

Terence X. O'Leary's **WAR BIRDS**

MARCH - 15c

COMPLETE
\$2.00
NOVEL

THE
WORLD'S
GREATEST
HERO IN A
SMASHING
EPIC OF
SUPER AIR
ACTION

"O'LEARY
FIGHTS
THE
GOLDEN
RAY"



CASH PRIZES IN THIS ISSUE

ANNOUNCING AMAZING TYPEWRITER BARGAIN

**BRAND NEW MODEL No. 5
REMINGTON
PORTABLE
10¢ A DAY**

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE



**10 DAY
FREE TRIAL
OFFER**

**FREE EASY HOME
TYPING COURSE**

● Positively the greatest portable typewriter bargain ever offered! Now for the first time Remington, world-famous manufacturer, offers a NEW purchase plan... only 10¢ a day buys this latest model machine! Not a used or rebuilt typewriter. Not an incomplete machine. A beautiful brand new regulation Remington Portable. Standard 4-row keyboard; Standard width carriage; margin release on keyboard; back spacer; automatic ribbon reverse; *every essential feature found in standard typewriters!*

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HOLDS GOOD!**

New factory stores in our own factories, and in the factories of the companies which make our materials, point definitely to higher prices. Stocks of machines on hand make possible the present unbelievably low cash price on this machine. Everything points to higher prices. We cannot possibly guarantee this low price in the face of constantly rising costs in every one of our departments. So we say... "Act Fast!"

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You can try this machine for 10 days without risking one penny of your money. Not even shipping charges. Send for complete details on this most liberal offer. Get attractive new catalogue illustrating and describing the many Remington models available on unusually low terms. Clip coupon today!

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found in Standard Machines**

Buying a typewriter isn't like buying a suit of clothes. Many Remington portables, seeing 10 years of hard service are still as active as new. When you buy, buy a machine with every standard feature. The Remington No. 5 is the most compact and portable machine ever built, includes all essential standard typewriter features. This beautiful machine

represents the bright economy... unqualified economy in fact... unqualified economy in service.

It is today the best value ever offered in typewriter history... and that statement comes from the company that has consistently made typewriter history. Buy now. It is a real bargain offer.

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The Model 5 includes every essential feature found in standard typewriters. It has standard 4-row keyboard. Complete utility. Standard width carriage for easy correction. Carriage returns. Lines of correction. All design for easy and rapid operation.

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Broadcasting stations use engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to \$5,000 a year. Manufacturers continually employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, buyers, for jobs paying up to \$7,500 a year. Radio operators on ships enjoy life, see the world, with board and lodging free, and get good pay besides. Dealers and jobbers employ service men, salesmen, buyers, managers, and pay up to \$100 a week. My book tells you about these and many other interesting Radio jobs.

MANY MAKE \$5, \$10, \$15 A WEEK EXTRA IN SPARE TIME WHILE LEARNING

The day you enroll with me, I send you instructions which you should master quickly for doing 28 Radio jobs common in most every neighborhood, for spare time money. Throughout your training, I send you information for servicing popular makes of sets! I give you the plans and ideas that have made \$200 to \$1,000 a year for N. R. I. men in their spare time. My Course is famous as the Course that pays for itself!

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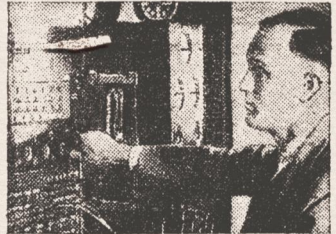
I am so sure that N. R. I. can train you satisfactorily that I will agree in writing to refund every penny of your tuition if you are not satisfied with my Lesson and Instruction Service upon completion.

FREE 64-PAGE BOOK OF FACTS

Mail the coupon now. In addition to the sample lesson, I send my book, "Rich Rewards in Radio." It tells you about the opportunities in Radio, tells you about my Course, what others who have taken it are doing and making. This offer is free to any ambitious fellow over 15 years old. Find out what Radio offers you without slightest obligation. ACT NOW! Mail coupon in an envelope, or paste on a 1c post card.

J. E. SMITH, President

National Radio Institute, Dept. 5CF,
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You Get PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE with Radio Equipment I GIVE YOU

I'll show you how to use my special Radio Equipment for conducting experiments and building circuits which illustrate important principles used in such well-known sets as Westinghouse, General Electric, Philco, R. C. A., Victor, Majestic and others. You work out with your own hands many of the things you read in my lesson books. This 60-50 method of training makes learning at home easy, interesting, fascinating, intensely practical. You learn how sets work, why they work, how to make them work when they are out of order. Training like this shows up in your pay envelope—when you graduate you have had training and experience—you're not simply looking for a job where you can get experience.

I have doubled and tripled the salaries of many



MAIL THIS NOW!

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National Radio Institute, Dept. 5CF
Washington, D. C.

I want to take advantage of your offer. Without obligating me, send me your Free Sample Lesson and your book, "Rich Rewards in Radio."
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The Tested Way to BETTER PAY

Please mention DELL MEN'S GROUP when answering advertisements

Terence X. O'Leary's WAR BIRDS

Vol. 30

MARCH, 1935

Whole No. 84

A BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

O'LEARY FIGHTS THE GOLDEN RAY

NEW! STARTLING! THRILL STORY!

BY

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY 8

Like blasting spotlights of destruction the devastating rays lanced out from the mystery ships of a lost kingdom, rocketing to atoms the finest of modern aircraft, reducing the U. S. to a nation afraid. Then from Unuk, master mind of carnage, came the order:
"Kill O'Leary!"

WIN

BIG CASH PRIZES Editor 6

Center your stick, kiwi, and win one of the eighteen cash prizes given this month for naming O'Leary's ship.

TAKE A RIDE IN

THE COCKPIT 114

The biggest and best of the flying clubs grows with this issue to bigger aims. Get your membership application in.

HOLD YOUR BREATH

WHEN SKY RAYS DESTROY 120

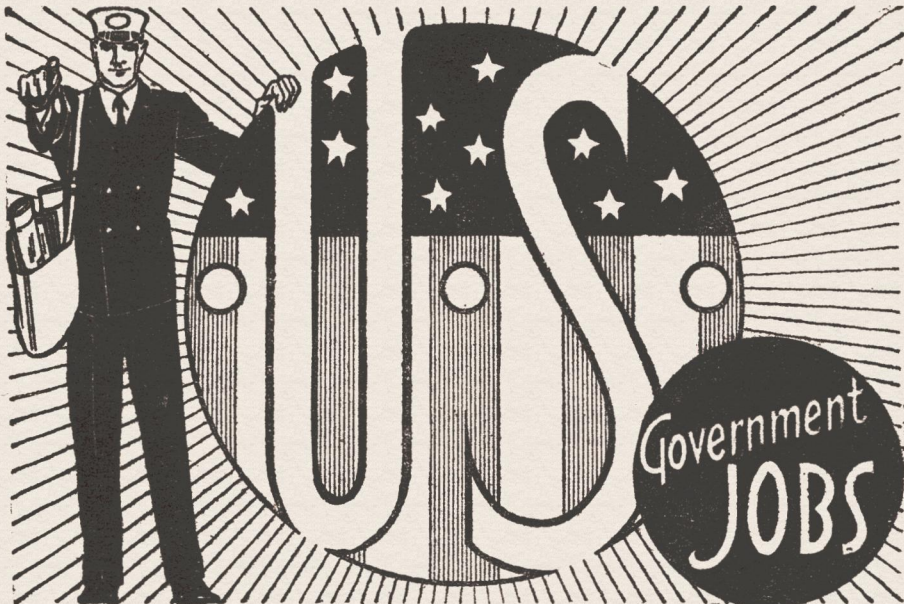
HANG ON WHEN

THE DEVIL'S DREADNAUGHT STRIKES! . . . Rudolph Belarski

Cover design from the novel "O'Leary Fights the Golden Ray."

Published monthly, and copyrighted, 1935, by the Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 149 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y.; George T. Delacorte, Jr., President; H. Meyer, Vice-Pres.; J. Fred Henry, Vice-Pres.; Margarita Delacorte, Secretary; Chicago Advertising Office, 540 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Illinois. Entered as second-class matter, February 10, 1928, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published in the U. S. A. Also copyrighted in Great Britain. Yearly subscription, \$1.50, single copies, 15c. No Canadian subscriptions accepted.

WAR BIRDS ON SALE THE TENTH OF EVERY MONTH



START

\$1260 to \$2100 a YEAR

Many U. S. Government Jobs for Men and Women 18 to 50

Railway Postal Clerks—Post Office Clerks—City Mail Carriers—Rural Mail Carriers—General Office Clerks—Liquor Gaugers—Bookkeepers—Customs Inspectors—Immigrant Inspectors

A VERY DESIRABLE POSITION

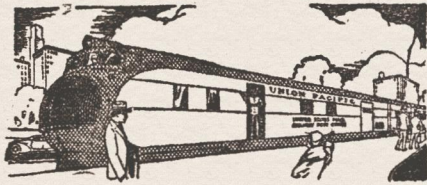
Railway Postal Clerks get \$1900 the first year regular, being paid on the first and fifteenth of each month, \$79.16 each pay day. Their pay is increased \$100 and \$150 a year. The maximum is \$2700 a year, \$112.50 each pay day. They get extra allowance for hotel expenses when away from home.

PAID VACATIONS

Railway Postal Clerks, like all Government employees, are given a yearly vacation of 15 working days (about 18 days). When on long runs they usually work 8 days and have 3 days off duty or in the same proportion. During this off time and vacation, their pay continues just as though they were working. When they grow old, they are retired with a pension. As Railway Postal Clerks are continually traveling, they have an excellent chance to see the country. They are furnished with a railroad pass for official business.

City Mail Carriers—Post Office Clerks

Clerks and Carriers get \$1700 the first year regular and automatically increase \$100 a year to \$2100, with further increase to \$2800. They also have 15 days' vacation.



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Do you earn \$1900 every year? Have you any assurance that a few years from now you will get \$2700 or more a year every year?

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- Rush to me free of charge (1) a full description of the position checked below: (2) Free copy of 32-page illustrated book, "How to Get a United States Government Job"; (3) A list of United States Government Jobs.
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 - Post Office Clerk.....(Start, \$1,700)
 - City Mail Carrier.....(Start, \$1,700)
 - Stenographer-Typist.....(Start, \$1,260)
 - Liquor Gauger—Storekeeper.....(Start, \$2,000)
 - Customs Inspector.....(Start, \$2,100)
 - Bookkeeper.....(Start, \$1,440)

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Dept. M-289
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Many Winter and Spring Examinations Expected

Fill out the coupon. Check the job you want and mail it today—now, at once. **DO IT NOW.**

Name

Address

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The First All-Star issue of **INSIDE DETECTIVE**

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Veteran detective on the Homicide Squad of the San Diego (Calif.) Police Department.

***CHIEF OF POLICE AXEL C. STOLBERG**
of Niles Center, Illinois—the officer who found the corpse of "Baby Face" Nelson.

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of Nassau County, New York—one of the most experienced detective-prosecutors in America.

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of Madison County, Illinois—a sleuth who refuses to be thrown off the trail.

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of the Illinois State Highway Patrol—whose duties involve more than arrests for speeding.

A-L-S-O

This first all-star issue of Inside Detective contains intensely interesting true crime narratives by these outstanding newspapermen:

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Canadian and British press correspondent, and an authority on Scotland Yard.

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Inside Detective's own Washington correspondent.

A-L-S-O

Two worthwhile departments:
"The Almanac of Crime" and
"The Line-up, 1886 Style."

INSIDE DETECTIVE

First edition now on sale—10c

**"I'm not worrying...
..should I meet with an Accident or Sickness tonight!"**



**Will You Get
CASH or
Sympathy?**

**FOR LESS THAN 3c A DAY
YOU CAN PROTECT THOSE
NEAR AND DEAR TO YOU!**

Some of the
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**\$10 A YEAR
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**MEN AND WOMEN
16 to 69 Years Accepted**

**\$10,000
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\$25 Weekly Benefits
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Doctor's Bills, Hospital Benefits, Emergency Benefit and other liberal features to help in time of need—all clearly shown in policy. This is a simple and understandable policy — without complicated or misleading clauses. You know exactly what every word means — and every word means exactly what it says.

**OVER \$20,000,000.00
PAID IN CLAIMS!**

SUPPOSE you meet with an accident or sickness tonight — will your income continue?

Remember, few escape without accident—and none of us can tell what tomorrow holds for us. While you are reading this warning, somewhere some ghastly tragedy, flood or fire, some automobile or train disaster, is taking its toll of human life or limb.

Now is the Time to Protect Yourself!

If you suddenly became ill—would your income stop? What if you suffered from lobar pneumonia, an appendicitis operation, or any of the many common ills

which are covered in this unusual policy; wouldn't you rest easier and convalesce more quickly if you knew that our company stood ready to help lift from your shoulders the distressing financial burdens in case of a personal tragedy?

A sudden accident! A sudden sickness! Can you say neither will happen to you?

Then don't delay another day. Protect yourself by insuring in the largest and oldest exclusive accident insurance Company in America. Send the coupon NOW for complete information about our new \$10,000 Accident and Sickness Policy.

Under Direct Supervision of 46 State Insurance Departments

**IF PREFERRED, THIS POLICY
CAN BE SECURED ON EASY
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Largest and Oldest Exclusive Health and Accident Insurance Company in America

**NORTH AMERICAN
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Established Over 48 Years | AGENTS Wanted for New Territory

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GENTLEMEN: At no cost to me send copy of your **FREE** booklet, "Cash or Sympathy." There is no obligation.

Name.....
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ENTER O'LEARY'S

SHURE, an' you guys is itchin' an' ready to spin your props an' git your entry in this first O'LEARY SUPER AIR DERBY. An' I don't blame ye. Terence (Big-Hearted) O'Leary is proud of hisself. Fifty big, round and shiny dollars fer jist namin' the crate I steal out of Unuk's hangar! Between the two of us, I'd steal another ship from that Baloney fer half of fifty bucks—or maybe fer jist the fun of it.

The first thing fer you to do, before grabbin' yerself a hunk of that easy money, is to read the story "O'Leary Fights The Golden Ray," on the pages that follow. Unless ye read that story ye ain't got no more business in this contest thin the devil has in a Santa Claus suit.

Right there I had to take time out to put the kibosh on Peter Maher McGuffy. Do you know what that Harp was doin'?

Ye don't? Well, he was scribblin' away over in the corner, not even takin' time to refuel from the soda pop bottle at his elbow. Lookin' over his shoulder I see he was writin' eighteen letters, an' they was all addressed to me. Each letter had a different name fer the ship ye see on these pages. After each one he had written: "P.S. Give me the prizes an' I'll split with you. Yer pal, McGuffy."

Me pal is outside now, takin' care of the print I gave him—a black eye that looks like the total eclipse of the sun.

But back to business. After ye read over the story "O'Leary Fights The Golden Ray" ye'll see the necessity fer havin' a name fer the strange crate ye see on these pages. All me other ships have had jist one name, "Lulu Belle." But somehow "Lulu Belle" jist doesn't fit this flyin' round-house.

Me old Spad 18 was the first baby to squat an' throw her sky hooks while bearin' that noble name, and Lulu Belle fit her like a shiny booter's

parade pants when he squats. The name did good duty on other ships, too, includin' the little two-seater mystery ship Mr. Murakii give me fer personal business while I was on his island in the Pacific.

By the way, that ship was the Lulu Belle I was ridin' when me an' Pete put some hot lead into the teddies of the big ship I'm askin' ye to name. So it wouldn't do to call the big baby Lulu Belle too. If we did it would be Lulu Belle fightin' Lulu Belle—and where would we be then?

Personally I don't care much fer fancy names, and the kiwi that suggests we call this flying dreadnaught "Percy" will wear the office goboon fer a collar—an' I'll fit it personal around his neck.

18 CASH PRIZES

1st PRIZE \$15

2nd PRIZE \$10

3rd PRIZE \$ 5

5 PRIZES \$2 EACH

10 PRIZES \$1 EACH

GET IN ON O'LEARY'S SUPER AIR DERBY FOR THRILLS AND BIG PRIZES. IT'S AS EASY AS MAKING A CRASH LANDING AND A THOUSAND-TIMES MORE FUN. MERELY GIVE THE MIGHTY MICK A NAME FOR HIS NEW SHIP. WIN DOLLARS AND FAME

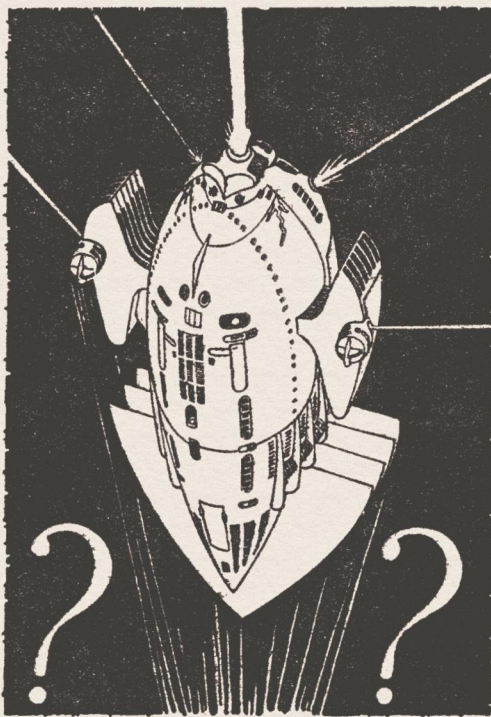
BIG CONTEST

\$50.00 IN CASH PRIZES

Me, I'm kinda partial to ladies. "Catherine The Great" would suit me better. Still, "Bull Of The Air" ain't a bad name fer this ship; and "Torpedo Terror" is pretty good. I kinda like "Disintegrater Ship" too. Anyway, that gives you the idea.

Ye can find in as many names as ye want. Put some of them on the coupon and the list on a separate piece of paper if ye send a bunch of them. I'm goin' to need lots of names to

a prize, I'll give ye each the full amount of pick eighteen winners. Remember, though, the prize tied for.—T. X. O'Leary.



NAME THIS SHIP FOR PRIZES

it only takes one name to win a prize!

Address yer letters to "Terence X. O'Leary's Ship Contest, 149 Madison Ave., New York, N. Y." Be sure yer letter is post-marked no later than March 8, 1935, to git in this month's air derby.

Don't forget the "X" stands fer ixcellent.

TERENCE X.
O'LEARY.

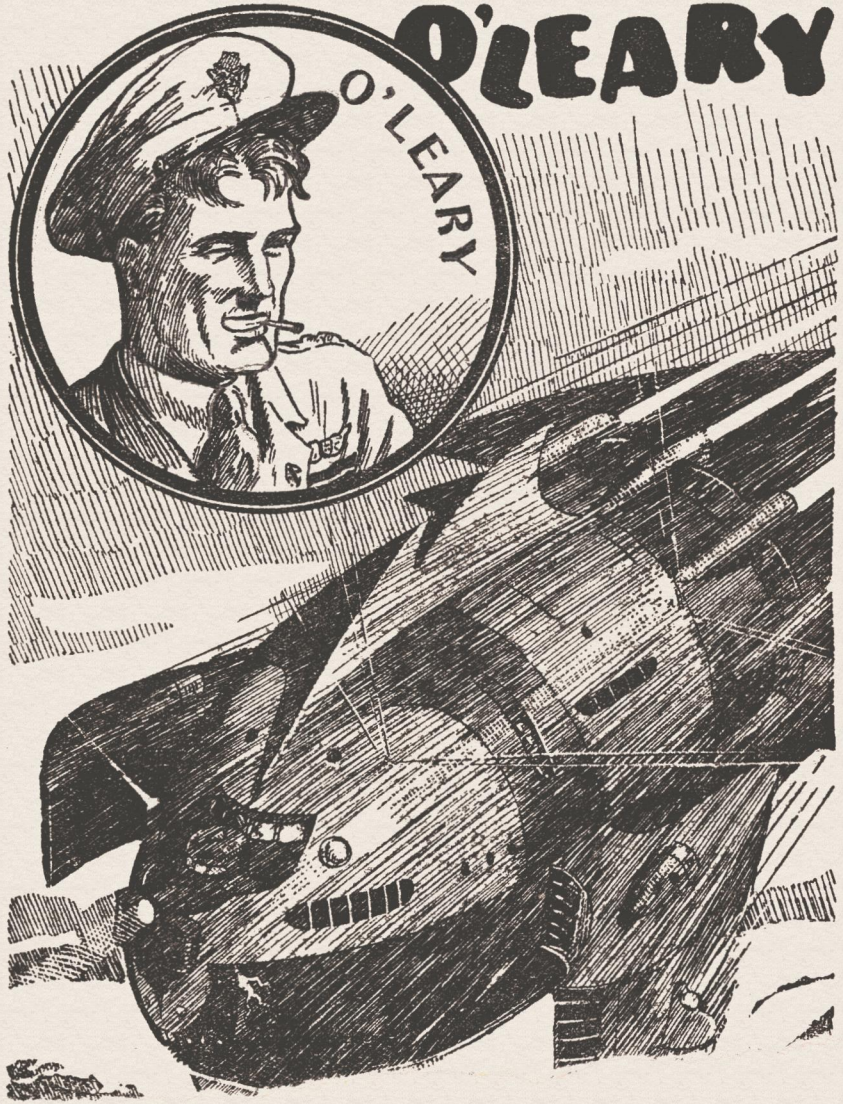
P.S.—In case ye tie with another winner fer

ENTER THE CONTEST NOW!

THRILLING!

ASTOUNDING!

GIGANTIC!



A NEW KIND OF O'LEARY STORY!

FIGHTS THE GOLDEN RAY



"Here's a Kiss from Cinderella"
yelled O'Leary, but his bullets
bounced harmlessly off the sky
monster.

by

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

Author of "O'LEARY, THE DEVIL'S DARLING," etc.

AND that nation in the far north
shall be destroyed."

A laugh that chilled the blood
echoed and re-echoed.

"The United States of America! Ha!

Ha! Ha!" resounded the dreadful laugh.

"Fire and thunder shall hurtle down
from the skies. Mangled bodies! Rivers
of blood! The stink of roasting flesh!

Toppling buildings! Cities blasted out of

**O'Leary Throws Flying Skill and Courage Against The Fiendish
Intelligence Of A Man Five Hundred Years Old, A Demon
Whose Foul Threat Is To Blast Civilization From The Globe**

existence! America shall be destroyed, I say."

"And then the rest of the world shall crumble into nothing, O Unuk, Supreme Ruler of the Universe."

It was a weird, somber and awe-inspiring spectacle, a scene of such magnitude and color that it would have dwarfed into insignificance the combined efforts and resources of the motion picture industry to produce even a semblance of its greatness and its scope. The twentieth century? Unbelievable! More credible that the years had turned back to the age of mythology.

Night had fallen. There was no moon. Not a single star twinkled in the heavens. But those heavens were painted a dull red.

UNUK, high priest of Lataki, was a horrible, fear-inspiring figure. Of small stature and thin emaciated body, his age-yellowed skin, dry and wrinkled as parchment, stretched tightly over protruding bones.

His head, devoid of hair, seemed a sharply outlined skull of death. From deep cavernous sockets burned reddish, ratlike eyes, constantly shifting. His thin, bloodless lips were parted in a malicious sneer, revealing rows of broken, yellow teeth. His nose reminded one of the beak of a bird of prey. His scrawny, vulture-like neck was spotted with bluish scars, marks of surgeons' knives.

He wore a headdress of white feathers, from which rose an immense black plume. A sleeveless black woolen tunic bore a crimson bleeding-heart embroidered on the left breast. An abbreviated black-feathered skirt and black sandals with white laces completed his attire.

From the lobes of his shriveled ears dangled strings of priceless emeralds, reaching to his stooped shoulders. Clutched in talon-like fingers, he held a four-tailed whip, the thongs heavily leaded.

"Witness the might of Unuk," he cackled, making a sweeping gesture with a

bony arm. "Look, O Alok, and tremble."

"Your humble servant looks, O Unuk, and he trembles."

Beside Unuk, high priest of Lataki, stood Alok, his under priest, and next in command.

He was short and stocky. His body of a coppery hue, was naked except for a golden breast plate, richly encrusted with gems and held in place by black leather thongs over his massive shoulders, and a short black woolen skirt trimmed with dark red feathers. He wore white sandals, the black laces of which entwined his ankles and the calves of his legs.

With a hand shading his eyes Alok looked at the awesome spectacle.

A grassless plateau flat as a table stretched for miles in all directions, a plateau walled in by bare, rock-ribbed mountains of majestic peaks and rugged crags.

Behind this rocky rampart of Nature boiled, boomed and hissed huge lakes of molten lava, a raging inferno of crimson fire which dyed the edges of the majestic peaks and rugged crags a dancing red.

At the north end of the plateau, barely discernible in the shifting, blood-tinted shadows, loomed vaguely what appeared to be a large industrial town. High concrete chimneys pointed into the skies as though they were uplifted arms, man arrogantly challenging the omnipotent might of God. Blast furnaces flashed and flared and roared.

"The factories of Unuk are mighty," said Alok.

"But not mighty enough. How many air messengers of the explosive death can my factories produce, and in what time?"

"Your factories can produce them at the rate of five each twenty-four hours, O Unuk. The parts are ready and need only to be properly assembled."

"Too slow, too slow. Look! The dogs at drill need the lash, I think."

In the foreground, as far as the eye could reach, thousands of half-naked, cop-

per-skinned men of short stature but powerfully built, arrayed in breast plates, chain-armor and carrying short, vicious-looking, double-edged swords and cross-bows, drilled like automotons; infantry and cavalry.

There was a set, vacant stare in the glinting, fiery black eyes, as though a switch in the circuit connecting mind and muscles had been pulled and left open. Nevertheless dogged determination, like a straining draft horse under lash, was imprinted on each suffering face.

Formed in platoons, companies, battalions, regiments, and even bridges, these eerie foot troops mechanically obeyed the staccato, mechanical commands hurled at them.

One! Two! Three! Four! A giant metronome monotonously beat out the cadence as troops wheeled and turned in column, or deployed into line. Perfect were the movements, as though each man was a robot, and the whole controlled by a master switch.

"Aye, the dogs need the lash, O Alok."

"Your sacred command shall be obeyed, O Unuk."

"Twenty of the laziest for sacrifice to the God of the Depths, in the temple over there."

"Twenty of the laziest for sacrifice, O Unuk."

"What do my dogs of scientists babble about? Why do they listen to the white-haired dog?"

"The white-haired dog discusses your air messenger of the explosive death, O Unuk."

In the center of a hollow square of armed warriors, sat a ten-motored airplane of immense proportions. A few yards from the giant ship stood a group of Europeans and Americans listening to one of their number outline the functioning of the mysterious air-monster. These were the war-scientists of the high priest.

But what a strange, motley collection of human beings they were.

Their faces, drawn and lined, were absolutely expressionless as though chiseled from stone. Their eyes, however, betrayed the suffering of their souls and glinted with hatred, albeit mixed with fear.

Each appeared to be near, or past, the century mark in years, although his physical fitness gave the lie to the daring assumption.

UNUK advanced to the scientist talking and raised his leaded whip.

"Silence, dog!"

The high priest spoke in English. The heads of his war-scientists lowered in deference.

"Am I not your Supreme Master?" The voice was high-pitched and thin, almost a cackle. "Have I not lived five hundred years?"

"You are our Supreme Master, O Unuk." Parrot-like came the chorus in monotonous, sullen tones, "The mighty high priest of Lataki has lived five hundred years."

"Who made you what you are, the premier scientists of all time?"

"You made your humble servants what we are, O Unuk."

"Who added scores of years to your lives and developed the brains you use in the service of Unuk?"

"You did, O Unuk."

"Who shall rule the universe?"

"You shall rule the universe, O Unuk."

"And which is the nation we first shall destroy?"

"The nation known as the United States of America, O Unuk."

"How shall that nation be destroyed?"

"It shall be destroyed by the engines of the air which we, at command of you, O Unuk, are now building for that purpose."

"And what nation shall be next?"

"Great Britain, with all her colonies and her possessions, O Unuk."

"Is it not for that reason that the language known as English has been mastered by all of my command?"

"It is for that reason, O Unuk."

The high priest pointed a scrawny arm at the scientist whom he had interrupted.

"On your knees, dog, and tell me more of our first air messenger of the explosive death."

With his whip Unuk viciously lashed the bare legs of the scientist. Blood spurted under the jagged leaden weights. Not the slightest outcry escaped the victim of the cruel act, but his eyes betrayed his suffering.

"Your humble servant obeys, O Unuk." Down knelt the scientist. "Like a fiend of hell your air messenger shall hurtle down from the skies into the heart of Washington, blasting a wide area and killing hundreds of Americans. With no human hands at the controls, racing at a speed heretofore undreamed, it will be dispatched from the plateau and be sent winging through space to its target. The explosive it carries will be sufficient to accomplish the result desired by the mighty Unuk."

"And if it should fail, dog?" The high priest brought his whip down on the bent shoulders before him.

Ugly welts showed and blood trickled down the lacerated back.

"Your humble servant shall be punished with death, O Unuk."

"The radio speaks, O Unuk," informed Alok, under priest. "A message comes from your agents in far off Washington, O Unuk."

"I shall listen. See, the dog of a scientist has fallen. Have salt rubbed into his cuts to revive him." A high, cackling laugh.

ALOK gave an order to a warrior, then signaled to a scientist standing by an immense short wave set. The scientist saluted by raising his right arm on high. He threw a switch.

The stillness was shattered by a metallic voice, a voice wafted through thousands of miles of space.

"Washington calling Lataki!" drummed on the night. "Washington calling Lataki!" Over and over again it was repeated in a strange, guttural language, the language of Lataki. "Washington calling Lataki! Washington calling Lataki!"

A fierce scowl twisted the repulsive face of the high priest. With whip raised on high he crossed to the scientist operating the radio. The man didn't flinch, but the smoldering hatred in his deep-set eyes burned hot and red.

"You careless dog?"

The leaded lashes encircled the unprotected neck. The man staggered under the blow, but instantly recovered his balance.

