LOST IN THE LAND OF FIRE; or, Across the Pampas in the Electric Turret.

By "NONAME."
Lost in the Land of Fire;  
OR,  
Across the Pampas in the Electric Turret.  

A THRILLING STORY OF FRANK READE, JR., IN SOUTH AMERICA.

By "NONAME,"  
Author of "Frank Reade, Jr.'s Search for a Sunken Ship," "Frank Reade, Jr.'s Chase Through the Clouds," etc.

CHAPTER I.  
EN ROUTE FOR SOUTH AMERICA.  

FRANK READE, Jr., the most wonderful young inventor of the age, sat in his office at his extensive steel works in Reade-town with a satisfied expression upon his face, and a ring of joy in his voice as he spoke to a comical-looking Irishman who stood before him.

"Well, Barney, the Electric Turret is a success. Every detail now is complete and she is ready for use."

The Irishman, whose name was Barney O'Shea, and who was a skilled electrician and an old servant of Frank's, ducked his head in a grotesque way, and replied:

"Bejubers, Mister Frank, it's mighty glad I am to hear ye say that."

"I will say more. I think the Turret eclipses any ground machine I have ever yet invented."

"Shure, sor, an' 'ow that country will we be after going to now?"

"Are you all ready for a trip, Barney?"

"Shure, sor, I am."

"And Pomp, too?"

"I'll let the naggy sphake for himself."

Barney stepped to the door and whistled shrilly. In reply a short, diminutive dicky, black as ebony, entered. He rolled up his eyes comically and bowed to his young master. He was the object of his remarks was brought to view.

"Yo' wan' fo' to see dis chile, Marse Frank?" he asked.

"Yis, replied Frank."

"Wha' yo' wan' ob me, sah?"

"I have just been talking with Barney about our new invention, the Turret."

"Yis, sah!"

Pomp ducked his head in a comical manner, and glared at Barney who had made a grimmace at him. Barney and Pomp were Frank Reade, Jr.'s favorite servants. They were faithful beyond reproach but as full of fun and mischief as a nut in a tree.

At every opportunity each was engaged in playing practical jokes upon the other.

"It certainly excels anything I have invented yet," said Frank.

"Now the question is where shall we go for adventure and sport?"

The two servants were silent. Indeed neither knew just what answer to make to this question. With some one or other of his inventions Frank had visited almost every quarter of the globe.

It was not strange then that he should ask with some perplexity what place of interest it was best to visit now. Suddenly Barney ducked his head.

"Well" asked Frank.

"If yez please, sor, I was readin' the paper—"

Here Pomp had a violent fit of coughing. Barney glared at him.

Again he began.

"If yez please, sor, I was readin' the paper this mornin' an' I just read about—"

Pomp gave a tremendous sneeze. It was of sufficient duration to crown Barney's utterance.

The Celt was mad. He glared at the Ethiopian again. Now Pomp's face was as sober and long as a demon's.

"And what do that again, naggy?" he cried, angrily, "I'll break the nose out of that—"

"Ah! done na'in'?" protested Pomp, with mock indignation.

"Yis, yez did!"
In the setting there were loopholes, and through one of these protruded the muzzle of an electric gun.

The form of the turret was the pilot-house in which also was the electrical engine which ran the machine.

An electric search-light of great power adorned the top of the pilot house.

Back of the turret another formidable electric gun was erected upon a steel carriage.

This was capable of throwing a projectile of electric compound forty feet, and its explosive force sufficient to blow to powder a one hundred ton boulder.

On the front of the machine was a long, keen ram of fiery-tempered steel.

This is a crude description outwardly of the electric Turric.

Inside the Turric around its base, were the living rooms of the voyagers.

These were necessarily small, but charmingly furnished and comfortable.

On board the Turric were scientific appliances, weapons and stores of all kinds.

Altogether the electric Turric was a veritable fort on wheels.

Certainly it was a formidable opponent for an enemy to meet in the open field.

Frank had built it with an eye to offense and defense, for his trips often took him deep into the heart of a savage country.

And the trip to the Land of Fire as proposed, was certainly one involving the greatest of risks.

The report was circulated that Frank Reade, Jr., was going to Patagonia in his electric Turric.

Everybody was interested.

All over the country people talked the matter over.

There were held in the different cities meetings of scientific societies, and offers were made to the young inventor of large sums of money to allow him to accompany him on board the Turric in the interests of science.

But Frank declined all offers of this sort.

Money was no inducement whatever to him, and he preferred to take only Barney and Pomp with him.

This angered some of the cranks, and as a result he received many eccentric and threatening letters.

But he burned these and went ahead with preparations.

The Turric was packed in sections aboard a train of cars, and shipped to New York.

Here it was placed aboard a special steamer, which was to land the adventurers upon the coast of Patagonia, and after an interval of a certain time, was to return for them.

Frank was decided to thoroughly explore Patagonia.

He would find the nation of giants, invade the Land of Fire, and as time went on the whole country became in a future over the matter.

Frank's name became more famous than ever.

But this did not add one whit of consent to his posture.

Finally all arrangements were perfected, and

The Turric was packed and en route to New York.

The three voyagers took leave of Readestown and their friends amid a grand demonstration.

They reached New York in safety and went aboard the steamer.

A mighty crowd was upon the wharf and saw them off.

Frank was obliged to answer not one, but two questions from the same party.

Then the steamer dropped away from the pier, swung out into the stream, and the journey to the Land of Fire was begun.

CHAPTER II.

OVER THE PAMPAS.

The scene of our story is now transposed to the rock bound and forbidding coast of Patagonia.

Little is known, even at this late day, of certain portions of this distant part of the earth.

It is people and their products are little familiar to the world at large.

Frank Reade, Jr., could not have selected a wider or better field.

Before they would again see civilization, the voyagers were destined to experience many thrilling adventures.

We will not dwell upon the voyage of the May Star, the steamer which carried our South American voyagers.

It was an uneventful one.

In due course of time the Equator was crossed, and they were under the Southern horizon.

Then gradually the South American coast was followed until below the Argentine.

Then one day the lookout on the cross tree shouted:

"Land ho!"

It was the Patagonian coast at last, and all were on deck eagerly watching it.

According to the chart, the landing place was to be at the mouth of the Guregus river.

This was sighted at six a.m. or two later.

Then the steamer stood in to a little bay, which was circled partly by a white sandy beach.

Back of it were precipitous cliffs, fringed with a growth of stunted trees.

The steamer dropped anchor, and the work of disembarkation began.

In a short while all the different sections of the Turric had been transferred to the shore.

Along with him on the steamer, Frank had brought skilled workmen.

These now proceeded to put the parts of the machine together.

The material was all conveyed to the Pampas.

The entire region presented a vastly different aspect than what our voyagers had been led to expect.

The air was dry and hot, the heavens had a lurid, burning hue, and there seemed ever present a peculiar smoke-like vapor in the air.

Truly it seemed as if this mark of high the Land of Fire.

Yet the spirits of all were high.

There was a certain indefinable charm in the thought that they were about to explore a wild and unknown tract of country.

Barney and Pomp worked like beavers.

The Turric was rapidly put together, and then began the work of moving stores from the steamer.

This was done by means of repeated trips with the boats.

At length, however, all this was accomplished in full.

The Turric was ready for her thousand mile trip, and the steamer blew her whistle in token of appreciation.

Frank Reade, Jr., shook hands with the captain.

"Now we are off," he cried. "Captain you know when to return for us?"

"About the middle of September!"

"Yes."

"I will certainly be here."

"All right!"

The steamer crew waved their caps and cheered lustily.

Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp sprang aboard the Turric.

They responded to the farewell greetings of their friends, and then Frank pressed the electric lever which set the Turric's machinery in motion.

Like a thing of life the Turric glided gracefully forward.

Gradually she gained speed.

The plain was smooth and hard, and she had no difficulty in getting up a terrific rate of speed.

The steamer's crew stood upon the cliffs and watched the Turric until she was far out of sight.

Then they returned to the steamer.

A few moments later she had left the bay and was far out to sea.

Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp in the Electric Turric were in the Land of Fire, a barbarous and unexplored region, many hundreds of miles from home, and effectually cut off from all intercourse with friends.

It was a thrilling thing to think of. But the bold explorers gave it little heed.

The dangers of the trip had been well considered and accepted by them before making the start.

On went the Turric over the level plains.

The sea line soon faded in the distance, and now the country began to undergo a change.

Low lying on the inland horizon was a line of blue mist.

It seemed to hang there like a wall of mystery, shutting out possible wonders beyond.

"Sez George, that's a queer lakin' sight!" declared Barney.

"Yo' am right, I'm sure," said Pomp. "I jes' jink at somethin' do a storm comin' dis yer way."

"I rather think you did, said Frank, studying it aweful. "It is very likely a peculiar condition of the atmosphere."

Upon every hand lay the boundless plain.

It was, as far as could be seen, remarkably free from the long grasses which would have elongated the wheels of the Turric had it not been for the keen, sly-like knives with which Frank had provided it for this very purpose.

The plain had the appearance of having been burned over not long since.

Short, succulent grass was just sprouting up in good shape.

Over this smooth surface course the Turric could thunder at a terrific speed.

The hours passed and the machine had covered a great distance.

Frank looked at the dial and saw that fully one hundred miles were they now from the sea coast.

Thus far they had seen no sign of life.

Only the boundless plain upon either side met the view.

But now Barney, who was on the forward deck, cried:

"Whisht now, Mister Frank, wud yez look at dat."

"What is it, Barney?" cried Frank, leaning out of the pilot-house window.

"Shore, sar, an' dat is what I'd like to know for meself.

Frank gazed in the direction indicated by the Celt.

Far out over the plain he beheld a long moving line.

At first it looked only like a little break in the level of the prairie floor.

But a closer scrutiny showed beyond any doubt that the line was moving.

The young inventor was interested.

"What is it?"

He picked up a long range glass, and lashing the wheel, went out on deck.

"What do you make of it, Barney?"

"Shore, sar, I don't know that."

"Let's have a look at it."

"Yes, sir, let's have a look at it."
Frank studied the line for some moments through the glass.

"Upon my word, it is a troop of wild horses, or tamed ones, with
Indian riders."

"Leam, am it, sar?" cried Pomp, excitedly. "I jes tink I betta
get mahl ride."

"Hiegh, yez had better go inside an' stay there?" said Bar-
ney. "It's a cruel sacrum."

"Well, take it that way, if yez likes!"

"Huh! yo' tink I'm fraid, does yo', chillie?"

With which threat Pomj disappeared inside the Turret.

Frank had meanwhile been basily engaged in watching the distant foe.

For that there would be a foe there was little doubt.
In the west the sky was amusing the beautiful colors of a gorgeous
sunset.

"Wha' am dat just ahead, Marse Frank?" asked Pomp.

"I am sure I cannot imagine," replied the young inventor. "We will
ever find out, however."

"Bejabers, it looks to me like a big pile av rocks!" declared Bar-
ney.

"It may be that."

Frank put on the full force of the current, and the Turret shot
ahead.

The intervening distance was quickly cleared.

But just before the undulating mounds were reached, a clump of
tall pampas grass was noticed to the left.

This corral was a few acres, but as the party approached, from its
cover there sprang forth a half hundred timid guanacos, a species
of antelope.

These raced into a clump of beechwood just beyond, and were gone
from sight.

The guanaco is a beautiful little animal, common in Patagonia,
and prized for its sweet flesh.

At once Frank's desire for a hunt was aroused.

"Ill, hill" cried Pomp. "Wha' sort o' critters am dem, Marse Frank?"

"These are guanacos," replied Frank, quickly. "And they are
beauties, too. I believe I'll try a chase for them!"

He went into the turret, and came out with a ride.

"Bejabers, av yez do that, Master Frank, some av the Injuns
will be down on us agin!" declared Barney.

"I am not afraid of it," declared Frank, confidently. "Barney,
you stay aboard and keep a good watch. Pomp, get your ride
and come along with me!"

Nothing could have suited Pomp better than this.

Either of the servants would jump out of his skin any time to
accompany Frank Read, Jr.

Barney, however, did not demur. Pomp was quickly ready.

Leaving the Turret in Barney's care, Frank climbed the nearest
mound.

It happened to be the highest, and he was able to look down on
the others.

As he gained the summit and looked about him he was given a
mighty start.

"By gracious!" he ejaculated. "As I live, I believe this is the
site of a city at one time!"

"Golly, Marse Frank!' exclaimed Pomp. "Wha' eber makes yo'
fink so dat?"

"Is it not easy to see explained the young inventor. "Look at the
site, younger. It evidently marks the city's street and from it are
others. These grass grown mounds are heaps of ruins grown over
in course of time by grass."

Indeed there was no doubt that the young inventor was right.

To the eastward was a vast grove of beeches with a stream run-
ing through its shady glens.

A little south of that was a vast area of pampas grass which had
in some manner escaped the fire.

The mounds which marked the ruined city were hundreds in
number and of all shapes and sizes.

In places the grass had failed to cover the brick and stone of the
ruins.
Avenues and streets were to be seen extending in every direction, but in all that vast area once occupied by the unknown city there was not left standing one single building. All had gone to ruin long ago. It was with curious reflection that Frank gazed upon the scene.

There was not here reasonable proof that a powerful and civilized people had once lived in Patagonia.

How long since this city had been occupied by a prosperous and thriving people there was no way of guessing. It might have been a thousand years. However, it might be, here was the undisputable proof that the city had once existed.

That it had been a large and beautiful place was also certain. Frank reckoned an estimate of sixty to one hundred thousand for a population.

Forgetting his guanaco bunt, he hurriedly searched for his gun and ran after the guanacos. After the hunt we would see what could be done."

"Whate'er Whar am de do."

"Sho! Whar am de people?"

"Probably dead and gone, just as the city has gone."

"But we will not stop now to explore it," said Frank. "Let us go after the guanacos. After the hunt we will see what can be done."

"Aright, sah."

Accordingly the mounds were left to the right, and the two hunters pushed on in quest of the growth of beechwood. Here they proceeded more stealthily in the cover of the pampas grass.

Frank led the way, for while he crept on thus, suddenly Frank paused.

"Easy, Pomp," he said. "There is the game just ahead."

The darky was in abject terror.

"Keep cool, Pomp!" he said in a low tone. "Do what I tell you."

"A'right, sah," replied the darky, who was trembling like an aspen.

"I will fire first. If my shot does not take effect and the monster attacks us before I can reload, fire again!"

"Yes, sah."

Frank raised his rifle and his eye glanced along the sight. He took careful and steady aim.

The puma was glaring at him and lashing its long tail. Frank aimed for the animal's shoulder in the hope of piercing the heart.

If he could succeed in doing this he would have the animal at his mercy.

There was a moment of hesitation and then Frank pulled the trigger.

"Crack!"

A terrible roar went up on the air, and Frank saw a yellow body come hurtling through the air towards him.

Never in his life had the young inventor felt more keenly the presence of deadly peril.

"Fire, Pomp!" he had presence of mind enough to shout.

And just in time Pomp fired.

"Crack!"

The monster struck the ground ten feet in front of Frank. He tumbled in a heap, turning a somersault, and slid along the ground for several feet with the impetus of his rush. But he was dead.

Straight to the heart Pomp's bullet had gone. In an instant the darky's terror was gone. He rushed forward, wildly crying:

"Golly for glory, Marse Frank, am he done killed fo' suah. Ainn' dat jes' good luck!"

"You're right on that score, Pomp," said Frank, earnestly. "I thought my end had come."

There was some thought of removing the puma's skin. But a closer examination showed that it was mangy and worthless. So it was not done. Frank now thought only of returning to the Turret.

The guanaco meat was packed and carried along with them.

A little while later they emerged upon the plain and saw the Turret not a quarter of a mile distant. Barney was on the lookout for them, and came bearing down at full speed.

A few moments later they were on board the Turret. Pomp told the story of their adventures with gusto. There was listened to with tingling ears.

"Bejibahs, it's meeff that will go wid Misher Frank next time," he said. "Yes have had yer turn, naygur!"

