stirred, and rose.

Nijihua spoke again, and his voice was clear and precise, utterly exact, as perfect as a perfect machine. "Very well. The thing is done then."



"Aye, it is done, Nijihua. Now say, Councilors, what choose ye?" demanded the Server. "Life-life-

"So be it," the Lords echoed soft. And the heart of All's bright flame froze, and congealed in the cold and dark of Dread Barmak, the utter absence nodded its awful head and spoke. "So be it," and the cold dead ray of the Black Lord's staff lanced out, and the councilors fell crying with cold, and rose again as the Black Lord vanished and Mens' blue flame touched them.

"You will hold to the covenant of your word, Nijihua?" Lord Men's voice was low and grave.

"I will hold to the covenant of my word, and the people iball move out so swiftly as may be; what more, what other, can man do, before the powers of the living, eternal Gods? I dreamt I fought men, and the Gods walked and lived and acted. I am done. My kind is done. We go."

"This I say to you now, under seal of secrecy you cannot break, by intent or other," said Lord Mens, rising from his sapphire throne, "for I tell you under the Flame of Mens, and the channels of the brain that make this understanding expressible are forever closed. So always you will know, and understand, but never will you speak of it, nor write of it nor ever act by reason of it.

"Chu Liang who stands here now as your Councilor of Science said once that the God he fought was a greater god than his, his God of Science. That is true. The science of a knowledge of atoms and radiation undreamed before its discovery. Here in this vault we released the flame of matter, the flame of All Things, as America died.

"We learned its secrets, and one of its secrets is this: that radiation can be specific, even as chemicals can be. Close you came in your guess of specific chemicals and anti-bodies, but it was specific radiation. And under the crudest of these, Chu Liang, the plane-polarized light of the Moon, the mad grow madder. You tested, Chu Liang, and you found only ultra-violet in the Flames of the Lords, and never did you guess of their infinite variation of wave form and polarizations of unguessed types. For these no instrument you knew could detect, so safe you called them-and died. A thousand-thousand we know, for where drug must follow drug in difficult laborious synthesis, with the Flame of All Things, combination followed combination of polarization, hyperbolic and parabolic, and strange wave form as swift as control may be turned.

"Not unique are these specific radiations we use, for there are men who send powerfully, the powerful personality, the natural healer who by his steady gaze alone draws up the fires of life to fight again. In man these radiations form every nerve ending, and they bring unease or death to every other animal or living thing. So it is the dog looks not long in the eye of man, for man's radiation is powerful, and nerve-racking to all other creatures.

"Infinite power of them have we here, so that, specific to Western man, it sterilizes them of every living thing, and leaves only the man alive, uplifted by friendly, sympathetic vibrations. There be rays that speed tissue

growth, and rays that stimulate heart and glands. These bring peace or sleep, joy or sorrow or death as we may choose.

"Such are the Flames of the Lords. And the Flame of the Black Lord brings death to the nerves that stimulate the glands, and death to all feeling of emotion!

"So, Nijihua, is All more and yet less than he seemed?"

"More," said Nijihua, "for his power is real and infinite, the power of all things.

"And-Less," said Nijihua, "for he obeys the Laws of Cause and Effect. Yet therein is his greatness, for all becomes dependable and understandable as Science, where he is whimsy and intractable as a self-will being."

"Dis-Lord Dis-the thousand foot-" said Chu Liang softly.

"By projection, projection of such forces as heard your innermost councils, they threw the image of Lord Dis of the Temple and Lady Tammar thousand-foot over Chicago. Remember, then, this too; in all the world there fa no hiding from the sight of the Lords.

"So, gO>, Nijihua, and remember your covenant to keep it. For All is God, and more than God!" Lord Mens' Flame died and Nijihua shuddered slightly. His mouth opened, and sounds came forth, but no speech.

"You cannot speak of the knowledge, Nijihua, for the time of its revealing is not yet. Go, and remember in thy soul!"

Nijihua turned, and the Golden Bubble of Tammar followed him to the Barrier of the Threshold and burst in golden crystals that clamored soft in their extinction. The Singing Stair sang to his tread, and he went steadily, without emotion of despair, or regret, to turn the great organizing abilities of his perfect, unemotional intellect to the mighty task of evacuating America, the Land of All and the people of All.

For locked in his mind was the understanding that All was a god for all Lord Mens might say, and a mightier God than the man Nijihua who had entered that Temple had ever guessed.

Beside him walked his Councilors, seven elderly men, locked in silence of intellectual despair of questions that to them must ever be unanswered, unexpressed-microcosms of knowledge, forever incommunicable.