



***CHARLES  
G. D. SIR  
ROBERTS***

***IN THE MORNING  
OF TIME***

**Charles G. D. Sir Roberts**

# **In the Morning of Time**

EAN 8596547218852

DigiCat, 2022

Contact: [DigiCat@okpublishing.info](mailto:DigiCat@okpublishing.info)



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD WITHOUT MAN

CHAPTER II

THE KING OF THE TRIPLE HORN

CHAPTER III

THE FINDING OF FIRE

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILDREN OF THE SHINING ONE

CHAPTER V

THE PULLER-DOWN OF TREES

CHAPTER VI

THE BATTLE OF THE BRANDS

CHAPTER VII

THE RESCUE OF A-YA

CHAPTER VIII

THE BENDING OF THE BOW

CHAPTER IX

THE DESTROYING SPLENDOR

CHAPTER X

THE TERRORS OF THE DARK

CHAPTER XI

THE FEASTING OF THE CAVE FOLK

CHAPTER XII

ON THE FACE OF THE WATERS

CHAPTER XIII

THE FEAR

CHAPTER XIV  
THE LAKE OF LONG SLEEP

# CHAPTER I

[Table of Contents](#)

## THE WORLD WITHOUT MAN

[Table of Contents](#)

It lay apparently afloat on the sluggish, faintly discolored tide--a placid, horse-faced, shovel-nosed head, with bumpy holes for ears and immense round eyes of a somewhat anxious mildness.

The anxiety in the great eyes was not without reason, for their owner had just arrived in the tepid and teeming waters of this estuary, and the creatures which he had already seen about him were both unknown and menacing. But the inshore shallows were full of water-weeds of a rankness and succulence far beyond anything he had enjoyed in his old habitat, and he was determined to secure himself a place here.

From time to time, as some new monster came in sight, the ungainly head would shoot up amazingly to a distance of five or ten, or even fifteen feet, on a swaying pillar of a neck, in order to get a better view of the stranger. Then it would slowly sink back again to its repose on the water.

The water at this point was almost fresh, because the estuary, though fully two miles wide, was filled with the tide of the great river rolling slowly down from the heart of the continent. The further shore was so flat that nothing could be seen of it but an endless, pale green forest of giant reeds. But the nearer shore was skirted, at a distance of perhaps half a mile from the water, by a rampart of abrupt,

bright, rust-red cliffs. The flat land between the waterside and the cliffs, except for the wide strip of beach, was clothed with an enormous and riotous growth of calamaries, tree-ferns, cane and palm, which rocked and crashed in places as if some colossal wayfarers were pushing through them. Here and there along the edge of the cliffs sat tall beings with prodigious, saw-toothed beaks, like some species of bird conceived in a nightmare.

Far out across the water one of these creatures was flapping slowly in from the sea. Its wings--eighteen feet across from tip to tip--were not the wings of a bird, but of a bat or a hobgoblin. It had dreadful, hand-like claws on its wing-elbows; and its feet were those of a lizard.

As this startling shape came flapping shoreward, the head afloat upon the water eyed it with interest, but not, as it seemed, with any great apprehension. Yet it certainly looked formidable enough to excite misgivings in most creatures. Its flight was not the steady, even winging of a bird, but spasmodic and violent. It came on at a height of perhaps twenty feet above the sluggish tide, and its immense, circular eyes appeared to take no notice of the strange head that watched it from the water's surface. It seemed about to pass a little to one side, when suddenly, with a hoarse, hooting cry, it swerved and swooped, and struck at the floating head with open jaws.

Swift as was that unexpected attack, the assailant struck nothing but a spot of foam where the head had disappeared. Simultaneously with the lightning disappearance, there was a sudden boiling of the water some eighty-odd feet away. But the great bird-lizard was either too furious to notice this

phenomenon or not sagacious enough to interpret it. Flopping into the air again, and gnashing his beak-like jaws with rage, he kept circling about the spot in heavy zigzags, expecting the harmless looking head to reappear.

All at once his expectations were more than realized. The head not only reappeared, but on a towering leather-colored column of a neck it shot straight into the air to a height of twenty feet. The big, placid eyes were now sparkling with anger. The flat, shovel jaws were gaping open. They seized the swooping foe by the root of the tail, and, in spite of screeches and wild flappings, plucked him down backwards. At the surface of the water there was a convulsive struggle, and the wide wings were drawn clean under.

