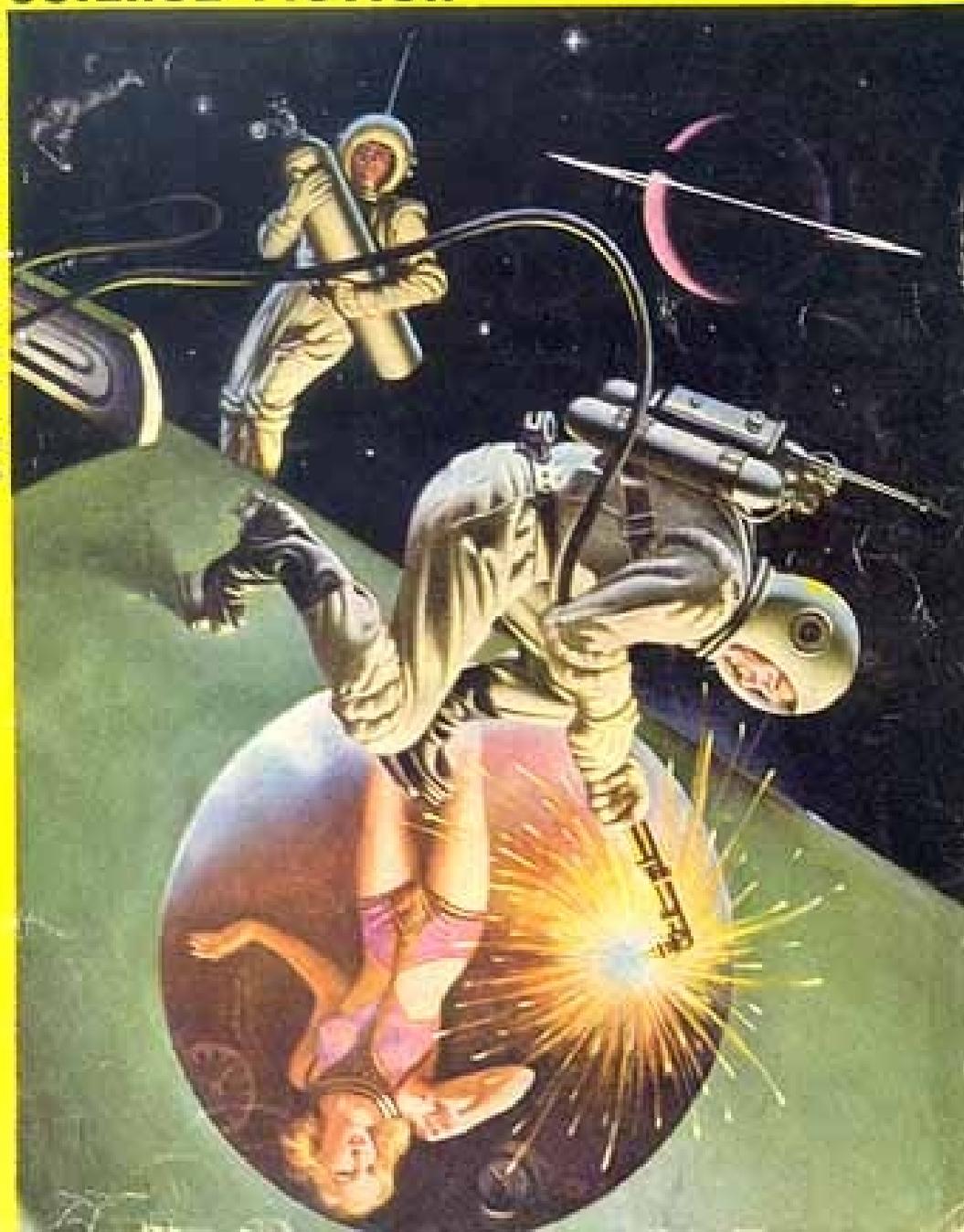


SPACE SCIENCE FICTION

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THE GOD IN THE BOWL
BY ROBERT E. HOWARD
LEINSTER-PRATT-SIMAK

SEPTEMBER 1952 35c



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OFFICIAL RECORD

BY FLETCHER PRATT

Illustrated by SCHECTERSON

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First Report of the First Kurada Expedition (by radio)

Intelligent Lord:

Your expedition is a success!

