

Men with Wings

Leslie F. Stone

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Men with Wings

Leslie F. Stone

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His wings were snowy white and he smiled brightly appearing very curious about the plane. Mureno thought of taking him back as a prisoner, but the other laughed and dropped from the plane.

THE present story is quite an extraordinary one, and aside from adventure, suspense and interest, it contains excellent science.

A well known evolutionist once said that if it were absolutely necessary for humanity to have four arms and hands instead of two, the extra members would in time be evolved. Nature always keeps pace with necessity, particularly if this necessity is vital. Once a member is no longer vital, it promptly is discarded, such as for

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instance, tails in human beings. It may not be known generally, that among the human family, there are so-called throw backs, which still have a prehensile tail.

The author has made use in this tale of an evolution of a most remarkable character and carries the reader on from chapter to chapter with never ending suspense.

Sketch of the author, Leslie Stone

FOREWORD

IT was in examining the precious stack of documents that lay carefully wrapped and ticketed in the old-fashioned vault that our ancestors called a safe that I came across this manuscript, which in view of its great historical worth, I feel obliged to publish that all men may read.

We, today, being a race possessing wings, know the few facts of our peculiar evolution. But cold facts like a cold egg do not attract our attention or pique our appetite. And so in order to give more vivid understanding of what actually took place, I am presenting the story of my ancestor who, to use a quaint idiom of his day typed these chapters of the great and most picturesque period of world history.

Almost five hundred years have passed and the pages of the manuscript are yellowed by time, but it is possible in reading them for one to relive the tale in its colorful telling. One has only to lift his eye to the air above him and see his fellow-man flying as the birds fly with wings outspread, to become thankful that he is not like his ancestors of centuries ago who had to depend upon a poor sort of flying contraption that had been handed down to him. They did not know the pure joy of soaring above the eagles' heads and adding voice to that of the meadow lark. And realizing this the world can bow heads in reverence to the Martyred President of America and send up a prayer of thanks to our common ancestor, Howard Mentor!

One could write at length on the advantage of having wings, in fact, our literature contains many such extravaganzas. In fact some of our humorous writers have pictured how we would have to live if we reverted back to our poor earth-chained ancestors of the early twentieth century. They must have lived a pitiful existence.

So our story starts in 1945.

CHAPTER ONE. Alarming News

IT was Harry Brent who made the scoop and The American came out on one fine morning with four-inch scare heads devoting their entire front page to the news relegating the less important details of murders, robberies, gang-wars, stocks and floods to inside pages. The Warby father-daughter murder went begging for space. It was really hard on those concerned. Later, we reporters, condoled with Annabel Warby because the time was inauspicious for a first-class murder.

The American flaunted its news.

NORDIC FEMALES UNSAFE IN LATIN AMERICA!

MANY OF AMERICA'S FAIREST HAVE VANISHED WITHOUT TRACE!!

New Race of Men with Wings Believed Responsible for the Strange Disappearances of Visiting White Women!

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IT IS REVEALED THAT SOUTH AMERICAN OFFICIALS HAVE PURPOSELY SUPPRESSED WORD OF ABDUCTORS FEARING LOSS OF TOURIST TRADE!!!

The newsboys made a bedlam of the streets with their ballyhoo voices interpreting the news as each saw it, and their papers went like hot-cakes.

In the editorial chambers of the New York News half-a-dozen or so of us reporters sat about discussing this latest tidbit, lamenting that it was Brent instead of us who had nosed out this delectable morsel. The wonder of it was that he had managed so adroitly to keep it all under cover until he had unearthed all the corresponding details and that no other paper had smelled it out.

The accounts described the strange abductions in detail, but the signed columns of Brent's held the meat of the whole affair.

In searching, he said, through the records of various South American cities I was startled in discovering that the old files held record of many unsolved woman-nappings as far back as two hundred years before, and that then, as today, only women of Anglo-Saxon, Celtic and Scandinavian blood appear to have been the victims!

That fact in itself points to at least one clue and it is evident therefore that all these strange disappearances can be laid to one person or ring working under one head. The South American police have naturally been baffled, for in all these years no other clue has ever come to the surface, and all the combined efforts of the various governments of the Latin countries have not availed in discovering the culprits.

What is hard to understand is how have they managed to keep these serious matters away from the world. Of course such news would be most injurious to the nations of South America who look forward to the in-pouring of tourists and wealthy visitors. In Brazil the Argentine, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Colombia and in fact every country where white women have visited the toll has been taken. How many more than the four hundred and thirty-five recorded kidnappings have taken place, we have no way of telling. And perhaps our South American friends might have continued to hide the truth had not the abductors themselves become so careless in their actions as to give away more clues, forced themselves, in fact, on public attention, so that our friends below the equator were forced to admit what was happening!

I might even say that the woman-stealers have become incensed by the attitude of the South American police, at the utter disregard of them by the officials, and are now making it a point to bring themselves to the notice of the world. On the other hand it may be that, so long unrestrained, they are merely becoming careless and with a spirit of bravado are indulging in wild escapades, in extravagant gestures.

It was the disappearance of Marion Hally, daughter of the well-known Herbert Hally, sportsman and dilettante artist of New York, that first brought Rio de Janeiro to the realization that something had to be done. In two weeks' time more information has come to light than in over two centuries.

On March 4th the thing happened, but for almost two weeks the news was kept secret as there was hope of finding the missing girl. It was the father that exposed the truth to the public when he offered the munificent reward of one hundred thousand dollars for the recovery of his daughter or at least for word as to her whereabouts. The story was printed on handbills and distributed throughout the city as it was evident that Hally would not depend on the newspapers to make the announcement.

The story says that Miss Hally had gone for a jaunt on her horse, followed only by an attendant by the name of Jose, through the winding paths of the vast estate of Senor Alvarez Ricardi y Murado at whose home the Hallys were visiting. The equerry kept a respectable distance behind his lady, speeding his horse as they rounded each curve so as to keep her in sight. The ride was, at first, anything but eventful; the sun was hot, the day warm.

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Gradually Jose fell farther and farther behind until suddenly awakened by the shying of his horse he recalled his responsibility and whipping up his horse was surprised to find his mistress riding in the company of a man who was likewise horsed.

The stranger's costume struck Jose as singular, since the equestrian was entirely wrapped in a black, completely enfolding cape. Under his wide brimmed hat was a tanned hawkish face that reminded the equerry of a bird. Miss Hally appeared very much interested in her escort and the two were conversing with alliteration. Jose fell back again and was aroused from his lethargy only when a piercing scream brought him to attention. Spurring up his horse he raced ahead. The path took a wide curve, a hairpin curve in truth and although the voice was near at hand it was necessary for him to ride in a wide circle to reach the spot from where the voice had come. He saw the two horses grazing quietly beside the road but there was no sign of their riders!

Leaping from his horse Jose looked about. On the ground ten feet away he found the long cape of the stranger, and to it was adhering several black feathers, glossily ashine, and several inches in length. Farther on he found Miss Hally's stiff little riding hat. But though he searched in all directions and repeatedly called her name there was no answer. Once he glanced up at the sky and saw what appeared to be a large bird of black flying high and very swiftly though he appeared to be carrying a burden. It was only after much questioning that he bethought himself of the bird, but, of course, the police did not consider that a clue. Nevertheless the disappearance of Marian Hally is still one of the unsolved mysteries.

In the following week there were several tales that paralleled that of Miss Hally. And it was found that there was always a man with a black cape near the scene of the abduction. Someone was sure to liken him to a bird and usually a few feathers of different colors were found! The hue and cry went out for a black caped man.

It was in Quito, Ecuador, on March 17th that the real clue came to light. It was in the new Salvadora Hotel where Miss Hilda Berkenhart was visiting with her father. The Berkenharts are of old Swedish-German stock and Miss Berkenhart blonde and handsome, was often spoken of as the Viking Maid. Junoesque tall, wide-shouldered, overflowing with the vitality of her healthy body, she was a true daughter of that once great race, a prize-winner if ever there was one.

It appears that she, with several other guests of the hotel, had entered the lift. One by one the others got off at their floors. She had a room several floors higher. She, and a tall slender man with fine aquiline features, and wearing a dark blue cape that hung to his feet, were now the only occupants beside the elevator-boy. The latter was a small slender Irishman who had found his way into the tiny country on the Equator, and he was suddenly aroused from his memories of the Emerald Isle as he realized his male passenger had addressed him. 'Drive to the roof!' had been the command.

Miss Berkenhart started to protest, but turning the boy saw that the be-caped man held a revolver trained on them both. Up they went to the roof. 'Get out!' The girl and boy under the persuasion of the gun hurried to obey. From under his cape the man next brought forth a length of cord. 'Tie her hands together,' he had directed the elevator operator and under the menace of the revolver the girl allowed him to do it. 'Now tie her feet'. That was done. 'Go back to the lift now and descend to the lobby!'

Quaking, the youth retreated to the elevator shaft and started the motor, but he did not descend far. He lowered the machine just enough to allow his eyes to be on a level with the roof-floor. So noiseless was the well-oiled machinery that the man in the cape did not hear. Later the operator reported what he had seen. The man had already crossed to the girl's side and said something to her that the closed door of the lift muffled, but the boy saw her smile bravely. Then the strange man tossed off his cape!

The boy had to rub his eyes to make sure of what he had seen. The man was standing in a close-fitting costume of white that seemed skintight, decorated with a snow of colored feathers bright and glistening. However, that

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was not the strangest part of him. He was winged! On his back pressed against his shoulder blades were a pair of wings, wings such as a condor might have. The boy swore they were easily five feet in length from the shoulder blades to within a few inches of the man's heel, wings with long glossy feathers of golden brown intermingled with yellow and darker shades of brown. For joy of being free from the binding cape the wings seemed to stretch themselves and there was easily a spread of twelve feet from tip to tip!

Smiling kindly the winged man had turned to the girl who tried to draw away from him in fear. The Irish boy admitted that the man was handsome, with his bird-like features and his dark wavy hair and sea-blue eyes that had the distance of the sky in their depths. He walked toward Miss Berkenhart and as gently as a mother, picked her up, settled her comfortably in his arms and with a great surge of those gigantic wings arose straight up into the heavens with his burden.

For several moments the boy watched the flight, and on the streets below were people who were staring in wonder, for they too had seen the takeoff. When the youth reached the hotel lobby his eyes were rolling. He reported what he had seen. A great roar took hold of the city. The boy's word was not doubted. Others had seen. Rather the fellow was looked upon as a saviour. At last there was something tangible to work on. A winged man had carried off Miss Berkenhart. A winged man had carried off Miss Hally! Winged men had carried off women in South America for two hundred years. It was all explained. Latin America is satisfied. The mystery is solved!

Is the mystery solved? asked Brent in concluding. Surely it has just begun. What are these men with wings? Who are they? From whence have they come? What sort of beings are they? Has Science overlooked something? Is Darwin right? What have evolutionists to say? Does this prove or disprove? And what has become of our women, our girls that have been carried away? For what?

Brent then went on to question the possibilities. Had South America given birth to a new race of men? Was there some Lost World in that half explored continent? Were these new creatures birds or men?

A Strange Tale

THE next day the papers came out with editorials concerning this new man, this new menace. Had a new race actually been evolved? Was this to change the entire theory of evolution? Where would Darwin and his monkeys be now? Could it be true that the Pterodactyl, the flying reptile was our ancestor instead of the ape? Was South America a new breeding place of man?

New tales of abductions appeared. It looked as if this *alated* race had come out of their two centuries of seclusion and were deliberately making war upon humanity, on white women! A pilot flying over a section of the Brazilian jungles came back with the tale of his sighting a winged man and giving chase. He tells of having caught up with the fellow, and he estimated that the flying creature was traveling at the speed of about eighty miles per hour!

Seeing the plane draw alongside of him the birdman waved and before the pilot realized his intention he had risen above the machine and then as lightly as a bird alighted on a wing, as close to the pilot as he could.

Pedro Mureno, the pilot, described the fellow as a young chap of perhaps twenty-two with fair hair and blue eyes. His wings were snowy white. He smiled brightly and appeared very curious about the plane, his eyes darting about and taking it all in. The speed of the machine evidently intrigued him for it was doing a hundred and fifty miles an hour. He crawled through the struts to the pilot's side and attempted to converse with him, but the noise of the engine prevented that.

Mureno turned a loop for the edification of the youth and performed several other maneuvers and stunts, and the boy laughed with pleasure. Mureno thought of taking him back to the base a prisoner, but, as if divining his

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purpose, the other laughed again, crawled to the edge of the wing and dropped from the plane. Mureno circled him for several minutes chagrined that he was unable to make his capture.

Taking the opportunity to show off, the winged youth now did stunts. Rising rapidly above the plane he suddenly closed his wings so that he fell like a stone for almost five hundred feet and as suddenly opened his wings halting his fall as abruptly as he began it. He gave a pretty demonstration of a bird chasing insects, darting, banking, soaring, whirling and plunging with the sun ashine upon the beauty of his snow-white plumage.

He turned somersaults, lay on his back with his wings spread under him, circled, turned sharply at right angles, climbed straight upwards and sailed, then came tobogganing down again. At last tired of play and wanting to be rid of his spectator with a wave of his hand he commenced rising straight upward again and before Mureno realized his intention, headed into the bright glare of the sun that was soon to set. To Mureno, it was as if he had actually flown directly into the heart of the flaming star.

Later that same trick of the flying men was going to prove rather trying to aviators giving them chase, for once in the full glare of the sun it was impossible for the pilots to make them out, blinded as they were by the sun. The trick also gave rise to the supposition that the winged men came from the sun, were not of Earthly origin after all. However, only the ignorant would believe such a tale.

CHAPTER TWO. The Three Start

AND still the kidnappings continued with the police baffled, always just too late. Planes were called into service, but they invariably arrived too late or else were eluded. A soldier did manage to shoot an abductor as he bore off with a girl and they both plunged to their death. Thereafter orders were issued that there was to be no more shooting, but to capture alive. A second flying man with his prey was chased into the Andes mountain fastnesses and there lost.

It appeared as if the winged men knew no caution; the purloining of women became more daring, more spectacular. North Europeans with their wives and daughters were fleeing homeward, and most of the American residents in Latin countries were sending their families back to the States. Married women appeared to be no safer than the single girls. All South American governments were calling for aid from their northern neighbors with their superior air-craft and air-men.

Nor was America quiet. Its people were up in arms demanding that the government do all they could to fight this menace to American womanhood. The winged men must be exterminated! Their lair must be discovered and wiped out. Planes left daily for Latin America. The air was to be made unsafe for flying men!

Still disgruntled over the scoop made by Brent, a plan came to me and I confronted the city editor with my scheme. Three years earlier I had gone with one of the Smithsonian expeditions into the heart of the Amazon country. I knew the country. I knew several Indian dialects. And now all reports were pointing to the fact that the winged men had their home in Brazilian jungles. Why could I not go down there and alone find my way to their settlement? I would get the complete story, the history of this new race, and their intentions! I was the man to do it.

Sims, the city editor, had to think it over. It sounded good. It was. The next morning I was summoned to his desk. Of course I had not slept all that night and now was feverishly awaiting that call. Plans had already been laid. I was to go with two more trusted men, Jack D'Arcy and Dick Norton, also reporters on the News. We were of course to keep our plans secret and must hurry before another paper beat us to it.

We took off in our plane one dim morning, and by the afternoon had passed the Mexican border. We were

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apprehensive that our mission be discovered. Howard Wormley the famous aviator was our pilot. We thought at first to use Lima as our headquarters, but after scouting around the city for a day we flew to Cuzco somewhat southward but nearer the Brazilian jungles.

