

Wayne Hancock

"Red Weed, Pt2"

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Brave New World and Dead London

Then, on the ninth day, we saw the Martians eating. Inside the hood of their new machine they were drawing the fresh, living blood of men and women and injecting it into their own veins.

Nathaniel: Aah! It's a sign! I've been given a sign! They must be cast out, and I have been chosen to do it! I must confront them now!

Journalist: No, parson, no!

Nathaniel: Those machines are just demons in another form. I shall destroy them with my prayers. I shall burn them with my holy cross. I shall...

Journalist: The curious eye of a Martian appeared at the window slit, and a menacing claw explored the room. I dragged the parson down to the coal cellar. I heard the Martian fumbling at the latch. In the darkness I could see the claw touching things, walls, coal, wood, and then, it touched my boot. I almost shouted. For a time it was still, and then, with a click, it gripped something: the parson! With slow, deliberate movements, his unconscious body was dragged away, and there was nothing I could do to prevent it.

I crept to the blocked window slit and peered through the creeper. The Martians, and all their machinery, had gone! Trembling, I dug my way out and clambered to the top of the mound: not a Martian in sight! The day seemed dazzling bright after my imprisonment and the sky a glowing blue. Red weed covered every scrap of ground but a gentle breeze kept it swaying, and oh, the sweetness of the air.

Again, I was on my way to London through towns and villages that were blackened ruins, totally silent, desolated, deserted. Man's empire had passed away, taken swiftly and without error by these creatures who were composed entirely of brain. Unhampered by the complex systems which make up man, they made and used different bodies according to their needs. They never tired, never slept, and never suffered, having

long since eliminated from their planet the bacteria
which ?cause all fevers and other morbidities.

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