This report is sent from a point fifteen philads inside Kurada. There has been no opposition. The inhabitants are docile, mostly deformed, and without cultural activity, as predicted by the Scientific Board. They will make admirable laborers under our direction, while their deformities render them so repulsive that there will be little temptation for even the hottest-blooded youth to pollute our sacred Evadzonian blood with their debased strain. Moreover, their country has become amazingly fertile, and is in every respect suitable for colonization.

I will send further details of a general order tomorrow, when we expect to reach their ancient capital at Paralov. I now

send the detailed narrative requested for study by the scientific board:

This morning, before penetrating the barrier, I ordered all hands into pressurized air-tight suits, and as an added precaution against contamination with the Twedorski mutation-virus, placed everyone inside the enclosed combat vehicles, personally inspecting the entire expedition to make certain the orders were carried out. My precautions occasioned some slight delay, as it was difficult to handle the bridging equipment under the conditions, and it was nearly noon before we reached the Kuradan side of the stream.

Here, of course, we had to pause while the scientific vehicle commanded by Dr. Govelsitz secured samples of the plant life and tested it for the virus. There was no opportunity to obtain samples of animal life immediately, except for some large insects, nearly four merkils in wing-spread, which were occupied with the numerous and brilliant flowers of plants which at the same time bore large yellow fruit.

The report of Dr. Govelsitz was that in the hundred years since your gracious grandfather wisely released the Twedorski mutation-virus in Kurada, it had, as expected, bred out of both plants and the large insects, and they were established forms. Dr. Govelsitz' assistants are engaged in classifying the new forms. They believe the fruit may have economic value.

My own observation was that the forts which formerly occupied the Kuradan side of the stream were ruinous and the metal in them almost completely worn away with rust, which gave indeed a happy augury of the state to which the

once-aggressive Kuradans must have declined under the influence of the mutations. At the bases of the cupolas in two of the forts burrowings about two handspans in diameter led downward at an angle through the concrete and metal. I conjecture that this means the development of a mutated burrowing animal of a quite formidable character, possibly dangerous to human beings, even when protected by armored suits. I have orders for precautions, but no sign of the animals appeared. Dr. Govelsitz considers they may be nocturnal.

As soon as the doctor's report showed no immediate danger in proceeding, I dispatched combat vehicle XN-54 under Lieutenant Ghenjon to investigate the armored rocket-launchers at Sappuka which gave us so much trouble in the development of our legitimate ambitions a hundred years ago. He has not yet reported, but I expect him to rendezvous with the expedition at Paralov.

The expedition was now ordered to proceed toward Paralov, leaving behind combat vehicle XN-86 to maintain radio contact through the gap in the barrier. The roads are in very poor condition, heavily overgrown with vine-like growths several merkils in thickness. It is recommended that when a colonial expedition is sent, the vehicles be of tread type and include road-building equipment. For at least three philads all the buildings we perceived were in a state of utter decay, and we observed no signs of animal or human life except some small unidentified creatures that disappeared rapidly in the tangle of vines and yellow-fruited plants. Dr. Rab of the linguistic-anthropological unit desires to have placed before the Board his theory that the Evadzon border has become a

place of superstitious terror to the modern Kuradans since the erection of the barrier.

I have no opinion on this, but I was forced to intervene officially in a dispute which arose between Dr. Govelsitz and Dr. Adelach of the biological unit. The former considers that the absence of avian life is due to the fact that the mutation virus introduced by Your Intelligence's grandfather caused the birds to develop into flightless forms. Dr. Adelach offered the theory that it was not the virus, but the atomic dusting during the last war. I suspect him of deviationism and have ordered that Govelsitz' view is official.

At three philads the road began to show more signs of use and several crudely-fenced fields were observed on the left. In one of them there was growing a crop of mutated grain with a large head and extremely hard shell; another held three animals, an old one and two young, the adult being about the size of a cow, but all with only one leg in front and four curling horns. Of course we collected them at once, and halted while they were examined. Dr. Govelsitz pronounces them free of any trace of the virus. They appear to breed rapidly and should form a useful addition to our food supply.

