

# Of Gods And Goats

by Richard S. Shaver

An A\NN/A Preservation Edition.

[Notes](#)

AMPHITRITE fluffed her distinctly gorgeous hair with one slim jeweled hand, silhouetting the long beautiful line of her arm, shoulder, breast and slim waist against the morning sky.

Pan lay down the syrinx and reached for her, but she swayed farther away.

“Pan, how came you to be accursed with those goatish legs? Nice, curly black hair on them—rather charming novelty, once a woman gets used to them. But how *did* you get them?”

“Come inside, beautiful, and I will show you the records of our war with the giants. It was during that shindig that these pins were wished on me.”

Inside the vast and already ancient warren of tremendous borings within the hollow Mount Olympus, Pan turned the switch on the thought-record projector and inserted a series of spools in the record slot. He pulled down the projector lever, and with his arm around Amphitrite’s slim, satin-soft waist, sank down on the Venus-lounge before the luminous sphere of projection mist. Pictures formed within the mist—pictures from the records of the past projected by the machine—and the story of the war with the Gigantes began.

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JUST outside the monstrous portal of the Olympian’s home, Jupiter lounged beside the slim and youthful figure with quite normal and rather beautiful legs that yet resembled Pan. It *was* Pan, some years before, as the record-mech Ray Eye had seen him.

The far steps shook their mist veils free in the morning breeze, and their green faces came clear in the mounting sun. Rivers sprawled their gleaming lazy lengths far below Olympus, and the land of ancient Greece awoke.

On the far horizon, Pan’s sharp eyes noted an ominous movement, a slow roll of dust clouds!

That rolling dust could mean but one thing—a mighty host on the march. From the far heaving of dust-laden air now shot the gleams of weapons flash-ing bright danger in the sunlight. And through the handsome limbs of the young godling Pan shot the terrible thrill that every fighting man knows—a battle was brewing!

“Jupiter, the Gigantes come!” bawled young Pan, pointing to the ominous approaching dust cloud.

Jupiter’s great, heavy-muscle limbs flung his old-young bulk within the Mount. Seizing the huge lever of the lightning-thrower mechanism that he alone dared handle, he threw an experimental bolt of flaming

force at the frightening mass of the invaders.

The black beam of blotting force-ray sprang expertly from the invaders to meet the flaming streak of lightning, and the mighty energy of the death-bolt was absorbed—disappeared harm-lessly. A foretaste of defeat rose in Jupiter Diespiter's great throat: he had played his ace, and it had been trumped. The giants were wheeling mightier equipment across the soft-sur-face plains than themselves, the lesser-bodied Olympians, could have moved along an underworld road of solid rock.

Why had they chosen the soft sur-face for the moving of such weights? Only to achieve the surprise they had achieved, Jupiter realized. The numer-ous watch-ray he had set along all the underworld highways had proven use-less against the wily leader of the giant horde.

The terrible bolt he had flung at the approaching mass of great-limbed Gigantes served a purpose, futile as the gesture had proved. The army, that must have been steadily nearing all night in the darkness, now slowed and began to spread sideways.

Out from the mighty array of gigan-tic men and vaster weapons raced a black stallion, tiny under the huge bulk of the form it carried. The rider raced directly toward Olympus.

About Jupiter, the whole divine pantheon of gods were taking their stations at the antique ray-mech, rubbing the sleep out of their eyes, and cursing. Their view-beams swept the far, menacing mass of vast-bodied enemies with the magnifying magnetic lensed eyes of the antique telescopic vision rays—counting, estimating and conjecturing. Could they defend Olympus against this sudden onslaught of awful might? Or must they abandon their well-loved home, with its endless wealth of infinitely valuable gear from the wise hands of the Elder race? Must they give it all up now, abandon this luxury? Better to die at the hands of the terrible invaders. They had to choose quickly, before the penetrating rays of the giant horde rolled close enough to blast all the life from the elder god fortress!

In each heart they knew that the choice of defense meant sure death, for in all their experience they had never seen such ray-mech on wheels before. Such a mass of men and weapons on the move was unbelievable. Whoever was leading the Gigantes was a man who knew what ray-fighting took to be victorious.

BUT such speculation and fearful questioning did not keep them from taking their places in the great metal seats upon the ray-beam mechanisms, too big even for their latter god size, and make ready to sell their lives as dearly as possible. They realized that the giants must have had a spy conversant with the range of their ray, with the number and kind of weapons within Olympus, to have known the need of finding in some far cavern weapons much more powerful. That they had done so was plain before their eyes. Mars growled in his red beard, and Venus shot a quick soft glance at Vulcan, busily screwing a heavier focusing coil upon the snout of a needle-ray mech—a deadly rapier he was readying for his own use against the interlopers. Venus noted that the supposedly valiant Mars was far more perturbed by his approaching demise than was lame Vulcan. Even a husband has his qualities, she mused.

Enceladus, the Gigante leader, climbed the last slabbery slopes of the mount of the Gods on foot. Some would have thought it a foolhardy risk so to place his person in the power of the Olympians for a parley. But Enceladus knew very well what he was doing. His great stallion\*, of no use on these slopes, stood lathered and drooping. It seemed but a tiny pony beside the bulk of the mightiest of the giants. Leaping up the last of the rocky steeps, his terrible limbs flashed sunlight from the polished metal surfaces of the ray-proof armor of the Elder race. His long, black locks swung in braids hung with heavy gold barbs. His great, swarthy face was grim as Enceladus stood at last before Jupiter. There was no deference in his greeting for the “All-father”.

*\* That these legendary giant races had and used horses may be untrue; but in the Norse legends the building of the wall of Asgard by a duped giant was accomplished by the use of a gigantic horse. Similarly the horses drawing the chariot of the sun—etc., etc.*

“Jupiter Diespiter—Zeus, Jove, Mechaneus, All-father—whatever fraudulent alias you are masquerading under, we have a vast grievance to settle with you.”

Jupiter brought out the oil, and tried to spread it thickly.

“Noble Enceladus, what means this? Your race has always been of peaceful intent toward the Olympian power. Why should our long and pleasant relations end thus in war? What is this grievance? I mean to give you every satisfaction.”

“You bet you do!” Enceladus smiled fiercely, not taken in. “Certain of our people have been missed from time to time. Knowing not what had become of them we bided our time. We did not think it was the work of you Olympians. We thought that you had learned to fear our anger, and value our friendship. But late a messenger came to me from Pluto’s dark realm upon a matter of buying some slaves of Pluto’s.”

A great light came to Jupiter and his tremors found fresh cause, for he knew now what had brought the giants out against him. He could not speak, but tried. Enceladus, enjoying the great Jupiter’s inability to conquer his fear, continued:

“I asked myself why Pluto—who uses and abuses so many slaves that there are never enough of them to perform his work—should have an overabundance of slaves? So we wined and dined the messenger.

“The rich and too plentiful wine made him drunk, and when he was talkative, we questioned him. He blurted out the reason for Pluto’s oversupply of slave labor. For Pluto had recently acquired some twelve-score of our number. You know that one Gigante is worth a hundred ordinary men. We were swift to understand why Pluto had slaves to sell. Further questioning the drunken messenger we learned that Pluto had bought these sons of the race of Gigantes from a certain god, namely you—Jupiter Mechaneus.”

Jupiter, the guilt reddening his face and thickening his speech, tried to deny the accusation.

“Enceladus, it is not true! The messenger lied!” Sweat stood out now on Jupiter’s broad, almost noble brow, and the hand that held the sceptre over much of the known earth shook as a leaf in a breeze. What troubled Jupiter most were the looks from his own followers, the Olympian pantheon. For, if the charge were true, it meant that Jupiter’s greed for stimmech and slaves and other valuables from the deep, endless and rich caverns under Pluto’s rule had betrayed them all. The coming encounter, if it took place, could end only in death. For Enceladus held the whip-hand by virtue of having brought his powerful ray into range in the night.

