Virginia of the Air Lanes

A ROMANCE OF FLYING

Herbert Quick

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CHAPTER VI. THE MYSTERY OF THE EMPORIUM.

the evanishment of Mr. Wylie, thought often of Shayne's charming niece, but, manlike, gave scarcely night sky after dropping him as a

The warfare and insurrection which hurt in amour propre as well as protanic regard for Virginia. He was too angry to follow her to the deck as she swept out of the cabin to take leave of in their shirts at the left shoulder. her bandit of the dunes. For some minutes the girl lay, half fainting. wholly terrified, by the rail, where she had fallen as Theodore dropped over the side into the cloud and the night.

"Where is Virginia?" queried Aunt warie at last. "Has she eloped with that creature? Look for her! She's my niece, after all!"

Mr. Shayne called Mrs. Shayne's maid and gave orders that Virginia be sought on deck. The maid looked about hastily and, failing to observe the little heap in which Virginia sat huddled up by the rail, ran in agitatedly and said that Miss Suarez was not on deck "In the least."

"I told you!" gasped Mrs. Shayne "She's thrown herself away!" Silberberg walked glumly in from

the cabin. "This assassin," said he, "must be aft with the crew. There's only one place where Miss Suarez can be."

Shavne ran aft and astonished the crew by bursting into their midst and staring wildly about, as if demented. "What is it, sir?" Willett asked calmly.

"Where is Miss Suarez?" panted Mr. Shayne.

"I don't know, sir."

gone over the side!"

"Where's that fellow we picked up?" "I don't know," responded Willett. "They're gone!" Shayue exclaimed. rushing into the cabin. "Max, they've

"That parachute," said Max, "could not save two from death, even if they made a good drop. And in this darkness"-

Virginia, having recovered her self possession and the control of her knees, rose and, entering her cabin, threw herself on her bed. She felt a horror of Silberberg, a sense of disgust with the Shaynes. To think that they could so insult this young man who had saved her life and treated her so beautifully, no matter what he wasto offer him money, to send him aft like a servant! No wonder he had struck Silberberg's odious nose. Later she rose, preened like a bird before the mirror and sat down to think. The voices of her uncle and aunt and Mr. Silberberg came to her ears from the main salon. Opening her window for air, she noted that the roar of the wind from the earth had ceased and knew that they had reached the calm area, of which Willett had spoken, in the middle of the "low." They would probably have an easy landing in Chicago. And then?

One thing was certain-she would not live longer with the Shaynes. They were too sordld, too hard, too cruel And she would-not-stay-with-them -any longer!

Oh, if she only had just one relative

in the world save Aunt Marie! Stay! The thought struck her of her mother's father's people, somewhere in the south. Her mother had been disowned by her family for a perversely contracted marriage, but they were southerners, and they would not see an orphan girl of their kin go home less. She would leave Aunt Marie a note of thanks for all her many kindnesses, take her really, truly own belongings and fly south. So there!

So resolving, she became quite calm and walked into the main salon in a very matter of fact way. Aunt Marie gave a shrill scream and fainted. Silberberg said that he would be-tor mented. Mr. Shayne stared blankly. "Wetl," said Virginia, "do you think

I am a ghost?" "Oh, child," gasped Aunt Marie "where have you been with him?"

Virginia stood still, her eyes ablaze, her cheeks burning. The Roc was coming into the Chicago garage on the roof of the Aerostatic Power building in a most beautiful landing, but none of the party knew it. Silberberg unbounded admiration. Her splendid lie, Mr. Carson." anger had won him back. Shayne spoke in foolish agreement with his wife, half believing for the moment that there was something questionable in Virginia's absence.

"With a beggar!" said he.

"A bandit," said Aunt Marie, "an

"A beggar!" repeated Virginia in lofty scorn. "Why, even if he were one, in rags and a hovel, he'd be worth plans, Mr. Carson, but"-

a minion uze you! An assassin, a bandit! And, if he is, what are you? You rob by syndicate, assassinate by general managers and superintendents and make beggars by votes of shares! I loathe you, and I l- I admire him as much as I loathe you. As between bandits like you and bandits like him give me the brave man rather than the coward!"

Willett interrupted the scene by announcing their successful landing They passed constrainedly into the tower and went down to the street and to Shayne's Chicago hotel in a motorcar, all in silence.