A third of a philad beyond and behind a hill which bore a large number of trees, we came upon our first modern Kuradans. There were four of them, working together at some hand-task on the porch of an old building whose glass walls had been much broken and repaired with some opaque material—two females and two children. They made no effort to escape, and my heart leaped up when I saw them, for I remembered our long struggle for adequate territorial resources with the obstinate Kuradans, and these were true

mutation-types, who would never again be able to resist the will of the superior race. Their heads went almost directly back from the brows and the rear of the skull was over-developed; the breasts of the females were enormous. Dr. Rab, who of course went to talk to them at once, reports that they only have three fingers on each hand.

Of course, they were not very intelligent. He had difficulty both in understanding them and in making himself understood and was forced to use the simplest Kuradan words. Even the word "Evadzon" had no meaning for them. They offered him some of the yellow fruit, cut up into a liquid, addressing him by an appellation which he understood as "City Man," and saying that their male was busy gathering his quota of food for the "Little Gods." He could not make out what was meant by this phrase; it is doubtless a reference to some debased religious belief. He said they appeared very cheerful and glad to see him.

This was confirmed two philads farther on, when we reached what had evidently been a village a century ago, and still was, though the people now live in recently-built huts of their own, and have allowed the old buildings to decay. A number of them emerged from their hovels as the expedition entered the village, all females and children, and all exhibiting striking physical deformities. The flattened skull was general; in addition to the big-breasted type with a much over-developed right arm and hand and a left arm and hand equally under-developed.

I judged it prudent to have Dr. Govelsitz examine one of them for indications of the Twedorski virus and signalled his vehicle accordingly. As soon as he and Rab appeared outside

the vehicle, two or three of the females, uttering cries of pleasure, ran to their huts and returned with bowls of the liquid and yellow fruit. It was not difficult for Rab and Govelsitz to entice one of the females into the vehicle for testing and I am happy to inform Your Intelligence that the result of the test was negative, although the process occasioned some embarrassment to Govelsitz, the female having evidently mistaken the purpose for which he invited her into the vehicle.

I thereupon descended in person, accompanied by an interpreter, with the double purpose of learning what I could and affixing to a statue of some forgotten Kuradan hero in the public square a plaque taking possession of the place in the name of Your Intelligence. My interpreter experienced the same difficulties with the language as Rab, but he was able to make out that the creatures admired us greatly and were eager to present us with their preserved fruit. When I asked where their men were, they said at work, but they apparently have little concept of time, and could not give us the hour of their return.

While affixing the plate to the statue, I observed running down underneath it several more of the same type of burrows I had seen at the fortifications, and had the interpreter inquire what type of animal made them. The reply was "Little Gods," but he could obtain no satisfactory description. Rab describes this as an interesting return to totemism, indicating a barbaric culture level, and I agree. The clothes of the Kuradans are of poor quality and hand-woven; their buildings are the merest thatched huts. The bowls in which they offered us the preserved fruits are of rather anomalously

fine quality and made of metal, and so was the small hand weaving apparatus one of the females carried. Perhaps there survives somewhere a certain degree of industrialization, a fact which we can determine when we reach Paralov. No sign of any form of cultural activity has been observed; the Kuradans merely stared uncomprehendingly at my plaque.

Apparently, writing is a lost art to them.

Long live Toxernn III, Supreme Intelligence of Evadzon!

Shtenin, Major-General

In camp, 16th Moridd.

Second Report of the First Kurada Expedition (by rocket)

Intelligent Lord:

Evadzon must triumph!

That we have encountered difficulties is only a proof that one cannot know in advance everything about the unknown; that we have overcome them is a proof of your supreme intelligence in selecting the personnel of the expedition which is opening vast new territories for the development of the Evadzonian race.

My head is at Your Intelligence's feet for not having reported earlier. It was not until today that I learned that yesterday's radio report probably did not reach Your Intelligence, and I hasten to make good the deficiency by repeating its

substance in this document, which will be relayed through the gap in the barrier by combat vehicle XN-86.

