

little chins came to a point and their eyes were large and gentle. Perhaps my sense of my own importance is too great, but I felt even then that they showed very little interest in me.

'Because they didn't try to speak to me, but simply stood smiling and speaking softly to each other, I began the conversation. I pointed to the Time Machine and to myself. Then, after thinking for a moment how to describe time, I pointed to the sun. At once a pretty little figure dressed in purple and white did the same, and then made the sound of thunder.

'For a moment I was very surprised, though the meaning of his movement was clear enough. The question had come into my mind suddenly: were these people fools? You couldn't really understand how I felt. I had always expected that people living about 800,000 years in the future would have much greater knowledge than us in science, art – everything.

'But one of them had asked me a very simple question, which showed him to be on the level of intelligence of one of our five-year-old children. He had asked me, in fact, if I had come from the sun in a thunderstorm!

'This made me think again about their clothes, their weak arms and legs and pretty faces. A feeling of sadness came into my mind. For a moment I felt that I had built the Time Machine for no reason at all.

'I said yes, pointed to the sun, and made a sound like thunder. This was so real that it frightened them – they all stood back a step or two and bent their heads down. Then one came laughing towards me, carrying some beautiful flowers which were new to me. He put these around my neck.

'The idea made them all happy. Soon they were running around for flowers and throwing them on me until I was almost covered with them. You cannot imagine what wonderful flowers countless years of work had produced.

'Then someone suggested that their new toy should be shown to others in the nearest building, and so I was led past the sphinx made of white stone, which had seemed to watch me all the time with a smile at my surprise. As I went with them, the memory of my hopes for a future full of highly intelligent people came to my mind, and made me smile.

'The building had a very large entrance, and was really enormous. I was worried about the growing crowd of little people, and the shadows beyond the big open doors. Around me I saw many bushes and flowers. It was clear that no gardener was looking after them, but they still looked beautiful. The Time Machine was left on the lawn.

'Several more brightly-dressed people met me in the doorway and we walked through into a large hall. The roof was in shadow and the windows, partly made of coloured glass, let in a soft light. The floor was made of large pieces of a very hard white metal, lower in places where people had clearly walked across it for hundreds of years.

'Along the length of the room were many tables made of shiny stone, perhaps half a metre above the floor, and on these were piles of fruit. Some I recognised as larger apples and oranges, but mostly they were strange.

'The people with me sat down around a table and made signs for me to do the same. They immediately began to eat the fruit with their hands. I was happy to follow their example because I felt thirsty and hungry. As I did so, I took some time to look around the hall and noticed that the glass windows were broken in many places and the curtains were thick with dust. The general effect, though, was very attractive.

'There were, perhaps, a couple of hundred people eating in the hall, and most of them were watching me with interest, their little eyes shining over the fruit they were eating. All of them were wearing the same soft but strong material.

'Fruit, I later learned, was all that they ate. These people of the future didn't eat meat, and while I was with them, although I missed it, I could only eat fruit too. In fact, I discovered later that horses, cows and sheep, and dogs, had disappeared from Earth. But the fruits were very pleasant.

'When I had filled my stomach, I tried to learn some of the language of these new people. The fruits seemed an easy thing to start with, and holding one of these up, I began using questioning sounds and movements. I had great difficulty making them understand. At first they stared in surprise and laughed, but soon a fair-haired little female seemed to realise what I wanted and repeated a name.

'They had to talk for some time to explain things to each other, and when I first tried to make the sounds of their language they were very amused. I felt like a teacher among children, but soon I at least knew a number of names for things and even the verb "to eat".

'It was slow work, though, and the little people soon got tired and wanted to get away from my questions, so I decided to let them give short lessons when they wanted to. And they were very short lessons because I have never met people who are lazier or more easily tired. They used to come to me with happy cries of surprise, like children, but like children they soon stopped examining me and went away to find another toy.

'When the dinner ended, I noted the disappearance of almost all the creatures who had surrounded me at first. It is odd, too, how quickly I stopped caring about these little people. I was continually meeting more of them. They followed me a little distance, talked and laughed around me, smiled in a friendly way, then left me alone.

