



SYNOPSIS.

Professor Desmond of the Peak observatory causes 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, saviors 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. After a thrilling chase in the air he is thrown from his machine by the flying man and killed. North and a score of other aviators arrive. The reward is increased to a million. The aviators find themselves outdistanced and outmaneuvered by the flying man. Artillery proves futile.

CHAPTER IX.—Continued.

"You pup," gritted North from his chair. All undisturbed, March continued maliciously:

"Yes, he is greatly taken. Says you remind him of the girl he is engaged to and wants to tell you about her."

"Ah!" breathed the girl in evident relief. "I shall be more than pleased to listen. Also, I want to hear about the case from him. You must bring him up."

"I will do so with all the resignation and misgivings of which I am capable. He is going back to the field right now and I have decided to accompany him and show him your house. He says he will stop in for a few moments on his way—with your permission."

"Liar," hissed the listener. "But I will, just to spite you. You can't bluff me that way."

Doris seemed genuinely pleased at the announcement. "By all means come—both of you. And if you hurry you will be just in time for lunch—light and cold, you know—just a few mouthfuls and a cup of tea. I am going to ring off now before you have a chance to decline. Goodby." The receiver clicked in the hook and she was gone. March turned to his friend with a grin.

"We are elected to go at once and have a few bites of lunch before you pass on to your machine. She hung up the receiver on me before I got a chance to consult you about it. So I suppose we might as well be on our way." He banged down his desk, put on his hat and left the office.

Doris met them at the door frankly pleased to see them, wonderfully tempting in her soft morning gown that floated about her light as a summer cloud. Exceedingly dainty and pretty she was, but Alan was quick to notice the faint, dark half circles that underscored her eyes and which bespoke another night of ill rest. She led them directly to the light dining room with its plain, solid oak furniture, and seated them at the table at once. "I was afraid that Mr. North might be impatient to get back to his machine, so I thought we would have our luncheon first and—chat afterwards that he might not feel that I was delaying matters. I realize that he feels that he should be prepared to leave upon a minute's notice at all times. Anyway we can talk more or less as we nibble. Do you know?" she turned the tea with a wrist so rounded and altogether fascinating that they watched it as if spellbound—"that I imagine I feel somewhat as the southern women did during our Civil war when their men folks were marching away to defend their homes? All houses were open to the soldiers then, and while you gentlemen of the air are here risking your lives for our protection, we women should be happy to do everything in our power to make your stay as pleasant as possible. I want you to come straight here whenever you feel inclined and bring any friends you may wish to with you. Now tell me about the chase." North laughed belittlingly.

"There isn't anything in particular to tell except that the creature we were after and myself sat it out together all night." He attacked his sandwich reminiscently.

"And what happened?" breathed the girl.

"I suppose I might as well tell the story at once and be through with it. You saw the first part of the chase when he led us around that big loop to see what kind of stuff was in us, so I need not go into that. It was just the same thing all the way around, anyway. Of course when that mortar sent him pinwheeling through the air we felt considerably encouraged; but he wasn't hurt a bit and kept on as fast as before, keeping his distance ahead of us almost to a rod and leaving us as much in doubt as ever as to whether he was doing his best or just flirting with us. Just as we got over the mountains some of the boys got discouraged and opened

fire on him—you should have heard those peak echoes come back at us. He was so far ahead that it was merely wasting ammunition to shoot, yet there was a bare chance of landing him so the rest of us cut loose in order if somebody happened to drop him we could all have a claim on the reward, since nobody would be able to swear which bullet did the work. Of course we did not get him, so we kept on with the chase. It got dusk pretty soon after that, and for a while we had a hard time keeping him in sight, but presently the moon arose and that gave us light enough for all practical purposes. It certainly was an eerie sight to see that old bat-winged party ahead scudding through the moonlight like one of those funny things you sometimes dream about after a rarebit. For the first time in my life the creeps came along my back—felt like frozen footed caterpillars were crawling up and down me. Presently I looked around and saw that the rest of the fellows had turned back, but I thought I would go on for a little while longer just on a bare chance. So I did."