To put the matter briefly, there are signs of a surreptitious opposition to our enlightening mission, but we have found the means of dominating it. The first sign came on the morning of the 17th, when we broke camp, nine philads inside the frontier. The camp was set up with only the normal night guards because of the lack of any evidence of hostility on the part of the inhabitants. In the morning, however there were found affixed to my own vehicle a series of metal plates bearing pictographic writing. One of these plates is enclosed for examination by the Scientific Board. Our own staff reports that it is of an alloy unknown to them, as is the means of impressing the writing upon it. They are investigating further.

The enclosed plate is the first of the series. As you will perceive, it shows a very good representation of two of our combat vehicles proceeding back across the bridge homeward, their crews wearing expressions of great happiness. The remainder of the series showed us entering a city which by its typical Kuradan architecture I took to be Paralov, wearing unhappy expressions, or doing wild, violent dances, with rolling eyes and disordered hair.

I interpreted this as a warning and the men of the scientific units agreed. Naturally, no attention was paid to it, but what attracted our attention was the quality of the plates themselves and the deliniation. Before Your Intelligent grandfather released the Twedorski virus among them, the Kuradans were celebrated as an artistic, if tricky, people, but Dr. Rab assures me it would have been impossible for the

debased peasants we have seen to have produced such works, either technologically or in deliniation. I was therefore forced to assume the existence of quite another mutant strain among them, and this was later strikingly confirmed.

The guards declared the night was quiet, though very dark, and they had seen no one approach the vehicles. I have given them second-level punishments (18 lashes and half an hour in the thumb press).

While the discussion of the plates was in progress, my attention was drawn to the peculiar behavior of Dr. Govelsitz. Someone suggested that we ought to find out whether the plates were really metal or something good to eat—in a jocular manner, of course—whereupon Govelsitz immediately seized on one and clamped his teeth on it, in a manner by no means jocular. A moment or two later he said to me that Dr. Adelach had told him he ought to confess that his theory for the absence of birds in Kurada was inferior to Adelach's own, and therefore he was abandoning his position in favor of that taken by Adelach. As I had already ordered that the Govelsitz theory (that the birds had mutated into flightless forms) was correct, this constituted a deviationist insult to the Supreme Intelligence. I at once ordered Govelsitz into arrest for psychological examination. It is very difficult to conduct while on active service, and he has not signed the confession prepared for him as yet, but we hope to hold the trial in another day or two.

Upon resuming the journey we encountered a procession of two-wheeled carts drawn by animals with round heads and long curling hair of about the size of a horse. The biological unit, after a cursory examination, pronounced them mutated

sheep. Such animals might provide a valuable source of meat, and their hair can be turned over to the natives to be woven into clothing by their crude processes, thus relieving our synthetics trust of the necessity of providing such materials for the labor we will control.

The drivers of the carts were about evenly divided between the two types previously observed—the three-fingered species, and that with the disproportionate arms. It is not yet determined whether these can interbreed. The vehicles were loaded with metal articles; weaving tools like those previously reported, one whole load of the fine metal plates, and another of tools so remarkable that we confiscated samples, in spite of the protests of the drivers, who showed the greatest fear at our action. No opposition was threatened, however.

I will dispatch samples of these, together with collected flora and fauna, by vehicle as soon as possible. For the present, let me say that some of them are small machine tools, adapted to the cutting of highly refractory materials and others hand tools made for tiny hands, not over a merkil or two in span. All were of great fineness of workmanship, and argued not only a high degree of industrialization, but the existence of a third race of human mutants, dwarf-like in size. In the presence of these artifacts, I felt severely the misfortune of Govelsitz' conduct. None of the others seemed capable of throwing real illumination on the problem of the tools.

When questioned as to where they came from, the drivers answered quite readily that it was from the city; but when asked where they were bound, they only gave vague answers about the "Little Gods," with a number of words which, Rab

says, have entered Kuradan since the barrier went up, and which are therefore unintelligible. I might have detached a vehicle to follow them, but judged it imprudent to isolate one, in view of the fact that the culture suggested by these tools is probably provided with dangerous means of attack and defense.