'The evening was calm as I came out of the great hall, and the land was lit by the colour of the sun as it went down. The big building was on the side of a wide river valley, but the Thames had moved a kilometre or two from its present position. I decided to climb to the top of a hill from where I could see more of our world in the year 802,701. That was the date the little dials of my machine had showed.

'As I walked, I looked for anything that could explain the bad condition of things. A little way up the hill, for example, was a great pile of stones held together by pieces of metal. These were the ruins of a great building, although I couldn't imagine what its use had been.

'Looking round with a sudden thought, I realised that there were no small houses. Here and there among the trees and bushes were palace-like buildings, but the single house, and possibly even the family, had disappeared.

'And then came another thought. I looked at the small group of figures who were following me. I saw that all had the same type of clothes, the same soft hairless faces and the same girlish arms and legs.

'It may seem odd, perhaps, that I hadn't noticed this before. But everything was so strange. Now, I saw the fact clearly enough. These people of the future were all very similar in clothes, and in all other ways the differences between men and women had almost disappeared. And the children seemed to my eyes to be just smaller adults.

'Seeing how safely and comfortably these people lived, I felt that this close similarity of the sexes was understandable. If there are enough people, it becomes a problem rather than an advantage to have a lot of children. If violence comes only rarely and children are safe, there is less need for men to be strong and

protect their families. This, I must remind you, was my feeling at the time. Later, I discovered how wrong I was.

'I continued, and because I could walk better than the people of the future, I found myself alone for the first time. At the top of the hill I found a seat of a yellow metal that I didn't recognise. I sat down on it and looked at the wide view of our world under the sunset of that long day. It was as beautiful as I have ever seen. The west was burning gold, mixed with some purple and red. Below was the valley of the Thames, in which the river lay like a line of shining metal.

'As I watched, I began to try to understand the things I had seen. (Afterwards I realised I had only learned half the truth.) It seemed to me that people were now past their best. The sunset made me think about the sunset of our people. For the first time I began to understand an odd result of the social changes we are trying to make at the moment. Strength comes because we need to be strong; weakness comes when we feel safe. The work of improving the conditions of life, of making life safer and safer, had continued until nothing more could be done. The result was what I saw!

'The science of our time has attacked only a few human diseases, but it moves forwards. Farming today is still at an early stage. We improve our plants and animals very slowly – a new and better apple, a prettier and larger flower, a cow that gives more milk. One day the whole world will be better organised, and better.

'I knew that this change had been made, and made well, in the space of time across which my machine had jumped. The air was free of unpleasant insects, the earth was free of useless plants. Everywhere there were fruits and sweet and pleasant flowers. Beautiful birds flew here and there. And I saw no diseases during my stay.

'Social changes, too, had been made. I saw people living in fine

buildings, beautifully dressed, but I hadn't yet found them doing any work. There were no signs of economic activity. The shop, the advertisement, buying and selling – all of these things are so important to us, and all of them were gone. It was natural in the evening that I had the idea of a social heaven.

'But this change in conditions has to produce changes in people. What is the cause of human intelligence and energy? Difficulties make people strong and clever and help them to work together. And the family, with its protective love and selfishness, is there for the care of children. The love of parents helps to keep the young out of danger. *Now*, where were these dangers?

'I thought of the physical smallness of the people, their low intelligence and those big ruined buildings. It strengthened my belief that humans, who had always fought against nature, had finally won – because after the fight comes quietness. People had been strong, energetic and intelligent, and had used this energy to change their living conditions. And now they too had changed because of the new conditions.

'No doubt the beauty of the buildings was the result of the last waves of the now purposeless energy of people. After that, they began to lead quieter lives. Even artistic activity would finally disappear – had almost disappeared in the time I saw. The people liked to cover themselves in flowers, to dance and to sing in the sunlight. That was all they did.

'As I stood there in the growing dark, I thought that I had understood the whole secret of these pleasant people. Possibly their population control had worked too well, and their numbers had fallen instead of staying the same. That would explain the empty ruins. My explanation was very simple, and believable enough – as most wrong ideas are!

