```
ed keenly and closely
                                                                                              by intelligences greater th
                                                                                                                                                                                                  an man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as na
                                                                                                                                                                                                  an man's and yet as mortal as his own; that as men busied themselves about their various concerns they were scrutinised and studied, perhaps almost as ha nise the transient creatures that swarm and multiply in a drop of water. With infinite complacency men went to and fro over this globe about their little affair matter. It is possible that the infusoria under the microscope do the same. No one gave a thought to the older worlds of space as sources of human dang of life upon them as impossible or improbable. It is curious to recall some of the mental habits of those departed days. At most terrestrial men fancied th rior to themselves and ready to welcome a missionary enterprise. Yet across the gulf of space, minds that are to our minds as ours are to those of the b nsympathetic, regarded this earth with envious eyes, and slowly and surely drew their plans against us. And early in the twentieth century came the graned remind the reader, revolves about the sun at a mean distance of 140,000,000 miles, and the light and heat it receives from the sun is barely half
                       rrowly as a man with a
                                                                                           microscope might scruti
                         s, sérene in their assu
                                                                                       rance of their empire over
                           er, or thought of them
                                                                                    only to dismiss the idea
                             ere might be other me
                                                                               n upon Mars, perhaps infe
                                                                            lects vast and cool and u
                               easts that perish, intel
                                  eat disillusionment. T
                                                                       he planet Mars, I scarcely
                                    of that received by th
                                                                   is world. It must be, if the
                                                                                                                                                                                                               nebular hypothesis has any truth, older than our world; and long before this earth ceased to be molten, life upon its surface must have begun its c
                                      ourse. The fact that it is scarcely one seventh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                of the volume of the earth must have accelerated its cooling to the temperature at which life could begin. It has air and water and all that is necess
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   Yet so vain is man, and so blinded by his vanity, that no writer, up to the very end of the nineteenth century, expressed any idea that intelligent I deed at all, beyond its earthly level. Nor was it generally understood that since Mars is older than our earth, with scarcely a quarter of the super t necessarily follows that it is not only more distant from time's beginning but nearer its end. The secular cooling that must someday overtake ndeed with our neighbour. Its physical condition is still largely a mystery, but we know now that even in its equatorial region the midday tem
                                       ary for the support of animated existence.
                                          ife might have developed there far, o
                                            ficial area and remoter from the
                                                                                                                                                                     sun, i
                                               our planet has already gon
                                                                                                                                                                     e far i
                                         perature barely approach
s slow seasons change hug
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          of our coldest winter. Its air is much more attenuated than ours, its oceans have shrunk until they cover but a third of its surface, and as it caps gather and melt about either pole and periodically inundate its temperate zones. That last stage of exhaustion, which to us is still inc problem for the inhabitants of Mars. The immediate pressure of necessity has brightened their intellects, enlarged their powers, and har
                                                                                                                                                                     es that
                                                                                                                                                                    e snow
                                      redibly remote, has become a pr
                                                                                                                                                                    esent-day
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                instruments, and intelligences such as we have scarcely dreamed of, they see, at its nearest distance only 35,000,000 of miles sunwar
                                  dened their hearts. And looking acro
                                                                                                                                                                  ss space with
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                green with vegetation and grey with water, with a cloudy atmosphere eloquent of fertility, with glimpses through its drifting cloud wis d seas. And we men, the creatures who inhabit this earth, must be to them at least as alien and lowly as are the monkeys and lemurs
                              d of them, a morning star of hope, our ow
                                                                                                                                                               n warmer planet,
                           ps of broad stretches of populous country an
                                                                                                                                                              d narrow, navy-crowde
                        to us. The intellectual si
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    sant struggle for existence, and it would seem that this too is the belief of the minds upon Mars. Their world is far gone in its cooli
                   ng and this world is still
                                                               crowded with life, bu
                                                                                                                                                             t crowded only with what
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      they regard as inferior animals. To carry warfare sunward is, indeed, their only escape from the destruction that, generation after
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       we must remember what ruthless and utter destruction our own species has wrought, not only upon animals, such as the vanish pite of their human likeness, were entirely swept out of existence in a war of extermination waged by European immigrants, in n if the Martians warred in the same spirit? The Martians seem to have calculated their descent with amazing subtlety--their
                                                                  them. And before w
                                                                                                                                                         e judge of them too harshly
                generation, creeps upon
            ed bison and the dodo,
                                                                                                                                                          races. The Tasmanians, in s
                                                                   but upon its inferior
        the space of fifty years.
