# The Flying Man

by Harry Irving Greene

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

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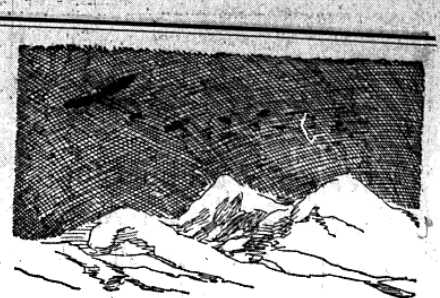


SYNOPSIS.

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 man 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. 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. A negress is the latest victim. The aviators go to the scene of the tragedy, some 300 miles distant.

## CHAPTER X.—Continued.

"And I am going riding tomorrow at nine in the morning, and if you feel so inclined you may ride with me," she informed him at the close of their preliminary chat. He thought it over for a moment as he held the wire. It seemed to be an assured fact that the enemy was far away, it certainly was too late to keep an active girl like Doris shut up in the house any longer when she craved the open air, and it certainly would be a delight to again go galloping at her side. Anyway he would have his revolver handy and nothing could get near them by daylight without being riddled, therefore—

"And if you won't come with me I will go alone," she threatened in the midst of his meditations as she became tired of awaiting his answer. Of course that settled it.

"I am only too eager to accompany you."

"Indeed! I can imagine your eagerness from the impetuous way in which you accepted the invitation. Why, I did not wait over five minutes before reminding you that I was still listening. If I woke you up, I apologize."

"I was not sleeping, I was merely thinking. Somehow I cannot think much and talk at the same time as some people seem to be able to do. Lucky for them they can though—otherwise they would not think much," he added with a grin. But the attempted sarcasm was evidently lost on Doris for her laugh came tinkling over the wire.—

"Now I wonder whom you can mean by that, for goodness knows I never utter a word—except when I happen to think of something I want to say. Then I may expect you to call at nine in the morning?"

"You may."

"Very well. I will tell you the rest of the gossip that I have picked up over the "phone then." And with that she rang off abruptly as she usually did when she had had her say and left him to pursue the affairs of business.

Promptly at the hour appointed the next day he rode single-footing up to the block before her house. Mounted on a handsome chestnut horse with four white stockings, riding splendidly, Doris admitted to herself that she was proud of his appearance as he dismounted and took her bridle reins as she swung herself into the saddle, for Doris was of the west where all women who ride horses at all are wise enough to ride them astride. Then with a clatter of hoofs they were off down the road galloping side by side, vagrant wisps of the girl's shining hair snapping in the breeze like tiny pennants, her parted lips showing the tips of her even white teeth, her eyes brightening with the swift coursing of her blood, her spirits effervescing, radiant, happy once more. And March seeing all this sighed the sigh of an ardent lover as his thoughts flew on to —well, to whence do every ardent lover's thoughts take flight when he rides by the side of her who inspired them?

Close beside them the mountains grim and vast towered up so steep that a mountain sheep would have had to choose his way with care—Titanic walls thrown up in prehistoric ages to mark the end of the dominion of the plain and the beginning of the land of snow-clad peaks and abyssmal gorges. Above them the marvelous sky stretched into infinity, unmarred by speck visible to the human eye, upon their head the rays of the sun fell warmly, but the air was crisp and sparkling, sweet to the nose and lungs, invigorating, exhilerating. Miles behind them lay the peaceful city, silent in the Sunday morning save for the faint tolling of bells. It was a day, an hour and a place to make one tingle with the joy of wholesome exercise, the sweetness of youth and health, the gladness of living. Doris' laugh, low and contented, was seldom still.

They had ridden rapidly in a roundabout course for two hours and now the deep trench of Blue Canyon opened close before them. Hewed out of the solid mountain, flat of bottom and precipitous of sides, it retreated mile after mile towards the distant peaks, crawling sinuously backward as a worm retreats, ever ascending until it flattended itself into nothingness and was lost in the far upper regions. Some distance from its mouth was a famous spring where the water gushed from the rock as an endless stream of diamonds, cold and sweet, and as though they had prearranged their act they swung their horses into the canyon's throat, slightly thirsty themselves and knowing that their horses would be eager to drink. Fifteen minutes later they dismounted where the stream burst forth, and throwing the long bridle reins of the well trained animals over their heads they left the beasts to drink and shift for themselves. Alan filled the folding pocket drinking cup which he always carried in his riding coat and handed it to his companion. She raised it to her lips, challenging him with laughing eyes over the brim.