"Must I listen forever to the same senseless chatter?" demanded Unuk. "What has the fool in Washington to say?"

"Your pardon, O Mighty Unuk," groaned the scientist. "I but awaited your command to acknowledge the call."

"Alok," commanded the high priest, "after receipt of the message from Washington, have the insolent dog tortured between the toes with burning sulphur."

"It shall be done, O Unuk." The under priest gave an order to the scientist, who acknowledged the distant radio call.

From the loud speaker sounded the metallic voice.

"Murokai, sworn enemy of Unuk, again had Kiva try, but unsuccessfully, to warn the United States Government at Washington of its danger. The chief of the American Air Force once more refused to see Kiva, or to pay attention to his message."

A triumphant grimace further distorted the face of the high priest as he bent forward to listen.

"Murokai now plans to commandeer the services of the two outstanding air aces of the American army, Captains Terence X. O'Leary and Peter Maher McGuffy," continued the metallic voice. "What is the command of Unuk, high priest of Lataki?"

UNUK



NO DEED IS TOO HELLISH FOR UNUK, HIGH PRIEST TO GOD OF THE DEPTHS

The high priest's cackling laugh sent an involuntary shudder through the scientists grouped about him.

"The Crimson Legion? The Crimson Legion which planned world dominance, the overthrow of all governments? The fools! Little did they know that Unuk, high priest of Lataki, hundreds of years before, had the same plan; that it is destined that he, and he alone, shall rule the universe."

"The Mighty Unuk shall rule the universe," said Alok.

"What is the pleasure of our Supreme

"Who are these American flying-dogs he prattles of?" Unuk asked Alok.

"They have no peers in the air, O Unuk, and no fear in their breasts. In the days when the nations of the outside world were tearing at one another's throats, these two men fought for the United States with valor and skill. It was they who killed the German, Count Joseph von Krassner, self-styled Emperor of the Skies."

"Count Joseph von Krassner?" cackled the high priest. "You mean the mad war-scientist who invented the disintegrating rays, which my dogs of science have since perfected?"

"The same, O Unuk. They also killed the German, Baron Kofrank von Stoeffen, who founded the world-wide organization called the Crimson Legion."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

ALOK



THE DEVIL'S UNDERSTUDY IS ALOK, SECOND PRIEST IN DEVIL'S HEAVEN

Master regarding Captains O'Leary and McGuffy?"

Unuk hobbled to the radio set and, on a low bow from the scientist in charge that it was ready, spoke into a microphone.

"Unuk, high priest of Lataki, commands that the two American aviators, Captains Terence X. O'Leary and Peter Maher McGuffy, be killed without delay. Do not fail in this, or you shall suffer the wrath of Unuk."

The order was confirmed on the other end and the scientist snapped a switch, shutting off the powerful radio set. The high priest turned to Alok.

"Is the experimental ship of the disintegrating rays ready for its errand of destruction?"

"It will be ready in a few days, O Unuk. Following your first blow against Washington with the robot-controlled air messenger of the explosive death, the ship of the disintegrating rays will be dispatched to destroy the American airmail and passenger service plying between San Francisco and Honolulu, as it destroyed other American air-mail ships."

"Is the American crew prepared to function again?"

"More brain injections were necessary, O Unuk, but they proved successful. The crew is ready."

"These American flying-dogs are of hardy caliber, and do not respond to your brain-serum as readily as do the dogs of science we kidnaped. Why?"

"I have not as yet solved the mystery, O Unuk. Only for short periods do their brains stay under control of the serum, but by using the injections more often I have overcome that obstacle."

"If you fail you shall feel the heavy hand of Unuk."

"If I fail I shall feel the heavy hand of Unuk."

"Are my Latakians undergoing your brain-serum treatment developing into pilots?"

"Very slowly, O Unuk. We still must rely on kidnaping foreign airmen and scientifically destroying their resistance to your sacred commands."

"What is responsible for the delay in the development of my Latakians?"

"Their inborn fear of all that flies, O Unuk. For centuries they have worshipped the God of the Sky and, now that they have repudiated that god by command of the Mighty Unuk, the terror of leaving the ground to enter into the kingdom of the skies still lurks in their hearts."

"What of the dogs of science here? Can they not speed the desired end by helping you?"

"Your scientists work hard and faithfully with me, O Unuk."

"Put three of them to the torture. It will inspire the others to greater effort."

"Your august command shall be obeyed, O Unuk."

The high priest gazed out over the crimson-lighted plateau at his legion of drilling warriors.

"Are you weeding out the laggards?" he asked.

"I am, O Unuk. Yesterday a full dozen were put to death as hopeless."

"Sacrifice a hundred more to the God of the Depths. I want no weaklings under me."

"A hundred more shall be sacrificed."

"Have any of them lost their inherent fear of fire arms?" A shudder shook the high priest.

"No, Mighty Unuk. Even my serum cannot overcome that." Alok's voice trembled. "I, too, am afraid of them. The noise terrifies me."

O'Leary, Crimson Warrior

IN the meanwhile General Merton, Chief of the U.S. Air Force, seated at his desk in Washington, looked up from the blueprint of a new-type bomber he was studying. One of his secretaries had entered.

"What is it, Mr. Weaver?"

"Your pardon, General, but that crank is acting up again. He has been waiting since early this morning to see you. I suggest that the Department of Justice take charge of him."

"You mean the one who claims the destruction of the United States is being plotted by the mythical high priest of Natak?" General Merton laughed. "Isn't Natak the name he called the lost kingdom of his imagination?"

"Not Natak, but Latak, sir. On each visit he adds more information. This time he declared Washington itself will suffer the first experimental blow of the high priest, and that the blow is liable to fall any time now. If the experiment proves successful, he said, the Panama Canal and Los Angeles will be the next long range targets, to be destroyed by an armada of air-engines of which our modern scientists as yet haven't dreamed. Following the demolition of the Canal and Los Angeles, our principal cities will be effaced and—"

"Yes, yes, Weaver, I know. What does he want in exchange for saving the U. S.—money?"

"Not a farthing, General. In fact he claims he is rich enough to buy the mint. In return for his information all he asks is

that our two best army flyers, Captains O'Leary and McGuffey, be detailed to him in order that he can furnish the U. S. Government with proof of his contentions."

"So he wants our two best army flyers, does he? What is his nationality?"

"I wish I knew, General. He talks with a peculiar foreign accent which I have addled my brain trying to place, but he uses good English. He is not very tall, but powerfully built. A study of his facial structure, however, indicates that he has Indian blood in him, not to mention a certain coppery, reddish hue of complexion. It is difficult to describe him exactly."

"Quite an enigma, he seems. How old is he?"

"He casually stated that he was in his two hundred and eleventh year. In fact, he just as casually informed that shortly after the inauguration of George Washington he warned General Washington a plan was afoot by the high priest of Latak for the domination of the Americas."

"Forget the investigation, Weaver. He is demented. What did George Washington do?"

"Refused to listen to him."

"Yes, Weaver, we are dealing with a lunatic. Although he appears to be quite harmless, your idea of passing the buck

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to the Department of Justice is a good one. We can't be further annoyed by him."

"Very well, sir. His place is in an asylum." A smile crept into the eyes of the secretary as he informed, "Captains Terence X. O'Leary and Peter Maher McGuffy, who won the international air race for us, are outside, sir. They urgently request an audience with you."

"Terence X. O'Leary! What a marvelous character! Dynamite and barbed wire. If Dumas were alive today that red-headed Irish air-dragon would be his

"Right away, sir, then I'll have the Department of Justice take care of the crank bothering us."

Captains Terence X. O'Leary and Peter Maher McGuffy were ushered into the office. They snapped to attention before the Air Chief, but their expressions were decidedly sheepish, even though faintly tinged with anxiety.

Their superior glowered blackly at them while he sized them up. A thunder storm was coming, that they knew.

Lithe and sinewy as a panther in build, a

Warning Was Given, But Ignored—And The Exploding Death Came Swooping!

D'Artagnan of the skies. And Peter Maher McGuffy would be Porthos."

"A great team of daredevil aces, sir."

"Our two most expert flyers, and Uncle Sam has some good ones. Winged hell-cats! Not satisfied with winning every medal stamped out in the last war they had to cop first prize in the greatest around-the-world air derby ever staged. "What have they been up to now?"

"Nothing much, sir." The secretary grinned. "O'Leary and McGuffy, for a monumental bet of five dollars, *only* landed on the White House lawn this afternoon and ruined a rose garden of the President's wife."

"Jumping Judas! Landed on the *White House* lawn? Haven't the crazy fools got better sense than that? Are they insane? What excuse did they give for the idiotic prank?"

"When I asked O'Leary why he did it he asked me to find an excuse for the stunt, because he himself temporarily had run out of alibis, and that McGuffy wasn't so hot in that respect."

"Send the lunkheads in. I'll *alibi* the gee dee scalawags. Landing their ship on the *White House* lawn, if you please! I bet the President is fit to be tied."

full six feet in height, Captain O'Leary looked as though he might be—and he was—a nasty customer in a fight.

A crop of unruly red hair topped a rugged, none-too-handsome, but good natured, mugg. Across his expansive chest were sewn enough ribbons to stock a millinery shop. His keen, steel-blue eyes twinkled as he gazed steadily at his irate chief. He realized he was in Dutch, but nothing could faze his undying sense of humor.

His flying partner and pal of World War days, Captain Peter Maher McGuffy, was a trifle shorter, but much huskier. His hair was dark brown and curly and his eyes were gray and piercing.

"So," rasped the air chief, trying hard to disguise the smile in his voice, "you two air-buccaneers had to select the pet rose garden of the First Lady in the Land on which to set down your ship. Would you kindly tell me why?"

"Ye see it was this way, sir," replied O'Leary. "Me an' Pete here—Capt'in Peter Maher McGuffy to be official—was drinkin' Coca-Cola in the Y.M.C.A. and—"

"Coca-Cola?" roared the chief.

"Anyhow, there was Coca-Cola in it, sir," quickly parried O'Leary, "to sort o' deaden the sting."

"And you were in the *Y.M.C.A.*?"

"Mike Hennessy's beer parlor, sir," offered McGuffy, lamely.

"Naw, we wint to Hinnessy's first," corrected O'Leary. "Doogan's was the last place we visited."

"Hennessy's was the last place."

"Never mind the order of sequence," snapped the chief. "Why did you set tail on the White House lawn?"

"Shure an' we makes a bet with Doogan—"

"With Hennessy," protested McGuffy. "Get it straight, Terence."

"Like I sez, before I was so rudely intrupted." O'Leary flashed his pal a withering glance. "We make a bet with Doogan that we kin set Lulu Belle down—"

"Lulu Belle?" interposed the chief. "So there was a woman in it, eh?"

"Not this time, sir. Lulu Belle is the name o' our new two-seater. Me an' Pete bought her with the jack we won in the air race. Ye, see, sir, whin me an' Pete was makin' the world safe for Dimocrats in the war, I called me Spad Lulu Belle. On the livil, Gin'ral Merton, this new baby is a honey. Whin she tightens her corsit strings an' lifts her sky-hooks to start climbin'—"

"Damn Lulu Belle! Answer the main question.

"*Why did you land on the White House lawn?*"

"Oh, yis, I was sort o' fergittin' that, sir." O'Leary fidgeted uneasily. "It's this way, sir. Doogan's a Republican. So is me an' McGuffy. The Prisdint is a Democrat. And whin cloud-hoppers is broke, five dollars is five dollars. Could anythin' be plainer, sir?"

"Nothing could be plainer, Captain O'Leary. I understand, perfectly. Now, for my own personal information, after pulling such a crazy stunt why did you come here to headquarters of the air force? Aren't you aware that you are in great demand by the White House?"

"Shure an' I'm well aware o' the dis-

mayin' fact, sir. Me an' Pete didn't wait fer the Prisdint's better-half to pin a rose on us, but lifted Lulu Belle out o' it, fast. We thin sets her fannie down in the Municipal Air Port, an' thin we beats it here as quick as the divil himsilf would let us."

"Why, if you didn't want to be caught, did you come here, of all places?"

"Psychology, sir. Air headquarters is the last spot the Prisdint's gum-shoes will look fer us. And are they lookin'!"

"Why shouldn't I inform them that you are here?"

"Not ye, sir. D'ye know what I sez to Pete, sir? I'll tell ye. Pete, I sez, our bist friend in the world is Gin'ral Merton. There's a swell guy fer ye, Pete, an' how he knows his air onions, dispite the lies printed about him in the papers controlled by dirty politicians. An', Pete, I adds, if he iver gits in trouble—the good saints ferbid—me an' ye will stick by him 'till they makes a cold storage plant out of hell." O'Leary stopped for breath.

"And?"

"Where ye gonna hide us, Gin'ral?"

The chief could restrain himself no longer. He laughed. Covertly O'Leary winked at McGuffy. They had won again.

"Fade into that office and *stay* there."

"It certainly is fine of you, General," said McGuffy, "and we appreciate it."

THEY crossed to the door, where O'Leary hesitated.

"Well?" demanded the Air Chief.

"I was jist wonderin', sir," ventured O'Leary, slyly nudging Pete, "if the Gin'ral had a bit of a eye-opener hid some-where in his private office. Shure an' it's a good habit all gin'ral's has. Me an' Pete could do with a pick-up, after inhalin' the derogatory aroma o' thim roses."

"Of all the blasted nerve! Get out!"

"Failin' in that, sir," persisted O'Leary, "would it be too much to ask the Gin'ral to lind us twinty bucks 'till payday? The bigger the favor ye does us, sir, the harder

we'll work fer ye whin ye git into that trouble I mintioned."

"I have had the sad experience of lending you money. Anyway, how dare you, only a captain, attempt to borrow money from the chief of the U. S. Air Force?"

"Ye see, sir," floundered O'Leary, "the bigger they come the harder they—"

"Terence!" gasped McGuffey.

"The harder they fall," said the general, acidly.

"Ye got me wrong, sir. I was gonna say, the harder it is fer thim to refuse, due to that fine sympathy an' understandin' what only gin'ral's possiss."

"Get out!"

"If ye don't mind, sir, me an' Pete is gonna fade into oblivion 'til our leave is up, we not bein' so terribly anxious to discuss roses with thim on Capitol Hill. So, like I sez, if ye don't mind, sir, kindly notify Flight No. 13, knowed as the Black Wings, that the 'X' in me initials still stands fer icillint and that I ain't dead. By a strange coincidence I also owe money to thim, and I don't want 'em to worry un-nicissarily."

"If you don't get out I'll—"

The two flyers vanished, closing the door behind them. The chief chuckled and resumed his work. O'Leary and McGuffey were his favorites and occasionally he lowered the bars of rank when dealing with them.

"O'Leary Must Die"

EXCEPT for here and there a belated pedestrian walking along, policemen on beat, or else a Department of Justice agent on duty, the area occupied by government buildings was silent and deserted.

Cautiously a watchman opened a basement door in rear of the War Department, peered up and down the street, then called softly to someone in the cellar below:

"No taxi in sight yet, gentlemen. Everything quiet too."

"Take another look for snoopers, Jim," cautioned a voice of distinctive Irish accent. "It's been me experience that whin all was quiet on the Wistern Front to ixpict plinty o' trouble."

"Ain't it the truth?" sighed another voice, but of lesser brogue. "Landing in that rose garden sure stirred up a hornets' nest. You'd think we had knocked off the President, or something."

"Cripes!" growled O'Leary. "What this country needs is a sinse o' humor. And how!"

Jim, the watchman, looked again and reported all clear, but his scrutiny, as sharp as it was, had failed to detect two spying forms lurking in the black shadow of the building.

O'Leary consulted his wristwatch and frowned.

"What's keepin' that taxi we ordered?" he said. "It would be suicide to try an' iscape arrist on our dogs. I bet ivery secret service snooper in Washin'ton is huntin' us."

"The War of the Roses," remarked McGuffey caustically. "How history repeats itself."

"Geeze!" snapped O'Leary. "Roses? I niver wanta see one o' the damn things ag'in."

"You had better take a look yourself, Terence," suggested McGuffey. "Those cat-eyes of yours won't miss much, dark as it is."

"Is it true that you can see in the dark, Mr. O'Leary?" asked the watchman. "I have read reports to that effect."

"Can he see in the dark!" exclaimed McGuffey. "Ask those who flew with him in the war. I'll say he can!"

O'Leary nodded and poked his head out of the doorway. Unfortunately for him, however, the two spying men had withdrawn temporarily out of his range of vision and O'Leary saw no one.

Five more minutes of anxious waiting dragged by and the watchman took another peep.

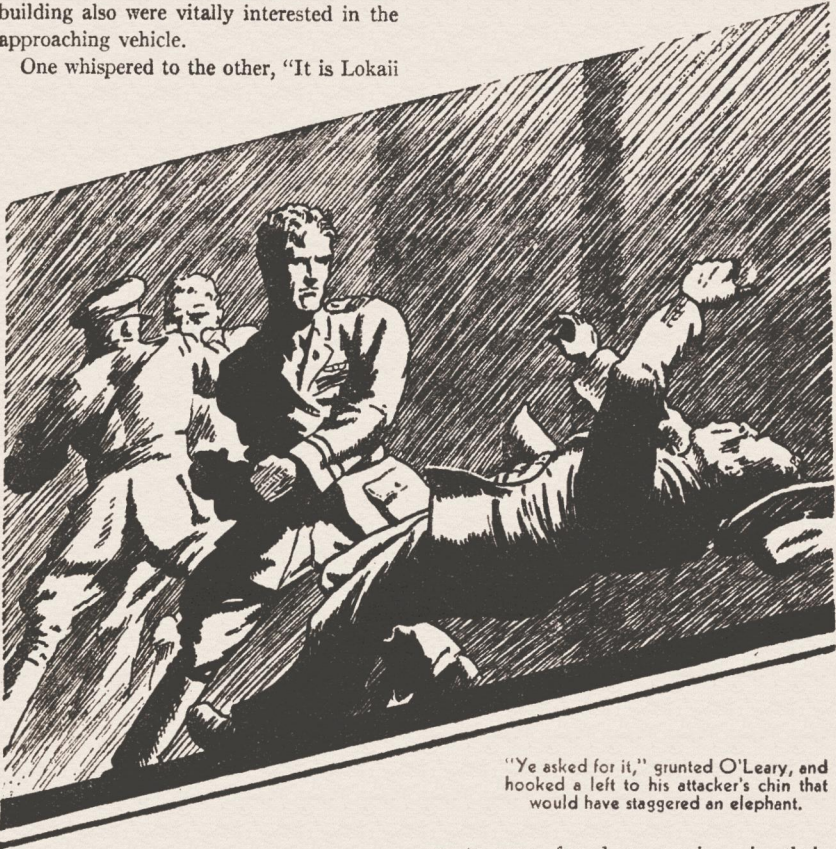
"A taxi," he announced, joyfully, "but it's a couple of blocks away yet, and coming slow."

The forms skulking in the shadow of the building also were vitally interested in the approaching vehicle.

One whispered to the other, "It is Lokaii

service. How could he know that they still are inside?"

"True that he was arrested, but how long did they hold him? Not five minutes after he had entered their car. Are you forgetting the sleeping-rays? The secret service



"Ye asked for it," grunted O'Leary, and hooked a left to his attacker's chin that would have staggered an elephant.

who comes. He will keep driving by until we signal him."

"Was Kiva positive that the two American flyers entered the office of the air chief?"

"Has Kiva ever failed?"

"No. But they might have left long since. Kiva was arrested by the secret

agents were found unconscious in their parked car, with Kiva flown. And the memories of the agents will not function for hours yet."

"But our mission here in the United States is so hopeless. Why do we not return to Lataki and do something ourselves? The years wasted trying to convince a government of fools of its danger? And more than a hundred aviators of all the so-called

civilized nations killed in an impossible task?"

"It is the command of Murokaii. Dare you question his wisdom, or deliberately fail in what he orders?"

Presently his comrade stiffened.

"Hist, they come!" he warned. "And they will pass us. Get ready."

Having finally decided that the taxi ordered had failed them, O'Leary and McGuffy had ventured forth afoot.

THE mysterious spies flattened themselves against the stone wall screening them and tensed to spring on their unsuspecting quarry.

Slightly in advance of McGuffy, who was watching the rear, O'Leary came abreast of the ambush. A body shot forward and two talon-like claws encircled his throat in a grip of steel.

Taken unawares, he went down under the heavy impact of the hurtling form, unable to cry out in warning to his pal. Simultaneously the other spy had leaped, dragging McGuffy to the sidewalk with him.

But the assailants had not reckoned on the unusual strength and agility of the flyers. They just as well might have attacked Royal Bengal tigers with bare hands.

Thinking that they had been jumped by secret service agents trying to arrest them, O'Leary and McGuffy were at a disadvantage, they not wanting to seriously injure the government officers. It was not the agents' fault, the flyers reasoned, they were only carrying out their orders.

O'Leary wrenched loose from the choking grip on his windpipe and drove a terrific punch into his opponent's stomach. Up he sprang and squared off. Unsteadily the recipient of the breath-taking drive clambered to his feet.

"I'm sorry, Shorty," grunted O'Leary, "but I gotta massage ye on the button."

No sooner had he spoken then he hooked

a left to the other's jaw which would have staggered an elephant. Legs doubling, the spy crumpled to the pavement, face forward. He was out, cold. O'Leary wheeled around to help his pal. But McGuffy needed no help.

"I hope I didn't clip him too hard," said McGuffy. "Damn near broke my knuckles on him."

"Shure an' there'll be hell to pay in Denmark," growled O'Leary. "Cloutin' Department o' Justice guys ain't to be laughed at. Let's hot-tail it out o' here while they's snoozin'."

A taxi rounded the corner and headed for them. O'Leary and McGuffy darted behind a corner of the building and watched. The taxi kept leisurely on its way, the two prone figures on the sidewalk apparently not seen by its driver.

"Now where to?" demanded McGuffy. "Washington's no good place for us now. If we go to the Municipal Air Port we'll be pinched, sure as hell."

"We gotta hide out somewhere's fer a couple o' days an' thin blow the town."

Where?"

"In Doogan's. He'll take care o' us. Anyhow, we gotta collect that bet o' five bucks he owes us."

"Not Doogan's, but Hennessy's."

"Hey, taxi!" called O'Leary.

The driver pulled into the curb. O'Leary shot him a sharp, wondering glance. Never before had he seen such a peculiar looking face. But what did the face of a taxi driver count under the pressing circumstances?

At the side entrance of Doogan's Brass Rail they got out and between them scraped together enough loose change to pay the taxi fare. The driver saluted respectfully and drove off.

They went inside, closeted themselves in a curtained off booth and sent for Mr. Doogan. They didn't have long to wait.

"Where's the five bucks ye owe us?"

demanded O'Leary as the Irish proprietor appeared.

"Foive bucks? Wot foive bucks?"

"What did I tell you?" rasped McGuffey.

"Pipe down, ye!" O'Leary was mad. "He's tryin' to pull a fast one on us." Then to Doogan, hotly, "Ye know what five bucks. Ye bet us five clinkers that we was afeared to land Lulu Belle on the White House lawn."

"Hell fire, I git ye now." Doogan laughed. "Shure and Tim Hinnessy calls me up an' tills me about the bet he made with ye. Begorra, an' ye byes shure won it. The papers is full o' the stunt, and ivery cop in town is lookin' fer ye."

"So, Mr. Sure Thing," taunted McGuffey, "you're always right, are you?"

"What's the differince in a name?" O'Leary shot him a frigid stare.

"How about some liquid refreshmint, on the cuff?" asked O'Leary. "And thin taxi fare to take us to—" He stopped suddenly.

"Hennessy's," supplied McGuffey, triumphantly. "You're not man enough to say Hennessy's. Some day you'll admit I'm right, but—"

"Go on, be a parrot."

"Ye fellers know how much ye owe me already?" asked Doogan, vindictively. "Well, a week from now ye won't owe me a cint more. Do ye git me drift?"

"Jist try an' put us out," challenged O'Leary. "I'll roll yer dirty shirt up yer back like a window shade."

Believing that discretion was the better part of valor, the flint-hearted and tight-fisted Doogan hastily withdrew. O'Leary and McGuffey exchanged disgusted looks. McGuffey started to speak. O'Leary stopped him.

"I dare ye to say it!" he roared. "I jist dare ye!"

Outside the curtain a metal coin clinked on the floor, as though it had been dropped.

Both flyers froze with interest. They needed money, and how. No voices or sound of footsteps could they hear.

Nevertheless a short and stocky man had tiptoed from the adjoining booth and had sneaked out the side entrance.

"A silver dollar," whispered O'Leary, excitedly. "And it's only sixty cints by taxi to—to—well, ye know where. Anyhow, what ye grinnin' like a ape fer?"

"Just a refreshing thought, dear Terence." McGuffey gingerly parted the curtains of the booth. "It wasn't a dollar, it was a half-dollar. You can't fool me."

"I said it was a dollar. I know the ring too well. See if ye kin find it."

AFTER a long range search McGuffey emitted a triumphant ejaculation, stooped and held up a coin.

"A ten dollar gold piece!" he said. "Manna from the skies."

"Ye gonna keep it?" asked O'Leary. "It don't belong to us."

"No, Mr. Honest," retorted McGuffey, sarcastically, "I'm gonna give it to Doogan."

"Because, if ye're gonna keep it," went on O'Leary, "we better fade quick before the owner finds out he's lost it."

Looking as innocent as two sextons caught rifling the poor box, the flyers left the saloon. A taxi was parked at the curb.

"Ye tell him where to take us," said O'Leary to his pal, "ye're so all-fired smart."

Five or six blocks along the driver turned down a dark street and, unseen by his passengers, dropped a knotted white handkerchief.

A man ran from a basement doorway, picked up the handkerchief and returned to his hiding place.

A blackjack crashed down on his head and he collapsed, his skull fractured. Magically three shadowy figures appeared.

"Drag his body inside," ordered one in that strange, foreign accent.

He quickly untied the knotted handkerchief. A gold piece and a crumpled ball of paper were his reward. From his vest pocket he got a tiny flashlight and in its electric beam, carefully screened under his coat, he read the cryptic characters drawn on the paper.

"They have captured the two aviators," he informed exultantly to the man beside him. "Kiva will be waiting for them in the back room of Hennessy's Beer Parlor, where they made their foolish bet. Stay here until I return."

The taxi carrying O'Leary and McGuffy crossed railroad tracks and turned left towards a warehouse which had a loading platform running along its front.

ON the loading platform of the warehouse three plug-uglies hidden by a parked truck watched the north end of the street. One held a sub-machine gun, its barrel resting on a side of the truck.

"Six grand fer a easy blottin' out job like this," complained one. "It don't seem right."

"Aw, cut it, Soup," snarled the leader. "Ye're always bellyachin' about somethin'. We got the jack in advance, ain't we? Don't miss, Hank. Get 'em on the first crack."

"Me miss? Don't make me laff."

"I ain't bellyachin'," persisted the gangster known as Soup, "but them guys is mighty queer. They don't look natchral an' human, more like they been dead fer a long time and then come to life again. And their crazy lingo. You ever hear the like of it? I ain't. They ain't no Japs, like you say, Hank, even if all of 'em is sawed off. Not them! They don't come from no country we ever heard of."

"Sing bass, you canary," rasped the leader. "Whatta we care where they came from, just so they lay money on the line?"

"Oke! I'll chop 'em into hamburgers."

"Get the driver first," instructed the leader, "then spray 'em hard."

"Oke. You're the boss."

When the cab came opposite him, Hank cut loose with a well-directed burst. Glass and wood splintered and the driver, his head and face a bloody mess, slumped down in his seat. Unguided, the cab skidded in a rut and turned half around.

Instantly the hellish blast had spewed from the platform, O'Leary caught McGuffy and dragged him down. Then another blast ripped into the taxi, tearing and rending. Then two more.

How the flyers escaped the steel-jacketed death was just another miracle wrought by the Goddess of Luck, for there was hardly a square foot of the cab which had not been riddled.

"Pertind ye're dead, Pete," whispered O'Leary. "Hunch yersilf up an' hide yer face. They'll give us a look-see before pullin' out."

A gat in hand, the leader of the assassins ran to the riddled taxi and looked through a shattered window.

"Dead as stuck pigs," he muttered, as he saw the two flyers lying on the floor in grotesque attitudes.

In the distance sounded the shrill wailing of a police car siren.

"Scram!" the leader shouted to his men. "Cops!"

From around a corner of the warehouse came a black sedan and jammed on brakes near the cab. The leader sprang inside and the car tore away.

"Fooled ye murderin' skunks, didn't

Death Chattered From The Blazing Muzzle Of The Machine Gun—Was O'Leary Doomed?

we?" O'Leary leaped from the cab. "Come on, Pete, we can't afford to be interviewed by no cops this night."

They raced away into the night.

The 200-Year-Old Man

TWO very badly winded sky-hussars puffed up to Hennessy's rear door and entered the back room of his drinking parlor.

Only a favored few, which did not include minions of the law, held entree to this back room. All others were religiously and, if necessary, forcibly excluded.

Hennessy, in person, greeted his two welcome visitors.

"You're there, me byes, you're there," he congratulated, "Be gob, I've niver had such fine publicity in me whole life. The bar is jammed to the walls, and all the reporters in Washington has interviewed me an' has took me pitcher."

When they had recovered breath sufficiently O'Leary and McGuffy acquainted Hennessy with the happenings of the hectic night.

"Shure an' that'll be Red Murtha and his gang," mused the proprietor. "Now why did they wanta bump off two fine fellers like you fer? Somethin' phony behind it, Terence."

O'Leary flashed a look around the room.

Except for a man sitting at a table in a far corner and reading a newspaper, which hid his face, the roof was empty.

"Shure I'll put you up as long as you want, and thin will slip you out o' Washington like nobody's business."

"Thanks, Hennessy," said McGuffy. "You're aces."

"Aces back to back," supported O'Leary. "Whin ye gonna pay that five dollar bet?"

"Right now." Hennessy grinned. "I been waitin' fer you to collect it. I'll be right back."

The grin splitting his mugg from ear to ear he went out and came back imme-

diately. He carried a large bunch of red roses.

