



## SYNOPSIS.

George Anderson and wife see a remarkable looking man come out of the Clement hotel, look around furtively, wash his hands in the snow and pass on. Confrontation attracts them to the Clement, where it is found that the beautiful Miss Edith Challenor has fallen dead. Anderson describes the man he saw wash his hands in the snow. The hotel manager declares him to be Orlando Brotherson. Physicians find that Miss Challenor was stabbed and not shot. Gryce, an aged detective, and Sweetwater, his assistant, take up the case. Mr. Challenor tells of a batch of letters found in his daughter's desk, signed "O. B." All are love letters except one, which shows that the writer was disguised. This letter was signed by Orlando Brotherson. Anderson goes with Sweetwater to identify Brotherson, who is found in a tenement under the name of Dunn. He is an inventor. Brotherson tells the corner Miss Challenor repulsed him with scorn when he offered her his love. Sweetwater recalls the mystery of the murder of a washerwoman in which some details were similar to the Challenor affair. Sweetwater gets lodgings in the same building with Brotherson. He borrows a hole in the wall to spy on Brotherson. He visits him and assists the inventor in his work. A girl sent by Sweetwater with Edith Challenor's letters is ordered out by Brotherson. He declares the letters were not written by him. Sweetwater is unmasked by Brotherson, who declares he recognized him at once. The discovery is made that the letters signed "O. B." were written by two different men. Sweetwater goes to Dorby in search of the second "O. B.," whom he expects to locate through one Doris Scott, mentioned in the letters. She is found acting as nurse for Oswald Brotherson, who is critically sick and calls the name of Edith in his delirium. Sweetwater comes across a peculiar but not a word. He sees a load of boxes marked "O. Brotherson," taken into the hut under the supervision of Doris Scott. Brotherson tells Challenor of seeing in a dream the face of the man who killed Edith. The door bell rings and she recognizes in the visitor the man of her dream. It is Orlando Brotherson, who requests an interview with his brother. It develops that Orlando is working on a flying machine. Oswald is told of Edith's death. Orlando tells his brother of his repulse by Miss Challenor. Orlando asks his brother to assist in tests of his air car, as he can trust no one else. Oswald refuses owing to his weakened condition.

## CHAPTER XXXV.—Continued.

"Who's there?" he asked, imperiously and with some show of anger.

No answer, but another quiet knock. "Speak! or go away from my door. No one has the right to intrude here. What is your name and business?"

Continued knocking—nothing more. With an outburst of wrath, which made the hangar ring, Orlando lifted his fist to answer this appeal in his own fierce fashion from his own side of the door, but the impulse paused at fulfillment, and he let his arm fall again in a rush of self-hatred which it would have pained his worst enemy, even little Doris, to witness. As it reached his side, the knock came again.

It was too much. With an oath, Orlando reached for his key. But before fitting it into the lock, he cast a look behind him. The car was in plain sight, filling the central space from floor to roof. A single glance from a stranger's eye, and its principal secret would be a secret no longer. He must not run such a risk. Before he answered this call, he must drop the curtain he had rigged up against such emergencies as these. He had but to pull a cord and a veil would fall before his treasure, concealing it as effectually as an Eastern bride is concealed behind her yashmak.

Stepping to the will, he drew that cord, then with an impatient sigh, turned to the door.

Another quiet but insistent knock greeted him.

In no fury now, but with a vague sense of portent which gave an aspect of foreboding to the one quick glance he cast about the well-known spot, he fitted the key in the lock, and stood ready to turn it.

"I ask you again your name and business," he shouted out in loud command. "Tell them or—" He meant to say, "or I do not turn this key." But something withheld the threat. He knew that it would perish in the utterance; that he could not carry it out. He would have to open the door now, response or no response. "Speak!" was the word with which he finished his demand.

A final knock. Pulling a pistol from his pocket, with his left hand, he turned the key with his right.