"To the most gallant of escorts," she said with the mockery of mischief in her manner as she quaffed daintily and returned the cup to him. He sank upon one knee in exaggerated homage, refilled it, rose and held it on high.

"To the woman I love," and looking her full in the face drank it with one mighty draught. She laughed contentedly, seating herself upon a boulder while he took his place close at hand where he could look her full in the face and thus miss no detail of her beauty. It was absolutely impossible for March to be alone with Doris for any length of time without making love to her, and now he began again with unblushing flattery.

"Doris, you are the sweetest—prettiest—most inconsistent—most aggravating—most adorable woman in the world," he ejaculated between puffs as he lighted a cigar. She nodded her assent.

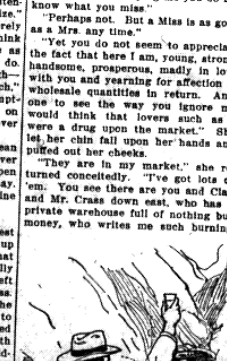
"All right. I don't care if I am. What of it?"

"And in not marrying me you do not know what you miss."

"Perhaps not. But a Miss is as good as a Mrs. any time."

"Yet you do not seem to appreciate the fact that here I am, young, strong, handsome, prosperous, madly in love with you and yearning for affection in wholesale quantities in return. Any one to see the way you ignore me would think that lovers such as I were a drug upon the market." She let her chin fall upon her hands and puffed out her cheeks.

"They are in my market," she returned conceitedly. "I've got lots of 'em. You see there are you and Clay and Mr. Cras down east, who has a private warehouse full of nothing but money, who writes me such burning



"To the Woman I Love!"

letters that I have to keep them in the ice chest for fear of spontaneous combustion, and—"

"I believe you are in love with Clay after all," he interrupted sullenly, little knowing the other's proposal and her answering letter. Immediately she became airy, mischievous, totally unsatisfactory, revelling in the feminine satisfaction of mastery over mere man, yet with her conscience secretly pricking her for tormenting him and with the mental resolve that she would more than make amends for it before the day was over. Not an ounce of real cruelty was there in Doris' whole being, nor any more vanity than must of necessity abide in one who was so persistently sought, and being thankful for her beauty rather than vain of it, but knowing in her own heart that she was enjoying her small tyranny over her suitors. Before succumbing she enjoyed pricking them slightly and watching them squirm for a moment that she might by a touch or a word make them whole again and more content than ever. Therefore she said:

"And suppose I were! And suppose even that we were about to become engaged! What of it? At least you must admit that he also is young, strong, handsome, prosperous and yearning for affection in impossible quantities—" He interrupted her impatiently.

"Oh, I suppose so—from a woman's viewpoint. But it seems to me in this case I have a prior claim." Judicially she thrust out her bosom.

"The mere fact of priority does not in itself of necessity validate a claim," she announced ponderously. "You see I learned lots of law from Clay when he had that broken rib. He read Blackstone to me, too." Again March squirmed.

"But injustice and equity—"

"Justice, like charity, should begin at home, while equity means the equal treatment of others. In the case at bar—" she hemmed learnedly—"the plaintiffs seem to be one Alan March and one Clay Tolliver, et al., suitors for the fortune—namely the face—of the defendant, one Doris Fulton, who, strangely enough, is the judge presiding. She has listened to the pleas of the plaintiffs, heard their respective arguments and now has the case under advisement. Presently she will decide in favor of one or the other, or if she feels so disposed throw both suits out of court—"

"Which will mean the end of their courting."

"So far as she is concerned. Yet the court does not intend by these words to in any manner intimate what will be her ultimate decision. "There!" she exclaimed triumphantly. "What do you think of that? And I learned it all from Clay."