ENCELADUS, reading all their faces as one reads a child’s primer, went on, his great, angry giant’s voice ringing around the crestfallen Olympians like a blast of death-laden fury from across the Styx.

“I do not come to bargain, little men-who-would-be-Gods, play-acting with your elder race image-mech for the poor deluded people under your rule. Luxuriating here in the home of the elder race who were really gods, and not frauds, like you. You, with all your foul desires gratified by virtue of the mighty wizard work of the departed ancients—all that wonder work that you hold so secret from your mortal dupes. You fear they might discover the frauds that you are. I did not come to bargain with you, no! I remember a certain giant named Prometheus too well for that.

“You slandered Prometheus, lied about him, and in the end killed him, Jupiter Mechaneus. You were called Zeus then, if I remember right. Your reason is clear enough to me. For if Prometheus, with his soft

heart and wise head, had accomplished his purpose, if he had given the poor suffering mortals the secrets of the ancient science; the medicines and methods we use to defeat age; the rays and machinery that we have learned to use by studying the wisdom of the Elder race—then mortals would have understood your enmity for them and never again would have believed in your benevolent nature. That would have cost you much, wouldn't it, you obolus-pinching, double-crossing furtive man of many faces. If the mortals had grown wise and great under Prometheus, and learned how to build such things as we have found in the caverns for themselves rather than use forever the leftovers of that ancient time, men would today be greater by far than the fool's-gold 'glory' of the Olympians!

"You killed Prometheus, and many another man for no other reason than to keep mortals ignorant. But your time has come, Jupiter Mechaneus, and all the rest of you, puny pale-faced creatures of the darkness that you are. Had you had spent some of your time in study of the ancient writings, you would not be in this strait."

Jupiter made an effort to defend his character before his people, though his knees kept knocking together like a horse on a hard road.

"Enceladus, you have been having dreams, and believed them. You are bemused, worthy Enceladus. This cannot be..."

"Nay, mighty dog-in-the-manger, we sent a spy to the city of Dis, where it lies so near the center of Mother Earth that none but a giant or one of Pluto's poor dupes cares for the exertion of going there. The truth we learned in full upon his return. Our missing relatives and friends are there. Laboring in Tartarus, abuilding of a vast harem for that other rascal, Pluto. After you, he will feel our wrath. My coming for this conference is but formality. By it I hope to save a few lives not Olympian. Not one of you is worth the little finger of the least of my honest men. For you I have but one offer, one choice. Leave this land forever or die! Today!"

Jupiter looked at the pale faces of his partners in the ever lasting conspiracy of "godding" it over the poor mortals. A long minute passed as he took a slow census with his eyes, and one by one they nodded their heads in a gesture that meant:

"Better to go peacefully than be killed like rats in this fortress that has proved but a trap."

"We accept your offer, Enceladus. We will go on one condition."

"There are no conditions. It is your choice to go or die, for you cannot fight and live. But to save some few deaths among my own, I offer you the chance to go peacefully with your worthless lives."

There was a strange light in Enceladus' eyes as these last words left his lips, but Jupiter, seeing it, could not interpret it. Had he known the full extent of the giant's information as to himself and his doings, and the intent of the Gigante leader, he might not have assented so readily. But it did not occur to him that the famously honest Enceladus was not quite open in his words. Besides there was little stomach in them for such a battle as the giants had evidently prepared to wage.

"We assent."

Jupiter's head was bowed, it was all too plain there was no resistance to be made. When death comes in ray fighting there is little indecision about it. One side is outranged by the weapons of the other, and all die swiftly as a child might pick berries from a vine.

The offer of life was in truth a generous one, for even if the Olympians fought and by some good fortune won through to a victory, they knew that most of them would die. And of those left alive many would be insane from the effects of the terrible bolts of disintegrant energy that can never be fully

countered by any beam of absorbent energy.

“Well enough. Try treachery upon me and you will die too swiftly to regret it. Now call all your people out here in plain sight of my host and we will invest the Mount.”

As Enceladus turned from the now white-faced Jupiter he murmured contemptuously under his breath: “And men call these cravens their Gods!”

IT WAS some hours later that Enceladus played his joker upon the Olympians. They were completing their preparations for departure while the Gigante leader disposed his men and weapons so that no thing could go amiss with his possession of Mount Olympus. The Gods had gathered their choice belongings about them, and Vulcan and Mars were readying the motor vans—great antique auto-chariots called by the antique name rollats—to bear them away from Olympus forever.

Venus stood, weeping on the shoulder of the little nymph Echo, who looked up sorrowfully into the eyes of the handsome young Pan. Echo was a slight, frail-built, but beautiful child who had been mentally mutilated by Jupiter in a fit of anger. Her constant childish chatter having driven him to anger, he had cut her mind with needle rays in such a way that she could hear and think, but could not think and say her own thoughts. Her mind made her repeat the last syllables of everything she heard, and she was constantly humiliated at the involuntary acts of her mind. Pan blew softly into his syrinx a sad song of parting and regret. Tears were on many of their faces, and an anger at the cupidity of their leader that had led them to this pass. Many were the scorfying remarks that found their way to his ear as he busied himself loading the “Chariot of the Sun” a great motor van which was his personal possession.

Enceladus stalked forward from the great god-seat of the All-father where he had flung himself contemptuously to await their last preparation.

“Little men-who-would-be-gods, I have a surprise for you. You will not need all this gear, nor any of those luxurious goods—not by the means I have prepared for you to travel!”

“What mean you?” Jupiter was apprehensive, for a stern and unforgiving glint in the eyes of Enceladus again aroused those tremors in his limbs which he alone could suffer from so greatly.

In the great resounding voice of Enceladus a note of gigantic amusement showed itself openly now.

“Have you ever heard of the ancient magical mechanism called by some the ‘converter’?” The slight sneer and the grim triumph in the rolling voice that they could not help but hear, struck them with swift comprehension, with deadly fear.

“You gave your word, Enceladus! Had we not known you were a man of your word we would not have passed up the battle!” Venus, into whom Enceladus’ ominous words had struck the greatest fear—for of them all she valued her human form the most—fairly screamed at the Gigante leader. “You promised!”

“I promised life and freedom to depart, as you remember. Naught else! So line up, and I will demonstrate the efficacy of the elder gods’ science upon all of you, one at a time. You may enjoy it more if you watch the fate of your fellows closely!”

The “divine” Olympians were suddenly reduced from their last shreds of pride and dignity and began to run shrieking in all directions pursued by the laughing giants. At long last they were all in line before the cabinet of the converter (a very potent and useful unit of ancient masterwork in machinery to do the impossible) held each by a giant as children by men. Enceladus, as they stood before him, held each immovable, entertained them with a discourse on the nature of the fate that awaited them. And the honest

and valiant Enceladus, his grim implacable face alight with the justice of what he was doing, looked more a god than the whole lot of them.

“As you know, gentle people, my ‘friends’ and betrayers, the converter is a mechanism that can cause matter to take any form desired. The very atoms of a substance are surrounded by a penetrative fluidic force-field, when placed within the cabinet of this remarkable machine. Too, upon the dial of this little gadget—” Enceladus was toying with the dials of the vast enigma of shining complexity which was the great “converter” by which the many transformations of the “god” hoax were accomplished “—are many little pictures representing animals and men; many many little pictures of complex life-forms are here represented upon the dials of this much-used instrument. A very useful instrument it has proved, too. Hasn’t it, Jupiter?”

Jupiter’s knees again took up their involuntary knocking together. For in Jupiter’s mind the memory of the many women he had transformed into various creatures to hide his guilt from Juno’s relentless insistence upon continence except where she was concerned had suddenly arisen—and the full realization that all his perfidy was well-known to Enceladus and would be visited upon him confounded him.

“Will you have the honor of being the first to enter, my good friend, Jupiter Diespiter the all-wise, the all-father who could not let one little man learn the source of his long life and power? Enter, friend...”

THE giant holding Jupiter, one Gyges by name, whose wife had disappeared some time before, thrust Jupiter roughly within the cabinet of the great mechanism. He turned to Enceladus, his broad, honest face one beam of delight. At last the Olympians were going to get their dues.

