

its victims upon its altars. You are the victim, Mary."

Professor Singleton sat bolt upright in his chair. For a moment he had forgotten his researches. He looked around him. His eye fell upon a Malay kris hanging upon the wall, which a friend had sent him from Borneo. It was long, with a keen, jagged edge, waved like the edge of a bread knife. If such a weapon as that were plunged into a man's heart now—

The professor's eye returned mechanically to the microscope. The spiranthea was emerging from its pupa. Undoubtedly this proved his contention. The existence of a winged form among such microscopic creatures would revolutionize biology. He had proved it. A little longer—half an hour of watching—

"How long will you suffer in this way, Mary? You are fifteen years younger than he. You have made a ghastly error—but why should it ruin your life?"

"It shall not," Professor Singleton heard his wife whisper.

The professor rose noiselessly out of his chair. He took down the kris with trembling fingers. Once it was in his hand he felt a strange strength which seemed to flow into his fingers from the steel, into his blood, renewing its power. His muscles quivered as he bent his arm. Then, holding the weapon, he hesitated.

He seemed to realize in that moment that all his future was at stake. On the one hand was his treasured science. If he left the microscope for ten minutes the conditions might never again recur and all would be wasted. On the other—well, he was a man after all.

The voices seemed louder now and shamelessly indifferent. Professor Singleton crept stealthily to the partly opened door. The room beyond was in darkness. His foot creaked upon the boards, but neither seemed aware of his presence.

"I love you," he heard reiterated

through his maddened brain, and he was standing in the room now, and still the sounds continued. They seemed to elude him, traveling from corner to corner. The professor lunged forward, his outstretched hands encountered a soft object with flying draperies, and with a yell he thrust the kris upward, turned it, and thrust again. Then he fell senseless upon the floor.

Morning—a quiver of sunlight—voices in the room. He opened his eyes, to find himself lying in bed in his own house, and his wife bending over him.

"What is it? Where did you come from?" he muttered, half unconscious.

"Hush, dear!" Mary whispered.

The tragedy loomed in his mind, but dimly, curtained off by the black unconsciousness from which he had emerged.

"You have been ill, dear," said Mary.

"George Street. Where is he?" he asked.

"George? My dear, don't you remember that he sailed for the Philippines a month ago—three weeks before you were taken ill?"

"What did I do? I killed someone?"

"You were found lying upon the floor of the living room. You had taken Mr. Humphreys' kris and dug a hole in the armchair. You must have lain there for hours before I came home and found you. I thought you were in your laboratory."

That reminded him. "The microscope!" he exclaimed. "I must go. How long have I been ill?"

"About a week, dearest."

The professor sank back groaning. A week! Fifty generations of the spiranthea must have been born and died, and there would be years of patient work before he could renew the conditions which had existed before the illusion dragged him from his chair.

He remembered all now: George's