

Amazing Stories, April, 1928

The ANCIENT HORROR

by Hal Grant



“IT will be interesting if they happen to find the lizard and it turns out to be the real thing.”

“What thing?” I asked. Rutherford had been reading the paper to himself.

By way of reply, he handed me the paper, at the same time pointing to a head-line carrying the information that scientists were on their way to Africa to search for a “PRE-HISTORIC MONSTER SEEN BY HUNTERS IN NORTHERN AFRICAN SWAMP.”

From the writer’s description, I gathered the idea that the creature was supposed to belong to one of the species of gigantic saurians that roamed the earth during the reptilian age, some five hundred millions of years ago.

I thought the story a hoax and said so. Rutherford didn’t agree with me, calling my attention to the fact that the men—whose names were given—were all well known, which made it unlikely that any writer would use them in connection with anything that savoured of deceit.

“I believe they have evidence warranting such an expedition, or they would not go. Moreover, I shall not be surprised to read, at some future date, that they have discovered the thing, whatever it is, and that it furnishes them with some very interesting experiences.”

Well, every one has a right to his opinion, even though he has no foundation upon which to base it, so I didn’t argue with him, beyond saying that I presumed he had some very good reason for being so positive.

Perhaps he thought I was a trifle sarcastic. At any rate he looked at me through contracted eyes for a moment, as if trying to make up his mind about something; then, having filled his pipe, he reached for a match and, after lighting the tobacco, he said quietly, “Yes, I do believe there are living descendants of those saurians and that they are, in appearance, like the old fellows we read

about. Also, I believe I have good reason for thinking there are some that resemble no known species, and, since you won’t take any stock in my belief until you have some proof, I am going to give you some, provided, of course, that you will accept my unsupported word that what I tell you is true.”

Rutherford is not one given to making statements that are not true. If he says he knows a thing to be so, from personal knowledge, that settles it. He always was that way, even in school. More than once I have known him to take a licking when, by simply misstating the facts, he would have saved himself. Knowing him as I did, I told him to go ahead and give me the proof, if he wanted to, but, that I’d take his word for the “reason” without any further evidence, I hadn’t the slightest idea as to what his “proofs” were, or I should not have taken the chance of missing them. Aside from a tale of fiction, I’ve never heard, or read of anything that approached his story for horror. And the setting was perfect. Rutherford and I, alone in the hunting lodge on the shore of a northern lake at night, with the November wind howling through the trees that surrounded the house on three sides, and driving torrents of rain and sleet against the windows and upon the shakes that covered the roof. An eerie night, for an eerie tale.

“I’ve never told this story before,” he began, “because there is little chance of being thought anything but a liar. I’ve often wanted to tell it though, and this moment seems very opportune. Every word is gospel truth.”

“In this case, as in all others, cause and effect are operative,” he began. “If I hadn’t caught the flu in the winter of nineteen hundred and five, I should never have known anything about it.

“I had a pretty bad case of it and, only by the skin of my teeth, did I manage to pull through. Even at that, I barely missed ‘going west,’ for I was left with a lung complication that my doctor thought was a touch of T.B.

“As soon as the weather permitted, he ordered me into the mountains for an indefinite time. ‘Any place,’ he said, ‘where there are lots of pine trees and clean air.’ It seems odd that, out of all the familiar places on earth, which I might have chosen, I should have selected a place I had never heard of before, just because the name, when I read it on the route marked out in a railway time table, reminded me of a little girl I used to like back in my school days.

“Maybe you will remember her, Elsie Hampton, She went to school with us, back there, in Stowe, Vermont. She lived back on the hill, beyond the big house that Butler, the hotel man, built. You remember, he never finished it? Got killed by being thrown out of his buggy, while driving a crazy horse. Drunk at the time, if I remember correctly.”

I nodded and, refilling his obnoxious pipe, he went on.

“That’s how I happened to go to Hampton and, as it turned out, I would have had some trouble finding a better place, every thing considered. It was two thousand feet above sea level, just at the edge of the foothills. There were plenty of pines, firs and balsams. Air as clear as crystal. Fishing and hunting ’till you couldn’t rest and, to make it more attractive, it was off the tourist track. Nobody ever stopped there (it was before the days of ‘Automobile Tramps’ and there was no such thing as a ‘Tourist Camp’).

“But the town was modern and up-to-date, provided with gas, electricity and a plentiful supply of pure water, piped from a reservoir ten miles back in the hills. There had been a hot controversy over the construction of the reservoir, due to the heavy cost, but the ‘Boosters’ had won out, and in the end, every one was happy.

“I had been there but a short while when things began to happen that set the town by the ears, particularly that part of the town that had opposed the idea of putting in the

reservoir. One beautiful afternoon, just at the time the women were getting supper started, every tap in town went dry. Inside of half an hour the water works department was being called up and ‘called down’ by indignant housewives, who wanted to know what had become of their water supply.

“Well, the department found it out almost as soon as the women did, and it wasn’t long before the engineers were loping along the pipe-line leading to the reservoir, followed by a crowd of idlers; being one of that class, I was with them.

“There was no break in the pipe and no cause for the stoppage of the water ways found until the reservoir was reached. Here they found cause in plenty. The huge, artificial lake was dry and the creek that fed it was pouring into a great hole in the center of the basin, near the dam and, from the roar that issued forth, one could guess that the water was falling some distance.

“Ordinarily, a hole may be stopped up. This was more than a hole; a continuous stream of water of considerable size failed to fill it. Evidently there was a cavern, or a number of caverns, underneath the surface with outlets, possibly sufficiently large to carry away any overflow.

“There were two newspapers in Hampton. One backed up the ‘Boosters,’ while the other stood with the ‘Conservatives,’ and the reservoir incident furnished the rival papers with a plentiful supply of material for publication.

“As might be guessed, the conservative organ was mean and caustic. Of course, nobody could have foreseen such a catastrophe—for it amounted to that.

“The other paper tried to explain, and really did explain. The cause was entirely obvious. The creek, for at least that part of it that had passed over the spot where the hole now was, had flowed over the thin rock cover of an underground chamber, or chambers, of

huge dimensions. In view of what occurred a year later, I believe there must have been at least two, or more. This thin plate, or cover, had been strong enough to support the weight of the stream, but it was constantly growing thinner and it was apparently not strong enough to bear the greater strain imposed upon it by the water in the reservoir.

“The conservative paper admitted this but tried to convince its readers that the engineers should have known, from the formation of the rocks, that such an accident was liable to occur.

“And so they went at it, hammer and tongs, until, like a bolt from the clear blue sky, came another phenomenal occurrence. This, I suppose, might have been anticipated, although I don’t see how.