For several minutes the water seethed and foamed, and little waves ran clattering up the beach, while the owner of the harmless-looking head trod his assailant down and crushed him among the weeds of the bottom. Then the foam slowly crimsoned, and the mauled, battered body of the great bird-lizard came up again; for the owner of the mysterious head was a feeder on delicate weeds and succulent green-stuff only, and would eat no blood-bearing food. The body was still struggling, and the vast, dark, broken wings spread themselves in feeble spasms on the surface. But they were not left to struggle long.

The water, in the distance, had been full of eager spectators of the fight, and now it boiled as they rushed in upon the disabled prey. Ravenous, cavern-jawed, fishlike beasts, half-porpoise, half-alligator, swarmed upon the victim, tearing at it and at each other. Some bore off trailing mouthfuls of dark wing-membrane, others more substantial

booty, while the rest fought madly in the vortex of discolored foam.

At the beginning of the fray the grim figures perched along the red ramparts of the cliff had shown signs of excitement, lifting their high shoulders and half unfolding the stiff drapery of their wings. As they saw their fellow overwhelmed they launched themselves from their perch and came hooting hoarsely over the rank, green tops of the palms and feathery calamaries. Swooping and circling they gathered over the hideous final struggle, and from time to time one or another would drop perpendicularly downward to stab the crown or the face of one of the preoccupied fish-beasts with his trenchant beak. Such of the fish-beasts as were thus disabled were promptly torn to pieces and devoured by their companions.

Some fifty feet away, nearer shore, the harmless-looking head which had been the source and inspirer of all this bloody turmoil lay watching the scene with discontent in its round, wondering eyes. Slowly it reared itself once more to a height of eight or ten feet above the water, as if for better inspection of the combat. Then, as if not relishing the neighborhood of the fish-beasts, it slowly sank again and disappeared.

Immediately a heavy swirling, a disturbance that stretched over a distance of nearly a hundred feet, began to travel shoreward. It grew heavier and heavier as the water grew shallower. Then a leather-colored mountain of a back heaved itself up through the smother and a colossal form, that would make the hugest elephant a pigmy, came ponderously forth upon the beach.



The body of this amazing being was thrice or four times the bulk of the mightiest elephant. It stood highest--a good thirteen feet--over the haunches (which were supported on legs like columns), and sloped abruptly to the lower and lighter-built fore-shoulders. The neck was like a giraffe's, but over twenty feet in length to its juncture with the mild little head, which looked as if Nature had set it there as a pleasantry at the expense of the titanic body. The tail, enormous at the base and tapering gradually to a whip-lash, trailed out to a distance of nearly fifty feet. As its owner came ashore, this tremendous tail was gathered and curled in a semi-circle at his side--perhaps lest the delicate tip, if left too distant, might fall a prey to some significant but agile marauder. 6

For some minutes the colossus (he was one of the Dinosaurs, or Terrible Lizards, and known as a Diplodocus) remained on all-fours, darting his sinuous neck inquiringly in all directions, and snatching here and there a mouthful of the rank tender herbage which grew among the trunks of fern and palm. Apparently the spot was to his liking. Here was a wide beach, sunlit and ample, whereon to bask at leisure. There were the warm and weed-choked shallows wherein to pasture, to wallow at will, to hide his giant bulk from his enemies if there should be found any formidable enough to make hiding advisable. Swarms of savage insects, to be sure, were giving him a hot reception--mosquitoes of unimaginable size, and enormous stinging flies which sought to deposit their eggs in his smooth hide, but with his giraffe-like neck he could bite himself where he

would, and the lithe lash of his tail could flick off tormentors from any corner of his anatomy.

Meanwhile, the excitement off-shore had died down. The harsh hootings of the bird-lizards had ceased to rend the air as the dark wings hurtled away to seek some remoter or less disturbed hunting-ground. Then across the silence came suddenly a terrific crashing of branches, mixed with gasping cries. Startled, the diplodocus hoisted himself upon his hind-quarters, till he sat up like a kangaroo, supported and steadied by the base of his huge tail. In this position his head, forty feet above the earth, overlooked the tops of all but the tallest trees. And what he saw brought 7 the look of anxiety once more into his round, saucer-eyes.