Enceladus beckoned with a finger to Gyges. The giant stepped to the machine’s control panel, and after a smiling conference with Enceladus, turned the main dial to a certain ungainly form upon the pictured dial markings. With a vast grin he pulled down the great lever of the power-switch. The breakers in the distance made a sound like thunder as the power surged through the cables, the cabinet doors popped open, and the product of the vast forces unleashed within the cabinet stepped out. The product whose very inner atoms of the life cells had all shifted and taken on a new form in answer to the controlled distortion of the mighty force fields that had surrounded the cells, the atoms, the molecules of his body with a slippery repellant that had stripped the whole mass of his body of its natural rigidity and left a stuff as pliable to the controlling flows of force as water to a wind. Out stepped—not the pompous perfidy of Jupiter’s synthetic youth and strength, but a skinny, bandy-legged, knob-hipped goat. Jupiter Goat-form looked with doleful eyes upon them all. The giants roared with gargantuan laughter, for not only was Jupiter now a goat, he was also a naked goat!

“The hide this thing has given you will in time produce hair to hide your ignominy, I hope, Jupiter!” Enceladus boomed, laughing greatly.

And Jupiter answered: “Baaaaa .”

The pitiful object shambled off into the noonday sun outside the cavern, while a rock shied after him by a young giant accelerated his departure.

One by one the Gods entered the cabinet of the “converter”, and one by one they fled baaing or bleating into the noon-light that shamed them.

For the boyish Diana, the giant Enceladus shifted the dial to a place marked by the form of a cat—and her graceful form, now a great lynx, was still beautiful as she stalked out to join the ignominy of the Olympians.

Venus, the terrible dread of losing forever her wonderful form, her greatest treasure, turned her charm

upon the giant leader in full strength. Softly swaying her hips, she walked toward him slowly, the sorcery of her famous girdle coupled with the more natural magic of her beauty making her for that moment seem truly divine. Her smile, that is to this day celebrated, wrought its enchantment upon the great kindly heart of the chief. She stretched out her hand and touched him lightly upon the dark sinewy muscles of his hairy and terrible arm. The rosy skin of her glowed softly in the magic light of the ancients' work that bathed everything with a radiance kindlier by far than daylight.

She turned her body slowly before him to display her high breasted form to the best advantage and all the soft woman-being of her pleaded with the anger that burned in Enceladus' breast to have mercy upon her who was in truth quite innocent of complicity in the crime for which the Gigantes were punishing the Olympians. Enceladus was bemused for long moments as his eyes drank in the world-famous allure of the truly Elder grace of her woman's form. The chiseled, rosy, polished flesh, the soft, Venus-ringed neck of her, rising like a tapering pillar strong from her womanly shoulders to a narrowing, balanced support of the wealth of her curled golden hair; the drooping, ripened lips that curled blood-red enticement about the flashing ivory teeth—she was too much for even Enceladus' grim spirit. Such a wealth of warm, bewitching beauty just could not be turned into the hideous goat-forms that had been given the rest of the Olympian crew.

“As others may one day tell you, Venus\* Mechanitis Anadyomene, leave war and battles to these dishonest Olympians. Is it not enough that you delude weak womankind? I will have mercy on you against my better judgment, for I cannot bring myself to destroy the wonder-art of Mother Earth's own magic that you are.”

\* Venus: Homer's opinion of the Gods and of Venus in particular, quoted verbatim from Bryant's Homer:

*“Tydides with cruel steel—Sought Venus, knowing her unapt for war—*

*(wounds her in hand and says :)*

*“Leave war and battle, Goddess—Is it not enough that thou delude weak womankind?”*

Venus did eventually leave Olympus, and lived alone upon the island of Cypria or upon Mt. Ida.

Enceladus seated her gently upon the broad back of the goat that had been Mars, and chained there her feet under the goat's belly. Kissing her, he said:

“Choose better company, and we would have no quarrel with you. But we cannot be too lenient with any Olympian after the ills we have suffered from you. Remember Prometheus!”

JUNO he changed into a great, white cow, somewhat reluctantly, but he could not think that she was not privy to her mate's doings, and he could do no better for her.

Pan, the last of the Olympians in the line, he winked at, for Pan was a hard fellow to be angry with. As Pan was thrust into the converter, Enceladus stopped for a moment and conferred with a bearded oldster standing behind him. The old man shook his head, but as Enceladus turned back to the mighty switch to throw the power into the vast complexity of the field coils within the mech, Pan found the inner catch of the cabinet doors, pressed it and was half out of the thing as the mighty forces caught him, crushing the breath and nigh the life out of him. He awoke with his head on the knee of the pretty Pythis, who being a Nymph, and only a guest of the Olympians, had been let go free by the Giants.

Pythis was weeping as Pan looked up questioningly into her eyes. Pan soon learned why she wept, for the fiery pains in his lower limbs brought his glance down upon them, and he shrank fearfully from the realization that he was forever after to be half-man, half-beast. His lower limbs were the limbs of a goat, naked, hooved and crook-shanked.

“There is no hope for you even if we earned the giant's mercy and were brought to the converter again,” moaned Pythis. “If the converter were set to change goat into man, your man parts would be

monstrously changed by the field's tearing forces. It would kill you or make you into a mass of shapeless flesh. And if it was set to turn man into goat, your upper parts would become a goat, but your lower parts would become unrecognizable as limbs. There is no hope for you ever, my dear!"

Pan's heart was touched, for he realized that Pythis cared for him.

"There is this about it, my loved Pythis. Echo will forever hate the sight of me now, and if you do not object to my legs overmuch, why then Pan will be yours." Pythis kissed him, but the tears still ran. For Pan had had such beautiful legs, such lithe young nimble legs. And now forever he must hop clumsily about as a goat-legged man.

IT WAS a strange, a pitiful procession that wound across the valley that was the Mediterranean, and across the plains that were then the Sahara, and on inward to the lands that surrounded Memphis, their goal. For there a relative, a brother of Jupiter named Osiris, was the mighty ray-ruler of the caverns underlying all Egypt, and the custom of playing god was one he subscribed to as fully as the Olympians.

In the lead went Pan, limping on his soft hooves and leaning upon the arm of the faithful Pythis, for he was the only one of them that had even a half-human form, except Venus, and the gifted tongue to explain their divine nature in such a way as to avoid for them injury by hunters or by those who would be pleased to catch the often-hated and despised gods of Olympus in such a predicament. Pythis was much too timid and unlearned a creature to do such explaining as their peculiar form called for. And even Pan's nimble tongue was somewhat sprained with making plausible the story that they had escaped the anger of the giants when caught off guard by assuming the form of goats. For the truth was a much too ignominious story ever to get to a mortal's ears concerning the divine Godhead and his Pantheon.

Their conversation as they wound wearily across the endless plains was confined to a series of sorry baaaa's and a dialogue between Pan and Pythis. Echo, who had hidden from the giants, now accompanied them at a distance, and her plaintive voice often involuntarily mimicked their conversation, but she would not approach.

As the weeks of their pilgrimage into exile wore on, a shaggy fur covered the naked, sunburned backs of the goat-gods, and their soft hooves hardened to the stony trail.

The hills above Memphis were green then, and not eroded desert. The goats that were not goats paused to crop the fresh grass, but Pan urged them on toward the great sculptured figures of Osiris and Isis that flanked the rock-hewn entrance to Egypt's vast underworld.

They were a sorry lot of travel-worn billys and nannys. Nearly a year of toil, danger and hiding from the arrows of the hunters lay behind them. Venus' lovely body was burned a deep bronze. Her once sleek softness was now a lean and weary lankness. Her mystic girdle, which still cast its magic spell over the eyes of all humankind so well that it had nigh been the death of them all more than once from pursuing amorous males eager to acquire her charms, fitted now loosely upon her shrunken hips. Pan, soothing her harassed spirits, said:

"Venus, your looks have improved with the loss of a little unneeded flesh. A few days of rest and food and transfusions of precious ichor in those thirsty veins, and that immortal beauty of yours will be greater than ever."