The door remained unopened. Stepping slowly back, he stared at its unopened boards for a moment, then he spoke up quietly, almost courteously:

"Enter."

But the command passed unheeded; the latch was not raised, and only the slightest tap was heard.

With a bound he reached forward and pulled the door open. Then a great silence fell upon him and a rigidity as of the grave seized and stiffened his powerful frame.

The man confronting him from the darkness was Sweetwater.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

The Man Within and the Man Without.

An instant of silence, during which the two men eyed each other; then, Sweetwater, with an ironical smile directed towards the pistol, lightly remarked:

"Mr. Challenor and other men at the hotel are acquainted with my purpose and await my return. I have come—here he cast a glowing look at the huge curtain cutting off the greater

portion of the ill-lit interior—"to offer you my services, Mr. Brotherson. I have no other motive for this intrusion than to be of use. I am deeply interested in your invention, to the development of which I have already lent some aid, and can bring to the test you purpose a sympathetic help which you could hardly find in any other person living."

The silence which settled down at the completion of these words had a weight which made that of the previous moment seem light and all athrob with sound. The man within had not yet caught his breath; the man without held his, in an anxiety which had little to do with the direction of the weapon, into which he looked. Then an owl hooted far away in the forest, and Orlando, slowly lowering his arm, asked in an oddly constrained tone:

"How long have you been in town?"

The answer cut clean through any lingering hope he may have had.

"Ever since the day your brother was told the story of his great misfortune."

"Ah! still at your old tricks! I thought you had quit that business as unprofitable."

"I don't know. I never expect quick returns. He who holds on for a rise sometimes reaps unexpected profits."

The arm and fist of Orlando Brotherson ached to hurl this fellow back into the heart of the midnight woods. But they remained quiescent and he spoke instead:

"I have buried the business. You will never resuscitate it through me."

Sweetwater smiled. There was no mirth in his smile though there was lightness in his tone as he said:

"Then let us go back to the matter in hand. You need a helper; where are you going to find one if you don't take me?"

A growl from Brotherson's set lips. Never had he looked more dangerous than in the one burning instant following this daring repetition of the detective's outrageous request. But as he noted how slight was the figure opposing him from the other side of the threshold, he was swayed by his natural admiration of pluck in the physically weak, and lost his threatening attitude, only to assume one which Sweetwater secretly found it even harder to meet.

"You are a fool," was the stinging remark he heard flung at him. "Do you want to play the police-officer here and arrest me in mid air?"

"Mr. Brotherson, you understand me as little as I am supposed to understand you. Humble as my place is in society and, I may add, in the department whose interests I serve, there are in me two men. One you know passably well—the detective whose methods, only indifferently clever, show that he has very much to learn. Of the other—the workman acquainted

with hammer and saw, but with some knowledge too of higher mathematics and the principles upon which great mechanical inventions depend, you know little, and must imagine much. I was playing the gawky when I helped you in the old house in Brooklyn. I was interested in your airship—Oh I recognized it for what it was, notwithstanding its oddity and lack of ostensible means for flying—but I was not caught in the whirl of its idea; the idea by which you doubtless expect, and with very good reason too, to revolutionize the science of aviation. But since then I've been thinking it over, and am so filled with your own hopes that either I must have a hand in the finishing and sailing of the one you have yourself constructed, or go to work myself on the hints you have unconsciously given me, and make a car of my own."

Audacity often succeeds where subtlety means fail. Orlando, with a curious twist of his strong lip, took hold of the detective's arm and drew him in, shutting and locking the door carefully behind him.

"Now," said he, "you tell me what you think you have discovered, to make any ideas of your own available

ing. You wish to help me finish and prepare for flight?"

"I sincerely do."

"You consider yourself competent?"

"I do."

Brotherson's eyes fell and he walked once to the extremity of the oval flooring and back.

"Well, we will grant that. But that's not all that is necessary. My requirements demand a companion in my first flight. Will you go up in the car with me on Saturday night?"