                                                                     Are we such apostle
                                                                                                                                                             s of mercy as to complai
    mathematical learning is
                                                                        evidently far in exce
                                                                                                                                                          ss of ours--and to have carrie
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             d out their preparations with a well-nigh perfect unanimity. Had our instruments permitted it, we might have seen the gather
                                                                                                                                                           Men like Schiaparelli watched
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 the red planet--it is odd, by-the-bye, that for countless centuries Mars has been the star of war--but failed to interpret the
ng trouble far back in th
                                                                         e nineteenth century
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  the Martians must have been getting ready. During the opposition of 1894 a great light was seen on the illuminated part and then by other observers. English readers heard of it first in the issue of Nature dated August 2. I am inclined to this
luctuating appearance
                                                                           s of the markings th
                                                                                                                                                           ey mapped so well. All that time
of the disk, first at t
                                                                             he Lick Observatory
                                                                                                                                                               then by Perrotin of Nice,
                                                                               e may have been the
nk that this blaz
                                                                                                                                                         casting of the huge gun, in the vast p
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    it sunk into their planet, from which their shots were fired at us. Peculiar markings, as yet unexplained, were seen nea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     rst upon us six years ago now. As Mars approached opposition, Lavelle of Java set the wires of the astronomical exc incandescent gas upon the planet. It had occurred towards midnight of the twelfth; and the spectroscope, to which y hydrogen, moving with an enormous velocity towards this earth. This jet of fire had become invisible about a qu flame suddenly and violently squirted out of the planet, "as flaming gases rushed out of a gun." A singularly ap re was nothing of this in the papers except a little note in the Daily Telegraph, and the world went in ignorance e human race. I might not have heard of the eruption at all had I not met Ogilvy, the well-known astronomer, at
                                                                                                                                                      he next two oppositions. The storm bu
zing intelligence of a huge outbreak of
r the site of th
                                                                                  at outbreak during t
                                                                                    itating with the ama
hange palp
                                                                                       at once resorted, in
                                                                                                                                                     dicated a mass of flaming gas, chiefl
                                                                                         past twelve. He co
                                                                                                                                                     npared it to a colossal puff of
                                                                                                                                                       ved. Yet the next day the
                                                                                          opriate phrase it pro
                                                                              of one of the gravest dangers
                                                                                                                                                            that ever threa tened th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     he excess of his feelings invited me up to take a turn with him that night in a scrutiny of the red planet. In spite of a nctly: the black and silent observatory, the shadowed lantern throwing a feeble glow upon the floor in the corner, the
                                                                        Ottershaw. He was immensely excite
                                                                                                                                                         d at the news, and in t
                                                                     Il that has happened since, I still rememb
                                                                                                                                                                          igil ver y disti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  e roof--an oblong profundity with the stardust streaked across it. Ogilvy moved about, invisible but audible. Looking thr d planet swimming in the field. It seemed such a little thing, so bright and small and still, faintly marked with transverse stri d. But so little it was, so silvery warm--a pin's-head of light! It was as if it quivered, but really this was the telescope vibrating ed, the planet seemed to grow larger and smaller and to advance and recede, but that was simply that my eye was tired. Forty mil ealise the inner stream of a warm of a w
                                                                    eady ticking of the clockwork of the telesco
                                                                                                                                                       blue an dt he little roun
                                                            ough the telescope, o
                                                                                             ne saw a circle of deep
                                                                                                       ightly flattened fro
                                                                                                                                                                     erfect roun
                                                                   e activity of the clockwork that kept the planet i
                                                                                                                                                                      As I watch
                                                    ons of miles it was from us--more than forty millions of miles
                                               points of light, three telescopic stars i nfinitely remote, and all ar
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ace. You know how that blackness looks on a frosty starlight night. In a telescope it seems far pro
                                                                                                                                                      ound it
                                                                                                                                                                  was the u
                                           founder. And invisible to me because it w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                           teadily towards me across th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                at incredible distance, drawing nearer every minute by so many thousands of miles, came the Th
                                                                                                    as so remote and small, fly
                                                                                                                                                                     tly a nd
                                        ing they were sending us, the Thing that w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                       nd death to the earth. I never
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  dreamed of it then as I watched; no one on earth dreamed of that unerring missile. That night, t
                                                                                                     as to bring so much struggl
                                                                                                                                                       and c
                                                                                                                                                                         am ity
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   est projection of the outline just as the chronometer struck midnight; and at that I told Ogilvy y and feeling my way in the darkness, to the little table where the siphon stood, while Ogilvy
                                                                                  ting out of
                                                                                                     gas from the distant planet.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   h flash at the edge, the slight
                                          and he took my place
                                                                                                                    arm and I was thirs
                                                                                                                                                     ty, and I
                                                                                                                                                                                                               nt stretching my legs clumsil
                                                                                                                                                                                                           That night another invisible m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        issile started on its way to the earth from Mars, just a second or so under twenty-four hou
                                                                                                    er of gas
                                                                                                                       that came out tow
                                                                                                                                                                                                        there in the blackness, with
                                                      s after the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         patches of green and crimson swimming before my eyes. I wished I had a light to smoke b
                                                                                       first on
                                                                                                    e. I reme
                                                                                                                        mber how I sat on t
                                                                                                                                                     he table
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           presently bring me. Ogilvy watched till one, and then gave it up; and we lit the lantern an
                                                                                      specting
                                                                                                      the mea
                                                                                                                          ning of the minute gleam I h
                                                                                                                                                                                                  were Ottershaw and Chertse
                                                                                                                            own below in the darkness
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     <mark>y and a</mark>ll their hundreds of people, sleeping in peace. He was full of speculation that night abo
                                                                                                    s house. D
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           were signalling us. His idea was that meteorites might be falling in a heavy shower upon the planet as that organic evolution had taken the same direction in the two adjacent planets. "The chances aga
                                                                                  tion of M
                                                                                                                               offed at the vulgar idea
                                                                                                                                                                                            of its having inhabitants who
                                                         or that a huge volcanic exp
                                                                                                                                n progress. He pointe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ne t hat night and the night after about midnight, and again the night after; and so for te gases of the firing caused the Martians inconvenience. Dense clouds of smoke or dust, visib
                                                          t anything manlike on Mars are a million
                                                                                                                                    to one," he said. H
                                                           ghts, a flame each night. Why the sh
                                                                                                                      ots ceased after the tenth no one on earth has attempted to explain. It ma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     v be the
                                                                 h a powerful telescope on eart h as little grey, fluctuating patches, spread through the clearness of the nd popular notes appeared here, there, and everywhere concerning the volcances upon Mars. The seriocom
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  and obscure d its more familiar features. Even the daily papers woke up to the disturbances a made a happ y use of it in the political cartoon. And, all unsuspected, those missiles the Mar
le thro
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    planet's atmosphere
t last, a
                                                                        fired at us drew earthward, rushing now at a pace of many miles a second through the empty fate hanging over us, men could go about their petty concerns as they did. I remember how jubila
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       of space, hour by hour and day by day, nearer and nearer. It seems to me now almost incredibly wonderful that,
tians had
with that swift
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     s at securing a new photo graph of the planet for the illustrated paper he edited in those days. People
                                                                   scarcely realise the abundance and enterprise of our nin isation progressed. One night (the first missile then could scarcely have been 10,000,0
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  as m uch occupied in learni
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ng to ride the bicycle, and busy upon a series of papers discussing the probable development e. It was starlight and I explained the Signs of the Zodiac to her, and pointed out M
n these latter times
s of moral ide<mark>as as c i</mark>
                                                               vilisation progressed. One night (the first missile then
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  es a way) I went for a walk with my wif
                                                                                                                                                                                                             00 mil
                                                                                                                                                                                                        s a warm night.