EVEN as they descended into the Egyptian underworld, Enceladus, the conqueror, was descending into Pluto's caverns in the north of Greece. His intent—to burn a swathe of death and destruction through the whole of that dread realm. The ways leading north from Olympus in the under-rock were choked with the giants and their now augmented array of fear. Choking, too, were their great hearts with anger



and battle ardor, for they meant to leave no man of all Pluto's hordes unaware of the dangers of enslaving giants.

MIGHTY OSIRIS sat upon the Sun-throne, leaning to talk to his gigantic half-brother, Typhon. About the two throbbed sensuous, Dionysian music. The soft feet of hovering dancing girls lifted and slid whispering on the stone, their gauze-shadowed figures twining in the shameless dances of old Egypt. Upon Osiris' head rested the mystic mitred cap, symbol of his awful power over the lives and the after-lives of the souls of all Egypt. In his hand he held the whip with the three evilly barbed thongs. And at his side stood the dark, towering strength of Typhon, half-giant, half-brother to Osiris. Osiris was a full brother to Jupiter. There was scant love between Typhon and Osiris, but so far their relations had not lacked courtesy.

Isis, her lovely veiled form beside her husband and Lord, watched the dark, moody face of her relative, Typhon, her face unreadable. She distrusted him, yet had been unable to find reason for her distrust. Typhon was wise enough to bide his time, and enmity to Osiris or Isis was the last thought he admitted to his mind in their presence.

Osiris was clad in the white, soft, concealing robes of the Egyptian priesthood. Typhon wore the greaves, breast-plate and sword of the Egyptian warrior. His dark-skinned face set in a cynical mold, relieved by a humorous twist of the lips, Typhon carried on a light entertaining banter with the two who held his fortunes in their hands. Typhon was an opportunist. Osiris' face was rather mild. He was much slighter than his brother, Jupiter, and a great deal smaller than the half-giant, Typhon. But the limitless power which he had grown accustomed to wielding over life and death had given Osiris a look of strength from consciousness of superiority.

Like Jupiter in the North, Osiris held in a stupefied thrall all the peoples of Upper and Lower Egypt and the surrounding territories. He was the God of Gods, the omnipotent and omniscient ruler of all. Of course, like Jupiter, he was so only because he had been raised since a child in the Elder-world of caverns of the great race who preceded men upon Earth. Osiris in his heart believed with the ignorant people under him the ancient race had created men from mere mud with their magic. But then Osiris had reason for believing in their magical power. Had he not seen the machines they left perform ever more startling miracles—and caused such machines to obey his own hands.

With such machines defying time and the elements, sitting in everlasting magnificence about the endless tiers and labyrinthine windings of his underworld realm, miracles could be accomplished which made the ignorant men of the surface worship Osiris as a God. Why should he quarrel with fate? Osiris accepted his good fortune and sat with his Queen, Isis, in state.

Like Jupiter, Osiris and his followers were the products of a way of life that had produced a parasitical, profligate and often demoniacal rule in the caverns. That this was not true under his guiding hand was to his credit. But there was no need for thought or true effort. All the means of life were provided by the wonder work of the ancient peoples who had gone before—and by the slavish and adoring labors of the peoples who worshipped Osiris and his followers as divine immortals.

Osiris was not a bad fellow, in his way. A huge man like Jupiter, but of a softer, kinder way. He was also wiser and possessed of a much greater cunning. As the sorry Olympian goat herd filled into his throne room, led by the travel-worn Pan, his laughter began. As his eyes picked out and recognized the well-known, but now distorted faces of the men and women he had known for centuries of wild licentious living, friends recognizable with difficulty even through the work of the converter, he called out the name of the victim, and burst into a fresh roar of mirth. Coming down from his throne, he bent over each goateed face and pulled the little beard, saying:

“Mars, I would never have known you! Ha ha ha ho ho ho HO! Jupe, you old two-timing fraud, I wouldn’t have recognized you except for that guilty look in your eye. Ha ah—mighty Jupiter Mechaneus, to come to this! I weep for you, I do indeed! HO HO HO. Here’s a sight the sons of men would give their much valued ‘souls’ to see! The All-father wagging his beard like any poor muddle-witted goat, and bleating for help from his brother Osiris. And Juno, chewing her cud! My dear Juno, don’t you think it’s a bit vulgar to show yourself in this condition. And my irresistible Venus, done up in chains upon the back of a mangy goat; and the goat her much-admired champion, the mighty Mars. It’s all just too, too much!” Osiris sank upon his tall throne again, too weak with laughter to stand.

PAN, the only one of them with the oral apparatus left intact to plead their case, spoke carefully and at length.

“Mighty Osiris, the fate that has befallen us may well reach out from Greece, do these Gigantes go unchecked. Even now they may be rumbling across the plains or through the great underworld tubes to deal you the same fate. It might be wisdom as well as mercy to give us back our rightful forms with your own antique mechanisms, and get all our forces and allies together and ready ourselves for a long war. This may look like a joke, but it has a most serious side, I assure you. The more the Gigante race considers its success over the Olympian power, the more apt they are to decide it necessary to treat all who ape the Elder Gods and oppress the men of the surface world by their rule in the same way. This Enceladus would let the men of mortal kind into the caverns, give them the formulae for ichor, teach them to pump the age out of their bodies with the transfusion apparatus. He would show them the ‘Meccano’ of the Elder race with which we work our ‘divine’ miracles. He would give away the whole game of god-rule to all mortal men.”

Osiris bent toward Pan and rested his square Egyptian beard in his hand, looking long and thoughtfully into Pan’s sun-scorched face. Pan’s sharp eyes stared back into his own full of imperative warning. Truly, the Gods were in peril of loss of their dominion over man!

Mighty Osiris came swiftly to a decision, and with decision came action. Soon the great generators of the intricate mechanism of the converter were roaring a song of power. Energy surged into the cables to a cabinet of similar appearance to that the giants had used in the Olympian mount.

WHILE Osiris was returning the Olympians to their original forms, a strange and beautiful meeting took place between two of the greatest women on Earth at the time.

Isis, the long transparent veils of her Egyptian dress clinging to and trailing over a form quite as divine as Venus at her best, rose from her throne beside her Master, and with cat-like grace still renowned today stepped down toward Venus where she sat disconsolate on the back of the red goat, Mars.

Signing to a slave, she had the chains struck from her legs, and as the lovely stiffened body of Venus nearly toppled from her perch with relief and the agony of motion in her limbs, she supported her with one slender, rosy arm. You can talk of antique grace, of antique sculpture—the real-life forms of those two who inspired more worship in men than any other two women in man’s memory outstripped all the imaginative labor that has gone into their veneration since their passing. Isis, slightly taller than Venus, her arm around the haggard beauty, kissed her gravely on the forehead, and Venus, in sheer gratitude raised the lovely jeweled hand to her lips. The two women went softly from the throne room to Isis’ quarters, and the toilet of Venus assisted by Isis was one that even Reubens would have hesitated to raise a brush to conquer. As they left, Diana, still in her cat form, stalked majestically after.

As Venus reclined on a great couch, Isis rubbed her nude form with soothing oils after washing off the

dust and grime of nearly a year-long ride on the back of a goat. Over the two figures streamed the beneficial rays from a dozen great Elder-made ray-lamps, and anyone who knows ray of the antique make, knows what those rays do for beauty. Their naturally intense beauty thus enhanced by those rays that are themselves the distilled essence of the vibrations given off by healthy animal-cell activity, that are themselves the essence of beauty made into a ray, made the scene one to daunt the pen of the most confident and ambitious scribe.