A quick affirmative was on Sweetwater's lips but the glimpse which he got of the speaker's face glowering upon him from the shadows into which Brotherson had withdrawn, stopped its utterance, and the silence grew heavy.

Though it may not have lasted long by the clock, the instant of breathless contemplation of each other's features across the intervening space was of incalculable moment to Sweetwater, and, possibly, to Brotherson. As

drowning men are said to live over their whole history between their first plunge and their final rise to light and air, so through the mind of the detective rushed the memories of his past and the fast fading glories of his future; and rebelling at the subtle peril he saw in that sardonic eye, he vociferated an impulsive:

"No! I'll not—"

and paused, caught by a new and irresistible sensation.

A breath of wind—the first he had felt that night—had swept in through some crevice in the curving wall, flapping the canvas enveloping the great car. It acted like a peal to battle. After all, a man must take some risks in this life, and his heart was in this trial of a redoubtable mechanism in which he had full faith. He could not say no to the prospect of being the first to share a triumph which would send his name to the ends of the earth; and, changing the trend of his sentence, he repeated with a calmness which had the force of a great decision:

"I will not fail you in anything. If she rises—" here his trembling hand fell on the curtain shutting off his view of the ship, "she shall take me with her, so that when she descends I may be the first to congratulate the proud inventor of such a marvel."

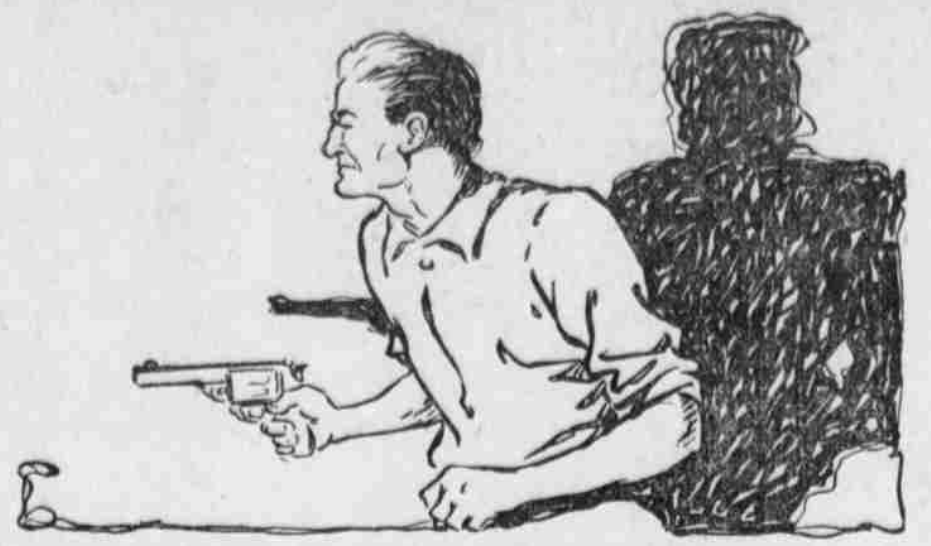
"So be it!" shot from the other's lips, his eyes losing their threatening look, and his whole countenance suddenly aglow with the enthusiasm of awakened genius.

Coming from the shadows, he laid his hand on the cord regulating the rise and fall of the concealing curtain.

"Here she is!" he cried and drew the cord.

## INITIALS ONLY

By ANNA KATHARINE GREEN  
AUTHOR OF "THE LEAVENWORTH CASE"  
"THE FILIGREE BALL" "THE HOUSE OF THE WHISPERING PINES"  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
CHARLES W. ROSSER  
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In the manufacture of a superior self-propelling airship."

Sweetwater, who had been so violently wheeled about in entering that he stood with his back to the curtain concealing the car, answered without hesitation:

"You have a device, entirely new so far as I can judge, by which this car can leap at once into space, hold its own in any direction, and alight again upon any given spot without shock to the machine or danger to the people controlling it."