We learned that two planes, one leaving from Quito and one from Rio de Janeiro had headed for the Amazon jungles, but had been heard of no more, forced into a bad landing no doubt. The papers were of course filled with the latest abductions. A most daring one had occurred aboard a great trans-pacific air liner going from Honolulu to San Francisco. The account read:

Aboard Quitonia, April 5; Another victim has been added to the long list of white women who have been stolen by winged men.

At ten o'clock this morning the liner's passengers were startled to see a flying man appear coming toward the craft. At first he had been taken for a giant bird but as he drew closer it could be seen that he was one of that strange new race of winged men. He alighted on the super-structure holding by one hand to some rigging while he surveyed the people on the observation deck. Then letting go his hold he soared over their heads for several minutes giving a pretty exhibition of fancy flying, then swept low as he scanned each face. He dropped to the edge of the deck at last smiling brightly.

People crowded to the rail and spoke to him. He was said to be a handsome youth, an interesting freak. He did not look harmful. He answered a few questions put to him, joked and laughed and then motioned for one of the young women passengers to come close. She was a Miss Elizabeth Moray, known to be a teacher on a holiday jaunt, a very pretty young person.

Miss Moray would have hung back, but her fellow passengers laughingly pushed her forward. She came near and the two began talking together. Someone heard her liken him to Icarus and he laughed. It sounded to the by-standers that they were discussing mythology. Then the flying creature dropped his voice and spoke too low for any but Miss Moray to hear him.

The voyagers commenced talking amongst themselves with their eyes lingering on the strange youth. They did not appear to realize the seriousness of the situation until suddenly Captain Edwin Moorhead was seen approaching with a revolver in his hand trained on the visitor. The crowd were awakened by the sight of the weapon to the fact that this youth was a menace, a creature to be captured. They began milling about, drawing back, pushing forward. Then it happened!

The astonished passengers of the Quitonia saw the school-ma'am suddenly fling her arms around the winged man's shoulders and seemingly without effort he lifted her and himself above the deck with a great surge. With a wave of their hands the two headed for South America. Captain Moorhead did not shoot. They were at an altitude of three thousand feet. And like the other he headed straight toward the sun. Hours of pursuit by the Quitonia ended in the realization that the bird-man had escaped.

After the Bird Men

THE article went on to discuss the horror of such a situation when women were kidnapped in the sight of their fellow-man, and the fact that the abductors were such handsome fellows, that the kidnapped did not appear to object at all. Several other aircraft reported having sighted the twain as they passed overhead. A small coast-wise air-freighter fired some random shots at them and a village on the sea-coast saw them go by. Many aircraft gave them chase, but the bird man always eluded them.

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The news heartened our little party. We would most surely find them in Amazon country if it were possible to find them at all. Our plane was ready for the take off. We were to fly over the jungle lands in hope of discovering the settlement of the flying men. Then we would land our plane in some clearing and proceed on foot. In the meantime we scouted in the city which was one of the oldest in Peru and filled with Indians. Many of the Indians told tales of flying men they had seen from time to time. However, they were very close-mouthed and did not seem anxious to speak of them, possibly believing them to be some new sort of gods. We heard a rumour that there lived an old Indian who claimed that he had once lived among the winged men! We sought him out!

He dwelt below the city of Arequipa some two hundred miles south of Cuzco. We flew that day to that city that has for its background the majesty of El Misti. Early the next morning with a couple of hired *arrieros* (muleteers) we made our way to the tiny village where the old fellow was said to live.

Peru at best is a wild country made up of pampas, deserts and mountain heights. It is a rugged place of irregular rivers that cut deep terrible canyons and tremendous water-falls. It is a country of mystery, of ancient grandeur, of ghosts of the Inca, of poor ill-clad peons who are the descendants of that once great race. What cultivation there is, is done on a very intensive scale.

Since large areas of the country is desert there is not a grain of fertile soil wasted. The fertile belts are usually on the river banks and the farms are set on series of terraces that had been built originally under Inca direction and are farmed in much the same way as they were hundreds of years ago. Nor is the climate of the country equable. In the valleys is the hot fetid breath of the tropics and an over abundance of tropical vegetation and snakes, while the higher one climbs the cooler becomes the air. Mount Coropuna which is a matter of nineteen thousand feet above the sea is always covered with snow; and the Indians dwelling on the high altitudes of from twelve to fourteen thousand feet wear heavy clothing and find it difficult to keep the home fires burning up there above the tree line.

In our trip to old Pedro Majes we experienced a variety of weather. Sometimes we climbed rather high and then dropped down into valleys. Most of our trip, however, was along the edge of a raging torrent and the path was rough. At places where the river's gorge narrowed, stone steps had been cut out of living rock by the Incas, we were told. Sometimes a causeway constructed by the same builders took us across the wild waters or else our mules picked their way delicately along the crumbling road-bed where every foot fall precipitated a rain of gravel to the river below.

After almost a two day's journey we came to the hovel of Senor Majes, a decrepit old chap whose lack of hair, teeth and cataracted eye-balls attested to his great age. Luckily I could understand a few words of his dialect so I did not need to depend entirely on our guides for interpretation. Old Pedro's wrinkled face lighted up when we questioned him about the men with wings.

The Story of Majes

AH.ay.. he cried, I knew them well. Ay..they were men! Children of the Sun were they indeed. They will come . . . truly . . . they will come . . . and they will lead my poor people back again to the lands that rightfully are theirs, for know you . . . they are most surely the children of the Inca who came to us once . . . from the Sun. Ay . . . ay . . . they will come. Never fear!

Where did you know them? I broke into his ravings.

He waved his hand to the north-east, and then sat with his eyes turned to the distant horizon. When he spoke his voice was low. Many, many years ago I was young, I was strong. A mighty man was I! Now there are none as

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strong as I was once. My people lose their strength even as they lose their hearts. Yet that will be different when They come again . . . ay . . . ay . . .

I was hunting in the jungles for I was a warrior then . . . And as I crept along tracking the deer a man appeared before me with a suddenness that is only possible to god-things. I fell upon my face for lo! he was different from other men; he had wings like the condor!

He bent and helped me to my feet and then I found that he had pressed a piece of silver into my hand. 'I have paid for your labor,' said he, 'your labor belongs to me'. I nodded for that is our custom. He named then a place where we should meet and with his great wings he rose straight into the sky.

And did you meet him? I asked.

The peon nodded. Ay . . . ay . . . had he not paid me for my labor? I bid good bye to my wife, my little ones and my friends, and I went to the place where he had bidden me go. There were others there, all fine strong men like me. He was there and with him many of his kind. With them they had a great hammock of woven bark shaped like a canoe and we were hidden to take our places therein. There were fifty of us.

We did not hesitate but sat in the hammock. Then the men with wings each took a hold of the air-boat, for such it was and together they bore us up and over the trees! For many hours we sailed more smoothly than a boat sails the river, and with the setting of the western sun we descended. We found ourselves on a vast plantation, and we were given food and drink and a place to lay our heads.

Ah, never before was there such a farm. This poor cultivation that you see here in these hills is not like that. How far it stretched there was no way of telling. There I worked in the fields with my fellow men for a year and again the flying men came to bring us back here to our friends and our families.

You can imagine how I felt when I heard this. The winged men therefore had settlements, plantations and what not.

Were there many winged men? I asked.

Pedro shook his head. I know not their number. They brought us and they took us away, but how many there were, I know not. They did not live near us. They but came and went as they pleased. Sometimes they came by night, sometimes by day, and they carried off with them great sacks of the foods we raised, of the sheep we herded, of the fruits we gathered. Ay . . . the weight of the sacks that they bore off . . . twice the weight that even the strongest of us could bear!

Where did they carry it?

Pedro shrugged his shoulders. Is it for me, a lowly peon, to speak of god-things? Does one ask where the Sun dwells? Nay . . . I know not, senor. I know only that they will come again . . . and it will be to lead us back . . . to give us what belongs to us!

And no further questioning could bring another word from the old fellow. It was enough, though. Not more than a day's flight away dwelt the flying men. That would mean then that their plantation was in Bolivia instead of Brazil, however, for Arequipa is parallel to the Bolivian border. It appeared later that I made a mistake, in not realizing that in his hundred odd years old Pedro had not always lived in this locality but in reality he had lived farther to the north.

Futile Searching

AFTER returning to Arequipa we spent two days in flying over a portion of Bolivia. However, all of the western part of that country is mountainous, and we began to think that Pedro had led us astray, for not once did we catch so much as a glimpse of a winged creature except a number of condors who made their homes among the mountain peaks.

We decided then to fly back to Cuzco and continue our search from there. We heard nothing of much interest in the city, but more planes were arriving to take up the search. We, however, were determined to get ahead of them all and headed out over the vast jungle country. Below us lay the *montana*, the jungles on the eastern slopes of the Andes and which is known as the Upper Amazon Basin.

Flying over the wild country that rolled below us, for the first time we felt qualms of doubt. How were we to ever find the settlement of the *alatedin* in this wide stretch of unexplored land? No plane had as yet located anything that looked as if it might be inhabited the jungle presented nothing but miles and miles of tangled masses of tropical vegetation and massive trees, gentle slopes and occasionally a bald spot of leprous white amid the sea of green.

Rivers wound through over-grown banks appearing and disappearing, lakes blinked up at us, swamps and deserts stretched below. We saw a few spirals of smoke that set our hearts beating, only to discover them to be nothing but the cooking fires of a poor sort of Indian village. Once on a low hilltop we saw something we took to be a city which turned out to be merely some Inca ruins.

What if after all these winged men had no base, but like the Indians were a wandering people moving day by day. Suppose that Pedro Majes after all merely dreamed that he had been carried off by flying men, that his imagination had been fired by the tales he had heard of the men with wings? Only the fact that they had a great many women, kidnapped women, and a number of children perhaps, made us think that they had some fixed dwelling place. How large their settlement might be, we could not guess.

For two days we flew and in that time descried only one of our quarry. He immediately flew straight into the bright ball of the burning sun so we lost sight of him, even though we put on smoked glasses. He faded completely out of our vision.

Disappointed we sulked in Cuzco. We decided that we were wasting our time. We must go on foot into the country and search on the ground. We hired a band of Indians to guide us through the jungles and went to sleep determined to start out in the morning on this new venture. We did not start that morning, however, for some of our Indians had decided they did not wish to go. We spent the day in gathering a new band.

The Clue

ABOUT four o'clock that afternoon some fresh news came and again our plans were changed! A radio report had come in from a questing pilot. Flying low through the jungles not more than ninety miles from the border of Peru, he had suddenly come upon a great band of flying men! He judged there were perhaps a thousand and they had appeared to be going through some aerial drill, flying in formation with a leader at their head.

He had come upon them from the rear, but the noise of his engine announced his presence. Immediately as if at a signal the large party separated but still keeping a formation they flew upward and outward straight into the sky until a great circle a thousand feet above the plane was spread.

Men with Wings

Were they to attack me in a body, said the broadcaster from his plane, they could by laying hands upon the machine bear it down to the ground, but it is evident that they wish me to go my way. For some reason I suspicion that I am close to their base. I lay this position to be about seven degrees below the equator and . . .

There the voice of the pilot ended and it was believed for the moment that he had been attacked by the flying men, and, as the aviator had conjectured, had borne his plane to the earth. However five minutes later his voice was again heard.

I am losing control of my machine . . . I can no longer guide it . . . for it moves . . . and swings about crazily . . . as if . . . drawn by some great power. . . moving faster than before . . . Overhead the flying men watch . . . God . . . my hands . . . they are growing cold . . . my feet . . . why . . . there is frost on the instrument board! My God . . . the propeller is frozen fast . . .and yet . . . yet . . . the plane continues to move irresistibly toward some goal. The earth is swinging around . . . It is cold . . . horribly cold . . .and dark . . . the sky is black . . . I can see nothing . . . I . . . I . . .

And there ended the radiogram. The receiving stations waited for hours but no more was heard. The pilot was evidently dead, but he had managed to give the world some tangible news at last. We knew now where to look.

D'Arcy, Norton and Wormley and I started out before dawn and this time we headed ninety miles east on the seventh degree of latitude. Others started shortly after we did, but ours was uncommonly fast so that we led the race. It was I who discerned a large band of flying men gathered together several miles ahead. They sighted us and quickly spread out fan fashion until they disappeared altogether into the blue sky. We were happy. We had found them out.

CHAPTER THREE. Caught

D'ARCY leaned toward me. I suggest that we go in search of some likely place and proceed on foot . . . If these fellows have some means of destroying the plane . . . we'll be in a hell of a fix!

Acting on his suggestion I caught up one of the ear-phones that communicated with the driving seat; for D'Arcy and I were riding in the passenger cabin while Norton rode with Wormley, the pilot.

Immediately we commenced circling down looking for a clearing in which to land. We saw two clearings that were not very large and appeared too irregular for our purpose. Then the trees, great giants, spread out before us without a single break mile after mile. We turned about then for we did not wish to get too close to the village of the winged men. We recalled the fate of the pilot who had!

It was Norton who called my attention to a sight below. On the highest tree top we could make out a figure and it was waving to us, beating both arms over its head. D'Arcy cried out. It's a woman !

It was a woman and Wormley dropped lower so as to pass close to her when as suddenly as she had appeared she vanished from our sight into the thick foliage of the trees, pulled from below. We could do nothing but stare at the place she had been, as we skimmed overhead. We did not doubt but that she was indeed a captive, one of the hundreds of girls who had been abducted in the last few months.

We were wild with joy now. The search was over. Below us we would find our quest. We knew at the same time that if we now returned to Cuzco with the news and brought out a squadron of rescue planes we would have been heroes indeed. But fired, rather, by the eagerness to carry out our own mission we decided in favor of landing, if we could only park our plane somewhere! We had no way of knowing then that our decision was to cost our party two lives, but on the other hand our own plans would have carried no weight at all in the next turn of events.

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Turning back we continued to look for a clearing, but the winged men had already a different scheme for us. We had no sooner turned about when we heard murmurs through our communication lines from Wormley. We could not understand what he was saying, but it became noticeable to D'Arcy and myself that the plane was acting queerly. Then we almost took a nose dive, but with a superhuman effort Wormley held the nose up. He spoke into his phone.

I'm losing control, he said.

We held on to our seats not knowing what was coming. It was D'Arcy who first noted that he was cold and I began to feel the chill in the air, a northern chill that did not belong to the equator. Then Wormley lost entire control of the ship. D'Arcy let out a yell. We're moving backwards!

It was true, the plane was actually running backward, and in a circling motion, the earth seeming swinging about the trees slipped from under us grotesquely and the propeller was whirling crazily. Too, it was growing dark around us although it was only about ten o'clock in the morning! I could see the sun shining as if through a haze.

When the propeller stopped we stared at the big motionless blades blankly. The engine was dead, but we continued to move around in a great circle as though we were being pulled along on a string! The chill was increasing each minute and we were shivering. I remembered the words of the pilot who had managed to broadcast the course of events before he fell to . . . what? What was happening to us? Were we to die under the hands of the men we had come to discover?

Now with the engine stalled we were moving faster and faster until below us through the growing darkness we could see the jungle sweeping crazily around in a blurred vision. It had become so cold that I was entirely numbed, my sense of feeling gone.

Then: God! We're falling . . . falling . . .

The trees were coming up to meet us. I had a glimpse of a big wall crashing toward us. I covered my face with my hands. The crash came and our screams reverberated in my ears as I sank into darkness that swept over me. And through it I heard voices and dreamed of giant eagles who were ripping my flesh from my bones.