Chapter 6 Lost in Time

'As I stood there thinking about this too perfect success of humans, the full moon came up in the north-east. The little figures stopped moving around below me and the night began to feel cold. I decided to go down and find a place to sleep.

'I looked for the building I knew. Then my eye moved to the white sphinx on the pedestal. There were the bushes and there was the little lawn. I looked at it again. A strange doubt made me feel cold. "No," I said to myself, "that isn't the lawn."

'But it *was* the lawn, because the white face of the sphinx was towards it. Can you imagine how I felt as I realised this? But you can't. The Time Machine had gone!

'At once I understood the possibility of losing my own time, of being left helpless in this strange new world. I ran with great jumps down the hillside. Once I fell and cut my face. I did nothing to stop the blood, but jumped up and continued running. All the time I was saying to myself, "They have just pushed it under the bushes out of the way."

'But I knew that I was wrong. I suppose I covered the whole distance to the small lawn, three kilometres perhaps, in ten minutes. I shouted but nobody answered. Nobody seemed to be moving in that moonlit world.

'When I reached the lawn, I found that my worst fears were true. The Time Machine was nowhere to be seen. I felt faint and cold. I ran round the lawn quickly, checking every corner, then stopped suddenly. Above me was the white sphinx. It seemed to smile with pleasure at my problems.

'It is possible that the little people had put the machine in a safe place for me, but I didn't feel that they were either strong enough or caring enough to move it. This is what worried me, the feeling of a new power that had moved the machine. But where could it be?



The Time Machine was nowhere to be seen.

'I think I went a little mad. I remember running violently in and out of the moonlit bushes all round the sphinx and frightening a small white animal that I didn't recognise. Then, crying and shouting, I went down to the great building of stone. The big hall was dark, silent and empty. I lit a match and continued past the dusty curtains.

'There I found a second great hall, where about twenty of the little people were sleeping. I have no doubt they found my second appearance strange, as I came suddenly out of the quiet darkness with mad noises and the sudden light of a match. Perhaps they had forgotten about matches. "Where is my Time Machine?" I began, shaking them with my hands.

'This behaviour was very strange to them. Some laughed, but most looked very frightened. When I saw them standing round me, I realised that it was foolish to try and frighten them. Judging by their daylight behaviour, I thought that fear must be forgotten.

'I threw down the match and, knocking one of the people over as I went, I ran across the big dining-hall again, out under the moonlight. I heard cries of terror and their little feet running this way and that. I don't remember everything I did as the moon moved slowly up the sky. I know that I ran here and there screaming, then lay on the ground near the sphinx and cried. After that I slept, and when I woke up again it was light.

'I sat up in the freshness of the morning, trying to remember how I had got there. Then things became clear in my mind. I understood the wild stupidity of my madness overnight and I could reason with myself. "Suppose the worst," I said. "Suppose the machine is really lost – perhaps destroyed? I should be calm and patient, learn the ways of the people, learn what has happened and how to get materials and tools – then, in the end, perhaps, I can make another machine." That would be my only hope, perhaps, but better than giving up. And it was a beautiful and interesting world.

'But probably the machine had only been taken away. I must be calm, find its hiding-place and get it back by force and cleverness. I stood up and looked around me, wondering where I could wash. I felt tired and dirty and rather surprised by my emotional state the night before.

'I made a careful examination of the ground around the little lawn. I wasted some time in useless questions, asked, as well as I could, to the little people that passed. They all failed to understand what I meant. Some simply said nothing; others thought it was a joke and laughed at me.

'The grass told me more. I found a line in it. There were other signs around, with strange narrow footprints. This made me look again at the pedestal. It was made, as I think I have said, of metal. It was highly decorated with metal panels on either side.

'I went and knocked at these. The pedestal was hollow. There was no way to pull to open the panels, but perhaps if they were doors they opened from inside. One thing was clear enough to my mind: it wasn't difficult to work out that the Time Machine was inside that pedestal. But how had it got there?

