Yellow Men Sleep

By JEREMY LANE

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"WHAT A WORLD."

Synopsis. — Cornelius Levington, well-born, an orphan, comes to manhood through the devious ways of the underworld. He is saved for a better life by Andrew March. The strange adventures of "Yellow Men Sleep" begin when Con takes by force a small leather sack from Chee Ming, the Chinese cook of an acquaintance. This sack contains a Chinese map of the Gobi desert, which is precious beyond price to Andrew March. Eighteen years before armed men in the Gobi had taken March's wife and infant daughter from him. Now he sends Con in search of them. On the voyage Con finds Chee Ming a fellow passenger. Con is shot by a poisoned dart, and while he is in the consequent stupor his map is stolen. On the river boat to Feking he again sees Chee Ming, and realizes they are seeking the same destination. Con keeps faith with Andrew March and starts on his mission westward with a caravan. After weeks of difficult travel he reaches the little settlement of Shan-sung and reads instructions from Andrew March to the effect that Con has been made a federal agent to search out Chee Ming, who has brought quantities of heroin, a deadly drug, to San Francisco. At Shan-sung Con is unexpectedly joined by March. The two Americans press forward into the desert. Armed horsemen swoop down on them, rob them of everything and leave them to die in the desert.

CHAPTER VI
—8—
Trespass.

This shred of a chance, half humorous, was deep-set in anger and loss. Sand was a rasp to their bodies, and the slashed clothing gave scant protection. Already, in imagination, Con was in need of a drink. The thought of brandy was a horror now, and the idea of clear, cool water like a knife in the throat. Andrew March sat down and studied the bottom of his foot.

"How much do you think," Con inquired, "in miles?"

"Oh, not so very far. If we only had one camel—"

"Yes—one with milk in her."

"Don't talk like that!" said the elder man, sharply.

The subject of drinkables was thus dismissed by the veterans, and Con bowed his head in acknowledgment.

Late in the day the sand-storm passed, and the air cleared. They went up along the vanes of sand, fresh drifted, out of the gully, to gaze at large upon their world—a prison as vast as the horizon circle.

"The white race could wander in here and get lost," said Andrew March.

"Let's not talk about getting lost, either," said Levington.

It was the elder man's turn to nod agreement.

The country was fantastic in formation and color, reddish hills running in rows ahead, like the spine of a world monster showing through. At intervals were cuts, showing the deeper layers of rocky blue and blood-color. Not so much as a dead twig anywhere, or a bird. The skyline was notched with tilted rocks. Levington could not help wondering how soon he would wither and dry up, to bleach beside some colorful boulder.

Pain was gripping him. It was neither grief nor illness, but the current of life, deeper than many are called to feel. He met it silently, with a fortitude that perhaps his mother and father before him helped to integrate. Death had small part in this bitterness. It was a matter of life.

"Help me to keep sane," he said to March.

"That is mutual," said his friend. "But you are not in any danger. I watched you a long while before choosing you for this task. You are not a materialist, and only materialists go insane."

"Yes, I suppose all the others are born with a touch of some kind."

"So I've heard," replied March.

They walked through the sand. Sometimes their feet sank deep and threw them backward, but perhaps the next step would find smooth and solid rock. Progress was a rack of physical strain, and pitifully slow. The hills ahead, so hard to reach, were on a diagonal across their route. It startled Levington to find that this diagonal straightened out every hundred paces. This was simply the effect of the landscape upon their eyes. The hills were distinctly misleading, having a tendency to deflect the course that should lie at an angle over them. Without strict attention to their shadows, the two pedestrians must certainly have wandered off into sandy oblivion. The perennial hands of the ages had wrought cunningly to confuse.

"Our path should lead across those big lumps to the southwest," said March.

They suffered the illusion of growing smaller, since there was nothing anywhere to renew familiar associations and comparisons.