The Toll

WHEN I came to consciousness I wondered at finding myself in a hospital room. I recalled after racking my brains what had happened. I remembered the day's flight, the flying men, the peculiar antics of our plane and the fall. Beyond that I could remember nothing and wondered now how I had been transported back to the city.

For some minutes I lay staring at the sky—light overhead, through which diffused a sunlight like that of northern skies. Then turning my head I stared at the four walls, and the white beds of which there were five beside mine. Two, I saw, were occupied. For a moment I did not recognize the bandage swathed face of the figure in the next bed to mine as that of Howard Wormley.

Hello, I said, addressing that hidden face, could you tell me what I am doing here, and how I arrived?

The figure turned over and when he spoke I recognized him. Well, it's about time you came to old fellow. It hasn't been pleasant lying here for seven days watching to see if you breathed or not!

Oh, it's you Wormley, I said, Where's Norton and D'Arcy?

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I heard him sigh through his bandages, Norton died immediately . . . and there's D'Arcy in the other bed. He's been suffering horribly and it is doubted whether he will live or not! We've feared for you, afraid that you would go, too...

As he was speaking I was realizing that I ached severely in many quarters. I felt as though I had been through a meat grinder. I shuddered when he spoke of Norton and D'Arcy. They were good fellows, two of the best reporters on the News, and good sports too. I peered over at the quiet form lying stiffly without movement on the third bed.

Just what happened? I asked, and how did we get back here to Cuzco?

One at a time . . . and not so much at once please. Who said anything about Cuzco?

I looked about . . . Why this hospital . . . this . . .

Yeh . . . this is a hospital, but not in Cuzco my boy. You might as well know it now. You're a prisoner! At present you are in the underground hospital of the city of Number One of the nation of Mentor, old man, the headquarters of the people alated-homo . . . or what have you! But anyway the service is pretty fair!

My pulse quickened. So we did find them?

No, said Wormley, They found us; we're invited guests!

Invited, hum? That was a fine invitation card they presented us with. Did you learn what sort of a contraption they used to make us fall? Must be a devilish thing. Perhaps we can arrange to buy it for the United States of America!

Not on your mug-print, feller. We're captives here and not somehow. Death to him who attempts escape! I asked about that woman we saw signalling us, but from what I judge she got . . . and he passed his hand over his throat and uttered a colorful, Quirk . . .

Hum . . . well, I'll have to get out to take the story back home... Walls do not a prison make... or iron bars a something-or-other. We shall see . . .Howard Wormley we shall see. Well, tell me something more about this Number One city . . .

Not so fast, not so fast . . . You're just recovering from a lot of what-not . . . do you think I'm going to talk you into a fever. No sir, you keep your mouth shut. I'm calling a nurse now, and after that we'll see what's what! And when you see the nurse . . . oh boy!

As he spoke Wormley was reaching up to the bead of his bed from which a bell cord hung. He pressed the button. This isn't such a bad billet at that, Jimmy. They aren't a bad lot and are willing to treat us right if we do our part...

And what is our part? I demanded.

Simply to take upon ourselves a mate and help propagate the nation of Mentor!

Oh . . . !

Men with Wings

Lois

FURTHER conversation stopped with the sound of footsteps coming along the corridor outside our door. Somehow I had never thought of the possibility of there being winged women. The papers had been full of winged men, but none had ever mentioned women with wings. Nor could I have dreamed that she could be so like an angel!

First I saw the gold of her close cropped hair, the blue of deep far-seeing eyes, a face such as Harris Fishel might seek in vain. Clothed in the tight fitting smock and snug trousers of Mentor she was a picture to behold and needed only the pair of beautiful rainbow-hued wings to make an angel of her.

She carried her wings as angels should, the tips appearing just at the shoulder line, the end feathers, long and fine, dragging several inches on the ground behind her. (Such Mentorites as have gone a-kidnapping usually cut those long ends to prevent detection). Her hands were long and slender with the blue veins outlined under the sun-browned skin. It always puzzled me (I noted these last items at a later period) how the tall girl (she was five feet and nine inches tall without heels) managed to walk so easily and lightly on the tiny little feet she possessed which were so beautifully molded that they did not appear to have been constructed for use. Her shoes, incidentally, were but flat soft pieces of tanned bird skins of about two dozen thicknesses, held on the bare foot by straps that crossed and recrossed.

She had come directly to the side of my bed and when she smiled brightly I thought I should cry out with the pain of it. (And me a case-hardened reporter). Ah, she said in an angel's voice, at last you have awakened. We feared for you, Jim Kennedy.

My tongue clove to the roof of my mouth, else I might have said some silly insane thing. But I could only grin foolishly. Wormley, however, did the honors for me.

It's not easy to kill these reporter fellows, Miss Lois, he said from behind his bandages.

No? she queried. Are reporters a breed different then from other men?

Wormley burst out into a wild guffaw that ended abruptly in the middle. His bandages were not there for decoration, his face was pretty well shattered, and secretly I was tickled that he had hurt himself for his cussed remark.

When he spoke again his voice came weakly. It isn't the breeding, but the training . . . they only take the hardest, toughest men they can find for reporters, mal-treat 'em, take away their hearts and graft on 'em a nose that smells out news 'scoops'.

Miss Lois' (heavenly name) eyes opened wide, then I saw that she had a good sense of humour for she laughed.

You are . . . what you say . . . kidding me again, Howard Wormley. You talk too much. Now both of you go to sleep while I go to tell Doctor Morris that Jim Kennedy has gained consciousness.

As she was speaking she put her hand on my forehead and then professionally took my pulse, thrust a thermometer into my mouth and then tucked the covers around my neck after reading it and writing the answer on her charts. She then tip-toed softly over to D'Arcy's side.

Wormley and I watched breathlessly as she bent over him. She put her fingers to his pulse, but as quickly took it away, then with a white face she turned to us. He . . . oh dear . . . I believe he is dead! and she turned and raced

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from the ward.

In a minute she was back followed by a white coated doctor. He too bent over the still form, and we saw him draw the sheets over the face. Miss Lois brushed a tear from her eye. The Doctor now turned to me.

Doctor Morris was rotund, pink-cheeked and bald. The sight of him carried me back to New York. He might have been merely a physician paying his daily call at his clinic. He had no wings or signs of any. Surely he did not belong in the Brazilian jungles.

Later I learned that he was from New York, that he had come to Mentor of his own accord, preferring his work here among the flying people to his fashionable clientele on Park Avenue. Here he was head of the medical corps and he loved the winged people more than he could ever have loved his millionaire clients.

Well, he said quietly, we lost one, but we managed to save two! and he smiled. I surely am delighted to see you looking so good, young man. You almost went under. But you'll be as good as a new babe in a few days. No bones broken, but you were pretty well cut up around your head and shoulders. Had a slight concussion of the brain, too. Lost lots of blood. Now Wormley here broke a leg and got his face so cut up I am afraid his own mother won't be able to recognize him again.

He noted the readings of my chart and then bade us both to take a nap. With a friendly nod and a Hope you like Mentor, he was gone with Miss Lois trailing behind.

Conjectures

NEITHER Wormley or I spoke, both of us thinking of our dead comrade in the other bed. Then I must have fallen off to sleep, for it was dark in the room when I was awakened by a nurse (not Miss Lois) bringing me some broth. The room was lighted with electricity, and I saw that D'Arcy's body had already been removed. After eating I fell asleep again.

I did not awaken until morning and I found Wormley already breakfasting and waiting for me to wake up. I was given some fruit juices by a nurse who, unlike Miss Lois, had poor little undeveloped wings on her shoulders. However, she was cheery and gay as she made us ready for the day. When she left us I turned to Wormley.

Now, tell me something, I said, about this place. What have you discovered about it anyway?

Feeling chipper, eh? Well, you'll be out and doing, I suppose, in a short while and I've got about a month or so before I can get around on this game leg of mine.

Well, tell me what kind of a machine they used to pull us down with?

Sorry, but I can't say. No one seems anxious to talk about it at all. But after thinking it over it seemed to me that what we were caught in was a greatman-made tornado.

I looked at him incredulously. Man-made tornado.

Um-hum he nodded. Just that. I've been thru one before and I know the signs. What else could explain the great force that pulled us, the sudden darkness, the chill and the feeling of the earth swinging around.

I shook my head sadly. I don't see.

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Wormley looked at me tolerantly. Alright, here goes he said. I'll explain. A tornado, you see is caused by a sudden change, or movement of air. Let a cold body of air sweep over a heated place and it will quickly descend and the heated air will rise. That creates a spiral movement of the air. The cold air descending naturally causes a sudden chill, while the great flurry of dust in the air ionized by electrical disturbances obscures the sun and causes darkness.

I was beginning to see. But, I objected, I always thought that a tornado touched only a small area.

So it does Wormley agreed. That's why this one must be man made. What I think they did was to electrically ionize the dust of the air probably even throwing great quantities of dust into the air. And then they must use some gigantic machine to suck in the air to create the cyclonic movement in the higher regions.

I lay back pondering. So these people had command of a great knowledge of science. . .

Well what do you think now Wormley asked.

Well, whatever it was, it certainly did the trick.

Right", Wormley agreed. It certainly is a wow and I'd like to have the chance to study it. Mechanics is my meat!

Well, all I'm after is the meat of the story. Come across now and tell me all that you've learned about this place. I'd like to get out of here as soon as possible and report this to the 'home folks' .

Boy, from the looks of this joint you're never going to see no home folks . . . take that from me.

I laughed. Show me the reporter who did not get home to report!

You can laugh, but it's no laughing matter. I know that girl who signaled us got hers . . . and the Patriarch won't stand for any foolishness!

Who's the Patriarch? I demanded.

You'll know soon enough, but I guess I better enlighten you before you make any breaks for liberty! Well, in the first place you are now in the hospital of City Number One of the nation of Mentor as I have already told you. And City Number One is built entirely underground! No wonder none of us ever found it.

It must have taken quite a bit of engineering too, with those gigantic trees overhead, most of them several hundred feet high. Everything here appears to be under a communistic sort of regime. Everyone works for a common cause food, clothing and work is doled out by the city administration plan. Children are raised by the state, lives are directed by the bell. Everyone does his work on schedule. And over it all is this Patriarch.

Haven't seen him yet, but I understand that he's a dictatorial boy, has 'em all under his thumb and they love it. He's a lady killer, too. Has a harem of his very own. His family has held the Patriarchship since the beginning of the race, so he's naturally the big billy-goat. I am led to believe that he will be making a tour of inspection in a few days.

Have you seen any of the kidnapped girls?

No, not yet, though I understand a few of 'em are working here in the hospital. Doctor Morris says that most of the captives are happy here, too. It seems as if they enjoy the wholesome life! No 'sasiety' to do, no continual run

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of social duties, no match-making mamas, no fighting to hold their places before the world. Here they are given what work they wish to do and the hours are easy; they can choose their own mates and live a simple quiet life.

Yeh", I observed, that's all right for a change, but how does a steady diet of it go? And what about their families back home worrying about them?

Wormley shrugged his shoulders, No need to get mad at me. I'm telling you facts.

Well, then tell me the history of this glorious nation of Mentor. And what's the Mentor for?

That's part of the story. It appears as if the whole thing was started back in the sixteenth century, on the heels of Columbus by a chap by the name of Mentor! All this talk about evolution from birds is bunk. Yeh, man-made evolution. That's what it is.

I had to break into a laugh at this junction. You certainly do ramble around your story. Now come across with it. You know I am anxious to learn what it's all about.

Well, who's telling the story, anyway, you oaf? Oh . . . all right I'll give it to you straight then. Here goes, and please remember that I never took up story writing.

Aw, go on, go on . . .

CHAPTER FOUR. Wormley's Tale

BEFORE starting the tale, however, Wormley first plumped up his pillows and settled himself comfortably. Then he took a sip of water from the glass standing on the table between our beds.

It is told, he began, that there once lived a fellow by the name of Howard Mentor, English and Scotch stock, all scientists . . . of sorts, astrologists, alchemists, leeches or whatever they called 'em back in those days. Also some philosophers and prophets as well as some evolutionists in the bunch too. And it seems that from father to son had come an ambition to put wings onto man long before they had the idea that machinery could be made to fly, or did they know anything about machinery in those days? I guess I'm a bit hazy about our ancestors at that.

Well, anyway after generations of experiments it was this Howard Mentor who managed to grow wings on the back of a rabbit or maybe it was a white rat. Howard was feeling pretty proud about that I guess so what does he decide to do but to try some experiments on his own son!

His idea seemed to be in taking certain glands from the throats of living birds and replanting them in his victims. He also injected some sort of solution into the body. Of course in those days they did not know that the blood circulated so it was a rather hit or miss proposition, and Doctor Morris seems to believe that little Howard was far ahead of his times.

It had taken many generations to grow wings on the rabbit, but Grandfather Howard was not discouraged believing rather in posterity and aimed to do as much as he could in his life time. He began right there to attempt to improve the human species by performing the same operation on his own offspring. He forced his wife to take the injections, submit to the operation, and also to swallow another concoction that he brewed himself made from some part of the bird.

In the next ten years he had produced a pretty fair nucleus for his future generations, his wife giving birth to nine children of both sexes. When she, poor woman, died, he managed to take upon himself another wife and by using

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the same methods brought a half a dozen more children into the world inoculated with the virus that was eventually to bring about his heart's desire.

Luckily Mentor had much of the world's goods to his credit. He had a vast estate somewhere in the back-skirts of Scotland so there were no prying eyes to watch and condemn him. His next task was to obtain wives for his growing sons and husbands for his daughters. His oldest son was fifteen when he found a wife for him. She submitted docilely to the old man's administrations and within a year their baby was born. Mentor was not disappointed because it was born like all other babies. He knew how to bide his time.

In the meantime he had been teaching his sons and daughters his science and nurtured in each one of them the desire to see men and women on wing. Perhaps a few went astray from the fold, but there is no record of such in the annals of Mentor's history. Perhaps some of his son's wives rebelled but our Lord Mentor knew how to quell that. Perhaps the servants rebelled and grumbled at the strange mixture the master of the house demanded be cooked with all foods so that all dishes tasted very much alike. But that was the day of serfs and feudalism, and servants were not problems then.

The most difficult task that Father Mentor had to do was to marry off his daughters. Young lordlings, counts and the like, did not care for the idea of leaving their own paternal estates to live in the already crowded castle isolated from their kind. One or two whose fortunes were not so secure came attracted by the beauty of Mentor's daughters. A third son of an Earl who had been destined for the church married another of the beauties, but there the supply ended. So Mentor was forced to go down into the cities and buy up youths who had been incarcerated in the debtor's prisons in order to marry off his remaining daughters. It must have been a great pleasure to the old boy when he married the last of the brood off!

One can wonder what discords must have arisen in the paternal home with more than a dozen different families under the same roof, for now the children were being born so rapidly that it was almost too much to keep count. Mentor was present at each birth anxiously expectant as to what may be brought forth. He all but wept when his youngest daughter brought into the world a little son that had for arms what looked very much like the wings of a fledgling bird.

There was a soft down on the strange appendages and it looked as if the little fellow would one day be able to fly! Fly he might, but his arms had been sacrificed. The little mother must have wept over her maimed darling and Mentor surely wasn't happy over it, but at the same time he knew that the first rung of the ladder had been climbed. They could only hope that this was an accident. The scientist again went into his laboratories and brought forth another mess that was added to the diet of his family.

The new baby became the pet of the family and they all tried to keep him from knowing of his loss. At four years old they tried to teach him to fly, but the wings had not matured and were weak sticks. They did act as a sort of support when the little fellow took jumps from the top of a flight of steps and landed at the foot nicely balanced with his feathered arms outspread. The down of the wings had grown into small feathers, unevenly distributed the length of the wing, but they had none of the beauty of the present-day wings of the people of Mentor.

