

## The Aftermath Of Death

**August 7, 1854**

Adelaide and Miranda are both lost to me! Miranda's thin body lies in Mrs. MacKenzie's bed, wrapped in sheeting. Two coffins lean upon my own home, one so tiny it could not hold all my daughter was in life. The hollow service, my more hollow home, its every scent, possession and memory – precious mockeries.

I am told that the night of the funerals, the good Reverend Burnet found me prostrate at the doors of St. Andrews, screaming at the God who had so forsaken me. Mrs. MacKenzie, spared from the pestilence, took me in and nursed me through days and nights I could not bear to emerge into the light. My patients meant nothing to me, nor did life itself. After two weeks I returned to my own home and drowned myself in bitter laudanum, its mad sleep my only respite. In the dreams it brought on, I was scrabbling in the dry earth of a nearby street. Flies covered an object buried there. I brushed them aside and discovered the watch Adelaide had given me. It appeared to me that the case was transparent and I could see the gears within. But they were distorted, twisted into strange spirals. The hands of the watch were skipping forward in an erratic St. Vitus' dance, as though a mockery of cholera death throes. All around me the landscape changed, now the dirt and dung of my own time, then a strange hard surface, black as tar and marked by worn, painted lines. Dust returned and through that dust came a snail, its shell spiraling inward as it moved. Sunflowers burst from the dry ground, their centres likewise spinning inwards, endlessly. Upon my ears came harmonies so sweet and pure I thought though God had abandoned me, he had left his angels in his wake.

I began, slowly, to return, during the day, to a semblance of life. I saw my patients and did my best by them, but at night I let the purple bottle of opiate coax what little sleep I could squeeze from my mind, as I felt myself forever drifting in a time no longer my own.



## The Chronocycle Revealed

**September 8, 1858**

“Gunsights, or no,” I told MacDonald, “I have in mind to create a remarkable conveyance!”

“Which might be?” he asked, gathering up the chess pieces from the board.

“I call it the Chronocycle. It is that which I intend my nautilus gears to control.”

“Chrono, as in time, of course,” said MacDonald through a smoky haze. “But you said yourself earlier tonight such time travel would take massive amounts of power. How would you come by such brute energy, my young friend?”

“We all know of the great waterworks now underway near the lake,” I said.

“A prodigious undertaking indeed, supplying fresh water to all of Hamilton from water pumped from Lake Ontario to a reservoir on the Mountain.” He paused, grinning around his cigar. “The pump ...”

“Exactly,” I exclaimed. “It has two mighty 100 horsepower engines, but more vitally, they each have the force over distance, the torque, I require to propel the Chronocycle into the time stream! But I have months of work ahead of me before that can be accomplished.”

“Then work with stealth and strategy, sir,” said MacDonald, placing a few pieces on the board. “No more outbursts such as tonight’s display, I beg you.” He motioned to the board, “Speaking of strategy. Tell me, what single move might white make so as not to put the black king in checkmate?”



## Sub Rosa

**September 9, 1858**

I write this in the surgery I rent from Dr. James Bates. Here I have dwelled since I sold the home I shared with my beloved family. Bates will soon retire and is happy to let me make use of his offices on the days he would rather spend reading Marcus Aurelius and tending to his turnips and roses. He is likewise happy for the small income he makes from me as a boarder in a small upstairs room of this Gore Street abode. It is centrally located and has a pleasant hominess to it, though, like Bates himself, it is showing its age in a genteel way.

It is late and my lantern casts long quavering shadows on the woodstove that squats in the corner beside an engraving of our Queen Victoria. The objective lenses of my Leitz Wetzlar microscope catch the light on its burlled edges and the frosted lids of my glass medicine bottles glow softly in the dim light. A scale I use to measure newborns sits on a cabinet of medical files.

I feel a simpleton tonight. Last evening my loyal friend Dr. MacDonald had schooled me for my foolishness. I should not have allowed my pride and anger to suggest to Hickson that I was on the verge of a breakthrough of this import. Idiot! Of course a conveyance that makes laying rail and road or plying dangerous waters obsolete is a threat to men like Hickson. Or imagine my invention as a weapon of war! Whole battles could be replayed with the odds rearranged! Enemy lines would be so much gossamer and futility. Imbecile that I am, I failed to see so obvious a danger! Seen in this light, my Chronocycle should soon be wrested from me!

No more! Henceforth no talk of my theories! All my calculations, planning and experimentation shall be done in secret and stealth, as MacDonald advised. From this day forward, to the public, and even to my Society fellows, I shall be the forlorn and fanciful Dr. Hess, as harmless as a gadfly. My light shall be kept under a bushel, my method subterfuge and silence. But, like a burrowing mole, my undertaking will proceed apace, sub rosa. By these words I swear.



## An Assistant Is Forged

**September 25, 1860**

The rain is unabated and my pursuer harries me once again, emerging from the woods that shielded me from his view. I know that a few blocks away my assistant Angus Ambrose awaits in the laboratory. He is doubtless full of worry at the late hour but is, I have no fear, keeping my Chronocycle in readiness. It is with this invention that I soon shall ply the waves of time and space!

Three years ago, Angus was a machinist in John Gartshore's foundry in Dundas. There the mighty engine – tonight churning in the Waterworks far to the east of the city – was cast in hellish flame and molten metal. But one July afternoon, when Angus toiled at a gear casting, the mould shattered and red hot iron seared his leg. I was nearby, as I was filling in for my friend Dr. McMahon, a fine, progressive physician of that prosperous town. I arrived to find Angus in great pain, a leather belt clenched in his teeth.