Night drew down before they had made any noticeable progress. They rested upon the pink sands, and Con had a pillow of proper shape, restful to the eye in its imitation, although it was solid rock. A dull substitute for sleep claimed their bodies. Levington's dreams were wrecked by huge tumbling mountains that proved at the striking moment to be riders, desert robbers with the fervor of a perverted religion in their ice-colored eyes. All through this wretched slumber, the white man ached and burned from the lashing of the storm, nerve-torn by the thought of their capture and plight. At daybreak the wind began again.

"Let's go," said Con.

"My understanding" — as March studied his tattooed foot, he made this pun—"dictates plainly a continuance of that direction."

Levington followed him over the unfriendly surfaces. An old wind, half asleep, hissed against rocks, and at moments burned their ankles. By the flying dust the sun was diminished to a far red-hot griddle. Con could not look at his friend for the hurt it gave him. He knew that he must himself look as bad. It was not vanity that made him care, but a simple desire to remain human, and not become a thing of rags and beard and thirst.

Toiling up the unequal slopes, to arrive at a new point of confusion, they would note that their shadows no longer fell true beside them, and March would sit down and study the map in its inconvenient location. Then they would go on.

The crest of the first series of hills gave only a sharper wind. A broader vista of desolation. Levington was desperately weary. His step slouched, and the once powerful shoulders tipped sidewise. Lonely thoughts passed through his mind, like birds in a ruined hall. His eyes were puffed. There was Memphis, and that mystic high board fence at the end of the blind alley. There was Bill the yellow cook, twisting his hands together in such a quick fascinating manner; or laughing with a voice like the cry of gulls; again, intoning wonder-tales in a language beyond translation. A phantom Shast stood at moments on the edge of the world. Then the unclean woman Dowgine appeared, with oily black hair, straggling upon her neck, her body bulging with neglect—and suddenly Levington was choking. March gave him a hand.

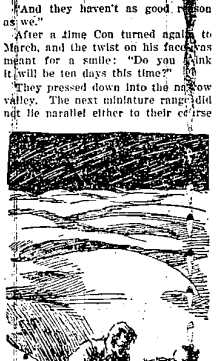
"Control yourself," whispered the elder man. "It can be done. Same as walking straight when you're drunk. I've seen men in India go for ten days without water, and fifty days without food. It can be done."

"Thanks," muttered Con hoarsely. "Till try. Ten days, you say, without water."

"And they haven't as good reason as we."

After a time Con turned again to March, and the twist on his face was meant for a smile: "Do you think it will be ten days this time?"

They pressed down into the narrow valley. The next miniature range did not lie parallel either to their course



I've Seen Men in India Go For Ten Days Without Water, Fifty Days Without Food. It Can Be Done."

or to its dry sister range. Complexity of lines and contours increased. The two sun-caught men could no longer rely upon their own shadows, for time was passing, and they could not determinate how much to allow for the shifting of the planet. Con's heart pounded with fear. It seemed old earth herself was no longer tolerant.

Much of the former Levington was broken down. All the cells of his body that had ever cried for brandy were now dead and gone. He had been burned down to the pure primitive thirst for water. No trifling attachments could remain here to nettle a man. Desire, once red and full as the storms of summer night, had faded out. Con had been seared and whipped to a plane of humanity bare and solid and basic—a relation of man to the earth and sun—where the heats of sex are but a new zero. All the moist forces of Levington were turned inward to sustain life itself.

"Is that that I hear thunder?"

"Maybe the pulse in your own ears," answered March.

They staggered up a third series of hills, which were spread fan-shape in the midst of the world. Looking back, they noted that the first range appeared to have turned partly about since they passed that way. The sun of afternoon showed in the wrong quarter of the sky. March sank to his knees and began to draw intersecting lines in the sand. To Con, as he sprawled near his friend, it was like forcing the solar system back into place. West and north were again established, almost against conviction. They dragged across the third range, but the instinctive flutter of hope in their hearts died quickly, when they saw that had miscalculated. Across a deeper valley was another monster bank of dust, another range.

