



SYNOPSIS.

Professor Desmond of the Peak observatory causes a great sensation throughout the country by announcing that what appears to be a satellite is approaching at terrific speed. Destruction of the earth is feared. Panic prevails everywhere. The satellite barely misses the earth. The atmospheric disturbance knocks people unconscious, but does no damage. A leaf bearing a cabalistic design flutters down among the guests at a lawn party. It is identical in design with a curious ornament worn by Doris Fulton. A hideous man-like being with huge wings descends in the midst of the guests. He notices Doris' ornament and starts toward her. The men fear he intends some harm to Doris and a fierce battle ensues, in which Tolliver and March, suitors of Doris, and Professor Desmond are injured. The flying man is wounded by a shot from Tolliver, but escapes by flying away. A farmer reports that the flying man carried off his young daughter. People everywhere are terror-stricken at the possibilities for evil possessed by the monster. The governor offers a reward of \$500,000 for his capture, dead or alive. Putnam is the first of the aviators to respond.

CHAPTER VI.—Continued.

Up toward him the machine arose in a long, sweeping curve until but a few hundred feet separated them and a deeply intoned gasp came from the multitude as the tragedy seemed about to close before it had begun. And then the unexpected happened. Closing his wings as quickly as a woman snaps her fan shut, the Flying Man dropped in a black streak, while Putnam, quick as a cat in pursuit of a mouse, plunged after him in a dive so reckless, so apparently beyond control, that a shrill cry, quick and explosive, burst from the multitude and hundreds averted their faces that they might not witness the sight all thought must follow. But when hundreds of those below had already started for the place where he would lie at the end of the fall, he checked his flight with incomparable skill and went, skimming along on a parallel, once more in perfect poise. It was an exhibition of nerve beyond anything they had ever seen attempted by an aviator before, and a hoarse roar of admiration burst from their throats as they pounded each other upon the back in a frenzy of delight. As for the Flying Man, he had mounted up again and was now coming straight toward them with mighty sweeps. Swiftly Putnam circled about and followed.

And now followed a chase such as man had never seen before—the sight of a wingless man in a machine-driven craft whistling through the air at wild speed in pursuit of another man upon whom Nature had bestowed a power of flight beyond that of most of her feathered things—with death as the loser's penalty. Their evolutions became bewildering. Plainly the Flying Man was trying the other out as a boxer tests an unknown adversary before deciding upon his course of battle. He mounted straight upward as an arrow and at a height of thousands of feet hung stationary with a languid beating of his great wings. He dropped as a nighthawk drops in his hunting at dusk, he leaped broad spaces like a shooting star, he flew upon his side as a swimmer races, he circled, he pirouetted in dizzy whirls, soared like a condor, flapped fastly. It was an exhibition of flying incomparable, and the concourse below grew cold with apprehension as it mentally pictured the scene which must follow when this wizard of the air, tiring of his exhibition, would bring it to a close. But Putnam, reckless as ever and either not realizing or not caring that he was hopelessly outclassed, stuck to his quarry with the tenacity of a bulldog. Almost any other man would have descended and awaited the arrival of reinforcements, but with half a million dollars in sight, a great crowd to watch him and his reputation for fearlessness at stake, the aviator followed every movement of the black-winged one with fierce determination. It was taken or be caught, kill or be killed, and he had faced death at short range too often to falter now. Steady as an iron man, cool as ice despite his rage, he maneuvered his machine with a skill and dash and disregard of consequences that proclaimed him the most spectacular of his spectacular profession, every move executed with the accuracy of genius, every poise the acme of skill. Three times his revolver had leaped from its holster as his foe offered a possible mark, but each time the winged one, divining his intent, dropped like a stone and Putnam had released the unfired weapon to devote himself once more to the machine. He had begun at last to realize that the chase was hopeless, but his obstinacy was still unshaken. "It has got to be you or I, my awful dodger," he gritted between his set teeth as he once more swung about in pursuit after a futile whirlwind dash. "It is you or I, and by Heaven's one of us has got to take a tumble this day." In the grimness of his determination to get a fair shot he would have tried to fly to midocean had the other led him that way.