"It was altogether too reckless and I hope you will not take such a chance again," broke out the girl impatiently. North seized the opportunity to finish his sandwich.

"Well, perhaps so, but I certainly do need a good slice of that million. And I figured it that they having abandoned the chase for the night and turned him over to me, if I happened to be lucky enough to land him the larger portion if not all of the reward would be mine. So I kept on. The moon kept getting brighter as it grew darker and for half an hour more I coaxed the Dragon along by every trick I knew. It certainly was some sight when I looked down upon those mountain tops that were skimming over. Never saw such grotesque shapes and shadows as those jumbled rock piles made—caves and grottoes and goblin palaces—while as for the canyons and valleys—well, some of them were moonlight bathed and I was willing to swear that I saw witches riding about on their broomsticks and gnomes dancing, although I suppose, of course, they were nothing but flying shadows. Others were as black as the mouth of the Pit itself, while ahead of me and always keeping his distance with infernal endurance was the most uncanny phantom of them all—the very spirit of the night."

He stopped speaking to sip at his tea and the girl shivered.

"Think of it!" she murmured in an awed voice. "The recklessness of it—the foolhardiness. You had no right to do it." He acquiesced.

"I will admit that for once I pushed discretion to the limit, and after I had left the others twenty-five or thirty miles behind I began to see it in that light. Well, my engine was beginning to act up a little by reason

of getting a heated bearing, and I saw that I would have to come down, willy nilly. But it was no joke of a trick in that uncertain shimmer with those sharp rocks stabbing up all around, and I confess I was a little anxious. But presently I reached a valley that seemed to have a pretty level floor in places and I dove for it and managed to alight after quite a shake up. Then I looked up. The Flying Man had swung about, too, and was now circling back over me and things began promising to be real interesting. I did not like the lay of the land where I was particularly well, so I backed up against a rock, pulled my revolver, firmly placed one foot before and yelled:

"Come one, come all. This rock shall fly From its firm base as soon as I."

"I guess that scared him, for he screeched back, took a skim over me, saw that he could not get at me except from in front and then flapped across the valley and roosted on the edge of a rock about a quarter of a mile away where he could watch me. I was pretty tired and sat down, but of course I did not dare go to sleep. What I was most afraid of was that he would drop rocks on my machine and smash it, but for some reason he didn't. Maybe he did not happen to think of it just then, and maybe he was too tired to go carting boulders around and concluded to wait until morning when he was rested. Anyway, he certainly must have been pretty well played out, for I could see his head sink until it rested on his chest. He made me think of a condor roosting. I did not sleep a wink all night, but I guess he was snoozing most of the time; anyway when the sun came up I could tell that he was in a sound doze. I got my machine ready as quietly as I could and then took another look at him. He had not moved and I decided to risk a shot. Of course he was so far away that it was a thousand to one that I would miss, but it was a chance all the same, so I steadied myself against a boulder and let drive. I did not hit him, but I made some shot at that, for I could see a chip of rock fly up from between his very feet. You ought to have seen him jump—straight up in the air, and his wings out as quick as you could snap a fan open. Then I started up the machine and managed to get aloft. He started in to try the rock game now and got hold of one as big as my head and commenced trying to get above me, but I gained on him so fast that he had to let drop and light out. I had barely enough gasoline left to carry me back, so there was nothing for me to do but give it up for that time. I made pretty fair time and arrived here about an hour after sun up. He did not follow me. The last I saw of him he was nothing but a speck in the southwest and still going. That is about all."