Hurling itself with desperate, plunging leaps through the rank growths, and snapping the trunks of the brittle tree-ferns in its path as if they had been cauliflowers, came a creature not unlike himself, but of less than half the size, and with neck and tail of only moderate length. This creature was fleeing in frantic terror from another and much smaller being, which came leaping after it like a giant kangaroo. Both were plainly dinosaurs, with the lizard tail and hind-legs; but the lesser of the two, with its square, powerful head and tiger-fanged jaws, and the tremendous, rending claws on its short forearms, was plainly of a different species from the great herb-eaters of the dinosaurian family. It was one of the smaller members of that terrible family of carnivorous dinosaurians which ruled the ancient cycad forests as the black-maned lion rules the Rhodesian jungles to-day. The massive iguanodon which fled

before it so madly, though of fully thrice its bulk, had reason to fear it as the fat cow fears a wolf.

A moment more, and the dreadful chase, with a noise of raucous groans and pantings, burst forth into the open, not fifty feet from where the colossus stood watching. Almost at the watcher's feet the fugitive was overtaken. With a horrid leap and a hoot of triumph, the pursuer sprang upon its neck and bore it to the ground, where it lay bellowing hoarsely and striking out blunderingly with the massive, horn-tipped 8 spur which armed its clumsy wrist. The victor tore madly at its throat with tooth and claw, and presently its bellowing subsided to a hideous, sobbing gurgle.

The diplodocus, meanwhile, had been looking down upon the scene with half-bewildered apprehension. These creatures were insignificant in size, to be sure, as compared with his own colossal stature, but the smaller one had a swift ferocity which struck terror to his dull heart.

Suddenly a red wrath mounted to his small and sluggish brain. His tail, as we have seen, was curled in a half-circle at his side. Now he bent his body with it. For an instant his whole bulk quivered with the extraordinary tension. Then, like a bow released, the bent body sprang back. The tail (and it weighed at least a ton) struck the victor and the victim together with an annihilating shock, and swept them clean around beneath the visitor's feet.

Down he came upon them at once, with the crushing effect of a hundred steam pile-drivers; and for the next few minutes his panicky rage expended itself in treading the two bodies into a shapeless mass. Then he slowly backed off down into the water where the weedy growths were

thickest, till once more his whole form was concealed except the insignificant head. This he reared among the swaying tufts of the "mares' tails," and waited to see what strange thing would happen next.

He had not long to wait. That hideous, mangled heap there, sweating blood in the noon sun, seemed to have some way of making its presence known. Crashing sounds arose in different parts of the forest, and presently some half-dozen of the leaping, kangaroo-like flesh-eaters appeared.

They were of varying sizes, from ten or twelve feet in length to eighteen or twenty, and they eyed each other with jealous hostility. But one glance at the weltering heap showed them that here was feasting abundant for them all. With a chorus of hoarse cries they came hopping forward and fell upon it.

Presently two vast shadows came overhead, hovering a moment, and a pair of the great bird-lizards dropped upon the middle of the heap. Hooting savagely, with wings half uplifted, they struck about them with their terrible beaks till they had secured room for themselves at the banquet. Other unbidden guests came leaping from among the thickets; and in a short time there was nothing left of the carcasses except two naked skeletons, dragged apart and half dismembered by mighty teeth. In the final mêlée one of the smaller revellers was himself pounced upon and devoured.

Then, as if by consent of a mutual distrust, the throng drew quickly apart, each eyeing his neighbor warily, and scattered into the woods. Only the two grim bird-lizards

remained, seeming to have a sort of understanding or partnership, or possibly being a mated pair. They pried into the cartilages and between the joints of the skeletons with the iron wedges of their beaks, till there was not another tit-bit to be enjoyed. 10 Then, hooting once more with satisfaction, they spread their batlike vanes and flapped darkly off again to their red watch-tower on the cliff.

When all was once more quiet the giant visitor fell to pasturing among the crisp and tender water-weeds. It took a long time to fill his cavernous paunch by way of that slender neck of his, and when he was satisfied he went composedly to sleep, his body perfectly concealed under the water, his head resting on a little islet of matted reeds in a thicket of "mares' tails." When he woke up again the sun was half-way down to the west, and the beach glowed hotly in the afternoon light. Everything was drenched in heavy stillness. The visitor made up his drowsy mind that he must leave his hiding-place and go and bask in that delicious warmth.