But now the tactics of the Flying Man suddenly changed. Appearing to have satisfied his mind that he could fly with the other and harass him as

a matador does a bull, he led him once more into a blind rush, darted lightning-like aside, and holding his wings outstretched to their fullest extent and rigid as bars he came swooping down upon the heads of the packed multitude with almost the speed of a direct fall. Down, down in a long, sharp incline as a wildfowl seeks the surface of a lake, he came, head foremost, his body nearly perpendicular, his arms outstretched and his hands clasped as a swimmer dives from a great height, the whistle of his wings shrilling ever sharper and sharper in their ears. And before that majestic dive those upon the ground surged backward with the hoarse roar of a panic, jamming each other against the surrounding walls, striking at random, trampling each other unmercifully. But when only a dozen feet above their heads the descending one flattened his pinions and with a cry of such savagery that it set the hearers' teeth on edge, went skimming like a meteor above them to the rush of wind and vanished in the twinkling of an eye over the buildings. Putnam, dazzled by the unexpectedness and swiftness of the other's plunge, circled about rapidly as he sought to again sight his vanished foe.

For perhaps a minute, a long minute, when men gazed silently into each other's eyes in the stupefaction of those who have just witnessed a miracle, the flying one remained beyond their ken while Putnam, the whistle of his fan faintly audible in the great hush, patrolled the sky impatiently with his keen eyes. Then far above them in another quarter and at least five hundred feet higher than the aviator, the winged one again appeared and those below caught their breath with a long, sighing gasp in the instinctive realization that the comedy was finished and the grim tragedy about to be performed. So suddenly had he reappeared and so considerable was his height that Putnam did not locate him until a great shout of warning arose to his ears. He looked down, saw the direction of their pointed fingers and shot an upward glance in response. The Flying Man was hanging directly over him like the shadow of death, and with a quick twist of his wheel he circled aside and began to ascend as one mounts a spiral staircase. Up and up, the propeller screaming, the guy wires humming, the light body of the machine vibrating beneath the power of the motor, up he went straight into the zenith, while holding his distance almost to a foot the hovering one pumped himself skyward in steady leaps. A mile—two miles—would they never stop? Three miles! From the ground the machine looked a toy, the Flying Man with his thirty feet spread of wings, a bat hovering over it but a foot above his pursuer. Uncanny horror ran through the crane-necked watchers at the very thought of the awful attitude to which the demonic creature from an alien world was turning his prey before destroying him, while fifteen thousand feet up Putnam, gray of face but steady of eye and steady of arm, coaxed his machine still higher with every caress his deft hands had learned to minister. Could he get but one fair shot at this mocking devil all would be well yet and the half million his alone, and even if he could ram him and bring everything and everybody down together in an unrecognizable mass of wreckage and humanity he would in his last moment of life make himself immortal, win the prize for his widow and rid the earth of this hateful monster. Quit! He would follow him to the heart of the zenith first.

But he got no chance to shoot. His antagonist had learned to fear those fire belching things with which this man was armed and appeared to understand perfectly that so long as he retained his present position of above and slightly behind the other he was in a region of comparative safety. Keenly he watched the ascending machine as it arose slowly and more slowly in the rarefied air until another thousand feet had been mounted, then with the quickness of thought he executed his plan. Dropping sheer until he reached the level of the plane he seized it with his powerful hands and with one beat of his pinions tilted it perilously. Putnam, driven to the full extent of his skill to keep from being capsized, had no opportunity to shoot, and the Flying Man with another mighty heave turned him fairly wrong-side up as one turns a turtle on a beach. Down went the plane as a wounded bird falls, Putnam clinging to the frame and striving with almost superhuman energy to right it as they fell, but it was a task beyond human capability and when he had fallen a mile he became bewildered, missed a hold and fell. Whirling, spinning, arms and legs outstretched, he dropped ten thousand feet at horrific speed, his upset machine with its propeller still whirling shooting downward after him in grotesque gyrations. The crash of their fall upon the top of the buildings was heard for a mile, while far in the

distance the sickened mob saw the Flying Man soaring for the distant peaks, swinging sportively from side to side with the graceful movements of a skater in a rink.

Once more the surcharged wires reeked with the news of this unprecedented battle three miles above the earth, and now the world received it very gravely indeed. The editors of great dailies the world over discussed it as the most momentous event of the hour, more important than national politics, the alliances of nations, the mysterious absence of the czar or the latest battle in Asia. Foreign cabinets debated it seriously behind closed doors, and the president of the United States formally tendered Governor McNeill the use of several regiments of regular troops, a regiment of cavalry and such field ordinance as he might deem of use. This tender, however, McNeill courteously declined upon the grounds that he had men enough, horses enough and firearms enough, and that all three were futile enough—that he must place his main reliance upon the swarm of aviators now headed his way and arriving singly and in small parties every day. However, as a matter of precaution a dozen mortars capable of shooting upward at acute angles were distributed about the city and heavily loaded with grape shot. And in order that there might be enough money to divide among a considerable number of aviators in case a large number of them were in at the death the reward was increased to a million. And as though in reply to this the Flying Man promptly issued another challenge.