The luncheon had been finished for some little time and now North began to evidence signs of uneasiness. "Sorry to leave you so soon, but you will understand how necessary it is that I stick close to my machine. Most of us are going to roll up in our blankets and sleep beside our planes—they have furnished us with mattresses and we will be quite comfortable in the open. And now I had better be getting back to the field so as to be on hand in case he shows up again unexpectedly, as he seems to have a habit of doing. Thanks exceedingly for the luncheon, and I'll tell you about Clare some other time. She is a wonder. March, passing down the hall with him and the girl, was hoping that Doris by some sign might signify that he should remain, but at the door she bade them both goodby with no sign given, so there was nothing for him to do but bid her good afternoon also. Somewhat disappointed, he strode away by the side of the actively moving hero of the lone moonlight chase.

The week which followed was one of fruitless activity. From the moment when North had caught his last fleeting glimpse of the Flying Man disappearing into the southwest in the rays of the early morning sun, nothing had been heard or seen of him. Day by day the scouting air fleets ranged the mountain tops, whirled past precipitous cliffs, swooped down into valleys and gulches, alighted upon points of vantage that they might scan other heights with their powerful glasses, but all their efforts remained unrewarded. Either he was in close hiding somewhere amongst the recesses of those vast fastnesses, had met with some disaster remote from the abode of man or had taken himself far afield to haunts where his life was in less jeopardy than so close to the swift air crafts of his relentless hunters. Day by day the impatience of the eager aviators grew more and more chaotic, and nothing but the colossal size of the reward prevented many from returning to fields which offered more certain if less dazzling prizes. But the immensity of the fortune that dangled before their eyes still held them and they remained to scour the country day after day in wide flights that each time grew more and more perfunctory. Then one morning, when some of them were actually preparing to leave for good, news came that caused them to prick up their ears a bit and decide to loiter a while longer, for from Quartzville, two hundred miles away, came the report that a citizen had seen roosting upon a far distant crag a strange, winged figure, half manlike, half birdlike, but whether it was the Flying Man or not the observer was not able to positively testify because of the great distance, although he was strongly inclined to the belief that



He Roosted on the Edge of a Rock About a Quarter of a Mile Away.

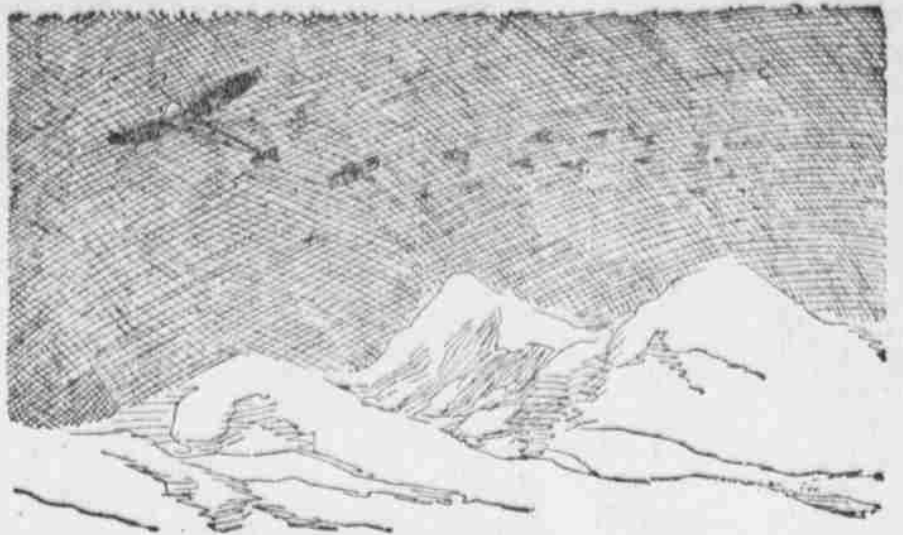
it was no bird. Then from Lode City, not far from Quartzville, there also came a rumor. An old man awakened at night by the squealing of his pig had lighted a lantern and, gun in hand, hastened to the pen with the thought that some wild creature of the mountains had descended in search of fresh meat, only to find the sty empty and no trace of the missing porker, yet a moment later he was sure he heard a faint squeal from far up in the air. From another place came the news that a belated traveler had heard a raucous cry from above and in a great fright threw himself behind a rock, from which, a moment afterwards, he heard through the darkness the whistle of powerful wings. But so unsatisfactory were the different rumors, so vague, and emanating from so many different quarters that the awaiting ones soon began to accord them but little credence, a little later ceasing to place any confidence in them whatever. Then after several of the aviators had actually departed in disgust there came a seething message from Dentonville, two hundred miles to the westward, so full of horrible details that none who read even the expurgated report of the papers could doubt but that the Flying Man had again been located and had once more shed human blood, this time with a fiendishness of which he had heretofore been only suspected as being capable. The victim this time was a middle-aged negro woman who lived with her husband in a lonely place two miles beyond the town, the principal narrator being the negro himself, a rather simple minded and peaceable man of good repute, who made his living by doing odd jobs in his vicinity. His report of the occurrence as taken in shorthand by a newspaper reporter and after having been expurgated, read as follows:

