

THE SEARED BROW BY DUFFIELD OSBORNE... AUTHOR OF 'THE SPELL OF ASHTEROTH'

PART I. "I ran across him in March of 1884 in the Royal Infirmary at Glasgow," said Dr. Lindsay. "It was certainly the most interesting case I have ever had, and I was not for the patent conceit involved in such an assertion. I would go so far as to say that it is the most remarkable that has ever come into the practice of any physician."

that meant a good un on the pack an' the drift. Oh, yes, I know how to take reckonin'. Ye can't fool me. I'm furth north now than any o' five man's voice rose to a shriek as he uttered the last words. Then, after a brief silence, he resumed his babbling tone: "An open Polar sea?--an' mebbe I don't know as how it's open--that's when ye get far enough to find it--get through the ice wall that God's built. Ice feels a bit like fire, an' it's hot."

"ME AN' THE DEAD MEN. ONLY THE DEAD MEN DIDN'T MATTER." board one by one, for they thawed out--that's what they done in the open Polar sea. Mebbe ye don't believe they thawed out there? and he raised his voice again, glaring at me defiantly. "The most an' the best thing in the world, my good man," said I soothingly, at the same time placing my hand upon his forehead and exerting myself in a way which I have sometimes found to produce a semi-hypnotic effect on certain patients. It seemed to have an influence in the present case; for the man grew calmer almost immediately, and, hitching himself over nearer to the side of the cot, turned toward me an inquiring glance. Then, after a pause, he said in slower and quieter tones: "In the beginnin' the stars revolved in a tholiform manner. That's Diogenes Laertius. Mebbe ye never read him?"

"What's the matter with him?" "I don't know. Come and see if you do." Finishing his whisky, I followed McLeod into one of the private wards. "I put him in here," said the interne, "because--well, because I thought it was worth while."

He was a young fellow--not over thirty, I am sure; though his hair, mustache and beard were snowy white. His face wore a curious expression, which, though set in almost rigid lines, seemed to shift from time to time in its interpretation. At one moment I read dazed astonishment, at another terror, at another awe, and yet again the look was one that, while it froze the blood in my veins, could be attributed to no sentiment with which I was familiar. The man was not what you could call delirious, and I am sure he was not insane; but it was quite evident, upon a very superficial examination, that his nerves had received a shock that made him to all intents and purposes irresponsible. Beyond this, I could find no pathological condition.

"I hurried to the door." of a sword that had been heated red-hot. For the rest it was quite evident that the wound was at least six months old, and that it had healed very cleanly, considering how perilous it must have been. I also took occasion to satisfy myself that the skull had not been injured in the least. When I had finished my examination, I turned to McLeod. "A case of profound shock to the nerve centers," I said, "with perhaps a cerebral lesion and possibly connected with that scar. I will stop in the morning and see what more I can make out."