"Aright," agreed Pomp. "If yo' had been dar, dat big lion wud hab eat yo' all up."

"Begorra, there's two moinds an' dat point," declared Barney, boisterously.

As darkness was now at hand Frank was determined to remain over night upon the spot. Accordingly preparations were made to that end. The electric search-light was turned on, and as the darkness increased it lit up the vicinity far and near. Frank was determined to explore the ruined city the next day. Particularly he was desirous of descending into the aperture in the mound which he had discovered.

He was of a firm belief that he would make some wonderful discovery inside the monster. So he anxiously awaited the coming of day again.

But the night was destined to hold adventures of a most thrilling sort.

Everything was made shipshape for the night. It was arranged that Barney and Pomp should alternate as watchers.

But Frank Reade, Jr., was a light sleeper, so on the whole they had little fear of a surprise.

About ten o'clock Frank turned in to get some sleep. This left Barney on guard while Pomp was sleeping, having retired much earlier.

The night was as black as pitch. Object or scene could hardly be seen a foot distant, and the search-light was closed, as Frank did not like to waste the current necessary to run it. Barney was plucky enough, but as he patrolled the deck of the Turret upon this night, he felt a trifle queer.

There just in the verge of the pampas jungle was a huge, tawny monster.

His proportions were enormous, and his savage looks enough to terrify the bravest of men.

"Heaven!" exclaimed Frank. "It is a puma!"

This was the truth.

A puma of the most savage species was the animal in question and the cause of Pomp's fright.

For a moment Frank gazed at the monster in a cool manner.

The young inventor was an utter stranger to fear. But certainly there was something in the face of this cruel monster with its powerful jaws and claws.

Then slowly Frank began to retreat to the cover of a huge beechwood.
In that lonely savage wilderness, with such a veil of darkness about him, it was not surprising.

The Celt in broad daylight and in plain view of an enemy, was as-brave as the Indians.

But in such darkness as this, and with the superstitious fears of his nature aroused, he was far different.

So as he paroled the deck with the rifle at his shoulder, he would look about him fearfully.

Every dark shadow suggested a foe, every distant wailing cry of night bird or animal called to mind the hauntings.

So he shivered and drew himself up with a tautening of nerves. “Begorra, it’s the haunth’s own land, this,” he muttered to himself. “Divil a bit do I take it at all.”

But he would not have deserted his post though he had really been confronted by a genuine ghost.

His sense of duty was too strong for this.

Time passed slowly.

It seemed to Barney that he must have worn a literal path on the deck of the Turret so many times had he crossed it.

Thus matters were when suddenly the Celt beheld a strange sight.

From the distance there flashed a star of light.

It seemed in the direction of the moun’dy city.

The Celt stood still and watched it for some moments.

It seemed to dance up and down and flicker wildly.

He was puzzled.

“P’mast the divil wud yez call that?” he muttered.

The light was suddenly joined by another. They might have been ignis fatuus judging from theitations.

The Celt was completely mystified.

“Howly Mither, preserve us!” he gasped. “I’t’s the wurrak av the divil an’ his legions. I’t’s the Devil, all at.”

So certain was of this premise that Barney began to mumble prayers and cross himself devoutly.

But even as he was doing this another light appeared.

A fourth came, and a fifth, then others, and rapidly a very legion of them made their appearance.

This was perplexing enough.

But the Celt’s superstition began to vanish at this point.

His natural common sense began to come to his aid.

“Begorra, that’s not so funny as it might be,” he muttered. “Sure, there be races carried by a lot av thin red-skinned omadhouns. Faith, I’ll soon find out!”

The Celt started for the plot-house.

His intention was to turn on the search-light and investigate the matter.

But before he reached the plot-house, over the rail there came tumbling a legion of aerometric forms.

It was dark as pitch, and Barney could see them but indistinctly, yet he knew that they were Indians.

In an instant he let out a yell to wake the dead.

“Howly St. Patrick! Up wid yez, every man. Shure, the enemy have come at last. On deck, every man!”

Then he discharged his rifle.

With a terrible yell one of the Indians went over the rail.

But the others came on like a whirlwind.

There was no time to lose.

For an instant Barney gave the battle up as lost. Then his dogged spirit was thoroughly aroused.

“Cowards, they’diver take the Turret while Barney O’Shea is alive.”

The Celt made a spring for the plot-house door.

A Red Indian had already reached the door.

But the Celt struck him down with the butt of his gun and then rushed into the place.

The steel door shut behind him with a snap.

He touched a spring, and all the shutters aboard the Turret were closed.

Then the Celt reached the search-light and turned it on.

At this moment Frank and Pomp appeared on the scene.

They had tumbled out of bed and were only partly dressed.

“Where the matter, Barney?” asked Frank, excitedly. “Are we attacked?”

“We are, sor,” replied the Celt. “Bad cess to the omadhouns.”

Then Frank sprang to the keyboard.

He glanced out of the plot-house window as he did so.

The glass of the electric lights dispirited the gloom, and he saw the situation at a glance.

The Red Indians were all about the Turret in a swarm.

They were vainly trying to effect an entrance to the turret.

The steel doors, however, resisted them. Their stone axes made no impression at all on the hard steel.

Frank pulled grimly, and pulled open a certain lever on the keyboard, which was marked 57.

CHAPTER V.

FIGHTING THE SAVAGES.

Barney going forward, it might be well to mention the fact that the interior shell of the Turret was insulated.

The Turret was given a wall of thick rubber between the outer and the inner steel walls.

The purpose of this was a most adroit one.

The outer shell was connected by a network of wires with the dynamo.

When the current was turned on, the entire outer shell and steel deck was heavily charged.

Contact with this was the most disastrous for any human being.

When Frank pulled open lever 57, therefore, he charged the outer shell heavily.

The result was thrilling.

Every barbarian on the deck was given a terrible shock.

Nothing could withstand such a thing.

They were prostrated in heaps and in many cases hurled from the deck as if with giant hands.

It was safe to say that none of them had ever indulged in such an experience before.

Many of them would never again.

For the force of the current was fully three thousand volts and enough in many cases to instantaneously kill a man.

More of the barbarians were piling forward as if to invade the deck.

But the moment one came in contact with the steel railing, he was a sorry savage instantly.

The attacking body of barbarians were hurled back as effectually as if by the hands of Jove.

Then Frank started the Turret forward.

It was resolved to change his position, and clearing the crowd of assailants Frank started the Turret out onto the plain.

It ran well and fast for a half mile. Then Frank was satisfied that they were clear of the savage gang.

He had turned off the current which charged the shell of the Turret.

Upon the deck there was a heap of the attacking natives.

Some were dead and others unconscious. By Frank’s orders Barney and Pomp went out and dumped them unceremoniously off upon the floor of the prairie.

The flashing of lights could be seen about the spot they had just left.

The excited adventurers now had time for an interchange of opinions.

Barney told his story succinctly.

“Then you did not really understand what those lights were when you saw them?” asked Frank.

“No sor, I didn’t replies the Celt. “Divil a bit av it. But I knew whin I see the divils coming across the ferry!”

“Bejabers, they’diver have done that while I was alive!” declared Barney.

“I hardly know what to col,” said Frank. “If they attempt to attack us again I think I’ll give them a ball from the electric gun!”

“Shure sor, an’ ye’ll have to do that same!” cried Barney.

The Celt pointed into the gloom.

He was right.

There advancing down upon the Turret plainly visible in the search-light’s glare was a body of several hundred of the foe.

Frank was perplexed.

He was awe to taking human life.

He hated much to sweep these ignorant savages from the land.

But now, if he could make it effective enough, he believed it would be for any human being.

It was plain that they did not know what they were doing.

Yet but there seemed no other way.

It was certainly an act of self-defense. Then an idea occurred to the young inventor.

He would try the effect of a scare upon them.

Thus far this had not worked very well.

But now, if he could make it effective enough, he believed it would tell.

So he decided upon it.

He went into the turret and touched a spring.

The turret revolved until the electric gun was brought to bear upon the approaching Dorgo.

Then he sighted it.