The Flying Man

by Harry Irving Greene

Author of "The Lash of Circumstance," "Barbara of the Snows"

Copyright, 1912, by Harry Irving Greene



"Come one, come all. This rock shall fly From its firm base as soon as I."

"I guess that scared him, for he screeched back, took a skim over me, saw that he could not get at me except from in front and then flapped across the valley and roosted on the edge of a rock about a quarter of a mile away where he could watch me. I was pretty tired and sat down, but of course I did not dare go to sleep. What I was most afraid of was that he would drop rocks on my machine and smash it, but for some reason he didn't. Maybe he did not happen to think of it just then, and maybe he was too tired to go carting boulders around and concluded to wait until morning when he was rested. Anyway, he certainly must have been pretty well played out, for I could see his head sink until it rested on his chest. He made me think of a condor roosting. I did not sleep a wink all night, but I guess he was snoozing most of the time; anyway when the sun came up I could tell that he was in a sound doze. I got my machine ready as quietly as I could and then took another look at him. He had not moved and I decided to risk a shot. Of course he was so far away that it was a thousand to one that I would miss, but it was a chance all the same, so I steadied myself against a boulder and let drive. I did not hit him, but I made some shot at that, for I could see a chip of rock fly up from between his very feet. You ought to have seen him jump—straight up in the air, and his wings out as quick as you could snap a fan open. Then I started up the machine and managed to get aloft. He started in to try the rock game now and got hold of one as big as my head and commenced trying to get above me, but I gained on him so fast that he had to let drop and light out. I had barely enough gasoline left to carry me back, so there was nothing for me to do but give it up for that time. I made pretty fair time and arrived here about an hour after sun up. He did not follow me. The last I saw of him he was nothing but a speck in the southwest and still going. That is about all."

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"I done lef' de house early in de mawnin' fo' to done some wuk fo' Mistah Lewis, who am buildin' a fence ovah on his place about two mile away. I done got finish' at foah erlock and starts fo' home. When I gets up chas to de house I done notice dar' something dat ain' jes' right, fo' dar ain't no noise inside. Allers when I comes home befo' I can heah dat woman o' mine er meckin' er racket, a singin' or whistlin' er slammn' dem dishes erbout lak she were gwine bust 'em up, but dis time it am so still I could heah my habt er beatn' lak a drum. I stan' dar fo' er minnit a-wonderin' what am de trubbl, an' den I tries de do'. I am locked. Den I tries de back do' an' dat am fasten' too. I tries to peek in de windows, but de curtains am down an' I begins to get suspicious, tho' I ain't nevah seen no tracks of any other man aroun' ma' place since we been married. But I jes' gettin' mad all ovah an' I poun' de do' de do' an' I says, 'Woman! yo' open dat do' or I see gwine bust it in wif a rock.' At dat I heahs a little soun' inside an' I picks up a big stone an' smashed de lock an' den I steps inside quick. Oh, Gord, what er sight! Dere a-settin' on de kitchen' table all hump up, war de debbil hisself wif his wings folden ovah his haid an' his chin a-hangin' down an' a winkin' an' blinkin' at me wif eyes as big as ma' fis', an' dar on de flo'—Lawd, folks, I can't tole yo' what I sees. I jes' screech out a screech an' flies to de barn an' locks myself inside an' grabs de pitchfork an' peeps out er crack. Well, pretty soon out comes dat ole debbil, still a-blinkin' an' looks eroun', but he doan' see nuffin an' so he flaps his wings lak er rooster an' tries to fly. But he can't get offen de groun', an' bimeby he climbs up on de fence an' meks a little hop an' dis time off he goes poundin' up in de air slow an' heavy lak a tukey buzzard. I waits until he am mos' out er sight an' den I goes a-shoutin' fo' help. So help me Lawd, dis am de truf of I done get hanged fo' tellin' it."