Off To Mentor

AND so, went on Wormley after sipping some more water, All went well until the third generations began to arrive. For his grandchildren Mentor had taken the easiest course and married cousin to cousin, hoping in this way to hasten his evolutionary trick.

His cry of joy was heard throughout the castle and into the valley below when the first great-grand child came

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into the world with odd protuberances on his little shoulders. They were no more than little lumps with the least suggestion of down upon them, but they were the first link of the long chain. It mattered not to the grandfather that the mother of the babe died in giving it birth, for that night was one of celebration. There were no invited guests to the feast; Mentor had no desire to make the world aware of the nature of his experiments.

More children were born, some had the humps on their shoulders, some did not; but two were born with more definite suggestions of the sought-for wings. Then the son of the arm-less grandchild was born, and lo, he had wings, true wings almost as long as his body and arms as well!

Mentor might have been able to rear his family in Scotland and there the race might have grown as well as in the jungles of South America had not word slipped out to the authorities in Edinburgh. Had a servant told or had one of Mentor's offspring slipped away and tattled? The truth can't be learned, but it was enough that a small army of soldiers of the king came to the stronghold and demanded in the name of God, the Pope and the King as to what sacrilege had been perpetrated here in this fastness.

Mentor had in some way been forewarned and the monstrosities had been secreted away so that the officers retreated somewhat disgruntled and empty-handed. Still Mentor wisely foresaw that this was the beginning of the end. Word of the discovery of new land to the westward had reached Scotland and the stalwart old gentleman who was not to be thwarted decided to leave the narrow confines of his native country.

So it happened that the Mentor clan embarked for the new world, and the old world was left in ignorance. Mentor first went to the nearest seaport and there with his money bought men and women who were willing to go to the new country across the sea. He chartered a ship, provisioned it and with some plausible excuse to the authorities, no doubt, started out for a nice quiet place where he could carry on his good work for the betterment of humanity!

The ship was headed for North America, but a storm arose out of the night when the ship lay presumably not far from the Virginian coasts. The storm drove them south and then out to sea again and raged for three days and three nights driving the ship ahead in its fury. Somewhat crippled, they limped on taking bearings by sun and stars and hoping that land was near. The captain was new to this part of the world and only the offer of more money than he had ever heard of before had brought him this far. He had no idea where the storm had carried them and hopefully had headed west and a little south. One when they saw land they made for it, but a great number of Indians put out in their canoes and in fright the captain ran away.

Then, when they were possibly off the coast of Florida, a second time a storm caught them, a storm of hurricane dimensions and again bore them out to sea. During the storm's wildness the crew in fright and frenzy murdered not only the captain but the two mates, so that when the storm abated at last, the ship's company found themselves without a single navigator aboard. The crew would have murdered Mentor, too, but he defended himself well.

A month passed and now the almost wholly crippled vessel wallowed through the seas and drifted without guidance. Food and water was low and disease was stalking the deck. Mentor, old and broken, now died and was buried at sea. Horace Mentor, the eldest son, took charge.

Realizing that all would be lost unless something drastic was done, he ordered the planks torn from the deck's floor and the women give up their petticoats to make a sail for the single slender mast that stood. Every able-bodied man was forced to take his turn at rowing so that after the sixth day the lookout atop the mast cried 'Land!'

Thus the Mentors came to the coast of Brazil. They found food in plenty, made friends with the Indians and built palm thatched houses for themselves. Spaniards came, but they looked with friendly eyes upon the growing settlement knowing that the Scotch were as deadly enemies of the English as they themselves.

The Founding of A Nation

GEE, broke in Wormley, this is a story and a half. Doctor Morris told it to me, but I'm sort of condensing it.

Go on, you're doing fine.

Well, to make the best of the long tale . . . the Spaniards continued as friends. They were for the most part pushing into the interior of the country searching for gold and they did not see much of the Mentorites, but by that time children were being born with appendages that were true wings. Birds there were in plenty so that the Mentors had all the serums and solutions and glands they needed. The Indians were the first to discover that children with wings were appearing among the white settlers and there began a time of persecution for the children of Mentor.

The next two centuries of their existence appears to have been made up of flight, fleeing from haven to haven until at last they founded this settlement here on the edge of Peru with only a few savage tribes as neighbors, savages who look upon the *alate* as gods of some sort and have no intercourse with the white men.

Wings have come to them to stay, and they have prospered out here in the wilderness. Eventually the need of importing new blood drove them to stealing women. Occasionally, too, it appears that men have been picked up and brought to Mentor for the same purpose. Mentor, I believe, could account for the disappearances of whole scientific expeditions that have never been heard of again. They refuse to breed with any but people of their own race, hence the fact that Latins, Semites et cetera are never captured by them. Many of their women die, too in giving birth to their children, and of late they have found it necessary to bring in as many women as they can find so that the dynasty they have planned can be brought into being . . .

Wormley sighed, And that's that. Simple, eh what?

It all sounds highly improbable, I noted. I think that if I pinch myself I'll wake up.

Don't do that, laughed Wormley, for here comes our pretty nurse Miss Lois . . . And if I am not mistaken you are very much taken . . . eh?

She came in smiling brightly and inquired as to how we were. She seemed to guess that we had been talking and she shook her finger at us and admonished us for exciting ourselves. She took our pulse and temperature and left us with directions to sleep.

Some baby, commented Wormley when she had gone.

It appears to me, I said, that I could learn to like Mentor after all!

CHAPTER FIVE. Convalescence

THE next week I spent in bed convalescing though I had very little pain. At first I was given a liquid diet and later more substantial food. Fruits, green vegetables, bread of corn and wheat flour and a few different varieties of wheat and fowl constituted the menu of Mentor. I noted immediately a strange foreign taste that I put down to some new condiment, but Wormley quickly put me straight. The strange flavor he said was due to Ingredient B that was fed to every man, woman and child in Mentor. Once a week Ingredient A was injected into our blood and twice monthly Ingredient C was added to the menu. I can't say that any of it was very tasty. I learned later that I had already had a gland operation.

Men with Wings

They're making full-fledged Mentorites out of us, old man, Wormley declared.

The second week I was allowed to sit up in a chair to take short walks in and around the hospital. I discovered just how complete an institution it was. Everything was kept spotlessly clean. Most of the work was devoted to the maternity wards where the young Mentorites were brought into the world scientifically and as easily as possible. One mother out of eight usually died in giving birth to the winged babies. The death rate had been higher before the coming of Doctor Morris and he was doing all he could to reduce it still more.

There was a dispensary to attend the every-day sicknesses and accidents such as those brought about by deadly insects or by the winged people who sometimes misjudged distances and hurt themselves on limbs of trees, etc.

Diseases were practically unknown even in this fever-infested land for every precaution was taken. Healthy people are not prone to become diseased and the *alate* were healthy without a doubt. Then too, I discovered that every new captive was quarantined miles from the city for the duration of a month before they were allowed to intermingle with the Mentorites, and during that time their blood was purified and thoroughly cleansed of any lurking germ-cells. The reason that Wormley and I were not quarantined, of course, was due to our session in the hospital; and I learned that we had been completely de-germed.

On the fifth day of my convalescence, I was allowed to climb the flight of steps that led upward and into the jungle. The trees grew high and thick and the sunlight had difficulty in finding its way through the branches. To offset this lack of sun in their underground cities every citizen whose work did not bring him into the sunlight was forced each day to take a sun-bath either in the clearings or else on platforms reared high in the trees where the beneficial rays of the sun could penetrate. And once daily a strong violet ray was switched on and swept throughout the city.

A path led away from the entrance to the doorway through which I had come. The door itself was in the trunk of a giant tree that had been hollowed out and the bark placed on the door-panel so ingeniously that it was difficult to detect that it was a doorway from the outside. Nor was the path I trod a distinct one. It might have been one made by animals or the Indians.

In fact, a stranger might have walked all about the 'city' or rather atop it and not know that life seethed beneath his feet. He might have even made his camp on the top of one of the sky-lights of the underground community without being aware that glass and concrete were his bed.

The jungle had been cleared to some degree so that the winged people might move about more easily, but the clearing had been done in such a natural manner that one passing through the area would not have noticed particularly that it had been cleared. Strangers had in fact actually passed this way or camped hereabouts without being the wiser. No wonder Mentor could not be discovered by plane!

As I came into the forest I met Miss Lois who was also out for an airing. She joined me and pointed out the points of interest as we strolled along. Never before had I met a girl who was so natural, so simple without any little coquetries or subterfuges that one usually looks for in the sex. She accepted me merely as a companion and expected me to do the same with her.

Several Mentorites passed us, men and women with their variegated wings dragging in the dust behind, all clad in the tight fitting costume that gave no resistance to the wind in flying. One fellow passed who had the half formed wings of the Earthbound as they called them, the people bred of the two races, winged and unwinged.

There were many of these people in Mentor destined never to fly but to give birth rather to children that would, one day, fly. They took their place in the ranks as did the others. They were, in fact, the workers, holding responsible positions in the underground stronghold. They were merely a part of this strange evolution.

Men with Wings

Once, overhead I heard the beating of wings and Miss Lois bade me look up. Doing so I saw perhaps a half a dozen or so winged people flying down toward us through the trees. At first I believed they would surely tear their wings upon the branches of the trees, but in looking more closely I saw that the great branches of the trees had been cut away to allow about twenty feet clearance, giving the *alated* an entrance and exit to the world. These avenues were cut at regular intervals so that there would be no danger of crowding when danger lurked above.

Sightseeing

LATER by carrying me up a distance of about fifty feet Miss Lois showed me other avenues cut horizontally through the trees to give passage to those who did not wish to expose themselves above the trees. They could fly many miles within the protection of the jungles in this manner. There were many of these paths criss-crossing through a great area. Where the trees became thin and gave way to glades and clearings wingless men were usually stationed to give warning if danger was about.

We now approached one of the natural clearings where many people, children and adults alike were playing or sunning themselves. Here were groups of woman sitting or lying in the grass talking and working over lengths of cloth, embroidering feathers on jackets, shaping garments. Here, for the first time, I saw a number of fellow captives.

Upon our entrance into the glade a tall, slender, dark-haired girl jumped to her feet and came running toward me. Almost immediately I recognized her from the picture I had seen in the papers. It was Miss Marion Hally. She stopped short a few feet in front of us.

You are a newcomer, aren't you? she asked me in a low, throaty voice.

Yes, Miss Hally, I averred.

Ah, you know me!

Only by your photos.

Tell me, then, she said, have you heard anything about my father? I have been sick with worry about him. How is he taking my disappearance . . . he had only me . . . you see . . .

I told her of her father's offers of rewards for her recovery. Beyond that I knew nothing else. She sighed and without another word returned to the group she had deserted.

That, said Miss Lois, is the trouble of stealing these poor girls. They could be happy with us, I believe, if only they could get in touch with their people and let them know that they are well . . .

Yes, I said, the world is not going to stand for this wholesale abduction of yours very long!

Up came Miss Lois' chin. We do not have any fear of that, Jim Kennedy, Mentor knows how to protect herself!

Well, why don't you come above board and show your hand to the world instead of this miserable woman-stealing?

She shrugged her shoulders. It is not for us to ask, Jim Kennedy. The Patriarch will deal with the world when the Time comes!

Men with Wings

Then there will be a Time?

She smiled. Yes, the time is coming when the world will realize that we are a factor to be reckoned with! They will gladly give us our place in the World Court!

Unless they annihilate you entirely!

And that is impossible of course.

I said nothing to that, but I felt it highly improbable that this handful of people could stand against the world.

May I ask . . . how many people have you here, Miss Lois?

She nodded. Surely. We divide our population into two parts, the winged and the Earthbound. Of the former we have here in Number One a little less than thirty thousand! Of the latter there are about ten thousand! Of children under the ages of sixteen there are forty thousand! Then in each other community there is almost a like number.

Jim Learns Much

TO say I was astounded was putting it too mildly. I turned upon Miss Lois in wonder. You mean that there are eighty thousand people living here in this area?

She nodded. Certainly.

And this is only one of several like settlements? I queried.

Yes, at present we have six communities, and the Patriarch is directing the construction of a seventh city. He has decided that it would be well for us to have two cities devoted entirely to children. Our quarters here are becoming too crowded.

Hum, then you have a population of almost a half a million people. Good Lord it sounds impossible.

She laughed up at me. We have forgotten to include the 'captives'. There are about two thousand of them at the present time! And by the end of the year the Patriarch expects us to have about ten thousand!

My God ! I was flabbergasted. A half a million people here in this jungle.

Mentor now covers about sixty square miles and still continues to grow. Each settlement is about four miles in circumference for we always build from a hub, and each settlement is laid about fifteen miles apart to give room for spreading.

A few well laid bombs could almost demolish it!

And who is going to lay the bombs?

Outside they now have a pretty fair idea of where Mentor lies.

Miss Lois shrugged her shoulders. That really matters very little. You shall see how little one of these days!

You mean that no plane could ever reach here because of that infernal machine of yours?

Men with Wings

She nodded her head. I am afraid so.

Oh, well, I guess the future will have to decide that.

She did not answer me but now we had turned back to the city. I was thoughtful during the remainder of the walk. Gosh, if only I could get out of this place and tell my story to the world! What a scoop this was going to be. The girl's words, however, made me realize just how hard it was going to be to escape. If, as she said, the surrounding country was populated so thickly with her people what chance would I, a puny man without wings, to fight my way out into the world again. And with what I now knew it was evident that they were not going to allow me to escape.

Miss Lois appeared to have read my thoughts. It is impossible for anyone to escape from Mentor. Our Patriarch is not quite ready for the world to know and it is death to any who makes the attempt. She went on to explain just how great an organization her nation was, how it had already thrown out its tentacles into the world in general all unbeknown to the Outside.

I questioned her about the food supply, and her words told me that Pedro Majes had not lied when he spoke of the plantation to which he had been borne by the winged men. Mentor had not only one plantation to raise her food, but many in some of the most fertile countries of the continent.

It appears that those born entirely devoid of wings were used for the purpose of going out into the world establishing themselves and working only for the good of their race. By taking Spanish names a dozen or so Mentorites owned and controlled the plantations from which the winged men carried off by night the foods that they needed. It was from the estate of one of these men that Marion Hally had been spirited away!

They owned mines in the same manner, rubber plantations, and air lines were controlled by the far reaching arm of the Patriarch of Mentor! The wealth from these enterprises of course flowed in a steady stream into his coffers.

And to further the interests of the nation were another corps of men and women, the diplomatic corps that found places of responsibility all over the world. They insinuated themselves into positions of trust in Washington, in London, in Paris and in fact in all the capitals of the world and were accepted by their fellow- men as one of them, while in truth their lives were dedicated to the interests of their own race. It was possible therefore for them to accomplish much for its welfare.

It was through one of these spies, that that infernal engine that had brought our plane down was bought and brought to Mentor. It had been invented by a German just after the Great World War and under the Patriarch's direction had been purchased for this jungle home ere the world was able to learn about it; and all but one blue print destroyed.

In the same manner Doctor Morris had been brought to Mentor enticed by the tales of one of the Patriarch's agents who proved to the Doctor the need of the jungles for medical aid. And because he had tired of the humdrum life of New York City he had come to take complete charge of the health of the five hundred thousand souls within the confines of the jungle.

Every necessity that was needed was brought from the Outside, just as electricity was carried hundreds of miles across the continent by cables and conduits from three or four points in South America. The cables were cleverly laid; either in the trees or underground as the topography of the country demanded.