“A MAN by the name of Wilson owned a large farm that abutted upon the creek. In fact, a part of the lake formed by the reservoir encroached upon Wilson’s property, and would have covered a large part of it, were it not for a retaining wall that had been built to keep the water back. This wall ran from a point near the upstream end of the reservoir to within a hundred feet of the dam. The remaining space was filled by a sort of mound, rising some fifteen feet, or more, above the surface of the water at high level. This mound was very much like a turtle’s shell in shape, a hundred feet in length, about fifty feet wide at its base. I mention the mound at this point in the story, because it played an important part in a later incident, and I want you to remember the details.

“One morning, while the principal topic of conversation was still the reservoir cave-in, Wilson came into town, all het up! Winding up in the Mayor’s office, he sprung a sensation upon that official by declaring that his farm had ‘sunk out of sight.’ This was, to be sure, a mean and unusual trick for a farm to play upon its owner and the Mayor was both

astonished and sympathetic. Wilson didn’t want sympathy; he wanted damages, which put an entirely different light on the story. At first, the Mayor thought Wilson was crazy, but he soon changed his mind and, calling in the County Attorney, asked Wilson to tell the story in detail.

“Wilson said he had been aroused from sleep by a strange noise, a sort of tearing sound mixed with a great roar and, upon getting up and going to his window, which faced the reservoir, he had seen a great gush of water, spurting up through the hole in its bed, and that a few moments later there had been another tearing, crashing noise and all his best garden land had broken away from higher and less valuable land, and ‘dropped plum out of sight.’

“He was still standing, open mouthed, at the window when there came another explosion, followed by a tearing noise and a great chasm appeared in the northern end of the depression into which his farm had sunk and through this came a rushing volume of water. By this time, Wilson said, he thought he’d ‘better put on some clothes and investigate.’

“Continuing, he said that, when he reached the side of the cave-in, he saw that it was rapidly being filled with water that came pouring into it through the rent in the upper end. He had watched until morning when, the water, having reached a point a few inches below the firm edge of his remaining land, had ceased to rise, and he concluded it had gone as high as it ever would.

“At first he was mystified, but at last decided that his misfortune was due to the cave-in of the reservoir, the water having washed the underpinning from beneath his property. Well, both the Mayor and the County Attorney agreed with him—forgetting in the excitement induced by the fantastic story, that Wilson was there to secure damages.

“Of course the Mayor couldn’t do anything for Wilson, and the County Attorney, seeing no better way out of the tangle, advised the man to get a lawyer and bring suit.

“The case didn’t come to trial—not then—for the city figured a way out of the trouble into which the cave-in had drawn it.

“Analysis showed that the water in the newly formed lake was the same water the city had been getting from the reservoir and so an appraiser fixed a valuation upon the sunken property that satisfied Wilson, and, this settled, preparations were begun to connect up the lake with the pipe line.

“But, the chain of unusual happenings was not yet at an end. The day before Wilson was to receive the money for his land, water began to flow through the hundreds of taps that had been left open since they ran dry. An investigation revealed the fact that the reservoir had begun to fill up again and, as soon as the news reached the County Attorney’s office, payment to Wilson was held up, pending such a time as might be needed to show whether or not the reservoir would fill and remain full.

“When it became apparent that there was to be no more trouble with the water supply, the City called the deal off. Wilson then took his case into court and lost. He carried it up on an appeal, and lost again, the higher court sustaining the lower and justifying itself in so doing by stating that what had occurred was ‘an act of God,’ for which the city was not liable.

“During the trial, I became acquainted with Wilson and, afterwards he invited me out to his place. I was glad to go with him for his invitation carried with it the assurance of better conditions of living for me, for I had been unable to secure suitable quarters in any of the farm homes outside of Hampton. I conjectured that, if Wilson’s place suited my fancy, I could very likely make arrangements with him which would enable me to remain at

his place indefinitely. I did succeed in doing so and, who knows but that I might have met with the same unpleasant experience he did, had not Fate willed it otherwise.

“Adventure, like romance, lies just around the corner. One does not need to go to Africa, as these scientists are doing, in order to find adventure any more than it is necessary to go to Europe for romance, and the adventure ahead of me that summer day, as I sat in Wilson’s rattling Flivver, en route to his place, was very real. No other man ever lived through an experience more bizarre, more horrible than the one that was waiting for me, at Wilson’s place.

“It didn’t take us long to cover the distance between Hampton and the farm which, even with most of the tillable land under water, was a beautiful place. That part of the property covered with the water from the reservoir had been practically the only really flat land in the whole estate; the rest was rolling and hilly, and for the most part, covered with timber. The lake lay almost in the center of the ‘farm,’ as Wilson called it and, while it completely ruined the farm for agriculture, it added immensely to its charm and beauty. Roughly oval and nearly a mile in diameter, it twinkled in its bed like a great sapphire encircled with emeralds. Owing to its depth, which, according to Wilson’s estimate, was something about five hundred feet, the water would remain cold always, which made it an ideal place for any trout which entered from the creek, to live and breed in.

“I said as much to Wilson that evening after supper. Evidently, he had never thought of such a thing; his mind was centered upon his loss. He mulled the thing over in his mind for a moment, and as the possibilities of such a proposition grew upon him, he said, ‘if that danged lake had fish in it, I wouldn’t take any price you could name for it. I could get more out of the water than I ever got out of the land and still own it.’ And I knew he was

right. Given fish, he had the world by the tail. It would make a wonderful summer resort, for cottages could be built along the lake which would bring high rent for the season. He surely needed fish.

“AND the fish came, but not until we had about given up all hope that they would. I had become Wilson’s star boarder, for he had invited me to stay there as long as I liked, as his guest. I spent the days helping Wilson keep house. He was a widower for some years, and wandered about the lake, looking for signs of fish.

“Then, one afternoon, just at sundown, I saw one leap out of the water. I shouted to Wilson, who answered the call on the run and got there in time to see another one jump up out of the blue depths. He gripped my arm and said. ‘Rutherford, I shall need some help, financially. If you want to go in with me, we’ll split the profits. What do you say?’ I thought the matter over for a moment, then told him I’d furnish the needed capital. We stayed there, at the side of the lake, until dark, talking the matter over and watching the ‘dollars,’ as Wilson was pleased to call the trout, jump out of the water. We then went back to the house to make further plans for the next season.

“Two weeks later we had a dozen summer cottages well on the road toward completion. We expected to build more, later, but we figured a dozen, to start with, would be sufficient, which shows how nearly a couple of greenhorns can come to making a correct guess. We could have rented a hundred, if we had them. Later I wished I had never thought of building a single cottage. But who could have dreamed of such consequence?