In the morning a letter was taken to the Shayne apartments. It was a short, tear stained missive of gratitude, penitence and farewell from Virginia to her aunt. It ran:

You have been as kind to me as any woman can be to a person the cannot love. You have never loved me, Aunt Marie, and you will never see me again. I blush to be obliged by your unjust sus-OUNG Mr. Carson, detained at pictons to say one thing more. I am not the Slattery institute to bal-ance the books on account of is. I shall never know!

Craighead and Carson walked through a stately peristyle to a low building a thought of the situation on board called the laboratory, but termed by the Roc as she bore northward in the the patients the "shot tower." Theodore was astonished at the throng asbawk might let fall a too belligerent sembled for the "shot" treatment, of which he had as yet no conceptionmen of all sorts anxiously watching he left behind would have interested the clock like schoolboys fearful of him had he known, Mr. Silberberg. being tardy. They formed in two columns, resting on two aisles, across the boscis, was deeply disturbed in his sul- farther ends of which stood two desks exactly alike. All slung their coats over their right arms, disclosing slits

Craighead, with Carson following. sent back ripples of disorder along the line by offering bets as to whether Carson was himself or Wylie. Two young men easily classified as new hatched physicians stationed themselves like sentinels at the desks. The



'I ADMIRE HIM /S MUCH AS I LOATHE YOU.

clock struck. There was a jostling at the rear caused by late comers, at which the serious young doctors frowned fiercely. The lines moved forward, and the men as they passed the physicians seemed to undergo some sort of operation performed by means of glittering instruments, of which Theodore caught glimpses like lightning playing about those slitted shirt

Theodore found himself in the buman current and drifted with it. On closer view he saw that the doctors pricked the patients with little gilttering weapons, but he reasoned that it could be nothing very severe.

Craighead passed on, and Carson took his place. The doctor looked searchingly in his face, seemed puzzled and reached to another region of the tray for a syringe.

"You should have rolled up your sleeve or cut it," said he sternly. "Roll it up."

Theodore rolled up his sleeve, whereupon with an expertness quite startling the man of medicine pinched up a bit of the brown flesh, shoved in the needle, pressed down the piston, and Theodore was "shot." With a stinging in his arm and wondering as to the why of it all, though he knew by this time that he had dropped out of the night sky into full membership in a drink cure establishment, he passed on.

Dr. Witherspoon met each patient with a standardized smile, clasped each hand with a grip of absolute uniformity and said, "Good morning, Mr. Bascom." or whatever the name might be. "And how is the appetite this morning? And the tongue, please, Puise regular, I observe. Have you had your constitutional this morning? Improving nicely, Mr Bascom, Good

morning" They returned to Theodore's room. Soon entered Mr. O'Grady, Mr. Evans and a slender person of about Carson's size, who at once began the coursing of imaginary game on the wall paper, slapping his thigh and laughing at every failure.

"This," said Mr. O'Grady, introducwas gazing at the enraged Virginia in ing the indoor huntsman, "is Mr. Wy-

"My worst fears confirmed!" hissed Craighead. "The one man I ever loved turns out to be-oh, ye gods, both a teller of truth and a victim of regular

habits! The last straw and no julep!" Carson looked at Wylle, awaiting Mr. O'Grady's development of his

case. "We are, of cawse," said O'Grady, "sorry to have interfered with your

Mr. O'Grady's grave discourse, in which Carson could feel himself being placed irrevocably in the wrong, was interrupted by Mr. Wylle's making a Mr. O'Grady's nose.

"I most caught him," he cried. "A bumblebee! A bumblebee! Sunday. guats; mosquitoes, Monday; Tuesday, flies; bees, Wednesday; hornets yesterday and bumblebees today. Big game soon! Ha, ha, ha, ha! Whoop!

"Long lost brother evidently," remarked Craighead. "I note the Craighead strawberry mark. Well, when he cets to elephants I may claim relation-

"Of cawse," went on Mr. O'Grady. paying no attention to the Wylle incident except to use and examine for blood stains a neatly folded handkerchief, "your being found in the greenhouse has been partially explained, sir, and we are not disposed to make you trouble. In fact, with our customary liberality we shall leave to you both that and your board and lodgings since you so strangely came into our-into our midst."