Isis' chambers were those which had once been the home of a great queen of the time of the Elder race, and all about the walls the abstract images of basic erotic forms, the pistil of the flower, the corolla of growth, the combined forms of all complementary generative life organs were heterogeneously depicted in colored rock sculptures of bas-relief. Through this mirror-reflected phantasmagoria of the mental images of the source of all love in all life moved the two graceful women, one ministering to the needs of the other, and beside them crouched the great graceful body of Diana in the form of a lynx. Before her oval mirror of a magical, mystic depth—a mirror that magnified all that it reflected without ever losing one iota of the charm of the image—Isis combed tirelessly at the long, tangled, gold hair of Venus, who leaned back in the tall chair wrought of slender entwined golden rods, her throat thrown back and all her graceful tapering form relaxed in weariness. The long hair, tangled, hung to the floor, her dark shadowed eyes closed in deadly weariness. Diana, watching, closed her long slanting lynx eyes in sleep.

Beside the three immortal women stood the tall, slim-legged Nubian slave girl, holding a tray of unguents and pins for Isis' weaving hands at work on the hair of Venus.

THE Olympians gratefully resumed their natural forms. They were not the same forms they had had from the natural growth of centuries of culture with the ichor of the Elder Races' medical storehouses, not the forms that time and the Elder wisdom had combined to give them, but they approximated human form again and they were grateful.

Long into the night their council of war sat, and many were the plans they considered for the overthrow of the horde of Gigantes who had kicked the Olympians from the sacred Mount. The ignominy of the transformation into goats must be paid for. The debt of blood to Enceladus and all the mighty race of Prometheus must be wiped out. Their plans began to take shape before them upon the great thought projection screens that made such thinking easy for them. The whole future of the business of godding it over the human race from the safety of the Elder world caverns, powerfully equipped subterranean fortresses where the wrath of their dupes could never reach them, was at stake. If Enceladus had his way, the pursuit of divine fraud might no longer be practical.

*That night, the whole future of man on earth was undermined, and from that conference's results the race of man has not yet recovered. Not yet has man won the ancient gifts left him by his creators. For the fraudulent Latter Gods prepared there a trap to engulf forever the Promethean efforts of the race of giants to bring the light of the ancient wisdom from the Elder records into men's hands. All the accounts of their humiliation and exposure to the eyes of men as mere puny tricksters and not divine ethereal immortals at all must be wiped out. That night was quite some thousands of years ago, and still man has not recovered from the results of that discussion.*

SLEEP, in the soft, black, beneficial rays of the Elder Gods' abandoned sleep chambers, with all their nigh magical aids to the recuperative activity of the human flesh. Soft, blanking rays to wipe the worry from a woman's mind, to wipe the fatigue poisons from the fabric of her body. Strong, stimulative rays to bring on an ecstatic half-conscious drowse during which the records of wisdom and divine living of the

ancient past when the world was a true paradise passed through the mind.

Venus' stiffened body sank wearily into this enchanting voluptuous rest that the Elder Gods alone knew how to produce.

And as she slept, the ancient magic of the girdling zone about her waist recharged its potent microcosmic reservoirs with the essence of female fascination that had made Venus the power among the Gods that she was. Her body that was desired so by all mankind's dreams as well as by the dissolute Gods themselves, recharged its living cell batteries to a slight imitation of the ancient Elder appearance of beauty and power. For the machines of these Elder God caverns could make even these Latter Gods appear as gods, though their lesser and often evil natures made their attempts at god stature the fraud it was.

As Mars, too, sank into the ecstatic dreamland that the sleeping chambers provided, as Mars accepted the soothing rays upon his coarse, brawny body, he champed his great teeth and clenched his broad hands in fierce inner resolves of dire vengeance upon the warriors who had made of the god of war a bleating billy-goat.

And as Jupiter Mechaneus sank into a sweet slumber of oblivion upon a couch as soft as a summer cloud, the bloody visions in his mind would have made even Enceladus shudder with a chill to the bone. For Jupiter meant to leave no giant alive on all the earth. And that vindictive latter god meant just that evil with his whole being. Just as he had slain Prometheus for giving the light of the ancient wisdom to the people above, so would he slay every last Gigante on all the earth if he could—but could he? His dreams were troubled by alternate fits of shivering, fearful visualizations of his fate did Enceladus get hold of him a second time with guilty hands. These fear fits were followed by hoped-for bloody scenes of carnage upon the bodies of the giants.

Jupiter Mechaneus was somewhat of a madman, were the truth known.

And as Pan's weary body settled at last to rest, his mind shook itself free of its sensing of future vast impending doom for all the bright, lazy future of the god race—and thought of Echo's sweet face, of Amphitryon, the sea nymph, who might someday be his. And as he mentally cursed young Cupid for shooting him with the hypno-stim fixation for Echo—whom no man could love satisfyingly—a soft vision of some unknown but terrifically beautiful female rose in his mind and spoke to him. It was but a record from the antique schooling, had Pan but known it—but Pan was asleep. And the vision said:

“Dear man, these things you think are not correct, but logic has another thing to say. You must strive for a place in life for each life-unit or you will help to set up a state of action in which your own place in life is insecure. To love me, you must love all men; to do yourself justice, you must make justice a right obtained by each life-unit.”

And Pan slept pondering these peculiar words and visions and gradually in his sleeping mind arose a great revulsion for the role he was playing as aid and abettor to the fraudulent depriving of all men of the value of the wisdom and machinery left by the Elder race. And in Pan arose a strange resolve to accomplish some other end in life than Jupiter's selfish will, which became a living part of him. And as the vision of the Elder-wise woman vanished from his mind, Pan dreamed of setting the hypno-stim himself and freeing himself from synthetic love impulses and learning to love and think anew for himself. Pan wondered if he did so if loyal Pythis would not be the gainer.

But then one could always secure the upperworld females for the price of a few minutes at the hypno-stim beams. One could have as many willing slaves as one wanted. But they were so apt to turn against one when the full understanding of the false nature of the gods came to upset their idealization of the god-life. Then, if they had learned overmuch of the workings of the Elder machine they were apt to

try to kill every one of the gods they could reach with a dis-beam. Consequently Jupiter had forbade the importation of such dangerous people into his caverns. But he did it himself, changing them into some animal when he was through with them. It wasn't safe to disapprove of Jupiter, but Pan did, anyway... and Pan snored.

MORNING again, weeks after the Olympians had resumed their human shape and their usual opposition to all human aims. Restored by the transfusions of ichor, the antique formula for a synthetic blood which neutralized the age poisons, a blood that could be charged over a long period with all the vital electric essences of life-nutrients and then pumped into the veins to replace the blood, they planned busily the coming invasion of the lands and the caverns under the lands now held by the Gigantes.

It was a terrific project to contemplate for several reasons. The chief reason was weight and the second was distance. They had weapons vast enough and powerful enough to defeat anything they had seen in possession of Enceladus' horde, but they had neither the giants' muscles for moving such weights, nor had they the means to replace the giants' strength. The distance over which they must transport such siege apparatus was much greater than had been Enceladus'. Most of their power equipment, built by the huge Elder race, was of such a nature they couldn't use it for pulling weights over long distances—just as a child can't drive a truck and trailer. The giants *could* handle such huge, wheeled vehicles by reason of their superior strength.

Pan's cunning, curly, now goat-horned head was busy. The process of conversion which half his body had missed seemed to have done him good, and his head seemed to be in better thinking order than ever—though the essence of goat growth that pulsed now through his half-human form seemed to be determined on growing horns on his head. Venus had noticed that he got a little more goatish every day, but she held her tongue. Of them all, she had the greatest liking and respect for Pan.

Pan took his troubles to Osiris.

"It seems to me we aren't going at this thing the right way."

Osiris listened with care, for the coming and unavoidable war was on his mind too.

"Instead of making all these efforts ourselves, the correct method of ridding ourselves of this threat is the simple and obvious trap. Enceladus is impulsive, he thinks he has the whole god race where he wants them, and his overconfidence should be usable to lead him into a morass."

As Pan talked, his memory conjured up a vision of a strangely beautiful woman, who tried to stop his efforts to figure out a trap for the giants. Pan did not realize he had developed a conscience.

Osiris took up the theme Pan had begun.