"Here you be, me brave lads," he said. "I spint the five dollars fer thim. Ain't they purty? Somethin' nice to remember the day with."

"Geeze!" O'Leary hissed it between set teeth. "Fer a plugged nickel I'd knock yer lousy block off. *Roses!*" He grabbed the bouquet and threw it savagely into a corner. "If ye don't drown the insult in beer, I'm off ye fer life."

Laughing uproariously, Hennessy went into the front room.

A waiter came in with a pitcher of foaming beer and two glasses. The aviators sat down at a table and went to it with gusto.

"Pete," confided O'Leary, "there's somethin' mighty fishy, and it ain't a sardine, what's took place tonight. How'd thim yeggs with the typewriter know we was gonna pass that warehouse?"

"I'll guess, too." McGuffy shrugged.

"Somebody must o' paid 'em plinty to bump us off. Thim birds don't go huntin' jist fer the pleasure of it. Yeah, I got a hunch somethin' big's gonna happen, and me hunches niver go back on me, either. Remember in the war how me hunches saved our lives more'n once."

"I'm not likely to forget it."

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen."

The aviators wheeled about in their chairs. They had heard no one approach, but the man who had been reading the paper had crossed the full length of the room and now stood smiling down at them.

Both of them frankly stared, and there was good reason for them to do so as they studied his face.

The skin, stretching like tissue paper over a hooked nose and high, prominent cheek bones, was a network of criss-crossing wrinkles finer than cobwebs. The lips, thin and severe, were parted in a peculiar smile, disclosing rows of perfect teeth as white as alabaster.

The most unusual aspect of the face was

its color. It appeared to be of a light coppery hue with a distinct reddish tint, as though the skin were transparent. The bead-like eyes, set deeply in the head, were jet black and glistened with an unnatural fire. He was short, but husky and broad-shouldered.

"May I sit with you?" he asked in that strange, foreign accent.

Before the astonished airmen could answer he reached out a bony hand and drew up a chair. The fingers were twisted and crooked, as though they had been broken often.

"Thank you, gentlemen," he said.

"Don't mention it," replied O'Leary, dryly.

"My name is Wilson, gentlemen."

"Been in Washin'ton long?" O'Leary was interested to learn the mysterious stranger's nationality.

"This is my sixth visit here in one hundred and fifty years."

"Oh, I see."

O'Leary covertly winked at McGuffey. The man was goofy. But his strange appearance? A disordered brain couldn't effect that.

O'Leary tried again.

"Born in America?"

"In Lataki, sir."

"Lataki? Niver heard of it."

"You are not alone in that respect, sir."

"I don't wanna git personal, Mr. Wilson, but how old are ye?"

"I am now in my two hundred and eleventh year, sir."

"Cripes, ye'll soon be wearin' long pants."

"I have worn them, sir, for many, many years. In fact, ever since I came to your country."

"My error. What business are ye in?"

"I am a collector of colored stones."

"Colored stones?" exclaimed McGuffey. "No kidding!"

"Would you like to see some of my specimens?"

NOT deigning to wait for an answer the mysterious stranger fumbled in a coat pocket and withdrew about a dozen uncut gems of various hues, which sparkled and glittered in the electric light.

O'Leary and McGuffey stared in amazement.

"Now this one," explained the owner, selecting a large, green stone, "is really a very fine emerald. The cutting is perfect—a work of art."

"A imerald?" blurted O'Leary. "What's it worth?"

"Roughly, I should say two hundred thousand dollars."

"Phew! Now I'll tell one."

"I see you do not believe me, sir. To convince you, I shall make you a present of it." He handed the stone to O'Leary. "Why not take it to a pawnshop and see what they will give you on it?"

"A hock shop? There ain't none open this late at night."

"Pardon me, but one is open, Rosenbaum's, on Munroe Street. Ask Mr. Hennessey, but say nothing of the gem I gave you."

"Supposin' Rosenbaum hands me a wad o' jack?"

"What you receive is yours."

"Hey, feller, don't try to kid us. What's yer game, handin' out phony glass an' pertindin' it's real?"

"You believe me to be deranged, that is quite plain. However, I wish to assure you such is not the case. In fact, I am in possession of all my faculties. Why not prove it by taking the stone to Rosenbaum's, as I suggested?"

"Hell, we don't need no big money like that, do we, Pete?"

"We wouldn't exactly pass it up."

"Gentlemen, I know who you are, and what you did this afternoon. I also am cognizant of the fact that the secret service and police are hunting for you."

"Sez ye!" O'Leary scowled. "Are ye also cog—cog—aware o' the fact that a ma-

chine gun near chopped our heads off comin' here, and kilt our taxi driver?"

"The work of Unuk, the High Priest of Lataki," he said in English. "Once again he raises his evil hand in our midst."

"Hey, what's that?" demanded O'Leary, excitedly.

"Explain yourself!" cried McGuffy.

"I shall talk no more until you have convinced yourselves of my sanity, gentlemen," came the calm, studied reply. "Take the emerald to Rosenbaum and learn what he has to say. That is final. I shall await your return."

He got up, bowed low, then walked slowly to his table in the corner and sat down.

"Damned if I don't try him out," said McGuffy. "If that bird is cuckoo, so am I."

"Which makes him plinty cuckoo. My advice is to pass up the whole thing and beat it upstairs. I got a hunch we're headin' fer trouble."

"Let's toss the gold piece," suggested McGuffy. "Head we go, tails we give him back the stone and turn in."

"I'll gamble. Remimber what he sez about the evil hand o' Unuk, the High Priest of Nagasaki?"

"Lataki, not Nagasaki. That's one reason why we ought to go. Still, I'll abide by the toss. Here goes."

McGuffy flipped the gold piece into the air and bent over it as it came to rest on the floor.

"Heads," he announced, solemnly. "To Rosenbaum's we hie ourselves."

They called on Hennessy and asked him if the pawnshop were open, but did not tell him why they wished to know.

"Shure it's open. The Jew niver closes. He's in the big money too. Between me an' ye he's a high class fince and only does business with thim he knows. What ye wanna hock?"

"Don't git nosey." O'Leary winked

good-naturedly. "Kin we tell him ye sint us?"

"Shure. It'll open the gate fer ye. Comin' back?"

"Yeah. Where kin we git a taxi?"

"There's a stand on the corner, an' the drivers is jake. Careful o' Rosenbaum, though. He niver gives nothin' away fer nothin'."

Not long afterward O'Leary and McGuffy entered the pawnshop through a private entrance. Late as it was they found Rosenbaum on the job.

"How much will ye gimme on this?"

O'Leary handed the Jew the green stone. "Hinnissy sint us."

"Hennessy? Okeh."

CASUALLY Rosenbaum looked at the stone, then he stared in surprise. Excitedly he grabbed a testing glass and placed it to an eye.

The flyers watched him, breathless.

Rosenbaum finished his scrutiny and called to someone in the rear of the shop.

"Oh, Max, come here, quick." His voice trembled.

"Well, what'll you give us on it?" demanded McGuffy.

"And how much is it worth?" cried O'Leary.

"What's it worth?" The Jew whistled. "More'n two hundred thousands dollars. Where'd you get it? What you want on it?"

"Fifty thousand dollars." O'Leary blinked. "It's none o' yer business where we got it. Hand over the fifty thousand, and in cash."

"Fifty thousand dollars in *cash*?" The Jew was shaking like an aspen. "Where can I get so much in cash, and the banks closed?"

"That's your business, not ours," said McGuffy, trying to keep his voice steady, but failing. "Cash, or the deal is off. This isn't the only place we know."

"Listen, please, mister," begged the Jew,

"I'll send Max out for the money right away."

"How long will he take?" asked O'Leary, suspiciously. "No funny stuff, mind ye."

"About fifteen minutes. That's our speciality, raising big money in a hurry. Hurry up, Max!"

O'Leary and McGuffy whirled to a sudden command. The muzzles of two automatics covered them.

"Stick 'em up!" commanded a harsh voice from behind the menacing guns.

Caught dead to rights, there was no re-

O'Leary looked at McGuffy in disgust.

"The ind o' a perfect day," he said, glumly.

But the end hadn't come yet.

From a side street a car shot around a corner on two wheels. Skidding on the slippery pavement, it sideswiped the rear end of the speeding police car and sent it flying against the curb. A tire blew out with a loud report.

"You gee dee fools!" cursed the plain-clothes man at the wheel. "Grab 'em, you guys back there, they're drunk."

The driver started his siren screaming

What Strange Device Of Unuk's Is This That Turns Men's Bones To Water?

sisting. The aviators elevated their hands.

"What's the big idea?" snapped O'Leary. "A hold-up?"

"Nix on the comedy! You're pinched. Put the bracelets on 'em, Brennan, while I make 'em play nice."

"Do you know who we are?" In his disappointment and anger it was all McGuffy could think of to say.

"Sure! You're the rose garden humming birds, and we're headquarters dicks. We've caught you with hot goods. That stone'll send you up the river."

"We didn't steal it, ye thick palookas," roared O'Leary.

"No! Then where'd you get it?"

"A guy in Hinnessy's Beer Parlor gave it to us."

"What is his name—Santa Claus?"

"No!" bellowed O'Leary. "Snoopin' Snoop, the Dead-Eye Detective."

Handcuffed together, the flyers were hustled outside and were ordered into a waiting police car.

"Headquarters, Sam, and step on it."

With siren screaming the car raced down the dark street.

for help. The detective called Brennan leaped out, gun in hand.

Straightening his car from its skid, the other driver jammed on brakes and came to a stop a few feet away.

"Pile out of it!" rasped Brennan. "All of you. You're pinched for drunk and reckless driving."

"We are not drunk, officer," replied a cold voice in that strange, foreign accent. "I am a doctor answering an emergency call. The accident was unavoidable, I assure you."

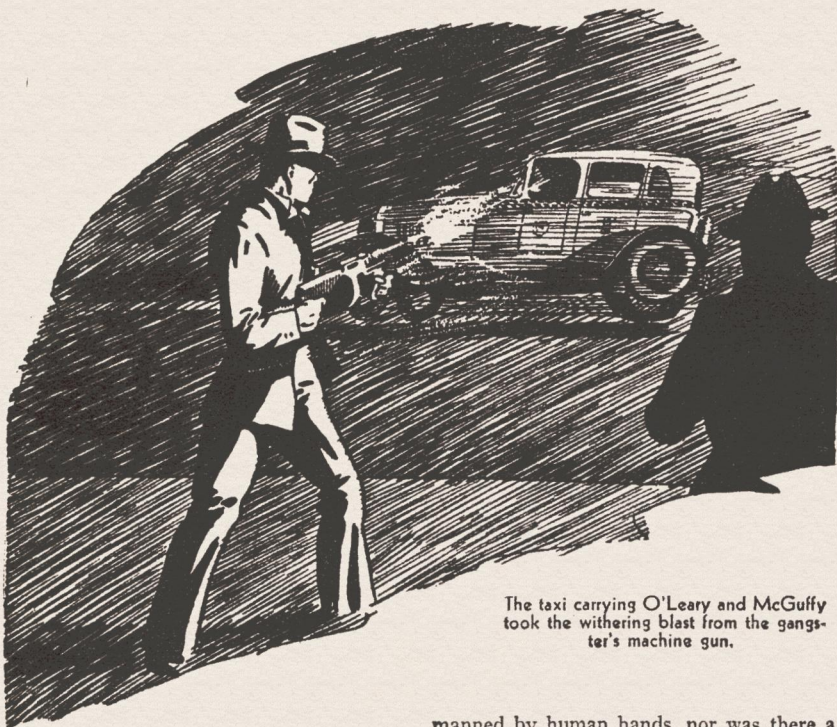
"Doctor, huh? Well, Mr. Doctor, you're riding to headquarters with us, and in your car."

Then it happened.

Brennan swayed and clutched at his throat. His gat clattered on the concrete. As though all his bones suddenly had turned to water he went limp and collapsed.

"What is it, Brennan!" The driver of the police car whipped out his gun. "What's the matter with—"

His words died in his throat with a chok-



The taxi carrying O'Leary and McGuffey took the withering blast from the gangster's machine gun.

ing gurgle and he fell over on his side and lay still.

"Pete!" O'Leary attempted to spring up. The handcuffs prevented him. He stared in horror. The mysterious death also had claimed his pal.

"Ye dirty, murderin' skunks, I'll—"

O'Leary never finished it. Head first he slumped over the front seat. The detective beside him lay crumpled on the floor of the car.

Fully forty thousand feet above in the sky and hidden by the intervening clouds, sliced through the air at terrific speed a strange, monstrous aircraft carrying a cargo of high explosive unknown to modern science.

Not a light shone from the juggernaut of the heavens. Nor were its controls

manned by human hands, nor was there a living soul aboard.

Of a sudden a lever on its intricate instrument board, operated by a time device, automatically switched to a different notch.

In instant response the mighty wings dipped and the air monster streaked down, screaming insanely.

Like a falling meteor it dropped from the sky and hit a tenement house. Then the earth seemed to split asunder and a blinding flash lighted the country for miles around, followed by a paralyzing detonation which rocked buildings and shattered glass in a wide area.

Four city blocks were effaced as though the ground had opened up and had swallowed them.

The dead silence which came in the wake of the terrific explosion soon was broken by shrieking sirens of ambulances,

police cars and fire apparatus racing to the scene of disaster.

Unuk, High Priest of Lataki, had delivered his first thrust against the supremacy of the United States of America.

The Magic of Murokaii

O'LEARY opened his eyes. He blinked in amazement. Where was he? He experienced no physical discomfort. In fact, he had never felt so fit and well in his life. But where was he?

Damned if he wasn't in bed. Who was that lying beside him and snoring so musically? It could be no other than Peter Maher McGuffy, for there was no mistaking that brass band playing. It was Peter Maher McGuffy.

He raised up on an elbow. Aladdin and his Magic Lamp! Alibaba and the Forty Thieves! Had McGuffy and he been transported back to medieval times? It seemed so.

Far above him, in a large metal brazier suspended by heavy bronze chains from an oddly carved mahogany ceiling, burned a glowing red light which threw the rest of the spacious room into opaque shadow.

Try as he would, O'Leary's gaze could not penetrate beyond the orbit of the effulgence.

He lifted a hand to his eyes in an attempt to brush the clouds from his vision. His arm felt peculiarly heavy. He dropped his gaze.

His forearm was encircled by a massive gold armlet inscribed with hieroglyphics. His other arm was similarly adorned.

Bolt upright he sat.

"What the hell!" he exploded. "I wonder where Cleopatra is."

From a shadow-hidden corner appeared a half-naked warrior, short and stocky. His skin was of light-copper hue, with an indefinable red tint to it. His torso was encased in a finely-spun coat of chain-mail of brilliant silver. A wicked-looking pon-

iard was stuck in a girdle of yellow satin.

Golden-brown sandals, turned up sharply at the toes and their red leather laces crisscrossing to his knees, completed his attire. His thick hair was shiny, jet black, and bobbed.

The mysterious apparition came to the bed, halted, raised his right arm full length in salute and bowed.

"Gallopin' ghosts!" ejaculated O'Leary. "Ye ain't Cleopatra."

In answer the apparition opened his mouth and pointed into it. The tongue had been cut out.

"Cripes! Ye've lost yer phonograph needle!" burst from O'Leary in sympathy.

The tongueless one approached a copper gong hanging from a bronze support and struck it a resounding blow with a bronze clapper.

"Ham and eggs!" The snoring McGuffy suddenly sat up in bed. "Turn 'em over!"

An expression of bewilderment spread over his countenance. "Phew," he whistled, "I thought I heard the breakfast bell."

His roaming eyes rested on O'Leary. His jaw sagged. "What the— How'd you get here? Bracelets! You gone Hollywood, or something?"

"Run out an' pick yerself some pansies! What ye call thim fancy doo-dads on yer own hairy arms? Sleeve garters?"

"Where—where are we, Terence?"

"Keep guessin', I ain't stoppin' ye."

In response to the ringing of the gong a massive door at the end of the room slid noiselessly open and a second apparition, of similiar build and attired as the first, came to the bed and tendered the arm salute.

"Your pleasure, O God of the Sky?" he asked O'Leary.

"Nuts on the God o' the Sky! What does all this tomfoolery mean?"

"Your pleasure, O God of the Sky?"

"Me pleasure is to git out o' this daffy joint. Where'n blazes are me clothes?"

"And mine too," cut in McGuffy.

He tugged unsuccessfully at an armet to get it off.

"What do you think I am, a lousy female impersonator?"

"Jist a minut," interposed O'Leary.

"What's yer name, Mr. Hiawatha?"

"Lokaii, O God of the Sky."

"Sounds like a nerve tonic. Scram, now, like a good little bye, an' find us our clothes. Look here, the last thing I kin remember I'm ridin' in a police car, there's a crack-up, me an' the cops go to sleep, and I wake up in this nut-house. What's the answer?"

"It happened five days ago, O God of the Sky."

"Five days ago?" repeated McGuffy. "Hooey."

"Five days!" O'Leary made a rather uncomplimentary noise with his lips. "What became o' the cops?"

"They were killed, O God of the Sky."

"*Kilt?* Ye lousy, murderin' skunks."

The warrior ignored the insult.

"Tinga, the Tongueless, will attire you properly, O God of the Sky," he said. "No longer shall you wear the clothes of the American barbarians. It is so decreed."

"American barbarians!" McGuffy got hot. "For a Russian kopeck I'd knock you for a barrel-roll, you sawed-off boy scout. Come on, Terence, let's bust out o' here while the busting's good."

"Suits me. We'll give 'em the bums' rush."

But it was not to be. Lokaii gave a command in those strange, guttural tones.

Instantly from the red shadows all around him stepped into sight a cordon of guards in chain-mail and armed with ugly-looking double-edged swords. All were of the same short stature, but of remarkable physique.

"Ye do the bustin'." O'Leary winked glumly at McGuffy. "I don't feel like bein' a hamburger. Pipe thim meat-choppers the byes carry."

"I bet they can use 'em too."

"It is your pleasure, O God of the Sky, to be arrayed in proper dress?"

Lokaii flashed a significant glance at the guards, which carried a lot of meaning to the flyers.

"If so, your humble servants are ready."

"Bein' a good Republican an' politician, Lokey, old sock—I hope ye don't mind me callin' ye Lokey for short—I'm jist dyin' to be properly attired. And I'll be dead if I don't."

As though unhearing, Lokaii turned to McGuffy. He did not salute.

"You, O Messenger from the Clouds," he informed, "also shall be attired, but according to your rank."

"According to rank? How do I rate with the red-topped ape in bed with me?"

"The God of the Sky is supreme. You are but an underling in his service."

"Which makes iverythin' jake," O'Leary grinned. "I kin fergive most anythin' now."

McGuffy's expression wasn't exactly angelic.

LOKAII nodded to Tinga, the Tongueless, who retired and soon came back accompanied by two attendants, each carrying an outfit.

Silver-white sandals fashioned from the finest leather, a suit of brilliant chain-mail, also silver-white, a white silken toga richly embroidered in sky-blue with mystic symbols, and a winged Roman Helmet of gold, topped with a white plume, were laid on a table for O'Leary.

"Mother pin a rose on me!" he muttered. "Now ain't that somethin'!"

McGuffy's outfit was similar in design, but much inferior in richness and quality, and there was no plume on his helmet.

"Suffering tripe! I gotta wear that junk?" McGuffy spat in disgust.

The two attendants helped them to dress, then Tinga, the Tongueless, artistically draped the white toga about O'Leary's shoulders and fastened it with a magnifi-



cent gold clasp, in the center of which was set an emerald worth a king's ransom.

The two flyers presented a commanding appearance in their picturesque costumes. Admiration flashed from the eyes of the Latakians. O'Leary and McGuffy felt sheepish, and showed it.

"Well, little man, what now?" snapped O'Leary to Lokalii. "Cripes, wouldn't I look sweet flyin' a crate in this movin' picture clabber. Geeze!"

"Can you imagine what the Black Wings would say?" asked the disgusted McGuffy.

"Murokaii, Messenger of the Sacred Arrow, awaits your august presence, O God of the Sky," announced Lokalii to O'Leary.

"August prisince? Shure an' it's only July. Tell him we'll see him nixt month."

Lokalii frowned.

"How time passes!" exclaimed O'Leary, quickly. "August here already!" He grinned at McGuffy. "Come with Caesar, little Brutus, and tell the Romans why Caesar ain't dyin'."

"Be serious, can't you? We're in one swell jam, I tell you, with no way out. Just you wait and see."

"What am I supposed to do, bust out cryin'? Where's the tear bucket?"

Lokaii clapped his hands and still another apparition appeared in the massive sliding doorway.

O'Leary and McGuffy exchanged knowing looks. It was the stranger who had given them the emerald in Hennessy's back room. They had been expecting some such development.



"I am Kiva, formerly Captain of the Guard of Latea, O God of the Sky," declared the warrior. "Murokaii, Messenger of the Sacred Arrow, awaits you."

"Really, ye don't know how *delighted* we are to see ye," retorted O'Leary, acidly. "We shure owe ye a apology fer not returnin' to Hinnissy's. I hope we didn't keep ye waitin'."

Without answering, Kiva led them into the adjoining room.

At a large table sat a short-statured, white-haired man of medium build. He was attired almost identically as O'Leary, but his winged gold helmet was minus the white plume and there was no emerald in the golden clasp of his toga.

Both aviators inwardly sighed with relief, he looked so human and friendly.

He arose and tendered the arm salute to O'Leary.

"Welcome, O God of the Sky," he said. "I am Murokaii, Messenger of the Sacred Arrow."

"Howdy, Milwaukee." O'Leary smiled and winked. "How's Wisconsin?"

"Please do not jest," came the mild rebuke.

Kiva saluted and withdrew.

"I ain't jistin'," returned O'Leary. "I'm plinty serious. What ye got up yer sleeve, if ye had a sleeve? Me an' Pete is kind o' fed up with this nonsense."

"I'll say we are!" seconded McGuffy.

"Gentlemen, I wish to apologize for the manner in which you have been treated."

"Apologize!" flared O'Leary. "Ye an' yer murderous gang o' cutthroats better turn us loose, pronto. This is the U. S. A. and Uncle Sam won't stand fer no funny business from poisonous rats like ye."

"You are in error, Mr. O'Leary. The United States is far removed. You are now on an island in the Pacific Ocean, and are under the jurisdiction of the Kingdom of Lataki."

"Nuts! Ye can't kid us. Murderin' thim cops is a capital offence and—"

"Again you are in error. We did not kill them. They met their deaths at the hands of the secret agents of Unuk, High Priest of Lataki. In fact, we snatched you and your flying partner, Mr. McGuffy, from their clutches just in time."

"It listens okay, but don't git by with me an' Pete. Ye want us to believe we're on an island in the Pacific? Applesauce! If so, how'd we git here so quick."

"Quick? For five days you have been oblivious to what was happening. You were in a coma produced by the sleeping-rays, one of the inventions of Unuk and his super-scientists. We flew you here."

"Sure!" said McGuffy, sarcastically. "It's part of the scenario, Terence. Ask him the title of the picture?"

"Look into this and you will be con-

vinced that we are on an island in the Pacific, gentlemen."

Murokaii indicated a rectangular, glass-topped cabinet over his desk.

"It is an invention of ours, as yet unknown to Unuk. Without it our cause would crumple before his mighty opposition. By its apparent magic we can see what the enemy does, without ourselves being seen.

"We call it, in your tongue, the range-o-scope. It now will afford you a view of all terrain and water within the circumference of a circle, the radius of which is one thousand miles."

Murokaii turned a dial and closed a tiny switch.

"We are the center of that circle," he stated. "Look."

McGuffy shot O'Leary a skeptical glance and received an affirmative nod. Another trick to fool them.

GRINNING derisively, they moved closer to the desk and gazed through a ground-glass, but saw nothing. They winked knowingly at each other. The hocus-pocus wasn't so hot.

"Patience, gentlemen." Murokaii readjusted the dial. "Look now."

The aviators tensed in amazement at what they saw.

Under the ground glass, in natural colors, lay a wide expanse of undulating ocean, in miniature. Here and there could be seen steamships plowing on their courses.

There was no fake to it, either, decided the aviators. It was no optical illusion. Sea gulls circled and swooped in the wakes of the steamers as natural as life and waves broke against the steel hulls.

"Now for the sound effects, gentlemen."

Murokaii pressed a button on the side of the cabinet.

"Are they not the real thing?" he asked.

O'Leary and McGuffy hardly could credit their ears. Faintly they could hear

the lashing of waves and the screams of the gulls from the nearest ship.

"Now, for what your moving picture technicians term a close-up."

Murokaii manipulated another dial.

The steamer in question grew in size until the watching aviators could read her name and see the activity on her decks.

"Gentlemen," asked Murokaii, "if a battle plane were equipped with the range-o-scope, would the pilot, or would he not, hold a great advantage over an enemy?"

"Geeze!" O'Leary hissed it. "Look here, Murokaii, turn this invention over to Uncle Sam an' he kin lick the whole world if they should gang him."

"Washington will give you millions for it," said McGuffy.

"Money means nothing to us, gentlemen. We are concerned with but the one objective, the annihilation of Unuk and his evil forces. We are not interested in the welfare of the United States, but in the peace and the prosperity and the continued isolation of the Kingdom of Lataki."

"And that's that." O'Leary solemnly wagged his head. "Say, who is this Unuk feller anyway?"

"I shall also answer that. Look again, gentlemen, and you shall see something which will thrill you with wonder."

Murokaii took a full five minutes to adjust the dials of the range-o-scope to his satisfaction.

"By a simple process," he explained as he worked, "simple to the scientists who invented the range-o-scope, but astounding to the still undeveloped science of the so-termed modern world, the handicap of the spherical shape of the globe, with the consequent limited horizons, has been overcome, hence the extended range of vision."

"Ye know, Pete," sighed O'Leary, "equipped with this wonder gadgit, what couldn't Flight 13 do to all the inimies the whole cockeyed world could muster ag'in the good old U. S. A.? Kin ye imagine our Black Wings wingin' through space

with the range-o-scope under their noses?"

"Can I?" exclaimed McGuffy, enthusiastically. "And you are to be squadron commander when our leave is up, for winning the international air derby. Oh, boy! Oh, boy!"

"Whin our leave is up?" O'Leary scowled. "Ye fergittin' we're in the middle o' the Pacific and—"

"Please look, gentlemen," interrupted Murokaii, "and you shall see the secret training ground of the legions Unuk intends hurling against the rest of the world. Also the town of his secret factories, laboratories, and the hospitals where his fiendish surgical operations are performed and his brain-serum is made. The plateau which lies before your eyes is unknown to the people of Lataki and is reached only by a secret underground tunnel, which Unuk and his scientists utilize for that purpose. Behold the power of Unuk, high priest of Lataki!"

O'LEARY and McGuffy gasped as the astounding spectacle of the plateau unrolled before their staring eyes.

"I—I—don't quite understand," stammered O'Leary. "W-what does it mean?"

Murokaii snapped a switch and the range-o-scope went dark, blotting out their view.

"That is enough for the present, gentlemen," he said calmly. "I do not wish to confuse you. I showed you the Pacific in a radius of a thousand miles. Now I shall reveal to you the skies above that same area of water."

He carefully turned a dial and closed a switch.

"Please look again," he instructed.

Where the surface of the ocean had been displayed before, now a tremendous expanse of sky came into view.

"Cripes!" cried O'Leary. "A crate in the air! See it, Pete?"

"Yeah. And it looks like Jerry Austin's

mail ship, out of Frisco for Honolulu. Good old Jerry. What a flyer!"

"You are right, Mr. McGuffy. It is the air-mail which plies between San Francisco and Honolulu," Murokaii declared. "The name of the pilot in question, however, is unknown to me."

"Phew!" McGuffy shook his head. "It is unbelievable."

"As yet you have seen little, gentlemen. Many more surprises are in store for you. Unuk and his evil geniuses, as well as our own scientists, are so far ahead of your world in science that—"

"Look!"

McGuffy grabbed O'Leary by the arm and pointed into the range-o-scope.

"What's that speck so high in the sky

be destroyed?" McGuffy paled slightly. "That good old Jerry is about to be crashed?"

"Good God!" O'Leary seized Murokaii by the shoulder. "Jerry's crate carries passengers—with a full load, more'n forty of thim. Stop it! Stop it, I say!"

"There is nothing I can do to prevent the disaster," Murokaii was not visibly affected by the impending tragedy. "We can but watch it, and curse Unuk, the perpetrator."

Teeth set and brows moist with cold sweat, the two helpless flyers watched.

The strange speck in the sky drew nearer and nearer to the unsuspecting air liner, then streaked down.

A sudden tiny flash, a puff of smoke, and

Unuk's Sky Monster Blasts Rays Of Destruction—Forty Die High!

over the air liner, and overhauling her so fast? Look out, Jerry!" he cried. "Behind and above you, Jerry!"

"What is it, Mr. Murokaii," demanded O'Leary excitedly.

"That, gentlemen," stated Murokaii grimly, "is Unuk's new sky-engine of destruction, on another experimental test. So far, but one is in commission. It carries a disintegrating ray which no plane, or battleship, or fortification for that matter, can withstand."

He paused and again looked into the range-o-scope.

"I believe we are about to witness another of those mysterious air tragedies which, in the past few months, have occurred so often, and have not yet been explained," he said. "Your government now is conducting a secret investigation of the strange disappearances, but will learn little."

"You—you mean that the airliner will

the air liner disappeared. Up shot the mysterious destroyer, climbing vertically, and vanished in the clouds.

Murokaii snapped a switch and the range-o-scope was shut off.

"God," groaned O'Leary. "O God. Poor old Jerry, and wiped off without a chance."

"I—I feel sick," McGuffy held to the mahogany table for support. "It was awful—awful."

"While you lay unconscious in the police car in Washington," informed Murokaii, quietly, "another type of Unuk destroyer, robot-controlled, flying at an altitude of forty thousand feet, and loaded with a new explosive, dropped from the sky and destroyed four city blocks, killing upward of eight hundred people. In fact, the holocaust almost thwarted our rescue of you, it was so close to the police car."