He was just bestirring himself to carry out his purpose, when once more a swaying in the rank foliage of the cycads caught his vigilant eye. Discreetly he drew back into hiding, the place being, as he had found it, so full of violent surprises.

Suddenly there emerged upon the beach a monster even more extraordinary in appearance than himself. It was about thirty-five feet in length, and its ponderous bulk was supported on legs so short and bowed that it crawled with its belly almost dragging the ground. Its small head, which it carried close to the earth, was lizard-like, shallow-skulled, feeble-looking, and its jaws cleft back past the stupid eyes.

In fact, it was an inoffensive-looking head for such an 11 imposing body. At the base of the head began a system of defensive armor that looked as if it might be proof against artillery. Up over the shoulders, over the mighty arch of the back, and down over the haunches as far as the middle of the ponderous tail, ran a series of immense flat plates of horn, with pointed tips and sharpened edges. The largest of these plates, those that covered the center of the back, were each three feet in height, and almost of an equal breadth. Where the diminished plates came to an end at the middle of the tail, their place was taken by eight immense, needle-pointed spines, set in pairs, of which the chief pair had a length of over two feet. The monster's hide was set thick with scales and knobs of horn, brilliantly colored in black, yellow, and green, that his grotesque bulk might be less noticeable to his foes among the sharp shadows and patchy lights of the fern jungles where he fed.

The sluggish giant moved nervously, glancing backwards as he came, and seemed intent upon reaching the water. In a few moments his anxiety was explained. Leaping in splendid bounds along his broad trail came two of those same ferocious flesh-eaters whom the great watcher among the reeds so disliked. They ranged up one on each side of the stegosaur, who had halted at their approach, stiffened himself, and drawn his head so far back into the loose skin of his neck that only the sharp, chopping beak projected from under the first armor-plate. One of the pair threatened him from the front, as if to engross his 12 attention, while the other pounced upon one of his massive, bowed hind-

legs, as if seeking to drag it from beneath him and roll him over on his side.

But at this instant there was a clattering of the plated hide, and that armed tail lashed out with lightning swiftness, like a porcupine's. There was a tearing screech from the rash flesh-eater, and he was plucked back sidewise, all four feet in air, deeply impaled on three of those gigantic spines. While he clawed and writhed, struggling to twist himself free, his companion sprang hardily to the rescue. She hurled herself with all her weight and strength full upon the stegosaur's now unprotected flank. So tremendous was the impact that, with a frightened grunt, he was rolled clean over on his side. But at the same time his sturdy forearms clutched his assailant, and so crushed, mauled and tore her that she was glad to wrench herself away.

Coughing and gasping, she bounded backwards out of reach; and then she saw that her mate, having wriggled off the spines, was dragging himself up the beach toward the forest, leaving a trail of blood behind him. She followed sullenly, having had more than enough of the venture. The triumphant stegosaur rolled himself heavily back upon his feet, grunted angrily, clattered his armored plates, jerked his terrible tail from side to side as if to see that it was still in working order, and went lumbering off to another portion of the wood, having apparently forgotten his purpose of taking to the water. As he went, one of 13 the grim bird-lizards from the cliff swooped down and hovered, hooting over his path, apparently disappointed at his triumph.

The watcher in the reeds, on the other hand, was encouraged by the result of the combat. He began to feel a

certain dangerous contempt for those leaping flesh-eaters, in spite of their swiftness and ferocity. He himself, though but an eater of weeds, had trodden one into nothingness, and now he had seen two together overthrown and put to flight. With growing confidence he came forth from his hiding, stalked up the beach, coiled his interminable tail beside him, and lay down to bask his dripping sides in the full blaze of the sun.

The colossus was at last beginning to feel at home in his new surroundings. In spite of the fact that this bit of open beach, overlooked by the deep green belt of jungle and the rampart of red cliffs, appeared to be a sort of arena for titanic combats, he began to have confidence in his own astounding bulk as a defense against all foes. What matter his slim neck, small head and feeble teeth, when that awful engine of his tail could sweep his enemies off their feet, and he could crush them by falling upon them like a mountain! A pair of the great bird-lizards flapped over him, hooting malignantly and staring down upon him with their immense, cold eyes, but he hardly took the trouble to look up at them.

Warmed and well fed, his eyes half-sheathed in their membraneous lids, he gazed out vacantly across the waving herbage of the shallows, across the slow, pale tides whose surface boiled from time to time above the rush of some unseen giant of a shark or ichthyosaur.