Only a continent such as South America with its great unexplored spaces, its great natural resources, its jungles, could have held the secret of Mentor. I could only gasp as I thought of what a prodigious organization had grown out of the aimless fumbings of Howard Mentor with man-made evolution. Could this strange though powerful

nation some day put its mark on the world?

CHAPTER SIX. The Patriarch

ON returning to my room, where I was still bunking with Wormley, I told him of all I had seen and learned.

God . . . if only the world knew! Drastic steps need to be taken if the government hopes to do away with this menace, he averred.

I shook my head. No . . . nothing can be done. You can't wipe out a half a million people easily . . . not unless you dynamite half of South America! No, Wormley, this is a tremendous thing and mark my word the world is going to realize very shortly just what they are up against. And warring with these people would be like warring on mice in a hayrick . . . you either have to smoke 'em out or burn the hay . . . both of which methods would be too difficult in this area.

We both fell to thinking and were aroused only by the appearance of Doctor Morris. He had come to remove the bandages from Wormley's face. Morris, and the Earthbound nurse who had followed him, worked for several moments and then revealed the scarred face of the aviator. Wormley had never been handsome but the added ugliness of his face gave him an attractiveness that later was to prove irresistible to the women of Mentor.

Wormley refused the mirror Morris held for him. In fact, thereafter, he never so much as attempted to shave himself as it would force him to view his mug .

After the operation was over and the nurse had left we commenced questioning Doctor Morris. He appeared to enjoy our conversation, wanted to know all about New York.

Do you think, Doctor, I asked after I had led up gradually to the subject, that you are doing the proper thing in helping these people as you have?

He looked at me in surprise at such a notion. Isn't it always right to 'help', young fellow? he asked with a quizzical twinkle in his blue eyes.

Yes . . . but in doing this you are being unpatriotic in giving yourself to these people who are rightfully the enemy of our own nation!

And what, my boy, is patriotism if it is not to follow the dictates of your own heart? Does a man have to be born to patriotism . . . can't he adoptit?

No, he continued, I do not feel at all traitorous because I have renounced my citizenship of the United States of America and substituted for it the citizenship of the Nation of Mentor.

A great many of the 'original settlers' of the States were criminals and convicts sent from England in order that the new colonies could be populated. Do we look down upon Britain because that was once her policy? Then why should we condemn these people for taking the best of womanhood from the countries round about to establish themselves?

True, it is hard to see it in that light and you may say my argument is illogical, but I am with the Mentorites to the last man and I will do everything in the world to help establish them. Some day they will have their place in the world and they will prove the superiority of wings over machinery!

Men with Wings

That night Patriarch Mentor deigned us the favor of his presence in our ward. He came followed by the two aides that were never known to leave him, two large well-proportioned men of perhaps forty or fifty, winged and as stern-visaged as he.

The Patriarch was a singularly tall man well over six feet, with wings of monster size. They were raven black, glossy and ashine in the shaded light of the room. His face was the face of a powerful man, a man whose entire life had been spent in attaining power; the sharp gimlet eyes and the hawk-like features with the sun-tanned swarthy skin accentuated all that. He was, I judged, forty years of age. He was clothed in a suit entirely covered with long black silky feathers. Sometimes he wore white, but never any other color.

As I studied him I was suddenly aware of the fact that the description fitting him so well, corresponded with the newsbit concerning the abductor of Marian Hally; he also was black winged and hawk-faced. Later I learned that Marian Hally was one of his wives! So the Patriarch was not above doing a little kidnapping on his own.

I was seated in my chair and Wormley was sprawled on his bed. As the personage entered the room I unconsciously arose to my feet. His very bearing was enough to inspire one with a sense of his majesty.

A Challenge

HE was the first to speak and his words came sharp and cutting.

Ah, Messers, you have indeed given Mentor an honor in condescending to pay us a visit, he said, and to throw your lot in with ours! We trust that you will learn to look upon Mentor as your own. The glitter that shone in the dark eyes was the Patriarch's manner of expressing keen enjoyment as well a slaughter.

However, he continued. I regret my friends that your arrival accidentally broke your little machine and of course it will be impossible for you to find your way home through the jungles.

In other words you are informing us that we are your prisoners, eh? shot out Wormley.

One addresses the Patriarch as Sire! One of the attendant aides spoke, fastening cold eyes upon the aviator.

Wormley shrugged his shoulders. You mean we are your prisoners . . . sire? he repeated and I could only grin at the audacity of his slurred emphasis on the word.

Again the gimlet eyes glittered. It could be seen that Mentor enjoyed a show of spunk.

You are mistaken, Pilot Wormley, said the cold harsh voice, we have no prisoners. When you have been entirely healed and found to be in good physical condition you will be given the freedom of Mentor. What the jungle holds for you we can not answer. You will find Mentor a pleasant place to dwell in, our rules are simple, our food plentiful. True, our amusements are not many, but our women are said to be . . . pretty, and we trust you will be glad to make your home with us.

And if I do not come up to your physical standards . . . sire? again the emphasis on the word.

The Patriarch shrugged. We allow no imperfect beings in our midst . . .

Then, would I be allowed to return to my home, sire?

The jungle lies before you! and with that laconic statement he turned on his heel and with his shadows

Men with Wings

departed as quickly and silently as he had come.

Well, that's that, gentlemen, concluded Wormley. He dares us to try to get out!

I'm making no attempts to leave here until I discover all there is to know, I declared.

And then you will continue to stay, my dear friend if I judge that nice amiable gentleman right!

We both laughed uproariously as if it were a good joke, but I am sure that Wormley as well as myself felt just how tight the net lay about us. Surely others had tried to escape ere this and had they reached safety the world would have known.

More Sightseeing

THE following day I was given my discharge from the hospital after Doctor Morris had given me as thorough an examination as any man ever had. Evidently I proved to be physically fit as I was put in the charge of a youth whose wings were but little stumps between his shoulder blades. He led me to my new quarters through a long underground corridor. I have forgotten to note that from the first I had been wearing a suit of clothing exactly like the Mentorites, close fitting and feather embroidered.

One could only marvel at the ingenuity of the Mentorites in constructing their city under the ground; it had taken hard labor and fine engineering to dig out the large chambers and tunnels beneath the jungle giants whose roots often could be seen enclosed in cement. It must also take care to keep alive the trees whose roots were so embedded.

I was led into a fairly large chamber, the roof of which was upheld by a number of sturdy columns. This, I gathered was a lounge, for there were chairs, tables and settees placed conveniently about. The furnishings were of the simplest, being for the most part home-made specimens fashioned from small saplings and roughly finished. Cushions of native cloth were filled with soft feathers to relieve the body from sharp contact with the rough wood. The chair backs were very low for the benefit of the winged people. A carpet woven of rough dried grasses covered the cement floor. Everything was clean and neat and disinfectants were used to keep the air clean and sweet.

Here and there on the wall were hung examples of Mentorian workmanship, tapestries woven from variegated feathers often depicting scenes from the life of the city as well as of the jungle, birds and flowers. Too, there were a number of paintings done by native artists that showed power and understanding. Skins of jungle creatures, jaguars, armadillos, tapirs and alligators were placed about. Yet with all these embellishments the plain severity of the room shone out with something like puritan simplicity.

Several doorways opened from this general room, and through one I saw the long tables that bespoke the dining room. Odors emanating from there told of the noon-day meal in preparation.

In passing through the lounge my guide, of course, had not stopped but took me directly through it to another corridor. The open doorways showed me fairly large-sized rooms with beds set in neat rows. He took me into one of these rooms. There were ten beds to the room, made of saplings with springs woven from hemp, mattresses that were filled with sweet smelling grasses and covered with thin blankets of feathers.

This was one of the male dormitories. On the other side of the lounge were the rooms for women. The ceiling was rather high and I descried several openings in it and could feel the current of cool fresh air that came through them. I found that this ventilation was forced through the city by the means of great fans; the air, being brought in

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by big suction pumps, was cleansed and purified before it was distributed.

Electric fixtures were fitted into the ceilings, fixtures that were of plain white glass, the lights burning throughout the day and night, until, at the proper hour, they were turned off simultaneously at one point in the city. Electricity was only source of power; they cooked with it as well as used it for lighting.

Jim Learns the Rules

MY guide pointed out the bed that was to be mine and on questioning I found that a bed was reserved for Wormley next to it. I was glad of that. The youth then gave me a number which was to be mine in the dining hall. Meals, I learned, were served at regular hours and woe to the one who was tardy; he must go hungry until the next meal unless he could wheedle a bite from a kindly cook in the kitchen.

Mentorian kitchens were models of modern equipage. A small army of workers prepared the foods, each man and woman employed there having his own routine laid out for him. The bins and closets that held the food supplies were roomy and beautifully kept, and even though the kitchens were underground not a bit of smoke ever lingered for suction fans carried it off and the smoke itself was chemically dissolved so that not a wisp of it ever escaped. Too, great fans kept the air sweet and fresh.

Life in the city was run by clock work. There was the hour to arise and the hour to retire, the hour for relaxation, the hours for work, and to deviate from the routine was considered a serious offense. Punishment was not meted out to the culprit, only there was the disapproval that shone in the eyes of his fellow; for a laggard as well as a sluggard was to Mentorites as bad as being a thief or a murderer.

And to every man and woman was given a job either manual, clerical or executive whatever he or she were best suited for. Idleness was not tolerated.

In each day's schedule there was plenty of time for relaxation, and by relaxation was meant the hours that belonged to the individual to do with as he wished. There were hours for drill, for the winged people. This meant drilling in formation, army drill in other words. For the Earthbound and Captives it meant drilling to evacuate the city in record time, a sort of precautionary measure in case of fire or attack.

Every flying man and woman belonged to a company and the officers were designated *only during drill hours* by a colored band around the forehead, and their rank was achieved *only by work*.

Even the children had their drills and earned their places in the ranks only by their achievements. After seeing one of the drills I decided that Mentor was well defended. It was to be seen that they were never to be taken unawares by their enemies.

I became very interested in the Mentor manner of child rearing. Children stayed with their mothers up to the age of five years when they were turned over to the educationalists trained specifically for their work. The children had their own lounges and dormitories, their class rooms, their hours for work, for play and drill; and beside their school work were small tasks and duties for them to perform.

Nor did it appear to me as if these people suffered for the loss of what we on the Outside consider our heritage, *the right of the individual*. They were healthy, strong, happy, normal. There were no police nor courts for the simple reason that there were no thieves, no madmen, no vicious tri-cornered affairs that necessitated litigation; no murders, no divorce. Children were as gay and happy as if they had a mother's care, as joyous and carefree as any child upon the Outside; more so, I should say, since there were no class distinctions, no race prejudices, no snobbishness; the same abundance of food, the same clothing, toys and play hours. What more could children

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want? Love? Could any normal man or woman help but love the little things? They had their little friendships, their little loves, the comfort of each other's arms and guardians who had only kind words and loving pats for them. A teacher who mistreated a child was taken from her charges and put to other work.

For the adults there were their own friendships, their mates, their amusements. A man had a right to take the woman he loved to mate, *but he was not compelled to take her for life*. True many a man or woman took upon themselves a single mate for their life–time and they were happy in each other's love and lived their full happy days knowing that with the end of the days they would have each other again. And there was the pure blue sky and the bright sun above into which one could plunge or climb to the dizzy heights, race with the birds and look about and survey the world as far as the eye could see. He could know that he is the happiest of all creatures on Earth because he possessed the medium to express his soul's desire . . . wings . . . to climb with the eagle . . . to sing with the lark!

Amusements they had, too. There were races run in the clearings, tournaments held in the air, pageants enacted, plays performed. There were sing–songs, games, competitive drills. There were five holidays in the Mentorian calendar. One marked the birthday of Howard Mentor, their common ancestor; one for the day on which the Scotch ship had put to sea; one for the arrival in Brazil; one for the settlement of present Mentor; one for the birthday of the reigning Patriarch. On these days there were opening prayers and no work was done except such chores as were absolutely necessary.

Could life be more complete anywhere else on the the globe?

CHAPTER SEVEN. Ready For Work

FOR a week I was given the freedom of the city. I wandered down one corridor and up another; into chamber after chamber, up the steps to the jungle or down to the lower levels where were the workshops. Here men and women worked alike, making cloth, skinning birds, plucking and sorting feathers, tanning the skins, and manufacturing all kinds of necessities that were not purchased from the Outside. There were furniture shops, mechanical shops, a sugar refinery that treated the raw sugar as it came from the plantation.

Throughout the city were many small swimming pools distributed on the third level and here I spent a great deal of time in the cool water that was brought underground from the rivers hereabouts. The winged people were not very good swimmers, in fact, they never went into the water to swim but rather to bathe. To wet their wings meant many hours to be spent in drying them. They kept the feathers clean with oil baths, and there were a number of chambers devoted to their care just as there were the tonsorial parlors to keep their hair and beards neatly trimmed.

I visited the hospital often for Wormley was still confined and Miss Lois was usually about. She and I had become fast friends. She, I had learned, was a cousin of the Patriarch and she was a head nurse in the hospital directing the work of the nurses under her. There were a good number of doctors whom Doctor Morris trained; conducting a school for their benefit. He was kept rather busy traveling from one hospital to another in the settlements supervising the work and taking charge of the most serious cases.

I learned that Mentor was equipped with the telephone system so that all the cities were linked together and there was also a radio hook–up! The Patriarch had a giant receiving set in his own quarters and often we were given musical concerts from all over the world.

Almost every day new recruits were arriving in the Detention Camp some twenty–five miles beyond Mentor. I could only wonder what this would eventually bring. It seemed as if the hour had almost struck for Mentor to announce herself to the world.

Men with Wings

In the meantime I knew that my time was growing short. The usual procedure with the newcomers was to give them a few days of idleness in which to learn all they could about the nation of Mentor; then they were required to state their preference for the type of work they should like to do best, and more than a week of idleness would not be tolerated. In fact, I was anxious to be up and doing, for the enforced idleness was becoming unbearable, especially in a world where everyone was busy.

It was Wormley who made a suggestion of what type of work I could accomplish here in the city and I was directed to seek out the Patriarch for his approbation. I found him in his quarters which formed the hub of the city. I had to wait in an anteroom until my turn came for an audience. After an hour's wait I was ushered into *the presence*.

The room in which I found the Patriarch was furnished in Spartan simplicity, a table and three or four chairs were the only pieces of furniture. A grass rug covered the floor and behind the Patriarch's chair was the full length portrait of a man whom I immediately judged to be Howard Mentor, a dark-visaged man with the piercing eyes of one who had spent a life-time in realizing an ambition. He was dressed in the colorful costume of the sixteenth century.

The Patriarch merely nodded his head by way of recognition when I entered the chamber and he heard me through, quietly, as I outlined my plan for establishing a newspaper by which Mentor might be informed of all that took place in the various settlements and what news filtered in from the Outside. I rapidly explained plans for various departments and for the training of printers, reporters, et cetera.

The gimlet eyes bored me through, but somehow I felt an awe for the handsome man. I think I judged him right, for in him I saw a very human man with a deep sense of humor as well as honor. I had admired him intensely from the start and now I found I had not placed my regard improperly. Here was a man of power who could take his place in the world among kings.

After finished speaking he nodded his head slowly, and his cold hard voice spoke in his rapid emphatic way. I expected as much from you, James Kennedy. Once a newsman always a newsman, eh? and his eyes glittered. I grinned.

That will be all, he shot at me. Your suggestion will be considered and you will be advised as to my decision.

And I was dismissed.

I went back to Wormley and told him of the rather one-sided interview. He sure is one cussed gentleman, laughed the aviator, but I don't know but that I like him. Wouldn't mind a good poker game with him!