“The cottages, which were erected on a sufficiently large, cleared space, on the southeast shore of the lake, were completed before the cold weather set in, and after closing the board shutters over the windows to

protect them from possible breakage, we devoted our time to planning a campaign for the Spring.

“Winter passed reluctantly it seemed to Wilson and me, but it gave way to Spring at last and shortly after I went to the city. There I had a series of talks with certain dealers in fish, which resulted, as soon as the fishing season opened, in a big window display of strings of trout that made the disciples of Isaac Walton almost wild to swing a fly over their habitat. A carefully worded legend that accompanied the display gave the necessary information. The season opened with all our cottages occupied and we were making money.

“VERY shortly after, we began to hear strange noises in the night. If we had been very near a seaport town I should have thought the sound, though rather sharp, was given by a ship’s siren. However, since we were better than eighteen hundred miles from the ocean, and a thousand miles from any other body of water large enough to float a ship, we concluded that it was a particularly awful whistle on the railroad, that ran some three miles to the west of us. It bothered us for about a week, then, like all other noises that occur at frequent intervals, it ceased to bother us much. There was some speculation among the cottagers but, when we told them it probably came from some engine, they accepted the statement for fact, and forgot all about it. Besides, what does a little noise amount to when the fishing is good? And it was.

“There was only one fault to be found with our lake, or its environment. Owing to the altitude and the added fact that it lay so deep down among the hills, the nights were too chilly to permit of comfort on the lake after dark. However, there was plenty of warmth during the daytime, so it didn’t matter so very much.

“Along about the first part of July, however, we had a stretch of very hot weather. The warmth continued well into the night, and the early evening hours found the lake pretty well dotted with boats and canoes, passing back and forth near the shore and pretty well out into the lake.

“The first break in the calm order of our lives came one evening, during this hot spell. Wilson and I were down at the lake, cleaning some trout we had caught. It was about eight, or a little later and it was getting dark rapidly. We had practically no twilight. We had just finished our job when a long, agonizing scream, as one in mortal anguish, came vibrating over the lake, from some point down in the southwestern corner. Dropping our fish, Wilson and I ran down the shore, in the direction of the cottages, only to find all the women, and a couple of men huddled in a frightened group, down by the shore. In reply to our queries, one of the men said that the scream came from young Barnaby who, with his father and mother, occupied one of the cottages.

“As it chanced, no one had been out on the lake, except the young man. All the other men, with the exception of the two who were on the shore when we got there, were in Hampton, laying in more supplies. When his mother called to young Barnaby to come in, he answered he would be ‘back in a few moments,’ but for some unearthly reason, had started toward the deepening darkness of the western shore. The boy’s mother had remained on the cottage porch, following the lad with a mother’s anxious eyes, as he paddled away into the shadows. The two men, also watching from the shore, commented upon the boy’s ‘whim.’

“Up to this point there was perfect agreement; then started differences of opinion, as to what followed. One man said he was certain the boy had started to change ends, in the canoe, and had capsized it in so doing. His

neighbor was equally certain that he had dimly seen the young man stand up in the canoe and, with the paddle, strike at something and then suddenly pitch forward, out of the canoe, screaming as he fell.

“ALL this was told by the two men, while the four of us, in two boats, were racing toward the spot where the boy was last seen.

“Although the man who declared the accident had been due to the boy’s attempt to ‘change ends’ still stuck to his opinion, I felt, somehow, that he was wrong, Barnaby was, I had been told, a crack swimmer and, considering that he must have been close to shore when he fell into the water, I was convinced that merely being capsized would hardly have elicited such a cry of agony. No! I felt, absolutely, that there had been some sort of an attack made upon him and that he had tried to fight off the attacker, whoever, or whatever it was, with his paddle, and that he had failed in the attempt. And, as I tried to guess what sort of danger the unfortunate boy had faced, chills of horror went down my spine.

“So thoroughly convinced was I that something terrible had happened to Barnaby, and that he was beyond help, that the sight of his overturned canoe, as we drew near it, acted only as a sickening confirmation. Yet, knowing that it was useless, I urged a careful search and, with the others, called his name, again and again. They may have hoped; I did not. I merely knew the boy was dead.

“I kept my thoughts to myself, however, since voicing my suspicions would only make matters worse. It would be bad enough to believe her only son had been drowned, but, I doubted whether her reason would bear the shock of the awful thing I had in mind. Wilson followed my example.

“Having no grappling irons, we would not drag the lake that night, but I told Mrs.

Barnaby, who bore up remarkably well, that I would get some from Hampton in the morning. Hampton had none, so we had to devise them from clumsily made heavy rods and hooks.

“Young Barnaby’s father wanted to go with us, but I prevailed upon him to remain with his wife. I felt it was best, because, while I did not expect to recover the body, I realized the possibility of something very sinister, and I felt it would be better for him not to see what the irons might bring to the surface. Maybe he sensed something of my thought, for he consented at last to remain behind.

“We loaded the clumsy drag with the rope attached (I had bought eight hundred feet, in order to make sure we had enough) into the boat and with Wilson at the oars, pulled over to the place where the accident occurred. We had some trouble getting the drag into the water, owing to its awkward shape and weight, but we finally succeeded in lowering it. It seemed as if the drag would never reach bottom. Five hundred feet is a long way down.

“When, finally, the drag came to rest, I sat down in the stern of the boat and told Wilson to row slowly. He did. He did even better than that; he hardly moved at all. I thought the drag might have caught on some snag, but Wilson assured me there was no such thing in the whole area of the lake. It required the combined efforts of eight men, two to a boat, to pull that thing.

“We worked all day, dragging every foot of the lake within a radius of several hundred yards from the spot where the boy went down. We found nothing that day nor the next day, nor any day within the week of heartbreaking labor.

“It was labor lost, but it was necessary. There was no use running the risk of, not only driving a mother and, perhaps, a father crazy, but of ruining our business. And, of course, I might have been mistaken.

“The Barnaby cottage was vacant the day after we ceased to drag the lake, and it looked, for a while, as though the others might be, too; but, after talking the matter over, the occupants decided that it was only an accident, sad, indeed, but only too common and, since going back home would not help these parents to recover their boy, they might just as well try to forget it. So they stayed and the vacant cottage was soon rented again.

“One thing, however, they didn’t forget—that the ‘accident’ happened in the evening: so, although the warm spell continued, they kept off the lake after sundown.