Abruptly Con stopped and pointed down the slope. Directly below them something was moving.

Stones were rolling down the hill. It was not clear from what point they started. Perhaps a dragon had burrowed into the hill and was kicking out the earth from his nest. Clods of red clay went flying down, below the two watchers. Levington peered, forgetting the awful sun. It was like recovery from blindness, to find something in motion in the dead world. At length, from a hole in the hillside, a living creature appeared, resembling somewhat a man.

Now others of the same species emerged and stood on a sandy ledge, half-way down the slope. They seemed like fat, misshapen children, thin-legged, hunched of shoulder, with heads set close. Their eyes were coils of their own hair. The arms of all were dwarfish. They had come out to take the air after their labors within the hill. The falling clay had stopped. More and yet more of these demi-humans came out into the sunlight, until the slope was darkly patched with their leathern bodies.

March shook his head. Levington noted the first sign of fear in the elder man, who remained silent.

From that distance they determined that the creatures were naked above the waist, but that they wore short, dark skirts like those pictured upon the ancient walls of Assyria. Their canes or staves proved to be implements resembling garden hoes. The faint sound of their conversation drifted up to the Americans. But this was drowned in the slow thunder of Con's temples.

"Cave men?" muttered Levington.

"Witches' children."

"Aren't they solid? Have my eyes gone out?"

March did not hear, for he simply whispered to himself, "What a world!"

A dromedary was coming across from the farther hills. Leisurely it followed a slanting way up to the cluster of creatures around the pit. On the beast were strapped four baskets. Now many hands set about filling these with pebbles, or so it appeared. The camel-driver was another of the crooked dwarfs. When the baskets were full, he led the animal down by the same path, starting across the valley toward the opposite barrier of sand.

The little men who had come out of the hill began to disappear. Their bare bodies were like rough nuggets of copper. Levington's eyes twitched, and he brushed a hand across his face. He wanted to laugh and fling himself down hill. He would ask them for water. For an instant he hated Andrew March for being afraid, and an instant later realized this feeling was merely his own deep-stirring fear. He swallowed chickly. A tear stood in one eye, making humorous the pain in his heart.

"Didn't know I had it in me," he said, grinning.

March did not see the tear. He had grown pale beneath the grime.

"Oh, God!" he mumbled, "this isn't what we came for!"

"Suppose we'd better not ask them for a drink," said Con. "We'll go on and hunt for it, because it must grow natural somewhere around here. Shall we follow the dromedary?"

The little men had gone in. Dust rose like smoke from the open shaft. The laden beast was etching his way across the valley. March had roused from his apathy. He looked at Con, who asked:

"Can you make it—down hill?"

"Boy," said March steadily, "you've got a tungsten nervous system."

Commanding their scant energies, the white men made a final play for life, and walked along the crest of the ridge, to keep the animal in view without exposing themselves. The afternoon was waning. The wind slackened. The valley beneath them was painted with soft purple shadow. The hunched little humans and the dromedary turned into a cleft in the great bank, and disappeared.

"There must be something to drink where he is going," said Con.

"Yes, because the dromedary is natural, at least."

"You might wait here," continued Levington, "and I'll run on to make sure."

"We'll go together," said March.

They descended to the valley, and crossing, entered the ravine. Con was light-headed now. He had no further thought of avoiding discovery, by no matter what enemy. Instinct began and ended in thirst, and even the idea of death meant a possible drink. This pervasive dryness was a question of the soul, a thirst far deeper than the body. Reckless intent shone in Levington's eyes.

March looked at him sidewise, and Con heard only the latter fragments of his speech:

"Cincinnati—you were going like this when I first saw you. I knew then how Washington needed you in the Gobi. God needs you—this is it—"

"Cincinnati," said Con, uncertainly, "netted me the best friend in the world." He stumbled headlong in a returning wave of weakness, quite the opposite of a moment since.