"Explain the device."

"I will draw it."

"You can?"

"As I see it."

"As you see it?"

"Yes. It's a brilliant idea; I could never have conceived it."

"You believe—"

"I know."

"Sit here. Let's see what you know."

Sweetwater sat down at the table the other pointed out, and drawing forward a piece of paper, took up a pencil with an easy air. Brotherson approached and stood at his shoulder. He had taken up his pistol again, why he hardly knew, and as Sweetwater began his marks, his fingers tightened on its butt till they turned white in the murky lamplight.

"You see," came in easy tones from the stooping draughtsman, "I have an imagination which only needs a slight filip from a mind like yours to send it in the desired direction. I shall not draw an exact reproduction of your idea, but I think you will see that I understand it very well. How's that for a start?"

Brotherson looked and hastily drew back. He did not want the other to note his surprise.

"But that is a portion you never saw," he loudly declared.

"No, but I saw this," returned Sweetwater, working busily on some curves; "and these gave me the filip I mentioned. The rest came easily."

Brotherson, in dread of his own anger, threw his pistol to the other end of the shed:

"You knave! You thief!" he furiously cried.

"How so?" asked Sweetwater smilingly, rising and looking him calmly in the face. "A thief is one who appropriates another man's goods, or let us say, another man's ideas. I have appropriated nothing—yet. I've only shown you how easily I could do so. Mr. Brotherson, take me in as your assistant. I will be faithful to you, I swear it. I want to see that machine go up."

"For how many people have you drawn those lines?" thundered the inexorable voice.

"For nobody; not for myself even. This is the first time they have left their hiding-place in my brain."

"Can you swear to that?"

"I can and will, if you require it. But you ought to believe my word, sir. I am square as a die in all matters not connected—well, not connected with my profession," he smiled in a burst of that whimsical humor, which not even the seriousness of the moment could quite suppress.

"And what surety have I that you do not consider this very matter of mine as coming within the bounds you speak of?"

"None. But you must trust me that far."

Brotherson surveyed him with an irony which conveyed a very different message to the detective than any he had intended. Then quickly:

"To how many have you spoken, dilating upon this device, and publishing abroad my secret?"

"I have spoken to no one, not even to Mr. Gryce. That shows my honesty as nothing else can."

"You have kept my secret intact?"

"Entirely so, sir."

"That no one, here or elsewhere, shares our knowledge of the new points in this mechanism?"

"I say so, sir."

"Then if I should kill you," came in ferocious accents, "now—here—"

"You would be the only one to own that knowledge. But you won't kill me."

"Why?"

"Need I go into reasons?"

"Why? I say."

"Because your conscience is already too heavily laden to bear the burden of another unprovoked crime."

Brotherson, staring back, glared with open ferocity upon the man who dared to face him with such an accusation.

"God! why didn't I shoot you on entrance!" he cried. "Your courage is certainly colossal."

A fine smile, without even the hint of humor now, touched the daring detective's lip. Brotherson's anger seemed to grow under it, and he loudly repeated:

"It's more than colossal; it's abnormal and—" A moment's pause, then with ironic pauses—"and quite unnecessary save as a matter of display, unless you think you need it to sustain you through the ordeal you are court-

ing. You wish to help me finish and prepare for flight?"

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"Here she is!" he cried and drew the cord.

The canvas shook, gathered itself into great folds and disappeared in the shadows from which he had just stepped.

The air-car stood revealed—a startling, because wholly unique, vision. Long did Sweetwater survey it, then turning with beaming face upon the watchful inventor, he uttered a loud hurrah.

Next moment, with everything forgotten between them save the glories of this invention, both dropped simultaneously to the floor and began that minute examination of the mechanism necessary to their mutual work.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

His Great Hour.

Saturday night at eight o'clock.

So the fiat had gone forth, with no concession to be made on account of weather.