Rab says the mutant Kuradans possess a sense of hearing pitched several degrees above ours. When I blew my whistle for entrance into the cars and the resumption of the journey, they became greatly excited and began talking together all at once.

We reached the outskirts of Paralov late in the afternoon. Your Intelligence will appreciate that, although degenerate by our virile standards, the Kuradans possessed a certain artistic sense that enabled them to produce objects of great beauty. I recall the exquisite Kuradan statuette which adorns Your Intelligence's desk. We have old pictures of Paralov, but it must be seen to be appreciated. Even ruinous, and with the vine-like trunks twisting across its broad avenues, it is a place of great beauty, with finely proportioned buildings. I would recommend that the city be reserved as a rest-camp, and the earliest colonization include entertainers and pleasure-girls. It will take very little labor to prepare some of the buildings for immediate occupancy, especially the fine one in which the Kuradans housed a collection of their paintings.

Immediately on reaching Paralov, our attention was caught by a plume of smoke against the sky, which rose steadily, not with the indication of something burning but of an industrial establishment. I ordered scouting formation in case there

were defenses, and made an approach through the streets. The precaution proved unnecessary. When we reached the place, which was on the northern outskirts, it proved to be a long, low building of recent construction, not in the least like the traditional Kuradan architecture, which is tall, with angled buttresses, but domed over and close to the ground. As commander of the expedition, I did not hesitate to be the first to enter, accompanied by an armed guard and Dr. Rab.

The building proved to be the factory in which the tools and plates we had seen were being produced by workmen; so intent on their tasks that they hardly looked up to answer our interpreters' questions. In the first place, these workmen: they constitute a distinct third species of mutant modern Kuradan, being in all respects well-proportioned and even handsome, though rather small, and possessed of a very low degree of intelligence, even lower than that of the deformed peasant Kuradans. They were cooperative and willing to answer questions, but apparently did not understand much of what was said to them. This, however, may be merely clever concealment on their part, for reasons that I will describe presently.

Second: their work. They were operating automatic machines with power sources that came up through the floor and whose lines we have not traced. There was not too much apparent comprehension of the machines. Each worker had by his side a series of the metal plates with the steps of what he was doing pictured on it and kept glancing at it constantly. When one of the machines ceased operating, the worker at it merely stretched, stood up and walked away from it. From him we learned that these called themselves the "City Men"

(the title given to us by the first Kuradans we encountered), and that they lived in Paralov.

While we were interviewing this individual Colonel Kaszuk entered to say that our radios had become inoperative. He had discovered it through trying to make contact with two of our cars which had apparently taken the wrong turn among the streets and had not joined the rest on schedule. At once recalling that I had not received any acknowledgment of my first report, I hurried out and confirmed that on all the common frequencies of all the radios in the cars, there was nothing but a high-pitched, persistent humming. As the instruments seemed in perfect order, this could only come from jamming.

I ordered experiment with very high and very low frequencies, in the meanwhile returning to the factory building, where the workers, with the exception of the one whose machine had broken down, continued to labor imperturbably. I demanded to know who was the head of the factory; he did not appear to understand. He was equally uncomprehending when I said that this radio jamming must cease at once, and it was clear that, although these Kuradans give every outward appearance of cooperation, we were dealing with the type of opposition known as underground.

There is an established procedure for dealing with this, which I think the modern Kuradans have become too much mutated and too far out of contact with civilization to remember. I immediately took an armed detail into the factory, plucked every third man from his place, and taking them outside, informed them that unless the jamming ceased, they would be executed. At about this time, the work in the

factory ceased, and the workers came trooping out. I repeated the admonition, and to reinforce it, gave one of them the thumb-press. He screamed in a satisfactory manner and the others seemed disturbed, but without positive result.

For the night, I retired the force to a hill beyond the factory and posted war-standard guards. We were undisturbed, and in the morning, the remaining workers returned to the factory as though nothing had happened. Your Intelligence will perhaps not approve my forbearance, but feeling it always better to obtain the willing cooperation of subject peoples, I had the interpreters warn these "City Men" repeatedly before proceeding to measures. As the radios remained inoperative, I took one of the prisoners into the factory and gave him the thumb-press at full intensity. He died after only two hours and seventeen minutes, which indicates a low order of physical resistance among these people, but the rest still affected not to understand what we were asking them.