Dust of the dromedary was rising not far ahead. It required a furious expense of will power to gain upon it. Then, something like a living hand touched their faces. This was a cool breeze from the far upper end of the ravine. The pathway was wide and well graded. In the sunlight colored

A Rushing Cloud of Horsemen Thundered Into the Ravine From the Upper Levels.

strata walled high and various on either side, as might appear to an ant traversing a lane of birthday cake. The breeze was soft upon their cheeks.

Perhaps the peculiar halting person beside the dromedary felt that he was being followed,—a most fabulous event to him. Some antenna of his wretched consciousness was troubled, and he glanced behind him, through the dun cloud. His throat closed upon a cry of horror. Convulsed, he fled up the rise, and out of sight. His pale scream came back.

"Announcing us," whispered Con, grimly.

"But look!"

Another figure waited at the end of the upward road—some one upon a horse, motionless. The sunlight was a rain of black dots for Levington now, but his muscles were galvanized to a forward motion. It was not in him to stop. He took time to note, stupidly, that though his feet were bleeding, they were insensible as boots. He guessed that the mounted figure might be a sentinel. The sequence of what followed was never afterward clear to Con.

Closer, he saw the glitter upon a long gray cloak. The sentinel had no weapon, and gave no sign other than to watch with curiosity the two jaded wanderers. The pony was well groomed and restive. Arabian in build. From beyond the crest of the road a volley of shouts came down into the ravine, and the swift beat of hoofs. All these on-coming riders were as yet invisible, but the cries were resonant with hate.

March called out to the gray sentinel, in the best Chinese he could frame with swollen lips. In response, the left arm of the rider came up, glittering, to shield the face below the eyes.

A rushing cloud of horsemen thundered into the ravine from the upper levels. Swords were bare, flashing in the ruddy light. Harsh battle-chanting filled the dust. The riders swooped down to trample the intruders.

Levington was not accountable. He leaned forward to breast them. His hands worked with strange power. Something elemental lived in him; something like the centaurs that had peopled the night horizons. His throat rattled the challenge. The first of the wild horses swerved as if he were a crouching wolf. Con rocked forward, and seized a sword-wrist as it swung low at March's head. And abruptly all strength left him. He fell in the road.

The gray sentinel turns out to be a princess.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

A new broom sweeps almost as clean as a straight flush.

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)

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LESSON FOR JUNE 6

SAUL'S FAILURE.

LESSON TEXT—I Sam. 15.

GOLDEN TEXT—For thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee.—I Sam. 15:26.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL—I Sam. 14: 47-52.

PRIMARY TOPIC—A King Who Disobeyed God.

JUNIOR TOPIC—How Saul Lost His Kingdom.

INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—Why Saul Failed.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—The Strength and Weakness of Saul's Character.

This is one of the saddest pictures in Bible history. No one has had a brighter prospect before him than Saul, yet no one has made a greater failure. He possessed fine natural gifts, the qualities of a good king. He had a fine personality, which generally favors one's success in life. Other things being equal. He had the benefit of Samuel's advice and good wife, which was of inestimable value.

I. The Command to Saul (vv. 1-3).

He is commanded to utterly exterminate the Amalekites, leaving neither people nor beast. The reason assigned is their treatment of Israel as they came up out of Egypt (Ex. 17:8; Deut. 25:17). The command may seem cruel, but we must remember that it was given by the Lord, who has the right to kill or to make alive. The wickedness of this people was very great. Their punishment was only such as their sin deserved. It was not Israel's act, but God's. Israel only being the sword in his hand.

II. The Disobedience of Saul (vv. 4-9).

He renders a partial obedience. Agag, the king, is spared and the best of the goods is appropriated. The purpose of God's thoroughgoing command was to show that it was a warfare of judgment for wickedness, not for greed. Saul only obeyed as far as his inclinations led him. The obedience to God which is limited by the heart's inclination is the worst kind of disobedience.