"Speaking of the devil—" broke in March with a disgusted movement of his hand. She looked up quickly. A couple of hundred yards away and slowly approaching them upon his horse was the omnipresent Tolliver himself. Clean cut and erect in his saddle, he presented as good a figure upon a horse as one often sees, and March was fully cognizant of the fact that Doris was by no means blind to such things. As for the girl, she appeared delighted at his coming and promptly waved her hand in greeting, while the newcomer touching his hat and slightly quickening his speed dismounted before them with a bow to her and a nod to her escort.

"Both unexpected and most agreeable," he smiled. She motioned him to seat upon an adjoining rock.

"So say we all. And you did not leave the city after all your threats and attempts to frighten me. What happy chance led you this way?"

"I have no idea unless the secret wish which I was cherishing mystically guided my steed's feet upon the path I was longing to pursue. However, I assure you I had no idea of intruding—" She laughed lightly.

"As if there could be such a thing. We were merely talking—let me see, what were we talking about?" she challenged with a taunting glance at March who sat unhappily. He wrinkled his brow.

"A suppositious, highly involved metaphysical and legal tangle I believe. Miss Fulton was spouting quite learnedly." Tolliver's eyes, unfathomable and always peculiar looking to March, rested upon his face steadily.

"Miss Fulton has the mental qualifications to become a very good lawyer," he returned slowly. "While I was ill at her home I sometimes used to alternate law with Kipling. I found her very apt. It was one of my greatest sources of enjoyment during those painful, happy hours." He turned to the girl. "But really I am especially fortunate to meet you here when I had quite given up hope of seeing you again soon. I called up your home this morning only to learn that you had gone riding—in what direction no one knew. I wished to see you again before I leave, which may be at any time."

"And to where do you go?" Tolliver's face clouded thoughtfully.

"To be absolutely honest with you, I do not know."

"And when do you expect to start?"

"Again I do not know—except that I may be summoned at any time." He saw the mystification upon her face and hastily assumed a lighter vein. "I have no desire to speak in parables, and assure you that I desire to conceal nothing. I am as completely in the dark as are yourselves, yet I know that I am going away. I will not attempt to enlighten you further at this time, as it would involve a somewhat lengthy and involved explanation which I am not at all sure that you would grasp. It is enough to say that I have been notified and am holding myself in readiness."

"And this notice—had you been expecting it?" she inquired, manifestly little pleased at the mystery of his manner. He negatived.

"No. It came to me a couple of days ago as lightning out of a clear sky. It may be because of business reasons, it may be for any other cause, it may be today or a week from now, it may be with great suddenness or I may have a short notice—those are things I know no more about than do you. I simply know that I have been notified and must hold myself in readiness to obey." He saw March's thin smile of incredulity and gave him a queer look in return.

"I know it sounds as though I were wandering mentally, yet you will find out that it is all true," he added coldly. He arose and took a step towards his horse, addressing himself solely to Doris. "And now I am going to leave you for today, hoping that I may see you again before I depart upon the longer trip of which I have just spoken." The girl springing to her feet stepped close before him.

"Ride back with us," she urged.

He shook his head, speaking to her rapidly and in a voice too low for Alan to hear his words. "No, this afternoon belongs to you two. But I shall endeavor to make an opportunity to at least say goodby to you before I leave. And always remember—" her lids dropped before the light she saw burning in his eyes—"what I told you the other day, Doris—that all that I possess, even to my life itself, is ever at your service." The snort of his horse caused him to wheel just as that animal, raising its head, started at a brisk trot down the canyon with the bridle reins trailing. Much to the astonishment of the girl and Alan their own well broken horses, which theretofore had been standing quietly, now faced about and started in the other's tracks, heads and ears erect. In an instant March was upon his feet.

"Now, what the mischief ails those brutes?" he exclaimed angrily as he started in quick pursuit, loudly commanding them to whoa. Tolliver, equally provoked at the actions of his own beast, was hurrying along by his rival's side as he called his animal by name.

"They must have winded some beast up there in the mountains and become uneasy. They are not particularly frightened—just restless. See! They have stopped already," he exclaimed. A hundred yards further down the pass the beasts had stopped short in their scamper, and wheeling about were now awaiting the approach of their masters, their ears pricked forward and tails jerking nervously. Rapidly the men pressed on to capture them while the opportunity offered.