A splash maliciousness seemed to have come over him and sheer wantonness characterized many of his acts. In the few following nights not less than a dozen country dwellers were awakened by boulders crashing through their roofs, injuring no one through sheer good luck, and often the creaking of porches and the soft falling of feet upon thin roofs and the frenzied yelping of dogs proclaimed to the residents of isolated houses that the uncanny one was prowling in the darkness without. That with his enormous eyes he could see as well by night as by day was soon proven, for even stray cats and chickens did not escape his petty malice. This additional advantage of night seeing which he possessed over his foes rendered all their efforts against him futile, for while now a small swarm of aerial craft patrolled the skies and scoured the mountains by day, when night came they were compelled again to seek the earth, and it was during the darkest hours that he issued forth upon his maraudings. But owing to their caution in traveling in small parties after nightfall—if indeed they traveled at all—no human being fell into his clutches. For miles around the city each country door was strongly barred at the hour of dusk, and from that moment until broad daylight none but the reckless ventured forth. Even in the city and its neighboring well-lighted towns, those who went abroad by street light held a furtive clutch upon



"He Seized It With His Powerful Hands and Tilted It Perilously."

the handle of some weapon. Women were forbidden by the police to appear upon the streets after dark without the escort of some man, and the children were sent scurrying homeward at seven o'clock at the ringing of the curfew upon the church bells. From lack of patronage the theaters closed their doors, the night restaurants followed suit, and upon all rested heavily a feeling of oppression as of some great, unspeakable horror yet to come and beneath which they all walked dazedly. Even the loud

mouthed talked subduedly and the most collected laughed nervously as they denied all nervousness. Suspense, deep, brooding, ominous, charged the air and pervaded all bosoms and business sickened alarmingly. And then one day there came the news of another assault committed in the broad light and almost under their very noses. This time through fortunate circumstances there were no victims but rather two heroes, a boy and a dog.

Jimmy Collins, a ten-year-old country youngster, was fishing in a stream a quarter of a mile from his home at mid-forenoon. Accompanying him was his dog, a large brute, strong, agile and full of courage and affection for Jimmy. The boy described what happened about as follows:

"Well, you see I was settin' on the bank and a-fishin' with grasshoppers and not thinkin' about nuthin' when I heard old Scout growl. Well, you bet old Scout was some pup and I never seen nuthin' what could lick him, and he would fight a steam engine if I sic'd him onto it. First I thought another dog had come nosin' around and I looked over my shoulder. Bet I jumped a rod. There, close behind me and sneakin' up like an Injun with wings stickin' out 'bout half way like a chicken holds his when he is scrapin', I seen this here Flyin' Man what everybody is so scart about. Gosh, you other seen his face! Made me think of a jack lantern. Scart! You bet. But I didn't lose my head—not by a pipel. There was an old cabin close by, so I just let out a holler for Scout to sic him and then lit out for that shack. I reckon I run faster'n a jack rabbit and went under it like a prairie dog inter a hole and crawled under it where nobody who wasn't a little feller could follow. There was an awful racket goin' on outside, with Scout a-snarlin' and yellin' and the other feller kind of croakin' like a frog, and bimeby I peeked out. They was a-fittin' to beat all thunder, him and the pup. First Scout would make a run and jump for him, but the Flyin' Man was always too quick and Scout's teeth would click like a trap when he missed him. Then old Flyer'd make a grab for the pup and Scout would dodge him and they would circle around and start all over again. I reckon it lasted about five minnits, with me a-watchin' and yellin' 'sic 'em, tear him up, old dog' as fast as I could holler to Scout. Then all at once that old devil got Scout by the tail and gave a flop with his wings. Up and up they went with the dog not bein' able to do nuthin' because of the way he was held, until they must have been about a million feet high. Then old rip lets go of the pup and down comes Scout to beat the band and lands ker-plunk, with that old cuss soarin' down close behind him. 'Course it killed Scout all at once. He never moved a leg after he landed.