But he took good care not to aim it directly at the Red Indians.

He made a line upon a knoll just before them and then opened the pneumatic tube of the gun.

Instantly the air was exhausted.

It was but a moment’s work to put in the explosive projectile.

Then he closed the breech and twisted the percussion wire with the dynamo wire. All this took but a few seconds.

Then Frank pressed an electric key.

The pneumatic chamber expanded, there was a hiss of air and a thunderbolt; the projectile was hurled from the gun.

It traveled down toward the foe as swift as thought.

Almost instantly there was a flash of light against the knoll, a terrific roar and into the air there rose a mighty column of sand and flames.

A few seconds later the commotion had subsided.

And there right in the path of the attacking Indians there was erected a mound of earth and debris fully ten feet high.

It was an astounding exhibition of explosive power.

The natives, terrified beyond all measure, started away in wild retrospect.

The experience with the Electric Turret was a bitter pill with them.

In a twinkling they were out of sight in the darkness.

“Reajers, that will open their eyes a bit, I’m thinkin’,” declared Barney.

“Ought to,” agreed Frank; “but these savages are such an ignorant class that it is hard to tell about that.”
Frank waited for some while for the savages to appear again. But they did not do so.

It began to look for a certainty as if they had really enough of the battle.

Resolved to satisfy himself upon this point Frank started the Turret around the mound city.

With the search-light to illuminate the vicinity it was easy enough to see the way about.

The Turret coasted about the vicinity for some while.

But no sign of the natives was to be found.

They had disappeared absolutely from the vicinity.

The lesson given them had proved a terrible one. They had no desire to try conclusions with the white men.

Where they had gone it was not easy to guess.

Frank guessed perhaps correctly that they had sought the cover of the jungle.

Certainly nothing more was seen of them that night.

But there was no more sleep for the voyagers.

They were glad enough to welcome the light of day.

The young inventor returned to the Turret.

He had enjoyed his journey.

This showed great art.

At this juncture Frank picked up one of the silver candelabras of brass.

This was the very thing that he had never seen or heard of.

It was the like he had never seen or heard.

It was the like he had never seen or heard.

"Oh, Barney!" replied the young inventor.

"I am the way to find out more," said Barney.

"All right, Barney!" cried Frank.

"All right, Barney, sir!" he replied.

Frank now proceeded to examine the underground chamber with care.

Its walls and ceilings were those of an ordinary house of the ancient Roman period.

Indeed, the style of architecture of the columns and bases which supported the roofing was much after the Roman pattern.

Frank continued his exploration with deep interest.

The floor was of paved tiles and arranged somewhat in Mosaic pattern.

But the chamber was utterly devoid of anything like furniture or statuary or like objects.

What he had ever contained anything of this sort or not, it was not easy to hazard a guess.

Neither were there any skeletons or human remains to be seen.

Yet, it was certain that the human hands had built these walls.

Frank discovered that a door led into another room, and in the hope of finding something there which was more explanatory, he passed through it.

And as his lantern broke the utter gloom beyond he stood absolutely enchanted with wonderment.

Never in his life had it been his good fortune to gaze upon so wonderful a scene as this.

CHAPTER VI
THE TRAVELERS.
FRANK READE, JR., was for a moment appalled with the spectacle which burst upon his vision.

A mighty banquet hall lay stretched in columned vistas before him.

Great columns, rudely carved, extended in a long line down its entire length.

Beneath the roof supported by these was an immense banquet table, with what actually seemed like a bountiful repast waiting for hungry eaters.

A long row of chairs extended upon either side of the table.

In each of these chairs sat a ghastly, grinning skeleton.

Nothing was left of flesh or vestment, but the crumbling bones were all.

Upon the table were great flagons, mighty urns and vast bowls, with drinking cups of silver and gold and horn.

Great candelaibes of brass were at intervals along the table.

It had been a mighty feast apparently, with only Death to preside.

Frank gazed upon the scene with something like a sickening sense of horror.

Its like he had never seen or heard of before.

"Upon my word," he muttered. "What an assemblage this was. With terrible strokes of death was visited upon them in this summary manner to leave them all here like this."

Certainly it must have been a fearful and sudden death stroke which had struck the assembly.

None seemed to have left their seats indicating a desire to escape.

What did it mean?

Frank was puzzled.

He overcame his selfish aversion.

He was glad enough to welcome the light of day.

Whether it was the effect of the light or the commotion of the atmosphere by his appearance, it was not easy to say, but some of the bones crumbled into dust.

This showed great antiquity.

They had been here no doubt several hundred years at least.

At this juncture Frank picked up one of the silver mugs.

He examined it closely when he received a powerful shock.

There, upon the surface, he saw plainly a cross and arms.

The latter were the arms of Spain.

Below it was the date 1560.

Like a great wave the revelation came to Frank Reade, Jr.

"Ah," he cried. "At last I have it. I have found a Spanish city, founded in this wild country by that early spirit of exploration and discovery which led Columbus to dare the unknown ocean westward."

"This was true.

The city of mounds was really the relic of a mighty effort of Spanish colonists to found an empire on American soil.

The city had been built perhaps one hundred years after the voyage of Columbus.

It was a powerful thing to think upon.

Frank gazed upon the scene before him with a deep thrill.

But all this, however, did not explain the mystery of the death of the banqueters seemingly all at once.

Nor was he to find any sort of a key to this problem.

Search as he would Frank could not solve it.

He was obliged to abandon it.

This banquet hall and the room by which he had entered were the only chambers in the vast palace, which the building must have been, not filled with earth and debris.

Frank took several of the silver and gold flagons and an antique sword with a diamond-studded handle and started on the return.

When he arrived at the aperture he found Barney in waiting.

"All right, Barney. Pull away!" he cried, adjusting the noose about him.

"I will, sir!"

The Celt did pull away.

And with such success that Frank was soon once more on level ground.

"Share, sir, an' plawt have yez there?" cried the Celt, in amazement.

Frank t'en told the story of his discoveries in the banquet hall.

Barney listened in wonderment.

"Share, sir, that is very squared!" he cried. "Don't yez mane to return and hunt further!"

"I think not!" replied Frank. "I don't believe it will result in any advantage to us. We will go on to new explorations, for our stay in Patagonia is brief."

"Well, very sort!"

"You know we want to find the giants and visit the southern spur of the Andes."

"Yis, sir!"

"I will, however, take the exact latitude and longitude of this place so that if we desire we may visit it again?"

Barney did not demur. Frank was the boss and he had nothing to say.

The young inventor returned to the Turret at once.
Then he proceeded to note the bearings of the buried city.

"Whoa!" he muttered, as he mentally surveyed the vast collection of mounds. "What a treasure this would be to certain enthusiastic scientists and antiquarians!"

He put away his note book and went into the pilot house.

Frank was in earnest in his intention to leave the spot.

A beautiful day was breaking overhead. A few moments later, the Turret was ready to make its trial run under full head running across the pampas.

The country now began to undergo a material change.

It was still the same low, level plain, but the grass stood in some places two feet high.

It was with difficulty that their course could be seen from the pilot house.

It was like swimming in a vast sea of white cotton, for the pampas grass was ripe and its pollen hung in great quantities from the stem.

An ordinary wagon would have found progress slow.

But the Turret had been provided with keen knifes upon the hubs and axles, which cut the grass like cheese.

This left a broad pathway wherever the Turret went.

For hours the machines went on in this fashion.

They regarded it with wonder, and therefore, when approaching the Turret, Frank instinctively made them out to be gaucho's.

Sweeping across the plain they carry destruction in their van, and as they lost .

The two exploring parties should together.

However, modestly disclaimed the title and said:

"We, gentlemen, if you will oblige your horses and tardy sort here same. we will try and give you a sample of Pomp's skill in the culinary art!"

"In other words an invitation to drink!" cried Wayne, gayly.

"Indeed, Mr. Reade, if we will not be presuming upon your kindness—"

"Certainly not."

"To tell the truth, our living has been so poor since leaving home, that it seems to good to really get something that is lookaboum."

"All entered into the spirit of the occasion in high good humor."