“Nearly a month went by with no untoward happening. Even those night noises ceased and I began to think I had let my imagination run wild, and that young Barnaby’s death had been due to a simple capsizing of his canoe. Then, there was another accident and, this time, it was a particularly horrible one. To add to its sinister aspects, it took, for its victims, the young couple who occupied the cottage in which the Barnaby family had lived.

“The young man and his wife,—their name was Whipple,—had been married only a little over a year. Mrs. Whipple, a rather frail woman of the neurotic type, temperamental, crochety and stubborn as the Devil, was soon to become a mother and her condition, of course, didn’t make her any easier to get along with. She was a beauty, though, and Whipple adored her.

“But, unreasonable as she was, Mrs. Whipple realized that she was in no condition to risk being tipped into the water, even if she had been a good swimmer, so she kept off the lake, contenting herself with sitting in the bow of the boat, which was tied to a stake driven into the ground, a few feet from the edge. There was absolutely no shore, no beach, and the water, at the edge of the lake grew suddenly deep.

“No one will ever know what prompted her to insist upon going out on the lake that night. Probably it was just an unaccountable whim, common to women. Had Whipple been a little more coaxingly diplomatic, he might have talked her out of the notion, but, unfortunately, he emphatically negated her suggestion that he take her ‘for a little boat ride’ before they went to bed, and the fat was in the fire. What had been, when made, just a simple, wheedling request, became a demand, backed up by evidence of approaching hysterics.

“According to Holy Writ, which is accepted by many people as being true, Eve succeeded in getting Adam to eat the apple, even when he knew the consequences were going to be disastrous, so what could be expected of a man, so deeply in love with his wife, who only feared the possibility of an unpleasant result of his yielding? Whipple held out for a little time but, in the end, she deviled him into taking her and, to make the matter worse, she insisted upon going, ‘straight across to the opposite shore and back.’

“I was present at the time; that is I was within hearing distance, having been, engaged in conversation with the man next door to Whipple. When I heard him, grudgingly, consent to take his wife across, I had a feeling of dread, a premonition of something dreadful in connection with it. Using all the tact I possessed, I tried to dissuade her from going. But it was useless. She listened, politely enough, for she was well brought up, but she was unshaken and what more could I do? True, I might have taken hold of the painter and refused to allow Whipple to take the boat, as I had a ‘hunch’ to do. But that would have necessitated an explanation, which I could hardly give. So I contented myself with saying that I wouldn’t do it under the circumstances. Which helped not at all.

“I’ve known people to laugh at ‘a

hunch.’ They claim there is nothing to it, that the ‘feeling’ is due to some trifling nervous disorder, entirely physiological. Some attribute it to over-stimulation of the nerves by alcohol, or tobacco. Well, perhaps it is due to any one, or all of these causes, but I’ve never known it to fail in my own case, and I’ve had plenty of chance to test it out. The proof, of course, is entirely one-sided, for, if I ‘feel’ that I’ll be sorry later if I do a certain thing, and I obey that ‘hunch,’ I never know that punishment would really have followed had I disregarded the feeling. It is like taking the Pasteur treatment for suspected rabies infection. If the treatment is taken before rabies develops in the person, it can never be known, for certain, that there was any need for the treatment. All that is known is, if there is an infection and the treatment is not taken, the person dies, most horribly. So with a ‘hunch.’ It may be all bunk, as the cold-blooded, matter-of-fact people claim, but it doesn’t cost much to play the ‘hunch’ and, as a rule, I do.

“I STOOD there, on the shore, watching the outline of the boat grow dimmer and dimmer as it neared the middle of the lake. It was the second night of the new moon. The starless sky was like black velvet. And it seemed ominously still to me. At the first terrible ululation of a woman in deadly peril, which came echoing across the black stretch of water, I felt, not so much of surprise, as confirmation of a previous certainty. None the less, my very soul sickened with dread and horror and when, an instant later, the hoarser cry of a man smote my ears, I knew the tragedy was complete—both Whipple and his wife were past help.

“I must have been very close to hysteria for, when Wilson, whose teeth were chattering, grasped my arm, I shook him off with an oath, and ran for the boat, closely followed by the other men.

“As a rule, I am not much bothered by

'nerves.' It is not due to any courage of an unusual sort, for I have known fear many times, but I certainly had them that night, when we pulled across the lake, toward the spot from which had come those terrible cries. Although I have crawled out into the mud and filth of 'No Man's Land.' in the blackness of a rainy night, knowing that death would be my portion if I should betray my presence by a sound, my nerves were steady although fear was in my heart. I knew in what manner I should die and the knowledge helped. But the awful mystery that lay behind the need for going out on the lake shook me and, had any one touched me, suddenly, I am sure I should have screamed.

"A hundred yards distant from the farther shore we came upon the boat and drew alongside of it. It was empty. Suddenly my eye caught sight of something white at the bottom of the boat, near the stern. Pulling the craft along, I reached for the object. It was a bit of muslin, torn from a woman's dress, and remembering that Mrs. Whipple had been wearing a white dress that night, I turned sick.

"When I lifted my hand from the gunwale of the boat, preparatory to beginning a search that I knew would be fruitless, I noticed that it felt sticky. It struck me as strange, since the boat had not been lately painted. I was about to dip my hand into the lake, to wash it when a thought struck me. Lighting a match—for it was too dark to see anything clearly—I looked to see what had befouled my hand.

"It was blood.

"Wilson had been watching me and as I hastily dipped my hand into the lake, with a shudder I could not prevent, he asked, in the tone of one who dreads the answer, 'Was that—' He didn't finish the question. I nodded and I felt the boat quiver as a spasm of shaking seized him.

"We knew, but we continued to search—we and the others, who had caught up

with us. Although I was ignorant as to what it was that had brought about the death of three people, I was certain there was something sinister and terrible in that lake of ours, and I was afraid.

"When we dragged the lake, we found no bodies—and I knew there would be nothing left to find.

"This ended our enterprise. One week after the last accident found every cottage vacant. And no wonder. Not only were the women wrought up to the breaking point over the affair itself, but their nights were made hideous by their dreams and the infernal sound of that siren, whistle, or whatever it was which grew increasingly worse. It was a heartshaking sound.

"After the last of our guests had packed up and gone, Wilson and I determined to solve the mystery, for we were convinced there was a mystery hidden somewhere in that lake.

"Fortunately for us, nothing had been said concerning the disappearance to arouse suspicion in Hampton. It was known that some people had been drowned, which was, of course, unfortunate, but not unusual. And we did not further enlighten them.