"Then the Flyin' Man comes for me and I backed up like a squirrel in a hole until I was under the middle of the floor. It was too low for him to crawl in under me and so he found a stick and laid down on his stummik and tried to poke me out. Gee, what eyes he had! They was as big as my fist and shone like lanterns. But the stick wasn't long enough and pretty soon he give up and walked away. I could see where he was goin' by his feet, and he went straight up to the pup, picked him up and smelt of him. Then he took him by the leg and hopped up in the air. I crawled to the edge of the cabin and watched him. He headed straight for the mountains and never stopped as long as he was in sight. Then I lit out for home good and plenty. I hope you'll get that old devil, for he killed my pup. Scout was a good dog, all right."

Trivial as the incident was in its consequences, it nevertheless cast a deeper pall over the country. The bearing away of the dog settled beyond all doubt that the murderous minded creature was strongly carnivorous, and the name of the lost daughter of Farmer Jones was no longer spoken even in whispers. And deeper and still more deep there settled into the hearts of all mankind a horror, loathing and hatred of this unnatural thing that words were impotent to express. Had he fallen into their hands they would have become barbarians themselves in the ferocity of their revenge.

CHAPTER VII.

The Face at the Pane.

March, passing down the street, was deep in thought and his face looked as though he were somewhat worried, and in truth he was, for to have a Flying Man, and a woman with whom one is very much in love, upon the mind at one and the same time, and both behaving unsatisfactorily, is trouble enough for any man. Not a word had been heard from Doris since the night he had left her at the door with the words in his ears, "If I really need you I will let you know," and

his obstinacy and jealousy had prevented him from communicating with her in any manner as long as his rival remained beneath her roof. He had not expected that she would really need him in the physical sense, of course, yet one may need another in many different ways, and it piqued him that she, knowing how eager he would be to come, had not made some excuse for needing him that he might go and see her, or at least talk with her over the phone. Perhaps she had been in love with Tolliver all along. He had half suspected at times that she was, and now that she was helping to nurse him, was seeing him many times daily, was reading to him and being read to by him and having long and confidential talks with him under propitious circumstances, it would not be at all startling if the tender passion bud were swiftly blooming into full flower. Confound Tolliver, anyway. Was he going to stay there forever? Why didn't he send for his trunk and be done with it? He ought to be ashamed of himself for his insolent abuse of common hospitality.

Head down and frowning, he ran abruptly into a man at a corner and with a muttered apology looked up. Clay, a half smile on his handsome face, was regarding him with small attempt to conceal his amusement. "This is a poor time for one to go about with his head down in that fashion when everybody else has got a crick in his neck from looking up. You had best take care. The Flying Man will get you if you don't watch out," he said in his even and rather musical voice. Quickly Allen swept him with his eyes. He had never appeared in better health, stronger or better satisfied with things in general. March thrust out his hand and Clay taking it with a mechanical motion released it instantly.

"Glad to see you out again," exclaimed the former fervently. Once again an amused smile flitted about the other's lips.

"Thanks," he returned drily. "You are looking very well indeed."

Tolliver bowed. "It would be strange if I did not after the nursing and treatment I received. Take my word for it, man. If you ever become injured prevail upon Miss Fulton to look after you. If she will do so you will not have suffered in vain." The faint look of displeasure that ran across March's face did not escape the convalescent one's eyes, and again he batted him out of pure enjoyment.

"Nothing will put a sick man on his feet so quickly as to have an interested and interesting woman ministering to him. Do you know I almost regretted that I was not laid up longer? But as it was I got out even before they wanted me to. Didn't want even to appear to be taking advantage of their kindness, you see."

Although the speaker's manner was open enough, there was nevertheless a subtle maliciousness in his tones that March instantly detected and inwardly resented. "Let's see—ten days," he returned reflectively. "That is a pretty long while to be laid up with a cracked rib, isn't it?" Tolliver agreed with him at once.

"I should imagine so. But you see I have been away from there for the last four days—was there less than a week. What? Is it possible that you did not know?" He opened his eyes in a look of mock surprise at the other's evident lack of information. March felt like a fool.

"No, I knew nothing about it," he was forced to admit. "I have been very busy with my own affairs. But I must be on my way. See you again, Tolliver."

"Indeed you will, March," was the slow retort. With a farewell nod each went his separate way.