"And ye knowed it was comin'?" O'Leary towered menacingly over the smaller Murokaii.

"Yes, I knew it was coming."

"Thin why didn't ye warn Washin'ton?"

"Gentlemen, although through my spies here and in Lataki I was aware of the high priest's evil intention, I was unaware of the exact day of the striking of the blow. For years, Kiva, the one who contacted you in Hennessy's saloon, has been trying to warn your government, but the fools would not listen. Kiva tried to warn your air chief of the impending disaster to Washington, but he would not listen and had Kiva arrested by the Department of Justice. Even if he had listened, the air chief would have been powerless to prevent the disaster."

"If Kiva acted and talked the way he did to us in Hennessy's," groaned McGuffy, "it isn't fair to call our government fools for not heeding him."

"Let's git down to cases," cried O'Leary. "It's a pipe ye've got us in yer power, so what ye gonna do with us?"

"And what does this farce of the God of the Sky and the Messenger from the Clouds mean?" demanded McGuffy.

"It is not a farce, I assure you, gentlemen."

"Cripes, ye pertindin' ye believe in that rot?"

"I used to, Mr. O'Leary, but I do not now. The people of Lataki, I mean those still true to our high Latakian standards, believe, so it is essential for the success of my plans that the—shall we call it imposture?—be carried on."

"Okay, Murokaii." O'Leary wiped the cold sweat dampening his forehead. "Our country is in danger and—"

"Not only in danger, gentlemen, but very probably will be destroyed by Unuk. It is first on the list of his outrages."

McGuffy thrust his pale face close to that of the Latakian. "What's your proposition? We aren't here for nothing."

"Yes, let's have it," begged O'Leary. "We gotta do somethin', an' do it quick."

"How far would you go to save the land of your birth?" asked Murokaii.

"The limit," said McGuffy.

"There ain't no limit," put in O'Leary.

"Thank you, gentlemen. You are brave. Please take chairs and I shall present to you my proposition."

"Make it snappy, please." O'Leary slumped into a seat. "We got no time to lose."

"Very well," replied Murokaii. "First, though, as briefly as I can, I shall tell the story of Lataki and the doom now menacing the kingdom."

Beauty for Sacrifice

AND this was what Murokaii told them: "What I now relate to you will sound incredible," he began, "but, on the honor of Murokaii, I pledge you that it is the truth."

"After all we've seen an' been through," said O'Leary, "ye don't have to plidge us nothin'. If ye say the moon's made o' green cheese, it's oke by us. Eh, Pete?"

"Sure! The Latakians have made me believe in Santa Claus. Shoot, Mr. Murokaii."

"I thank you for your confidence, gentlemen."

The Latakian chief smiled. It was the first time the aviators had seen him do so.

"Many of your authors have written romances of lost kingdoms and mythical nations, not realizing how near the truth they touched. Before the discovery of America by Columbus, the old world, as it is erroneously called, would have laughed to scorn a tale of the existence of a new continent and a new race of people. Just as it is today, if I were to publish a chronicle of facts about my people, it would be received with derision. That is as I wish it to be, for if the existence of my country ever should become known to the present day world, what a disaster it would be to Lataki."

"Pardon me, Murokaii," cut in O'Leary. "We're takin' yer word fer iverythin', so

don't waste time tryin' to further convince us. Uncle Sam is in danger, an' quick action is needed."

"I shall be as brief as possible."

Murokaii leaned over the desk in his earnestness.

"My nation is known as Lataki, which, in our language, means 'apart from others.' Situated in the as yet unexplored heart of a certain continent and walled in by impassable barriers of Nature, it numbers over a million souls. We worship a deity known to us as the God of the Sky."

"God o' the Sky!" ejaculated O'Leary. "The plot thickens. An' I'm beginnin' to smell a nice little pink rat."

"Although the people of Lataki itself are hundreds of years behind the progress of present day civilization," continued Murokaii, "there are a few of them, Unuk and his faction and my close followers, for instance, who are so in advance of your archaic science that there is no comparison."

"You don't need to tell us that." McGuffy nodded, grimly.

"It is necessary that I outline the history of my country so that you can appreciate what the coming of the God of the Sky means to those persecuted and downtrodden souls."

"Ye mean I'm to be the God o' the Sky an' do that home-comin'?"

"You are to attempt it, Mr. O'Leary, as have so many valiant aviators before you. They all failed, and all are dead."

"Uh-uh! Pardon me. The nice little pink rat has growed to a iliphant."

"Our deity, the God of the Sky, is not represented by idols of stone, as is the false deity set up by Unuk, called the God of the Depths. The God of the Sky, unseen as is the God you worship, represents everything that is good, rich harvests, purity of women, love, kindness, tolerance, forgiveness and so on.

"Unlike the God of the Depths, no human sacrifices, or self-inflicted hardships,

are demanded. For a thousand years or more, under the rule of the House of Latea, our country prospered and the people were happy. Then Unuk raised his ugly head. For a long, long time he had secretly recruited to his standard unprincipled characters and had conducted an insidious campaign of discontent and avarice."

"History over and over again," observed McGuffy.

"Quite true. Unuk usurped the throne, established human sacrifices and foisted the God of the Depths upon the people. He banished the House of Latea, and all those known to be loyal to the former rulers, from the City of Lataki, decreeing that they live outside the city walls. None could re-enter without his permission."

MUROKAII paused to note the reaction of his hearers. The aviators were tense with interest.

"In time," resumed Murokaii, "Unuk, by his poisonous methods, became supreme. Fiendishly cruel in his hatred and revenge, he instituted a campaign of humiliation and oppression against the proud House of Latea. Putting them to the sword wasn't his idea of punishment, for they were not afraid to die. Their suffering must be a lingering one. Foremost of all the high priest wanted to crush their pride; to make them crawl in the dust before him."

"More history repeating itself," said McGuffy.

"Consequently," went on Murokaii, "Unuk challenged the House of Latea to pit their god against his; the God of the Sky against the God of the Depths."

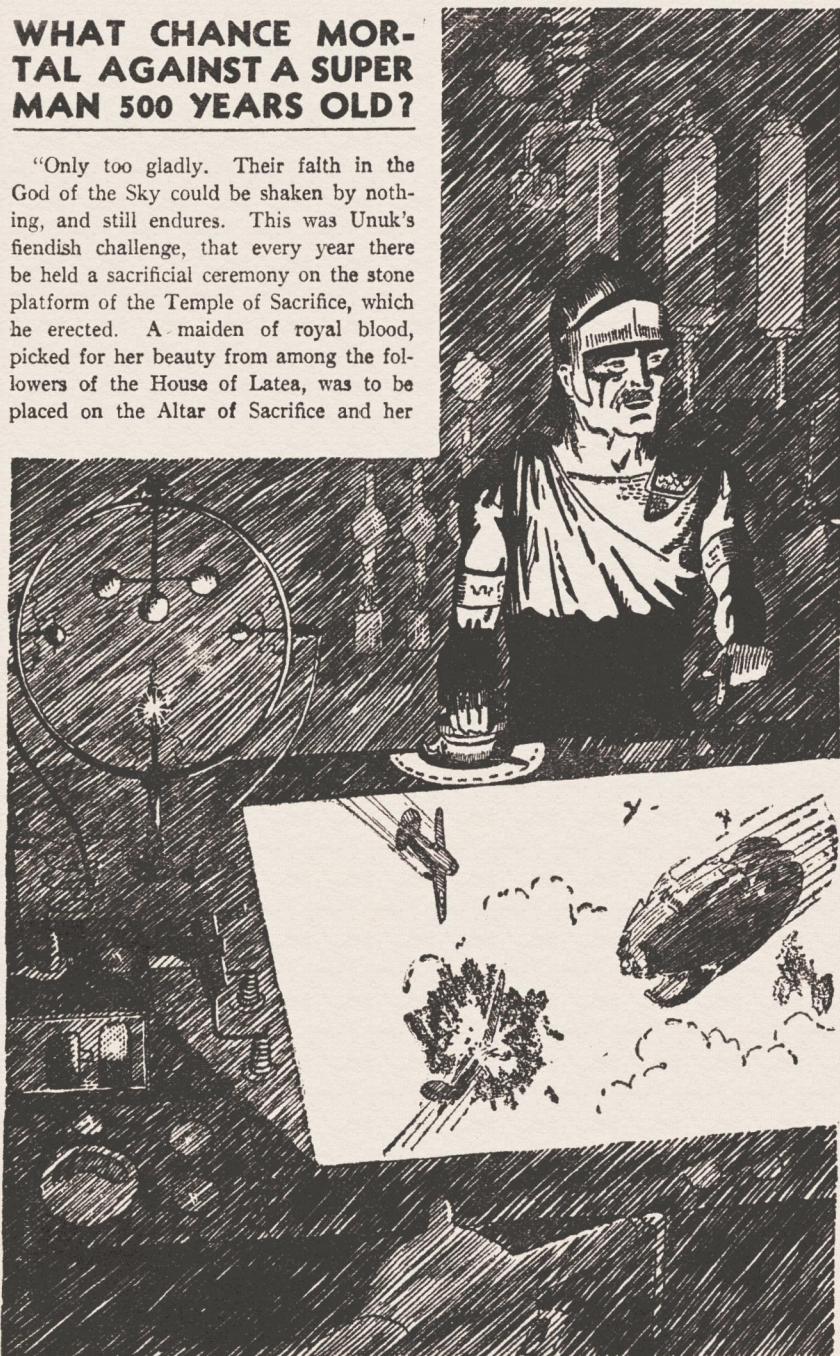
"Did he believe in the God o' the Sky?" asked O'Leary.

"No. Unuk believes in nothing but himself."

"I'll make the bum believe in a lot o' things before I'm through." And O'Leary meant it. "Shure'n did the House o' Latea accept the challenge?"

WHAT CHANCE MOR-TAL AGAINST A SUPER MAN 500 YEARS OLD?

"Only too gladly. Their faith in the God of the Sky could be shaken by nothing, and still endures. This was Unuk's fiendish challenge, that every year there be held a sacrificial ceremony on the stone platform of the Temple of Sacrifice, which he erected. A maiden of royal blood, picked for her beauty from among the followers of the House of Latea, was to be placed on the Altar of Sacrifice and her

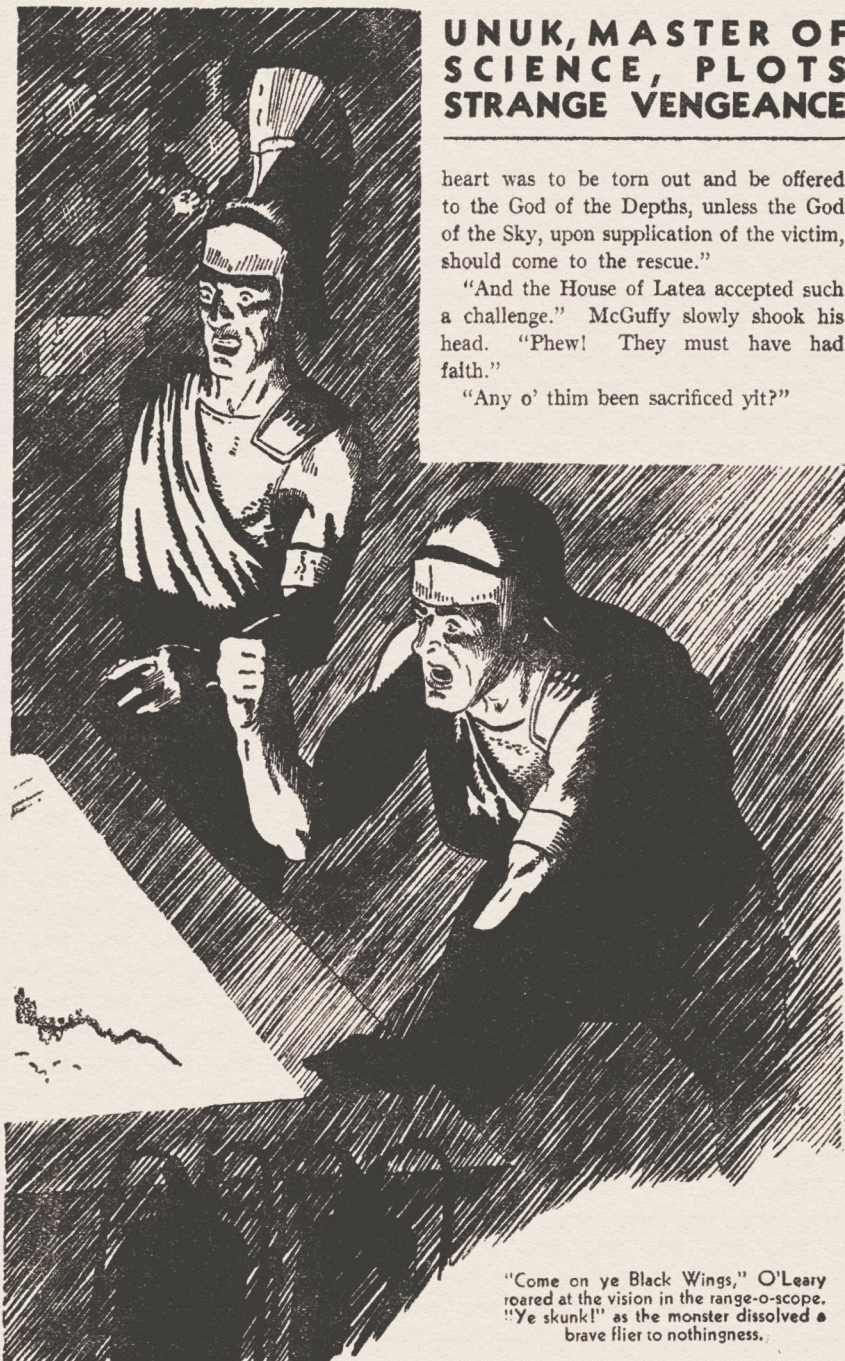


UNUK, MASTER OF SCIENCE, PLOTS STRANGE VENGEANCE

heart was to be torn out and be offered to the God of the Depths, unless the God of the Sky, upon supplication of the victim, should come to the rescue."

"And the House of Latea accepted such a challenge." McGuffy slowly shook his head. "Phew! They must have had faith."

"Any o' thim been sacrificed yit?"



"Come on ye Black Wings," O'Leary roared at the vision in the range-o-scope. "Ye skunk!" as the monster dissolved a brave flier to nothingness.

"Hundreds, Mr. O'Leary."

"Hunderds? Did I hear ye right? That would take hunderds o' years, with one dyin' each year."

"Unuk himself is over five hundred years old, Mr. O'Leary."

"Listen, Murokaii, with all due respect to ye, don't stritch it too far, it might snap."

"I warned you that my story would sound incredible to you, but I speak truthfully. Alok, next in command to Unuk, is, and was, a great scientist of medicine and surgery. I shall explain this long-life mystery later. On each Sacrificial Day, from the Temple of Sacrifice, the victim of sacrifice is still permitted by Unuk to exhort the God of the Sky. This is done by casting a broken arrow into the Lake of Whispering Waters, far below the platform of the temple. A certain time is allotted by Unuk for the God of the Sky to answer. Failing, the victim is sacrificed, as described by me."

"Of course there is no answer," said McGuffy. "A sort of heads I win, tails you lose game for Unuk."

"Naturally. And the House of Latea has to endure anxiety, humiliation and suffering for another year, with the same tragic result at its end."

"And who is to be sacrificed this year?" O'Leary's eyes were narrowed to slits and his chin was thrust forward pugnaciously.

PRINCESS LATEA herself, the fairest and noblest of all who were sacrificed before her. Of her own free will she has volunteered, her faith in the God of the Sky is so great."

"And?"

"And Princess Latea will die, if Captain Terence X. O'Leary, in his plane, does not save her."

"Thin she's as good as saved. Shure an' the 'X' in me initials stands fer ixcellent. Don't fergit that, Mr. Murokaii. I ain't braggin', neither. Am I, Pete?"

"No, you're too modest, Terence."

"Ye know, I don't like the way ye said that, Pete."

"By saving Princess Latea how will it help the United States?" questioned McGuffy.

"It won't, gentlemen. This is my proposition. Do all you can to save Princess Latea and I, in return, shall assist you, to the full extent of my power, which I warn you is negligible, to thwart Unuk in his designs against your country."

"Fair enough." O'Leary shot his pal an enquiring look. "What d'ye say, Pete?"

"I vote yes."

"Me too."

Murokaii gripped each of their hands in turn.

When he spoke again his voice was husky.

"In the name of Lataki and the House of Latea, I thank you, gentlemen. But yours is a tremendous task."

"The bigger the better." O'Leary's attempted grin wasn't a howling success. "There's a couple o' things, Mr. Murokaii, what don't sort o' jibe. If Lataki is hemmed in by impassable barriers o' nature, how did ye an' yer little playmates git out of Lataki? And Unuk's?"

"Here is the answer, gentlemen. On the ascension of Unuk to power, and after he had exiled the House of Latea to an area beyond the walls of the City of Lataki, I, as Commander of the Latea Forces, conferred with the members of the royal household.

"At this conference, Kadif, Captain of the Royal Bodyguard, explained their plan to me. Eleven leagues from the Temple of Sacrifice, the outlet of the Lake of Whispering Waters disappears with a mighty rushing and roaring into a cleft in the earth, near the mountains.

"Believing that this outlet might lead to the domain of the God of the Sky, the best swimmer of the Guard was to be a messenger, carrying to that god the supplication

of the House of Latea. This warrior was to dive into the raging torrent and be carried into the bowels of the earth, relying on the God of the Sky to lift him up into the realm of the skies."

"What happened?" asked O'Leary, eagerly.

"The warrior was never heard of again."

"So they called it a day, huh?"

"No. After sixty warriors had lost their lives in the attempt, one was successful."

"What was the name of the winner?" demanded McGuffy.

"Murokaii," came the quiet reply. "I was lucky enough to win, where so many had failed."

The aviators regarded him with admiration.

"Ye're aces," said O'Leary. "Thin what?"

"Of hundreds, after me, who tried and lost, twenty-three accomplished the perilous feat, making a total of twenty-four."

"To supplicate the God of the Sky to come to the rescue of the House of Latea?" McGuffy sighed. "What a useless sacrifice of good men!"

"'Tis said faith kin move mountains," observed O'Leary, gravely.

"It can, gentlemen. If you, Mr. O'Leary, as the God of the Sky, should succeed, those sacrifices will not have been in vain."

"I'll try hard. How long ago did ye make yer attempt?"

"Nearly three hundred years."

"Oh ho! The cat's in ag'in. All ye Latakians gifted with internal life?"

NOT eternal life, Mr. O'Leary, but a few of us have had our lives prolonged by glandular operations. Even your backward scientists have transplanted the glands of monkeys, with a certain amount of success. This secret was known to the priests of the House of Latea nearly a thousand years ago, but instead of using

the glands of lower animals they use those of healthy young men."

"What happens to the healthy young men?"

"They die, Mr. McGuffy. Willingly they offer their lives so that certain of us can carry on in the interests of the House of Latea."

"Phew! And us Americans call ourselves patriotic!" ejaculated O'Leary. "How about Unuk an' his priests?"

"They employ the same method, but the young men are taken by force, from the warriors of the House of Latea."

"I ain't disputin' ye, Mr. Murokaii, considerin' all what's took place, but I'll admit I'm down fer the count. What happened to ye blokes what made the swim?"

"We reached the outside world. Later we discovered the plateau beyond the mountains, and learned of Unuk's secret activities there to conquer the universe."

"Yeah, but how did Unuk git wise there was a outside world?"

"That I do not know. This I do know, however. His agents, taking with them fabulous fortunes in gems, specimens of which you gentlemen have already seen, spread over the world and recruited leading scientists to the banner of the high priest. These scientists were either bought, or kidnaped. None dreamed of the lasting hell he was entering into."

"Yeah. Go on."

"By glandular operations their lives were prolonged. Then Alok, under priest, experimented with a brain-serum until he discovered secrets known only to him. The scientists were compelled to submit to injections of the serum, with astounding results. Although their brains were vitalized to a remarkable degree, the serum destroyed their resistance and made them abject slaves of Unuk. Their existence, despite their abnormal advance in science, is a living hell. I pity them from the bottom of my heart."

"Geeze! Ain't it awful! And, ag'in

Disintegrating Rays, Terrible In Their Awfulness, Protect Unuk's Hidden Lair

their wills, the poor blokes fly the crates o' Unuk?"

"No. They are not permitted to leave the ground. Their work is to invent, and to perfect, infernal air-engines of destruction."

"Thin who handled that ship o' the disintegratin' rays, and who's gonna handle the ones bein' built?"

"American aviators kidnaped by Unuk's agents. Their brains were subjected to Alok's serum. They don't realize that they are fighting their own country."

"What a dirty louse the high priest is! Why don't he train his Latakians fer pilots?"

"It is a peculiar thing, but true. All Latakians have an insurmountable horror of the air. It was born in us. Even so, Unuk is now experimenting to that end, but as yet has achieved little success."

"Have the people of Lataki ever seen a plane?" asked McGuffy.

NO. That is why Mr. O'Leary can impersonate the God of the Sky. Should he, in his plane, come from out of the sky, he would be accepted as such and easily could restore the House of Latea to its former position of power."

"I don't quite get you, Mr. Murokaii. What of Unuk's followers? Surely they are wise to airplanes."

"Only those who work with him on the plateau. Those in Lataki are unaware that an airplane exists."

"Yeah," objected O'Leary, "but the planes Unuk uses and tests? Why ain't they seen by the people o' Lataki?"

"Partly due to the immense screen of black smoke rising from the lava fields, which the range-o-scope revealed to you, and because they fly low, behind the mountain walls, until they reach a distance pro-

hibiting observation from Lataki. Then they are tested."

"I git ye. Why didn't any of the flyers, what tried to pull the God o' the Sky stunt, make good an' reach Lataki?"

"For the reason that an air barrier, many miles in circumference and completely surrounding the kingdom, is charged with Unuk's disintegrating rays, controlled from the ground. Not one of the aviators was able to get through it. All the planes were destroyed."

"Say, what crate we gonna use fer the attimpt?"

"We have more than one, built especially for the purpose. They are here on the island. We had you and Captain McGuffy in mind."

"Mr. Murokaii," asked McGuffy, "why don't you Latakians, I mean your agents and those of Unuk's in the U. S., carry firearms?"

"We Latakians are deadly afraid of them. So is Unuk. There is not a pistol, or a rifle, carried by any of us, not excluding those on the plateau. Somehow or other we never have been able to overcome our fear of them."

"But explosives and bombs?"

"Explosives and bombs are carried by Unuk's robot plane, and will be carried by those of the same type now being built, but they are for long range use only, where the detonations cannot be seen or heard by Latakians."

"Pete, we're settin' pretty!" cried O'Leary. "Me an' ye, armed with .45 automatics, kin rule Unuk's whole roost an' barnyard."

"Do not deceive yourselves, gentlemen. You are forgetting the sleep-producing and the disintegrating rays. Firearms are practically powerless against them."

"Not if we see them first, Mr. Murokaii. Now whin do we start for Lataki?"

"Not for several weeks. At the end of that time you and Mr. McGuffy, by hard and conscientious study, should learn our language. Really, it is absurdly simple, once you understand the roots."

"Several weeks?" O'Leary groaned aloud. "What will become of the U. S. in that time?"

"Unuk will not strike again until he is fully prepared, and he cannot prepare in a lesser period. Also, we must time our start for Sacrificial Day. You must stick to our agreement. Save the Princess Latea, and then you can attend to your own important matters."

"Okay, Murokaii," said O'Leary. "A agreemint is a agreemint, evin if we are helpless to go ag'in it."

O'Leary's Wonder Ship

FOR a space Murokaii eyed with keen approval the two aviators standing before him in their picturesque costumes. Of all his predecessors, O'Leary by far was the outstanding God of the Sky, as was McGuffy in his rôle of Messenger from the Clouds.

There was a hopeful sparkle in the Latakian chieftain's eyes.

"What's the menu now, Mr. Murokaii?"

"We shall inspect your ships, then you may test them."

"In this outlandish git-up?" O'Leary winced at the thought. "Teddies an' brasieres is all right in boodwars, but ain't so a la mode gallopin' along the Milky Way."

"You will find proper flying clothes in the hangar, tailored to your sizes."

"What I gotta do, Mr. Murokaii, to make ye laugh? Stand on me head an' wigwag Morse with me tail?"

"Come with me, please." Murokaii might as well not have heard the sally.

"All right, all right. Whin me cracks ain't funny, don't laugh, but whin they are

funny, which is quite often, jist snicker a little, an' I'll put it down to the sinse o' humor ye ain't got. Now, listen. How is the God o' the Sky supposed to act? A show like this needs plinty o' rehearsin'."

"Until you reach Lataki, if you do reach it, we—"

"Whatta ye mean, if I *do* reach it?"

"I beg your pardon, Mr. O'Leary. Until you gentlemen reach Lataki—"

"Thin Pete flies with me?" O'Leary was all eagerness.

"Yes, as the Messenger from the Clouds, but only as your aide, or orderly, as you might term it in the American army."

"Hooray! Pete, from now on as me dog-robber, ye'll kindly use the servants' in-trance. Thursday is yer day off."

"Sez you!" McGuffy's thumb again made expressive contact with his nose. "A kiss for Cinderella."

"We will dispense with the God of the Sky rôle until you reach Lataki." The Latakian chieftain ignored the clowning. "My Latakians here know you to be only pretenders. They have seen many Gods of the Sky come and go. You both will be rehearsed, however, in that which will be required of you."

On leaving the house, a low, flat stone structure of peculiar color, the aviators gazed about them with interest. Except for six immense hangars, several other buildings of that same peculiar color and an expansive landing field, the island, small in area, was studded thickly with trees.

"Mr. Murokaii," observed O'Leary, "I been wonderin' why Unuk ain't got wise to this place and ain't blasted it off the map. Don't tell me it's one o' thim story-book uncharted-island things."

"The island is charted on all maps, Mr. O'Leary. Presumably, it is owned by an eccentric multi-millionaire, who uses it for botanical research. In reality, I am that multi-millionaire."

"Yeah, but is Unuk wise that the island is yer flyin' base?"

"No, for the simple reason that it is thought to be uninhabited."

"Uninhabited! With thim hangars over there, the flyin' field and the other buildin's? I can't swaller that."

"Please note the unusual color of the buildings, as well as the surface of the landing field. From the air, and from a short distance at sea, the buildings and the field are invisible to ordinary sight."

"Holy smoke!" exclaimed McGuffy. "I gotta hand it to you fellows. Got any more rabbits up your sleeve?"

IF they were amazed at what Murokaii told them, their amazement knew no bounds when they viewed the ships especially built for use of the God of the Sky.

"Glory be!" O'Leary almost swallowed his Adam's apple. "Will ye lookit the sweet stream-linin! Ain't thim air babies the honeys? Six props! Count 'em, Pete. Ground an' water landin' gear too. I bet that cabin de luxe kin carry twinty passin'ers an' a litter o' kittins. Pipe the machine guns, fore an' aft. Geeze!"

They moved closer and peered inside.

"Lamp the instrument board! McGuffy pointed. "Did you ever see so many new-fangled gadgets in all your life? What can she do, Mr. Murokaii?"

"Offhand, I should say eight hundred miles an hour. That is faster, by fifty miles, than the fastest of Unuk's ships, unless he recently has turned out something speedier."

"Knock me over with a gnat's hind foot!" sang O'Leary. "And the ceilin'?"

"They have practically no ceiling, Mr. O'Leary. You can fly as high as the occasion demands."

"Hold it! I got a weak heart."

"What is their cruising limit?" gulped McGuffy. "You know, oil and gas."

"Seven thousand miles, without refueling," was the calm answer.

"Christopher Colombo! Kiss me, sergeant!"

Murokaii conducted them to the adjoining hangar and pointed to a ship much smaller than the ones they had left. It appeared to be an ordinary stream-lined army fuselage. Stub wings were both fore and aft. A two-seater it was with but a single prop. It was equipped with a double set of machine guns, a pair in the pilot's seat and another pair in the seat of the observer.

"Now we're gittin' down to earth ag'in," remarked O'Leary. "That ship looks more regular. I feel at home ag'in."

"With those gadgets on the board?" challenged McGuffy. "What's her speed, Mr. Murokaii, and ceiling?"

"This plane, under forced draught, has done better than six hundred miles per hour and has reached an altitude of fifty thousand feet."

"I reckon I ain't home, after all," said O'Leary. "Ye mean to tell me your guys invinted ships like all these?"

"Not exactly, Mr. O'Leary." Murokaii smiled. "The planes were designed and perfected by three scientists we rescued from the cruel dominance of Unuk. No one factory manufactures them. Separate parts are built in various factories scattered throughout Europe and the United States, then are transported here, where they are assembled into the finished product."

"Oh!"

O'Leary grinned somewhat sheepishly at McGuffy. These Latakians were miles ahead of them in everything but a sense of humor, it seemed.

"When may we try her out—I mean the two-seater?" eagerly inquired McGuffy.

"If you will don your flying-clothes you may do so now."

Half an hour later, after having been instructed in the use and the operation of the unfamiliar devices on the instrument boards, O'Leary and McGuffy climbed into cockpit and monkey-seat, respectively.

Murokaii, a group of Latakians and Americans standing behind him, watched.

The chocks having been removed, O'Leary fed gas to the ship, which he had solemnly christened Little Lulu Belle, and gave her a light touch of left rudder. The instant response made him grin delightedly. Whatta baby! Whatta baby!

With the nose of Little Lulu Belle thus slewed around and pointing across the landing field to a wooded section beyond, he cut off the spark.

"Shure'n I'll first try out me typewriters, Mr. Murokaii," he called. "I don't think I've fergot how to write me name in tracers on the fannie of a crow."

"You mean you intend firing your machine guns?"

Murokaii's color had faded perceptibly and there was a break to his customarily quiet and steady voice.

Tac-tac-tac-tac! hammered O'Leary's

We—we were not afraid, but we are so constituted that—"

"Geeze, I'm sorry, Mr. Murokaii," said O'Leary. "I understand, perfectly. Please kick me in the pants fer bein' sich a damn idiot. Cripes," he floundered, "I don't know what to say."