"There are all indebted to you for this jolly time. Now we would like to humbly submit to you a proposal!"

"Very well," said Frank.

"Our cause seems to be a common one. You are in quest of the giants and we the same!"

"That is true!"

"Why can we not combine our forces?"

"There was a moment's silence. Then Frank replied:

"We can, at least, be traveling companions."

"That is what I mean."

"Good! We shall certainly be glad of your company."

And so it was arranged that the two exploring parties should proceed together.

It was decided to continue the journey without further delay.

Accordingly the Turret started ahead.

But even as the machinery was put in motion a sudden gloom fell over the landscape.

In surprise all turned their heads to the eastward.

There was a moment's silence. Then Frank replied:

"We can, at least, be traveling companions."

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But even as the machinery was put in motion a sudden gloom fell over the landscape.
The progress of a pampas fire is very rapid indeed. Unless quick action is made few can get out of the way of the terrible flames which scorch and wither everything in their path.

None realized this more keenly than Frank.

The young inventor shouted:

"Come, Barney and Pomp! Get aboard lively now!"

The two chieftains of the pilot-house were quick to obey. They were actually in the Turret and Frank sprung into the pilot-house.

As Everhard sprang to saddle he shouted:

"Better go due south Mr. Reade. There is a wide burn there and if we can reach it we will be safe!"

Indeed it was hard enough to tell in which direction this was in the face of such a wall of smoke.

But Frank glanced at the compass.

"All right!" he replied. "Come along all of you!"

"We will!" shouted Wayne.

And away went the Turret cutting a wide swath through the dry grass.

Like a locomotive on a clear track the Turret ran on.

Fortunately the ground was quite smooth on every side of the Turret.

The horses kept up with difficulty, yet did not seem to be giving out.

After the first two miles Frank realized that it would not do to run so fast.

He would certainly leave the others hopelessly behind.

But he did not wish to do this either.

So accordingly he slackened pace.

If it had been necessary he would have taken the three Americans aboard in the Turret but going in a different direction, having quit the party immediately after the first meeting.

They no doubt were in safe quarters and far beyond the reach of the fire.

But now just when it became patent to Frank that the horses were going to be unable to outrun the fire a most thrilling thing happened.

A mighty great wave or smoke swept over the party.

The horses were hopelessly separated from the Turret.

It was with a sense of horror that Frank realized this.

"My God!" he declared. "This will be the death of them."

"Golly! day is jes' agood as cooked already I reckon," said Pomp.

"Bejabers! I'd rather not be in their skin!" affirmed Barney.

The fire had been making tremendous headway.

It was now gaining fast.

Frank was in a terrible quandary.

He regretted now that he had not taken the three travelers aboard in the first place. Their fate seemed sealed.

But every moment endangered the Turret and their own lives.

Frank considered this latter plan.

But, of course, every moment the flames were fast drawing nearer.

Time was valuable, and to hesitate was to be lost.

Self preservation was his key, and Frank yielded to a sense of his inability to succor the lost men.

So he sent the Turret ahead once more at full speed.

But now a new and terrible danger threatened.

Of course it was quite impossible to tell where the machine was going or what was ahead, on account of the dense smoke.

The course might be clear, or there might be some obstacle, which, if the Turret should crash into it would ruin it.

It was a blind course, and placed Frank in a predicament.

He dared not wait or turn back on account of the fire.

The no other way but to go on, and turn about and take the chances of dashing through the flames in safety.

For a moment Frank considered this latter plan.

But he abandoned it on account of its seeming lack of feasibility.

He pulled the electric lever wide open, the dynamos buzzed and the Turret shot like a meteor across the plain.

The blind race was on.

Frank had no idea what the end would be or where he would terminate the mad run.

On and on like a meteor fled the Turret through that smoke cloud.

The young Inventor was in momentary hope that the Turret would emerge from the smoke cloud and that the fire could be seen.

But dashing away the smoke only grew thicker.

More than this the air became suffocating hot, and even Frank fancied that he distinguished flames just ahead.

What did it mean?

Had the Turret changed its course and were they going really into the fire instead of away from it?

A fear of horror seized Frank Reade, Jr.

"Golly, Marse Frank!" cried Pomp in terror.

"I don' tink we is gettin' into a bad fix. What eber shall we do?"

"Begorra, it's burned up insteeply well be'!" cried Barney.

But Frank only grimly held onto the steering wheel of the Turret and sent it ahead with increased speed.

"There is only just one way now!" he reflected. "And that is, to take a run for it!"

He looked at the compass and saw that the Turret was going due south.

And should have carried them away from the fire instead of into it.

But Frank guessed the truth which was that the fire had rapidly made a semicircle and the wind changing had brought it from this new quarter.

And every moment the Electric Turret was going deeper into the flames.

In a few moments it would be engulfed in that awful flame.

But Frank Reade, Jr. did not once lose his nerve.

He hung onto the Turret's wheel and kept her straight ahead. It was a trying moment. Would he succeed in his purpose?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GIANT.

FRANK READE, JR., knew that the chances were against him.

The fire was intensely fierce, and it would require but brief exposure to ruin the machinery of the Turret.

But the best of luck sided with the Turret's party.

The machine plowed full head into the fire.

And as it happened this was at a point where the grass was thin, there being a gravelly bottom under it.

For one brief instant flames were all about the machine.

Frank Reade, Jr., in the pilot-house could see nothing ahead, but merely held onto the lever and kept his eyes on the compass.

The heat was something awful.

The glass in the pilot-house front seemed likely to break at any moment.

"The metal shell was creaking and straining as though about to crack."

But the only combustible thing on the outside of the machine was the flag.

They were consumed instantly.

One moment of awful suspense.

The Turret could hardly have been in the vortex of flames ten seconds.

Yet this was sufficient to instantly charge the air on the interior.

Then as if bursting from the depths of Hades the Turret emerged from the flames.

Sunlight was all around them, and a long, level, blackened plain lay before them as far as the eye could reach.

Scarcely a smoking ember could be seen in that expanse where the terrible heat had so quickly consumed all.

But the Turret was safe.

They had emerged as by an act of Providence from the clutches of grim death.

A wild cheer burst from the lips of Barney and Pomp.

"Bejabers, this is the time we got out alive a foine scrape!" cried Barney wildly.

"Suave an' it's lucky we are," said Pomp.

"'Bout fair! I done tink it would be no mo' dan yo' will come to some time, Pomp," declared Pomp, with a smirking grimace.

"Bejabers, I'm ather thinkin' yez will be mee nearest neighbor," cried Barney.

"Huh! 'Yo' kin bet I won't. I don' mix wit no Fish, I don't."

"Begorra, an' they're a shade betther than naygurs," retorted Barney, more hopefully.

The two servants would have had a friendly scrap then and there had it not been that other and more important matters just now claimed their attention.

The Turret was now running wild across the burned plain.

The course was now smooth and clear, and Frank turned the Turret so that it could follow the fire.

The young inventor now thought of the three Americans.

What had become of their fate?

Had they perished in the flames or had they really made good their escape?

This was a mystery.

It was not easy to solve.

Frank allowed the Turret to bear more to the northward now.

It was possible that if the flames overtook the Americans they might be able to break through the line safely.

So Frank kept a sharp lookout in the hopes of seeing them.

But this happy hope was not accorded him a fulfillment.

For miles the Turret kept on, but nothing was seen of the Americans.

All hope was given up of ever seeing them alive again.

Frank did not believe it possible that they could have made their escape from the flames.

The fire now surged away to the southward in huge masses of flame and smoke as high as the sky, and yet the flames were only glowing.

Frank did not attempt to keep up with it.

He bore away to the westward now, and soon had reached the line of the previous burn, where the new grass, rich and succulent, was springing up.

Here there were plenty of guanacos and ostriches.

A number of the latter started out from their burrowing places in the sand and started across the plain.

The ostrich is a very fleet bird, as is well known, being able often to outrun the fastest horses.

Barney, who was on the bridge, waved his arms and shouted:
Barney bad taken umbrage.

"Out, Barney bad taken umbrage."

That is one of the covered.

That is one of the covered.