In the heavy heat of the afternoon the young world had become very still. The bird-lizards, all folded in their wings, sat stiff and motionless along the ramparts of red cliff. The only sounds were the hiss of those seething rushes far out on the tide, the sudden droning hum of some great insect



darting overhead, or the occasional soft clatter of the long, crisp cycad leaves as a faint puff of hot air lifted them.

At the back of the beach, where the tree-ferns and the calamaries grew rankest, the foliage parted noiselessly at a height of perhaps twenty feet from the ground, and a dreadful head looked forth. Its jaws were both long and massive, and armed with immense, curved teeth like scimitars. Its glaring eyes were overhung by eaves of bony plate, and from the front of its broad snout rose a single horn, long and sharp. For some minutes this hideous apparition eyed the unconscious colossus by the waterside. Then it came forth from the foliage and crept noiselessly down the beach.

Except for its horned snout and armored eyes, this monster was not unlike in general type to those other predatory dinosaurs which had already appeared upon the scene. But it was far larger, approaching thirty-five feet in length, and more powerfully built in proportion 15 to its size; and the armory of its jaws was more appalling. With a stealthy but clumsy-looking waddle, which was nevertheless soundless as a shadow, and his huge tail curled upwards that it might not drag and rattle the stones, he crept down until he was within some fifty feet or more of the drowsing colossus.

Some premonition of peril, at this moment, began to stir in the heavy brain of the colossus, and he lifted his head apprehensively. In the same instant the horned giant gathered himself, and hurled himself forward. In two prodigious leaps he covered the distance that separated him from his intended prey. The coiled tail of the colossus lashed

out irresistibly, but the assailant cleared it in his spring, fell upon the victim's shoulders, and buried his fangs in the base of that columnar neck.

The colossus, for the first time, was overwhelmed with terror. He gave vent to a shrill, bleating bellow--an absurdly inadequate utterance to issue from this mountainous frame--writhed his neck in snaky folds, and lashed out convulsively with the stupendous coils of his tail. But he could not loosen that deep grip, or the clutch of those iron claws.

In spite of the many tons weight throttling his neck, he reared himself aloft, and strove to throw himself over upon his assailant. But the marauder was agile, and eluded the crushing fall without losing his grip. Then, bleating frightfully, till the sounds re-echoed from the red cliffs and set all the drowsing 16 bird-lizards lifting their wings, he plunged down into the tide and bore his dreadful adversary out of sight beneath a smother of ensanguined foam.

Now, the horned giant was himself a powerful swimmer and quite at home in the water, but in this respect he was no match for his quarry. Refusing to relinquish his hold, he was borne out into deep water; and there the colossus, becoming all at once agile and swift, succeeded in rolling over upon him. Forced thus to lose his grip, he gave one long, ripping lunge with his horn, deep into the victim's flank, and then writhed himself from under. The breath quite crushed out of him, he was forced to rise to the surface for air. There he rested, recovering his self-possession, reluctant to give up the combat, but even more reluctant to expose himself to another such mauling in the depths. As he

hesitated, about a hundred feet away he saw the mild little head of the colossus, apparently floating on the tide, and regarding him anxiously. That decided him. With a crashing bellow of rage and a sweep of his powerful tail he darted at the inoffensive head. But it vanished instantly, and a sudden tremendous turmoil, developing into a wake that lengthened out with the speed of a torpedo-boat, showed him the hopelessness of pursuit. Turning abruptly, he swam back to the shore and sulkily withdrew into the thickets to seek some less unmanageable quarry.

The colossus, so deeply wounded that his trail threw up great clots and bubbles of red foam, swam onward 17 several miles up the estuary. He realized now that that patch of sunny beach was just a death-trap. But in the middle of the estuary, far out from either shore, far removed from the unseen, lurking horrors of the fern forests, spread acre upon acre of drowned marsh, overgrown with tall green reeds and feathery "mares' tails." Through these stretches of marsh he ploughed his way, half-swimming, half-wading, and felt that here he might find a safe refuge as well as an unfailing pasturage. But the anguish of his wounds urged him still onwards.