"Please forget the regrettable incident, gentlemen. I wish to assure you, though, should the occasion arise where the courage of us Latakians is put to the test—where there are no firearms in action—"

"Gee, Mr. Murokaii, need ye tell us that? Cripes, don't rub it in. I feel bad enough now."

BEFORE Murokaii could answer, Tinga, the Tongueless, his head held up proudly and his eyes glowing with a peculiar fire, advanced to O'Leary and drew his wicked-looking poniard.

Involuntarily O'Leary stepped back.

Meet O'Leary's Mystery Ship! More Than 600 Miles Per Hour!

guns. An amazing development resulted. Murokaii threw himself on the ground, face down, and covered his head with his arms.

Of the other Latakians, some followed Murokaii's example and the rest scattered in all directions, terror written on their copper-hued faces.

"Cripes, I'm sorry," muttered O'Leary contritely to himself. "I fergot. Shure'n I should o' knowed better."

Not until he and McGuffy had climbed down from their seats and had approached the chieftain did Murokaii arise.

Shame at his weakness shone in his eyes. For a short space he stood trembling in front of the penitent aviators, unable to find speech. At length he spoke.

"Gentlemen," he said in nervous, strained tones, "I wish to apologize for my conduct, and the conduct of my Latakians.

Tinga shot him a withering glance of contempt, held out the poniard to him, hilt first, then knelt, back bent forward, at his feet.

"What the devil!" exclaimed the astonished O'Leary. "Lee surrinderin' to Grant. Is that it?"

"No, Mr. O'Leary," informed Murokaii, quietly. "It is Tinga's way of proving that Latakians do not fear death. He invites you to kill him with his own dagger."

"Invitation not accpted. On yer dogs, Tinga, old thing, an' shake day-day with Terence."

Tinga rose, sheathed his poniard, flashed O'Leary a look of scathing disdain and turned on heel to walk away.

"Tinga!" cried Murokaii, sharply. "Dare you act so in my presence?"

The tongueless one humbly prostrated



Again the sky monster dove and a gallant Black Wing died under the mysterious golden ray.

himself at the Latakian chieftain's feet and covered his head with dirt.

Murokai looked down at him sympathetically, then moved close to O'Leary.

"Be careful," he warned in a whisper, "you have made an enemy by publicly insulting him."

"Publicly insultin' him? What should I have done, kissed him?"

"You should have driven the knife into his jugular vein. He offered you proof of his courage, and you refused that proof."

"Jumpin' grasshoppers! How kin I make up with him?"

"Only by visual proof that you yourself are not afraid to die. Until that time, I warn you to beware of Tinga."

"Awaoki! Awaoki!" cried a Latakian, pointing into the sky. "Awaoki! Awaoki!"

O'Leary's and McGuffy's gaze followed the pointing arm. High in the heavens,

far to the east of the island, they saw a large "V" formation of tiny specks flying towards them.

"Awaoki! Awaoki!" shouted all the Latakians in chorus. "Awaoki! Awaoki!"

"What'n blazes do they mean?" O'Leary asked Murokaii, who stood, eyes shaded by a hand, watching the approaching formation.

"Awaoki is the Latakian term for gods of the air," explained the chieftain. "In other words, airplanes."

"But why all the excitement? They've seen plinty o' crates before, ain't they?"

"Yes, but never so far out to sea. Only once in the many years we have been here has a plane approached the island."

A Latakian ran from a hangar and handed Murokaii a strange-looking field-glass. The chieftain adjusted the lenses and placed the glass to his eyes.

O'Leary and McGuffy watched him anxiously. Were the approaching ships the destroying air-engines of Unuk, the high priest?

Their question was answered by Murokaii.

"A false alarm." He passed the field-glass to O'Leary. "For a moment I thought they might be the ships of Unuk."

"Me too." O'Leary breathed in relief. "What d'ye make 'em?"

"Look for yourself, please. I think they are Americans."

"Americans? Gee whiz!" O'Leary clapped the glass to his eyes, focused the lenses, then cried excitedly, "Pete! Pete! Black Wings, Pete! Flight 13! Some o' our byes."

"Impossible! Not a chance! We're too far out in the Pacific. Wait a minute, though. What of the gang sent to the Pacific Coast, to work in conjunction with the navy? The ones who were to test the new plane-carrier?"

"Yeah, it's thim, Pete." O'Leary's voice quavered with excitement. "The formation

commanded by Capt'in Redfield. They're Black Wings, I tell ye. Three cheers fer the winged hell-cats!"

The Sky Devil Strikes

O'LEARY handed the field-glass to McGuffy, who eagerly studied the formation of Black Wings.

"Our boys, right enough, Terence, but don't you think it is strange for them to be so far out? Now if there were some navy craft in sight and—"

"Look!" O'Leary thrust forward a pointing arm. "Smoke comin' over the horizon. One! Two! There's another! *Three* navy bathtubs." He wheeled on Murokaii. "Say, where is this island located, anyway?"

"That information I cannot divulge, but it is near enough to a certain American naval base to make what you see quite probable. Now, gentlemen, all ships will be rolled back into hangars and everybody must take cover."

"Shure'n why?"

"This island is supposed to be uninhabited and I can't afford for it to be known as otherwise. Soon your approaching ships will be in position to observe us."

"Cripes!" growled O'Leary in his disappointment. "Me an' Pete was plannin' to take off in Little Lulu Belle to say hello to our Black Wing pals."

"Truly I am sorry, Mr. O'Leary, but I cannot allow it. Under cover, please."

Grumbling to themselves over the dashing of their hopes, O'Leary and McGuffy went into the hangar. The two-seater was quickly rolled in after them.

"Why not climb into your seats and watch your comrades by means of the range-o-scope?" suggested Murokaii, in sympathy. "Each instrument board is equipped with one, and you know how to operate them."

"A sweet idea! In ye git, Pete."

Tinga, the Tongueless, a hand resting

significantly on the hilt of his murder-looking poniard, took station a short distance from the ship and watched O'Leary with eyes that burned fiercely with hate.

"What a angelic disposition Little Jack Horner is got, Pete." O'Leary jerked thumb at the scowling Tinga. "He's patiently waitin' to autograph his nom de plume on me gizzard."

Hardly had he finished speaking than an eerie uneasiness gripped him. He shifted uncomfortably in cockpit.

"What you itching for, you got fleas?" anxiously inquired McGuffy. "You're as nervous as a wet hen in a rowboat."

"Pete, I got the funniest feelin'." O'Leary flashed a furtive glance around him. "Like a ghost was gonna stab me in the back. Somethin' awful is gonna happen. On a dark night ye iver hear a dog howl near a cimitery? That's iactly how I feel, as if the dead was walkin'."

"Take an aspirin, and I'll keep my eye on Tinga and his darnin needle."

"Tinga hell! It ain't Tinga, it's somethin' worse."

"Turn over, you're lying on your back."

DESPITE his apparent levity McGuffy was nervous and apprehensive, and plainly betrayed the fact. He had an unflinching faith in O'Leary's premonitions, for in his long association with him not once had those hunches of disaster failed to materialize.

"Yeah, Pete, somethin' terrible is gonna—"

O'Leary's words clogged in his throat and he leaned nearer to the range-o-scope in front of him. He sucked in a sharp breath. An icy chill streaked down his spine.

"Pete, Pete!" he cried, tragically. "D'ye see it, Pete?"

McGuffy's face suddenly had gone white and his eyes, wide with horror, stared into the small groundglass circle on the rear instrument board. His hands clenched

until the knuckles showed white under the skin.

"O God, Terence!" he half-sobbed it in his emotion. "Unuk's ship of the disintegrating rays. It's—it's stalking our Black Wings."

"And the byes can't see the murderin' skunk, hid up there among thim clouds. What we gonna do, Pete?"

"What can we do?"

"I ain't gonna set here on me fannie, an' let me pals be kilt. They ain't got a chance ag'in thim rays."

"Neither have we, Terence."

O'Leary gritted his teeth and glistening beads of sweat began to show on his forehead. He realized only too well that they were powerless to help their menaced buddies. And it was hell, that awful realization.

Dismayed, he glanced about the hangar. His wild gaze encountered that of the Latakian chieftain, who at the moment had looked up from a large range-o-scope, around which the Latakians and the Americans in the hangar had gathered.

In answer to O'Leary's unspoken, tragic question, Murokaii gravely shook his head.

"But we gotta do somethin'," cried O'Leary, hoarsely to him. "I tell ye, me pals is gonna be murdered."

Murokaii crossed to the two-seater and laid a hand sympathetically on O'Leary's arm hanging limply from cockpit.

"There is absolutely nothing you can do, Mr. O'Leary," he said. "Except as I said before, curse the foul Unuk, perpetrator of the murders."

"This ain't no time fer cursin'!" O'Leary seized Murokaii by the wrist in a steel vise. "Me an' Pete's gonna take one o' thim God o' the Sky crates an—"

"And commit suicide," interrupted Murokaii. "On the honor of the House of Latea, you would be blotted from the sky. The ship of the disintegrating rays is impregnable. Before you could get within machine gun range, and the guns you carry are

twice the range of ordinary ones, you and your ship would be blasted to atoms, would be just a puff of smoke floating in space."

"All of which don't make no difference to me an' Pete. If the positions was reversed, Murokaii, an' me an' Pete was up there, an' the Black Wings was down here, what ye suppose thim air-dragoons would do?"

"Gentlemen, I order you to stay where you are."

There was no mistaking the implied menace in the Latakian chieftain's command.

"With our Black Wings on the spot," declared O'Leary, hotly, "we ain't takin' orders from nobody. Put that in yer album!"

"Then, as much as I deplore doing it, gentlemen, I must stop you."

"Ye and all Lataki put together can't stop us."

"You said a mouthful, Terence," growled McGuffy.

"I can, and shall, stop you very easily, gentlemen, with the sleeping-rays. You experienced their might in the police car in Washington. Each of us Latakians, myself included, is armed to that effect. You and your ship wouldn't get beyond the hangar doors. For your own good, and for the good of our cause, please be convinced."

The two Americans exchanged hopeless looks. They knew that Murokaii could, and would, carry out his threat.

Exclamations from those gathered with Murokaii about the range-o-scope caused O'Leary and McGuffy to gaze back into theirs, they having temporarily forgotten them in the stress of their emotions.

"Look, Pete! The damn thing ain't stalkin' the Black Wings!" cried O'Leary. "It's—it's circlin' around far to their rear, after somethin' ilse."

"I'll tell you what it's after." The words were hissed from between McGuffy's clamped-together teeth. "The three battleships are its meat. For dessert it will eat Black Wings. Look—"

Unuk's infernal machine had streaked down from its cloudy ambush, an ambush fully thirty thousand feet above the surface of the sea; had streaked down like a rifle bullet.

To the horror-transfixed aviators staring into the range-o-scopes it seemed but a second until the demon of the skies had leveled off over one of the battleships, then had tilted its nose vertically upward to return to its ambush, apparently at as great a speed as it had descended.

Of a sudden the attacked battleship split wide open with a staggering flash, then seemed to dissolve into smoke, which swirled and twisted around a monstrous waterspout that had towered up from the boiling sea.

As though the mighty column of water had been sliced in twain by a gigantic knife, it broke in the middle and splashed down into a raging cauldron of lashing spray and spume.

Where once had been a formidable battle-cruiser of Uncle Sam, now was but an expanse of angry waters, above which circled and wheeled and screamed frightened seagulls.

COLD and sick from the horrible spectacle the range-o-scopes had revealed to them, O'Leary and McGuffy stared into the groundglass.

Dully they watched the Black Wings, seven ships in all, break formation and race up after the disappearing sky-juggernaut.

Might just as well had tried to overtake an arrow in flight, the difference between the speed of the pursued and the pursuers was so marked.

From the decks of the two surviving ocean warcraft darted jets of flame, aimed at the destroying phantom. Harmlessly the screeching shells blossomed into fire and smoke far below their vanishing target.

Fiercely O'Leary shook his head to clear his brain. His face was strained and set. His steel-blue eyes were glinting points of

A Mad Gesture By A Mad Mick—To The Black Wing's Rescue, And To Doom!

carbon. When he spoke his words were clipped and stinging.

"Pete, we're goin' after that gee dee, dirty killer."

"We'll get the gee dee murdering—" What McGuffy called Unuk's destroyer is unprintable. "We'll get the skunk if we feed the fishes doing it."

MUROKAI must have read their thoughts because he held up a protesting arm, the while issuing commands in the Latakian tongue. His warriors ran back and faced the two-seater, short, peculiar looking instruments in hand, and aimed at the two aviators.

"Do not move!" ordered the Latakian chieftain to O'Leary and McGuffy. "Do not start your motor. I warn you that we shall use the sleeping-rays against you."

"God, what can we do?" groaned McGuffy.

"Plinty!" hissed O'Leary. "We ain't licked yet. Our buddies up there need us, Pete. Are ye game to make a dash fer it?"

"Don't waste so gee dee much time gassing. Do something!"

"Thin here goes! We're comin', pals, we're comin'!"

Of a sudden the hangar reverberated with a blasting roar which rent the air and deafened eardrums. O'Leary had tripped triggers of his twin machine guns and the black muzzles had vomited streams of fire and steel-jacketed slugs.

Emitting shrieks of terror the Latakians dropped their instruments of the sleep-producing rays and groveled on the floor of the hangar.

A gale of wind that swept from its path everything loose boomed from the whirling prop, and the ship, like a bolt from a cross-bow, shot out on the tarmac.

Once more O'Leary fired twin blasts

from cockpit to intimidate the Latakians outside. Arms shielding heads, they ran madly away, crying out in their terror.

"And that's that!" rasped O'Leary. "Try an' stop us now, ye pink-skinned monkeys."

O'Leary eased back on the stick. Gracefully as a bird Little Lulu Belle took to the air on her perilous, and apparently hopeless, mission of rescue.

"We're comin', Black Wings!" hoarsely shouted O'Leary. "Me an' Pete is on our way!"

McGuffy operated a lever and the landing-gear folded into the fuselage as an eagle folds its talons in flight.

Although they fully realized the overwhelming odds confronting them, O'Leary and McGuffy were gambling on their ability to successfully overcome the tremendous handicap.

How they would accomplish that end they did not know, nor did they care, just so they came out on top. Such was their indomitable spirit.

O'Leary threw a switch on the instrument board. Instantly the thundering roar of propeller and exhaust died to a droning whisper. He operated another gadget and spoke to McGuffy.

His voice carried to the back seat, clear and distinct.

"Ye claim that history repeats itself, Pete," he said. "So let's hope ye're right."

"I'll bite."

"Who won the fight 'twixt David an' Goliath?"

"I wasn't at the ringside, but David got the decision, I think."

As casual and irrelevant as their conversation appeared to be there was a tenseness to their clipped tones which bespoke the gravity of the situation and the strain which they were undergoing.

"Not on points, Pete, but by a knockout. Shure'n it's a good omen. Tied together, me an' ye an' Little Lulu Belle is David. Git me?"

"And that gee dee murdering giant out there is Goliath?"

"Nobody ilse. An', like Samson, ivery one o' thim wreckin'-contractors has a weak spot. Samson's was a haircut."

"Yes, yes?"

"I'm gamblin' that this Goliath's weak spot is where he sets down. If we kin git behind him, an' stick there, an' keep pourin' tracers an' steel into his fannie, like we done to the Gothas in the war, he'll fold up like a camp chair."

"Good old Terence!"

O'Leary glanced at his altimeter and whistled. Little Lulu Belle had climbed ten thousand feet in the short time and was still slicing off altitude to the king's taste. She was the darling of all the sky wagons.

"Thirty thousand feet's me targit, Pete. That'll put us over thim clouds up there, thim we'll try an' sneak up behind Mr. Unuk's Goliath an' glue oursilves to his pants."

"Where is the damned thing?" asked McGuffy, after a fruitless look into his range-o-scope.

"I caught a glimpse o' its tail disappearin' into that stritch o' clouds over the two battle-waggins. I think the Black Wings is lost sight o' Mr. Goliath, though. Lookit how they're circlin' around."

The flyers lapsed into grim silence, gazes focused on the range-o-scopes. Why didn't the sky-butcher come out of its cloudy ambush? What new devilment was it up to?

On reaching the desired thirty thousand feet, O'Leary leveled off and, with nose aimed at the spot where Unuk's ship had vanished, coaxed the utmost speed out of the racing two-seater.

When near the area where the Goliath

had last been sighted he dipped wings and entered the cloud-dotted stretch of sky.

Murder Flies High

FOR a space O'Leary lost his distance and timing, his ship traveled at such astounding speed. No sooner had he picked out a cloud in front of him than it whisked past and was in his rear.

"Easy, girl baby, easy," he purred, gradually closing throttle. "Ye're runnin' fast enough to slip right out o' yer panties." He gave her a little right rudder, pointing her for a heavy cloud. "Be a lady, if only while we're in the fog there."

Into the milky slop shot the faithful Little Lulu Belle.

Suddenly the skies were torn open by such a terrific, screaming blast that goose-pimples spotted O'Leary's skin.

McGuffy felt his hair stand straight up under his helmet and his blood run cold.

Blanketed in by the obscuring mist, neither aviator could accurately determine the cause of the unearthly screeching, but each guessed what it meant. Unuk's sky-assassin was hurtling down through empty space for its second victim; another of the helpless battleships far below.

As the diving thing drew farther away from O'Leary and McGuffy distance toned down the awful noise of its bullet-like descent to an eerie wailing, which echoed and re-echoed in the heavens.

"We'll try an' pin oursilves to its tail whin it comes up ag'in," called O'Leary. "It don't know we're here, that's a cinch, or it wouldn't o' dived that way. Grabbin' it on the rebound is our only hope."

"You're riding this air-horse," came McGuffy's ready reply, "and I haven't seen you pull leather yet. Good luck to you, pal."

A rift split the clouds. And through that rift his straining eyes glimpsed a repetition of the tragedy he and McGuffy had seen

enacted in their range-o-scopes in the Laktarian hangar.

The destroying monster, a shaft of blinding light projecting from its ugly steel nose, was slicing down at one of Uncle Sam's battle-cruisers.

Shells from the doomed craft exploded harmlessly around the diving sky-terror.

One of the Black Wings, in a beautiful sacrificial gesture to save the battle-cruiser from annihilation, was diving right across the path of the descending destroyer, no doubt with the forlorn hope of crashing into it and both going down to a watery grave.

"No, no, fer God's sake, *no!*" burst from O'Leary, frantically. "No, I tell ye!"

TO his horror, from a side of the awful thing shot another shaft of that mysterious blinding light.

The disintegrating ray struck the Black Wing ship squarely on the nose.

O'Leary cursed impotently. McGuffy froze in his belt.

And well might they, because the ship of the famous 13 Flight split into atoms and was blotted from their sight, except for a spinning blob of smoke.

"That'll be Jim Murdock an' his ship," groaned O'Leary. "God rist yer brave soul, Jim."

Without warning the two-seater skidded, dropped a sheer two thousand feet, then whirled dizzily around. O'Leary's nerveless hands fell from the controls.

The enshrouding mist swirled and twisted and eddied as though a powerful whirlwind had cut through it.

From the ocean below resounded a mighty clap of thunder, heralding the destruction of the battle-cruiser. But that thunderclap failed to register on the deadened eardrums of O'Leary and McGuffy.

Presently the air commotion quieted and Little Lulu Belle, equipped with a stabilizer devised by the three rescued scientists of Unuk, automatically righted herself.

"Thank God," murmured the stunned O'Leary.

His skin was dank with sweat and his heart pounded against his ribs. He could hardly catch his breath. His muscles felt flabby and unresponsive, and his brain was foggy.

McGuffy was in even worse condition. His head was bowed forward with chin touching breast and his breath was coming in short, wheezing gasps. His color was a dirty blue, as though he were dying of slow strangulation.

Little did the two flyers realize how close to annihilation they had come. The shaft of the disintegrating ray which had destroyed the diving Black Wing had, projecting upward, missed them by only a few yards.

Had it not been for the stabilizer and the robot steering device, their uncontrolled ship would have spun down into the Pacific.

Without warning the two-seater commenced pitching and bucking again. O'Leary shook his head to wipe the cobwebs from his brain. What had happened? What was happening?

Dimly his aching eyes registered a monstrous shadow, terrifying in its menace and size, blacken out the sunlight trying to pierce the shrouds of mist.

Then the shadow was gone, leaving in its wake a great rushing and hissing of air and a wild tossing and swirling of cloud fragments.

Unuk's sky-butcher, manned by a crew of his brain-doctored American pilots, had shot by in its upward climb to gain position to strike again.

"Pete, Pete," called O'Leary weakly. "Do ye hear me, Pete?"

Wearily McGuffy's head lifted, then dropped again. Somebody was calling him. What did he want? To hell with him! He was too tired and sleepy to care.

"Pete! For God's sake, Pete, answer me."

Again the head was raised, only to be lowered once more.

"Ye dirty, lousy quitter!"

O'Leary didn't mean it, but it was the best way he knew to jar McGuffy from his coma.

"Ye're yellin', Pete. Yeller to yer gee-string."

"So's—your old—man," was wafted faintly to his straining ears.

O'Leary breathed in relief. His pal soon would come out of it and would be fit to carry on. He decided to stab again, and hard.

"It was Doogan—not Hinnessy—who bet us the five bucks."

"You're a cockeyed liar!" McGuffy straightened up in his belt and gazed blankly about him. "Where—where in heck are we?"

"Lookin' fer another rose garden." Torn with anguish as he was, O'Leary's sense of humor refused to lie down and play dead. He had to chuckle.

"The Black Wings!" McGuffy had snapped into it. "Good God, the Black Wings! What—what happened?"

"I don't know ixactly, Pete. But we'll never come closer to death and live."

"Where's that gee dee thing?"

"I think Goliath's somewhere in the clouds, high above us, but I ain't shure. Somethin' awful tore by us and—Cripes an' tin fishes! I been neglectin' Little Lulu Belle an' damn if she ain't took care o' hersilf. What a perfect lady!"

Again that terrific, ungodly shrieking. The "thing" was hungry for another victim.

Still shut in by the walls of milk-white mist, the flyers could see nothing, but their drumming ears told them the horrible story.

"Go get him Sky Hawk, go get him!" yelled McGuffy. "Pull the buzzard's feathers out!"

"We gotta stay here, Pete, an' try to hitch on to his tailboard whin he comes up.

Fightin' that divil's instrumint in the open would be dealin' right into his murderin' hand."

This time the air around them had not been disturbed, so O'Leary correctly concluded that the monster had struck from a more distant point.

Chattering machine guns, faint and far off, reached their ears. O'Leary threw a despairing glance over his shoulder at McGuffy. Grimly the flyer in the rear seat nodded. He understood.

Another Black Wing was going out in a blaze of glory. To what avail were steel-jackets, or tracers, or incendiary bullets against the annihilating demon? Pebbles thrown against the side of a house.

Suddenly the chattering guns went ominously still. The resulting silence was charged with tragic portent. Again the flyers exchanged looks.

"God take care o' his soul," breathed O'Leary. "Whoiver he be."

THEIR every sense on the alert for the next upward rush of the destroyer, the aviators' searching gaze overlooked nothing around them.

Through the whirling blades of the propeller O'Leary's keen eyes were first to note a slight churning of mist dead ahead of the two-seater. His body stiffened in determination and his jaws snapped together with an audible click.

"On yer toes, Pete," he warned. "Goliath's comin' up."

"Get him Sky Hawk!" cried McGuffy. "You can do it."

There was no mistaking the signs. Unuk's vandal of the sky was returning to its ambush, for now the fog was whipping about like the white of an egg in the whirling flanges of an egg-beater.

As it had done before, the two-seater rocked and pitched and bucked in the maelstrom, but O'Leary had learned his lesson and had not been caught off his guard. His superb manipulation of the controls this

time was a match for the powerful air currents.

"Ride him, cowboy!" sang McGuffy in admiration, momentarily submerging his anxiety to compliment his pal on his expert airmanship.

LIKE immense white doors swinging wide, the milky pall split in twain and the awful thing, terrifying in aspect and magnitude, roared into sight.

"What the—"

O'Leary and McGuffy felt their blood congeal and their skin creep.

Mechanically O'Leary pulled back the

Little Lulu Belle to do her damndest to hang on. A scorpion trying to sting an elephant to death!

McGuffy had not erred. The two-seater had been sighted by that suffering face at the cabin porthole, and the intelligence had been transmitted to the rest of the crew.

Under the baleful influence of Alok's fiendish brain-serum, there were but two thoughts in the subjugated minds of the captive Americans; self preservation and to destroy.

Only by destroying all who opposed them could they themselves be preserved, had been the poisonous doctrine injected into

What Hellish Torture For An American, To Be Forced To Kill His Countrymen!

stick and gave Little Lulu Belle rudder, to trail in the wake of the appalling sky-monster.

At a circular port of the huge steel cabin fuselage appeared a head, minus a helmet. Just a flash, to be true, but the suffering and misery depicted on the white and drawn face shot a pang of sympathy into the two flyers' hearts.

What hellish torture for an American, even though his brain had been doctored, to be compelled to fight and to kill his countrymen.

"Ted Jones!" McGuffy had recognized the face which had flashed by. "It's Ted Jones, of 13 Flight!"

"Yeah, Ted Jones!" gasped O'Leary. "Who crashed at sea."

The two aviators were right. A year back, Pilot Theodore Jones of the famous Flight 13 of Black Wings had not returned from a solo flight over the Atlantic, and his name had been added to the long list of missing American flyers.

"The thing sees us, Terence!" yelled McGuffy in warning. "It sees us!"

O'Leary nodded and hurled his ship into the wake of the climbing phantom, urging

them by the high priest's scientist of medicine and surgery.

Out of the cloudy ambush and into the sunlight roared Unuk's air-engine. And, as though towed by a line, buzzed the two-seater right behind it.

To the upstaring, white-faced tars on the decks of the surviving battle-cruiser fully five miles below, it must have looked as though a gnat were chasing a legendary roc, the two-seater appeared so tiny in comparison.

The five Black Wing pilots, all that were left of the original formation, their nerves now so badly shaken that they were ready to believe that the terrifying "thing" was of the supernatural, gazed wide-eyed through propellers at the unequal fight about to commence.

Then an astounding development took place. From the rear seat of the diminutive aircraft hanging to the tail of the monster an arm signal was flashed to them.

Dumfounded they watched. Again the signal. Could they credit their sight, or were they dreaming? It was a Black Wing signaling in the code known only to Flight 13.

They leaned forward in cockpits, electrified. Once more the signal. The mysterious signaler was ordering them to keep away—to stay out of the fight.

Why? With his arm a Black Wing wiggled the question.

Back came his answer, and in no uncertain terms. The mystery pilot was speaking in the expressive, none-too-polite air-language Flight 13 understood so well.

Deleted of brimstone and sulphur, the message was to the following effect:

“Keep off, you gee dee, blankety-blank doddering idiots, or you will spoil the whole gee dee, cockeyed, blank, blank, blankety-blank thing.”

“Okeh,” pumped arms from the cockpits of all five ships. “Who are you?”

“The Sky Hawk and McGuffy,” was flashed back to them.

The Sky Hawk and Peter Maher McGuffy!

More than one throat tightened at the welcome news and hope surged in breasts. The two aces had been reported missing by Washington, most likely killed by the mysterious explosion which had wrecked four blocks of the capital city.

But Washington was wrong. The flying hell-cats were alive! Were up there battling that supernatural “thing.”

O'Leary, however, had no time for signaling. It was all he could do to follow the monster tearing madly up into the canopy of sky above.

As the stern of a battleship dwarfs a cockleshell, so loomed Unuk's destroyer in front of him.

Breasting the wash of the tube-enclosed propellers and the spitting exhausts was like flying into the face of a tornado. Wind shrieked insanely through the two-seater's wires and the short wings dipped and rocked in the air-blast, but O'Leary valiantly held on.

He dared not use his machine guns though, because all his attention was needed on the controls.

Through slitted eyes he watched two drawn, suffering faces pressed against an observation port in the rear end of the steel cabin. Fear shone plainly in the dilated pupils staring back at him. Although the faces were those of American flyers, he could not identify them.

But the fear-lined countenances were not the only things to be watched. Right in front of the observation port, on the top of the steel cabin, was a peculiar, rounded knob large enough to accommodate the head and shoulders of a man.

A monstrous glass eye of a dull, yellowish-white color glared menacingly at him from the knob. He correctly surmised that it was one of the outlets for the projection of the disintegrating rays. And, apparently, Little Lulu Belle was flying squarely in its destructive path.

What would happen to him, and to McGuffy, when the rays were loosed? He ground his teeth in his helplessness. What was to be, must be, he concluded, philosophically.

Hell in the Heavens

ONE of the suffering faces withdrew from the observation port. O'Leary murmured a prayer and set his jaws. Soon the blast would come. But not before he struck the first blow, he resolved.

Cautiously his fingers caressed the trigger-trips. Gently he eased back the stick, an eye along the sights of his twin guns. A trifle more and that ugly eye would be in line.

There! He cut loose with hammering, double blasts. A direct hit right on the leering eye.

The steel-jacketed bullets glanced off the grinning, yellowish-white optic as though they had been peas shot from a boy's pea-shooter.

O'Leary froze in disappointment. There was no battling the awful thing. With his guns useless, what was left for him?

A desperate resolve flooded through him.

There *was* one chance left. He would open throttle to the widest notch and crash the two-seater into the tail of the Sky-Goliath. Then, locked in death-embrace, he would hurtle down to destruction, carrying the monster with him.

But had he the right to sacrifice McGuffy in such a manner? He threw a questioning glance over a shoulder. His eyes met McGuffy's. The flyer nodded. He understood, and he was game. Their lives to save the battle-cruiser and the five Black Wings.

"So long, Pete." O'Leary half-sobbed it. "What a pal ye are."

"So long, Terence," came the choked reply. "You're pretty good yourself."

"Right in Goliath's pants!" muttered O'Leary to himself. "Do yer stuff, sweetheart!"

He opened throttle. The two-seater leaped forward to strike. Involuntarily O'Leary closed his eyes for the impending crash.