'I saw the heads of two people dressed in orange coming through the bushes towards me. They came and, pointing to the pedestal, I tried to make them understand my wish to open it. But at my first move to do this they behaved very oddly. I don't know how to describe their faces to you. They looked insulted.

'I tried a sweet-looking man in white next, with exactly the same result. He made me feel ashamed of myself. But as you know, I wanted the Time Machine and I tried him again. As he turned away, like the others, I lost my temper. In three steps I was after him, took him by the loose part of his robe round the neck and began pulling him towards the pedestal. Then I saw the fear on his face and I let him go.

'But I wasn't beaten yet. I hit the metal panels with my hands. I thought I heard something move inside – to be exact, I thought

I heard a sound like a laugh – but perhaps I was mistaken. Then I got a big stone from the river and hit the metal until I had flattened part of the decoration. The little people could hear the noise a kilometre way in all directions, but they did nothing.

‘I saw a crowd of them on the hillside, looking at me in a frightened way. At last, hot and tired, I sat down to watch the place. But I was too impatient to watch for long. I could work at a problem for years, but I was unable to wait, inactive, for twenty-four hours.

‘I got up after a time and began walking aimlessly through the bushes towards the hill again. “Patience,” I said to myself. “If you want your machine again, you must leave that pedestal alone. If they intend to take your machine away, it won’t help if you destroy their metal panels. If they don’t, you will get it back when you can ask for it.

“Face this world. Learn its ways, watch it, be careful of guessing its meaning too quickly. In the end you will find an answer to it all.” Then suddenly the humour of the situation came into my mind: the thought of the years I had spent in study and work to get into the future age, and now my impatience to get out of it. I had put myself into the most hopeless situation a man could ever imagine. I couldn’t help laughing at myself.

Chapter 7 Ghosts

‘Going through the big palace, it seemed to me that the little people were staying away from me. Perhaps it was my imagination, or because I had hit the metal panels. I was careful, though, to show no worry and not try to catch any of them, and after a day or two the situation got back to normal.

‘I decided to put any thought of my Time Machine and the

mystery of the metal doors as much as possible in a corner of my memory. I hoped that in the end, growing knowledge would lead me back to them in a natural way. But you can understand why I stayed within a circle of a few kilometres around my point of arrival.

‘As far as I could see, all the world seemed to be like the Thames valley. From every hill I saw the same large numbers of fine buildings, all very different in material and style, and the same kinds of trees and bushes. I soon noticed, though, a number of wells in the ground. Several of these, it seemed to me, were very deep. One lay by a path up the hill, which I had followed during my first walk. Like the others, it had a top made of metal, interestingly decorated and protected by a little roof from the rain.

‘Sitting by the side of these wells, and looking down into the darkness, I could see no sign of water or any reflection when I lit a match. But in all of them I heard a certain sound like the beating of a big engine. I also discovered, from the flames of my matches, that air was going down into them. I threw a piece of paper down into one and, instead of falling slowly, it was at once pulled quickly out of sight. I couldn’t imagine what these wells were for.

‘And I must say now that I learned very little about many parts of the life of these people. Let me describe my difficulties. I went into several big palaces, but they were just living places, great dining-halls and sleeping apartments. I could find no machines of any kind, but these people were dressed in fine cloth that didn’t seem very old, and their shoes, though undecorated, were very well made.

‘But the people didn’t seem to make things themselves. There were no shops, no factories, no signs that they brought things in from other places. They spent all their time playing gently, swimming in the river, falling in love in a half-playful way, eating

fruit and sleeping. I couldn't see how or where things were produced.

'But something had taken the Time Machine into the pedestal. Why? I couldn't imagine. Suppose you found something written in English, with here and there some words that were completely unknown to you. Well, on the third day of my visit, that was how I felt about the world of 802,701.

'That day I made a friend – a kind of friend. As I was watching some of the little people playing in a shallow part of the river, one of them was suddenly pulled away by the water. The river there could run quite quickly, but not too quickly for a swimmer of normal ability. It will give you an idea, therefore, of the weakness of these people, when I tell you that none tried to help the one that was in such danger.