Beyond the reed-beds he came to a long, narrow islet of wet sand, naked to the sun. This appeared to him the very refuge he was craving, a spot where he could lie secure and lick his hurts. He dragged himself out upon it eagerly. Not until he had gained the very center of it did he notice how his ponderous feet sank in it at every stride. As soon as he halted he felt the treacherous sands sucking him down. In terror he struggled to free himself, to regain the water. But

now the sands had a grip upon him, and his efforts only engulfed him the more swiftly. He reared upon his hind legs, and immediately found himself swallowed to the haunches. He fell forward again, and sank to his shoulder-blades. And then, the convulsive thrashings of his tail hurling the sands in every direction, he lifted his head and bleated piteously.

The struggle had already drawn the dreadful eyes of those grim, folded figures perched along the cliff-tops miles away; and now, as if in answer to his 18 cry they came fluttering darkly over him. Seeing his helplessness, they flapped down upon him with hoots of exultation. Their vast beaks tore at his helpless back, and stabbed at the swiftly writhing convolutions of his neck. One, more heedless than his fellows, came within reach of the thrashing tail, and was dashed, half stunned, to earth, where the sands got him in their hold before he could recover himself. With dreadful screeches, he was sucked down, but his fellows paid no attention to his fate. And meanwhile, in a ring about the islet, not daring to come near for terror of the quicksand, crocodiles and alligators and ichthyosaurs, with upturned, gaping snouts, watched the struggle greedily.

As the lower part of his neck was drawn down into the quicksand, the colossus lost the power to move his head quickly enough to evade the attacks of his horrid assailants. A moment more, and he was blinded. Then he felt his head enfolded in the strangling membranes of wings and borne downwards. Once or twice the convulsions of his neck threw his enemies off, and the bleeding, sightless head reëmerged to view.

But not only his force, but his will to struggle, was fast ebbing away. Presently, with a thunderous, gasping sob, the last breath left his mighty lungs, and his head dropped on the sand. It was trodden under in an instant; and then, afraid of being engulfed themselves, the hooting revellers abandoned it, to crowd struggling upon the arched hump of the back. Here they tore and gorged and quarreled till, some fifteen 19 minutes later, their last foothold sank beneath them. Then, with dripping beaks and talons, they all flapped back to their cliffs; and slowly the fluent sand smoothed itself to shining complacency over the tomb of the diplodocus, hiding and sealing away the stupendous skeleton for half a million years.



## **CHAPTER II**

[Table of Contents](#)

### **THE KING OF THE TRIPLE HORN**

[Table of Contents](#)

It was a little later in the Morning of Time--later by perhaps some two or three hundred thousand years. Monstrous mammals now held sway over the fresh, green round of the young earth, so exuberant in her youthful vigor that she could not refrain from flooding the Poles themselves with a tropical luxuriance of flower and tree. The supremacy of the Giant Reptiles had passed.

A few representatives of their most colossal and highly-specialized forms still survived, still terrible and supreme in those vast, steaming, cane-clothed savannahs which most closely repeated the conditions of an earlier age. But Nature, pleased with her experiments in the more promising mammalian type, had turned her back upon them after her fashion, and was coldly letting them die out. Her failures, however splendid, have always found small mercy at her hands.

But it was little like a failure he looked, the giant who now heaved his terrible, three-horned front from the lilled surface of the lagoon wherein he had been wallowing, and came ponderously ploughing his way ashore. As he emerged upon dry ground, he halted--with the tip of his massive, lizard-like tail still in the 21 water--and shook a shower from the hollows of his vast and strangely armored head.

His eyes, coldly furious, and set in a pair of goggle-like projections of horn, peered this way and that, as if suspecting the neighborhood of a foe. His gigantic snout--horned, cased in horn, and hooked like the beak of a parrot--he lifted high, sniffing the heavy air. Then, as if to end his doubts by either drawing or daunting off the unknown enemy, he opened his grotesquely awful mouth and roared. The huge sound that exploded from his throat was something between the bellow of an alligator and the coughing roar of a tiger, but of infinitely vaster volume.

The next moment, as if in deliberate reply to the challenge, an immense black beast stepped from behind a thicket of pea-green bamboo, and stood scrutinizing him with wicked little pig-like eyes.

It was the old order confronted by the new, the latest most terrible and perhaps most efficient of the titanic but vanishing race of the Dinosaurs, face to face with one of those monstrous mammalian forms upon which Nature was now trying her experiments.