"Hear, hear!" ejaculated Craighead. 'Hooroar for the emporium!"

"And if you will kindly sign these mutual receipts in full for all claims on both sides we will give Mr. Wylle his room, and-here's the pen, Mr. Carson, sir."

Theodore had already made the first stroke of the "T" when Craighead rushed upon him like a whirlwind, snatched the pen, hurled it into the door like a javelin, where it stood quivering, and interposed between Carson and O'Grady.

"Caltiff, avaunt!" he roared. "Wilt deprive the widows and orphans this youth may accumulate of their cause of action against this dope shotten emportum? Back, slave! You reach him only over my dead body! Receipts in full? Not on your life-to coin an expression. You have shot his patrician blood full of dishwater and bug juice. You have filled his innocent and unworldly stomach with dope. You have amputated his appetite for light wines and may as well pass him the darker drink first as last. He has suffered and must ever suffer most excruclating pain and agony and both mental and physical anguish. He's a gone gosling! And I, the greatest personal injury specialist in the legal world, as his attorney demand ten-thousandplunks as damages, falling the receipt of which, well and truly to be paid in lawful money of the realm, we'll take the emporium in execution and make Witherspoon a stable boy, with you as assistant swipe, both of you to sleep with Tige! We don't sign nothin',

CHAPTER VII. A TALK WITH MR. WADDY. HEODORE resolved that he must hie to the shed in the notice of the world in spite of the en- road and came back into the village "I know," broke in Mr. Craighead, I tall elms and maples knobby of smoke, "the yearnings of your sub- and they waited. tropical Alabamian system. But be practical. You come to this emporium, to be an alumnus, and you find me in tootsies to mother earth; a storage bat-

the world. I am an Antaeus, with no immediate prospects of getting my tery as big as Pike's peak, but insulated from the mass of demagnetized humanity; a great force for a number of things, with no way of proving it. What do you do? You make a profession for me. I was naught, not to mention naughty. What am I now? A great personal injury lawyer, developing into a prosperous ambulance chaser. I was out of touch with the world of finance. I have now laid the foundation for the organization of the great Carson-Craighead Aeronef cor-

"What do you mean?" ejaculated Carson.

"What I say! What I say! Through long, colonnaded, peristyled vista of marble and onyx I can see nailed to the back fence the bide of Mr. Finley Shayne.

"But I have no clothes," Carson

urged. "Clothes!" scornfully repeated Craighead. "What are they? Merely woven fabrics to fill bags to secure credit withal at hotels. And you need no credit, for this room is mine for the whole term of the treatments paid for by some one into whose company 1 dropped or rose during my last shore leave from the good ship Lithia, but by whom I have no idea. Clothes, indeed! Scat!"

"But it's cold here," persisted Carson, feeling helpless in the tolls of this serpentine logic. "I'm not prepared for

this climate." "Look abroad!" commanded Craighead, with a gesture toward the window. "The sun beats down upon the last remnants of the snow, and the littie brooks give the glad ha-ha to the river and send down the silky billet doux of the catkin to remind him that they've busted loose and are hurling themselves into his arms. Why, darn you, it's spring! And you can stay right here-steam heat, bath, hot and cold water, padded cell in connectionoh, fair youth, I love thee! Let me finish bunkoing Mr. O'Grady and start the Aeronef company. Don't be a

clam!" "You know how I feel about those damages, but if I could get the capital for the aeronef"-

"Why, you don't doubt my practical genius, do you," queried Craighead in estonishment-"in other people's affairs, I mean, of course? Why, sir, if in view of my failure with my own I can't handle other people's business then what becomes of my ability? I tell you, haughty southron, I'm good

for something! I have found a billionnire, and you shall meet him."

All that day Carson watched Craighead. From a trunk covered with the labels of foreign travel Craighead took swoop upon an imaginary animal on a sheet of cardboard and painted upon it an elaborate sign which bore the legend, "Craighead, Attorney and Counselor at Law." This he fastened outside the door, chuckling from time to time as the passersby paused as if to read it. After awhile he added to it.