The ostrich sped on westward. But the ostrich's neck was so long that, as it went on, it was only like a flake and shot off in another direction. Of course the Turret had to slacken speed and take a long sweep. But Frank soon had the machine once more in close pursuit. The Turret again and again dodged but Frank kept up the same tactics. The result of this soon became apparent. The bird began to tire and now Barney brought out a long lariat, which he was expert in the art of throwing. Just at the right moment he swung it over his head. It went coiling and circling through the air and settled down over the bird's neck. A quick pull and the game was bagged. The ostrich struggled violently, but was soon captured and killed. Its feathers were secured and the better part of its meat, which is very good eating.

This ended the ostrich hunt and Frank now headed the Turret due westward. All that day they bowed on over the pampas. Then as the night began to settle down, Barney, who was on the lookout, cried: "Hurrah! On me worrid there is a mighty big hill?" "A hill, Frank, with a laugh. "I should say it was!" Barney took umbrage.

"Bejavers, an' phwat else would ye call it?" he asked. "Why, it is a mountain," replied Frank. "A mountain?" "Sure!" "Begorra, it loks only folks a hill."

"That is because of the distance and the rarity of the atmosphere."

That is one of the Andean range.

"Yes, don't you mean it?"

"Yes, I do." "An' how far wad ye call it, sort?" "It is fully a million foot." "Faith, an' I'd never believe it."

"It is the truth, nevertheless." "An' do ye mean to go yender?"

"I do!" "Sure, an' I'pose we'll find thim giants over there!"

"Yes." Barney had been from the first more than anxious to get a look at the Patagonian giants. His curiosity was destined to be rewarded and that very soon. The Turret kept on rapidly. Before dark half the distance to the Andean range had been covered.

Travel was made by search-light, and by midnight the Turret was at the foot of the mighty range. The country now underwent a change. It became more rough and rocky. There were great heaps of bowlders, mighty ledges, hills and hollows and dazzling cascades of water. But it was all a vastly beautiful Region. The forests were of beechwood and juniper, with fires upon the mountain slopes. There were beautiful glens, picturesque dells, and all manner of wonderful natural beauties. For the first time now they came upon dromes of wild horses. Beautiful animals they were, as fleet as the wind, and as plump as the best of rich feed could make them. Barney and Pomp had a great desire to have a hunt for them. But Frank would not listen to lists. The young inventor was anxious to discover the valley in which it was said the city of the giants existed. Slowly the Turret made its way through the deep glens, until at length higher ground was reached. Now the pampas could be seen far below. Stretching as smooth as a billiard table far to the horizon line, they certainly presented a remarkable spectacle. For some time the voyagers rested upon a spur of the mountain wall and gazed in wonder at the sight.

Then the journey was resumed. They had come now to what seemed like a sort of water shed extending along the mountain wall. Beyond there were beautiful valleys. In this region the Patagonian giants made a dwelling-place. Suddenly the Turret leaped from the bridge, a trifle pale, and rushed into the pilot-house.

"Shure, Misther Frank?" he cried, "wad ye look at that?"

"What's it, asked Frank. "Bejavers, sor, up yonder on the mountain side?"

Frank's gaze went in the direction indicated. Truly it was a wonderful sight which he beheld. There, high upon the mountain side, was the figure of a man. But such a man! He was of enormous stature, being fully eight or nine feet in height, with herculean proportions. Never in their lives had the voyagers seen his equal.

For a moment they gazed upon him with a mixture of terror and awe. That he was a savage was evident from his manner and dress. He wore clothing roughly made of guanaco skins, and carried a tremendous battle club in his hands.

He seemed to be regarding the Turret with surprise. Indeed he seemed to be full of astonishment to see as the voyagers were to see him.

"Heaven!" exclaimed Frank Reade, Jr., "what a man that is!"

"Bejavers he'd make six av the avolves av us," affirmed Barney. "I done fink yo' betta look out fo' him, Mars Frank."

Pomp's warning was not without good grounds. Indeed the giant was soon on the monster before him. Then he swung his battle axe aloft and started down for the Turret. It was evident that he meant to challenge these new invaders upon his territory.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GIANT RACE.

Barney had not the slightest fear that the giant could do any harm whatever to the Turret. Indeed he did not make a move to change the position of the machine.

The giant came down the mountain side with long leaping strides. Straight toward the Turret he came. Frank waited until he was within fifty yards of the machine.

Then the giant halted. His features were coarse and massive and the shape of his head and brutal in every detail. It was evident that he was one of the lower order of men. He stood at that distance a towering, powerful specimen of manhood. The voyagers regarded him with something like admiration and wonderment. Frank's curiosity was aroused to see what move the fellow would make. For a few moments the giant surveyed the Turret in silence. He seemed unable to make out its character and its mission. Suddenly the brutal force of his nature cropped out. It has been claimed by certain physiologists that it is the nature of man to kill. Certainly the first impulse of the savage is always to kill the first invader upon his domains.

So the giant, actuated doubtless by what he believed was proper resentment at the intrusion, made angry signs at the curious monster before him. Finding that they were not answered, he was deeply angered. Thrusting his battle axe aloft he hurled it with all his might at the Turret. It struck the metal sides of the machine with terrific force and bounded off ten yards away. The force with which the axe had been thrown staggered conclusively the fearful power of the thrower.

"Mercy on us!" cried Frank. "He is strong enough, is he not?"

"Bejavers, I'll not risk a word with him," said Barney. The effect of his assurance evidently astonished the savage. He had very likely fancied it an easy matter to bury the axe in the sides of the Turret. But when he found that it made no impression whatever upon those metal sides he was dumfounded. The natural caution of the savage was at once aroused.

He now began to approach the Turret more cautiously. He made a detour and recovered his axe. Then he placed his hands to his mouth and made a strange howling cry. The voyagers knew at once that this was a signal.

In a few moments it was answered. From the distance came the same peculiar cry. Then in a few seconds down the slope there came bounding a dozen more of the giants with the howls.

Matters now looked more serious. While there was little to fear from one of the giants, there was much to fear from so many of them. Their combined attack upon the Turret might prove serious. The giants seemed to hold a hasty and excited consultation. Then one of them advanced, swinging his battle club.

The idea struck Frank. He boldly left the pilot-house and stepped out onto the bridge. This was the first intimation the giant had received that there were human beings like himself aboard the Turret. They seemed to be astonished, and stood motionless and silent, gazing at Frank.

The latter quietly advanced to the end of the bridge, and held up his hand in token of amity. Savages though they were, the giants recognized this token and made reply.

One of them, apparently the leader, advanced with his hands up-led, palm outward.
Frank said to Barney and Pomp in an undertone: "Keep a good line on that fellow with your rifles, but do not shoot him unless you see that it is necessary."

"All right, sir," replied Barney, "I'll do that."

Frank accordingly descended from the bridge and left the deck of the Turret.

The Turret fully gained the confidence of the advancing savage. He came forward fearlessly now until he was about six yards distant.

He towered above Frank, who looked like a pigmy in proportion. Almost disdainfully the giant looked down upon Frank, Reade, Jr.

Then opened his mouth and began to talk in some kind of gibberish which all Choctaw could not understand.

Frank shook his head energetically and made reply: "No, I do not understand you!"

But it was a mutual thing. Neither did the giant understand him.

It was now a question as to what sort of a sign manual could be established between them.

For some while Frank tried every device he could think of and finally succeeded in carrying his point.

Several intelligent things passed between them and Frank learned that this was a hunting party of the main tribe.

The hills at this point hid the giants' city, which was not very far distant.

From all outward signs the giants were disposed to be friendly. Indeed, very quickly Frank was upon pleasant terms with them.

The giants now all came forward gaily.

For many of them there were only some small presents. It was evident that this was the first time that any of this branch of the tribe had ever seen white men.

They were delighted with the presents.

Their manner of manifesting their gratitude was grotesque and strange, they groveling in the dust and bowing quantities of sand about their heads, which, however, they easily shot out of their long hair.

They were astonished when the Turret moved forward by Frank's orders, Barney being in the pilot house.