Strange Stories

A SECOND week went by and I heard nothing from the Patriarch. I was impatient to start something for time was hanging rather heavily on my hands. I visited and revisited the workshops, the schools, the playgrounds. I spent a great amount of time above ground in the clearings. People went past me as they hurried about their duties, and only during the hours of recreation could I mingle freely with them. I made the acquaintance of a number of the captives, girls who seemed happy in their new strange life. I heard some of them complain, but on the whole it appeared that they were content, or at least had accepted their lot with proper spirit. They had all been given work according to their own interests and those who had no interests were being taught simple tasks.

There were not only female captives, but quite a number of men who, like the women, had been spirited away.

Men with Wings

Several were aviators who like ourselves had fallen to the toil of the Machine. Of those that had been kidnapped two of them interested me the most with their stories.

Charlie Broner told the tale of the flying girl who had appeared to him in a moonlit garden in Buenos Aires while he strolled trying to sober up from a drinking party. Under the influence of liquor he had thought the winged creature an imagery of his besotted brain and gleefully demanded that she give him a ride in the air. He awakened from his stupor to find himself being carried over a jungle when the sun was dawning. Twice he had tried to make his escape from Mentor, but each time had been brought back. Being an architect by profession he was now employed in construction of the underground cities.

Eugene Fargo's tale was of different tinder. His name was not unknown to me, and I recognized him immediately as a sculptor of great promise. I could even recall having seen an article in the News stating that the artist had purchased a cay off the Floridan coast where he planned to work unmolested by lion hunters that were his pests.

With his negro valet he had sneaked off to the island with several uncompleted pieces of work. One morning as he came down to the water for his morning plunge he was startled to see what appeared to be a gigantic bird barely skimming the water and struggling with one wing to keep afloat. He watched it struggle nearer, but it was too weak and at last after a hard battle gave up, its strength gone, and fell into the water. There it continued to fight, keeping the one good wing above the water.

Admiring the heroic creature, Fargo called to his servant to help launch a boat and they rowed out to the stricken creature. One can picture their wonder in discovering the bird to be a woman! This was before the flying men had been discovered!

So he had nursed the winged girl back to health. Her wing had been broken in a storm that had carried her to his island. She allowed him to model her in clay, and it is needless to say that the sculptor fell in love with his model. Her name was Mary. She told him the stirring history of her people. They were in love, but Mary longed for her jungle home. She tried to prevail upon the artist to accompany her home. She begged that he come so he might model her people to teach them his art. But Fargo refused. He had a small son and daughter though his wife was dead, and he had no wish to desert the world.

The wing healed and the girl continued to plead, but the man was adamant. The wing was strong again, and the girl took little flights to strengthen it. Fargo watched each flight fearful that the girl would fly away, for he loved her, more than he loved his wife. He won in his pleading to keep her with him another month and again another month. He longed to clip the wings of his love, but he was too much a man for that.

He had a large fortune in trust for his children and they were well cared for by his sister. He almost made the decision to go, but at the end he was still as uncertain. The day before, Mary declared she must return to her people and that night the two fell asleep after many hours of pleading for each to do his will. That is Fargo fell asleep, but not Mary. She must return to Mentor and the man must go with her. She slipped the clay model of herself in her bosom. There were to be no taletell marks left.

So Fargo awoke with the dawn to find himself bound hand and foot more than a thousand feet above a watery expanse. With night they dropped on a deserted sandy beach. She fed him fruit and gave him water, but would not remove his bonds. The next night found them at Mentor.

Thus had Eugene Fargo come to the jungles, and he confessed to me that he was happy that Mary had taken the matter into her hands! He missed his children, but he was happier than he had ever been before and was doing better work. He had a school for sculpturing started, in which he taught those who had a talent. He took me to his workshop that he had fitted out in the lower branches of several trees.

Men with Wings

Life In Mentor

THE floor was of strong branches interwoven, the leaves his walls, and the sun coming through the tree tops gave him his light. He climbed to his shop by means of a rope unless his pupils or Mary were kind enough to carry him up there. It was a pretty sight of a morning to see half a dozen or so of the winged youth seated in a semi-circle around their teacher working with clay near the city. The Patriarch had ordered some clay. He had discovered a bed of fine workable marble to be imported for him to work with, although it would be grueling work for six winged men to bring the blocks of stone from afar in the dead of night. At present he was working on a full length figure of the Patriarch.

There were also other schools for art. The Mentorites were an artistic people as the paintings on their walls prove. And the Patriarch seemed anxious to cultivate the Fine Arts among his people, for he well knew that a civilization has its foundations in Art.

From time to time I had been seeing Miss Lois either in the clearings under the trees or in the lounge rooms below. I knew from the very first that I was in love with this beautiful angelic creature, but I did not know if she harbored a like feeling for me. Kindly, she answered all my questions, told me of her work, advised me and helped me in whatever way she could. And several times she was good enough to take me for short flights above the trees. Once she suggested a tour of Mentor for me; and, as she was going with Doctor Morris in a round of inspection of the hospital, I was invited to accompany them.

Morris was borne aloft by a winged youth and another was provided for me, and the five of us went from city to city. Life in the five other settlements was much the same as in Number One City. Each were designated by its number.

The Mentorite is a fine flyer. Their wings are very powerful as from childhood they are taught to develop them. And part of their training is to carry heavy burdens as they fly, the weight of the burden increasing with their years so that a hundred pound weight is nothing for them to carry a distance of from five hundred to a thousand miles in a long sustained flight!

Endurance contests were encouraged. The longest sustained flight record among them is for one hundred and fifty hours! On many a fine day it is not an uncommon sight to see a tiny dot high in the sky that looks no more than a speck of dust and know that it is either a man or woman out to break a record. They carry enough food and water to last them for a long time. Wearing heavier clothing they climb to tremendous heights, as high as it is possible for human beings to climb and yet survive.

One morning, Lois asked if I should care to witness the morning drill. I quickly assented. I knew now how to place my weight in a position that is best for my bearer and, as easily as if I were a child, the broad wings of Lois bore me up through one of the passages to the air above.

Early morning over the jungle is pleasant indeed. The air is fresh and keen, and the warm odor of growing things fills the air. Lois picked out a comfortable crotch in a big jungle giant from where I could watch the manoeuvres as from a ring-side seat. Thousands of the winged people were already abroad, and many more were coming up through the trees. I would have been glad to climb with Lois to the sun that morning, but with a smile and a wave she left me in my seat as she hurried to join her fellows.

There were other spectators beside myself. Later Miss Lois showed me that many of the trees were hung with giant vines and also ropes that had been camouflaged in such a manner as to look like the living vines. By this means the Earthbound might climb to the lowest branches of the trees and from there he would find steps leading upward, small ladders of interwoven branches. After discovering that, I spent a great deal of my time in the trees.

The Drill

NEAR me today was seated a captive, like myself, who was familiar with all the features of the drill and pointed out to me the more interesting exercises. He was a youth scarcely eighteen, as pretty as a girl. He had come to Mentor when he was but twelve years old.

He pointed out the eight sentinels stationed at the eight points of the compass. They had taken their places several thousand feet up in the sky. They were the outlooks and would warn the companies below of the approach of aircraft. Once in a while we see an aeroplane far off in the sky. Usually, however, we were warned of its arrival long before it could be seen and under pain of death we were forced to hide ourselves in the trees. One could only recall the fate of the woman we had seen from the plane on the day we had come looking for Mentor to be sure not to desire a like fate.

The winged men and women were now gathering into squads and companies, and at the sound of a sharp whistle a line was formed in the air as neatly as an infantry could on the ground as battalion after battalion took its place. I marveled at the dexterity with which the flying people mastered the air. It was a marvelous sight when all the companies had fallen into place and, with wings outstretched, maintained themselves in one position as easily as a man stands upright on his feet.

How brilliant that scene was in the bright tropic sunlight, with the variegated shining wings of every hue and color known to the birds. I noted that each company was made up of those whose wings were of one color. The first company were all white winged, the second black, the third golden, the fourth red, the fifth green, the sixth blue and so on through the natural colors and on into those whose wings were of various color combinations. Last and most beautiful were those of the rainbow wings, and among them was Miss Lois who ranked a captain!

At the sound of a second whistle all was very still, and I saw that the Patriarch had arrived. He took his place in front of the first company. He was wearing a costume of snowy white and was a striking creature with his great black wings.

He now blew his whistle and the companies came to rigid attention, their bodies stiffened, their wings quivering under the tension. Immediately two blasts of the whistle shrilled out and with it came a roar that was almost deafening. Thirty thousand pairs of wings were beating the air as the flyers arose, company after company, straight toward the heavens.

Never was a company of soldiers better trained. Every body was as straight and as motionless as a ramrod, each man kept his distance from his companion as if the distance had been measured by a yardstick. Rising, they looked as if they would never halt again, until finally the whistle sounded. Immediately the battalions broke order, half their number flying rapidly in one direction, the other the opposite. A thousand yards apart they came to a halt and we could see that they had separated according to the colors of their wings, the solid-hued wings on one side, the variegated upon the other.

GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION

No matter in what direction the planes turned, the winged men were upon them and plane after plane began to crash, many of them going up in flames. In one concerted rush, 50,000 flying men and women took to the air.

Again the whistle, and the two parties were galvanized into action. With a great roar of their wings and with equal speed the two contingents headed directly for each other so that it appeared as if there was to be a head-on collision. They met and now we were treated to a sight that was intensely stirring, an aerial sham-battle. Their

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only weapon was a small blunt stick that was brought from a pocket. Its tip was chalked with red. The trick appeared to be in parrying with one's opponent until one or the other was marked by the red stick. The stricken one immediately dropped out of the battle. And such flying there was, such banking, such whirling, such spins, such spirals, such flying as never before witnessed.

The battle lasted no more than ten minutes, one after another of the vanquished falling out until the trees were literally covered with them as they watched for the end. A roar went up when the Patriarch's snowy bosom was marked with red! No more than two thousand were left in the air when the whistle shrilled again. The majority of those remaining in the air had variegated wings and only a few hundred of the solid colored remained aloft. The victory was given to the former.

At times, my informant told me that there were battles between male and female and although the male predominated to a great degree the female contingents often won.

Now the companies again took their places in the air, and there followed a half hour of drill with the huge body moving as one man, turning, twisting, dropping, soaring, charging and retreating. I saw again the formation of the circle as each man and woman scattered at a command and flew outward and upward until a tremendous circle was formed, a circle of five ranks rising higher and higher.

When the drill was done Miss Lois came for me and carried me to the ground again. She was scarcely winded from the trial. She left me as she hurried to her duties in the hospital.

CHAPTER EIGHT. Jim Takes A Mate

DAYS went by and yet I received no orders from the Patriarch. The fact that I was allowed to remain idle pointed to the conclusion that he was still considering my application to organize a news sheet; but I could only wonder at the Patriarch's procrastination. I could see no reason for him to hesitate.

By now I knew all the ins and outs of the city. Twice I made a half-hearted attempt to escape knowing before hand the futility of such a course, and I was thwarted each time. I spent a great deal of time with Wormley who was still waiting for his leg to heal.

And one day a summons came. I had been called before the Patriarch! I was all a-quiver, but the cold visage of the black-winged man chilled me. Jim Kennedy, said he, I have learned that twice you have made an attempt to leave bounds! Your reason, please!

I shrugged my shoulders. I was merely seeking proof, sire, I answered as laconically as I could. And I saw that my answer was an almost imperceptible smile.

The second charge against you . . . is that you have been with us . . . five weeks . . . yet you have not performed the first duty that is expected of you! And that is to take to yourself a mate.

Again I shrugged my shoulders. The women of Mentor are all beautiful, I said lamely, thinking instead of the beauty of Miss Lois.

All the more reason you should have chosen. Mentor has a purpose in the world, and it is the duty of every man and woman within her gates to do what he or she can to further our work, and he who shirks that duty is of no use to us! Our way of dealing with such as you . . . is simple. Since you do not choose for yourself, we choose for you!

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He clapped his hands shortly. I was hot under the collar and I was ready to tell him what I thought of him and his nation when the door opened and in came Miss Lois!

We do not beat around the bush in Mentor, went on the dictator. We have no silly conventions, nor prattle by which we try to disguise our purpose here. We know to build a great nation we must have a foundation on which to build, and our foundation necessarily is strength. That strength is our young!

This young woman, he went on, is one of our finest specimens of girlhood. She is of a direct line of eight generations of the *alated*, and because of the strength of her blood you are commanded to take her to mate in hope that you can bring forth a child that is worthy of Mentor! Let me hear differently and things will go hard with you.

I listened wordlessly to the harangue. The man's cold-blooded eugenic creed disgusted me and I felt that I should stand up for my rights as a man and tell him what I thought of him and his noxious doctrine, only the presence of the girl standing quietly by, held me back.

Seething within I demanded, Has Miss Lois nothing to say to this?

The man must have read my feelings in my face and for the first time I saw a true smile on his lips. Lois has already announced the fact that she is quite willing to accept you, Jim Kennedy. In that you are to be complimented."

I don't know what emotion swept me then. I was suddenly elated and at the same time greatly embarrassed. I stole a glance at the girl's face and she was not looking at me nor appeared embarrassed in any way. Such procedure was the rule in Mentor.

Concluding that the interview was over I waited only for the word of dismissal. Yet the Patriarch was not through.

Today, he stated, a shipment from Cuzco has arrived. In Section Three of the third level you will find all the necessary equipment for the work you have asked to carry out. You are permitted to choose what youths you will need in your project. We shall expect weekly reports from you and I shall require that you confer with me on the policy which I wish you to pursue. That is all now. You may retire!

So that was the way the Patriarch did things. My heart suddenly grew warm. I took several steps forward and stretched out my hand. Patriarch Mentor took it and we clasped hands heartily. It was the beginning of our friendship!

Outside his chambers I faced Miss Lois who had accompanied me. I did not know just what to say. She looked at me and smiled gently. Our methods are strange to you, Jim Kennedy? I know from what Howard Wormley tells me that you do not go about such matters on the Outside as we do here.

I admitted as much, but I hurried on to tell her that my feelings had always been directed to her ever since I had first seen her; that I loved her and my reticence was due only to the fact that I feared she did not feel the same toward me.

And Becomes Acquainted With Her

SHE blushed prettily and then declared that she had loved me the minute they had brought my mangled body to her. She went on to tell me of hours she spent at my bedside when it was thought I would die, and the tears she had shed! Wormley, she said, had known all along! You may be sure that I made up my mind to tell him just what I thought of him for not having warned me.

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And now, said she in a tone that was strangely matter-of-fact for the occasion, I suppose you are anxious to see the machineries they have brought for you?

She led me through the corridors down to the lower level and into the rooms where my newspaper was to take life. The delight I had expected to feel when I should first realize I had a printing press under my hand was not there. Instead I wanted to run away somewhere with this Earthly angel, hold her in my arms and tell her how much I adored her.

Instead I pretended enthusiasm in the presses. I could never rival the great New York dailies, but I would be able to work out a fairly good weekly paper on the shiny new machinery that awaited me. Everything was there to the smallest detail, even the conventional mats and great rolls of paper ready for use. I had to admit that Patriarch Mentor did things in a big way.

Three fairly large chambers had been set aside for me and with the aid of six husky fellows we placed everything to my satisfaction, the various presses, the heavy rollers, and the bundle machine. By trade I am only a reporter, but I had learned my profession in the hard grind of a country newspaper and knew printing from pi to em! I arranged a desk of rough wood under a bright light, placed on it one of the three brand new type-writers, a stack of paper, pencils and what-not in preparation of the work to come.