And then from behind them there arose a scream so shrill, so penetrating, so awful in its horror that their blood curdled within them and their hearts seemed to stop at its first wild note. They spun upon their heels with every nerve bristling. "My God," gasped Clay, reeling as though from a fierce blow in the face, while March, sickened to the very core of his soul by what he saw, felt a deathly faintness sweep over him. Doris, a hundred yards away from them and to all appearances already unconscious from terror and shock, was being lifted bodily from the earth by the Flying Man. Again the horses were stampeding down the canyon with terrified snortings.

With an inarticulate cry of horror March jerked his revolver from his pocket and went leaping backward towards her, Tolliver racing by his side with weapon in hand. But even as they made their first step the winged one, leaping into the air as lightly as a tiger who bears but a fawn leaps a jungle deadfall, he struck the air with his tremendous wings. Upward he forged with swift beatings, upward and away, shielding himself perfectly from the drawn weapons of those below by the form of the one he bore, peering malevolently over the top of her head with his enormous insect like eyes at those who were raging below like men bereft of their reason. With brain reeling as though he would go mad March glanced at Tolliver. His rival's face was distorted almost beyond the semblance of a human beings, his eyes filled with the dull glare of stark madness, his teeth bared like a wounded panther's, his big revolver already raised for the shot which even though it missed the girl and pierced the fore-head of the one who bore her must bring her also crashing down upon the rocks to certain mutilation and death. With the quickness of thought he struck the weapon from the other's hand and sent it ringing upon the stones. Without pausing to see what his erstwhile rival's next move would be he went dashing up the canyon in wild pursuit, his eyes fastened upon those above, the horror of one who faces the rack freezing him to his very vitals.

## CHAPTER XI.

In the Clutch.

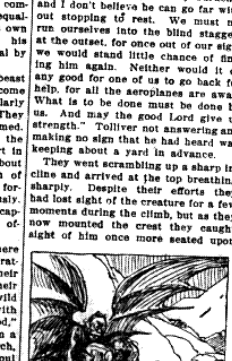
During the first five minutes of his frenzy Alan, little better than an insane man, ran frantically along the gently rising and fairly level floor of the gulch, striving with every nerve and muscle to keep pace with the creature above, calling Doris by name, shouting hoarsely at her captor, who still shielding himself behind the other, gazed silently back at him from over the top of her head as he flapped himself further and further into the distance in a half backwards, half sidewise flight. Then with the gradual return of reason as his wind began to desert him he realized the utter futility of so exhausting himself that he could no longer pursue, and with an effort fought himself back to self-control and logical reasoning. He glanced back. Tolliver, staring fixedly upward, was just coming up on a panting run and would have passed him without speaking or slackening his pace had not March seized him as he was going by. The look upon Clay's face caused another shiver to vibrate down Alan's spine. "Tolliver!" he cried sharply.

"Let me go. Release me, damn you," he yelled as he raised his revolver as if about the strike the other down. Alan shook him fiercely.

"Listen to me," he commanded. "If after I have spoken you still insist upon senselessly exhausting yourself you may do so. But harken to what I say first." Hesitating, seeming to but half comprehend what the other was saying Clay lowered his weapon and side by side they jogged along. March spoke as best he could between breaths.

"It is unspeakably horrible, but we must keep our senses if we would do our best. And we must work together and coolly if we would hope to save her. We must keep on as rapidly as we can without exhausting ourselves, and manage somehow to keep him in sight. He is pretty heavily burdened and I don't believe he can go far without stopping to rest. We must not run ourselves into the blind staggers at the outset, for once out of our sight we would stand little chance of finding him again. Neither would it do any good for one of us to go back for help, for all the aeroplanes are away. What is to be done must be done by us. And may the good Lord give us strength." Tolliver not answering and making no sign that he had heard was keeping about a yard in advance.