So Clay had been gone from the Fulton home for several days and he had not known it! He became angrier than ever. True, he had told Doris that he would leave the field to her and Clay as long as the latter remained in their house as her patient, but how in the name of common sense was he to know when the patient left unless he received word? If Doris and himself had been short time acquaintances things would have been different and he would not have expected her to let him know, but as it was they had known each other for years, had been the best of friends during all that time and in a way confidants long before he had begun to make love to her. Therefore, eliminating the love element, she might at least have let him know as a friend that her patient had recovered and taken his departure. He felt aggrieved. Should he call her up now and ask permission to call? His first inclination was to do so, then remembering Clay's sly insinuations of her tender care he grew resentful again and crawled back into his shell. Perhaps she did not want him to call any more. Perhaps she and Clay had it all arranged between them, and that was the cause of the other's subtle mockery. He would take a day or

two and think it over. If he was out of the running it was now too late to do anything about it anyway, and if he was not another day or so would make no difference—she might be gladder to see him then.

It was Sunday and he would do no work that day, but it was his custom to go to his desk between eleven and twelve on Sabbath forenoons to look over his mail and get it ready for Monday's dictation. He pursued his way officeward, therefore, opened the door and sat himself down in the quiet room. Five minutes later the telephone bell rang and he got up to answer it, wondering whom the caller might be. It was Doris.

"Knowing your custom of opening your mail on Sundays at about this hour I was in hopes of catching you in your workshop," she began. "And how have you been during these awful days?" He most untruthfully assured her that he had never been better or happier. She seemed pleased to hear it. "And you?" he asked.

"Quite well until this morning. But today I am dreadfully worried and nervous, and that is the reason I called you up."

"I see. Something has gone wrong and you really need me."

"You have guessed it exactly. You remember I promised you I should let you know in case of such an event. Well, I am keeping my promise."

"And you wish to see me when?"

"Today. You may come out to dinner at two o'clock if you will and spend the afternoon with me."

"Delightful. By the way, I saw Clay a few moments ago and he looked wondrously well and happy. Said you were the queen of nurses or something to that effect—so thoughtful, so tender, so sympathetic—here, here—Doris!" But Doris had hung up the receiver without waiting to hear more and he was compelled, much against his wishes, to return to his mail.

She met him at the door with her usual friendliness, smiling and sweet, altogether desirable, yet knowing her as well as he did his first glance told him that she was indeed troubled. Her eyes wore a hunted look and there was a certain nervousness in her manner that was in distinct contrast to her usual calm. He held her hand tightly despite her effort to withdraw it. "What is it, Doris?" he inquired solicitously. She shook her head.

"Please don't speak about it now. Father has to leave the house after dinner, which is the principal reason I called you. I will tell you later." He let her hand escape and followed her down the hall. Impatient though he was to hear the news, he knew he would be compelled to await her pleasure.

They finished their dinner amongst the commonplaces of an ordinary Sunday midday meal and then she and he took their seats in the comfortable chairs upon the shady veranda. Judge Fulton had just departed, also looking somewhat worried, as Allen thought, and the girl and himself were alone. "And now?" he questioned.

Again the hunted look filled her troubled eyes to the brim, she shivered as from a cold draft and glanced about quickly. "I hate to talk about it, it was too hideous—yet I want you to know. And as father had to be absent this afternoon he suggested that I send for you to keep me company. It happened last night."

"Yes, Doris, I am listening."

"And it was midnight and very dark and I was asleep."

"Go on."

"I was awakened by a sound, a very small sound. I am a light sleeper, you know, especially these nights."

"I understand. Possibly we all are."

"And I listened through the darkness and presently I heard it again, a peculiar sound—a scratchy sound I called it to myself—and it seemed to come from my window. Of course I thought of burglars, but the window is high up, and besides why on earth would a burglar be trying to get in there when he could enter so much more easily from the ground floor? So I listened and listened, and sometimes I thought I could hear something and sometimes I thought I was mistaken, and after a while I turned my head very slowly and looked towards the window. I imagined I could see two very faint, luminous balls through the darkness, so I reached for the button at the head of the bed and switched on the electric light. Horrors! She covered her face with her hands, shaking like an aspen. March's hair was beginning to bristle and his hands turned in knobbed fists.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Motor Cars at Church.

"Where did you go Sunday morning?"

"I went to church."

"You did? Was the service well attended?"

"It must have been."

"Why do you say it must have been? Don't you know?"

"Well, there were fourteen different makes of motor cars standing outside."