"I have no idea just what it was that suggested a connection between the sounds that disturbed our slumber and the happenings on the lake, but I found myself associating them in my mind. Wilson, when I mentioned it to him, scoffed at the notion. 'How,' he asked, 'could a noise tip a boat over?' and when I tried to explain that the thing that made the noise might be the cause, he wanted to know how a locomotive could leave its rails and accomplish such a thing. You see, he had accepted as fact, the idea that the sound we had been hearing emanated from a mechanical contrivance. I told him my idea of the situation and I'm inclined to believe that he thought I had gone crazy, for when I asked him to put in a night with me, trying to locate

the noise, he refused.

“In deference to his opinion that the disturbance could be traced to some engine, I made it a point to investigate. The men were very courteous and obliging, and blew the whistles of engines that traveled over that stretch of the company’s right of way, but none of them gave forth the sound, the origin of which I was trying to discover.

“I told Wilson about my findings, and when I told him I was convinced the noise came from the lake, he consented to stand watch with me, but I could see that he took no stock in my belief.

“For three nights we watched but heard nothing, and Wilson was ready to drop the matter. I had a hard time getting him to go out the fourth night, but grudgingly he came with me.

“Since the noises seemed always to have come from the southwestern shore and, because it was there the accidents had occurred, we had used that as our watching post. Unlike the eastern shore, which was open and fairly flat, the western side dropped sharply down to the water. Some of the trees, their footing broken away by the cave-in, lay flat in the water, attached to the shore only by their roots, their branches obscuring considerably the nearer reaches of the lake.

“We found one tree which had rooted a little farther back from the line of break, had therefore, partly escaped the fate of its fellows. Held by its roots, it reached out over the water, at an angle of some twenty degrees. It was a large conifer and its tough branches with broken limbs placed across them, afforded a safe and comfortable resting place, although being out over the lake and with nothing to break the wind, it was far from warm. As I have said already, the nights out there were cold.

“There were no dangerous land animals about, so we carried no arms and, I feel sure any arms we might have taken would

have been useless against the creature we were hunting. So, with a packet of lunch and a thermos bottle of hot coffee, Wilson and I set out for our point of observation.

“The night was clear, when we started from the house, but, after an hour or so, it began to thicken and a mean, cold drizzle set in. We were warmly dressed, however, so, aside from the ordinary discomfort of damp skin, wherever it was exposed, we suffered none.

“It was, as nearly as I could judge, (I didn’t think of looking at my watch) about half past ten o’clock when I was aroused from a half doze by an odd noise that I could not for a moment classify. It woke me up, however and now fully alert. I waited for a repetition of the sound, I heard it again presently, and this time I recognized the sound. It was a grunt, a regular hog’s grunt. If it differed in any respect from the familiar vocalizations one hears coming from the pig-pens, I didn’t realize it at the moment, although it did seem to be an unusually healthy grunt.

“My only feelings, as I remember, were those of mild astonishment; not so much because I had heard the grunt of a hog, (which might have escaped from its pen and wandered down to the lake), but because the sound came from the lake, and not from the land.

“**T**HERE is nothing in the sound of splashing water to scare one. Yet, there by the lake, with the cold drizzle wetting my hands and face, I shivered when I heard that noise.

“Wilson, his back against a crotched branch, was fairly asleep, (though he swore he wasn’t) and I was in the act of waking him when, like a blast from the siren of an ocean liner, the most awful roar I ever heard, tore through the night air, from out there in the darkness, nearly shattering my ear-drums.

“It fairly brought me to my feet and, as

for Wilson, if I had not been lucky enough to grab his coat, as he was disappearing downward, through the branches of the conifer, what happened to him later, might have happened to him that night.

“I had only just recovered from my mental balance and got Wilson back to safety when it came again. And I knew it was the same screaming noise we had been hearing all the time. And I knew also that that noise was in some way responsible for the distressing disappearances of our tenants, and I knew that the originator of that sound was of enormous size.

“It would be difficult to adequately describe my feelings, as I sat crouched there upon our none too secure platform, peering out into the black darkness, trying to discover what manner of creature it was that had given voice to that soul-shaking scream. Fear I knew, but there was something else beside fear; something of unrecognized dread; perhaps a premonition of some dreadful occurrence. And when the splashing sound came nearer. I had to exercise great self-control to keep from backing out of those branches as quickly as possible and out of the neighborhood. And Wilson, I believe, was even worse off, for his teeth were chattering and he seemed dumb with fright.

“Then the splashing noise gave way to another sound, this time to a swishing, sucking sound, like that made by an oar, pulled forcibly through the water. Whatever that thing was, it was swimming, not like our ordinary animal swims,—by moving its legs—but, rather after the manner of a seal—by paddling with flippers. And it was heading toward the north end of the lake.

“As the sound of its movements through the water came from directly in front of us, I dimly perceived, like a vague, black shadow against a wall of blackness, a vast, undulating body. I could not make out its shape for there was not light enough, but I

knew it was enormous and, as I thought of it in connection with the terrible screams of those unfortunate men and that helpless woman, the muscles of my throat tightened and—I am not ashamed to admit it—tears filled my eyes. Wilson apparently had been following the same line of thought. He was almost un-nerved and sat there picking at his fingers and repealing, over and over, ‘Poor little woman! Poor little woman!’ When I could stand it no longer, I shook him and made him shut up.

“When the last of the monster’s shadow had passed, we painfully rose from our cramped position and crawled back to shore and started for home, around the north end of the lake, hoping to get another and, perhaps clearer view of the monster. But we didn’t catch sight of it again. Perhaps it changed its course or, more likely, had sought its hiding place.

“I am not a drinking man but when we readied the house and Wilson poured a stiff peg of liquor for himself, I asked him to give me one too. And we needed that drink if ever any drink was needed, for we were pretty badly shaken up.

“It was long past our usual bed hour, but we didn’t feel very sleepy, although probably from force of habit, I suggested turning in. Wilson, however, much to my secret delight, refused to take any chances of dreaming about that thing. ‘No, sir!’ he said, ‘I’m going to keep my clothes on and stay awake.’ So, after another drink, we filled out pipes and prepared to wait for daylight.

“‘What kind of a fish was that?’ Wilson’s question aroused me from the train of thought into which I had wandered and, my mind engaged, I replied, an aquatic antique. This did not, of course, make things any clearer for him so I asked if he knew anything about the history of the earth, and the strange creatures that had lived upon it, in ages long past. His knowledge was very limited so,

drawing on my memory of lessons learned years before, I tried to answer his query in such a manner as to enable him to understand the probable meaning of what we had seen.