And the place of this meeting was not unfitted to such a portentous encounter. The further shore of the lagoon was partly a swamp of rankest growth, partly a stretch of savannah clothed with rich cane-brake and flowering grasses that towered fifteen or twenty feet into the air. But the hither shore was of a hard soil mixed with sand, carpeted with a short, golden-green herbage, and studded with clumps of 22 bamboo, jobo, mango and mahogany, with here and there a thicket of canary-flowered acacia, bristling with the most formidable of thorns.

They were not altogether ill-matched, these two colossal protagonists of the Saurian and the Mammal. The advantage of bulk lay altogether with the Dinosaur, the three-horned King of all the Lizard kind. His armament, too, whether for offense or for defense, was distinctly the more formidable. Fully twenty feet in length, and perhaps eight feet high at the crest of the massively-rounded back, he was of ponderous breadth, and moved ponderously on legs like columns.

His splotched brown and yellow hide was studded along the neck and shoulders with pointed knobs of horn. His enormous, fleshy tail, some seven feet long and nearly two feet thick at the base, tapered very gradually to a thick tip, and dragged on the ground behind him. But the most amazing thing about this King of the Lizards was his monstrous and awe-inspiring head.

Wedge-shaped from the tip of its cruel parrot-beak to its spreading, five-foot-wide base, its total length was well over seven feet. Its three horns, one on the snout and two standing out straight forward from the forehead just above the eyes, were immensely thick at the base and fined down smoothly to points of terrible keenness. The one on the snout was something over a foot in length, while the brow pair were nearly three feet long.

Almost from the roots of these two terrific weapons 23 protruded the huge horn goggles which served as sockets for the great, cold, implacable lizard-eyes. Behind the horns, outspreading like a vast ruff from three to four feet wide upwards and laterally, slanted a smooth, polished shield of



massive shell like the carapace of a giant turtle, protecting the neck and shoulders from any imaginable attack.

The antagonist who had come in answer to the giant's challenge was less extravagant in appearance and more compact in form. He was not much over a dozen feet in length, but this length owed nothing to the tail, which was a mere wriggling pendant. He was, perhaps, seven feet high, very sturdy in build, but not mountainous like his terrible challenger. His legs and feet were something like those of an elephant, and he looked capable of a deadly alertness in action. But, as in the case of the King Dinosaur, it was his head that gave him his chief distinction. Long, massive and blunt-nosed, it was armed not only with six horns, set in pairs, but also with a pair of deadly, downward-pointing tusks--like those of a walrus, but much shorter, sharper and more effective.

Of the six horns, the first pair, set on the tip of the broad snout, were mere bony points, of no use as weapons, and employed by their owner for rooting in the turf after the fashion of a tuber-hunting pig. The second pair, set about the middle of the long face, just over the eyes, were about eighteen inches in length, and redoubtable enough to make other weapons seem superfluous. 24

The third pair, however, were equally formidable, and set far back at the very base of the skull, like those of an antelope. The eyes, as has been already stated, were small, deep-set and vindictive. The sullen black of his coloring added to the portentousness of his swift appearance around the clump of pea-green bamboo.

For several minutes the two monsters stood eyeing each other, while the rage of an instinctive hatred mounted slowly in their sluggish brains. To the King Dinosaur, this stranger was a trespasser on his domain, where no other creatures, unless of his own kind, had ever before had the presumption to confront him. The suddenness of the black apparition, also, exasperated him; and he loathed at once the sickly sour smell, so unlike the pungent muskiness of his own kindred, which now for the first time met his sensitive nostrils.

The Dinoceras, on his part, was in a chronic state of rage. He was a solitary old bull, driven out, for his bad temper, from the comfortable herd of his fellows, and burning to find vent for his bottled spleen. The herd, in one of its migrations, had just arrived in the neighborhood of the great lagoons, and he, in his furious restlessness, was unconsciously playing the part of vanguard to it.

He had never, of course, conceived of so terrible an adversary as this splotched brown and yellow monster before him. But he was in no mood to calculate odds. For all his blind rage, however, he was 25 a crafty fighter, always. Seeing that the challenger made no move, he gave voice to a huge, squealing grunt, like the noise of a herd of raging pigs. Then he dug his armed snout into the turf and hurled a shower of sod into the air.