The corroboration of his story by the whites who had hurried to the scene in response to his stuttered story had convinced all of the entire truthfulness of the narrative, and the wires had immediately spread the gruesome news far and wide. Extra editions of the local press were upon the streets almost before the telegraph key had ceased clicking, and again a nameless horror and unspeakable rage filled the hearts of all who read. For although the papers suppressed the most gruesome of the details, enough remained to make even the stoutest-hearted of those who read the story through shudder. Upon the field the aviators were giving their machines a last test with nervous haste, working silently, fiercely, horror and hatred stamped deeply upon their faces. Doris, rushing bareheaded across the block which separated the Fulton home from the little park where the airships rested, thrust a small package into North's hand just as he mounted his seat.

"I just heard the awful news and knew you would start immediately and without waiting for anything. So I just picked up the first things I

could lay my hands on and hurried here," she panted. "Please take them—one can never tell when such things will be needed. It is almost nothing—just a couple of sandwiches and a small flask of brandy. Now go, and the blessings of humanity go with you." He accepted the package thankfully, smiling upon her with a gratefulness uncommon with him.

"I thank you sincerely, Miss Fulton. And you may rest assured that we will try as we never have before to rid the earth of this monster. Look at the faces of the boys! They have forgotten the reward now and have become soldiers to duty—a duty they owe to all mankind as well as their country. And you may depend upon their laying down their lives in this cause if self-sacrifice will accomplish the common good. For this fiend we seek

"—is neither man nor woman. He is neither brute nor human—"

The rush of a plane close by her caused her to shrink closer to North's machine, and as she did so he bent close to her. "Her name is Clare Manton and here is a letter addressed to her. Send it for me if I do not return." He straightened himself up in his seat and with a parting smile threw on the power. Swiftly the machine darted forward, leaped, and he went speeding into the distance in hot pursuit of the one who led him. From all sides the others arose in hurrying flight, skimming like swallows through the blue air, growing small and smaller until they vanished behind the chaotic masses that had been upheaved in the Titanic convulsions which attended the birth of a world.

Slow of foot and heavy of spirit Doris turned her face homeward, turning the letter over and over in her hands.

CHAPTER X.

The Surprise.

News came back of the safe arrival of the aeroplanes at Dentonville, then ensued an exasperating dearth of information other than that they were daily scouring the country for miles around, but had been able to come across no signs of the murderer. Fears were entertained that he had again changed his place of abode and that he was already hundreds of miles away plotting some new fiendishness in some unsuspected quarter. His almost unlimited capacity for mischief became more and more impressed upon the minds of the people as they grew to appreciate his wonderful flying powers, his ability to see in the dark, his fox cunning and his wolf sanguineousness. So long as he did not recklessly expose himself, as he had done upon the two occasions in the past when he was trying out the flying machines, there seemed little prospect of putting a quietus upon him except by some lucky accident, since

he could work by night altogether if he so chose and since the fleetest planes could not catch him by daylight even when they had him in full view. His ability to change his base of operations with such rapidity rendered troops, horses and artillery practically useless, and unless he could be induced to alight at a certain point traps and snares would be equally ineffective. Also, in a country where food, both animal and vegetable, was so plentiful that he could help himself to whatever he chose by merely taking the trouble of bearing it away, poison could not be relied upon to bring about his downfall. And as a matter of interest it is perhaps worth mentioning at this point that the mere suggestion of using poison there arose a howl of horror from sentimentalists all over the country, who raved at the mere thought of such an