“So far as repeating what I had read was concerned, my task was simple. But any proper answer, that is, one that would cover what we had dimly glimpsed out there on the lake, required something more and I was obliged to resort to deductive reasoning in order to supply it.

“Briefly I told him that the age of the earth was estimated to be between 860,000,000 and 1,000,000,000 years and that, according to the age of the rocks, this great span of years was divided into ages, such as the Azoic, followed by the Palaeozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic. I told him that, accepting the idea that roughly 1,000,000,000 years represented the earth’s age, the Mesozoic era lay back of us some 500,000,000 of years. Then I told him, as well as I could, what sort of monsters and giant reptiles inhabited the earth and its water at the time; then, in an effort to account for the monster in the lake. I drew upon my imagination. Perhaps I guessed wrongly, but I “know of no other way. For there is no record, so far as I know, of any creature, except some of the land species possibly, that could equal, in size, the thing whose shadow we had seen.

“I am inclined to believe I was not far wrong because it is common geological knowledge that vast continental changes were taking place at that remote time, and basing my conjecture upon that fact, I told him that during some of those tremendous upheavals, certain ones of the reptile family had probably been caught in some of the great caverns that were formed and, unable to escape, had adapted themselves to their changed environment.

“True it was, that this thing was different from any species known, but is it *certain that all the reptiles that lived away*

back in those ages had been classified? I wasn’t at all certain that they had been, so this creature might be a direct descendant of some distinct and unknown class. Or, I thought it might be possible that reptile might be some sort of hybrid, bearing a composite resemblance to its ancient forebears. Why not? If you can crossbreed asses and horses and get offspring which, though unmistakably different from either of its parents, in all essential features, resembles both, why could not some similar sort of crossbreeding have occurred with members of the reptile family?

“All sorts of fossil remains of pre-historic reptiles have been discovered in North America, and those creatures, when alive, lived here. Moreover, America, it is known, is fairly honeycombed with caverns, some of enormous extent. Many have water in them; although not sufficient, perhaps, to accommodate a lizard as large as this particular one. Is it certain that *all the caverns have been discovered?*

“Take this particular case for an example. When the bed of the reservoir caved in, where did the water go if not into some vast cavern, or caverns? And, had there not been such a cavern or caverns under the bed of the creek, would there have been any cave-in? Of course not.

“Following this line of deduction. I came to the conclusion that, in the subterranean depths, this reptile, with perhaps many others, had been born and, since even a lizard cannot live in water that is entirely stagnant, inlets and outlets must have existed, to keep the water, at least comparatively fresh.

“SPACE alone, is limitless, so there must have been a limit to this cavern or caverns and, when the water broke through from above, it was filled to the point where the rock walls were burst and the earth, having lost its support, fell, forcing the water upward and forming the lake. When the water reached

a certain level, or was on a plane with the bed of the creek, the reservoir filled up again, underground, the outlet having been too small to carry away the flow of the stream. If my premise was correct, then the presence of the lizard in our lake was easily accounted for. It simply came up through the same hole through which the water came.

“That was the explanation I gave Wilson and I thought, and still think, that it was correct.

“After breakfast I went to the north end of the lake, I believed I had hit upon the real solution of the reptile’s presence in the lake and wanted to verify it if possible. I had an idea that the lizard might take it into its head to come up from below, and give me a chance to see it. I wanted Wilson to accompany me but he said he had too much work to do about the place.

“I waited near the hole until about noon, but seeing no sign of it, I concluded that it had either come up early or, what was more likely, was hiding down there in the darkness, until nightfall. Instead of turning homeward, however, I decided to settle another question. For some time now, we had seen no trout jumping and I thought they might have been frightened out of the lake and returned to the reservoir. Wilson and I, although we did not know until the night before, just what had caused the accidents, thought it better to go without fish than to take any risks out on the lake. But if they were in the reservoir again I meant to catch a few.

“The knoll, or mound, about which I told you in the beginning, lay directly between me and the reservoir and, since it was easy to climb, I started up its side. It was covered with low brush and weeds that hid the surface of the ground from view, but did not greatly impede my progress. I plowed my way to the top and started across the rounded back, toward the reservoir. I had gone only a few paces when, without warning, the ground gave

way beneath my feet and I soon found myself, in a heap, in the gravel, at the bottom of what seemed to me to be an over-sized cistern.

“I was not injured but I was considerably shaken up, for I had fallen about ten feet. For a moment I was inclined to laugh at myself, for I cut a funny figure sitting there, hunched up. But there was nothing to laugh at. I found myself in a serious position, for I was imprisoned at the bottom of a hole, surrounded by unscalable walls of loose gravel. Moreover, no one had seen me at or near this isolated place, so unless a miracle happened, no one ever would come in time to find me alive. Well, sitting there, staring at the opening through which I had fallen would do no good, so I began to take my surroundings into serious consideration.

“It soon became evident that the hole had been dug by some one for a definite purpose; what that purpose was I had no idea. The opening at the top, I discovered, had been covered with planks which, in the course of a short time had become covered with earth and vegetable matter; in turn this furnished soil in which had grown the weeds that hid the spot. None of the boards had fallen into the hole, nor was there anything I could use to enable me to reach the opening. As there was nothing else I could do, I decided to kick gravel from the walls and heap it up until the pile was high enough to enable me to reach beyond the broken boards, grasp some bush, or other thing, and get out.

“I knew I had a tedious job ahead, for I had only my hands to use as a shovel. At one side of the hole, quite a pile of gravel had fallen of its own weight, which gave me a good start, I thought. Throwing double handfuls into the center of the floor soon proved to be a bad job. My hat also proved too slow a method, so I spread my coat, filled it, then carried it over to the slowly growing mound, on which I dumped these accumulations.

“I had a heap about three feet high when, in scooping up another double handful, my fingers came in contact with the surface of a box. I soon had it uncovered fully and found it to be about a foot deep, fifteen inches wide, and about two feet long. I was about to kick the cover off, in order to find out what, if anything, it contained, when I was moved to examine it a little more closely first. It was a good thing I obeyed the impulse, because, after carefully prying off the cover, which had begun to show signs of dry rot, I discovered a two gallon canister of nitro-glycerine.

“The reason for the hole became apparent at once. It had been used as a chamber for explosives while the reservoir was in process of construction, and this box very likely had been overlooked when the work was finished.

“Very carefully I carried it over and laid it on its side, on top of the little heap of gravel. Digging further I found another box, and another, until I had found fifteen. I piled these, pyramid fashion, under the hole through which I had fallen; then holding my breath and taking care not to make a false step, I climbed to the top and soon found myself in the sunshine once more where I could breathe freely.