The luncheon bell rang ere we were quite finished placing everything. Lois had returned to her own work after directing me to the offices, but I found her in the common lounge awaiting me. Heretofore she had lived and eaten her meals in the hospital quarters, but I discovered that she had had her place changed so that henceforth we should be together during the dining hours.

She was so sweet and unspoiled, so natural in what seemed to me such an unnatural position, that her very attitude made it easier for me. Still I did not have any appetite for the food put before me and I was glad when the meal ended and we would have an hour or so in which to become acquainted, for I realized that I knew very little about this young lady.

We took a settee in the lounge and we talked throughout the hour. Lois wanted to know more about the Outside, what was marriage, how were courtships conducted as well as a great many other things. She liked the thought of a couple setting up house-keeping together, but she had nothing to say against Mentorian methods. When the gong announced the end of the hour she shyly agreed to meet me after the working period.

Perhaps Patriarch Mentor was laughing at me knowing full well how difficult it was for a man to serve two masters at once, ambition and love! I surely accomplished very little in the hours that followed. I sat there at my desk contemplating the stack of paper for first off I had planned to lay out the set-up for the front-sheet of my paper. But as far as I went was to write at the top the name that it was to be known by, the *Aerial*.

At the ringing of the gong I found Lois at the spot she had designated for our tryst and she confided that she had something to show me. I followed her along a path I had never been on before, and after walking rapidly we came to halt under a giant tree. She pointed out that I was to follow her up the rope that hung from the lowest branch. She went up quickly and easily, I more slowly.

Up we climbed the little ladders that were barely strong enough for my weight, but up which the girl went as lightly as a bit of thistle. Scarcely ten feet below the roof of the jungle we halted and she showed me a pretty little nook that had been constructed of interwoven branches. A cushion of feathers covered the rough floor. And, only a few slender branches overhead, hid the platform from above.

She blushed as she confessed, When I was a child I built this little hide-out myself. Here, I now come often when I feel I wish to be alone. Could we not call this our . . . house . . . our own . . . Jim Kennedy?

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Ah, the sweetness of her and the pity, for though she was of a people who had lived a communal life for almost five centuries the desire for something of her own was still in her and had spoken to her. There for the first time I took her in my arms and kissed her. I can say no more of the love that welled in me for her, it is hard to write of it, but I loved her then as I shall always love her, I, the hard-boiled reporter fellow!

And Goes to Work

WE did not stay long in our little love nest as I thought of it thereafter, for our rest period was of but an hour's duration before the drill but we did come back again and again, and there were only the bright-plumed birds and the beady-eyed monkeys to tell of those hours. Often we took flights from there up into the blue of the skies or into the wonder of the silvery nights. The first strangeness of being carried in her arms wore off and I learned by proxy what it meant to fly . . . to really fly as the birds fly without the deadening roar of motors or the breath of burning oil.

So life in Mentor started for me with a bang. Never again did I think of escaping. Poor Sims can wait for his story. The next weeks overflowed and seemed all too short. I was peopling my office with printers, clerks and printer's devils. I was training reporters and columnists. Lottie Walker, a captive woman, became my women's correspondent. She had been a reporter on a Chicago paper and she became invaluable to me. Another American girl, Wanda Heath, became a reporter. Eugene Fargo agreed to write an article each week about art. I found a music critic and a sports writer!

I had an interview with the Patriarch and he outlined the policy of the *Aerial*, the name of which he approved. And two weeks after the arrival of the presses we came out with our first edition! I laughed when I thought of what the *News* would have said of it. It was crude; my printers were none too efficient and my staff needed much training, but at worst it was not so bad and gave promise of improvement. It had only one double sheet, all news, of course, for what had we of Mentor to advertise? The Patriarch was quite enthusiastic about it and laughed heartily over a caricature of himself that had been drawn by an art student. I realized that I must introduce one or two chaps to the art of comic-strips.

But wait I am not writing this narrative to tell of my own exploits and triumphs, there were other things that were taking place in Mentor.

From time to time planes had been sighted hovering around and about Mentor. Several planes fell to Mentor's toils and the pilots, who survived the fall to the great sheet of metal that was reared up over the jungle to receive them, were added to the swelling population. They took their places as we all had done, and none seemed irked by their enforced incarceration. As time wore on some of the bolder spirits did make attempts to escape, but they never got far away, nor were they punished for their attempts unless they proved too persistent. What happened to them, when they disappeared from our ranks, none of us knew.

By means of our radio we knew that those of the Outside were anxious for revenge upon the men with wings. Several flying men had been captured when they became too daring in the matter of abductions. Of course they had been given the third degree and South Americans were not adverse to torturing them in an attempt to learn from whence they had come, their number and their ultimate intentions. But to date not a single captured Mentorite had divulged the secret of his race.

We knew, however, that the Americans were planning to descend upon the jungle in the area where it was conjectured the *alated* had their base, and to wipe it from the map. The tropical rains came and we had that interim in which to prepare had their been any preparations to be made. But I learned Mentor was already prepared.

CHAPTER NINE. Ready For Battle

THE six weeks of rain that followed was not as unpleasant a time to us in the underground cities as it might be expected. However, the people were rather cooped up during those long hours when the heavens poured incessantly down upon the jungles. Still the cities were dry and many happy hours were spent in the lounges. Everyone did his best to entertain his fellow so that the hours did not seem long.

There were plays enacted in the big assembly rooms of the city, indoor games played. Musicians brought out their instruments to entertain the crowds and of course we had the radio.

On the days when the sun shone, there was a general exodus as everyone hurried into its warmth and wings were spread again.

In the meantime I was making great progress with my paper, discovering new talent, widening my range. I now had correspondents in each of the cities, and we had our own telephone switchboard to receive the incoming news. We had three comic strips, and we ran a column of jokes as well as a weekly story written by one of our coming authors. Patriarch Mentor complimented me on the work we were doing, for it could be seen that the newspaper was bringing the scattered settlements closer together than ever.

Wormley had since been discharged from the hospital and during those weeks while it rained he made great progress with the Mentorite women. He had gotten his wish and had been detailed to work at one of the Aero-electrovoid Bases of which there were six stationed at distant points around Mentor. These tremendous machines that brought down the planes worked on a very simple plan. By mean of great generators the dust was ionized and the air was sucked out of the locality above the cities. So powerful were they that any object in the way would immediately be swung around and around and finally sucked into the maw of the machine!

What Wormley had suggested that day in the hospital, then, was astonishingly correct. Over the machine was erected a great heavy plate of sheet metal of large proportions. This could be raised in the time of need above the trees to catch the falling plane and to protect the machine beneath. The metal sheet was then lowered and tilted so that the wrecked plane would slide off into a pit dug below.

The whole machine itself was built in a pit below the ground and when not in action was completely covered and the area over and around it made to appear as if it had never been touched by human foot.

Wormley's work was to do with the mechanics of the engine, repairing it keeping it in readiness for what was to come. I could not understand his desire to be part of such destruction, but human nature is a funny thing after all, and perhaps he saw humour in nursing the infernal thing. I knew too, he was studying its construction possibly with the hope that some day he might escape and give it to the world.

From a word the Patriarch dropped one day I imagined that he understood Wormley's intention, and he himself enjoyed the joke, at the same time keeping a heavy guard on the captive . Wormley did attempt to make an escape one day, months later, and he paid for it with his life. That caused me a good deal of pain.

At last the day did arrive when our friends on the Outside made an attempt to conquer the marauding winged men. That day the twenty-fifth of July will go down into history to be remembered many years hence. And it was the events of that day that forced the world to respect the power of Mentor!

We had already been appraised of the attack that was to be made and consequently waited anxiously for the outcome. How utterly were those fleets of two hundred and fifty planes beaten! How like toys they fell into the power of the Patriarch.

Men with Wings

Although we were forewarned no precautions were taken by the Mentorites. Until the hour had almost struck, the business of living went about as ever before. Only when the gong struck eleven o'clock in the morning, did it appear as if anything was afoot. Orders were given for every able-bodied winged man and women to gather above the jungle without a moment's delay. No one else was to leave the cities on pain of death! An Earthbound discovered above the ground would die on the spot.

For us all work was suspended and we were ordered to gather in the lounges and stay there. How inglorious I felt herded in a room while Lois, my wife, went to join the legions. I even envied Wormley then, in his work beside the Aero-electrovoid. I, as editor-in-chief of the *Aerial* should have at least been an eye-witness of that conflict. Instead I was forced to hear the results of the day by word of mouth. John, one of my reporters, who took his place in the ranks had the extreme pleasure of writing the dramatic story and all I could do was to edit it.

The Battle

WORD had come to us that the two hundred and fifty planes had set out from Cuzco and could be expected around noon. Half an hour before the hour we heard the roar of the motors as they drew near. Spread out in a giant circle the one hundred and eighty thousand or so winged warriors waiting quietly in the trees hidden from sight. Each officer of the companies was provided with a radio receiving set small enough to be carried on his belt. Orders came from headquarters in Mentor where the Patriarch waited, stationed in the trees. The six electrovoid machines were already warming up, but had not yet begun their work of sucking down the upper atmosphere over the area of Mentor. Let the enemy drop all the bombs he wished, but not one of them would ever strike their goal, their explosions would only wreck havoc in the wild unpopulated jungles becoming boomerangs to the very man who had tossed them!

Down in Number One city we knew when the planes arrived for they immediately took their station directly over our city. On arriving over the spot, the planes had gathered together about five thousand feet above the trees, then at a command from their commander began to spread into a wide circle. For a short time they stayed poised over the city, awaiting no doubt some sort of development from the jungle, but it lay quietly sleeping in the hot noon sun.

Then several scout ships dropped low and came zooming over the trees. They could see nothing that was of interest, and we in the lounge rooms heard their reports as they radioed to their commandant. Evidently the Outside was unaware of the fact that we had radio. Our battalions of course used a code.

More planes began dropping lower and it could be seen that they were getting into a formation so that they might throw bombs down upon the sea of trees. Now for the first time Mentor acted. The machines began their work, and the enemy were not aware until two of the scout planes commenced acting strangely and their pilots broadcast wildly what was happening.

Immediately the battalions above began to draw aside, but no matter in what direction they turned the danger was upon them, and one after another of the planes began to fall out of control! The six machines had complete control of the air for sixty miles around and there was no telling how high their power could be felt, for naturally as they drew the upper air in from one area there was still more to fill its place.

The air overhead was losing its light as the electrically-charged ionized-dust atmosphere could not conduct the light of the sun as directly as heretofore. And plane after plane was beginning to crash on the metal plates. Some of the planes were trying to discharge their supply of bombs, but they went the same way as the planes and consequently many of the planes went up into flames ere they struck the barrier.

In less than ten minutes after the beginning of the fight almost a hundred planes had succumbed, and those who had warily risen higher and higher hovered above the earth uncertain where to turn. They could be seen turning

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and moving out in all directions as they attempted to find an area that was free from menace. A number did reach the outskirts of that great hole only to be caught in the whirlpools formed in the outer spaces by the terrific suction that was exerted. And they too fell.

Seeing what had happened to their fellows the hundred or so planes that were left, now took to circling about within the sixty mile circle fearful of going lower and fearful of being caught by the whirlpools. It was then that Patriarch Mentor gave command to the waiting companies outside the circle.

In one concerted rush fifty thousand flying men and women took to the air rising straight up to the heavens wherein the remaining "enemy" were circling, still uncertain. The planes saw them coming. Here at last was a tangible enemy to fight. They gathered into formation and awaited the oncoming flying men.

I have mentioned earlier that I knew of no other destructive weapon possessed by the Mentorites outside of the Machines, but I discovered they were not unprepared to do battle. They knew electricity perhaps better than the world. We have had scientists who have made for themselves thunderbolts, but as yet no use had ever been discovered for them. The Mentorites did have a use for them.

Each man and woman carried a small stick, harmless enough looking, but harmless it was not; for each stick had within its barrel six discharges, discharges of electricity that could travel a thousand feet, and with each discharge of a thunderbolt a plane fell. That had been the reason for the practice battles with red marked wands!

Ten planes went down under the spitting of the thunderbolts before the two parties drew together, but now the aeroplanes were in the midst of the flyers, and the machine guns were being turned upon the flying men. A few of them fell, but their ranks were scarcely touched, for the pilots busily trying to keep out of the way of the flashes from the thunder sticks were not giving their gunners a very good chance to direct their fire and those who fell were shot down only by stray bullets.

They were always right on the tail of the machines and on that day they proved how much more efficient were living wings to those of cloth and steel. Less than fifty planes now remained as they fell one after another in smoke and fire, but they had learned their lesson and were climbing higher and higher so that the flying creatures were below them. Thunderbolts continued to flash and several more planes went into tail spins.

A number of the flying men fell because by this time the gunners could take more careful aim upon the whirling twisting bodies, and by holding their position high above the earth in the full glare of the sun they were able to shoot the winged creatures down one by one as they darted hither and thither attempting to shoot their bolts into the vital parts of the machines.

Yet as each man fell there was another to take his place. The airplane force had no reinforcements, they had shot their bow and by now their fuel must have been very low. And they were being driven back beyond the range of Mentor. More of the flying creatures arose from the trees. The enemy was forced to acknowledge defeat. Below were fresher troops taking formation in readiness for a new attack.

Dropping a few remaining bombs; and with as much dignity as they could muster, in close formation the thirty-odd airplanes moved west. We learned later that several dozens were forced down in the jungles because of the lack of fuel.

So ended the First Battle of Mentor!

Now the work of the hospital corps began. A little less than a hundred of our people had fallen, and only thirty-five of them were fatally wounded, the others having suffered only from flesh wounds. A few had been killed outright as they fell atop the metal sheets above the machines.

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Most of the enemy pilots and gunners had died, but some still lived and these were brought in to be cared for. The dead were gathered together and cremated. The pits around the machines were piled high with the wreckage of the two hundred planes. Much of the jungle round about had been completely demolished, but the cities of Mentor had not been touched.

We scarcely slept that night. There was moaning and sobbing over the deaths of our people. I and my staff worked the night through to bring out an extra, and with early morning the couriers flew with the papers to the other settlements. There was a great deal of rejoicing in the settlements, for it had been proven that Mentor could overcome her enemies.

However, we did not know what the result would have been if it were not for the Machines. Still, we were to learn that at a later period. The world knows now that the Mentorites are invincible, and they have learned to respect the nation.

CHAPTER TEN. Life Continues in Mentor

SCOUTS were now stationed as look-outs day and night, for we had fear of a second attack, although our spies Outside reported that the enemy had not yet rallied from their ignominious defeat. Still public opinion ran high, and North America was demanding that Mentor be wiped off the map. It was now estimated that we were a million strong, and they had no way of telling just how wide an area we covered. The returning planes had reported the locations of the machines, and it was evident that the next attack would be made upon them.

Plans were being made to establish bases in the jungle lands, for it had been proven that the air planes needed a port closer to the scene of the battle. America and Canada were both mobilizing troops, and airplanes were being hastily built.

And while all these preparations were being made on the Outside, Mentor continued on with her business of living. Our new recruits were being initiated into our manner of living, babies were being born, settlements enlarged.

I made it a point to visit the fifty-odd aviators who had survived the wrecking of their planes at the Detention Camp. They all expressed their admiration for their captors, and were intensely interested in the progress of the nation. On being freed from the Camp they quickly accepted their new life, and many of them appeared highly contented with their lot and expressed the hope that we should not be attacked again.