Com ing home, a party of excursionists from Che rtsey or Isleworth passed us singing and playing music. There were light as exampled the sight of the contact of the cont
ars, a bright dot of light c
                                                               reeping zenithward, towards which so m a
                                                                                                                                                    ny telescopes were pointed. It wa
                                                            th e houses as the people went to be d. From
                                                                                                                                                      he railway station in the distan
of the red, green, and yellow si
                                                                                                                                            e sky. It seemed so safe an
                                                                                                                                            an ordinary falling star. Albi
ard, a line of flame high in the atmos
                                                                                                                                                                                        n desc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        riting in my study; and although my French windows face towards Ottershaw and the blind was up (f
as sitting there, visible to me had I only looked up as it passed. Some of those who saw its flight say
ve thought that another meteorite had descended. No one seems to have troubled to look for the fallen
                                                                                                                                        to earth about one hundred mile
of its first appearance was about ninety or one hundred miles. It seeme
or I loved in those days
                                 to look up at the night sky), I saw nothing o
                                                                                                              f it. Yet this strangest of all things that ever came to ea
                                                                                                                                                                                                          m outer space must have fallen while I w
                                  g sound. I myself heard nothing of that
                                                                                                                  Many people in Berkshire, Surrey, and Middlesex mus thav
 mass that night. But very
                                     early in the morning poor Ogilvy, wh
                                                                                                                     o had seen the shooting star an d who was persu
                                                                                                                                                                                            aded that a meteorite lay so mewhere on
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               mmon between Horsell, Otters haw, and Woking, rose early with the idea of finding it. Find it he d
 id, soon after dawn, and not far from the sand pits. An eno rmou
                                                                                                                        s hole had been made by t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          irection over the heath, forming heaps visible a mile and a half a
                                                                                                                                                                    he impact of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                 f lay almost entirely bur ied in sand, am
ne s oftened by a thick's caly dun-coloured i
         The heather was on fire eastw ard, and a thin blue s
                                                                                                                     moke rose against the daw
                                                                                                                                                                      n. The Thing itsel
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   the scattered splinters
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             of a fir tree it had shivered to fragments in its descent. The un
           ed part had the appearanc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              r of about thirty yards. He approached the mass, surprised at
             ze and more so at the
                                                                                                               shape, since most meteorites
                                                                                                                                                                          are rounded mor e or less completely. It was, however, sti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           gh the air as to forbid his near approach. A stirring noise within
                linder he ascribed to
                                                                                                          the unequal cooling of its surface;
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  at the edge of the pit that the Thing had made for itself, st
                                                                                                                                                                              usual shape and colour, and dimly perc eiving even then som e evidence of design in already warm. He did not remember he aring any birds that morning, there was certainly
                                                                                                      rance, astonished chiefly
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    rrival. The early morning was wonderfully still, and the s
                  g at its strange appea
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     eeze stirring, and the only sounds were the faint movem
                    un, just clearing the p
                                                                                                                                               il alone
                                                                                                                                                                                   on the common. Then suddenly he n oticed with a start that some of the grey clinker, th
                      ents from within the c
                                                                                               indery cylinder. He was a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     incrustation that covered the meteorite, was falling off t
                                                                                                                                                                                    s and raining down upon the sand. A large piece suddenly came off and fell with a sharp n eat was excessive, he clambered down into the pit close to the bulk to see the Thing m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        at brought his heart into his mouth. For a minute he
                        he circular edge of th
                                                                                           e end. It was dropping of
                          scarcely realised wha
                                                                                       t this meant, and, althou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           early. He fancied even then that the cooling of the b
                                                                                                                                                                                           was the fact that the ash was f alling only from the end of the cylinder. And then he per
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              that, very slowly, the circular top of the cylinder
                         ody might account for t
                                                                                                                                                                                           that he discovered it only through noticing that a black mark that had been near him five, d, until he heard a muffled grating sound and saw the black mark jerk forward an inch or so
                        was rotating on its body. I
                                                                               t was such a gradual mo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               es ago was now at the other side of the circumfe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         hen the thing came upon him in a flash. The cylind man in it-men in it! Half roasted to death! Trying to
                       rence. Even then he scarcel
                                                                           y understood what this i
                                                                       h an end that screwed o
                                                                                                                                                                                             ething within the cylinder w as unscrewing the top! "G ood heavens!" said Ogilvy. "There'
                                                                   ick mental leap, he linke
                                                                                                                                                                                        with the flash upon Mars. The t hought of the confined
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   at he forgot the heat and went forward to the cylinder to h
                      escape
                                                                                                                                                                          ng
                                         But luckily the dull radiation arrested him
                                                                                                                                                                        e could
                                                                                                                                                                                         burn his hands on the still-glowing metal. At that h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         e stood irresolute for a moment, th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  en turned, scrambled out of the pit, and set off running wil
                   elp turn.