“**W**HEN I reached the reservoir, I found the trout jumping. The fish problem settled, I started back toward the house for my tackle. I was about half the way to the fence when I saw Wilson, a long stick in his hand, trying to head off a cow that had broken from the corral, and was now headed for the lake.

“Mules are supposed to be, and are, stubborn, but when it comes to downright ‘orneryness,’ I think a cow is pretty much of a fool. Added to this, cows are nervous things, ready to stampede at a moment’s notice and when they get a notion into their heads, you can’t club it out.

“Now, this cow was a Holstein, and

valuable so, when Wilson saw her heading for the lake he very naturally objected, considering the sort of tenant that lake harbored.

“I was too far away to be of assistance and the beast was too much for him alone. Dodging past his swinging club, she drove, head on, for the water, her tail, so it seemed, flapping, in derision. She was still on the gallop when she reached the water, so she went entirely under. I saw her come up, a few yards from the bank and, cow-wise, start for the farther shore. I don’t know why a cow will always, under similar circumstances, make for the farthest point, unless it is because as I said, they are just plain fools.

“In his anxiety over his cow. Wilson forgot something he should have remembered: if the lake was a dangerous place for the Holstein, it was even more dangerous for him. But he may never have thought about the lizard at all. At any rate he ran to the little dock that projected out into the water, and, getting into the boat that was tied there, began to row frantically after old bossy.

“I was too far away to warn him of his danger, although it didn’t actually seem great then; the lake, like a great blue gem bathed in the golden rays of the afternoon sun, suggested nothing further than dimpled beauty, made somewhat sinister by the knowledge that, deep down in its sapphire depth there had been, and might at the moment be, a nameless and monstrous horror. I guess I have become a bit of a fatalist; it seems to me, things are pretty much laid out for us from the beginning. We are supposed to be ‘free moral agents,’ according to the clergy, yet I wonder if we really are. Of course, Wilson did not *have to go out on the lake*. Nor would he have gone if he had stopped to think. But blame can hardly be attached to him for not stopping to think. He never did.

“By the time I reached the spot where the cow went into the water, the animal was

about a hundred yards from shore, headed back, for Wilson had overtaken her and made her turn back. There wasn't a thing to be nervous about, so far as appearances went, but I was worried, and I urged him to hurry. He waved his hand and nodded and that was the last thing he ever did. His hand had barely grasped the oar again when, silently, from the blue depths, there came into view, just behind Wilson, the awful head and neck of the creature, whose shadow we had dimly seen that night, when we sat crouched on a shaky platform spread over the branches of the fallen conifer.

"Up it rose, to a height of seven or eight feet, while I, gazing upon its utter frightfulness, stood paralyzed and dumb. I saw its cavernous mouth, fully three feet from snout to the angle of the jaw; saw it open and reveal its gleaming, needle sharp teeth over the head of the unfortunate man; and I was utterly helpless. If my own life had been at stake, I could not have uttered a cry of warning.

"I think Wilson must have sensed something, somehow, for I noticed (I can see that look even now) a look of fear spread over his rugged features. But it was too late for, just as he was in the act of turning his head to see what was behind him, the end came. There was a slight working of the terrible jaws, perhaps due to some sort of gustatory suggestion of the thing's instinctive machinery, then, like a flash, down came the obscene head, the jaws closed, with a snap and Wilson, only his legs protruding beyond the lizard's snout, was snatched from his seat with the speed and ease with which a hen picks up a kernel of corn.

"Horror unspeakable overpowered my mind, and I think I lost consciousness for a moment. Maybe I went mad for a time, for I have no remembrance of having gone to the house, nor, until awakened by a terrific crash of thunder, did I have a realization that

anything had taken place.

"When I regained my senses, I sat slumped over in one of the kitchen chairs. I felt dazed, like one who has been on a long drunk. Shadows of strange memories passed through my mind, suggesting nothing definite. Then another frightful crash swept the cobwebs from my brain and I felt memory coming back with a rush.

"Other things came quickly, and perhaps fortunately, to occupy my mind, and demand my attention, for one of the worst storms I had ever witnessed, was brewing fast and furiously. The house, stout though it was, trembled and creaked beneath the onslaught of the elements gone wild.

"Getting up from the chair I staggered to the window. The sky was overcast with heavy clouds, those immediately overhead being a grayish black, while, down in the southwest an unearthly, greenish mass of whirling cumuli, writhed and twisted, high up in the heavens. That there were several currents of air, coming from as many different directions was evident, from the manner in which the tops of the trees behaved. They fairly threshed about. Presently the temperature began to drop and great clouds from the northwest drove past, beneath the blackness far overhead, and then the flashes of lightning became appalling, as the fire forks darted from cloud to cloud, while deafening peals of thunder sent every loose thing a-rattle.

"Then the rain came; came in torrents that were veritable cascades of driven water, beating in at every crack and crevice. There was a blinding flash a hundred yards from the house and a tall tree, splintered into kindling, flew in all directions; this the gale whirled and tossed about, finally driving it into the lake, the surface of which was beaten into froth.

"I heard a crash overhead and knew the chimney had gone by the board. This was followed by a ripping sound, and the roof of

the chicken house, looking like the flapping wings of some enormous bird, went sailing away across the lake; and when the house itself began to slide upon its foundation I expected it to follow. It did not, however; neither did it lose its roof, although, as I discovered later, there wasn't a whole shingle left on it.

"Suddenly the hideous racket was augmented by a sound that over-rode all other noises. Every window pane was shattered; every door was driven from its hinges, while through the openings, a deluge of water rushed, flooded the house and knocked me into a corner.

"I have heard about the 'Crack of Doom' many times, and, if it is going to be any worse than that crack, I don't want to hear it. However, it seemed to serve one useful purpose, for after it came, the awful racket began to subside and, within the hour, only an occasional rumble bore evidence of energy still at work. The rain continued, however, until it seemed the oceans were being drained to furnish the water.

"Wet, cold and weary, I waded through the water that swashed back and forth through the lower rooms, to the stair leading to the second floor. I dragged my aching body up the stairs, down which little streams trickled, for the windows, upstairs, also were shattered. I went from room to room, seeking some place of shelter out of the wind, where I might perhaps find some dry clothing and lie down. The second floor was pretty well soaked but I found shelter at last, in a large closet in the rear. This part of the house was toward the east and since the storm had come from the southwest and north, it was comparatively dry there. In this closet I found Wilson's Sunday suit, some shirts and a pair of shoes, together with a few pairs of socks. The suit was too small, and the shoes too large, but I was in no position to be particular, so I put them on. Unless you have been in a

similar predicament, you cannot know the comfort of dry clothing of any kind or make.