"Personal Injury Cases a Specialty." Craighead went out late and brought back several legal looking books, which he ranged upon the dresser in dusty formidability-an old set of Illinois statutes and a tattered Broom's "Legal Maxims," from which he read unctuously such Latin aphorisms as "De minimis non curat lex," "Falsus in uno, falsus in omnibus," and the like, and lectured upon them very informatively. The remainder of the library consisted of a ten years' file of Martindale's Legal Directory, containing nothing more authoritative than lists of the world's lawyers.

"Where did you get them?" asked Theodore,

"Secondhand man," replied Craighead, "on approval. We must keep up appearances even if we have to buy

They went out for a walk to give O'Grady a chance, as Craighead expressed it, to see what he was up against, a statement that mystified Theodore greatly.

On their return Mr. O'Grady seemed to have been wrought upon by what be was "up against," for he asked Mr. Craighead if he would be so good as to give him a few minutes. Mr. Craighead looked at his watch, pleaded lack of time and asked Theodore if their business could wait. When Carson admitted that it could O'Grady said "Thank you, sir," in the tone of a porter accepting a tip.

What under heaven had suddenly raised the expelled Craighead from me despised position in the institute to thing to inspire terror and panic Theo. dore could not imagine nor guess the reason for Craighead's sardonic laughter as he sat in their room drawing indictments against O'Grady and Witherspoon. He saw, however, that these were awesome documents, which set forth in a large, round hand that these gentlemen had been guilty of obtaining money under false pretenses, false Imprisonment, malicious assault and the like, all done "feloniously, of malice prepense and aforethought, not having the fear of God before their eyes, but instigated thereunto by the devil," and "against the peace and dignity of the state of Illinois and contrary to the statutes in such cases made and provided."

"Theodore, when we return," said Craighead, "this room will be full of corpses knocked stiff by these linpeachments of O'Grady and Witherspoon. Take the spoor of the billionguif dunes, complete the flying | sire. Hike-oh, hike-with me!" They machine and bring it to the crossed a dim field, followed a farm mity of Mr. Shayne, upon which he from the opposite side. Craighead WILD gazing at the ceiling through wreaths swelling buds. He pushed a button,

At slow steps in the hall Craighead squeezed Carson's arm spasmodically. of which, alas, neither of us is fated The door opened, and a low figure stood before them in which Theodore fine fettle save that I am unrelated to noted something familiar, and a voice not altogether strange, be thought, in-

vited them into the "other room." "Mr. Carson." said Mr. Craighead, "does not recognize in our host the erstwhile guide of my wandering and wabbly feet. Mr. Carson, in your new and fully established capacity as a respectable citizen let me present you to Mr. Waddy, to whose counsel, precept and example while acting as my attendant I feel myself indebted for my complete restoration to Philistinehood. Mr. Carson, Mr. Waddy!"

Mr. Waddy, ignoring this reintroduction, led them silently down the hall, past a door, which gave forth scuffling sounds, female voices and the peeping of young chickens, and took them into a snug den, the shelves of which were covered with books-tall, imposing, learned looking tomes in time darkened bindings-where they sat down in leather covered chairs gray with dust. "So you did reely drop into the gar-

den?" their host finally asked. "Yes," answered Carson. "I think it was foolish to take the risk, but I did."

"Why?" queried Waddy, and Carson explained. "Boy foolishness," said Mr. Waddy, and silence fell again, broken at last by Theodore's inquiry as to whether

Mr. Waddy was active in eight banks and if he did not find his duties irksome.

"No," replied Waddy. "The things growed up on me. I never wanted to be a banker, but my rents kep' loadin' me up with deposits, an' I sort of got one bank after another-darn it!-country banks-the boys run 'em. I came here to have a quiet time in my own way, an' see how I make out. They wanted me to put on style. They reckoned I was going to when I bought this place. I could slick up an' go to stockholders' meetin's, an' the boys never knowed. An' jest as I got things right Caroline's man dies, an' here she comes to 'take care' of me! I shan't be allowed to earn a cent by workin' for Witherspoon, an' it brought me into such society. Them jags is mighty nice fellers, some of 'em.'

"I thank you," said Craighead, with an excess of manner. "And as for your being condemned by family pride to sterile uselessness, it is truly a shame, But is Caroline a relative?"

"Unly daughter," answered Mr. Waddy. "Come to live with me. Settin' things to rights."