I executed two more of the prisoners in the course of the afternoon, and have informed the rest that the remainder will be executed tomorrow unless the radio jamming ceases. The examiners report that Govelsitz is quite irrational today, throwing himself about violently and demanding some of the yellow fruit which grows in this country. I am still without word from Ghenjon, and in order that this report shall reach Your Intelligence at once, am forwarding it by rocket to vehicle XN-86 to be passed through the gap in the barrier.

Dr. Rab is inclined to the hypothesis that there is a fourth species of mutated Kuradan man, very small, and capable of using the tools we saw. I have issued no order against this theory, but I regard it as less tenable than the one that these

"City Men" are themselves responsible for the radio business. Very well; I intend to bring them to terms at the beginning of what will prove a happy relationship with Evadzon.

Long live Toxernn III, Supreme Intelligence of Evadzon!

Shtenin, Major-General

At Paralov, 18th Moridd.

Third Report of the First Kurada Expedition (by radio)

Intelligent Lord:

The City Men of Kurada have surrendered! Evadzon must triumph!

This morning, as we approached the factory with a new group of prisoners, preparing to execute several of them at once to make our purpose perfectly clear, we were met by a large number of women of their species. They were carrying bowls of the preserved yellow fruit, which seems to have an honorific significance among them, and they gestured enticingly. Through Rab, who is acquiring considerable facility in their language, I explained that while we cherished the friendliest feelings toward them, the jamming of our radios must cease, or they would have to take the consequences. This the women seemed to understand.

The one who approached me replied that to be friends, we must accept their fruit, and showed me one of the metal plates with an illustration of a man and woman eating together from one of the bowls. I accordingly took a piece of it—it is not at all bad, pulpy and with a flavor like that of spiced pears, though if I am any judge, alcoholic—and permitted the other members of the expedition to accept fruit from the bowls being offered to them. The women clapped their hands in delight, and one of them ran into the building, while the one who had accosted me flung her arms around my neck and would not be satisfied until we had emptied the bowl together.

A few moments later Colonel Kaszuk came running from the camp to say that the radio interference had ceased and he was in communication with XN-86, though not as yet with Ghenjon's XN-54. Naturally, we were delighted, and I ordered the prisoners released at once, except three whom we retained as hostages against further troubles.

But it seems there will be no further troubles. As soon as the prisoners were released, the Kuradan woman with me also ran back into the factory building, uttering the single word "Wait." Presently she returned with an animal on her shoulder which looked like a white rat, at least two handspans long, but with an enormous head.

"It is one of the Little Gods," she said. "They are very good, and tell us everything."

The creature was not at all repulsive and evidently very intelligent. It placed its head close to her ear and made a series of high-pitched sounds, at which she laughed, and then

burst into a flow of words, from which Rab finally extracted the statement that the entire personnel of the expedition was invited to spend the day in a banquet with the women while the men were at work. This was so pleasant a termination to our victory that I acceded at once, and the announcement to the crews was received with cheers.

They are saucy wenches with long, dark hair, well-formed even, as we understand the term in Evadzon. I understand that as the mutation has made them into a quite separate species, there can be no question of interbreeding, and I therefore anticipate a pleasant day. The one with me is named Clypteia.

I regret to say that Dr. Govelsitz died at dawn. He was violently insane.

Long live Toxern III, Supreme Intelligence of Evadzon!

Shtenin, Major-General

At Paralov, 19th Moridd, morning.

Statement of Gavil Brobon, Communication Mechanic

I was communication mechanic of the command vehicle XP-22 during the First Kurada Expedition. I have read the reports of General Shtenin. As far as my observation goes, it is accurate.

I have to add only that, being questioned on the point, I remember that Dr. Govelsitz ate a quantity of the preserved fruit known as dream-pears before examining the Kuradan woman for traces of the Twedorski mutation-virus.