'When I realised this, I quickly took off my clothes and, walking into the water at a place lower down, I caught her and brought her safely to land.

'She soon began to feel better and I saw that she was all right before I left her. I had such a low opinion of her people by then that I didn't expect any thanks from her. I was wrong about that, though.

'This happened in the morning. In the afternoon I met my little woman as I was returning from a long walk, and she greeted me with cries of happiness and gave me some flowers. Perhaps because I had been very lonely I did my best to show I was happy with the gift. We were soon sitting together and deep in a conversation, mainly of smiles.

'The woman's friendliness affected me exactly as a child's would. We passed each other flowers and she kissed my hands. I did the same to hers. Then I tried to talk, and found that her name was Weena. That was the beginning of a strange friendship, which continued for a week and ended . . . as I will tell you!

'She was exactly like a child. She wanted to be with me

always. She wanted to follow me everywhere, and on my next journey around the area I walked fast and tried to leave her behind. She gave up at last, calling after me rather sadly. But the problems of the world had to be solved and I hadn't, I said to myself, come into the future to start a relationship.

'She was, though, a very great comfort. When it was too late, only when it was too late, I clearly understood how badly she felt when I left her, and what she meant to me. By seeming fond of me, and by showing in her weak way that she cared for me, the little person soon gave my returns to the place of the white sphinx almost the feeling of coming home. I used to watch for her when I came over the hill.

'From her, too, I learned that fear had not yet left the world. She was fearless enough in the daylight, but she hated the dark shadows. Darkness to her was the one thing to be frightened of. It was a very strong emotion, and I started thinking and watching.

'I discovered then, among other things, that these people got together in the great houses after dark and slept in groups. I never found one outside, alone. And if I entered the room without a light, I made them very afraid. But I was such a fool that I missed the lesson of that fear, and although it made Weena unhappy I slept away from the others.

'It worried her greatly, but in the end her feelings for me won. For five of the nights of our friendship, including the last night of all, she slept with her head on my arm. But my story is running away from me as I speak of her.

'On the night before I met her I was woken very early in the morning. I had slept badly, dreaming that I was under water, and that fish were touching my face. I woke suddenly and with the odd feeling that a greyish animal had just rushed out of the room.

'I tried to go to sleep again, but I felt uncomfortable. It was

that grey hour when things are just appearing from the darkness, but are still unreal. I got up, went down into the great hall and out onto the stones in front of the palace. I thought I would go and watch the sun come up.

'The moon was going down, and the dying moonlight and the first light of day were mixed in a pale half-light. The bushes were inky black, the ground a dark grey, and up on the hillside I thought I could see ghosts. Three times I saw white figures and twice I thought I saw a single white animal running quickly on two legs.

'Near the ruins I saw a group of them carrying a dark body. They moved quickly and it seemed that they disappeared among the bushes. The light was still unclear, you must understand. I was experiencing that cold, uncertain, early-morning feeling you may know, and I doubted my eyes.

'As the eastern sky grew brighter, and the light of day brought stronger colours to the world again, I watched the hillside closely. But I saw no more white figures. I thought about them all morning – or at least until I had to get Weena out of the river. I connected them in some way with the white animal I had touched in my first mad search for the Time Machine. It was more pleasant to think about Weena, but these ghosts would soon take much stronger control of my mind.

Chapter 8 Morlocks

'I think I said how much hotter the weather of this Golden Age was than our own. I can't explain this. It is usual to think that the sun will continue cooling in the future. But people forget that the Earth must also, in the end, fall back closer and closer to the sun.

'Well, one very hot morning – my fourth, I think – as I was

trying to get away from the heat and the strong light in a large ruin near the great house, a strange thing happened. Climbing among those piles of stones, I found a narrow room, whose end and side windows were closed by falling stones. After the light outside, it seemed very dark to me. I entered it, feeling my way with my hands.

'Suddenly, I stopped and held my breath. A pair of eyes, made bright by the reflection of the daylight outside, was watching me out of the darkness.

'I felt the old natural fear of wild animals as I looked into those angry eyes. I was afraid to turn. Then I thought how safely people appeared to be living. And then I remembered their strange terror of the dark.

