

"What hotel is this?" I asked, gaining some confidence.

"Chateau Neolithia. Did you not know? Just got that name recently from the Neolithic proprietor," was the astonishing reply.

"And the city?"

"Neandertholia," again replied the semi-human voice, sitting down on one of the chairs with human-like ease. "Renamed recently by our Neandertholian mayor."

With a daring that would have been impossible a few moments ago, I sat on a chair facing the creature; and, through eyes that I knew were deceiving me, studied "him" carefully.

The body was powerfully broad and very much out of proportion to the height according to the human standard. The arms were extremely long, reaching nearly to the knees, and the legs were short and dwarfish. I fancied from the movements of the body that the upright position would have been maintained with much difficulty had it not been for the aid of a thick cane which he carried in his right hand as a support in walking. It was not a monkey, nor was it a man; it was something that resembled neither, yet both. It seemed a link that might join the two together. It was a sort of fifty-fifty proposition. Taking the monkey as a standard, the face had perhaps receded fifty per cent. toward the almost perfect-angle profile of man. The features were not unpleasant when the creature "laughed," but they were somewhat crude when at rest. The skin of the face and hair of the head resembled man more than monkey. The voice, in giving form to words, seemed to come from the deep cavity of the throat rather than from the sensitive tips of the tongue and lips. My visitor was fully dressed, and his thick, almost bristly hair had been carefully trained in imitation of those whom he apparently was ambitious to emulate.

The "Fifty-Fifty" rose and began to groom my clothing with his long bony fingers. Then he produced a whisk from somewhere and brushed me down very carefully in that solicitous manner which has raised the business of tip grafting almost to that of a profession.

I gave him two-bits and took my departure, going along the hall, and down a long flight of stairs that seemed to have no ending, being too bewildered and perplexed to think of an elevator.

The stairway led into the general waiting room on the ground floor, and here I lingered for a few moments only before going out into the street. The matter of paying for the night's accommodation, or going in search of my wife in the parlor, did not occur to me at the time.

In the congestion of the street I was swept away with the human torrent; and, along the unblazed city canyon, was soon hopelessly lost.

The conditions in the city seemed to render me indifferent as to my own welfare in the immediate present. There appeared to be a sort of Utopian atmosphere about that was unbelievable as an attribute of this earth. There was little or none of that tramp, tramp, tramp of feet on pavement, nor noise of wheels on rails that I had been accustomed to in Vancouver or any other city which I had visited. The sole of the foot and the surface of the pavement, and the contact of wheels on rails, seemed to come together with the minimum of sound. I could scarcely hear my own footsteps as I walked along on the soft composition that the sidewalk was made of. I began to wonder if I had been mysteriously transplanted into another planet which far surpassed ours in scientific accomplishments.

Trams and autos swept past me, but I could scarcely hear a sound as a result of their motion. The voices of the people as they laughed and chatted seemed to carry me away with them, for no other disturbance awoke the general tranquility

which reigned supreme in apparent contradiction to the commotion that was all about. I could easily distinguish what the people were saying as we surged along, which is very unusual in a crowded city.

I saw numerous individuals, both male and female, of the same race as the one I had met in the bed-room of the hotel. And they seemed to be part of the human throng, and were apparently accepted on terms of equality by the real human portion of the crowd. I dare say over fifty per cent was "Neandertholian."

Their domestic standing was astonishing, and their presence in the city seemed to be accorded all that courtesy which any ordinary human being owes to another.

And then I recalled that the creatures were more than common domesticated animals. They had the power of speech. Their training had not stopped at usefulness in a dumb, automatic way, but had been extended to embrace human intelligence. They had been taught to think and speak, as well as to act at the command of a master. Could it be possible that a branch of the anthropoid apes, with the example of man before them, had civilized themselves by a process of natural or artificial evolution or selection so as to have attained a standard of intelligence approaching, if not equaling, that of man himself? And why not? The wonder does not appear to be that there are intelligent beings on this earth, but that there are not more than one kind.

The deeper I delved into the mystery the more bewildered I became. In the strained condition of mind I found myself hurrying along like an insane person and attracting the attention of pedestrians in the human surge. Reigning myself up, I began to move like one in a trance so soothing and hypnotizing the noiselessness of the city had become to my astonished senses.

But my presence was now exciting curiosity. People were beginning to stare at me as they passed by. Whether it was my mode of walking, or my apparently obsolete clothing, I was not able to say. Children stopped and stared at me in amazement. The publicity became agonizing.

To escape a heterogeneous group of youngsters who began to follow, I stepped into a waiting tram car, handed the conductor (a "Fifty-Fifty") a coin which I found in my pocket, and was about to sit down when he called after me:

"Say, where did you get this old stuff? Been robbing a museum?" he said.

"It's all I've got," I replied with embarrassment.

Every eye in the car surveyed me with suspicion or curiosity; and, for a few moments the agony to my soul was indescribable.

The conductor pocketed the money with a grin at all the other passengers, receiving grins or smiles from the mixed

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