I was on duty in the radio compartment of the command vehicle on the 19th Moridd at Paralov, and therefore did not accompany the remainder of the crews to the banquet. I would say that they were intoxicated when they returned in the evening, particularly General Shtenin. I say it because his movements were uncertain and his voice thick. He set no guards for the night.

As I had not been relieved, I remained on duty, and received the acknowledgment of General Shtenin's report, transmitted through XN-86. At twilight the radio again became inoperative in the same manner as before. I did not like to rouse the General under the circumstances, so I set the radio on a screamer which would rouse me in case it came on again and went to sleep.

I was roused just before midnight by sounds in the vehicle. When I looked out of the compartment I saw several of the large white rats known as "Little Gods" in the vehicle. They were walking on their hind legs and examining all the equipment, talking to each other in high-pitched voices. The lights were not on, but some of them carried small, dim flashlights, by the illumination of which they took down and replaced very quickly one of the rocket-projectors. One of them entered General Shtenin's compartment with a bundle of the metal plates.

In the morning, I reported the failure of the radio to Colonel Kaszuk. He said it did not matter. I then reported it to the General. He said he had been informed that it was better not to use the radio for the time being. At the time he had two of the metal plates in his hand. I did not look at them closely, but I believe they pictured the expedition returning. He sent out a detail to procure more of the preserved dream-pears, and they all ate some. I did not have any myself.

After this, the General gave orders for the return journey. None of the officers protested. Outside Paralov, we met vehicle XN-54, which joined our movement. We proceeded at high speed, arriving at the bridge after dark. XN-86 was on duty there. As soon as we arrived Commander Videlacht got out of his vehicle and came over to ours. General Shtenin got out to meet him.

Commander Videlacht then asked what he was doing there and why he had not obeyed the order to set up an outpost at Paralov. The General said he had received no such orders, and even if he had it was necessary to return at once. Commander Videlacht went to his vehicle to get the order file, and I think it was at this time that Lieutenant Ghenjon came over. One of the rats was sitting on his shoulder. When Commander Videlacht came back he made some remark about the rat, I don't know what, and I thought he was going to hit it, and Lieutenant Ghenjon shot him. General Shtenin said it was just what he should have done.

I believe in the Supreme Intelligence of Toxernn III.

*Report of the Scientific Board of Examination in the Case of
the Late Bosip Shtenin*

Intelligent Lord:

We regret exceedingly not having secured the confession of the traitor Shtenin before his death. Unfortunately, he was already so irrational when our examination began that neither the thumb-press nor the lights had any effect upon him. As he kept screaming for preserved dream-pears, we immediately administered some to the other surviving prisoners. Their jerkings ceased at once and they became, to all appearances, normal. But we noted that they were left with a high degree of suggestibility, and would at once perform the most absurd acts when ordered. By lowering the dosage, this suggestibility was also lowered.

Chemical analysis of the preserved fruit shows that it contains a narcotic alkaloid whose formula we have not yet determined. It is evidently habit-forming, and so violent in its effects that cutting off the supply produces the death of the subject, as we have confirmed in several cases. On the other hand, a small daily dosage appears to leave the subject without physical damage.

Samples of the fresh fruit have also been analyzed. They do not contain the alkaloid, which is thus evidently produced during the process of preservation. On this we have no data at present.

The other and more serious question arising from the attached documents concerns the rats known as "Little Gods." We consider it evident that under the influence of the

Twedorski mutation-virus the rats of Kurada have mutated into a tool-using, social form, of an intelligence nearly as high as the human, and certainly higher than the mutated humans of Kurada. Even independent of the use of the dream-pears, they seem to possess considerable powers of suggestion, or psychic control over humans, and when these powers are exercised upon humans under the influence of the drug, they become absolutely irresistible, as is evident from the traitor Shtenin's decision to return from Paralov in the face of orders.

The drug would be useful in some of the processes of government, and the rats represent a potential danger. We therefore recommend a second expedition to Kurada to obtain some of the drug and to explore methods of destroying the rats as a prelude to occupation. Samples of the live rats or even of dead ones for analysis would be peculiarly useful.