'Trying to control my fear, I took a step forwards and spoke. My voice was strong but shaking. I put out my hand and touched something soft.

'At once the eyes moved to the side and something white ran past me. I turned, as my heart beat even faster, and saw an odd-looking figure, its head held down in a strange way, running across the sunlit space behind me. It ran into a large stone, fell to one side and in a moment was hidden in a black shadow under another pile of stones.

'It went too fast for me to see clearly, but I know it was a dull white and had strange large greyish-red eyes. Also, there was fair hair on its head and down its back. I can't say whether it ran on four legs or only with its arms held very low. After a few seconds I followed it into the second pile of ruins.

'I couldn't find it at first, but after some time in the deep darkness I saw one of those round well-like openings that I have told you about, half-closed by a large fallen stone. A sudden thought came to me. Had the thing disappeared down the well?

'I lit a match and, looking down, saw a small white moving



It stared at me as it climbed down.

creature with large bright eyes. It stared at me as it climbed down. Now I saw for the first time a kind of metal ladder down the side of the well. Then the light burned my fingers and fell out of my hand, going out as it dropped. I lit another but the horrible little creature had disappeared.

'I don't know how long I sat staring down that well. Time passed before I could make myself believe that I had seen something human. But slowly I began to understand the truth: that humans hadn't stayed as one species, but had become two different animals. My pleasant children of the Upper-world weren't alone.

'And what, I wondered, was this creature of the dark doing in my idea of a perfectly organised society? What was its relationship with the calm laziness of the beautiful Upper-world people? And what was hidden down there? I sat on the edge of the well telling myself that there was nothing to fear and that I must go down to find the answer. But I was very afraid to go! As I sat there, two of the Upper-world people came running across the daylight into the shadow. The male followed the female, throwing flowers at her as he ran.

'They seemed upset to find me looking down the well. I understood that it was bad behaviour to look down these holes, because when I pointed to this one and tried to make a question about it in their language, they grew even more upset and turned away. But they were interested in my matches and I struck some to amuse them. I asked them again about the well, and again I failed. So I soon left them, intending to go back to Weena and see what she could tell me.

'But my mind was already working. I now had an idea of the importance of these wells, of the mystery of the ghosts, of the meaning of the metal panels and what had happened to the Time Machine! And I also had the beginnings of a solution to the economic mystery that had worried me.

'Here was my new idea. Clearly, this second human species lived underground. There were three things especially which made me think this. First, there was the white skin common to most animals that live largely in the dark. Then there were those large eyes, like those of a cat. Finally, its confusion in the sunshine, how it ran into the stones, the strange way it held its head – all these things made me believe that its eyes weren't used to the light.

'Under my feet, then, there must be many tunnels, where these people lived. The wells, which carried air to them, were all along the hillsides – everywhere, in fact, except along the river valley. Their great number showed how many tunnels there were. It seemed natural, too, to believe that the underground people made things for the comfort of the daylight people. The idea was so sensible that I accepted it at once, and then thought about how humans had turned into two species.

'Starting with the problems of our own age, it seemed clear to me that the widening of the social difference between the worker and the manager explained the whole situation. Even now we can see the beginnings of this. We have begun to make use of underground space – we have railways, underground workrooms and restaurants, and these are becoming more common.

'It was clear, I thought, that workers had begun to go underground into larger and larger factories, spending more and more of their time there, until, in the end –!

'Also, the increasing difference between the social classes made marriage between them less and less frequent. So above the ground now were the Haves, looking for pleasure and comfort and beauty, and below ground the Have-nots, the workers, changed by the demands of their jobs.

'When they were there, they had to pay rent, and not a little of it, for the air coming to their homes. If they refused, they would die. If they couldn't live in this way, they would also die. In the end, everyone living underground would be used to the

conditions of their life, and as happy in their way as the Upper-world people were.

'This, I must warn you, was my explanation at the time. It may be completely wrong but I still think it is the best one. But I think this way of life had worked better in the past. The Upper-world people had become too safe, and so had become smaller, weaker and less intelligent.