"After wringing out my own, clothes and hanging them over the backs of chairs to dry if the rain ever let up I piled, some things on the floor and, upon these, for a bed, I soon forgot all about the storm and what had gone before it.

"A ray of sunlight on my eyes, reflected from a mirror, awoke me. My watch had stopped, so I didn't know just what time it was, although I judge it must have been about nine o'clock. I was a bit stiff and hungry, but otherwise, in pretty good shape. After drawing the chairs, over which my clothes hung, into the sunshine, I went down stairs, dug the wet ashes out of the stove, made a fire and cooked some ham and eggs and coffee for myself. Then I started out to learn the extent of the damage.

"There was plenty. The roof of the barn had fallen in, driving the walls outward. Luckily the weather had been warm, so the cattle were still kept outside. I found them at last, in a small apple orchard, apparently no worse for having been out in the storm, contentedly eating grass. I say had been, because practically every one of the trees had been ruined, the branches having been torn off.

"Then, for no particular reason, I strolled down to the lake. Except for a lot of floating shingles, branches and boards, it was the same, smiling, beautiful blue body of water—the last place in the world, I thought, where such terrible tragedies could take place, and the most unlikely hiding place for the horror that had caused the events. Soon I became aware of a muffled sound like a rushing of water over a fall, and wondered what caused it. A little later, I noticed that the floatsam was drifting toward the north end of the lake. This was odd, since there was no current and, curious to learn why, I started in the same direction. Soon the muffled sound

became louder. It was coming from the lake! Puzzled for a moment, like a flash the explanation came to me and I started north on the run.

“I soon reached the place where the noise came from—a great rent at the end of the basin in which the lake lay. I looked toward the mound, or, rather, toward the place where the mound had been, for it was there no longer, and if I had been in doubt as to what had caused the rent, I was soon in possession of full knowledge. That unearthly crash had been caused by the explosion of those fifteen cases of nitroglycerine, and there may have been more buried in the sand, when a streak of lightning found its way into the pit in which they were.

“The rocky floor of the pit must have been a sort of pot cover, over the subterranean cavern, or caverns, and the force of the explosion had torn it away rending the rocks and earth into a great tear, extending through the wall which held the lake. It had done even more; it tore out the wall between it and the reservoir, for I found, upon going around the chasm to the dam, that the water was rapidly lowering. While I stood there, amazed at the force of the charge, a large block of concrete from the end of the dam nearest me, broke loose and fell with a splash, into water. Evidently, I thought, the whole dam was being undermined and was liable, at any moment, to fall. I made haste to get away from the place, and I acted wisely, for within ten minutes the whole enormous structure of concrete crumbled and fell; a part of it going completely out of sight in the hole in the bed of the reservoir, while the rest went in the opposite direction.

“It was apparent, since the chasm was enlarging momentarily, that it would not take long to empty both reservoir and lake and being minded to see the finish, I went back to a point of safety, on the eastern shore, sat down on a rock and waited for the end.

“SITTING there, wondering into what profound depths the waters of the lake and reservoir were plunging, speculating upon the possible truth of some tales I had read concerning people discovered living in a ‘World Beneath a World,’ I forgot, for a time, what was taking place before my eyes.

“I was aroused from my reverie by a snort, and coming back to actualities, I looked to see what had produced it. There was the great lizard, from whose throat it had emanated, not fifty yards before me.

“At last I saw the monster, and monster it truly was. My powers of description are far too limited to adequately describe that monster. Its body, at least the upper part, was fully exposed. Swan-like in shape, it appeared to be nearly sixty feet from the point where the neck joined the body, to the end of its tail, which resembled, in a way, the tail of a duck. This body, armed or equipped with flappers, similar to those of a seal, but enormously larger, was a greenish black and was covered with what might have been, the slime and ooze of ages. Its neck, flexible as that of the swan, was fully two feet in diameter at its base, tapering slowly to the head, eight feet from the body. The head was a composite of the crocodile and the tyrannosaurus, but much larger, with loosely articulated jaws, permitting of tremendous extension, as is the case with certain snakes. The mouth, armed with teeth fully six inches in length, was at least three feet long from the snout to the angle of the jaws. To add to its frightfulness, the upper canine teeth, or fangs, curved outward and downward over the lower jaw, and were, as near as I could judge, at least ten inches long. A more horrible creature I couldn’t imagine, and I wondered whether it might be a member of some species that had never been catalogued, or whether it was what it appeared to be, a hybrid. I think it was the latter and, since it was the only one that had come into the light of modern times, I also

wondered if the thing could have begun its existence away back there in the Mesozoic era. It seemed impossible, and yet, who knows. At any rate it certainly looked ancient enough to have been born long before creation began. Doubtless, I thought, there were others like it, somewhere, for it seemed unlikely that only one specimen would have been caught in one of the cataclysms of those ancient days. But, whether or not I was right, can never be told.

“Apparently the lizard was terrified at something; probably at the idea of being sucked into the chasm, into which the water was pouring, for it was making violent efforts to draw away from that end of the lake. It was a losing game, however, for the suck of the water, powerful as was the reptile, was too strong and, thresh the water as it might, and did, it was slowly being drawn back. Whatever else might be said of the lizard, it was no coward, for, realizing the fact that it was a losing game, it suddenly turned and, with a terrific bellow, using its flippers to accentuate its speed, in a sort of ‘devil daring spurt,’ it drove head-long into the vortex.

“During the day the waters continued to enlarge the chasm and, by night the lake had nearly vanished, as had also the reservoir.

“The following morning the city

engineers were out, and as well as I could, I explained what had happened. As it chanced, I did most of my talking to the man who had supervised the construction of the reservoir, and was therefore the only one who knew about the nitro-glycerine, I realized that my knowledge of its presence in the pit caused him some worry, and he explained that he had given orders for its removal, but they evidently had been forgotten or disregarded by the workmen, so I told him I would not mention the matter to anyone, for which he seemed very grateful. Since it could have done no good to tell about it then, I deemed it best to forget about the matter.

“But I mentioned the lizard to no one. I explained the disappearance of Wilson, by telling them that he had fallen into the lake, from a rowboat, while trying to drive back to the shore a cow that had gone into the water. That also was the story I told the lawyers who settled up the estate.

“As soon as possible I gathered up my traps and came back to the city. I have tried to forget the experience, for it was far from pleasant, but this story in the paper brought it up again and, I repeat, I shall not be surprised to read that those men have found some hold-over from the Mesozoic era, for I believe there are specimens still alive. Why not?