At first, I feared I would have to remove the limb. I managed however to spare him that agony,

for which he was most grateful. The accident, however, left him unemployable by Gartshore, as he informed me when I attended to his recovery. It was then I proposed that he become my laboratory assistant.

“I have,” I said, “a most curious undertaking that will require your finest machining skills, some reconnaissance and your discretion.” I offered him \$1.50 a day for all three.

“Pleased to be at your service, Doctor Sir,” said Angus, and a fine servant has he been.

My pursuer gains the roadway just as a carriage, its sole light bobbing, passes. I look to his hand once more. What I had feared was a gun is not! Instead, a fearsome hook extends from the black of his cloak. I press myself against a thick wall and wait, the events of the last years scrolling behind my closed lids.

Angus began work at once, helping me refine my drawings and securing me the necessary equipment: dynamos, metal lathes, coils and necessary voltaic piles. The concept, born of my fevered dreams, I had known would require capital. And so, with more discipline than desire, early in my enterprise I had invested well and wisely in grains and pork. I did myself – and the Gore Bank – proud, and provided myself with a comfortable annuity.

Angus was a competent machinist and set about casting and lathing all that could not be purchased or cajoled quietly at a variety of establishments about town – bearings from the Wanzer factory, cabinets from Meakins & Sons, castings from the Mary Street Foundry and various pieces of milling and smithing from the fine craftsmen who surround us. That which was more esoteric I obtained through international brokerages or via a variety of ad hoc companies I set up for the purpose, or by placing anonymous ads in *The Daily Spectator*:

*WANTED*

*A leather doctor's examining chair, some honest wear acceptable, frame must be of sturdy metal amenable to welding.*

*WANTED*

*Gold pocket watches. Will pay fair price for fine quality.*

*WANTED*

*Job lot of insulated copper wire of stout and consistent grade capable of conveying large voltage, purity of utmost import!*

We toiled night after night, me feverish at my calculations, Angus keeping a coffee pot on the hob and fine-tuning this or the other small model that he skillfully crafted. One evening, about six months ago, I examined his latest model, a brass and copper instrument with a capsule the size of a loaf of bread. "I think, Mr. Ambrose," I said, "it is time you find us a stray cat or two."

A sound breaks my reverie. It is the stranger, passing not ten yards from my hiding place. I hold my breath and listen as he passes, dark oaths on his lips. He slips by, circles and returns south, back the way he came. I dare not move for a few minutes more, then as silently as I can, I make my way toward Angus and my appointment with Time.



## The Man Of Business

**October 12, 1859**

Sam Kellogg was a nervous man of two score years. His belly challenged his grey waistcoat and a flat hank of hair strained to reach across an oily and mottled pate. Kellogg closed the commerce pages of his *Daily Spectator* and looked out sadly at James Street. "Dr. Hess," he said, waving his hand at the window as he looked toward me. "Overextended! Dreadfully overextended! God knows what Beasley and the others are thinking," he complained. "The railways, some gaudy bauble of a water feature in the Gore and now that pump house nonsense in the east end everyone is ballyhooing about."

"The Waterworks? I favour it, sir, for several reasons," I countered. "It will, I believe, bring fire insurance rates within reason. There is talk of modern hydrants for our brave firefighters everywhere, and abundant water for all."

"True enough," he said nodding, "But it will take more than quenched thirsts and a few fresh factories to unburden us, I fear. Now, to business. You wish to purchase a warehouse, Doctor?"

"Yes, at the corner of Nichol and Wilson."

Kellogg swung in his chair and examined a city map he had framed on his wall. "Nichol and Wilson," he muttered, running a finger over the glass. He tapped it with satisfaction. "That is far from the hurly-burly of the docks, I must say," he exclaimed as he turned back to face me.

"Quite so," I said. "North-east corner; a Mr. Kennedy is the owner. The price is fair and it is

available. I believe my company, Faraday Holdings, will do nicely for this transaction, Mr. Kellogg.”

“As you wish,” he replied, “I will see to it immediately. Is there any other business you would like to transact today?”

“Edward Zealand’s fine schooner, the *Dove*, will soon be in port with a large shipment of raw cotton.”

“I was not aware.”

“Nonetheless,” I replied. “I wish to purchase the cargo.”

“How much shall I obtain for you, Doctor?”

“All of it. The capacity of the warehouse should be sufficient. I’m certain arranging the transfer of the goods will be a trifling matter. I shall obtain the key to the warehouse on my next visit.”

“Very good, sir. Anything else?”

“Yes, there is, Mr. Kellogg. You know John Pettigrew, the watchmaker?”

“Indeed sir, his shop is near the Royal,” he said, pointing out the window.

“The very man, indeed. I wish you to broker a discrete transaction. Please inform him you have a client who wishes to remain anonymous.”

“Of course,” Kellogg said, making careful notes.

“Tell him this gentleman requires the handcrafting of an exotic and extremely precise gearing mechanism, tooled to exacting tolerances. His skill and silence, of course, will both be handsomely compensated, as will yours.”

“Consider it done, sir!” Kellogg responded with a theatrical flourish of his pen.

“Thank you. And Kellogg,” I said, donning my hat. “Do try to find a bit of artistic sentiment in that businessman’s heart of yours. If I were to return here in 100 years time or more, I’d wager the fountain destined for the park in the Gore will still be a balm to perambulating Hamiltonians.”