"Mr. Waddy," said Craighead, "bear up under this. It may be for the best. And let us take up Mr. Carson's great have long believed that some one would turn up with the machine to whom, as it seemed to Theodore, he

subordinate all others, but since the time of Santos-Dumont, Farman and the Wrights aerial navigation has made no real progress. Mr. Carson is the genius. We offer you the unique chance to be with us comaster of the world. Mr. Carson will be glad to expinin his aeronef."

"I wun't put a cent in it!" said Mr.

Carson's heart sank, "Certainly not," replied Craighead, as if Mr. Waddy's refusal were the most natural thing in the world, "until you have ciphered the thing down to brass nails. And then- But tell Mr. Waddy about it, Mr. Carson. You need not enter into the offers of millions we have had and spurned. Just describe the machine."

Carson switched on the lights, and they gathered about the table.

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. WADDY INVESTS. HE young man talked slowly. Once in awhile Mr. Waddy in-

terjected a question which evinced intelligent comprehensico of the heart of Carson's explanation. Carson explained that his aeronef differed from all others in having wings like a bird's, which did not flap, like those of the absurd orthopters and yet used half their surface in beating the air with a straight thrust like that of an oar in water.

"Don't yeh use screws?" asked Wad-

"Not at all," apswered Carson. "The screw can never be effective, because it strikes with a slant. It will do in water, but air requires a more effective thrust. When your propeller blade moves at a hundred miles an hour, say, you have a lift of thirty pounds to the square foot of surface with the direct stroke. But the surface of the screw"-

"Now, how d'ye figger that?" Carson repeated laboriously.

"Why," said Carson, "I can lift weights that none of the other airships can stir and fly off like an eagle with a

The farmer-banker and the inventor were so absorbed that they scarcely noticed the entrance of a messenger from the institute with a message from Mr. O'Grady asking if Mr. Craighead would step outside for a moment nor Craighead's withdrawal and return

"The direction of the blow of the propeller," said Carson, "is under perfect control. A bird's wing isn't. This is a better wing than an eagle's."

"Kin you raise right straight up." asked Waddy, "without running along like a buzzard?"

"I sure can," replied Carson, falling into dialect. "No bird can do that-no big bird. It's a better, stronger flier than any bird. The best any other machine can do is to support four pounds to the square foot of surface. With my new motors I can fly off with five times that, and I've got four times their bearing surface. I can carry mail and express at a profit or passennow confidently counted. He must- hurried Carson to a broad porch under gers that can afford it. I can hover over a ship with good heavy torpedoes and sink her and overtake any vessel that floats. I can"-

"What kind of motors you got?" interrupted Waddy.

Carson went into details. The old man looked through his eyebrows, whiskers and mustaches at Carson and the drawings.

"What if your engines stop," he asked, "when you're a mile high and over water mebbe?" "I can soar," answered Carson. "I can make headway and gain height with no power if there's a wind, and I can stay up for hours with the propellers set for aeroplanes. But the

gyroscopic balancing device." "What's that?" asked Mr. Waddy. "Why, it's the successful application of the gyroscope to aviation."

best thing I haven't mentioned—the

"They used to talk about that," observed Mr. Waddy, "long ago-the Brennan single rail roads. I thought it turned out that the gyroscopes was too heavy f'r air work.'

"They are too heavy," cried Theodore, "if you use them to do the balancing. That's sure. And so we have had to balance by feeling, just as we do a bicycle. Thought isn't quick enough, so you have to rely on feeling. as a bird does. But I use little gyroscopes not to control by their weight and stress, but to distribute power to the wings and rudders-positive, automatic distribution of power. Why, if the engineer of thy machine should fall dead it would fly on just as he set it until the fuel was exhausted. It feels and thinks."

They did not notice the opening of the door nor see the woman who entered.

"Papa," she said. Mr. Waddy rose hastily and faced her. She looked like Mr. Waddy, but was undenlably pretty. He was blocky and short; she, round and plump, with small hands and feet. The turned up pug nose of Mr. Waddy was modified to a delightful little retrousse effect in her.

"Papa," said she, "this is hardly a place in which to entertain these gentlemen. We have cleared out the east

feverish haste. "To be sure, Caroline! Take 'em in, won't you? I've got to see the hired man. My daughter, Mrs. Graybill, Mr. Craighead; Caroline, aa friend of mine, Mr. Carson of Alabama. Excuse me for a minute, gentlemen."