In the eyes of the King Dinosaur this was apparently an intolerable insult. With a roar he came lumbering forward, at a slow, rolling run which seemed to jar the earth. Grunting again, and moving at thrice his speed, the black beast rushed to meet him, head down, like a charging bison.

They met under the spreading branches of an immense hoyá-tree. But they did not meet fairly, head to head, as the Dinosaur intended. Had they done so the battle would have been decided then and there, for the black beast's horns and unprotected front were no match for the impenetrable armor and leveled lances of the King's colossal head. But they did not meet fairly. The black stranger was much too crafty for that. At the last moment he swerved nimbly aside, wheeled with an agility that was marvelous for a creature of his bulk, and thrust at the shoulders of the colossus with a fierce, rooting movement like the stroke of the wild boar.

But he struck the rim of that impenetrable defense, the spreading ruff of horn. And he might as well have struck a mountain-side. That enormous bulk, firm-based on the wide-set columns which formed its legs, merely staggered an instant, coughed from the jarring of the blow, and swung about to present his terrific 26 horns against another such attack. The black stranger, meanwhile, as if disappointed at the meager result of his tactics, had drawn back out of reach. He stood rooting the turf and squealing defiance, in the hope of luring the giant into a second charge.

The stupendous duel had two interested spectators. On the top of the next tree sat an extraordinary-looking bird, about the size of a pheasant, colored blue and rose like a macaw. Its tail was like a lizard's, long and fully-vertebrated, with a pair of flat feathers standing out opposite each other at right angles from each joint, for all the world like an immense acacia-frond done in red. At the tips of its wing-elbows it carried clutching, hand-like claws, resembling those of the flying reptiles; and its straight, strong beak was

armed with pointed teeth. It kept opening and shutting its beak excitedly and uttering sharp cries, as if calling everyone to come and see the fight.

The other spectator was not excited at all. He was a large, ape-like man--one would have said, rather, a manlike ape, had it not been for the look in his eyes.

This enigmatic figure sat on a branch immediately over the combatants, and held on with one powerful, hairy hand to the branch just above him. He was covered with thick, brown hair, like fur, from head to foot, but that on his head was true hair, long and waving. His shoulders were massive, his chest of great depth, his arms so long that if he had been standing erect they would have hung to his knees, his legs short, massive and much bowed. His hands were furred to the second joint of the fingers, but they were the hands of a man, not those of an ape, for the huge thumb was opposed to the fingers instead of being set parallel with them like another finger. His head was low in the arch of the skull, low and narrow in the forehead, with a small facial angle and hardly any bridge to the broad, flat, wide-nostriled nose; and the jaws were heavy and thrust forward brutishly. But the eyes, under the roof of the heavy, bony brows, held an expression profoundly unlike the cold, mechanical stare of the giant Dinosaur or the twinkling, vindictive glare of the black stranger. They gazed down at the battle with a sort of superiority, considerate, a little scornful, in spite of the obvious fact that either of the two, as far as mere physical bulk and prowess were concerned, could have obliterated him by simply setting foot upon him. In his free hand he grasped a branch of acacia set with

immense thorns, the needle-like points of which he touched contemplatively from time to time, as if pondering what use he could put them to. He had no marked prejudice, for the moment, in favor of either side in the battle below him. Both monsters were his foes, and the ideal result, in his eyes, would have been for the two to destroy each other. But if he had any preference, it was for the black mammalian beast, the lizard monster appearing to him the more alien, the more incomprehensible and the more impregnable to any strategy that he might devise.

For perhaps a couple of minutes, now, the King 28 kept his place, wheeling ponderously to face his agile opponent, who circled about him at a distance of ten to twelve yards, seeking an opportunity to get in a rush upon his open flank. This wheeling and circling made the cool watcher in the tree impatient. Wrenching off a heavy branch, he hurled it down with all his force upon the King's face. To the King this seemed but another insult from his black antagonist, and his rage exploded once more. With a roar he wallowed forward, thinking to pin the elusive foe to earth and tread the life out of him.

This gave the black beast his opportunity. Doubling nimbly like a wild boar, he dashed in and caught his colossal opponent fairly on the side, midway between the shoulder and the haunch. The impact shocked the breath from the monster's lungs, with a huge, explosive cough, and brought him to a bewildered standstill, though it could not throw him from his feet. But the armored hide proved too tough for the black beast's horns to penetrate. Perceiving this on the instant, the latter reared, and brought down the two awful