One, Harry Mellor, a Canadian, approached the Patriarch with the plan for the construction of a number of bombing planes to combat the enemy. The Patriarch did not approve the notion. He admitted that his ancestors had not conceived the thought that man should ever rise in the air in mechanical devices, but he saw no reason for their offspring to take to machinery. He meant to prove to the world that wings were an improvement over the planes.

The task of bringing new women to Mentor persisted, but the abductors were more cautious and worked only by night. Too, they had to travel further and further for their prey. There were no more spectacular aerial kidnappings or hotel scares. Flying for hundreds of miles, sometimes as far as the border states of the United States, the marauders abided their time alighting as a rule near some outlying post where from previous observation they had discovered the woman of their choice. There they would await her coming. Swooping suddenly down upon her, burying her cries in a muffler they bore off with her not halting till they reached home.

The world was more uproarious than ever in their demands that the criminals be punished. Germany were turning out Zeppelins and planes that were being rushed across the Atlantic. England was also aroused, and even France

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and Italy were incensed although the Mentorites did not molest their peoples.

In the settlements of the winged people, however, war appeared forgotten. The Arts were being pursued avidly by the youths of the nation.

A writing club had been organized and gathered together weekly to discuss their writings and methods. New plays were being written and acted. I often printed the stories of these authors. Eugene Moore was making great progress with his Art school. He had been driven to take rooms in the city because of the growth of the school and some fine pieces of work were turned out. There were many other schools of endeavor besides those of Art mechanics, electrical and architectural, and they were all making progress.

I now added a sporting page to my paper. It aroused as much attention as the sport's section in a New York daily. The endurance tests for flyers continued. The record for staying aloft in one spot above the city was for fifty-two hours, forty-three minutes and ten seconds for male, and forty-nine hours, twenty-seven minutes and fifty-two seconds for female. This was apart from the long sustained flights.

Weekly contests were held for different types of flying, the winner receiving a prize as well as the high regard of his race. There were contests for children in which they were classed according to age. These races did much in teaching the most valuable lessons of endurance.

We did not confine ourselves to flying contests alone. There were the ground games for the flying people as well as the Earthbound, a type of baseball, basketball and marbles in which the adults as well as the children took great pleasure.

A New Mentorian

WE still kept in touch with the Outer world by radio, and I printed all the news that came over it. Several bases were being built in various localities. One was on a plateau of the Andes on the Peruvian border, another in Bolivia, a third on the Amazon River. Our scouts flying by night watched the progress that was being made. Infantry was being brought into the jungles and roads constructed. Artillery was also being brought in at the cost of tremendous labor, and the sky was becoming overrun by airplanes and Zeppelins.

Some of us in Mentor wondered that the Patriarch did nothing; why he was content to allow the enemy to build its big army of offense. Most of the Mentorites, however, were as phlegmatic as their ruler, and to our protest that something should be done, shrugged their shoulders and averred that the matter rested in the Patriarch's hands.

I went so far as to approach him and ask what this inaction was going to mean. We were now intimate enough so that my audacity did not bring a reprimand.

Why? asked the Patriarch, should we show our hand before the time is ready, Jim Kennedy? You have an expression that says, 'Give a man enough rope and he'll hang himself ! We will instead give them the rope and then do the hanging . . . Bridges are to be crossed only when we come to them. He smiled wryly. I should suggest, he added, that you write an editorial on that.

The rains came again before our enemy was ready to strike, and it was during that time that Jimmy Junior, as Lois insisted on naming him, was born. The day he arrived almost became one of mourning for me, for Lois, the dear little mother, almost died in giving him life. But Doctor Morris saved her as he had saved many mothers, and we were both to look with joy and pride on the most perfect specimen of *alate* babyhood.

The nurses were profuse in their admiration of him. They were not cooing over his appearance, for he was like all babies, and even I, the proud father, could not say that the little red creature was different. It was his wings that

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held their attention, for never had there been born a babe with such wings, wings that already were longer than the fat little youngster himself, and gave promise of a growth that had never been seen before. The soft fuzz that covered them was a downy yellow, although in the sun's glow we could detect the faintest tint of what were later to be white and blue.

On the third day of his birth the Patriarch condescended to pay him a visit and congratulated Lois on the fine baby she had given to Mentor. A month later he was feted by all of Mentor and it was easy to see that Jimmy Jr. was going to be the pride of the nation.

One might stop to question the thoughts of the father as he realizes that he had in truth fathered a monstrosity for such the baby would be considered in 'unwinged' circles. Yet I was so happy in the presence of my little family, in my work, in my new life that such an idea never occurred to me. In fact, I was so wholly of Mentor that it was seldom or ever that I thought in the terms of the world. It was not until later years when I presented my son to my family in the States that I felt any discomfiture in his strange appearance. However, by that time he was a handsome child with a body that matched the splendor of his giant wings.

Now to return to the Mentorian situation. The rains ceased, and airplanes and fighting men were coming into the jungle in hordes. Word came to us from our emissaries that within two weeks time, on the twelfth of the month, the day had been set for the concerted attack on Mentor.

It was not until on the eve of the twelfth that the Patriarch struck, and so forceful was the blow he gave the world, that they had reason to know that they were reckoning with a power that could not be crushed.

At noon the order went out that the flying men were to gather above the trees immediately after the evening meal, and they were to carry six thunderbolt wands apiece. These were distributed among them before they took to the air. Mentor was on its toes. There was to be action at last.

The next order came for the Earthbound. They were to be separated into companies, and by a quick march they were hurried to the boundaries of Mentor, in every direction.

A small number of Earthbound were to stay within the cities, to care for the children, to guard the Captives, for no chance was to be allowed of any of them escaping. A detail of winged women were also left to guard each settlement.

A Decisive Victory

LOIS was not called out, for mothers of babes up to six months old were not required for service. Again I was forced to stay behind, and hear the reports of what took place from other's lips.

We learned that the flying men made descent upon the three camps of the enemy and with their thunderbolts entirely demolished all that had been accomplished in the last months. Thousands of airplanes were demolished that night, the artillery was completely wrecked and there were thousands left dead and dying.

What airplanes managed to take to the air were wrecked and went up in smoke before they had so much as fired a single shot. Zeppelins exploded and added terror to the awful carnage.

The infantry that had already been making its way through the jungles under the cover of night were met by the Earthbound and entirely routed, and many of them, captured, helped to swell the population of Mentor. However, several thousand Earthbound died in those battles, for they did not have the advantage of wings or of machine guns. The infantry made a name for themselves that night, even, though in the end they were forced to retreat as the thunderbolts entirely demoralized them.

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With the morning all fight was driven out of the invaders, and once again Mentor was declared victor. The world cried out in chagrin.

For a week following, we of Mentor were busy with our wounded. All day and night our people worked in the jungles to save the living and to bury the dead. It was left for Mother Nature to heal the raw wounds that had been inflicted on her forests.

The world was now in turmoil. The newspapers came out with editorials against the winged people, for they saw a new scourge sweeping the planet. Even Asia was touched by it. Individuals in the southern part of the United States commenced arming themselves against the inroads of the abductors and proposals were made for a fleet of airships that should bombard the entire jungle area so that the menace might be wiped off the face of the earth. Indeed several private parties sent out two long cigar-shaped Zeppelins in an effort to do a little warring of their own. They no sooner appeared in the sky before they were attacked by a horde of the *alated* and the ships went up in smoke as soon as the thunderbolts reached their vital parts.

And Mentor went on about its business quietly and efficiently. Its area was growing as new settlements were continually being filled. The number of captives now ran into thousands and the work of rearing the young continued. Two years went by and nothing more had been done, for now Mentor was alert and ready, and every attempt that was made to establish bases in the jungle was thwarted. Every plane that appeared in the skies was immediately attacked, and no matter how large a fleet might come the dying men always conquered, having grown surprisingly efficient in bringing the machines to earth in a minimum of time with scarcely any loss to themselves.

The ranks of the winged were growing, for the Youth of sixteen were being enlisted, and now the count of able-bodied *alated* was well over two hundred thousand.

The fact that the Mentorites had their home in the jungle, of course, had much to do with their continued success. In any other part of the globe all might not have gone so well with them, but here they had control of an area of many hundreds of square miles about, an area that was a natural protection since the enemy had difficulty in securing any footing. The Indians were also our friends, for they saw in this new race a savior who would give them their own again. In fact, large tribes of them were drawing close to Mentor and offering themselves to the Mentorites. They did much in keeping us informed of all that the enemy did within the jungles.

Word next came that an attempt was going to be made on Mentor with poisonous gases, but again ere they could begin this new attack the Mentorites were upon them, and every city that had received a supply of gases was attacked at night, and the supply was bombarded so that the cities themselves felt the attack, and cried out against the governments to stop bringing any more of the bombs into the strongholds.

A Startling Proposal

AT LAST the day came when Mentor sent out orders to his emissaries to begin negotiations with the World Court for recognition of the Nation of Mentor. He demanded that all hostilities cease, that the new race be accepted in fellowship. And, he went on to advise, that if his demands were not accepted Mentor would hereafter take the offensive and the World would regret its refusal of Mentor!

To me it appeared a very audacious step for a people of less than a million to take. Yet they had proved time and time again their strength; and I knew that Mentor meant what she said. In our laboratories our scientists had discovered a gas that was more potent than even *cacodyl isocyanide* the gas that had been discovered some fifteen years earlier and which destroyed any life it touched.

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Another year went by, and in that time the World Court had come to no decision, for the world still clamored for our destruction. Again attempts were made upon us with plane and gases, but again Mentor thwarted every move. And to prove that she had meant what she had said a small contingent of winged men clothed entirely in a sheath of protection headed for Cuzco. They went armed with gas bombs, and the morning found the city black and scarred with not a living creature within its walls!

A cry of distress went up from South America and this time the World Court acquiesced. Two representatives went out from Mentor with a large guard armed with thunderbolts and bombs. They landed in Washington D. C. and with an armed guard proceeded to the Capital. There were demonstrations in the city as the Americans fought to reach the enemy and tear them limb from limb but the United States had offered them protection so that they might confer with the President.

The result of that conference was that the representatives embarked on an air-liner for Europe. Where they flew on to Geneva, Switzerland, where the World Court was then in session.

Brazilian representatives were there also and they fought against the usurping of such a large area of their nation by the Mentorites. Their protest was overruled as the other nations were glad that the winged people were willing to stay within bounds and not move to some other part of the globe. However, boundaries were laid, and the Mentorite representative signed an agreement that Mentor would not overreach her borders.

It took almost five years for the world to forget her animosity toward Mentor, and during that time flying people were not welcome in any of the cities of the world. But gradually the antagonism wore off, and it was not an uncommon sight to see the winged people in the cities of Quito, Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires as well as in American and European cities.

And Mentor was now coming out into the sunlight. The giants of the jungle were being torn down, and the cities were rising above ground. Fine buildings were reared and the nation was coming into her own. She had been allotted an area of one hundred miles wide and two hundred long. Her plantations continued to feed her, and her mines were working at full tilt.

Tourists were now coming into Mentor's cities, merchants had brought their wares, and the nation looked forward to a fine future. The *Aerial* was no longer the only newspaper in Mentor. All of the cities had their own dailies, but the *Aerial* was considered the leading paper, and people looked to it to give them the real news of the world.

Mentor became less and less communistic. The dormitories had been forsaken, and men and women were beginning to establish their own homes, their children attending the city schools conducted by educationalists from America.

Ah, could only Howard Mentor see what strides had been made by that little band of refugees who had fled to South American shores!

CHAPTER ELEVEN. Into A New Land

TEN years passed and it could be seen that Mentor was soon to outgrow her boundaries.

Brazil was watching jealously for one infringement on the treaty that had been made in Geneva. I saw that Patriarch Mentor who was now nearing his sixtieth year was growing restless under the limitations of his country.

I was now very close to him, for our friendship had deepened with the years, and I knew that he was looking for

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Jimmy Jr. to take his place when he would succumb to old age. Jimmy had grown handsomer with the years. He topped the Patriarch by an inch in height, and his tremendous wings far surpassed those of the ruler. In walking they dragged almost two feet behind him and had a spread of over sixteen feet. He held the present record of Mentor, having flown entirely around the Earth in a little over fifteen days!

I now went to the Patriarch with the plan I had had in mind for several years. He agreed with me that in another generation Mentor would not be able to stay within her boundaries, that eventually she must seek new territories. At first he was not fired with the idea of seeking that territory in North America, but eventually I convinced him that America was the only feasible part of the world where he could hope to find succor, a country that for all its two hundred million or so of population had vast lands scarcely touched. And after hours of deliberation the Patriarch called upon his councillors to discuss the question with them. In the end it was decided to send emissaries to Washington to ask that we be allowed to come into American territory.

I shall not go into detail as to what this request brought about in the two years that followed, but it took all of that time to convince America that it was for her own good to let us in. The President and the Patriarch had many conferences on the question in Cuba where they both met, and it is needless to say that the President was fired with the thought of what it would one day mean to the United States were she to allow this strange race to become citizens of her country.

When the people of the United States were told of the decision that had been made they rose up in arms and declared they would have nothing to do with the measure and demanded that it should be given no consideration. They still recalled the number of women who had been sacrificed in Mentor, and had become angered when Mentor had refused to give them up when she had been accepted in the World Court. However, many of the women and men had been given the right to return to their own people since, and most of them had refused although they often visited their home land. Too, many of the women had given their lives in bringing into the world the winged babies.

Still the President and Congress still played with the idea of admitting the Mentorites into the country. Doctor Morris had been closeted with several renowned heads of the medical profession and had convinced them that it would be possible to breed wings on all those who expressed a wish to go through with the experiment, and already several such experiments had been made and proved successful. In Mentor there were hardly any Earthbound left, for after the birth of Jimmy Jr. they had realized that by carefully breeding, the half-developed wings of the Earthbound could be done away with and children of mixed bloods were now born with true wings.

It was a memorial day when the first band of winged people came into America. There were many skirmishes in which the state militia had to be called forth. It was in one of such demonstrations that the President was killed. The murderers were discovered and punished, and henceforth the name of the Martyred President will be known to all future generations as a great fore-sighted American.

Conclusion

MENTOR of South America is still a powerful nation, but she is now undistinguishable from the winged people of the rest of the world. It would be a long story to tell how gradually the antagonism of the world against us vanished and we were admitted everywhere. And as the desire to fly spread among the people thousands upon thousands submitted themselves to the operation. So to day the whole world is winged.

In the meantime the Patriarch grows aged and weary. He is at present drawing up an outline of a type of government which he hopes his people will accept for the future. He wishes Mentor to become a republic and suggests that James Kennedy, Jr. be elected by the people as their president!

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Lois, now a comely matron, has not lost any of her youthful charm, for the women of Mentor do not age easily. Their lives spent in the air, in full glare of the warm sun and with the far horizon to remind them that life is as great as they wish to make it, are not given to sitting on their front porches and allowing the rest of the world to fly by.

Too, she has her daughters to keep her young and on her toes, for after Jimmy Jr. had come two more sons and two girls that are almost as pretty as their mother.

So ended the story as written by my ancestor. In contemporary history, I find, that not shortly after this tale was finished the secret formula of the solutions *et cetera* that had been evolved by the original Howard Mentor had been placed in the vaults of the Federal government. The obtaining of the secretions no longer necessitated the killing of birds, for chemists discovered that the ingredients could be produced synthetically.

It took several hundreds of years to bring about the complete change, and we can safely say that the world's five billion people are all the wings except perhaps a few isolated groups living in the jungles and mountains, who are now considered savages.

And it is to that Triumvirate composed of Howard Mentor of Scotland, the Patriarch of Mentor and the Martyred President that the world can send her prayer of thanks for the power that is now hers.

THE END