"Suppose I send an ambassador to Enceladus with insulting terms for a peace treaty, such terms in it that the only alternative will be war. Then he will attack. The distance he will have to travel to get at us here will necessarily limit his equipment, as well as to some extent his resources. The longer an army's supply lines, the less apt is the army to be well supplied. Our game must be to get Enceladus to attack and to get him to attack we must infuriate him. We must offer an opening, make believe we will be in a spot if he attacks. Do you agree?"

"Yes, I agree, my Lord Osiris, but that fat-head, your brother, Jupe, what will he say?"

"Leave him to me; he'll agree. Meanwhile set about recruiting and buying of weapon mech from wherever it may be obtained. Send a dozen buyers to the farthest caverns for the finding of rare and powerful weapons. I should have such men out all the time anyway."

“There are many places one can turn to get war gear, and they will fear not to give it to us. That is, not knowing what has happened to us recently.” Pan grinned at Osiris, for keeping the secret of the debacle of the Olympians had kept scores of ray agents, wide-thrown across Africa and Asia Minor, busy with lies and counter-explanations for the flight of the Olympians to Egypt. It was well for them that Osiris saw that the whole future of godding it over mankind was at stake, else ignominy would have been their daily fare, and power a thing of the past.

BUT their concern over the means of getting Enceladus to attack them in Egypt might have been avoided. For even as they talked, Enceladus turned from his war with Pluto as his losses mounted and the desperate resistance of Pluto made the thing more costly than it was worth. Enceladus had a love for his men, and preferred to gamble their lives where the loss was compensated for by a gain for all mankind. Now, through the great ways that led underground across the Mediterranean valley, and under the mountains of the coastal region of Africa, moved the awful might of the whole assembly of Gigantes. A way shorter by far than the overland journey the Olympians had been forced to make in their goat shapes. For the entrances to the underworld are few and no goat could have forced an entrance. The Elder caverns are guarded by great magical doors which opened only to certain sounds made on pitch pipes—as well as by those groups of ray warriors who make their homes about the entrances and prey upon all men with impunity, having a safe place where no man can find them. The wheels of the mighty ancient vehicles, powered by the mysterious motors whose fuel never gave out, did not sink in these hard underworld roads hewn out from the basalt firmament of the world’s birth.

Enceladus had chosen the upper-world for his attack upon the Olympian mount for the sake of surprise to be achieved in no other way, for the underworld ways were guarded—and his surprise attack had been successful.

But for the long road to Osiris’ Egyptian empire, he chose the underworld ways, straight as a string and wide as a river, for the wheels of his war-ray.

So it was that even as Osiris and wily young Pan discussed how to entrap Enceladus, the Gigante leader was laying the groundwork for a campaign to round up all the god-frauds that infested the world of man.

Colorful, these giants, broad of beam, vast of frame, their good-natured faces always split in a wide, big-toothed grin, their long yellow hair braided and hung with bits of ribbon or glittering gew-gaws inserted by the hands of their women, their arms always ready to give each the other a help with the work. No sneering superiority to the little mortal men of the surface upon their faces ever; and in fact among them moved often the slight frames and quick, small feet of some surface men, invited to accompany them for the sake of learning the ways of the antique world.

Enceladus had ideas about the future that included the training and use of these swarming bright-faced children of the sun-burnt upper world.

A river of living force flowing through the vast tubes toward Africa, a river of gigantic laughter and terrific effort, of vast, wheeled mechanisms that even the wisest of them could never have repaired had they broken. But the work of the Elder race seldom was known to need repair. Machines of great complexity were known to have been in constant use for centuries and their confidence in the leftover gear of the Elder people was not misplaced.

Truth was, the Elder Ones had been of gigantic stature, and the Olympians’ claim to godhood was not nearly so valid as that of the giant race, who were truer sons of the ancients by the evidence of their size, obviously of more direct descent from the original Elder gods of earth.

The rumble of the vast wheels within the echoing rock tubes, the giants' voices a soft thunder of purpose, the chatter of the accompanying small wights from the surface, all eyes and observation for the chance to see the gods or the giants at their mysterious warrings and doings under the rocky shell of Mother Earth, was one whose excitement and mystery kept their blood at fever heat. The soft, tinkling laughs of the few surface women, the greater, more alive and vibrant songs and laughter of the women of the giant race—the giants were a vast and happy throng on their way to domination of the world for its good. The giants meant to eliminate forever the repressions and cruelties, the mysticism and misteaching of the frauds who had dominated earth to its detriment since that sad day the Elder race had abandoned Earth.

UNDER Memphis, news of the on-sweeping horde at last reached the ears of Osiris and his guest Olympians. Jupiter's knees began their so annoying knocking again, for Enceladus' intrepid habit of taking the play out of his hands was too much for the All-father. The news called for a drastic change of plans, and for immediate and complete action. Crews were set to work blocking all the ancient ways from the north. Great walls were built across all the tubes from the northern caverns. But even as they were raised Jupiter's too correct imagination saw the vast strength of the giants' engines pushing them over like children's blocks. Great dis-cannon ray were set behind each new-built wall. The least movement on the far side would set them going, and the arc of movement was welded so the giants, even if they managed to capture the atomic weapons, could not immediately turn them on the Egyptians. But as they worked, Osiris and Pan saw that nothing they could do in that way would be enough. The vast power of the Gigantes, equipped as they were with mightier weapons than the slighter-framed Gods could handle, would be their downfall.

Osiris called a halt. After a whispered conference, the Egyptians as well as the Olympians were ordered to gather together their belongings for flight. Except for Osiris, Pan and Jupiter, none of them could understand the reason for their flight, unless their suspicions that the Godheads were wholly turned craven were correct. As the last of their people rumbled off on the ancient rollat cargo carriers toward the southern underworld, Pan and the two brothers who were seemingly losing forever their absolute rule over more than half the known world, got busy. With the help of a dozen slaves they had retained from the general exodus, they began to roll scores of peculiar cylindrical containers from the ancient sealed warehouses of the Elder races. In such stores of unknown merchandise and goods of all kinds could be found some fantastic and unbelievable materials.

These cylinders they hid about the chambers which had been used by Osiris for his palace: under his huge sun-throne, behind the nude statues that simulated the titanic majesty of beauty of the Elder race in the niches of the chambers, wherever a cylinder could be hidden from the casual eye by any subtle device so that its true nature would not be grasped by the careless giants. On some of the cylinders Pan mounted tiny lights with shades so that they might be mistaken for lamp stands.

On the outlet cock of each cylinder Osiris personally placed a tiny mechanism, looking somewhat like a modern wrist watch. He spent much of the little time remaining to them adjusting each of the face dials to the same setting. Then, even as the far rumble of the approaching horde's vehicles struck their ears they mounted a swift passenger rollat and spun off down the smooth-floored tubes to join the retreat of their people. And the giants moved victoriously into the domain of Osiris as they had into Olympus, without armed resistance.

It was a happy victory for them. Disappointed and discouraged by the inconclusive nature of their battles with Pluto's impregnable cavern fortresses, this easy victory was a needed spur to their spirit. Again they had defeated the once dreaded gods' might without a blow being struck. It was true that the so-called gods had little stomach for a real fight. They had driven the giants to desperation and then could not face that desperation. Well, so be it.

From here on, godding will be a different racket than it has been in the past, mused Enceladus, seated on the great rayed sun-throne of the powerful Osiris. The blood that flowed through Osiris' veins had proven as craven as that in his brother's, Jupiter.

"Mechaneus!" snorted Enceladus, "He knows about as much of the antique wizard mechanical science as a bull-frog of flying."

ON A GREAT, black bear skin before the flaming gold of the sun-throne, Enceladus' mate, the huge and lusty beauty, Fayal, played with their son. Rolling and hugging his rosy, active rotundity, she laughed deep in her throat.