               dly into W
t--that t
                                                                                                                                                                                        ut six o'clock. He met a waggo ner and tried to m ake
                                          oking. The time then must have been s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             nd his appearance were so wild--his hat had fallen off in the pi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            rs of the public-house by Horsell Bridge. The fellow thought he was a lunatic at large and made an u
he London journalist, in his garden, he called over the palings and made himself understood. "Hen
                                            he man simply drove on. He was e
                                                                                                                                                                                       ful with the potman who was j ust unlocking t
                                                                                                                                                              e taproom. That sobered him a little; and when he saw Hender
                                              essful attempt to shut him in
               nsucc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            e! That's good." "But it's something
eaf in one ear. Ogilvy told him all tha
                                               n," he called, "you saw th
                                                                                                                                                              ng star last night?" "Well?" said Henderson. "It's out on Horsell
                                                                                                          at shooti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                on now." "Good Lord!" said Henderson. "Fallen meteorit
              derso
                                              than a meteorite. It's a c
                                                                                                          vlinder--an a
                                                                                                                                                     rtificial cylinder, man! And there's something inside." Henderson stood u
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              his spade in his hand. "What's that?" he said. He was d
            more
                                                                                                                                                     ing it in. Then he dropped his spade, snatched up his jacket, and came out into the road
                                          had seen. Henderson was a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    e two men hurried back at once to the common, a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                nd found the cylinder still lying in t
            t he
                                                                                                          minute or so tak
           he sa
                                     me position. But now the sounds
                                                                                                          inside had ceased, and
                                                                                                                                                     a thin circle of bright metal showed between the top and the body of the cylinder. Air was eith
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  izzling sound. They listened, rapp
                                  n the scaly burnt metal with a stick, a
                                                                                                                                                 ponse, they both concluded the man or men inside must be insensible or dead. Of course the two wer equite unable to do anything. They sho
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              d consolation and promises, and we
                                                                                                        an imagine them, covered with sand, excited and disordered, running up the little street in the bright sunlight just as the shop folks were taking down their shutters and pece, in order to telegraph the news to London. The newspaper articles had prepared men's minds for the reception of the idea. By eight o'clock a number of boys and unemplo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ople were opening their bedroom windows
                               back to the town again to get help. One c
                          nderson went into the r ailway station at on
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       yed men had already started for the comm
                                                                                                         the form the story took. I heard of it first from my newspaper boy about a quarter to nine when I went out to get my Daily Chronicle. I was naturally startled, and lost no time in

COMMON I found a little crowd of perhaps twenty people surrounding the huge hole in which the cyli

nder lay. I have already described the charred as if by a sudden explosion. No doubt its impact had caused a flash of fire. Henderso

n and Ogilvy were not there.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   going out and across the Ottershaw bridge to
                      o see the "dead men fr
                   sand pits. CHAPTER T
                                                                HREE ON HORSELL
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           nder lay. I have already described the a ppearance of that colossal bulk, embedded in th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    n and Ogilvy were not there. I think they perceived that nothing was to be done
              ound. The turf and gra
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               eir feet dangling, and amusing themselves--until I stopped them--by thro
      for the present, and had go
                                                                     ne away to breakfas
                                                                                                      t at Henderson's house. There were four or five boys sitting on the edge of the Pit, with th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     anders. Among these were a couple of cyclists, a jobbing gardener I the railway station. There was very little talking. Few of the com
                                                                      mass. After I had sp
                                                                                                      oken to them about it, they began playing at "touch" in and out of the group of byst
    wing stones at the giant
                                                                                                       g the butcher and his little boy, and two or three loafers and golf caddies who
  employed sometimes, a girl c
                                                                         arrying a baby, Greg
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  were accustomed to hang about
mon people in England <mark>had anything but the va guest</mark> astronomical ideas in those days. Most of them were staring quietly at the big table like ap of charred corps es was disappointed at this inanimate bulk. Some went aw ay while I was there, and other people came. I clambered into the pit a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       end of the cylinder, which was still as Ogilvy and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               Henderson had left it. I fancy the popular expectation of a he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                               nd fancied I h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   vement under my feet. The top had certainly ceased to rot
                                                         I got thus close to it that the strangeness of this object was at all evident to me. At the first glance it was
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       verturned carriage or a tree blown across the road. Not
ate. It was only w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                          really no
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  more excitin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      g than an o
                          inde ed. It looked like a ru
                                                                                 sty gas float. It required a certain amount of scientific education to perceive that the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            scale of the Thing w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          mmon oxide, that the yellowish-white metal that glea
so much so,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              as no co
                          cra ck between the lid and the cylinder had an unfamiliar hue. "Extra-terrestrial" had no meaning for most of the onlooker
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ind that the Thing had come from the planet Mars.
med in the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        that time it was quite clear in m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   y own m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                in Mars. My mind ran fancifully on the possibilit
                         dged it improbable that it contained any living creature. I thought
                                                                                                                            the unscrewing might be automatic. In spite
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     Ogilvy, I still believed that there we
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         re men
                         f its containing manuscript, on the difficulties in translation that might arise, whether we should find coins and models
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  e for assurance on this idea. I felt an impatien
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    in it, and so forth. Yet it was a little t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     aybury. But I found it difficult to get t
                        e to see it opened. About eleven, as nothing seemed happening, I walked back, full of such thought, to my home in M
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      upon my abstract investigations. In the afte
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                o work
                                                               of the common had altered very much. The early editions of the evening papers had sta
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  es: "A
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       MESSAGE RECEIVED FROM MARS." "RE
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     rtled London with enormous headlin
                                                              ROM WOKING," and so forth. In addition, Ogilvy's wire to the Astronomical Exchange ing station standing in the road by the sand pits, a basket-chaise from Chobham, and
                       MAR KABLE'STORY F
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      had roused every observatory in th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      e three
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          kingdoms. There were half a dozen flies
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           p of bicycles. In addition, a large numb
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  a rather lor
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    dly carriage. Besides that, there wa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      s quit
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        e a hea
                                                                     d, in spite of the heat of the day, from Woking and Chertsey, so that there was a
                                                                                                                                                                                                             Itogether quite a c
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     onsiderable crowd--one or two gai
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ly dressed lad
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ong the others. It was glaringly hot, n
    er of p
                      eople must hav
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ies am
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ground towards Ot tersha
                                                                       breath of wind, and the only shadow was that of the few scattered pine trees.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     d been extinguished, but the level
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              w was blackened as far as one could
 ot a clo u
                                                                                                                                                                                                        The burning heather ha
                                                                        mers of smoke. An enterprising sweet-stuff dealer in the Chobham Road ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       rrow-load of green apples and gi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                f the pit, I found it occupied by a gr
 see, an d still
                     givin g off vertic
                                                  al st rea
                                                                                                                                                                                                     d sent up his son with a ba
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              nger beer. Going to the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             edge o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       veral workmen wielding spades
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  rections in a clear, high-pitched
oup of about half a d ozen men--H end
                                                                       on, Ogilvy, and a tall, fai r-haired man that I afterwards learned was Stent, t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            and pickaxes. Stent was gi ving di
                                                                                                                                                                                                    he Astronomer Royal, with se
oice. He was standin g on the cylind
                                                            er, which was now eviden
                                                                                                    tly much cooler; his face was crimson and stream
                                                                                                                                                                                                   ing with perspiration, and som
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ething seemed to have irritated
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           him. A large portion of the cy linder
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   had been uncovered, though its
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        g over to see Lord Hilton, the lo rd of
                                                                                                      mo ng the staring cro wd on the edge of the pit he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       asked me if I would mind goin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    he manor. The growing crowd, I
owe r end was still e mbedded. As so
                                                                                                                                                                                                   called to me to come down, and
                                                                                                        ions, especially the boys. They wanted a light r
                                                                                                                                                                                                  ailing put up, and help to keep the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        people back. He told me that
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       a faint stirring was occasionally s till au
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     dible within the case, but that t
e s aid, was becomi ng a serious impe
                                                                                                     p to them. The case appeared to be enormously t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      nted a noisy tumult in the interior.