atrocious being perpetrated. Shoot him, stab him, blow him to flinders, choke him, drown him, but poison him to a painless death—horror! They wept copiously at the idea. Better by far let him continue his career of murder and child stealing. And in their cabinets and offices statesmen, military men, scientists and inventors gathered together and held long discussions upon means whereby he might be rendered harmless as various intricate schemes were proposed, all eventually to be discarded as impracticable. The more they schemed and talked, the more evident it became that the gun and the aeroplane were the only weapons which promised any effectiveness against him.

In the common belief that the pest had at last deserted them for good, the people of the city of his first appearance once more gradually resumed their normal lives. One could not go about forever with his eyes up in the air without falling into the holes that lay beneath his feet. In fact, the ordinary dangers of life that beset one on every side were manifold, whereas there was but one Flying Man, and after some score of sky gazers had fallen into coal holes people began to pay more attention to the ground once more. Of course the air prowler might now and then swoop down and destroy someone, but so did the lightning for that matter, yet no one thought it worth while to go about carrying a lightning rod. In other words, the people were growing used to him and many commenced to use his name as a pet bugaboo—thoughtless mothers to frighten their children into good behavior, and silly youths to scare their girl companions into scurrying amidst screams for shelter. Of course should he ever begin a work of general destruction by explosives or the firebrand it would become a very different matter and then they would arise up in their might, but until he showed a disposition so to do there was no necessity of becoming so unduly alarmed. So argued the more philosophic people of the place, and they even sometimes smiled a little after the supercilious manner of the experienced when they read the hysterical reports from other places that imagined because somebody had mysteriously lost a chicken that the Flying Man was hovering over them. But it will be borne in mind that the pest was supposed to be far away from them at this time of smiling.

Doris, who had been virtually a prisoner in her home since the night of the first appearance of the visitor from space, began to resent the confinement and fret almost constantly. An enthusiastic out of doors girl, an ardent golf player and splendid horsewoman, she had prior to the night of the passing of the unknown body almost daily taken her exercise upon the links or in long rides throughout the surrounding district. Often upon these latter journeys she had gone alone, but usually upon Sundays when they were free from the duties of their offices either Clay or Alan, and not infrequently both of them, had ridden with her. Now she was consumed by a desire to ride again, and after resisting for a day or two she decided to do so. The Flying Man had not been heard of for a week, he was undoubtedly hundreds of miles away, and besides she would take an escort with her who would be well armed against anything which might attempt to molest them. Clay had called her up the day before—she had written him her answer as she had promised—and informed her that he expected to leave the city at any moment, and as she had not heard from him since she assumed that he had gone. Alan she had not heard from for several days, so she now decided to call up his number. He answered the ring in person. This was Saturday.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Russian Superstitions.

The number of Russian superstitions is legion, but some of them are not without symbolic beauty. A man's wedding ring is of gold, but is made to fit the wife's finger. A woman's wedding ring is of silver and is made to fit the husband's finger. The significance of this peculiar custom is as follows:

The gold ring should signify to the wife that Ivan Ivanovitch is the sun of her future home. Hers is a silver ring because, like the moon, she is supposed to receive her brilliancy from the husband—the sun.

At the wedding ceremony the rings are exchanged, the woman receiving the gold ring, the husband the silver one, to signify complete accord of husband and wife.

Going Down.

"This high cost of living problem is getting to be something terrible," observed Mrs. Nutley. "Everything is getting higher." "Oh, I don't know," replied her husband, soothingly. "There's your opinion of me, for instance, and my opinion of you, and our mutual opinion of our neighbors, and the neighbors' opinion of both of us."

"I Files to de Barn, and Locks Myself Inside."

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