THE controls were jerked from his grip. Simultaneously the air was shattered by that unearthly screaming. Even through his closed lids the resultant flash seared his eyes.

As though a powerful voltage had rocketed through him, his body stiffened rigid. Sledge hammers were cracking open his skull. His lungs were being crushed in a pulverizing vise. His heart had stopped beating.

He was falling, turning over and over in space. A terrific jolt. He had landed on solid rock. Then he was tossed about as the whirlpool of Niagara would toss a chip.

Ah! He could breathe. His body had relaxed. He experienced no pain. He opened his eyes.

The two-seater was whirling down in a mad spin.

The Pacific Ocean was where the sky should be. No, it was below him. No, on

his right. On his left! Behind him! In front of him! Everywhere at once! Why didn't the damn-fool ocean behave itself?

By instinct alone he jerked the crashing ship out of her spin. She leveled off. He glanced behind him.

McGuffy was alive, struggling in his belt to orient himself.

Frantically O'Leary gazed about him. From all points of the compass, it seemed that screaming crescendo was ripping open the heavens. Then he saw an appalling picture.

Unuk's destroyer was slicing through space, rushing straight at him.

From the awful thing's nose, from its sides, from its tail, blazed shafts of the blinding rays, like a battleship firing all its guns in salvo.

A lightning turn by O'Leary and the two-seater temporarily was out of the path of that ugly, blunt nose coming for him. The forward beam of the rays almost got him, though. It was a miraculous escape.

The air cracked and snapped as though a dozen machine guns had gone into action, and his ship bucked and sun-fished.

Then O'Leary thrilled with sudden hope. The rays could not be aimed independently of the movements of the monster, he saw. Like fixed machine guns, they depended for their targets on the skill of the pilot.

Now if only he, O'Leary, could keep out of those reaching, fixed shafts of searing brilliance; could fly between them, over them, under them? There was no flying across them, or around them, that he knew.

A contest of airmanship then followed between the pilot of the giant destroyer and the American ace at the controls of the two-seater. O'Leary's superb flying skill versus that of Unuk's brain-doctored pilot and the disintegrating rays.

The area in which the monster could maneuver was unbounded, but O'Leary's was restricted to the limited and constantly shifting spaces not dominated by the shafts of blazing light.

A superhuman accomplishment for the best of pilots, but O'Leary picked up the thrown gauntlet challenging his nerve and prowess and hurled it back into the very teeth of the high priest's juggernaut.

The aerobatics he performed to escape destruction taxed his every resource and all the tricks in his air-bag.

Had he heard the resounding cheers of admiration and the shouted encouragement volleying through space to him from the hoarse throats of the watching Black Wings and the bluejackets on the decks of the battle-cruiser, he would have thrilled with justified pride. Still, he could not have done any better; for he was flying at the peak of his ability.

Nevertheless it looked like a lost battle for him, out there over the Pacific, because he and his ship couldn't endure the terrific strain forever, and once either of the two weakened it was written in the skies that the evil science of the fiendish high priest of Lataki would triumph.

Out of the clutches of the reaching death-shafts continually slipped the gallant flyers, but only by the narrowest of margins. A will-o-the-wisp the two-seater had become under the expert, often miraculous, touch of the super-pilot manipulating its controls.

FOR more than ten minutes—ten centuries to O'Leary and McGuffy—the game of death continued. Their bodies were wet with nervous perspiration and despair was seeping into their hearts.

What was the use? they commenced asking themselves. There was no outlet for them, except to be blasted into atoms when caught by one of the shafts of blazing light so relentlessly reaching out to destroy them. Why should they suffer longer? A puff of smoke and all would be over.

"Pete," sobbed O'Leary as he hurled the two-seater around on a wing-tip to avoid a clutching shaft, "they got our number, pal. We can't win this way."

"No, we can't win this way, Terence," choked McGuffy. "What shall we do—stop dodging and get the misery over with?"

It was precisely what O'Leary had meant, but when voiced by another it didn't sound so good to him.

The Sky Hawk quit? Never! Not while there was an iota of fight left in him and the controls would answer his touch. Little Lulu Belle was doing her part, and nobly. The Sky Hawk thinking of folding up? Unspeakable!

"Yeah, git the misery over with—by knockin' the pants off o' Goliath."

He went into a quick dive. Just in time too, for above them streaked a shaft of that dazzling light. The air fairly boiled with disturbing currents. Death had barely missed them again.

"Pete, I'm gonna shoot straight at the dirty ——!" O'Leary's name for the Goliath isn't often used in polite circles, but it fitted the situation nicely.

"Whin the damned thing turns around to come at us ag'in, I'm gonna give Little Lulu Belle the gun an' try an' shoot between thim rays an' glue meself to the skunk's tail."

"What's the use?" McGuffy's voice was charged with despair and weariness. "It didn't get us anything before. Our guns are useless against the gee dee thing."

A disintegrating ray from a side port of the Goliath flashed at them. But O'Leary wasn't there. He beat it by a split part of a second.

"Glue meself to its tail, I said," panted O'Leary. "Grab leather!"

The maneuver he then executed was so unexpected and so daringly hopeless that it caught the crew of Unuk's destroyer napping.

Straight between the air lane of two blazing beams sliced the two-seater, as though to ram her nose into the monster.

Like a flash Unuk's pilot turned his ship, but that flash wasn't quite fast enough.

Diving under a death-shaft projected at him, O'Leary zoomed, swung sharply and again he was in the only blind spot of the destroyer, just abaft the tail.

"Try an' shake me off now, ye gee dee —!" Again that expressive, but impolite monicker.

Salty sweat was running into O'Leary's bloodshot eyes and his heart was pumping furiously, but the determination written on his rugged face bespoke his intention to do, or die.

"Atta boy!" cried the suffering McGuffy. "What now?"

"Plinty!" O'Leary tripped triggers. "A kiss from Cinderella!"

But this time he had not aimed his blasts at that yellowish-white eye gleaming so malevolently back at him. Instead his bursts of steel had roared at a spot lower down in the cabin, close to the rudder.

And the giant staggered!

Only for a second, to be true, but it told the two trepid pilots breasting the terrific air wash of the sky-monster that their steel-jackets had registered; had drawn blood.

"Hooray! How do ye like it, Mr. Goliath?"

HOPE had leaped into O'Leary's weary eyes; eyes that were blood-shot and burning, and were smarting from the salty sweat running down into them.

From that gleaming eye in the knob atop the steel cabin a shaft of golden brilliance cut through space. Again that rocking and pitching, but the valiant two-seater weathered the storm under the expert guidance of the American ace at the controls.

"Fer ye!" Defiantly O'Leary thumbed his nose. "Niver touched me!"

He loosed another fiery burst into the bowels of Unuk's destroyer. No noticeable effect this time.

"Pepper the rudder!" he yelled to McGuffy. "An' keep blazin' away. I'll





try fer the sore spot I made in its pants. Ye know, where I kicked it before.”

Both tripped their guns at the same moment. O'Leary hit the desired target. Nothing happened. McGuffy's blasts ricocheted harmlessly from the mammoth rudder.

Each groaned in dismay. There was no killing the Goliath.

Then the monster seemingly went Berserk. It lashed furiously about in space, diving, tumbling, twisting, zooming and turning in a wrathful, but futile, attempt to shake off the scorpion stinging its tail.

Like grim death O'Leary hung on, his and McGuffy's machine guns yammering.

What an awesome spectacle it must have been to the Black Wings hovering in the distance and to the bluejackets on the decks of the cruiser below, that battle between David and Goliath.

An Irish terrier hanging to the tail of a stampeding, infuriated giant bull of the skies; a bull that impotently roared and bellowed and tossed its horns in baffled rage to dislodge the pest.

THEN, in its demoniacal fury, the sky-monster zoomed high, leveled off and charged in a straight, downward course.

O'Leary and McGuffy, their guns still blazing, suddenly felt sick and nauseated at what they saw.

Refusing to stay out of the fight longer, the five Black Wings, in V formation, were rushing en masse at Unuk's destroyer.

“Go back!” yelled O'Leary. “Go back!”

Frantically McGuffy signaled to his comrades to keep off, but the members of Flight 13 disregarded his wig-wagged plea. They were not of the caliber to stand idly by when great deeds were being done in the skies. If their two valiant pals could die so heroically, they could die with them.

And die they did.

Straight into the maws of the screaming disintegrating rays they flew, their guns spitting.

And, like moths attacking a blow-torch, they shriveled into nothing and were gone.

Sobbing like broken-hearted kids, O'Leary and McGuffy swept the empty skies with tragic gaze.

Five blobs of smoke, naught else, eddied and swirled in their vision; all that was left of five sterling American pilots and five of Uncle Sam's newest type planes.

"Damn yer black soul!" Again and again O'Leary cursed the high priest of Lataki. "Terence X. O'Leary will sind ye tumblin' down into hell, if he has to tumble with ye. I swear it on all I hold sacred."

Teeth set and his bloodshot eyes narrowed to slits he stabbed the sky-monster in front of him with blasts of steel.

UNDER his helmet McGuffy's color had faded to the hue of ashes. But had Unuk, high priest of Lataki, seen the resolute manner in which the American ace's aggressive chin protruded, it would have afforded him food for thought.

But the Goliath, its jaws dripping blood, was not yet satiated. There still remained one more helpless victim to be slain, the battle-cruiser down there on the Pacific. After that killing had been accomplished, then to attend to the scorpion fixed so tightly to its tail.

Down it shot, its glaring, yellowish-white eyes screaming insanely and its semi-concealed propellers and slobbering exhausts roaring like thunder.

And down in the wake of the sky-monster streaked O'Leary and McGuffy, their hearts dead with the horror of it all, but their guns spewing defiance.

They turned their heads away to shut out the awesome murder as the rays of the Goliath struck the unprotected cruiser.

When they looked again nothing met their searching eyes but a raging, wave-tossed section of ocean, over which swirled and twisted a pall of smoke.

Not a vestige of the destroyed battle-cruiser was to be seen; not even a blue-

jacket struggling in the angry waters.

Neither of the flyers spoke. What could they say? They were too shocked for speech, even for thought.

Zooming to ten thousand feet, the monster straightened out on a level course, seemingly oblivious to the stinging gnat still holding on so tenaciously in its wake.

Unuk's pilot pointed nose south and speeded up the ten powerful motors. The course he had set, if followed, would take the sky-monster over the Latakian island.

Grim and silent, O'Leary answered the increase in speed by feeding the two-seater enough speed to keep her in the blind spot of the Goliath. His and McGuffy's guns were still. Wasted effort firing them.

Gradually the speed of the monster increased until Little Lulu Belle had reached her limit.

Then it was that the scheme of Unuk's pilot was revealed to O'Leary.

The monster, in straightaway flying, was speedier than Murokaii's ship. When a sufficient gap between the pursued and the pursuer had been established, the two-seater would be at the mercy of that yellowish-white, glaring eye; would be disintegrated into atoms.

O'Leary shook off the horror and dependency crushing him down.

"Pete," he cried, "the gee dee thing is leavin' us behind."

"What then?" demanded McGuffy.

"We'll be blowed to bits."

"What does it matter now?" came the despairing answer. "We have failed. Our buddies are blotted out; the cruisers are destroyed. A couple of wash-outs we are."

"Nix, nix! Snap into it, Pete. What of the United States? We gotta cash in like a couple o' quitters an' let Unuk—"

"Hell no!" McGuffy's eyes blazed anew.

"Thin we gotta do somethin', before we're rubbed out too."

"Sure, Terence. But *what?*"

"Ye're almost as good a machine gunner as me, Pete. Lambaste thim props one at

a time, till yer ammo runs out, an' I'll hold me fire on that sore spot until I bore a hole right through the thing's tail to its chin. We gotta slow the skunk down, or we're licked."

With the monster keeping a steady course, O'Leary gambled and set the automatic steering device. In this way he could concentrate fully on his shooting, which he previously had been unable to do when the Goliath was trying to shake him off.

If determination alone could have won, the battle soon would have ended, the way O'Leary and McGuffy handled their guns. The roaring blasts from the observer's seat were directed at one of the ten enclosed propellers, while those from cockpit pounded away at the spot which had caused the Goliath to stagger.

The aviators' last, desperate effort, however, appeared doomed to failure, because Unuk's destroyer, unaffected by the machine gun blasts, drew slowly away from the two-seater, inch by inch.

Grimly O'Leary watched the gap widen, but kept hammering away. McGuffy also noted that the Goliath was gaining in the race, still he didn't waver.

In the observation port in the rear of the steel cabin appeared three of Unuk's crew. To O'Leary it seemed that the fear which had been so deeply imprinted on the suffering faces before, now had given way to expressions of triumph.

Indeed an evil omen for McGuffy and him, was his gloomy thought. Those staring faces plainly told him that as soon as the destroyer had outdistanced the two-seater sufficiently, Little Lulu Belle would be but a puff of smoke floating in space.

Alarmingly the gap widened, but O'Leary and McGuffy stuck resolutely to their guns.

Farther and farther the monster drew away from them. A dull glow began to show in the yellowish-white eye atop the steel cabin.

It wouldn't be long, concluded O'Leary, an eye along the sights of his jumping

guns; it wouldn't be long before that gleaming optic screeched insanely and pulverized them into nothing.

Apparently the Goliath hadn't shown all its speed, for suddenly it forged ahead. The two-seater appeared to be standing still. Another yard or two and it would be in range of the destroying eye.

O'Leary and McGuffy realized it was the end. Nevertheless their Spartan spirit didn't flinch. They would fight to the last; would be blotted out at their hammering guns. A glorious finish for American aces.

The two-seater floated still farther to the rear. It now had lost the race, for it was in direct range of that horrible eye.

A blinding flash and that terrific, unearthly screaming split the heavens. The aviators felt as though a giant mailed fist had cracked them on the chins. So this was Unuk's death, eh? Well, they weren't whining.

LITTLE Lulu Belle leaped three lengths straight forward, it seemed to the half-stunned O'Leary at her controls. She was crashing head on into the monster in front of her.

By the instinct of self-preservation alone O'Leary checked her speed by closing throttle. Then it was that the Goliath leaped forward, it appeared.

O'Leary's brain partly cleared. The two-seater hadn't increased her speed, the sky-Goliath had decreased his. And the sudden throttling down of Little Lulu Belle had created the impression that Unuk's destroyer had forged ahead.

But what had caused the miracle? Why weren't McGuffy and he atoms floating in space? They had been in easy range of that awful optic up there.

The solution of the miracle came to him. The abrupt check in the speed of Unuk's destroyer had caused the shaft of disintegrating rays to go over their heads.

Someone was shouting. Faintly he could

hear a familiar voice, a voice almost drowned by the rush of the tumbling air currents in the wake of the projected rays. McGuffy's voice! What was it saying? Glory be!

"The gee dee thing is wounded! Terence! Terence! Look, Terence, look! We've kicked it in the pants!"

The resultant flood of joy to his heart caused tears to well in O'Leary's eyes, clouding his vision. Still he could see, dimly, that the air-giant was groggy. Like a drunken sailor it would stagger, then right itself, but only to stagger again.

"We got ye! We got ye!" shrieked O'Leary, temporarily insane with joy. "Murder our pals, will ye? Distroy Uncle Sam's cruisers? Down into hell ye go! Down into hell itsif, I say!"

He gripped his guns and poured burst upon burst into the wounded monster. Two of its ten propellers were gone, he noted, the result of McGuffy's marksmanship, and his own guns had cut a jagged hole through the steel hide.

Regulating Little Lulu Belle's speed to conform with that of the staggering sky-monster, he pounded away at the wound he had caused.

Under McGuffy's fire another propeller went out of commission.

Laughing like a madman O'Leary stabbed and stabbed at the bleeding wound. Blood? Blood was red. And the stuff pouring from the jagged hole, to be whisked into spray by the terrific wash of the monster, was of a yellowish-white color. What was the answer?

Unknown to him his bullets had penetrated a reserve tank of the chemicals which generated the disintegrating rays and, penetrating still deeper into the bowels of Unuk's destroyer, had almost wrecked the steering gear.

Another propeller broke under the impact of McGuffy's steel-jackets. The monster wobbled.

Shouting and yelling, O'Leary stabbed

and stabbed until his ammunition was exhausted. And that final stabbing did the work.

David had triumphed, for the Goliath of the skies, mortally wounded, was hurtling down, wing over wing, to the destruction it had meted out to so many helpless victims.

"Into hell with ye!" shouted O'Leary. "Into hell, I say!"

His eyes were so bloodshot and distended that they looked like crimson marbles. McGuffy's were no better. Still there was a glow to that crimson, a glow of pride and satisfaction for a hard job well done.

As they watched the Goliath tumble over and over in its death-fall, the space between them and the doomed sky-giant was suddenly bridged by a blinding flash of light, then that soul-disturbing mechanical scream.

The left forward wing of the two-seater exploded into atoms and Little Lulu Belle turned over on her back, herself mortally wounded.

Stunned, O'Leary and McGuffy, slumped in their belts, went whirling down to destruction with their ship.

Another staggering flash and again that eerie scream from Unuk's falling sky-monster. The descending two-seater, her tail blasted off by the lethal rays, was knocked out of her spin and streaked down, nose first, to the Pacific below.

With a mighty splash the sea-monster hit the water and disappeared in a cauldron of boiling spray and spume.

Three hundred yards away there was a much smaller splash as Little Lulu Belle, with her two valiant flyers still slumped in their belts, dived into her ocean grave.

Dead Man's Plot

IT was past midnight. The heavens over the Pacific were moonless and black and foreboding. Ominous, threatening clouds had gathered. A rising wind, which soon would develop into a gale, shrieked

"O'Leary Is Dead! Stiff And Cold He Is. Long Live The God Of The Sky."

and moaned and whined. Whitecaps mottled the surface of the uneasy sea. Thunder muttered and rolled.

On the Latakian island trees bent and swayed in the wind. Somewhere a dog howled mournfully, as though death were in the offing. Dust clouds swirled and twisted on the landing field. Not a light shone from hangars or buildings.

In the windowless room of a squat, flat-roofed stone structure a weird and solemn ritual was in progress.

Latakians, their heads bowed in grief and holding aloft burning, smoking torches, lined the somber-hued walls of the room. In the center of the room, revealed by the dancing red reflections from the flaming torches, were three marble biers.

On each of these marble slabs lay a naked body, stiff and white and cold.

At the foot of the middle bier knelt a Latakian warrior, his body bent forward so that his forehead touched the uncarpeted stone floor.

It was Tinga, the Tongueless, offering penitence to the dead God of the Sky.

Near the head of this bier stood Murokaii. His arms were folded. Sorrow and anxiety were deeply imprinted on his face as he gazed down at the stalwart form stretched out before him in the stillness of death.

A few feet away Kiva and Lokaii talked in hushed, tense tones. Kiva held a watch in his hand.

Finally Kiva signaled to a warrior who stood beside a drum resting on heavy bronze supports.

Boom! The hollow sound echoed and re-echoed throughout the room. *Boom!* Lower drooped the heads of the torch-bearers lining the walls. *Boom!* A solemn chanting arose from all the warriors.

Murokaii stepped a pace forward and

lifted his right arm on high. The chanting and the booming ceased.

"Has the allotted time expired, Kiva?" Murokaii's voice was strained and broken.

"The allotted time has expired, O Murokaii."

"And the God of the Sky has not answered?"

"The God of the Sky has not answered, O Murokaii."

"And the Messenger from the Clouds has not answered?"

"The Messenger from the Clouds has not answered, O Murokaii."

"And the stranger from the ship of the foul high priest has not answered?"

"The stranger from the ship of the foul high priest has not answered, O Murokaii."

Boom! echoed the drum. The chanting was resumed.

Murokaii moved a pace nearer to the bier. A warrior handed him a white silken shroud and a wreath fashioned from gold. Another warrior stepped up to Kiva and gave him a similar shroud and a wreath of silver. Lokaii received a black shroud of cotton cloth from a warrior, but no wreath.

Boom! reverberated the sepulchral notes of the drum. The chanting increased in volume.

"Sleep, O God of the Sky." Murokaii spread the shroud over O'Leary's body. "Sleep in peace." He adjusted the golden wreath to the white, cold brow. "Lataki salutes, you O God of the Sky, salutes you with the Sacred Drum of Eternal Sleep."

Kiva had performed a like ceremony over the body of McGuffy.

Lokaii covered the third body with the black, cotton-cloth shroud.

"Misguided one of Unuk," he said, "for you there shall be eternal torment, to expiate your foul deeds."

Murokaii gave a command. The Latakians formed in column and with slow, measured tread marched out into the night, led by the booming drum.

Murokaii went to Tinga, the Tongueless.

"You will carry out your vow?" he asked, kindly.

"Yes, O Murokaii." Unable to speak because of the removal of his tongue, Tinga used the sign language of the Latakians. "At the next coming of the sun Tinga shall plunge his dagger into his doubting heart and journey to the realm of the God of the Sky. There I shall supplicate for forgiveness."

"It is well, Tinga." The pitying look in Murokaii's tired eyes belied his words. "Captain O'Leary proved his courage and showed that he knew how to die. On the morrow, if the weather clears, I return to America to seek again."

"O Murokaii," Tinga replied on his fingers, "your search has ended, for the God of the Sky lies on the bier before us. Only a god could have performed those mighty deeds in the air; only the God of the Sky himself."

"Every Latakian to his own beliefs, Tinga." Murokaii smiled sympathetically. "I am sorry to lose you, Tinga. You are an excellent warrior of the House of Latea, good and true. Murokaii bids you farewell, Tinga."

"Tinga bids you farewell, O Murokaii."

Murokaii strode out, leaving Tinga alone with the dead.

A FEW minutes later he was closeted with Kiva and Lokaii. Outside, above the southing wind and the muttering thunder, boomed the Sacred Drum of Eternal Sleep in slow, monotonous cadence.

Now that they were alone the three Latakians dropped all ceremony. Such rituals were for the Latakians who still believed in them.

Gravely the trio regarded one another.

Murokaii broke the heavy, depressing silence.

"Kiva," he said, "why has the life-giving serum of Alok failed? Has it deteriorated from age? Are you sure that it was injected properly?"

"Alok's serum still is potent, Murokaii, and the injections were administered properly. If, after eight hours, the patient does not respond, it is hopeless. And those eight hours are long past."

"But I was informed by our spies on the plateau of Unuk that the serum has been known to work twelve hours after its injection."

"True, Murokaii, but only in cases where the heart alone is affected. Not the lungs, Murokaii. Captains O'Leary and McGuffy, as well as the captive American of Unuk's ship, were not recovered from the sea until a full hour after their planes crashed. They were drowned, Murokaii. Their lungs were filled with water. Even the wonder serum of Alok cannot restore life to the dead."

"Then Princess Latea is doomed to die." Murokaii sighed. "I had great hopes to save her. Nowhere can we find the equals of Captains O'Leary and McGuffy, were we to comb the world."

Then the threatening storm broke in all its fury. Blinding bolts of lightning, like striking serpents, zig-zagged down from the black heavens, to be followed by crashing thunderclaps which shook the stone building to its foundations then rolled and reverberated over the raging Pacific.

Huge waves dashed against the shores of the island and the wind shrieked and screamed. Now and then a tree crashed, either struck by a blasting electric bolt, or broken off by the furious gale.

During lulls in the storm the Sacred Drum of Eternal Sleep could be heard booming in solemn cadence, saluting the dead.

In the House of Death, made oblivious to the raging elements by his grief and abject shame Tinga, the Tongueless, kept

his lonely vigil with the dead. With forehead touching the stone floor at the foot of the bier of the God of the Sky, he was as motionless as the shrouded bodies on the white marble biers.

One of the bodies moved. Ever so slightly, but nevertheless it moved.

A deafening clap of thunder. Then a rending crash, telling of the destruction by lightning of another mighty tree. The wind shrieked, weirdly. Heavy surf roared and pounded and splashed. And the Sacred Drum of Eternal Sleep boomed and boomed and boomed.

Again the body stirred. This time more noticeably.

"Cripes an' little fishes!"

Tinga, the Tongueless, his copper-hued skin faded to a sickly pallor, sprang to his feet and drew his dagger. His eyes, round and dilated, stared in terror at the marble bier of the dead.

He had heard a voice; the voice of the departed God of the Sky. A voice in the strange accents of America.

"Now, where am I?"

A white silken shroud was thrown back and a naked form sat upright on the bier of the God of the Sky. Tinga's dagger clattered on the stones, dropped from nerveless fingers.

"Damn if it ain't a lousy crown!"

The golden wreath sailed into a far corner and banged against a wall.

"Glory be! I'm Siptimber Morn. Now ain't that somethin'!"

Tinga waited for no more. Throwing the apparition on the bier a terrified glance he ran madly from the room and out into the storm. A heavy oaken door creaked to a close behind him.

Boom! reverberated the Sacred Drum of Eternal Sleep.

"Now who's hammerin' on that lousy dish pan?"

O'Leary rubbed his eyes and gazed about him. Gifted with night-sight, the deep

shadows of the darkened room offered no resistance to his vision.

"Damn if I ain't in a undertaker's shop! I bet I'm dead."

His roaming gaze fell on a shrouded body beside him. He leaned over and jerked off the white silken covering.

"Peter Maher McGuffy! And in the nude? Pete, I'm ashamed o' ye."

THE corpse so rudely disturbed made a wild grab for the shroud, missed it, then turned over on his side.

"Cut it out, you big ape!" snapped the dead man. "Can't you let a guy sleep? Cheese an' crackers, it's *cold*."

"Damn if ye ain't been crowned, too!" O'Leary had noticed the silver wreath on McGuffy's head. "A sweet king ye make!"

"If you can't sleep yourself," growled McGuffy, "it's no reason why you should keep the rest of the world awake. Pipe down, or I'll pound you on the schnozzle."

"Come out o' yer trance, Pete." O'Leary tugged savagely on a tuft of his red hair to help gather his scattered wits. "Some-thing's screwy in Dinmark, ye green baboon. I think we're both dead, Pete. No kiddin'."

"So's your old man dead. Let me sleep, I tell you."

"No joshin', Pete," persisted the confused O'Leary. "If we ain't dead, thin why ain't we? The last I kin remember we was crashin' into the Pacific with Little Lulu Belle. Thin me lights wint blooey. An' here I be, in a *morgue*. What's the answer?"

As though he had been jabbed with a darning needle, McGuffy sat bolt upright and stared around him.

"Phew!" he whistled. "In a *morgue*? Perhaps we *are dead*, Terence."

"What a big hilp ye are to a feller in trouble. I ask ye, do ye *feel* like ye had croaked?"

"I don't know. How does a croaked guy feel?"

"Ye're askin' me? Please, Pete, do I *look* like I was dead? Ye know, do I resemble a corpse what's died? Take a good look an' make no mistake, 'cause it's a bit importint to me, yer decision."

"It's too dark to be sure. I ain't got cat-eyes like you. Cripes! Don't you *know* if you're dead?"

"Do ye know whether ye are dead, or not, Mr. Smarty?"

"Listen, Terence, we've got to reason this thing out," said McGuffy. "It won't be so hot for us to go around believing that we are dead when we really are alive. And no hotter believing we are alive when we are dead. Now would it?"

"Geeze, it would be imbarassin', at that. How we gonna prove it?"

"We crashed into the sea, didn't we?"

"We did."

"And we were buckled in our belts?"

"That's right."

"Naturally, our crate sank to the bottom of the Pacific?"

"Shure, 'cause the motor was still in her."

"And we sank with her?"

"That we did."

"Then we were drowned," declared McGuffy with convincing finality. O'Leary nodded. "And drowned people are *dead*."

"Guess ye're right, Pete, 'cause I ain't niver heard o' no drowned blokes livin'."

"Which settles the question, you numbskull. We are *dead*."

"**D**AMN it!" exploded O'Leary. "I don't *feel* like I was dead." For the first time he noticed the third bier. "Cripes, Pete," he cried, "we got company. Perhaps he'll know. I'm gonna ask him."

He got down from the marble slab and went to the end bier. Unceremoniously he jerked off the black shroud. A body, its head and chest bandaged, lay stretched out in seeming death. O'Leary bent down and scrutinized the white face.

"It's Ted Jones, Pete, it's Ted Jones!"

he announced excitedly. "The one we seen starin' at us from the port o' Unuk's ship."

"Ted Jones?"

McGuffy leaped from his bier and joined O'Leary.

"Yeah, Ted Jones." O'Leary pointed to the bandages. "Clicked it hard, too. Hey, wait a minit. Jones is dead an' we're dead, that I'll grant, but why is a ghost wearin' bandiges?"

"I'll bite. Why is he?"

The oaken door opened. A terrific rush of wind blew away the shrouds, leaving O'Leary and McGuffy standing in the garb of nature.

Led by Murokaii, Latakians carrying blazing torches poured into the room. They stopped in their tracks and stared at the two aviators who were trying unsuccessfully to cover their nakedness with blistering cuss-words.

Murokaii advanced hesitatingly to O'Leary.

"Are—are you really alive?" he faltered.

"Ye tell me! Anyhow, alive or dead, I want a pair o' drawers, an' damn quick!"

"Make it two pair—and *flannel*," piped McGuffy. "My whiskers are freezing."

Convinced that no ghosts stood before him, Murokaii essayed that cryptic smile of his, the only outward evidence he displayed of the fierce joy burning within him.

Kiva and Lokaii recovered the shrouds and draped them about the aviators to protect them from the biting wind.

Tinga, the Tongueless, knelt before O'Leary and touched his forehead to the stones, the Latakian custom of beseeching forgiveness for a capital crime.

"Okay, Tinga."

O'Leary lifted the warrior up and slapped him on the back. Tinga's face beamed with pleasure. O'Leary wheeled on Murokaii.

"Now, if ye'll kindly condescind, will ye tell me an' Pete what our status is? Are we, or are we not, dead corpses?"

Murokai actually laughed. O'Leary arched his eyebrows in surprise.

"We hadda croak to tickle his sinse o' humor, Pete," he said. "Shure'n it took a funeral to do it."