They were wholly at a loss to understand so wonderful a thing. Frank was secretly gratified at his success in handling them thus far.

They did not appear to be malicious or evil to an untrained degree.

The young inventor was anxious to view the city and learn more as to what sort of a system of sign talk was always on hand.

The people all fell back as the king and his retinue appeared.

"Begorra, did ye ever see the lookes av that!" cried Barney, effusively, pointing to the wonderful scene below.

"It is grand!" replied Frank.

Pomp was speechless.

Below was the rich and beautiful valley. In its center was a large lake, evidently deep and long.

The lower end of it was apparently shallow, and had once been broken up into lagoons and bays.

These had been utilized by the giants in building their city.

The buildings were of vast bowlders piled one upon the other with rudely constructed mortar to fill the crevices.

The styles of architecture were of course crude, but the size of the buildings was enormous.

The doors were made with a view to the safe passage through of the huge bodies of their owners.

The streets were broad and grass grown, except where the waters of the lake came in, making a sort of rude Venice.

The city was enormous in extent covering an area of miles.

The traffic was scarce, but the general air of business with the boats was apparent.

Upon the lake and in the lagoons there were vast numbers of craft of came shape, and some even had rude sails of guano skin nicely dressed.

Fire was well known to these natives, for smoke was seen ascending in many places.

The voyagers on board the Turret gazed upon the scene in silent wonder.

The machine slowly moved down into the valley behind the giant guides in its course.

Below could be seen hundreds of the giant race, men and women and children engaged in various pursuits.

Barney and Pomp naturally experienced some feelings of timidity at venturing among such a giant race, apparently unprotected.

But Frank Reade, Jr., was prepared for any outbreak akin to treachery.

"Have no fear!" he replied in response to Barney's query. "There will be no trouble; I will look out for that."

Down the slope and to the very outskirts of the giant city the Tar­ ret went.

The giants leading the way seemed much elevated by the import­ ance of their mission in bringing the newly discovered wonder into the city.

It certainly created a sensation.

The entire city turned out en masse and a furor ensued.

Around the Turret several thousand of the giant race congregated.

Frank had intimations by signs that the giants must keep their fel­ lower in contact with the Turret.

For this purpose and to guard against an attack, Frank charged the body of the Turret with a mild quantity of electricity.

The effect of the giants, venturing to touch the metal, received a sensation which terrified them while it did not injure them.

This led them to be more cautious and they kept aloof.

But for hours they thronged about the Turret in wondering crowds.

It was a strange, wild spectacle to the people on board the Turret.

The first discoverers of the giant city would not desert it, and now played the part of actual guardians.

A boatman with whom Frank had managed to get up quite a system of sign talk was always on hand.

From him Frank learned many points regarding the people and their customs.

For a time Frank was doubtful as to whether the giants had a ruler and a form of government or not.

But his doubts were soon satisfied.

From the center of the city there now marched forth a long array of fantastical arrayed barbarians.

They were native soldiers, and behind them with steady walk followed the king.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE GIANT CITY.

That giant king was the largest of them all.

With majestic mien he walked and Frank could not estimate his height at anything less than ten feet.

The people all fell back as the king and his retinue appeared.

A wide circle was made about the Turret, and the king of the giants advanced into this.

He stood regarding the Turret in a dignified way.

Two of his retinue advanced and bowing low made signs to Frank, Reade, Jr.

The young inventor responded and then descended to the ground and made a respectful salute to the sovereign.

His majesty smiled rather pleasantly and said something unintel­ ligible in a full, rich voice.

Frank responded in English, but the monarch shook his head.

Then the savage with whom Frank had first established a system of signs now came forward.

He bowed low before his sovereign, and then began sign talk to Frank.

"Covey moy compliments to the king!" said Frank, by means of signs and nods.

The fellow said something to the king which was evidently gratify­ ing, for the latter smiled and nodded approvingly.

"Where does the white-faced man come from?" was the king's query.

"From a far land beyond the sea!" was Frank's reply.

Thus the conversation continued for some time.

Then suddenly the king accepted an invitation from Frank to go on board the Turret.

But at this juncture a most unfortunate thing happened.

Barney, who was in the pilot-house leaning out of the window, sud­ denly shifted his position so that pressure was brought to bear upon the key which connected the dynamos with the insulated outer shell of the Turret.

An instant it was charged.

Unsuccessfully Frank led the way to the gangway of the Turret.

He mounted it, side by side with the giant king.

At precisely the same moment both stepped upon the deck.

It was fortunate that the full force of the current was not on.

If it had been, doubtless the both of them would have been killed.

But as it was they were hurled back with startling force and such a shock as nigh rendered them insensible.

The giant king was completely taken by surprise.

It was natural that he should regard it for the moment as an at­ tempt upon his life.

The result was most thrilling.

The people instantly sent up a mad yell and came rushing into the circle bent upon destroying the Turret and its occupants.

It was a moment of awful danger to Frank Reade, Jr.

He warded off the encircling giants and there was tremendous excitement.

The air was full of savage cries. It seemed as if Frank Reade, Jr., would be instantly killed.

But his doubts were soon satisfied.

From the center of the city there now marched forth a long array of fantastical arrayed barbarians.

They were native soldiers, and behind them with steady walk followed the king.

The giant king had no idea what it was that hurt him.

From him Frank learned many points regarding the people and their customs.

For a time Frank was doubtful as to whether the giants had a ruler and a form of government or not.

But his doubts were soon satisfied.

From the center of the city there now marched forth a long array of fantastical arrayed barbarians.
It was a wonderful and glorious display. Frank had recovered, and now hit upon a very happy idea. This was to make signs to the king in a voluble way. The king had seen many such displays before, but he had never understood them. With uplifted battle axes in another moment the people would have been upon Frank Reade, Jr. But he had struck the tree full force, and a great column of water and steam rose into the air. It was a wonderful and glorious display. The giants were all surprised and amazed beyond all expression. They had never seen such a thing before. They were all amazed and delighted. They had never seen such a thing before. They were all amazed and delighted. They had never seen such a thing before. They were all amazed and delighted. They had never seen such a thing before. They were all amazed and delighted. They had never seen such a thing before. They were all amazed and delighted.
They were nearly naked, huge brawny-armed fellows with repulsive features and black skins. A fortunate white man who should fall into their clutches need not look for mercy.

Frank saw this at once.

Also, that it was necessary to make immediate action to save them. If this was not done they would soon be a bar of soap, and Frank carefully studied the situation and then decided upon a plan of action.

He got the angle of the three death stakes and calculated the distance. Then he trained the pneumatic gun.

It was but a moment's work to press the electric button. There was a recoil, a hissing noise, and the projectile shot forth.

It struck the group of savages a fraction of a second later. In an instant there was an mighty explosion, an awful upheaval, and then a rush of flames, and flying bones, earth and debris.

It seemed as if a hundred of the giants had been slaughtered by that one blow.

Then quick as thought Frank thrust another projectile into the breech.

Hiss—boom!

Another destructive explosion followed. The effect upon the giants was wonderful. They instantly were thrown into a fearful panic. It was a startling and tremendous shock to them. It was as if an enraged Jove had begun hurling bolts into their midst.

They could not see from whence they came, nor could they guess their nature.

Superstition is an inherent trait of a savage. They waited for nothing, but beat in wild confusion.

No thought was given to the prisoners at the stakes. They thought only of their own self-preservation; this was more to them than even the6.

Frank had no desire to make useless slaughter. He really cared only at present to save the three Americans. They had saved the lives of the others and then were wild with joy.

Of course they were not a little surprised at the sudden appearance of the Turret.

But it meant deliverance to them, and this was what they cared for more than aught else just then.

And now as the giants made a mad retreat, down into the glaring light of the electric Turret, Barney and Pomp sprang down from the bridge.

Over the rail they went, and were soon by the side of the prisoners.

It was a moment’s joy to see them, as the sounds of their loud shouts could not express their joy.

Wild cheers burst from their lips, and they capered with literal joy.

"Hurrah for Frank Reade, Sr!"

"Hurrah for the electric Turret!"

"We are saved!"

They rushed up to the rail and fairly embraced Frank. It was a joyous meeting.