Long live Toxernn III, Supreme Intelligence of Evadzon!

27th Moridd.

Report from Madsill, Chief of Secret Police

No trace of the traitor Ghenjon or of the large white rats he brought from Kurada in his vehicle has yet been found. However, I have important information which I believe will lead to the capture of both within a few days.

Long live Toxernn III, Supreme Intelligence of Evadzon!

13th Avluna.

First Report of the Second Kurada Expedition (by rocket)

Intelligent Lord:

Conformable to your orders, the expedition avoided the main highroad to Paralov, where the rats and the human Kuradans would be forewarned, and took a westerly direction. Tonight finds us encamped at the village marked as Tatalo on the old maps, twenty philads inside Kurada. The inhabitants have everywhere received us well, offering us bowls of the dream-pears, which were placed under seal.

As instructed, I have collected two specimens, one of the disproportionately armed species and one of the three-fingered type. They made little objection to accompanying us. The interpreting staff assures me that they will be cooperative in communicating with one of the Little Gods when we have secured one. The Kuradans say they can understand what these rats say.

As also instructed, I laid bare one of the burrows under the border forts; extremely hard work, for the material was highly refractory. At a distance of twenty handspans down, it expanded into a series of chambers, some of which had permanent metal furniture fixed to the wall, but the place was not occupied, and from the debris scattered around, appeared to be deserted. There was an outlet and a very curious aerial for a radio, but no instrument.

Our own radios are inoperative. We have seen no other signs of the Little Gods.

Long live Toxernn III, Supreme Intelligence of Evadzon!

Huntervann, Major-
General

14th Avluna

Report from Communications Center, 3rd Military District

No reports received from General Huntervann for two days.

16th Avluna.

Report from Communications Center, 3rd Military District

Second Kuradan Expedition has just crossed bridge and entered fortified area.

17th Avluna, noon.

Second Report of the Second Kurada, Expedition

Intelligent Lord:

Your Intelligence has been grievously misinformed. By conversation with the rats known as "Little Gods" through the Kuradans who can understand their speech, I have learned that they only desire to live in friendly symbiosis with us. I have brought a number of them with me to convince Your Intelligence and the Scientific Board of this. The "Little Gods" are not only friendly, but have a profound knowledge of many technical subjects and will gladly direct us.

As for the fruit known as dream-pears it is actually beneficial in all respects.

I have fortunately secured a generous supply of it.

Long live Toxernn III.

Hunternann, Major-
General

17th Avluna, afternoon, 3rd Military District.

*Message to Lieut.-General Chorr, Commanding 3rd Military
District*

Arrest General Hunternann and his entire staff at once.
Exterminate all white rats.

Toxernn

Message to Intelligence Center

Intelligent Lord:

Your Intelligence has been misinformed.

General Huntervann is a loyal and intelligent citizen. His action in bringing the "Little Gods" here will result in untold benefits to all Evadzon. They only desire to live in friendly symbiosis with us, and to give us the benefit of their science. I am dispatching several to the other military districts by plane and combat vehicle with Kuradan interpreters.

Your approval is expected.

I am also sending a supply of dream-pears which, I find, conduce to a better understanding of the "Little Gods."

Chorr, Lieutenant-
General

18th Avluna.

Message to General Lebartzen, Commander of the Forces

Mobilize air force at once. Bomb 3rd Military District with atomics. Destroy all planes and combat vehicles from that point on sight and exterminate any white rats observed.

Toxernn

18th Avluna.

Message to Intelligence Center

Your Intelligence must have met with some accident, or be ill-advised.

Your extraordinary message calling for the bombing of the 3rd Military District and the killing of the "Little Gods" reached me three hours after the arrival of a deputation from General Chorr, accompanied by several of the "Little Gods" themselves. I had a most enjoyable communication with them. They only wish to live in Evadzon, as they do in Kurada, in friendly relationship with us, and to give us the benefit of their science.

They desire me to set a guard around your palace until Your Intelligence recovers from your indisposition, and I am doing so.

I trust that with their assistance, your recovery will soon be assured.

Lebartsen, General

[The end of *Official Record* by Fletcher Pratt]