                                                                                                                                                                                                  hick, and it was possible that the fa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         int sounds we heard represe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        very glad to do as he asked, a
                                                                                                        ated enclosure. I failed to find Lord Hilton at
       nd so become one of the privileged spectators within the conte
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         ected from London by the si
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      x o'clock tráin from Waterloo; and
                                                                                                                                                                                                  his house, but I was told he was exp
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        as it was then about a quarter
                past five, I went home, had some tea, and walked up to the stat
                                                                                                                                                                                                  INDER OPENS When I returned to th
                                                                                                        ion to waylay hi m. CHAPTER FOUR THE CYL
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         e common the sun was set
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ting. Scattered groups were hurryin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        g from the direction of Woki
                                                                                                        the pit had incr eased, and stood out black a
                g, and one or two persons were returning. The crowd about
                                                                                                                                                                                                  gainst the lemon yellow of the sky--a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          couple of hundred people
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    , perhaps. There were raised voices,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          and some sort of struggle
               eared to be going on about the pit. Strange imaginings passe d a-scr ewin' out. I don't like it. I'm a-goin' 'ome, I am." I went on t o the crowd. The ere were really, I should think
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            " A boy came running to
                                                                                                                                                                                                  Stent's voice: "Kéep back! Keep back!
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   wards me. "It's a-movin'," he said to
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          me as he passed; "a-screwi
n' an
                                                                                                                                                                                                   , two or three hundred people elbowi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ng and jostling one anot
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  her, the one or two ladies there being
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            by no means the least acti
               e's fall en in the pit!" cried some one. "Keep back!" said several. The crowd sway ed a little, and I elbowed my w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ly excited. I heard a pe
ve. "H
                                                                                                                                                                                                     ay through. Every one se
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 culiar humming sound from the pit.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            I say!" said Ogilvy; "help
                                                                                                                                                                                                          ant in Woking I believe he was, s jected. Somebody blundered
keep th
              ese idi ots back. We don't know what's in the confounded thing, you know!" I saw a young man, a shop assist
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             tanding on the cylinde
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                r and trying to scramble out of the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            hole again. The crowd ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                rrowly missed being pitched o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             nto the top of the screw.
d pushed
                                                             r was being screwed out from within. Nearly
                                                                                                                          two feet of shining screw pro
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             against me, and I na
                                                                have come out, for the lid of the cylinder
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                rson behind me, and turne
turned, and as I d id so the screw must
                                                                                                                          fell upon the gravel with a rin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ging concussion. I stuck
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             my elbow into the pe
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             d my head towards the T
                                                                  cavity seemed perfectly black. I had the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               bly something a little un
hing again. For a moment that circu lar
                                                                                                                         sunset in my eyes. I think ever
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        yone expected to see a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             man emerge--possi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              like us terrestrial men, b
ut in all essential s a man. I know
                                                             id. But, looking, I presently saw somethin
                                                                                                                        g stirring within the shadow: g
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              nother, and then two I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                           reyish billowy movem
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ents, one above a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              uminous disks--like eyes
. Then somethin g resembling
                                                                    e grey snake, about the thickness of
                                                                                                                         a walking stick, coiled up out
                                                                                                                                                                                          of the writhin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                            g middle, and wriggle
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               d in the air towar
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ds me--and then anot
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               her. A sudden chill came
over me. There was a loud s
                                                                        from a woman behind. I half turne
                                                                                                                        d, keeping my eyes fixed upon
                                                                                                                                                                                     the cylinder still, from
                                                                                                                                                                                                                             which other tentacles
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 were now proje
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              cting, and began pus
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               hing my way back from t
he edge of the pit. I saw astoni
                                                                         t giving place to horror on the fac
                                                                                                                       es of the people about me. I he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 . I saw the shopma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               n struggling still on the
                                                  shmen
                                                                                                                                                                                  ard inarticulate exclamation
                                                                                                                                                                                                                              s on all sides. There
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 was a general m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ovement backwards
                                                                         nd saw the people on the other s
                                                                                                                        ide of the pit running off, Sten
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             stood petrified and stari
edge of the pit. I found myself al
                                                                                                                                                                               t among them. I looked again a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                               t the cylinder, and u
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 ngovernable t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             error gripped me. I
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ng. A big greyish round
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ly. The mass that frame
ed bulk, the size, perhaps, of a bear,
                                                                    s ris ing slowly and painfully out o
                                                                                                                       f the cylinder. As it bulged up
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              coloured eyes w
                                                                                                                                                                              and caught the light, it glistened
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  like wet leather. T
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  wo large dar
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ere regarding me steadfast
                                                           wa
d them, the head of the thing, was r
                                                            ounde
                                                                              d, and had, one might say, a
                                                                                                                        face. There was a mouth und
                                                                                                                                                                              er the eyes, the lipless brim of wh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ich quivered and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    panted, an
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               dropped saliva.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             The whole creature heaved
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                and pulsated convulsiv
                                                                                he edge of the cylinder, an
                                                                                                                      other swayed in the air. Those
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                The peculiar V-shaped
ely. A lank tentacular app<mark>end</mark>age grip
                                                             ped t
                                                                                                                                                                              who have never seen a living Ma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    rtian can scarc
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 gine the stran
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           ge horror of its appearance.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ely im
mouth with its pointed upper lip, the a
                                                                                                                      ence of a chin beneath the we
                                                                                                                                                                             dgelike lower lip, the incessant qu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                les, the tumultuous bre
                                                         bse nc
                                                                                 e of brow ridges, the abs