As Oswald came from his supper and took a look at the heavens from the small front porch, he was deeply troubled that Orlando had remained so obstinate on this point. For there were ominous clouds rolling up from the east, and the storms in this region of high mountains and abrupt valleys were not light, nor without danger even to those with feet well-planted upon mother earth.

If the tempest should come up before eight!

Mr. Challenor, who, from some mysterious impulse of bravado on the part of Brotherson, was to be allowed to make the third in this small band of spectators, was equally concerned at this sight, but not for Brotherson. His fears were for Oswald, whose slowly gathering strength could ill bear the strain which this additional anxiety for his brother's life must impose upon him. As for Doris, she was in a state of excitement more connected with the past than with the future. That afternoon she had laid her hand in that of Orlando Brotherson, and wished him well. She! in whose breast still lingered reminiscences of those old doubts which had beclouded his image for her at their first meeting. She had not been able to avoid it. His look was a compelling one, and it had demanded thus much from her; and—a terrible thought to her gentle spirit—he might be going to his death!

It had been settled by the prospective aviator that they were to watch for the ascent from the mouth of the grassy road leading in to the hangar. The three were to meet there at a

quarter to eight and await the stroke and the air-car's rise. That time was near, and Mr. Challenor, catching a glimpse of Oswald's pallid and unnaturally drawn features, as he set down the lantern he carried, shuddered with foreboding and wished the hour passed.

Doris' watchful glance never left the face whose lightest change was more to her than all Orlando's hopes. But the result upon her was not to weaken her resolution, but to strengthen it. Whatever the outcome of the next few minutes, she must stand ready to sustain her invalid through it. That the darkness of early evening had deepened to oppression, was unnoticed for the moment. The fears of an hour past had been forgotten. Their attention was too absorbed in what was going on before them, for even a glance overhead.

Suddenly Mr. Challenor spoke.

"Who is the man whom Brotherson has asked to go up with him?"

It was Oswald who answered.

"He has never told me. He has kept his own counsel about that as about everything else connected with this matter. He simply advised me that I was not to bother about him any more; that he had found the assistant he wanted."

"Such reticence seems unpardonable. You have displayed great patience, Oswald."

"Because I understand Orlando. He reads men's natures like a book. The man he trusts, we may trust. Tomorrow, he will speak openly enough. All cause for reticence will be gone."

"You have confidence then in the success of this undertaking?"

"If I hadn't, I should not be here. I could hardly bear to witness his failure, even in a secret test like this. I should find it too hard to face him afterwards."

"I don't understand."

"Orlando has great pride. If this enterprise fails I cannot answer for him. He would be capable of anything. Why, Doris! what is the matter, child? I never saw you look like that before."

She had been down on her knees regulating the lantern, and the sudden flame, shooting up, had shown him her face turned up toward his in an apprehension which verged on horror.

"Do I look frightened?" she asked, remembering herself and lightly rising. "I believe that I am a little frightened. If—if anything should go wrong! If an accident—" But here she remembered herself again and quickly changed her tone. "But your confidence shall be mine. I will believe in his good angel or—in his self-command and great resolution. I'll not be frightened any more."

But Oswald did not seem satisfied. He continued to look at her in vague concern.

He hardly knew what to make of

the intense feeling she had manifested. Had Orlando touched her girlish heart? Had this cold-blooded nature, with its steel-like brilliancy and honorable but stern views of life, moved to more than admiration? The thought disturbed him so he forgot the nearness of the moment they were all awaiting till a quick rasping sound from the hangar, followed by the sudden appearance of an ever-widening band of light about its upper rim, drew his attention and awakened them all to a breathless expectation.