Then explanations followed.

Each told his story.

It was a notable meeting.

The giants had been slain and their men were saved.

They were really brave and reckless fellows. They rallied and made a bold front not a quarter mile distant.

"Well, Mr. Reade," cried Everhard, "I am glad that you escaped that fire all safely. It was really a hard pull." It was," agreed Frank.

"However, we will now hope for better times." But just now it looks equally.

"Ah, indeed!"

"We have not yet done with these savages."

"You think so?"

"I know it."

Frank with this proceeded to detail their experiences with King Don and his men. The explorers listened with interest.

Then Everhard said:

"Boys, I am going sick of this kind of life."

"You are?"

"I am.

"What are you going to do about it?"

"I am going home to America."

"What, and give up the search for the golden city?"

"I don’t believe that it exists, or that there is anything here for me. I am going back home."

"Well," said Prof. Bent, "I’ll go with you."

The other, Chester Wayne, looked at his companions in surprise.

"Of course I can’t stay here alone," he said.

"But how will you return just now?" asked Frank Reade, Jr. "You have no horses, and you cannot reach the coast on foot."

"We can find horses."

"That is not easy."

"We will catch and train some wild horses," said Everhard. "I’ll risk that but we will get back."

"You will do well," said Frank Reade, Jr., skeptically. "Will you take my advice?"

"What is it?"

"For the time you can travel with us aboard the Turret."

The three explorers looked at each other a moment. But they will discommode you!"

"Not a bit of it."

"Then we will gladly accept," declared Everhard, eagerly.

The three explorers were delighted, and Frank made comfortable quarters for them.

"Now," said the young inventor, "we will give those black giants a good drubbing, so that they will not trouble King Don and his men again."

"And what next?" asked Everhard.

"I want to take a little trip over the Andes," said Frank. "Then I am ready to go home."

"And may we be allowed to accompany you?"

"Certainly!"

CHAPTER XII.

THE EARTHQUAKE.

Winds cannot express the keen pleasure of the explorers.

"You are members of our party now!" said Frank, pleasantly. "We will co-operate in this purpose of exploring Patagonia."

"Will not that be grand!" said Prof. Bent. "We shall accomplish something now I am sure."

But the first move as Frank declared was to get rid of the black giants.

They must be disheartened in their intent to destroy King Don and his people. So Frank gave pursuit.

But the savages had scattered and it was hard to find any of them.

They kept well out of reach.

There were plenty of hiding-places and these they quickly sought.

However, a long and extended trip was made with the Turret.

Nightfall came on, camp was made in a beechnook glen by a bubbling spring of clear water.

The next morning early the Turret was on its return to the city of King Don.

Over the mountains the Turret ran and then made the descent into the wonderful valley.

The city of stone lay below a picturesque and handsome scene. Of course the three American explorers were greatly interested.

The giant people could be plainly seen walking the streets or rowing upon the vast lake in their boats.

"So that is the city of King Don!" asked Everhard, as he studied it through a glass.

"It is!" replied Frank.

But the words had hardly left his lips when a thrilling thing occurred.

Suddenly there was a peculiar tremor and the dynamo of the Turret began to hiss and sputter in its own sustaining coil.

"Too much current, Barney," cried Frank, "be careful.""""Divi 8 bit, sir!" cried the Celt.

"What is the matter then?"

"I don’t know, sir."

But Prof. Bent had been studying the landscape cred.

"My God, what’s that?"

Every eye was turned in the direction indicated by Bent. And a strange, wild thrill went through the breasts of all.

It was a terrible awe inspiring sight which they beheld.

The country beyond the lake seemed to be tossing and heaving like a ship at sea.

Forests were leveled, and hills rose and fell, and one huge mountain were cleft from base to summit by the shock.

"An earthquake!" gasped Frank.

This was true.

The shock was felt not so severely where they stood.

But a terrible scene was being enacted down there in the valley.

The horses of the giants were seen to be trembling about them and all was panic and confusion.

What was more, the land upon which King Don’s city stood began to subside rapidly, and the waters of the lake to sweep over it.

In a very few moments the entire city was lost to view, and the waters of the lake occupied the spot.

It was a dreadful scene to look upon, indeed.

For one awful moment the desponding, panic-stricken people were seen scrambling for their lives.

Then the waters swept over the city, and the end had come.

The earthquake had ceased.

But the rumbling of internal thunder continued, and now a fearful thing happened.

It was such a spectacle as probably few men had ever viewed.

Suddenly, upon the peak of a high mountain near by, there was a rattling discharge like artillery.
Huge stones were flung high into the air, and it seemed as if the entire mountain was being disintegrated. The long funnel-shaped column of smoke shot up into the air. After it came the burst of vivid flames. Then there was the bubbling of a liquid mass, which came plunging down the mountain side in torrents. "An eruption," cried Prof. Bent, excitedly. "This sight is worth a thousand dollars to me." The scientist instantly began to make notes. He was right. It was an eruption.

Nature's mighty internal forces were at work upon a new and mighty elevation. The party were witnessing one of the most wonderful sights of the creation of a new volcano. Words could not describe the wonderful scene adequately.

"By Jupiter! Is that a wonderful thing?" cried Everhard.

"Beyond all description," said Chester Wayne.

Spelunkers, the explorers all stood in their secure position and watched it.

But Frank Reade, Jr., Barney and Pomp thought, with the keenest of regard of King Don and his people, "It is too awful!" the young inventor murmured. "All are swept away in one moment."

"Begorra, it's a marthurin's shamal!" cried Barney.

"Golly! It am too dreadful and!" said Pomp.

"I don't see why the white giants survived. It seemed unjust that they should perish thus and the black giants survive. But it was the law of Nature and the will of God. When the Maker wills, human power or opposition is of little avail.

The thunder of the new volcano was now terrific. In the last few moments the whole face of the country about had undergone a mighty change. It was impossible to locate one familiar point. All was changed. The great volumes of lava now running down the mountain side merged with the waters of the lake.

The effect was terrific. Beyond all powers of description was that scene which followed. The lakes began to instantly become converted into steam. The curious hissing, boiling, mighty confusion below could hardly be identified with the once peaceful body of water upon which the people of King Don had so fearfully navigated.

But our adventurers had seen enough. Sick at heart they turned away.

Only the scientist, Prof. Bent, lingered, and even he was overcome with the terror of the situation.

Frank Reade, Jr., could not help thinking of the unlucky race.

"Poor souls!" he muttered, "they were barbarians surely. Yet they were human, and to see them, mothers, fathers, children, all root and branch, swept out of existence so summarily is sad, indeed!"

"Yes, we are right!" agreed Cecil Everard, regretfully.

All went on board the Turret, and Frank headed it back over the mountain wall.

For some while the dreadful scene in their rear remained in view. Then the ridge was crossed and the wide-spreading pampas once more burst into view.

The machine was headed due east. Soon they were upon the level plain. Then Frank Reade, Jr., went into the Turret and called all after him.

When they had all appeared the young inventor said briefly:

"Gentlemen, I have called you here for the purpose of discussion. Shall we remain much longer in this God-forsaken country?"

There was a moment of silence. Frank looked from one face to another, and continued:

"Gentlemen, I have called you here for the purpose of discussion. Shall we remain much longer in this God-forsaken country?"

There was a moment of silence. Frank looked from one face to another, and continued:

"Prof. Bent, arise to his feet.

"Mr. Reade," he said, "I have accomplished enough to fully satisfy me. I am ready to go at any time."

"So am I," cried Everhard.

"Wayne was the only one to demur. "I am not quite satisfied," he said, slowly, "I had hoped to find these deposits of gold said to be so plentiful heretofore."

"They do not exist!" declared Frank, positively.

"I hardly think we have given it sufficient trial," said Prof. Bent.

"We will remain for further trial," said Frank.

"Let it be so," cried Everhard.

"In favor of staying hold up the right hand."

Only Wayne held up his hand. It was decided to go. The Turret was then headed for the Atlantic coast.

For several days the party traveled without incident across the plains.

To be sure several times they narrowly avoided being overtaken by prairie fires.
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