Osiris' stores of rich-spiced Egyptian wines, blue and sparkling inwardly with tiny, flashing bubbles of light, was flowing freely into many a vast goblet in brawny giant hands about the throne room. Meats were roasting over the heat rods all about the endless and rich chambers of Osiris' many-tunneled antique den. The great giant children ran and screamed in play everywhere, swung upon the gold-worked hangings with their Ibis and their nude girlish figures and hawks and papyrus worked into them in endless detail. They Squabbled at marbles, played with the jewels from Osiris' coffers, or played at leap-frog on the soft, rich beds of Osiris' harem.

Enceladus leaned back in satiate contemplation of his newly won richness of being, his great, black-bristled hand held aloft a tall horn of the mead from the Elders' ancient stores of drink—that drink called nectar of old-time and highly valued because of its tremendous exhilarating and nourishing qualities. Enceladus drank deep to the future of all brave men everywhere and vowed to let no secretive, furtive god-gang ever again rest in evil monopoly of the fruits of the antique wisdom. And even as he planned to set broadcast to every scholar in the known world the antique writings explaining the formulas and methods used to obtain surcease from age and death, to give to all mortals everywhere the ancient secrets of defeating age by the use of ichor and extraction by magnetic rays of the age cause from the body of man—even as these mighty and benevolent plans revolved in his exhilarated mind—repeated unheard clicks came softly from the devilish mechanisms Osiris had set upon the mysterious cylinders from the vaults of the ancient laboratories.

A gray, almost invisible gas stole softly hissing from the cylinders to mingle with the close air of the cavern stealthily, undiscernibly! And with the gas into the many-roomed cavern of vast antique beauty and wizardry came the spirit called Death and perched upon the back of Enceladus' new-won throne.

Sleep came gently to the race of Gigantes, now here, now there they laid them wearily down to rest. And Enceladus' great, kind head nodded tiredly over his table-wide shoulders where he sat, clad in the shining antique ray-proof metal. His terrible limbs, long-muscled and relaxed, stretched out, and he smiled sleepily down upon his wife's huge alluring beauty where she slept near-nude upon a bearskin at his feet. His son prattled busily at his play and pulled at the golden braids of fine hair about his mother's sleeping dear face, until his active, strong, little limbs at last ceased their sport and the ever-sleep came and sat on his eyelids.

The weird, stony faces of the alien Elder race stared quietly, aghast at the spectacle of the silent, ruthless murder of a whole race—and seemed to try to tug a release from the stone bodies the vanished artist had given them.

And the mighty life-power of them *did* conquer the stony grasp in which their enigmatic likenesses were encased, to tug a release that fate denied them. The life force of the Elder Gods that day *did* tug some kind of release or freedom from the rocks of the ancient city tunnels, and came down to the dying Gigantes who were their true sons and wakened them one by one from the death-sleep that claimed them. Something weird and kindly brushed softly against the cheek of dying Enceladus, and with an effort



that shook his limbs like palsy he stood erect and tottered to the bode-horn where it hung above his dying woman and blew a great rolling ware-note from it.

SO WITH Death itself wrapping about their limbs and chaining the vast life-strength in them, Enceladus and a score of his strongest loaded the bodies of his people into as many great rollats and set them churning down the great tube-ways toward the north.

So it was that Enceladus fled from the gods he despised, and found himself with some dozen rollats and five score giants in them, and but fifty or so able warriors and the rest women and children, all that were left about him in his direction of flight—and for all he knew all that were left alive of the victorious horde that had come so happily south.

The tears in their eyes obscured their driving, and reckless were their hands upon the great wheel guides of the antique rollats. Fast behind them their sweeping penetrative rays revealed the armies of Osiris and the vengeful band of Olympians, unsated by the death of the mass of the giants, still athirst for the blood of the last of the survivors.

Northward and northward the huge wheeled Gigante rollats sped. Now and then a lucky distance shot dropped a man or shattered a rollat and their force grew smaller. Floors level as water—still water—the great river-wide tubes bored by the vast science of the Elder races were ideal for speed on wheels. The atomic-dis motors fueled forever by the magic of the ancients that made a piece of rock become everlasting power sources—there was no limit to the speed or distance these magic chariots of the true gods could travel on the roads for which they were designed. The chase mounted in speed and the distance became vast behind them where lay their brothers and friends, murdered by the stealthy gas of Osiris.

The Egyptians had spread, as they passed Y after Y of the tubes, to encircle the whole rear of their flight and there was no doubling back. Now the Egyptians had sent speedy rollats around their Gigante wide-ranging ray-fire, which they feared to approach closely, to head off their flight from Greece where a force of giants waited in Olympus and in their further home. This encirclement nearly complete, Enceladus had made an opening with his murderously accurate fire and plunged through, his dis-cannons blazing in desperation, toward the lands now called Italy, then but a range of mountains above the Mediterranean valley. Three miles down under the solid basalt these surface details meant but little, but Enceladus was aware that he had been cut off from his home bases and must fare northward into the unknown caverns of Italy and Spain and circle back toward Greece. But Enceladus lacked the knowledge that all these caverns to the north were filled with the lava of Mt. Etna, poisonous with smoke and deadly volcanic gas accumulations, though his nose at last told him what his wisdom had not taught him.

ENCELADUS came to a dead stop, for volcanos in the cavern world are feared and understood; one cannot even approach them in the great underworld tubes, for the collected gases are deadly. Furiously the last of the Gigante chieftains wheeled his great antique war-ray rollat tank about, and setting all his rays at extreme-distance focus, leveling every weapon carefully at breast height, he charged back upon the Egyptians, every autoray-cannon blazing its own arc of death. Beside him his brothers swept the great master weapon of the tank across the whole circle of enemy ray, and Egyptians' screaming and shattered bodies littered the floor in their wrecked vehicles as he crashed through the line of blazing death ray that had thought to pin him to the flaming breast of Mt. Etna's underworld fires.

There was no escape, and well Enceladus knew it. There was no way now to flee, for he could not turn his back and run; he was in too close range. On two wheels the huge motor tank war-ray, a Titan's most deadly tool of motile war, wheeled and again cut back through the ranks of Osiris' minions, seeking out the Olympians to take them with him into death. But far to the rear came lumbering the Egyptian and

Olympian pantheons, sheathed in the best of Osiris' armor for ray, and careful to stay well behind the pursuit. Again Enceladus turned and wound through the endless labyrinths about the volcanic fires, hoping that the fear of the volcanic gases might hold back pursuit. But quartering as he must to keep his cannon mouths flaming at the enemy—for to let them time to get a fixed focus upon his speeding, death-dealing chariot was his end—he could not elude them.

But Enceladus had somehow lost the hand of fortune for ahead the great tube closed in a welter of slow-flowing flame that was the blood of Etna, seething here far below. Tiny needles of force ate now at his mind, for the far-ranging view rays can be used to project tiny cutting needles of fire, and behind him now exploded too the bolts of the dis-ray nearer and nearer. A flashing barricade of force rays barred every way but the way into the heart of the volcano. With all the strength of his great body resisting the floods of weakness from the detrimental rays of the Egyptian projectors, his mind ablu with the tiny needles of fire cutting away the sense in his mind, his eyes blinded with sweat and smoke and deadly gases, Enceladus still fought on as the terrible lances of fiery doom stabbed ever nearer, spears of approaching doom.

Behind the circle of war-mech slowly closing on the last of the sons of Coelus and Terra, Jupiter brought up now the slower but heavier ray-weapons, to clinch at last the irons of death upon the struggling giant who refused to accept defeat.

TYPHON, his heavy black brows and great lean face inscrutable, had stood silently by his brother through all the turmoil of the coming of the Olympians and the onslaught of the Gigantes. Now, when the order for retreat had been given, he had taken the dismissing nod of his cunning brother as an order to leave, and had accompanied the palace household and guard as it sped through the ways, clogged as they were with the confusion of wheeled mechanisms and armed soldiery which were the great armies of Osiris withdrawing from the prepared defenses. Typhon was biding his time, but that time had somehow seemed to descend so swiftly upon him that he doubted his ability to judge the moment. As his chariot jockeyed its way through the press of men and gear toward the rear, he nodded inscrutably to this officer—and had Osiris seen and interpreted these exchanged looks, it would have meant his head. But Typhon was an opportunist and he must be ready.