'I didn't yet know what had happened to the underground people. But I could imagine that the changes to the Morlocks – that, I discovered later, was their name – were even greater than the changes to the Eloi, the ones I already knew.

'Then came worrying doubts. Why had the Morlocks taken my Time Machine? I felt sure they had taken it. Why, too, if the Eloi were in control, could they not get my machine back for me? And why were they so terribly afraid of the dark? As I have said, I questioned Weena about this Under-world, but I learned nothing from her.

'At first she didn't understand my questions and later she refused to answer them. The whole subject seemed too unpleasant. And when I asked her again, perhaps a little loudly, she began to cry. They were the only tears, except my own, that I ever saw in that Golden Age.

'When I saw those tears, I stopped worrying about the Morlocks. I lit a match and very soon she was smiling again.

Chapter 9 Underground

'It may seem odd to you, but it was two days before I could find out more about the Morlocks. I felt a strange fear of those pale bodies. They were just the same colour as the things one sees in jars in a museum and they were horribly cold when you touched them. I knew I could only get to the Time Machine by going

underground. But I couldn't do it. I was so alone, and even the idea of climbing down into the darkness of the well frightened me.

'The next night I did not sleep well. Probably my health had suffered a little. I was confused and unhappy. Once or twice I had a feeling of great fear for which I could see no definite reason. I remember walking noiselessly into the great hall where the little people were sleeping – that night Weena was among them – and feeling more comfortable in their company. I realised that the moon was in its last quarter and the nights were growing darker, and that there might be more appearances of those unpleasant creatures from below. And on both these days I had the restless feeling of someone who is trying to escape a duty. I felt that I could only get the Time Machine back if I understood these underground mysteries. But I wasn't brave enough to solve the mysteries, and I never quite felt safe.

'These worries drove me further and further in my walks around the country. Going south-west towards the higher country, I saw, far away, an enormous building. It was larger than the largest of the palaces or ruins I knew, and the front was pale green. The difference in appearance suggested a difference in use, and I thought about going to look around. But it was growing late so I decided to wait until the following day, and I returned to Weena's welcome.

'But the next morning I realised that my interest in the Green Palace was just helping me to delay an experience I was afraid of. I decided that I would go down without wasting any more time, and walked in the early morning towards a well near the ruins.

'Little Weena danced beside me to the well, but when she saw me bend over the opening and look down, she seemed upset. "Goodbye, little Weena," I said, kissing her, and then I began to feel over the edge for the metal steps.

'At first she watched me with surprise. Then she gave a most

heartbreaking cry and, running to me, began to pull at me with her little hands. I think her fear made me braver. I shook her off and in another moment I was inside the well. I saw her frightened face over the top and smiled to make her feel better.

'I had to climb down a well perhaps two hundred metres deep. There were metal bars all the way down, but these were made for a person much smaller and lighter than I was and I was quickly tired by the climb. And not simply tired! One of the bars bent suddenly under my weight and almost threw me off into the blackness below. For the moment I hung by one hand, and after that I didn't dare to rest again.

'Although my arms and back were very painful, I continued climbing down as quickly as possible. Looking up, I saw the opening, a small blue circle, where Weena's head was round and black. The noise of a machine grew louder. Everything except that little circle above was very dark, and when I looked up again she had disappeared.

'I was in great discomfort and thought of going up again. But I continued to climb down. At last, with great happiness, I saw, half a metre to the right of me, a thin opening in the wall. Pulling myself in, I found it was the start of a narrow tunnel in which I could lie down and rest. It was not too soon.

'I lay there, I don't know how long, until I felt a soft hand touching my face. Quickly getting to my feet in the darkness, I pulled out my matches. I struck one and saw three white figures moving quickly back, away from the light. Their eyes, unusually large from living in darkness, were like those of deep-water fish, and reflected the light in the same way. I have no doubt they could see me and they didn't seem to have any fear of me, only of the light.

'The thought of running away was still in my mind, but I told myself that the job had to be done. As I felt my way along the tunnel, the noise of machinery grew louder. Soon I came to a