"Supper." said she, smiling, "will be

served very soon."

The long dining room was gloomy with decayed gentility-black beams, dark wainscoting and a broad plate rail bearing wrenches, clevises, oil cans and baskets of eggs labeled as to breeds and dates. During the meal project for monopolizing aviation. I Craighead came out amazingly in his encounters with Mrs. Graybill, to

was making violent love. Mr. Waddy sat buried in thought, save when be questioned Carson concerning the aero-

"There's no cinch in it," said Mr. Waddy, "no monopoly, an' as soon as ft's public everybody'll build 'em. I

do husiness on cinches." "Oh, but the patents, Mr. Waddy!" cried Craighead. "You forget the pat-

"They expire in a few years," said Mr. Waddy, "an' then where are yeh? Land, now-that I made my money tn-land's an eternal cinch."

"Mr. Waddy," said Craighead, "this matter of securing exclusive control of the air is a part of our plans. It is one of my specialties."

Carson was amazed. Mr. Waddy grunted as if lightly impressed, as no doubt he was

"How long will it take you," said he, "to kind of draw out your plan for clinchin' the control of the air legally?"

"Oh, a very brief time," said Craighead. "I have installed a fine law library in my apartments so the consultation of authorities will be easy, but"-

"Well," interrupted Mr. Waddy, "if you can have that done by the time Mr. Carson can go where his machine is, put it in shape an' fly back it'll do. When he lights in the front yard an' you bring me a good law proof monopely I'll go in with you, but he's got to fetch a letter from Mobile within twenty-four hours o' the time it's stamped there. I'm from Missouri! What say?"

"Done!" cried Craighead.

Theodore was trembling. "Before we call it a bargain," said Theodore, "I should like a word with Mr. Craighead if you will excuse me. "Certainly," said Mrs. Graybill. Craighead faced Carson inquiringly

as they found themselves alone in the "I wish to explain," said Theodore.

"that I-I can't pay the charges on the



"I'VE SETTLED THE CASE OF CARSON VER-SUS THE SLATTERY INSTITUTE."

motors; I can't get them down to the beach. So how can we accept Mr. Waddy's offer?"

"Gad, cunnel," exclaimed Craighead, "I'm glad you told me in private instead of disclosing our impecuniousness to his Waddiness. But have no fear. You carry Caesar and his fortunes I have the fund for the motors."

Craighead drew from his pocket a roll of bills, the outer one of rather startling magnitude.

"Fees." said Craighead - "damages. actual and exemplary. I've settled the case of Carson versus the Slattery institute. Fair sir, we have a swollen fortune."

"What do you mean?" asked Carson. "I mean," said Craighead, "that this roll of tainted money is our loot of the emporium. Wit well that I soaked 'em plenty."

"But I can't allow this!" cried Theodore.

"It's already allowed." answered Craighead, with an air of perfect innocence. "Come, callow sir, we can't begin now the ruinous policy of scrutinizing the sources of our supplies. We can endow a college later, and that-What you doing?"

Carson was cramming the bills into his pocket.

"Going back to Mr. Waddy," said

he. "Come on." "Aye, aye, sir." said Craighead, his hand to his forelock. "But I warns you, capting, that there's breakers dead ahead and on both bows and that Craighead's the only pilot as knows these waters. But here's with you.

if it's to Davy Jones!" "Mr. Waddy," said Theodore, walking up to him and looking him in the face, "before accepting your offer I must make sure that I can fulfill my part of it. I must install the motors in the aeronef. There are some financial "Oh, yes!" assented Mr. Waddy, with arrangements to be made. It may be some weeks"-

"I'll let you have what money you need," said Mr. Waddy. "I know how it gen'ly is with these here geniuses." Theodore grasped the old man's

hands, his face flushed with joy. "I accept your advances with pleasure," said he, "and within sixty days I shall be here with the aeronef."

"As certain," said Craighead, "as the world turns over sixty times on its shafting. Got your order, Mr. Waddy!"

They took their departure. After retiring they lay awake, exchanging remarks and suggestions

across the dark room. (Continued to Page 8).