When the sudden news of the gas death of the bulk of the invading giants reached Typhon, he knew his moment had come. For Osiris had set out in pursuit of the fleeing remnants of Enceladus' mighty force, and the army of Egyptians was in his hands, his command. For Osiris, in his excitement at sudden success, had called up but a few of the great wheeled war-mech to pursue the fleeing giants, had not even inquired as to who should stay and who go. And those officers who had delayed in joining the pursuit were his men—Typhon's—for his hour had struck.

Swiftly Typhon drew his men about him, and with much idle chatter to cover their intent, they mounted the vast-wheeled bulk of the war-ray that was the far-reaching weapon which was to hold in awe and fear all the army of Osiris. For with it they could reach and kill every man in all that array of power. Swift the daggers plied as Typhon and his rebel officers took over this mighty weapon of the Elder people, and swift they were to swing the great sighting rays upon each doubtful man who they thought might have a dangerous loyalty to Osiris. Within minutes there were no high ranking officers alive who had not previously sworn to serve Typhon's vaulting ambition.

“Now, when my dear brother returns, we will have a hot reception ready for him, eh! We'll take his orders, his paltry gifts, no more. Death to Osiris, I say!” Typhon's black brows wore murder as if the garment fitted well, and the bloodthirsty glance he bent upon his lesser-bodied followers was agleam with a lust to find one of them of a mind to balk him. His full lips hung open slackly, and a slight twist to his mouth gave his face the killer's look. He held all that host, that army in the palm of his hand, with his

fingers on the huge sighting levers of the vast war-ray, and the feel of power was good. He meant to hold it so, for so long as vigilance would keep it there.

Swiftly the great army toiled, setting all the confusion of gear the giants had brought there to rights, activating the tremendous war-ray of Enceladus, setting all of them apoint upon the north ways that Osiris would return upon, a vastly greater mass of ray-mech than even Typhon had ever seen in use at one time before. All of Osiris' centuries of collecting of the antique weapons through all the underworld, plus the superior weapons the Gigante's army had brought, made for Typhon an array of power that no other in the underworld had ever had under his command.

The gleaming, intricate enigmas of the Elder science, all pointing their terrible snouts toward the north; the silently waiting warriors, swinging their view rays' forty and fifty miles range in wide arcs across the whole vast vault of tremendous ancient buildings; tier on tier of roads and mansions of metal and rock; every tiny pathway and every great, river-wide road from the north, was watched by a dozen great penetrative eyes, bringing into magnetic focus even the dust on the far roads. Not a rat scurried across the field of vision, thirty miles away, that was not noted by Typhon's warriors. He did not mean to drop this plum of all Egypt that had suddenly fallen into his lap. Not Typhon.

NOW at last Jupiter had his enemy on the crosshairs of the deadliest weapon in all that vast array of machines. With savage, snarling pleasure the "All-father" swung the firing lever down to the full-on pin. The dread flow of positronic force leaped out, engulfing the whole mass of the war-tank with Enceladus and his wife and son, his brother and three great giant warriors—and the whole mass shrunk and coiled swiftly into many little bloody curlicues of flesh and metal, torn asunder by the mighty twisting magnetic whorls of the dread flow of awful force. Pan turned his back upon the scene and upon the murderous set face of Jupiter his leader, and as he vomited his eyes were wet with strange uncalled tears; for Pan knew now surely that the ways of the gods were wrong. But what could a man do?

NOW the dark came slowly upon the scene of the last struggle of the Giants against the ignorance that was wiping out all the wisdom left for men by his parent race, as the blazing arcs of steady fire from the sweeping auto-fire rays were shut off one by one. Down the far ways the lights from the watch rays went out, and over all the scene but one or two kept watch while camp was made, water brought, and beds prepared. Far above the caverns, on the surface world, night too came down softly, slowly spreading her great dark-feathered wings of blackness over the death of the leader of a race that loved men, a mighty race—and her mothering face was wet with tears, or was it rain?

The gold rings in the ears of Venus sparkled redly in the fitfully flaring far-fires of the molten lava flows, spreading a harsh blood-red light over the Olympians' encampment. Above them reared the fire-ruined facades of the enigmatic, alien antique mansions, so huge they were not homes to men. The great ray-tanks were drawn up in rows as far as the eye could reach, and here and there cook fires shone through the hot dark.

The girdling mysterious ornament that was Venus' zone moved enticingly with swaying hips as she sidled up to Mars. The great-bodied warrior's face softened into the look of an adoring slave.

"The big booby," growled Vulcan. "She winds him around her fingers more easily than she does me."

Pan murmured consolingly into Vulcan's ear, where he sat beside him on the polished granite of the fallen stonework. The red and white veinings in the stone writhed in the strange fell light from the far volcanic fires like living snakes speaking the forgotten magical tongue with the shapings of their bodies.

"So does Pythis with me, as she pleases. It is woman's way, and stupidity alone would have it

otherwise. Where there is love, there is betrayal, and pain and jealousy to tell that love lives. As long as love lives, life will contain interest. Would you have it otherwise?"

"Yes!" snarled Vulcan and clumped limping off to his chariot. The night rang for a moment with the furious thunder of his horse's hooves, for Vulcan was going home, alone.

Pan watched him sadly, and murmured:

"Vulcan, you are right! The gods are a bunch of traitors to all men, as Venus is to you. But tonight has shown me that Earth itself is accursed, for some foul reason. The gods are blind, are not good. Wise and mentally healthy men like yourself, Vulcan, and like fallen Enceladus, are likewise accursed, and their fine plans for men come to naught. The blindness that has been in my eyes has been lifted by some magic."

Pan, sitting alone, listening to the fire-shot darkness, picked up his syrinx and plaintively the dark quivered with the melancholy invitation to love that is Pan's alone. Pan's song said:

"Love today and find happiness, for tomorrow you die. For the ignorant gods have destroyed the wisdom that would have made life worthwhile—and what can you do about it?"

The white body of Echo, the nymph, stole softly and timidly from the great rollat where she had been hiding, and came and sat close to Pan, listening to his pipes. Pan touched her softly upon the arm with his hand, and she sat and stroked his back, staring moodily at the far fires.

*The night of ignorance for all men closed down darker than ever upon the exulting Olympians and centuries went by in that darkness. Now we know again what the gods are, and what they were, and what they hid from us, and what something like them still hides and is even less worthy than the pagan gods for that hiding.*

AFTER the sleep had gone from their eyes, the host that was Osiris' army took their leave from the Olympians and wound southward to meet their death at the hands of Typhon. The Olympians went north and east to Greece again, and eventually won back Olympus from the remaining giants. And in time they all died, and were well-nigh forgotten but for the blathering of scholar-mystics who believed in them.\* And later there was the further blather of scholars who thought them myths, personifications of natural forces, etc., etc. In truth little is definitely known about them except that they were extremely careless with whom they slept and by whom they had children, and that fact is pretty well vouched for. But the wisdom that they used to prolong their lives broods still in the forgotten records of the Elder people's vast cavern homes. One day those records may be deciphered and added to the pitiful store of useless knowledge we have acquired. May it prove more useful than is usual with such findings.

## **The End**

*\* The descendants of these fraudulent latter-gods did remain to rule the underworld and to keep their dog-in-the-manger secrets from all men. And their ignorant misuse of the mechanical and electrical wizardry of the ancients ended finally in such degeneration for their racial stock that they became known as the gnomes, the devils, the trolls, etc. And the underworld became known variously as Hell, the Elder World, Fairyland, Elf-land and what have you. Even today these devils and these gnomes exist, and of many of them it can be said that their every intent is toward destruction. But the spirit that animated Enceladus lives still among them, and is man's best friend. This battle between the principles that animated the giants against the evil selfishness of the latter-gods still goes on today in one form or another deep under our feet. And those of you who can find a way to help the white cause—beware the disillusion that paralyzes such effort. Prometheus' plans must some day be realized—be completed.*

## **Notes and proofing history**

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