The lid was rising. Now it was half-way up, and now, for the first time, it was lifted to its full height and stood a broad oval disk against the background of the forest. The effect was strange. The hangar had been made brilliant by many lamps, and their united glare pouring from its top and illuminating not only the surrounding treetops, but the broad face of this uplifted disk, roused in the awed spectator a thrill such as in mythological times might have greeted the sudden sight of Vulcan's smithy blazing on Olympian hills. But the clang of iron on iron would

have attended the flash and gleam of those unexpected fires, and here all was still save for that steady throb never heard in Olympus or the halls of Valhalla, the pant of the motor eager for flight in the upper air.

As they listened in a trance of burning hope which obliterated all else, this noise and all others near and distant, was suddenly lost in a loud clatter of writhing and twisting boughs which set the forest in a roar and seemed to heave the air about them.

A wind had swooped down from the east, bending everything before it and rattling the huge oval on which their eyes were fixed as though it would tear it from its hinges.

The three caught at each other's hands in dismay. The storm had come just on the verge of the enterprise, and no one might guess the result.

"Will he dare? Will he dare?" whispered Doris, and Oswald answered, though it seemed next to impossible that he could have heard her: "He will dare. But will he survive it? Mr. Challenor," he suddenly shouted in that gentleman's ear, "what time is it now?"

Mr. Challenor, disengaging himself from their mutual grasp, knelt down by the lantern to consult his watch. "One minute to eight," he shouted back.

The forest was now a pandemonium. Great boughs, split from their parent trunks, fell crashing to the ground in all directions. The scream of the wind roused echoes which repeated themselves, here, there and everywhere. No rain had fallen yet, but the sight of the clouds skurrying pell-mell through the glare thrown up from the shed, created such havoc in the already overstrained minds of the three onlookers, that they hardly heeded, when with a clatter and crash which at another time would have startled them into flight, the swaying oval before them was whirled from its hinges and thrown back against the trees already bending under the onslaught of the tempest. Destruction seemed the natural accompaniment of the moment, and the only prayer which sprang to Oswald's lips was that the motor whose throbs yet lingered in their blood though no longer taken in by the ear, would either refuse to work or prove insufficient to lift the heavy car into this seething tumult of warring forces. His brother's life hung in the balance against his fame, and he could not but choose life for him. Yet, as the multitudinous sounds about him yielded for a moment to that brother's shout, and he knew that the moment had come, which would soon settle all, he found himself staring at the elliptical edge of the hangar, with an anticipation which held in it as much terror as joy, for the end of a great hope or the beginning of a great triumph was compressed into this trembling instant and it—

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Earth's Journey.

Our world's journey in space is a long one, if we are to accept the conclusions of Dr. Turner of the University observatory of Oxford and Prof. H. C. Plummer, royal astronomer of Ireland. Recent astronomical work suggests that the sun and its planets form a single unit in a vast system, the stars in which, though separated by enormous distances, have a common center of gravity, and in response to gravitation all move in union like a stupendous machine. The paths of these stars, instead of being nearly circular, like those of the planets around the sun, are much like the oscillations of a pendulum. The calculations show that on this elongated course our sun must travel 400,000,000 years before completing a revolution, and that it passed near the center less than a million—perhaps not more than 300,000—years ago, and is now on the outward stretch.

Evil in Use of Drugs.

In an article on the indiscriminate use of drugs the Lancet takes the same position as that of the New York physician who was recently quoted in this column. Speaking of "the shrewd fellow" who suffers from insomnia and purchases veronal as a safe (?) hypnotic, the writer says: "Eight grains have been known to prove fatal and ten grains not uncommonly give rise to alarming symptoms. But the sleep producer is used, nevertheless, by people who feel justified by misleading paragraphs in 'medical columns,' blind to the risk of acquiring a drug habit."—New York Tribune.

Nothing in It—But Money.

The late Charles Major, author of "When Kighthood was in Flower," was a sincere if not a very subtle writer, and he had no patience with the literary trickster.

Mr. Major, at a dinner in Shelbyville, once condemned the literary trickster with the epigram: "You can fool some of the people all of the time—but when you consider what kind of people they are, does it really seem worth while?"

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