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       ivering of t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   his mouth,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             the Gorgon groups of tentac
athing of the lungs in a strange atmosph ere,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            the earth--above all, the extra
                                                                               evident heaviness and pai
                                                                                                                      nfulness of movement due to
                                                                                                                                                                             the greater gravitational energy of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ordinary intensity of th
                                                                                                                     us. There was something fung
                                                                                                                                                                             oid in the oily brown skin, somethi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ng in the clumsy deliberation o
e immense eyes--were at once vital, intense
                                                                     , in human, crippled and monstro
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                f the tedious movemer
ts unspeakably nasty. Even at th<mark>is first enc</mark>
                                                                      ounter, this first glimpse, I was o
                                                                                                                     vercome with disgust and dre
                                                                                                                                                                             ad. Suddenly the monster vanished.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          It had toppled over the brim of t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                he cylinder and fallen i
                                                                  mass of leather. I heard it give a pec
nto the pit, with a thud like the fall of a great
                                                                                                                     uliar thick cry, and forthwith a
                                                                                                                                                                              nother of these creatures appeared darkly
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   in the deep shadow of the aperture.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                I turned and, running
madly, made for the first group of t<mark>rees, perha ps a hundred yards awa</mark>y; but I ran sla
opped, panting, and waited further de<mark>velopments. The common round t</mark>he sand pits wa
                                                                                                                     ntingly and stumbling, for I co
                                                                                                                                                                              uld not avert my face from these things.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  There, among some young pine tree
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                s and furze bushes, I s
                                                                                                                                                                                like myself in a half-fascinated terror, s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   taring at these creatures, or rather a
                                                                                                                     s dotted with people, standing
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                t the heaped gravel at t
he edge of the pit in which they lay. And then, with a renewed horror, I saw a round, b
                                                                                                                     lack object bobbing up and d
                                                                                                                                                                                own on the edge of the pit. It was the h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   ead of the shopman who had falle
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                n in, but showing as a l
ittle black object against the hot western sun. Now he got his shou
                                                                                           Ider and knee up
                                                                                                                      , and again he seemed to slip
                                                                                                                                                                                  back until only his head was visible.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    he vanished, and I could have fa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ncied a faint shriek had
reached me. I had a momentary impulse to go back and help him t
                                                                                                                     rruled. Everything was then q
                                                                                                                                                                                   uite invisible, hidden by the deep
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      of sand that the fall of the cyli
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                nder had made. Anyon
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        ding in a great irregular ci
The barrow of ginge
e coming along the road from Chobham or Woking would ha
                                                                                                                     the sight--a dwindling multitud
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                rcle, in ditches, behind
                                                                                          been amazed at
                                                                                                                                                                                     e of perhaps a hundred people
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              re star
bushes, behind gates and hedges, saying little to one anot
                                                                                      her and that in shor
                                                                                                                    t, excited shouts, and staring,
                                                                                                                                                                                           staring hard at a few he
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              sa nd.
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                r beer stood, a queer d
erelict, black against the burning sky, and in the sand pits
                                                                                                                     rted vehicles with their horses
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               g the ground. CHAPTE
                                                                                         was a row of dese
                                                                                                                                                                                                  feeding out of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ba gs d
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     r pawin
R FIVE THE HEAT-RAY After the glimpse I had had of the M
                                                                                    artians emerging fro
                                                                                                                    m the cylinder in which they h
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               o the earth from their pl
anet, a kind of fascination paralysed my actions. I remained s tan
                                                                                                                    n the heather, staring at the m
                                                                                         ding knee-deep i
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               as a battleground of fea
r and curiosity. I did not dare to go back towards the pit, but I fel
                                                                                                                   ging to peer into it. I began wa
                                                                                                                                                                              Iking,
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     big curv
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               e, seeking some point o
f vantage and continually looking at the sand heaps that hid thes
                                                                                                                    our earth. Once a leash of thin
                                                                                                                                                                              black w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               us, flashed across the s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             hips, like the arms o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   f an octop
unset and was immediately withdrawn, and afterwards a thin rod r
                                                                                                                                                                              ar disk th
                                                                                                                    int, bearing at its apex a circul
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               at spun with a wo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                bbling moti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               on. What could be going
on there? Most of the spectators had gathered in one or two group s--one a little crow
                                                                                                                    d towards Woking, the other a
                                                                                                                                                                              knot of peopl
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   e direction
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    of C
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            hobham. Evid
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ently they shared my me
ntal conflict. There were few near me. Ŏne man I approached--he was, I perceived, a ne
                                                                                                                     ighbour of mine, though I did
                                                                                                                                                                              not know his
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    --and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             accosted. Bu
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               t it was scarcely a time f
                                                                                                                                                                              r again. "Did
or articulate conversation. "What ugly brutes!" he said. "Goo<mark>d God! W</mark>hat ugly brutes!'
                                                                                                                     He repeated this over and ove
                                                                                                                                                                                                 you s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     in th e pit?" I said;
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              but he made no answer t
o that. We became silent, and stood watching for a time side by side, deriving, I fancy,
                                                                                                                    a certain comfort in one anoth
                                                                                                                                                                              er's compan
                                                                                                                                                                                                  y. The
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    positi on to a little k
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              noll that gave me the adv
antage of a yard or more of elevation and when I looked for him presently he was walki
                                                                                                                    ng towards Woking. The sunse
                                                                                                                                                                                                  ilight
                                                                                                                                                                              t faded to tw
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ythin g further happ
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              ened. The crowd far awa
y on the left, towards Woking, seemed to grow, and I heard now a faint murmur from it.