"I wish I could tell you more," he said, but as far as we are concerned, it is a closed book. On June 28 of last year we were in latitude seventy-five degrees, thirty minutes north, and about twenty miles off the east coast of Greenland, when the lookout reported a small boat with something looking like a man's body lying across the thwart. I gave orders to change the course and sure enough that's what it was, and to make a long story short, we found he was alive and got him aboard. Oddly enough, he didn't seem to be a burman, a cut-throat, yet alone starved; and there wasn't a mark on him but that queer slash across his brow, which I don't know whether it was a burn or a cut. It evidently hadn't bled much, and it wasn't over two days old, I should judge. Well, as I said, we got him aboard, brought him to, and tried to make him comfortable and get his yarn; but, Lord bless you sir, there wasn't any reason in his talk. He just raved about ice walls and open polar seas, and angels and flaming swords and all that sort of stuff. The only thing that we could get connectedly was that he'd belonged to a ship that had been lost in the Arctic region, his bay, which was a lie, seeing that we found him on the other side of Greenland in one of his ship's boats. "Did the boat have any name on it?" I asked. "Yes--Melpomene," but I never heard of such a ship. Well, there wasn't anything for it but to thank the captain and get back to the infirmary. On the way, however, it occurred to me to stop in at Lloyd's agency and find out if they had any knowledge of such a vessel as the Melpomene. The result was all that I could have hoped for, being as follows: "Melpomene--whaling bark--New Bedford, Mass.,--S. A. Spoken June 10, 1883, by ship John McPherson, of Glasgow--Reported leeward. Latitude eighty degrees fifteen minutes north, longitude seventy degrees ten minutes west. Crew refused assistance. Captain of John McPherson reports sudden movement of pack northward within ensuing twelve hours and narrow escape of his ship. Entertains grave fears of safety of Melpomene. "Let me see," said I to the clerk who had attended me, "is there nothing later? This entry is a year old, and have you no other Melpomene on your list?" He glanced at his index, and then at the entry again. "No," said he. "That seems to be all. There is hardly a chance that the bark was lost. I hope you had no other in her, sir?" I answered vaguely, thanked him and hurried out into the street, for my mind was full of the strange conflict of evidence which the facts disclosed. I knew enough Arctic geography to place eighty degrees north almost at the southern entrance to Kennedy's channel, and fully a ship or boat or man to get from there around Cape Farewell and up to latitude seventy-five degrees of the east coast of Greenland in eighty days was simply impossible. Besides the Melpomene was being carried north when last seen. I could conceive of no reconciling hypothesis, and yet the conflicting testimonies were incontrovertible. In this frame of mind I reached the infirmary and found McLeod, where I had left him--by the patient's cot. The condition of the latter did not seem to have changed materially. Perhaps the pulse was a shade weaker, save on the other hand, he was quiet, but for a slight nervous twitching, and had been so ever since I left. "I now come to that part of my story which I look back upon with more or less self-reproach. That my conduct was professional in the highest sense of the word, and that I have no doubt, however much I try to justify myself by the argument that a better knowledge of the history of the case was indispensable to its successful treatment. When I am alone tonight, I never, as is the case most, frank, however, as to admit that the prime motive of

us. He came at me with a capstan-bar and I had to kill him. He'd have lived and killed me if I hadn't. We were in the open sea then and it was warm. "And you reached the Pole?" "Yes." "What did you find there?" "The place where men first lived. What else means the tradition of every ancient race--that their fathers came from the north? Where did the earth cool first? Where was it first habitable? Where else do the stars revolve in a tholiform manner, and where else does the sun set only once a year, and 'a year' seem only a day? You are blind--blind, all of you." Trembling with excitement I put my next question: "But what did you see?" "For the first time since I had begun to question him, he hesitated and

"IT WAS TREES AND FLOWERS AND GOLD FRUIT." seemed to struggle against my influence, writhing under my hand, while the perspiration stood out in beads upon his face. I, for my part, was now fully absorbed in my effort and labored with all my force to subdue him. At last the answer came, but in a way that showed that he had in part escaped from his mind his brain was acting, in a measure at least, upon its own impulse. "How can I tell what I saw? It was trees and flowers and gold fruit, and all busy with summer and birds and butterflies and bright light." "Did you go among the trees?" His voice rose to a shriek, as it had once before, and he cried out: "Go among them, man! It was Paradise--Eden! The tree of life was there and the angel with the flaming sword--Do ye see the mark on me now? That's where he smote me when I tried to go in--for I didn't care if I lived or not; an' then the Harpoon men poked me up--an' they say as how it wasn't the east coast, which I don't rightly understand."

"Eden--at the north pole?" I ejaculated, reverting for an instance to my insanity theory. "Yes, that's where it was, and that's where it is, an' if ye don't believe he'll go back and show it ye all. Will ye go with me now--back to the Garden of Eden--which I've been to an' seen an' where I'll go again--Will ye go? Are ye man enough to go?--O Gawd!"