"Please come with me, Captains O'Leary and McGuffy," whispered Murokai. "Our Latakians, due to your great accomplishments this afternoon, believe you to be real gods, and I fear that your dignity will suffer if you remain here longer, unattired as you are."

"Oke by me! Shur'n I feel like a goldfish in a glass bowl. Thin we *are* alive, Mr. Murokai?"

"Yes, you are alive."

In the private quarters of the Latakian chieftain, O'Leary and McGuffy, wrapped in warm bathrobes and hot toddies in hand, listened to an account of what had happened after their crashing out of the skies.

"Yours was a great achievement," complimented Murokai, then added gravely, "but I warn you, gentlemen, that I shall not again countenance such disobedience of my orders."

"Skip it," said O'Leary. "We're sorry and won't niver do it ag'in. We promise."

"There was a lot at stake, Mr. Murokai," added McGuffy, "but we admit we were wrong. The promise stands."

"Thank you, gentlemen. Through the range-o-scopes we watched your truly marvelous battle in the skies, with its even more marvelous ending. It has proved to us that the air-engines of the foul Unuk are not invincible."

"Yeah." O'Leary grinned, ruefully. "But nobody could o' told us that up there. What did ye blokes do whin ye seen us crashin'?"

"Kiva and I, each in command of a power boat equipped with deep-sea diving apparatus, rushed to the scenes of disaster. My divers recovered your bodies, and Kiva's recovered the captive American pilot, the only one they could find."

"And thin?"

"Kiva injected into all three of you a powerful serum, discovered by Alok. Our spies stole a quantity of it from his laboratory, situated on the plateau of Unuk."

"Oh, ho! I get it now!" McGuffy nodded to himself.

"Kiva and Lokaii, really very skilled physicians and surgeons, worked over you untiringly for hours, but to no avail. Both pronounced you dead."

"But we really ain't, are we, Mr. Murokai?" asked O'Leary, anxiously. "I'd shure like to be convinced."

"You are alive, gentlemen."

Murokai didn't crack a smile. The whole matter was too serious to him.

"The serum of Alok brings results in eight hours," he went on. "At the expiration of that time the three bodies were brought to the House of Death. You are aware of what happened since."

"Glory be! Kin I iver fergit it—wakin' up in that morgue?"

KIVA hurried in. His eyes sparkled with the importance of his news.

"Murokai," he informed, "the captive American pilot of the foul Unuk is alive. The spark of life burns dimly, though, and he has not long to live."

"Ted Jones alive?" O'Leary sprang to his feet.

"Go and talk with him, Captains O'Leary and McGuffy," advised Murokai.

Murokai and Kiva went into the next room with the two aviators.

The dying man lay on a couch. Lokaii, hypodermic needle in hand, was kneeling beside him. He got up and made room for O'Leary and McGuffy.

"Ted—Ted!" O'Leary dropped to a knee. "It's me, the Sky Hawk, what's talkin' to ye, Ted. Yer old Black Wing buddy, Terence X. O'Leary."

"God, how glad I am to see you." The words fell in a hoarse whisper from the dying lips. "And does the 'X' still stand

for excellent, buddy?" A faint smile illumined the pallid features.

"Yeah, it's still hittin' on all sixteen, Ted. 'Twas me an' Peter Maher McGuffy fightin' ye up there in the sky this afternoon, Ted, but we don't hold nothin' ag'in ye, old man. We understand."

"Dear old Pete."

The dying aviator feebly lifted a hand, which McGuffy grasped in his.

"Howdy, Ted," said McGuffy softly. "It's great to be with you again."

"Thanks, Pete, you're an ace." The white features then contracted into a fierce scowl. Unuk! Unuk!" cried the pilot. "Gee-dee his black soul. Terence! Pete! Where are you, pals?"

"Right here with ye, Ted." O'Leary's voice was husky with emotion.

"Good old Black Wings." The dying man sighed in relief. "I thought you had left me. Listen, Terence, and you, Pete. A great disaster menaces our country—it will be destroyed—destroyed by Unuk, the high priest of Lataki." The voice was growing weaker and weaker.

"Yes, Ted, we know all that," said O'Leary. "The plateau, the factories, the new-fangled ships an' iverythin'. What we want to know, Ted, is how to git past the rays surroundin' Lataki—in a crate, Ted."

"Tell us how, Ted," pleaded McGuffy. "There must be a way."

"There—is—a—way—"

A vacant stare shone in the pilot's eyes and his lower jaw sagged open. His head rolled to one side.

"He is dead," announced Kiva, tragically. "And he died with the secret which can save Lataki, died with it locked in his breast."

O'Leary sprang up and seized Lokaii by the shoulder in his powerful grip.

"Lokaii," he hissed, "the Princess Latea,

the House o' Latea, the whole kingdom of Lataki, to say nothin' o' millions o' innocent souls in the United States o' America, is callin' on ye right now to save thim. And, damn it, ye *gotta* come through."

"No use, Captain O'Leary. I can give him another injection of the serum, but the dead cannot speak."

"Give it to him thin. Right *now!*"

SHRUGGING at Murokaii, Lokaii administered the hypodermic. No reaction from the man on the couch.

"Give him another!" commanded O'Leary.

Lokaii obeyed. The same result.

"Another, damn ye!" snapped O'Leary. "This time right into his heart. He's just *gotta* speak."

Murokaii nodded to Lokaii to humor O'Leary. The Latakian refilled the needle and injected the serum as ordered. Nothing happened.

O'Leary dropped to his knees and thrust his mouth close to an ear of the pilot.

"Flight 13!" he cried. "Callin' Flight 13! Capt'ins Terence X. O'Leary, Peter Maher McGuffy and Lootinint Theodore Jones, will fly to Lataki, equipped with bombs, an' will destroy the factories of Unuk, high priest of Lataki, in order to save the United States from annihilation."

No response. Not a flicker of an eyelid.

"He's dead, Terence," whispered McGuffy. "Stop it, you're giving me the creeps."

"Callin' Lootinint Theodore Jones, Flight 13!" went on O'Leary into the unhearing ear. "Washin'ton callin' Lootinint Theodore Jones, Flight 13! How can the Black Wings get through the disintegratin' rays surroundin'—"

Then, apparently, a miracle was wrought.

"Fly—due east—" issued in a rasping

A Dead Man Speaks, And Speaking Dies Again—His Secret Locked Within Him.

whisper from the gaping mouth, "keeping—conical mountain—peak in—direct line with—white—bald—faced crag—air lane only—fifty yards—wide—"

A faint, hissing sigh and Lieutenant Theodore Jones, of Flight 13 of the Black Wings, flew over the Great Divide, his duty done.

O'Leary arose and faced the astounded group.

"Gintlemin," he said quietly to the three Latakian officers, "with all his magic an' science, Unuk, high priest o' Latakia, can't win over American spirit. "Lootinint Theodore Jones, a Black Wing o' Flight 13, flew back from the grave to help Uncle Sam."

O'Leary wheeled about and snapped to attention in front of the dead aviator. His hand rose smartly in salute.

The Forbidden Kingdom

THE second day following was clear and bright. A hot sun shone down on the lonely isle in the Pacific. The storm had left in its wake a scene of devastation; uprooted trees, lightning-splintered trunks, tangled and broken branches, crushed-down underbrush and washed out beaches. One of the hangars was roofless and its planes were wrecked. Huge combers still rolled in from the sea and pounded the shore with a reverberating thunder.

O'Leary and McGuffy sat with Murokaili in his quarters listening to a short wave radio set.

General Merton, Chief of the U. S. Air Force, was broadcasting over a national hook-up to the people of the United States.

"The President, in this, our greatest national crisis, asks every American to stand steadfast. A general panic would wreck our nation and would be playing into the hands of our relentless, unseen enemies. Your air force is efficient, is well-equipped and is undaunted. In time it will cope

successfully with the dire menace now confronting our land.

"I now shall present the facts of the recent naval and air disaster on, and over, the Pacific Ocean. Disregard the preachings of religious and other fanatics. It is not the hand of God which struck down seven of our planes and three of our latest type battle-cruisers, but the hand of man.

"Were it the hand of God, we would humbly bow our heads in submission and say 'Thy will be done.' But it being the hand of man, we shall fight, as all true Americans have fought before us. We shall fight to the bitter end, if there is to be a bitter end.

"I, as your Chief of the U. S. Air Force, speak from the heart and with confidence; speak with the confidence instilled in me by the superb past performances of our American airmen. Eventually we shall win, but we cannot win unless each and every one of you displays that loyalty and that courage which has made America great.

"This so-called monster of the skies which dropped out of the heavens and destroyed our planes and ships is an airplane; is the handiwork of man. Equipped with disintegrating rays, which still are unfamiliar to our scientists, it naturally had an overwhelming advantage over our machine gun equipped planes, with the tragic result which you all know.

"Please disregard the reports of the crew of the fishing boat, which the press of the country so thoughtlessly featured in scare headlines. Those fishermen, appalled by the debacle they witnessed in the air and on the sea, were not responsible at the time they were interviewed by the press. Since, they have officially retracted many of their wild statements and have contradicted others.

"There was no God-sent messenger which attacked the mysterious enemy plane and crashed with it into the Pacific. The whole

thing is so absurd and impossible that all sane persons should refuse to credit it.

"The so-termed bolt that fell out of the sky and demolished four city blocks in Washington was not of the supernatural, but was a robot-controlled plane loaded with high explosives. Where it came from Washington as yet has not learned, but—"

O'Leary threw a switch and disconnected the short wave set.

"A great guy, Gin'ral Merton," he said, "and he's in a tough spot. He knows damn well thim fishermin didn't lie, an' so does official Washin'ton, but it would be suicide to tell the truth to the people. Like he said, once a panic spreads Uncle Sam would be licked. If the country gits the idea that the supernatural is battlin' thim from the skies it would be hell."

"Terence," said McGuffy, gravely, "our country is in a bad way. A spark to the powder magazine and she is lost."

"Don't I know it, Pete? And it's up to us, an' to us alone, to save the situation. Now let's see what ilse the Air Chief is got to say."

HE closed the switch and they listened. "—mysterious disappearance of our two leading army aces, Captains Terence X. O'Leary and Peter Maher McGuffy has not yet been solved. They, however, are airmen of proven ability, courage and ingenuity. It is my unshaken belief that they are not dead and that this country eventually will hear from them, and in a convincing manner. I thank you."

The voice of the announcer cut in:

"You have been listening to General Alford Merton, Chief of the U. S. Air Force in—"

"And that's that." O'Leary disconnected the set. "Mr. Murokai, ye heard what Unuk is doin' to the U. S. Whin do we leave for Lataki?"

"As soon as you and Captain McGuffy learn our language and customs sufficiently to carry on with the rôles you are playing."

"Thin opin yer school right now. There ain't no time to lose."

Despite their hard study and close application to the job in hand, the five weeks which followed proved a dragging period of misery and anxiety for O'Leary and McGuffy.

Nor had listening to the several broadcasts over Murokai's short wave set lightened their heavy burden.

Three times Unuk had struck with his robot-controlled planes of the "explosive-death," as he called them.

The business district of Chicago had been laid waste and thousands had been killed. Seven of the huge, six-motored sky-engines had crashed down from the heavens on the sleeping city in a single night.

Immediately there had followed a wild exodus from the Windy City which rivaled the horde of refugees fleeing before the advance of the German army in 1914.

Stocks on the exchange had tumbled to new low levels and the credit of the United States in Europe was practically nil.

Panic threatened on all sides. Everywhere fanatics howled out their morale-wrecking prophecies that the world was coming to an end and that the United States had been chosen for the first nation to be destroyed in the approaching world debacle.

Then Los Angeles had been struck from the skies by a full dozen of the infernal machines. The University of Southern California had been wiped out. On the same night the harbor of San Pedro had been destroyed, with all its shipping.

An even greater exodus than that from Chicago had followed in the stricken areas.

Finally the widespread terror had given way to that stoic grimness of a people resigned to an inescapable fate. Formerly blanched faces had become grim and determined. Fanatics were knocked off their soap boxes and were mobbed. The fighting spirit of America had asserted itself.

If the United States was to go down to

doom, her sons and daughters would go bravely down to that doom, but battling valiantly every foot in the descent.

O'Leary and McGuffy, helplessly marooned on that far off isle in the Pacific, had reached the breaking point.

Deep in his heart Murokaii pitied them, but the fate of the House of Latea and his own country came first with him.

On Saturday night of the fifth week O'Leary and McGuffy declared themselves.

"Murokaii," said O'Leary, "me an' Pete has reached the limit. We'll give ye three more days in which to start for Lataki. If ye don't, ye'll have to take the consequences. Our minds is made up."

"You leave tonight, gentlemen. A ship is—"

"Leave *tonight?*"

Tears sprang into the Sky Hawk's eyes. He threw a brawny arm around Murokaii and hugged the Latakian to him.

"Hooray!" he cried. "Pete, did ye hear him? We leave for Lataki *tonight!*"

"Yeah—yeah, I—I heard him, Terence."

"Ye mintoned a ship, Mr Murokaii."

"We worked while you slept." With difficulty Murokaii suppressed his own elation. "The planes to be used by the God of the Sky have been taken apart and are in the hold of the ship, the fastest you will sail on in many years. Our journey to Lataki is overland, afoot."

"How come?" demanded the disappointed O'Leary. "I thought we was gonna fly there."

"No. We must travel overland. It is the only way we can secretly arrive at our camouflaged take-off. We have established a trail, which we call the Sign of the Broken Arrow, that is undreamed of by Unuk and his agents, unless he has discovered it quite recently."

"But how'n hell kin the heavy parts o' the planes and all the rist o' the things ye're takin' be transported afoot, and along a trail?"

"That is our problem, Captain O'Leary.

Hundreds of natives are available—not Latakians—but loyal to us. We shall march in two separate columns, each far from the other; the supply column, which Kiva will command, and the combat column, which I command."

"Okay, Mr. Murokaii; ye know yer business."

"In an hour we embark on the Latea, the name of our ship. She lies at her camouflaged wharf on the other end of the island."

SOMETIME later, O'Leary and McGuffy, dressed in American officers' field uniforms and ugly-looking .45 automatics hanging in holsters from their belts, experienced the greatest thrill of their lives as they climbed the gang-plank of the trim, speedy-looking craft moored to the wharf.

"On to Lataki!" cried O'Leary. "Uncle Sam, we're on the job at last."

The moorings were cast off and the powerful engines turned over. The Latea's nose pointed to the open sea.

On the third night of an ocean passage which astounded them by the distance covered, O'Leary was awakened by an unusual silence. He turned on the light and sleepily rubbed his eyes. What had happened?

Suddenly it dawned on him that the engines had stopped. The absence of the rolling of the ship assured him that she had come to anchor in still water. He woke McGuffy. They jumped into their clothes and went above.

The deck was alive with the crew, their shadowy forms darting here and there. The aviators went up on the bridge.

"What is it, Murokaii?" McGuffy trembled in his eagerness.

"Tomorrow morning we disembark for Lataki. As soon as it gets light, I'll run the Latea into a land-locked harbor farther in shore. The channel is tortuous and I can't risk it by night."

O'Leary and McGuffy couldn't sleep, so

they stayed on deck until the breaking of day.

With the first coming of dawn the Latea lifted anchor and headed for the narrow channel.

Cautiously she nosed her way through it. The coast was mountainous and barren. A steep cliff towered in the foreground. Look where they would, O'Leary and McGuffy couldn't see a sign of human habitation, just a bleak and dreary coast line.

Fifty fathoms off shore the Latea dropped anchor in a small harbor. A boat was lowered and the aviators went over the side by means of a sea ladder. Four Latakians were at the oars. Murokaii sat in the bow with Tinga.

After a short pull they disembarked at a pier of rough-hewn logs.

In single file they trailed after Murokaii, Tinga bringing up the rear.

Some distance inshore Murokaii made an abrupt turn around a boulder. Kiva was waiting for them.

AN hour of arduous climbing, with occasional stops for rest, brought the party to the mouth of a cave, which was cleverly screened by stubby trees grouped in such manner that it was evident they had been planted for the purpose many years before.

"The cave is the hidden entrance to the trail of the Sign of the Broken Arrow," announced Murokaii. "We shall stay here until the Latea is unloaded and the two columns are formed."

O'Leary and McGuffy took advantage of the delay to catch up with their sleep.

Murokaii awakened them.

"Come," he said, "everything is ready."

"Hell, we only been asleep a few minits," protested O'Leary.

"Hours, Captain O'Leary. It is your reaction from the nervous strain of the past weeks."

Guided by Murokaii the party entered the dark cave and passed into a still darker

tunnel blasted through solid granite. They emerged upon a high, rocky ledge overlooking the beach and the sea.

Heaps of supplies, covered by tarpaulins, cluttered the red sands below. Strange-looking natives were moving about busy as ants, some leading burros to the supply heap, others loading the beasts of burden, while others, forming a long column of man and beast were slowly winding up an inland trail. In between the Latea and the shore several small boats were plying back and forth.

Peering from the rocky ledge the flyers saw Lokaii, escorted by a group of warriors, go to a large rock which projected far out into the sea. On the summit Lokaii halted and, with his right arm held forward, described mystic symbols in the air. The warriors stood rigidly to attention.

"Lookit the ship," cried the startled O'Leary to McGuffy. "She's sinkin'!"

The Latea was slowly settling by the stern and her bow was rising in the air. The flyers watched, fascinated.

The water crept up the Latea's now sharply-tilted deck, bubbling and frothing angrily. Soon her nose was almost vertical. As a swimmer who breathes in deeply before he takes an icy plunge, she seemed to pause as if to gather courage, then dived to the bottom amid a loud hissing of escaping air. The waters closed over her with an angry churning and boiling.

"Come, Captains O'Leary and McGuffy," called Murokaii. "We march to Lataki."

"But why did ye sink the ship?"

"We need her no more and we do not wish for Unuk's spies to see her. It would betray our presence on the mainland."

"I git ye."

By force of habit alone O'Leary looked up into the sky. He started nervously.

So high up that it looked no larger than an ordinary housefly he saw a plane circling around.

"It Is Our Custom," Said Murokaii. "We Kill Our Friends When They Are Wounded."

"Look, Murokaii! What d'ye make her?"

O'Leary saw the Latakian bite his lip as he gazed at the circling speck.

"It is one of Unuk's spies," he announced, gravely. "I fear our march to Lataki will be an eventful one. We must cut through the jungle and the swamps, or else we are lost. Come, we must hurry."

The aviators trailed him through the granite tunnel. They came out on a rough and rocky trail.

Murokaii went to a boulder and pulled aside a bush.

"The Sign of the Broken Arrow," he announced. "Were we to follow our original trail we would see many of them, pointing the way to Lataki."

The flyers saw an arrow, its shaft broken, carved in the rock.

Hiking by night and resting by day, now up a steep and stony mountain trail winding around and around, then abruptly down to a valley where streams were forded, a long stretch through a thick wood and the little band finally entered the jungle. They had not been molested by Unuk.

Murokaii issued quinine to the two white men and insisted that they take it, although the Latakians and the natives disdained its use.

As they pushed forward it became necessary at times to cut and slash through the tangled vegetation barring their way, thereby raising a chorus of wailing cries, grunts and angry snarlings from strange and unseen beasts as they slunk to safety in the darkness of the night.

Then into a steaming, stinking swamp they went, at times sinking to their knees in the treacherous slime. A heavy, fever-laden mist hung about gnarled roots and over rotting vegetation and the aviators

needed no urging to swallow more of the life-saving Peruvian bark.

Twice they disturbed boa-constrictors fishing from projecting limbs, which, upon their approach, slipped with an oozy splash into the slime and were gone.

During the day, while camping on hummocks, they saw sloths suspended from limbs by long, hook-like claws, their backs downward. The repulsive animals were as still as death and were almost invisible, the greenish hue of their fur blended so perfectly with the foliage.

But at night when the march was resumed they could hear the sloths scrambling clumsily about in the branches overhead in quest of their food of fruits, leaves and tender sprouts.

O'LEARY and McGuffy, muddy and weary, sat talking with Murokaii. High-powered rifles rested across the aviators' thighs. The night was black and still. The march was about to be resumed.

Suddenly a weird screaming rent the night. Several hundred yards away there came a blinding flash, followed by an explosion that deadened their eardrums.

Crying out in terror the Latakians and natives sprang into the ooze of the swamp, only their heads showing. By sheer will power alone Murokaii kept his seat.

The bombardment from the air lasted about fifteen minutes and Unuk's ship winged away.

Several casualties had resulted from flying steel fragments, but as a whole the column had not suffered to any great extent.

"What about the supply column?" O'Leary asked, when Murokaii had recovered from his fright.

"The fact that Unuk bombed us is proof that he thinks this is the supply column. Naturally that would be his objective, to

destroy the planes and other equipment. He would disregard us."

The march got under way. Perhaps an hour had gone by when again the stillness was split. This time, however, it was no descending bomb, but that terrific, nerve-shattering scream of the yellowish-white eye of the disintegrating rays.

Hell turned upside on the valiant little column. The shafts of the devastating rays wiped everything out of their paths, plowing furrows in the earth at least thirty feet deep and fifty yards wide.

The world had come to an end, it seemed. Sections of the swamp disappeared as though obliterated by magic. Swirling columns of trees, rocks, ooze and loam shot high into the air and were blasted into atoms.

A thick pall of twisting smoke covered an area miles wide.

O'Leary and McGuffy and Murokaii, helpless, and faces down, hugged a hummock, expecting each second to be blasted into nothing.

Then, not satisfied with the awful destruction, the ship of the disintegrating rays withdrew and Unuk launched another inferno.

Fourteen of his robot-controlled engines of the "explosive death" hurled down out of the heavens and blew up, rocking the ground and digging monstrous holes that made those of the Jack Johnsons of the World War look like rabbit burrows in comparison.

It was a sorry-appearing column that rallied to Murokaii's call when the hell had quieted. Over a hundred had been killed outright, thirty-three were missing, and nineteen lay critically injured. Lokaii and Tinga were unharmed.

Then the aviators witnessed a horrible thing. The Latakians dispatched the wounded with their spears and swords.

"It is our custom," explained Murokaii to the horrified flyers. "We must reach

our taking-off point and we cannot be retarded by carrying wounded with us.

As dawn broke tremors of expectation shot through the weary members of the expedition and they perceptibly quickened their steps. Even the plodding, mud-caked burros pricked up their ears, instinctively sensing that they were nearing their journey's end.

THE stale, dead smell of the jungle was soon blown away by a cool, invigorating breeze as they entered upon a green plain and trod on springy turf. The rays of the sun soon dried their damp clothing. Eagerly O'Leary and McGuffy strained their eyes ahead.

Far in front of them lay a large, placid lake, its edges fringed with trees. Beyond the water in the far distance rose a range of jagged mountain peaks, a hazy blue in the early morning air.

An hour's walk brought them to the shore of the lake, where hidden safely among a cluster of thick trees were three hangars, camouflaged to resemble foliage.

Farther back in the screening trees was an encampment of at least three hundred of those strange natives. Several of them were squatting before vine-covered huts cooking breakfast while others were busy feeding burros tied to a picket line. Here and there groups were sorting out supplies from under immense tarpaulins. Around the encampment sentries could be discerned pacing back and forth, spearheads flashing.

"Where in blazes did they all come from?" demanded O'Leary of Murokaii.

"They are the supply column of Kiva. I expected it to be here. The warriors armed with spears are the Guardians of the Outlet of Rushing Waters."

"Is the Outlet of the Rushing Waters near here?" asked McGuffy.

"Less than a league away. It is reached through a rocky pass known only to ourselves. There, from out the ground, ap-



"Dig in yer hooks, Lulu Belle," grated O'Leary. "The Black Wings is callin'." The powerful motor roared and Latakians fell to the tarmac in terror as machine guns rattled.

pears the torrent which brought us from Lataki. In Lataki it is called the Outlet of the Lake of Whispering Waters."

"Our crate, Mr. Murokaii?" inquired O'Leary. "Whin will it be assimbled an' ready?"

"You take off for Lataki tomorrow. It is Sacrificial Day."

Whatever the flyers were going to say was cut off by an American voice sounding from a short wave set in one of the hangars; a voice traveling through thousands of miles of space from the far-distant land of their birth.

With set jaws the flyers listened to the broadcast.

Unuk's robot-controlled engines of the air had destroyed a large section of the Panama Canal and had laid waste Governors Island, in New York harbor.

But that was not all, the Statue of Liberty had been blasted from its island pedestal and two trans-Atlantic liners anchored near had been sunk, with all hands.

Once again the President of the United States was calling all Americans to stand by him and his government in the hour of peril.

"Pete," husked O'Leary, when the broadcast had ended, "me an' ye is gonna light Miss Liberty's torch ag'in."

"I'll say we are, Terence."

The Avenger Flies

FOREBODING silence and unrest reigned throughout the House of Latea on this, the eve of Sacrificial Day. On the morrow their beloved Princess Latea was to go to the altar of sacrifice, where the hated Unuk, high priest of Lataki, was to tear out her heart and cast it into the Brazier of Eternal Fire.

There was additional reason for gloom and despairing, for had not three of the bravest warriors of the Body Guard of Latea met their deaths at the hands of Unuk's soldiers? The bodies lay in state

at the far end of the spacious throne room, their widows kneeling beside the biers, ashes sprinkled in their hair.

Apart from the dead stood a group of four Latakian officers listening attentively to the words of their leader, Rakivi, Captain of the Body Guard and betrothed of Latea.

"Unuk, foul high priest of Lataki, has again murdered our flesh and blood and the spirits of our fathers call for vengeance. These three noble warriors have gone to their deaths in an attempt to get by Unuk's sentries, to carry a message through the Outlet of the Lake of Whispering Waters to Murokaii, whom it is claimed still lives in the Realm of the Sky. Again fortune has frowned upon the House of Latea and has looked with favor upon the arms of Unuk, high priest of Murder and False Gods. I, Rakivi, Captain of the Guard, say there is no God of the Sky."

Those in the throne room inwardly trembled at the fiery officer's sacrilege. One of them spoke:

"Our lives belong to Princess Latea, and are at her command, but our souls belong to our gods. You claim there is no God of the Sky. Does our Princess know and condone your utterances?"

"She knows them not," answered the young captain. "But I still say there is no God of the Sky, because for twelve times a hundred moons fate has frowned on our house and has permitted the murder of our women on the dripping altar of sacrifice. On the morrow, the fairest and the last of our noble house perishes by the hand of a murderer to further his foul schemes, and you, so-called warriors of Latea, meekly allow her to go to that death. But I, Rakivi, Captain of the Guard, shall slay this wicked pretender, even in the presence of his false gods. Rakivi has spoken."

In their ears boomed the rushing torrent of the Outlet of the Lake of Whispering Waters. Brightly burning fires showed

from an encampment of soldiers of the high priest.

On a couch of cougar skins in her bed-chamber sat Princess Latea, her dainty jeweled hands clasped about a knee as she gazed through a stone window into the starlit heavens. Wisps of fleecy clouds floated toward far distant mountain peaks, whose black fantastic shapes were sharply outlined against a deep red glare from the fields of molten lava.

She wore a robe of loose-flowing wool of snowy whiteness, carelessly caught about her trim waist by a crimson girdle fastened with an emerald clasp.

The lights in the swinging braziers overhead danced and flickered, enhancing the golden brown of her wavy hair. Her soft black eyes were filled with anxiety. Her full red lips were tightly compressed.

A tear stole down her olive cheek to splash unnoticed upon a shapely bare arm.

"What do you see in the heavens, O Princess?" was asked compassionately by a tiny, blue-eyed girl sitting at her feet.

"Only stars, Taa, and they are strangely silent." The voice of the princess was low and musically vibrant. "They speak no message to me."

Taa, favorite hand-maiden of Latea, gazed anxiously up at her princess.

"O Latea, you are beautiful," she murmured. "Too beautiful to die. Why not refuse this test of the wicked Unuk before it is too late?"

"I shall not die, Taa. The God of the Sky will answer my supplication. If one's faith in good is strong enough, Taa, that faith can overcome all evil. My faith is strong. Tomorrow, from out the sky, shall come the god of my people."

From the shadows of the somber Temple of Sacrifice cautiously moved a priest, a spy in the pay of Kadii. With furtive glances about him he went to the brink of the stone platform of the altar of sacrifice, high above the Lake of Whispering Waters. Assured that he was unobserved, he cast a

piece of parchment rolled tightly around an arrowhead far out to the causeway beneath him, where it clattered on the stone.

A warrior of the Guard of Latea slipped quietly to the ground from his spying place and picked up the message and read it. Again weighting it with the arrowhead he threw it into the lake. He listened intently for a space, then ran in the direction of the House of Latea, his bare feet speeding over the dirt road.

At the Eastern Gate of the city a sentinel of the high priest paced back and forth listening to the banter of two of his comrades squatting on the ground near by.

A fleeting shadow passed suddenly between them and the sentinel sank to the ground, a dagger buried to the hilt in his side. Two bow-strings twanged and two arrows sang through the air.

Far in front of the running shadow one of the arrows struck the road and bounded harmlessly away. The other, dispatched with truer aim, tore through the flesh of a swinging coppery arm.

Without stopping the runner broke off the barb, jerked the shaft from the bleeding wound and flung it defiantly over a shoulder.

A mile farther on he stumbled into the supporting arms of a waiting comrade, a few whispered words, and a second shadow, equally as swift as the first, took up the race in the cause of the Princess Latea.

THE message finally was delivered to Kadii. It informed that a deputation from Unuk, headed by Alok, had left the Temple of Sacrifice and was on its way to the House of Latea.

On receipt of the startling tidings Kadii mustered the officers of the guard.

"I fear that it is but another insult to the House of Latea," he said to them. "Still, it might not be. Never before has the foul Unuk sent to us such an envoy of the rank and importance of Alok."

"If I were to pierce Alok's black heart

with an arrow," broke in the fiery Rakivi, "his importance would not—"

"Silence" commanded Kadii. "Prepare to receive him in the throne room, while I notify the Princess Latea of his coming."

The moon had sunk behind the ridge of crimson-tinted mountains in the west when the entourage of Alok strode arrogantly into the presence of the Princess Latea.