                                                                                                                      The little knot of people towar
                                                                                                                                                                              ds Chobham
                                                                                                                                                                                                  disp
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ersed
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ere w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             as scarcely an
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              intimation of movement
from the pit. It was this, as much as anything, that gave people courage, and I suppose
                                                                                                                     the new arrivals from Woking
                                                                                                                                                                              also helped t
                                                                                                                                                                                                o rest
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             At any rate, as
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              the dusk came on a slow
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ore co
intermittent movement upon the sand pits began, a movement that seemed to gather
                                                                                                                                                                              ening about
                                                                                                                    force as the stillness of the ev
                                                                                                                                                                                                 the c
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               ylinder remai
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ned u nbroken. Verti
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             cal black figures in twos
and threes would advance, stop, watch, and advance again, spreading out as they did
                                                                                                                                                                              hat promised
                                                                                                                    so in a thin irregular crescent t
                                                                                                                                                                                                  to en
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 close the pit in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ttenuated hor
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            ns. I, too, on my side beg
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   d the gride
an to move towards the pit. Then I saw some cabmen and others had walked boldly int
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             lad trundling off the barro
                                                                                                                   o the sand pits, and heard the
                                                                                                                                                                              clatter of hoo fs an
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             heels. I saw a
w of apples. And then, within thirty yards of the pit, advancing from the direction of Ho
                                                                                                                    rsell, I noted a little black knot
                                                                                                                                                                              of men, the f
                                                                                                                                                                                                orem
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ost of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              whom was w
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            aving a white flag. This wa
s the Deputation. There had been a hasty consultation, and since the Martians were evi
                                                                                                                    dently, in spite of their repulsiv
                                                                                                                                                                              e forms, inte
                                                                                                                                                                                                 lligen
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    t crea tures, it had b
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            een resolved to show the
m, by approaching them with signals, that we too were intelligent. Flutter, flutter, went
                                                                                                                    the flag, first to the right, then
                                                                                                                                                                              to the left. It
                                                                                                                                                                                                was to
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    for m
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             e to recognise
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            anyone there, but afterwa
rds I learned that Ogilvy, Stent, and Henderson were with others in this attempt at com
                                                                                                                    munication. This little group ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              rcumference
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           of the now almost complet
                                                                                                                                                                              d in its adva
                                                                                                                                                                                                nce d
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  ragged in
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      ward. s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         o to speak
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    the ci
e circle of people, and a number of dim black figures followed it at discreet distances.
                                                                                                                    Suddenly there was a flash of li
                                                                                                                                                                              ght, and a qu antity
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              of luminous
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      areenish
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       smoke came o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    ut of
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             the pit in thre
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           e distinct puffs, which drov
e up, one after the other, straight into the still air. This smoke (or flame, perhaps, would
                                                                                                                     be the better word for it) was s
                                                                                                                                                                              o bright that
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            eep blue sky o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      and the hazy s
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    tretch es of brown c
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          ommon towards Chertsey
set with black pine trees, seemed to darken abruptly as these puffs arose, and to remai
                                                                                                                     n the darker after their dispersa
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    eyon d the pit stoo
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          d the little wedge of people
                                                                                                                                                                               I. At the sam e time
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             a faint hissin
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  g sound beca
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      me audible. B
with the white flag at its apex, arrested by these phenomena, a little knot of small vertic
                                                                                                                                                                              ground. As t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          and faded again as it vanish
                                                                                                                     al black shapes upon the black
                                                                                                                                                                                                he gr
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             een smoke
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 arose, their face
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    d out
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             pallid green,
ed. Then slowly the hissing passed into a humming, into a long, loud, droning noise. Sl
                                                                                                                    owly a humped shape rose out
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                ghost of a beam o
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          icker out from it. Forthwith f
                                                                                                                                                                               of the pit, an d the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             t seemed to fl
lashes of actual flame, a bright glare leaping from one to another, sprang from the scatt
                                                                                                                     ered group of men. It was as if
                                                                                                                                                                              some invisib le jet
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          into white flame. It was as
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   impinged upo
each man were suddenly and momentarily turned to fire. Then, by the light of their own
                                                                                                                      destruction, I saw them stagge
                                                                                                                                                                               ring and falli ng, a