They went scrambling up a sharp incline and arrived at the top breathing sharply. Despite their efforts they had lost sight of the creature for a few moments during the climb, but as they now mounted the crest they caught sight of him once more seated upon



Doris Was Being Lifted Bodily From the Earth by the Flying Man.

a cleft in the rock wall perhaps a quarter of a mile ahead, the girl closely clasped in his arms and to all appearances still unconscious. For the first time since her scream had horrified him March was conscious of a gleam of hope. The girl's weight was a heavy handicap for the flying one, and he would of necessity have to make more and more frequent stops as he proceeded. With Clay to help him it might be that they could get the other in such a position that he could not shield himself from both at the same time, and then all might be well after all. Both himself and his companion were good pistol shots, and given half a chance could probably disable the brute. And now as the trail ran downward again they broke into a fast trot once more.

Motionless the one upon the cleft watched them until they had come within a couple of hundred yards, eyeing them with the motionless alertness of an eagle upon his eyrie, then spreading his wings launched himself into open space. The noise of his heavily beating wings came plainly to their ears, his flight was irregular and labored like that of a hawk bearing away a chicken, or an eagle a lamb, and so long as the travelling was good the struggling pair in pursuit nearly kept pace with him. Half a mile further on, however, the canyon bed again became a steeply rising jumble of rocks, and up this they went laboriously. And once again when they reached the summit they saw the object of their pursuit just arising from the trail after a moment's rest and but a stone throw ahead of them, yet still shielded as cunningly as ever by the body of the girl. So on and on they went with the perspiration streaming from their bodies and their hearts thudding heavily, but with the grim determination to follow until exhausted nature bereft them of the power of movement and left them prone and gasping upon the rocks. Tolliver, still a few paces in advance, threw aside his coat with a curse of impatience at its weight, and March, after a minute's consideration, did likewise. It bid fair to be a chase that would draw their strength to the last ounce and wear their endurance to the bone, therefore one could not well travel too light. His collar and vest quickly followed the first garment, and feeling far more free of action and breath by thus having rid himself of those cumbering things, he quickened his pace with a step which once more fell lightly.

An hour had passed with no permanent change in their see-saw positions. As the Flying Man had led the aircraft by a distance unvarying to the eye, so now did he lead the tolling two who hung so grimly on his course. When by reason of the steepness or roughness of their path he got so much as half a mile ahead, he would promptly stop and refresh himself until they had come up within a few hundred yards, whereupon he would flounder up with difficulty and resume his flight with heavily beating wings. Noon with its horizontal sun found both pursuers suffering acutely. Despite the coolness of the mountain air their clothing was drenched with perspiration, their limbs racked, their heads swam, their feet tortured, their breath came in wheezing gasps. Yet without pause and without a word uttered they struggled on, first one forging to the lead and then the other, passing and being passed alternately as the footing favored or retarded, sliding down sharp inclines to the rattle of following stones, scrambling up painful ascents where they left the blood of their hands and knees upon the sharp rock edges, sometimes stumbling into a fall that tore ragged gaps in their clothing and raked the skin from their limbs, their mouths half open, their limbs shaking, their breath whistling, their eyes forever glued upon the retreating one who, with a brief rest for every mile, still baffled them as maddingly as during the first hour. And above all was the incessant torment of their thirst.

One o'clock found them upon the edge of a ravine, deep and precipitous, its bottom a jumbled mass of huge boulders that through the untold centuries of the past had gone crashing to its bottom from the mountain's top. Just ahead of them the winged one was flapping in direct flight for the other side, while they travelling upon their blistered feet must first descend its dizzy slope to its lowest depth, clamber across its chaotic bottom and struggle painfully up the other side—a good mile of heart-breaking struggle against a half mile's unimpeded flight.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Society Caution.

The strange medley of which New York society is now composed led Frederick Townsend Martin, the admitted leader of New York society, to say at a luncheon: "Society, for all its diversities and contradictions, is uniform in one thing—and that one thing is a lack of culture. A society woman from the middle west, as her limousine glided down Fifth avenue, said to her daughter: 'My dear, at the dinner dance last night you talked entirely too much about Ibsen and Bernard Shaw and Tolstoi.' 'Dear me! Why?' the daughter asked. 'Strangers,' the mother explained, 'will be apt to think you were once employed in a book shop.'"

### Argentina's Rapid Advance.

Twenty-five years ago Argentina had to import its flour. Today it sells wheat to the world, the annual harvest value amounting to more than $500,000,000.