"I wish I could tell you more," he said. my final attempt to hypnotize my patient was an overmastering curiosity, and all that can be alleged in extenuation is that I hardly expected to be successful in an experiment in which I had never fully succeeded, that none of my former attempts had been attended with the slightest unfortunate result, and that I had no earthly reason to anticipate any in the present case. In fact I think I may honestly say that when I placed my hand upon the sick man's brow, as I had previously done with a markedly soothing effect, I had no definite intention of attempting to get him under psychic control. Everything that followed may be said to have been simply the drift of events. As before, my influence seemed to quiet the patient. The nervous twitches ceased gradually, and, with a rather quiet and unobtrusive breathing denoted a peaceful and natural sleep. "I suppose my mind, full as it was of the information gleaned through the morning hours, was expressed in its own subtle language a desire for the knowledge it craved. Be that as it may, I was startled a moment later by the patient's rolling his head slowly from side to side as if to escape my touch, while, at the same instant, he spoke in drowsy tones that seemed to come from a great distance. "Do not trouble me, I do not know how to tell it. I cannot understand." It was here that my error, if error it were, took shape. Surprised at words that surely evidenced the hypnotic state, I at once exerted myself to the full and a few passes with my free hand seemed to overcome all resistance. "But you must tell me," I said. "It is necessary for me to know in order to treat you properly." "What shall I tell?" he asked, in the same dull tones. "Where was your ship when she was caught in the ice?" "Near Kennedy's channel." "When was that?" "I do not remember. Last year--June, I think." He was speaking now with no shadow of a doubt, with a look to indicate that he had been born of parents who talked good English, and that his speech of the night before, which I confess had somewhat puzzled me, had been merely the result of long association with rough seafaring men of different nationalities. "In what direction were you carried?" was my next question. "North."

"How far?" "To the Pole." For a moment I almost lost control of him from sheer astonishment. Then I gathered myself for the next question. "How do you know?" "I took the observation at eighty-nine degrees thirty-eight minutes north and--" "Where were your captain and officers?" I asked, foolishly interrupting him in my excitement. "Dead and overboard. They all starved to death. On June 28 of last year we were in latitude seventy-five degrees, thirty minutes north, and about twenty miles off the east coast of Greenland, when the lookout reported a small boat with something looking like a man's body lying across the thwart. I gave orders to change the course and sure enough that's what it was, and to make a long story short, we found he was alive and got him aboard. Oddly enough, he didn't seem to be a burman, a cut-throat, yet alone starved; and there wasn't a mark on him but that queer slash across his brow, which I don't know whether it was a burn or a cut. It evidently hadn't bled much, and it wasn't over two days old, I should judge. Well, as I said, we got him aboard, brought him to, and tried to make him comfortable and get his yarn; but, Lord bless you sir, there wasn't any reason in his talk. He just raved about ice walls and open polar seas, and angels and flaming swords and all that sort of stuff. The only thing that we could get connectedly was that he'd belonged to a ship that had been lost in the Arctic region, his bay, which was a lie, seeing that we found him on the other side of Greenland in one of his ship's boats. "Did the boat have any name on it?" I asked. "Yes--Melpomene," but I never heard of such a ship. Well, there wasn't anything for it but to thank the captain and get back to the infirmary. On the way, however, it occurred to me to stop in at Lloyd's agency and find out if they had any knowledge of such a vessel as the Melpomene. The result was all that I could have hoped for, being as follows: "Melpomene--whaling bark--New Bedford, Mass.,--S. A. Spoken June 10, 1883, by ship John McPherson, of Glasgow--Reported leeward. Latitude eighty degrees fifteen minutes north, longitude seventy degrees ten minutes west. Crew refused assistance. Captain of John McPherson reports sudden movement of pack northward within ensuing twelve hours and narrow escape of his ship. Entertains grave fears of safety of Melpomene. "Let me see," said I to the clerk who had attended me, "is there nothing later? This entry is a year old, and have you no other Melpomene on your list?" He glanced at his index, and then at the entry again. "No," said he. "That seems to be all. There is hardly a chance that the bark was lost. I hope you had no other in her, sir?" I answered vaguely, thanked him and hurried out into the street, for my mind was full of the strange conflict of evidence which the facts disclosed. I knew enough Arctic geography to place eighty degrees north almost at the southern entrance to Kennedy's channel, and fully a ship or boat or man to get from there around Cape Farewell and up to latitude seventy-five degrees of the east coast of Greenland in eighty days was simply impossible. Besides the Melpomene was being carried north when last seen. I could conceive of no reconciling hypothesis, and yet the conflicting testimonies were incontrovertible. In this frame of mind I reached the infirmary and found McLeod, where I had left him--by the patient's cot. The condition of the latter did not seem to have changed materially. Perhaps the pulse was a shade weaker, save on the other hand, he was quiet, but for a slight nervous twitching, and had been so ever since I left. "I now come to that part of my story which I look back upon with more or less self-reproach. That my conduct was professional in the highest sense of the word, and that I have no doubt, however much I try to justify myself by the argument that a better knowledge of the history of the case was indispensable to its successful treatment. When I am alone tonight, I never, as is the case most, frank, however, as to admit that the prime motive of

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