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        nd their supporters turning t
o run. I stood staring, not as yet realising that this was death leaping from man to man i
                                                                                                                        n that little distant crowd. All
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        I felt was that it was someth
ng very strange. An almost noiseless and blinding flash of light, and a man fell hea dlong an
                                                                                                                                 d lay still; and as the u
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        nseen shaft of heat passed o
ver them, pine trees burst into fire, and every dry furze bush became with one dul I thud a mass of fl
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       way towards Knaphill I saw th
e flashes of trees and hedges and wooden buildings suddenly set alight. It was as sweeping round swiftly an
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       y, this flaming death, this invi
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   stounded and stupefied to stir. I heard the crackle of fire in the sand pits and the sudden squeal of a horse that was as
sible, inevitable sword of heat. I perceived it coming towards me by the flas hing bushes it touched, and was too
suddenly stilled. Then it was as if an invisible yet intensely heated finger we re drawn through the heather between me and the Martians, and all along a curving line beyond the sand pits the dark ground smoked and crackled. Something
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          a crash far away to the left
where the road from Woking station opens out on the common. Forth-with th e hissing and humming ceased, and the
                                                                                                                                                                                                                        black, dome-like object sank slowly out of sight into the pit. All this had ha
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             ppened with such swiftne
ss that I had stood motionless, dumbfounded and dazzled by the flashes of light. Had that death swept through a fu bout me suddenly dark and unfamiliar. The undulating common seemed now dark alm ost to blackness, except where its roadways lay grey st the sky was still a pale, bright, almost greenish blue. The tops of the pine trees and the roofs of Horsell came ou
                                                                                                                                                                                                                     Il circle, it must inevitably have slain me in my surprise. But it passed and spared
                                                                                                                                                                                                                  and pale under the deep blue sky of the early night. It was dark, and sud denly void of men. Overhead the stars were mustering, and in the we t sharp and black against the western afterglow. The Martians and their appliances we
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   re altogether invisibl
e, save for that thin mast upon which their restless mirror wobbled. Patches of bush and isolate 💢 d trees here and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                   there smoked and glowed still, and the house's towards Woking station were sending u
o the stillness of the evening air. Nothing was changed save for that and a terrible astonishment. The
                                                                                                                                                                                                                p of black specks with the flag of white had been swept out of existence, and the stillnes
it seemed to me, had scarcely been broken. It came to me that I was upon this dark common, helpless, un protec
                                                                                                                                                                                                                ted, and alone. Suddenly, like a thing falling upon me from without, came--fear. With an effort
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            I turned and began a stum
                                                                                                                                                                                                          the dusk and stillness all about me. Such an extraordinary effect in unmanning me it had that I ran weeping silently as a child might do. Once I had turn
bling run through the heather. The fear I felt was no rational fear, but a panic terror not only of the Martians, but of
ed, I did not dare to look back. I remember I felt an extraordinary persuasion that I was being played with, that presently, when I was upon the very verge of safety, this mysterious death--as swift as the passage of light--would leap after me from the pit about the cylinder and strike me down. CHAPTER SIX T HE HEAT-RAY IN THE CHOBHAM ROAD It is still a matter of wonder how the Martians are able to generate an intense heat in a chamber of practically absolute non-conductivity. This intense heat they project in a parallel beam
against any object they choose, by means of a polished parabolic mirror of unknown composition, much as the parábolic mirror of a lighthouse projects a beam of heat is the essence of the matter. Heat, and
invisible, instead of visible, light. Whatever is combustible flashes into flame at its touch, lead runs like water, it softens iron, cracks and when it falls upon water, incontinently that explodes into steam. That night nearly forty people lay under the starlight about the pit, charred and distorted
beyond recognition, and all night long the common from Horsell to Maybury was deserted and brightly ablaze. The news of the massacre probably reached Chobham, Woking, and Ottershaw about the same time. In Woking the shops had closed when the tragedy happened, and a number of people, shop p
eople and so forth, attracted by the stories they had heard, were walking over the Horsell Bridge and along the road between the hedges that runs out at last upon the common. You may imagine the young people brushed up after the labours of the day, and making this novelty, as they would make any nove lty, the excuse for walking together and enjoying a trivial flirtation. You may figure to yourself the hum of voices along the road in the gloaming.... As yet, of course, few people in Woking even knew that the cylinder had opened, though poor Henderson had sent a
méssenger on a bicycle to the post office with a special wire to an evening paper. As these folks came out by twos and threes upon the open, they found
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       little knots of people talking excitedly and
peering at the spinning mirror over the sand pits, and the newcomers were, no doubt, soon infected by the excitement of the occasion. By half past eight, wh
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     en the Deputation was destroyed, there may
have been a crowd of three hundred people or more at this place, besides those who had left the road to approach the Martians nearer. There were three policem
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    en too, one of whom was mounted, doing their
best, under instructions from Stent, to keep the people back and deter them from approaching the cylinder. There was some booing from those more thoughtless and
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   excitable souls to whom a crowd is always an oc
casion for noise and horse-play. Stent and Ogilvy, anticipating some possibilities of a collision, had telegraphed from Horsell to the barracks as soon as the Martians eme
t these strange creatures from violence. After that they returned to lead that ill-fated advance. The description of their death, as it was seen by the crowd, tallies very closely
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   rged, for the help of a company of soldiers to protec
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 with my own impressions: the three puffs of green sm
oke, the deep humming note, and the flashes of flame. But that crowd of people had a far narrower escape than mine. Only the fact that a hummock of heathery sand intercepted t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                he lower part of the Heat-Ray saved them. Had the eleva
tion of the parabolic mirror been a few yards higher, none could have lived to tell the tale. They saw the flashes and the men falling and an invisible hand, as it were, lit the bushes as en, with a whistling note that rose above the droning of the pit, the beam swung close over their heads, lighting the tops of the beech trees that line the road, and splitting the bricks, sma
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                it hurried towards them through the twilight. Th
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              shing the windows, firing the window
frames, and bringing down in crumbling ruin a portion of the gable of the house nearest the corner. In the sudden thud, hiss, and glare of the igniting trees, the panic-stricken crowd seems t
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            o have swayed hesitatingl
                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           hrieks and sho
y for some moments. Sparks and burning twigs began to fall into the road, and single leaves like puffs of flame. Hats and dresses caught fire. Then came a crying from the common. There were s
uts, and suddenly a mounted policeman came galloping through the confusion with his hands clasped over his head, screaming. "They're coming!" a woman shrieked, and incontinently everyone wa urning and pushing at those behind, in order to clear their way to Woking again. They must have bolted as blindly as a flock of sheep. Where the road grows narrow and black between the high banks the
crowd jammed, and a desperate struggle occurred. All that crowd did not escape; three persons at least, two women and a little boy, were crushed and trampled there, and left to die amid the terror and the d
arkness. CHAPTER SEVEN HOW I REACHED HOME For my own part, I remember nothing of my flight except the stress of blundering against trees and stumbling through the heather. All about me gathered the i
nvisible terrors of the Martians; that pitiless sword of heat seemed whirling to and fro, flourishing overhead before it descended and smote me out of life. I came into the road between the crossroads and Horsell, and ran along this to the crossroads. At last I could go no further; I was exhausted with the violence of my emotion and of my flight, and I staggered and fell by the wayside. That was near the bridge that crosses the canal by
the gasworks. I fell and lay still. I must have remained there some time. I sat up, strangely perplexed. For a moment, perhaps, I could not clearly understand how I came there. My terror had fallen from me like a garment. My hat had gone, and my collar had burst away from its fastener. A few minutes before, there had only been three real things before me--the immensity of the night and space and nature, my own feebleness and anguish, and the ne
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ar approach of death. Now it was as if something turned over, and the point of view altered abruptly. There was no sensible transition from one state of mind to the other. I was immediately the self of every day again--a decent, ordin ary citizen. The silent common, the impulse of my flight, the starting flames, were as if they had been in a dream. I asked myself had these latter things indeed happened? I could not credit it. I rose and walked unsteadily up the steep inc

hall dwell in these worlds if they be inhabited? . . . Are we or they Lords of the World? . . . And how are all things made for man?-- KEPLER (quoted in The Anato

THE MARTIANS CHAPTER ONE THE EVE OF THE WAR No one would have believed in the last years of the nineteenth century that this world was being watch

The War of the Worlds

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by H. G. Wells But who s

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