III. Saul Rebuked by Samuel (vv. 10-25).

1. Samuel pleaded to God (v. 11). The news of this disgraceful act greatly disturbed Samuel, causing him to cry to the Lord all night.

2. Saul's hypocritical pretense (vv. 15, 16). Saul met Samuel with the pretense of having executed the Lord's commandment. His pretense carried a lie upon its face. Those who are the most willing to speak of their obedience are the ones who are conscious of disobedience and their consciences trouble them more or it. Though disturbed by a guilty conscience he tried to conciliate Samuel, the prophet, but the very bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the herds betrayed him. Thus betrayed, he tried to shift the blame upon the people (v. 15). This is always the way. It matters not what the crime may be, some excuse can be made for it. He then played the hypocrite by trying to make it pass as an act of devotion to God (v. 15). He should have known that things gained by disobedience to God are an abomination to him. Offerings to God of ill-gotten gains can never atone for sins of disobedience and neglect. Saul tried to justify himself by pleading that he was keeping the spirit of the commandment, while not literally carrying out its requirements. He has many successors today who do not believe in the literal interpretation and practice of God's Word.

3. Samuel rebukes before Saul God's dealing with him (vv. 17-23).

Samuel met this hypocrisy by bringing him to squarely face his sin. God is more concerned in having his subjects render obedience unto his commandments than he is for them to offer unto him sacrifices. Such an act when the heart is in rebellion is as hateful to God as witchcraft and idolatry.

IV. The Judgment upon Saul (vv. 26-35).

For the presumptuous offering of sacrifice the dynasty passed from Saul's house, and for this act of flagrant disobedience the kingdom is rent from him. It is taken from Saul and given to his neighbor, who is better than he. He confessed his sin and begged Samuel to still honor him before the elders of the people. This further shows his self-centered life. His honor was more to him than the glory of God. Samuel forsook him and left him alone to suffer in disgrace. He refused to punish the Amalekite (II Sam. 1:10). Unless we stay our enemies they will slay us. Judgment shall come sooner or later upon those who sin for "the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 6:23).

Great Deeds.

We all want to do some great thing—to do what prophets, saints, heroes, and martyrs have done. But the small thing, the commonplace thing, the little trivial duty, the thing that has to be done out of everybody's sight—in the routine of business, home or school—that seems poor work to do for God. But it is what he wants us to do.—C. J. Perry.

Knowledge.

Knowlege is folly unless grace guides it.

HAD CHRONIC BRONCHITIS FOR TWENTY-SIX YEARS NOW WELL AND HAPPY

THIS IS WORTH READING

The experience of Mr. E. J. Toupalik, 1438 Rose street, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, is chiefly remarkable on account of the length of time he was afflicted.

He writes: "I have been suffering with chronic bronchitis for twenty-six years and every winter I would catch cold and become so hoarse I could not speak for six or eight weeks. I could get only temporary relief.

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A pretty girl is eagerly listened to although she may say nothing when she talks.

DEATH WAS NEAR

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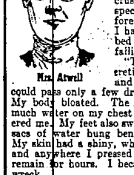
"Dropsy brought me right down to the shadow of the grave," says Mrs. Ida B. Atwell, 904 William St., Key West, Fla. "For fifteen years I was a helpless wreck, struggling between life and death. The pains were so severe in my back I screamed in agony. My head ached so severely I thought my skull was being crushed. Black specks floated before my eyes, and I had to grasp the bed to keep from falling.



Mrs. Atwell

"The kidney secretions burned and scalded and I could pass only a few drops at a time. My body bloated. The pressure of so much water on my chest almost smothered me. My feet also swelled and large sacs of water hung beneath my eyes. My skin had a shiny, white appearance and anywhere I pressed a dent would remain for hours. I became a nervous wreck.

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