A warrior wearing the insignia of a cap-

tered house," he hissed, "do you not know that I am *Alok*, under priest of Lataki? Your insolent answer to my captain shall not go unpunished."

"Well I know that you are Alok," replied Kadii, evenly, "but in my eyes Alok is no more than a captain of Unuk's degenerate soldiery. You are in the presence of Princess Latea to deliver the message of your master. The words of Unuk we shall listen

Devils Flee From The Lash Of Unuk, Foul Priest To God Of The Depths.

tain of the guard of the Temple of Sacrifice stepped forth and without saluting insolently addressed Kadii, who stood by the throne.

"Unuk, high priest of the God of the Depths and Supreme Ruler of Lataki, commands that Princess Latea of the discredited and exiled House of Latea shall receive with the homage and the respect due his high rank, Alok, under priest of Lataki," announced the warrior. "Unuk further commands that she shall listen to the message Alok carries and shall forthwith obey its mandate."

RAKIVI took a step forward, enraged at the insult to his princess. The warriors of his guard, lined six-deep along the stone walls, tightened grips on their spears, ready to avenge their princess if their commander should so order.

"By your trappings, you insolent hireling," replied Kadii to Unuk's officer, "it is plain that you hold the rank of captain, but your military courtesy must have been learned from the dogs at the base of your master's temple. You are in the presence of the royal blood of Lataki, so bend your knee and salute."

The captain of the Temple Guard sullenly bent his knee as commanded.

Alok advanced threateningly to Kadii.

"You braggart commander of a con-

to, but your words are as welcome to our ears as is the braying of an ass. Lest you meet with death, deliver the message and begone."

Alok's parchment-like face contorted with rage, but a glance at the determined warriors lining the walls, who were equal in number to his own escort, made him choose the side of discretion. "O Princess Latea of the exiled House of Latea," he said in a voice choked with hate, "I bring you message from Unuk, high priest of Lataki."

He unrolled a scroll of parchment to read from it.

The throne-room hushed and the murmur of the people gathered outside died as the sentries at the doors signaled for quiet.

"I am Unuk, high priest of the God of the Depths and Supreme Ruler of Lataki." The raucous tones of Alok echoed ominously. "I command that you, the Princess Latea, from the platform of the Temple of Sacrifice tomorrow shall publicly renounce the God of the Sky and commit the House of Latea to the worship of the God of the Depths. If you obey this command your life shall be spared and the exile of the House of Latea shall be ended. You are too beautiful and young to die."

Alok threw the scroll at the feet of the princess.

"Your answer?" he demanded. "I care not to linger further in this foul place."

The warriors of the House of Latea trembled in their righteous wrath. All that was needed to precipitate an open outbreak on their part was the slightest encouragement from one of their officers. Kadii held up a warning hand to them.

Her black eyes afire under the insult, the Princess Latea leaned forward on her throne and fixed withering gaze on the under priest.

"O Alok," she said, with stinging contempt, "return to your master of a high priest and tell him that the Princess Latea scorns his offer. Tell him that, on the morrow, she shall supplicate to the God of the Sky from the platform of his temple, and that the God of the Sky will answer.

"Ask Unuk if he forgets that tomorrow is twelve times the hundred moons, the day that the House of Latea shall be freed from its bondage. Now begone."

Resounding cheers filled the throne room at the defiance of their beloved princess, and were taken up by the people outside.

"You—you dare disobey the sacred command of the Mighty Unuk?" floundered the astounded Alok when the acclaim had quieted on signal from Kadii. "Have my ears heard aright?"

The Princess arose, signifying that the interview was ended.

Kadii stepped up to Alok.

"Begone, dog," he said, "and quickly. The fingers of my warriors itch on their bow-strings."

Amid taunts and jeers from the guard the cowed entourage of Alok hurried outside. The mourners at the biers of the three slain warriors contemptuously threw dust on them as they went by.

Doom Marks a Hero

IN ten minutes they would take off. In a hut close to the lake, O'Leary and McGuffey gripped hands. Each looked deep down into the other's eyes, but said nothing. No words were necessary. That

handshake had pledged each to do, or to die.

From the west end of the lake floated to them the steady beat of tom-toms. Through a window they caught the glint of spearheads in serried array.

The flyers presented a commanding picture.

In his picturesque trappings and with his six feet of physical perfection, rippling muscles outlined under a clear white skin and his steel-blue eyes flashing with resolve, O'Leary resembled a centurion of ancient Rome.

He wore a sleeveless tunic of sapphire, cut low at the neck and dotted with emeralds. Over this was a finely-spun coat of chain mail, worked in gold. Crimson kilts of many pleats and richly embroidered with mystic symbols reached to just above his bare knees. Crimson leather thongs from white sandals criss-crossed his shapely calves. Encircling each arm above the elbow was a wide golden band.

On his head was a steel helmet topped by a condor with outspread wings, done in gold. On his left forearm he carried a circular shield of highly burnished steel, a rising sun emblazoned on its face. In his right hand he gripped a short, heavy, two-edged sword.

A sagging leather belt, however, filled with clips of steel-nosed bullets and from which swung a holstered .45 automatic, stamped him as belonging to the twentieth century.

The general design of McGuffey's costume was the same as O'Leary's, but the coloring and the headdress were different. His tunic, minus gems, was of dark green, while his kilts were white and trimmed with gold. His sandals were crimson, with white thongs. His helmet was of white metal, with a flowing crimson plume. The rising sun was missing from the shield.

With his corded muscles, brawny chest and stocky legs, he looked like a nasty customer to engage with in a fight. A belt

with a forty-five girded his waist. He carried the same kind of sword.

From the lake shore blared a fanfare of trumpets, calling the God of the Sky and the Messenger from the Clouds to their ship riding the waters.

When the blaring trumpets had stilled, from Murokaii's short wave set in the adjoining hut sounded a tinny voice.

"—ninety men killed and hundreds of thousands' worth of ordnance destroyed. Although the government arsenal at Springfield has been effaced by the mysterious vandals of the sky, the Chief of the U. S. Air Force wished me to assure you that—"

A resounding flourish of trumpets drowned the voice.

"Fer Uncle Sam, Pete." O'Leary's voice was tense.

"For Uncle Sam, Terence." McGuffy's huskiness betrayed his emotion.

Shoulders back and heads up, they left the hut.

ON sight of the two gods the serried ranks of Lakatian and native warriors dipped spear-points until they touched the ground.

Murokaii stood waiting by a rowboat. Kiva, Lokaii and Tinga manned the three sets of oars.

In impressive silence O'Leary and McGuffy took seats in the stern, with Murokaii steering.

Not a word was spoken until the flyers had boarded their gigantic six-motored sky-engine riding so majestically on the lake.

"You will find in the cabin all which I listed." Murokaii's tones were low and shaky. "Forget not that the dying American aviator said to fly due east, keeping the conical mountain peak in direct line with the white, baldfaced crag. The air lane through the disintegrating rays is but fifty yards in width. The slightest deviation from the course means disaster."

"It's a dispirate gamble, Murokaii," re-

plied O'Leary, "but me an' Pete has won dispirate gambles before."

On a nod from the Latakian chieftain Tinga handed him a miniature arrow of gold, its shaft encrusted with emeralds. Murokaii passed it to O'Leary.

"I, Murokaii, Messenger of the Sacred Arrow, surrender into your keeping this symbol of victory to Lataki, which you will present to the Princess Latea. May your Christian God and our God of the Sky speed you safely on your way."

"We'll do our bist, Murokaii. As agreed, if we win, we'll come back to ye here in three days."

"We shall be anxiously awaiting your return."

The rowboat pulled away from the ship. O'Leary and McGuffy seated themselves at the controls.

"Well, Pete," said O'Leary, "away we go."

"Away we go, Terence."

"We're ixpictin' ye to be a perfect lady, Lulu Belle." O'Leary tried to smile, but couldn't. "Now pull in yer corsit strings, baby-girl, an' do yer stuff."

Although O'Leary called this plane Lulu Belle, it was not the same as the ship in which he and Pete had plunged to the bottom of the ocean. This new craft was a pontoon ship with a wide wing spread but no tail fuselage, built in the general shape of an Australian boomerang, cockpit forward in the single wing.

O'Leary gave Lulu Belle the gun. Trumpets blared in salute as the six-propellers turned over. With a deafening roar the mighty plane skimmed over the water.

At the east end of the lake it took to the air, folded its pontoons into wing and thundered skyward toward the distant mountains and the fields of molten lava.

Captains Terence X. O'Leary and Peter Maher McGuffy, of the famous Flight 13 of Black Wings, at last were riding the skies to hurl back into the face of Unuk, high priest of Lataki, the gauntlet with

which the pretender to the universe had so arrogantly challenged the United States of America.

Standing in the rowboat, a pair of field glasses to his eyes, Murokaii watched the flight of the speeding plane.

Smaller and smaller it grew until, to the naked eye, it appeared but a tiny speck in the distant sky. But the powerful lenses of the glass kept it full size in the Latakian chieftain's vision.

Minutes of anxiety dragged by. Kiva and Tinga and Lokaii watched Murokaii.

"It approaches the barrier of the death-rays."

While he talked Murokaii stood rigid as a stone image.

"It has turned more into the east. It is in line with the conical mountain peak and the white, baldfaced crag, seeking the air lane."

More anxious minutes passed.

"Traveling at its terrific speed, it soon will be through the danger zone."

Suddenly Murokaii leaned forward. His color had faded.

"It is in the clutches of the rays!" he cried, tragically. "The plane staggers and pitches! It is spinning around like a bird pierced by an arrow! It falls! It falls! Wing over wing it is hurtling down! It crashes!" A hissing sigh. "It—has—*crashed!*" A choked-back sob. "The Princess Latea is doomed. Murokaii once again has failed in his sacred duty.

"Save Me, God of the Sky!"

THE Eastern Gate of the City of Latakia, as was the custom on each Sacrificial Day, opened to silent, morose throngs of the House of Latea waiting outside to get past the high and heavily guarded walls. As the massive, iron-studded gate creaked slowly inward men and women and children crowded through the entrance.

The soldiery of the high priest stood well

back out of the way, arrogant hostility darkening their sneering faces. Their hostile looks were returned a hundredfold by the followers of Latea.

In doorways and windows, behind lines of Unuk's warriors, the inhabitants of Latakia surreptitiously flashed looks of encouragement and sympathy to the passing exiles. Their hearts were with the doomed princess and they longed for the time when the House of Latea should again mount the throne of Latakia to deliver them from the cruelty and oppression of Unuk and his soldiers.

Of a sudden they tensed. Trumpets had sounded outside the Eastern Gate, announcing the coming of Princess Latea with her retinue and her famous bodyguard of fighting men.

The soldiery of the high priest nervously fingered their weapons, for the deeds of the warriors of Latea were of legend. Also the defiant message which the princess had returned the night before to Unuk still rankled in their memories, and there was no telling when the fiery demons would break forth in vengeance, even against the standard of the high priest himself.

Though Latea's paltry three thousand men under arms were but a mere drop in the Lake of Whispering Waters when opposed to the many thousands of Unuk, still the hirelings of the God of the Depths had no stomach for an encounter with them.

First came Kadii, arrayed in the resplendent uniform of the Commander of the Forces of the House of Latea, stepping proudly along. Behind him followed eight trumpeter-heralds, dressed in crimson, then a hundred warriors bearing huge pavises on the faces of which were blazoned in gold a rising sun, the emblem of the House of Latea. These pavises, or shields, of the height of a man, were to protect the bearers from the arrows of enemy bowmen.

After the pavisers marched a thousand archers, each with an arrow in hand ready for instant use. In rear of the archers

trod the heavier built spearmen, circular shields on left forearms and glinting spears on shoulders.

Then Rakivi, Captain of the Body Guard of Latea. Defiance glinted from his eyes as he cast contemptuous glances at the soldiers of the high priest lining the sides of the road. Followed the famous body guard; two hundred heavy infantrymen armed with short, double-edged swords, bows and arrows and battle axes. Thick, square shields were slung over their shoulders.

From a throne on the platform of the Temple of Sacrifice, a stone ledge large enough to accommodate a thousand persons, Princess Latea gazed down bravely at the thousands of people solemnly looking up at her from a mammoth amphitheatre built around the Lake of Whispering Waters, a sheer sixty feet below.

A hushed, awed murmuring from the amphitheatre was wafted up to her.

From stone causeways on the east and the west banks of the lake wide stairways mounted to the temple platform.

THE waters of the lake were dotted with patrolling war canoes of Unuk. The sun glistened on wet paddles as they rose and fell.

On the east causeway, with the exception of her warriors on the platform, were Latea's fighting men. Across the lake, crowding the west causeway, were assembled regiments of Unuk, vanguard of the thousands resting upon their arms in the streets outside the amphitheatre.

The roving gaze of the princess took in the platform. Involuntarily she shuddered, for her eyes had rested on the altar of sacrifice, a table of stone dyed with ugly dark stains from the blood of countless victims.

Behind her throne stood a hundred picked archers, commanded by Rakivi. They shot glances of hatred across the platform at the Body Guard of Unuk, five hundred strong.

By the throne stood Kadii. Little Taa, the handmaiden, trembling with fear, sat at the feet of her princess.

Close to a large sun dial a captain of the guard of the Temple of Sacrifice watched intently the shadow of the sun as it crept to a mark cut in the stone.

"O Kadii," said the Princess Latea, "the time draws near. The shadow of the sun has reached the fifth mark on the dial beside me."

"Be brave, O Latea," encouraged Kadii. "The God of the Sky and Murokaii will not fail us."

The captain of the guard of the Temple of Sacrifice went into the temple.

The murmuring of the populace below died as the captain reappeared and gave an order to the black-attired trumpeter-heralds of Unuk.

Twelve abreast they advanced to the edge of the platform, sounded three flourishes, faced about and returned to their posts.

Unuk, followed by Alok and a retinue of priests, filed from the temple. The high priest crossed to the sacrificial altar and knelt down, presumably in prayer.

Finishing his mock worship, Unuk arose and went with Alok to the edge of the platform overlooking the lake. Resounding cheers from his soldiers greeted him, but the people maintained a sullen silence.

"Army of Unuk and people of Latakio." Alok's voice, multiplied in volume by the massive pile of masonry behind him, was carried to the farthest seats in the amphitheatre. "Bow your heads in worship of the all-powerful God of the Depths, and the Supreme High Priest, lest you go to the Eternal Fire."

Although the people hated and despised Unuk, still they were in mortal fear of the somber stone image of the God of the Depths which looked down on them from the apex of the temple. Obediently they lowered their heads. The battalions of Latea remained defiantly erect.

"I, Unuk, Shall Have Her Heart Torn Out And Cast Into The Eternal Fire."

Unuk's soldiers and those in the amphitheatre, appalled by the sacrilege, from under lowered lids watched Latea's fighting men, expecting to see the stalwart warriors wither and die as they stood there so defiantly in the sun.

The high priest ignored the insult. His revenge was coming and must not be spoiled by fighting.

"The shadow of the sun has passed the fifth mark," announced Alok, "and the Mighty Unuk wishes to have word with you."

Alok stepped back and saluted. Unuk took his place.

"According to my sacred decree," cried the high priest in his high-pitched, cackling voice, "Princess Latea of the House of Latea now shall supplicate her false god. When the shadow of the sun has reached the seventh mark, I, Unuk, shall have her heart torn out and cast into the Brazier of Eternal Fire.

"Today is twelve times the hundred moons, the day on which the craven God of the Sky is supposed to come from out the sky, according to the boasting fools. I, Unuk, say no god will come from out the sky. He will fail to appear as he has failed before, not daring to challenge the might of our omnipotent deity, the God of the Depths."

Unuk motioned to a priest. A jewelled arrow was brought to him.

"Hearken, O Princess Latea." Unuk had faced the throne. He held aloft the arrow. "By decree of the God of the Depths, I cast this arrow at your feet." Contemptuously he threw the arrow to the foot of the throne. "In the name of our god I challenge you to break the arrow and to cast it into the winds, thereby calling upon your God of the Sky to establish his might and to save your people. You have

until the seventh mark is reached by the shadow of the sun to talk to your people, or to supplicate your god."

Insolently the high priest turned his back on the Princess Latea and returned to the altar of sacrifice.

Thousands of anxious, pleading eyes turned to the throne. The silence was so heavy that the waters of the lake lapping against the stone embankments could be heard distinctly.

The Princess, her black eyes alight with faith in her god, left the throne, picked up the arrow and walked to the edge of the platform.

For a short space she looked down at the people. When she spoke her voice was clear and ringing.

"Unuk, high priest of False Gods and all which is evil, the Princess Latea, in the name of the God of the Sky, accepts your arrogant challenge. I shall break the Sacred Arrow and cast it into the winds. That arrow shall rise into the heavens, carrying my message. In answer, my god will come from out the sky and will return the arrow, whole, unto me."

Thunderous cheers from her soldiers and from the hope-awakened people welled up to her.

"O God of the Sky," she implored, her eyes uplifted into the heavens, "come down from thy domain and, with thy might, destroy the evil which crushes down thy faithful worshippers."

SHE broke the arrow and, with a sweeping gesture, committed it to the winds. But, as always it had done in the past, the arrow fell into the Lake of Whispering Waters and sank from sight.

The people sat stunned. The fighting men of Latea slowly bowed their heads in defeat. The soldiers of the high priest

brandished their weapons and shouted in triumph. A derisive, cackling laugh sounded from the altar of sacrifice.

Her olive-hued face blanched, the Princess Latea sank to her knees and stretched both arms into the sky. Terrified, little Taa covered her face with her hands.

"O Murokaii," prayed the Princess, "for the sake of thy suffering people supplicate the God of the Sky to answer my plea."

"The shadow of the sun passes the sixth mark," cackled the high priest. "It creeps toward the seventh. Why does not your false god answer?"

"O God of the Sky," implored the Princess, ignoring the high priest's taunt, "heed the supplication of Murokaii. Fly down from thy domain and with thy might destroy the evil which crushes thy loyal and faithful worshippers."

Again that fiendish, cackling laugh of derision.

The shadow of the sun touched the seventh mark on the dial.

The chin of Kadii lowered as all hope died. Rakivi, self-confessed unbeliever in the God of the Sky, loosened his dagger in sheath and his hot eyes switched to the high priest. If his betrothed, Princess Latea, must die, Unuk would die with her.

Her voice so low that it barely carried to the front rank of her archers the Princess Latea again prayed to the God of the Sky.

The shadow of the sun now fully covered the seventh mark.

ESCORTED by Alok and two brawny, evil-looking priests carrying wrist and ankle chains, who in reality were executioners, Unuk crossed to the kneeling princess.

"Your god has failed you." He laid a bony hand on the shapely shoulder of the beautiful woman. "The God of the Depths commands that your heart be torn from your breast," he cackled, "and be cast into the Brazier of Eternal Fire. Come, I command you."

The Princess Latea arose and faced her

executioner. There was no fear in her heart.

"Though I go with you to the altar of sacrifice," she said, "and my heart be torn from my breast, it is not your wickedness which triumphs. It is the will of the God of the Sky that my blood be shed. Gladly I bow to that decree."

Rakivi's dagger flashed into his hand. He stepped forward and gave a sharp command. Instantly arrows were fitted to the bows of Latea's archers and the double-edged swords of her guard were drawn from scabbards.

"Stop!" The princess wheeled on her soldiers. "It is my command that no blood, other than mine, be spilled. Although the God of the Sky has not heeded my supplication, who dares to dispute his justice and wisdom?"

Arrows were returned to quivers and swords were sheathed. There was no disobeying the command of their princess.

The two priests clamped the chains to Latea's wrists and ankles and led her to the altar. They lifted her up and laid her on the stone table, fastening the chains to iron rings in the stone.

Alok handed the sacrificial knife to the executioner.

Unuk faced the amphitheatre and raised a scrawny arm.

"Witness the might of the God of the Depths," he cackled. "The bleeding heart of the Princess Latea, who dared to invoke the aid of her false god, I shall hold aloft so that all may see. Unuk, Supreme Ruler of the Universe, has spoken."

The high priest turned and gave a command. The executioner raised the sacrificial knife and held it high over the bared breast of the princess.

"Strike," she said. "I am not afraid to die for my god."

The corded muscles in the uplifted arm tightened for the downward thrust.

"Look! Look!" Taa stood erect pointing into the west. "Look, my princess,

look!" Her voice vibrated with hope. "The God of the Sky! He has answered your supplication! From out the sky comes your god to save you!"

Her inspired voice, thrown back by the walls of the towering temple, reached to the farthest corners of the amphitheatre.

The thousands within hearing as well as those on the sacrificial platform with one accord gazed into the west. The arm of the executioner froze.

High in the azure blue appeared a speck, tails of vapor streaking from it.

"Strike, you craven dog!" commanded Unuk, to his executioner.

Not a move from the terrified man. To him, never having seen an airplane, that rapidly approaching speck signified but the one thing, the God of the Sky.

"An air-engine of Murokaii, O Unuk," whispered Alok into the ear of his master. "Kill the princess and we can retire into the temple."

"It cannot be an engine of Murokaii. We destroyed the column of supplies in the swamp. Also no engine of the air could pass over our barrier of rays. Can it—can it possibly be the—the God of the Sky?"

Fear had crept into the blood of the craven high priest. After all, he anxiously reasoned, the House of Latea might be right, and he wrong. Only a fortitude bestowed by the supernatural could give a beautiful young woman like Latea courage to go so defiantly to a horrible death.

Larger and larger grew the speck in the vision of the petrified thousands watching it.

"The thing staggers in the air, O Unuk," cried Alok, excitedly. "See, it falls! Ah! It has righted itself again. But it never will reach us. Look! Its left wing seesaws. The wing is broken. The thing flies like a wounded eagle."

Hope burned in the red, rat-eyes of the high priest.

Alok spoke truthfully. The plane was in a bad way. Drunkenly it floundered, rocking and pitching and skidding, but nevertheless on it came.

At the controls sat O'Leary and McGuffy, their faces white and strained as they watched the left wing, which was hanging on by nothing, it seemed.

Hitting an air pocket above the fields of molten lava, the plane had gone out of control and had been hurled from the air lane. The rays had barely touched the tip of the left wing, but had ruined it.

Only by the miraculous airmanship of the pilots had the ship been saved from crashing into the seething lava. It had been a desperate and valiant battle, but the Americans finally had won.

"We gotta make it." O'Leary's body was damp with nervous sweat. "Lulu Belle, Lulu Belle," he pleaded, "jist a bit farther, sweetheart."

"Stick it, Terence, stick it," encouraged McGuffy. "Stick it for Uncle Sam, old pal."

"Yeah, fer Uncle Sam, Pete."

ALTHOUGH the civilian population of Lataki gazing up at the staggering ship believed it to be the God of the Sky, still they recognized that the God was in serious trouble. If not, why did he flounder about in space the way he was doing? Had the God of the Depths struck? Was Unuk right?

A doubt that made their blood run cold stole over them. Bellowing like a wounded bull the lurching and skidding ship roared over the far end of the Lake of Whispering Waters.

"Cut loose with a sky-egg, Pete," rasped O'Leary. "Drop it into the water. We don't wanna kill no innocent people, but thim war canoes down there looks a lot like Unuk's skunks."

"Then what? We're about to crash. The wing won't hold much longer."

"A minit at the bist, but I'll try an' hit the lake."



"The God Of The Sky, he comes!" The people shouted, but the executioner paid no heed, poised the knife over the breast of the Princess Latea for the down stroke.



"Try this on yer roller coaster!" O'Leary loosed two bombs upon Unuk's war canoes in the Lake of Whispering Waters and fought the controls to keep the wounded ship from falling.

From the wounded sky-phantom down streaked a curving, silver thread.

Berroom! The mighty detonation sounded as though heaven and hell had met. From the Lake of Whispering Waters towered a mammoth column of water. It broke and tumbled down with a splash that echoed and re-echoed in the amphitheatre. Huge waves rolled out in a widening circle and crashed against the stone embankments, tossing spray and spume high into the air.

The war canoes of Unuk which were caught in the maelstrom of raging waters were swamped. Their occupants, weighted by chain-mail and heavy swords, sank out of sight, although their arms threshed madly in the desperation of death.

Unuk's soldiery and the civilians in the amphitheatre, terror-stricken by the appalling spectacle, crouched down and covered their heads to shield themselves from the awful wrath.

Latea's warriors, though their faces had blanched and they trembled and shook, remained erect. The God of the Sky was their god and had come to save them.

Unuk, Alok and the priests cowered in fear; due to their inborn fear of the blasting fire of the white nations outside their world.

Suddenly outcries of dismay arose from Latea's followers.

The monster of space in which the God of the Sky rode the air was falling into the lake. The God of the Depths had conquered.

Ah! One of the monster's wings had broken off and was slicing downward like a giant leaf.

Spinning madly, the monster of space was whirling to destruction.

Then seemingly a miracle was wrought. Just before striking the lake the plane flattened out. Her pontoons hit first and she cut through the water like a racing speed boat, then started turning around and around.

"Thanks, Lulu Belle!" O'Leary spat out sweat running into his mouth. "I didn't think ye could do it."

"You're—you're a wonder, Terence," gasped McGuffy.

"Ye're tellin' me! I'll swing her to thim stone steps over there, thin up we go to meet the princess."

"If she isn't dead."

"Yeah, if she ain't dead."

O'Leary speeded up three of the propellers and gave her rudder. The wreck swung against the stone causeway with a resounding crash.

Automatics in hand, the God of the Sky and the Messenger from the Clouds leaped ashore and climbed the stone steps three at a time. O'Leary carried the Sacred Arrow Murokaii had given him to deliver to Latea.

"Kill Her, You Dog!"

RECOVERING from the terror struck into him by the bomb McGuffy had sent winging down into the Lake of Whispering Waters, Unuk grabbed his trembling under priest by the wrist.

"Into the temple while there still is time," he cackled. "Standing here we shall be pierced by a score of arrows. The air-engine is that of Murokaii. A god would not have crashed."

"Y-yes, O Unuk." Alok still was in the grip of the unnerving fear.

"Our soldiers stand frozen, the craven fools. Come!"

His rat-eyes darting furtively about him the high priest slunk into an entrance of the temple, Alok on his heels.

From his protecting cover Unuk peered out on the platform. The executioner still stood motionless, his knife uplifted to strike.

"Kill her, you dog!" cried Unuk to him. "Drive the steel into her heart!"

The command of the high priest broke the spell. The executioner turned to the

temple, saw the menacing face of his Supreme Master, then turned back to his victim chained to the stone table. He leaned forward and his knife-arm stiffened for the fatal thrust.

A short, two-edged sword, turning over and over in the air, flashed from the hand of Rakivi across the intervening space. Its point buried itself deep in the naked belly of the executioner. Like a boar stuck with a lance he went down in a welter of gushing blood.

Rakivi ran to the altar and freed the chains of Latea from the iron rings.

The watching high priest cursed and spat venomously at his body guard on the platform, who stood like images of stone, staring down at the crippled air-monster riding the waters below.

"They shall feel the vengeance of the Mighty Unuk," cackled the high priest to Alok. "Lataki shall be destroyed. The House of Latea. My craven army, the people. All—all—all, I say!" His voice had risen to a screech. "To the plateau! To the plateau, Alok. There to loose our air-engines on the kingdom. Come!"

"I obey your sacred command, O Unuk."

They slunk into the dark recesses of the temple, hurrying to the secret tunnel known only to themselves.

Deep down under the foundations of the mammoth edifice Unuk stopped by a large instrument board bolted to a stone wall of the passageway. The captive scientist in charge saluted humbly.

"Connect me with the plateau, dog!" snarled the high priest. "My legions fly to destroy Lataki."

A microphone was respectfully placed in front of him and he issued his orders.

"Now, dog, get ready the voice of the God of the Depths." Unuk chuckled fiendishly. "I have been saving it for an emergency such as this. From the sky shall thunder down the voice of our god, a voice which will be heard all over Lataki. Ha! Ha! Ha!" A cackling, awesome laugh.

"It will strike terror into all who hear. And all shall hear its threat of doom. And then—"

He went into a fit of insane laughter which, multiplied by the rock walls of the winding tunnel, sounded as though scores of hell's angels were carousing.

In the meanwhile O'Leary and McGuffy were climbing the stone stairway.

Kadii, on bended knee, met them when they reached the platform.

"I am Kadii, O God of the Sky." Kadii's forehead touched the stones. "Your commands, O Mighty God?"

HAVING learned the language in the intensive course conducted by Murokaii and having been rehearsed in their rôles, the aviators understood, and knew what they were expected to do.

"Arise, O Kadii," commanded O'Leary in the Latakian tongue, "and bring before me thy princess, in order that the Sacred Arrow be returned, whole, into her keeping."

"I obey, O God of the Sky."

"Tell thy princess that Murokaii sends to her and her people, through me, the Messenger from the Clouds," ordered McGuffy, "his joyful greetings."

"I obey, O Messenger from the Clouds."

Kadii lifted his right arm in salute and issued an order to his soldiery on the platform. All knelt and extended their coppery arms in salute.

"Bring forth the Princess Latea to the throne to meet her god!" Kadii thundered out the command, then to O'Leary, "Is it thy pleasure, O God of the Sky, to mount the throne and talk to thy people of Lataki?"

"It is my pleasure, O Kadii. First, though, have a detail of thy warriors bring to the platform the equipment marked with the Symbol of the Rising Sun which is aboard my ship of the sky."

Kadii saluted and departed on his mission.

The aviators, heads held high, strode to the throne. O'Leary seated himself, with McGuffy standing to attention a step below and on his right.

Now that their god had accepted the proffered throne, the soldiers of Latea arose, brandished their weapons and cheered. It was taken up by the people.

The Princess Latea, with her hand-maiden Taa, came from the altar of sacrifice, behind her an escort of her guard commanded by Rakivi.

"Glory be!" exclaimed O'Leary to McGuffy. "Cleopatra herself! Ain't she the berries?"

"Phew! A pippin! Me for her."

AT the foot of the throne, her eyes alight with reverence and worship, the beautiful woman knelt in silence, her head bowed in homage to her god.

"What'n the deuce will I do now?" whispered O'Leary. "I've fergot me lines."

"Me too," gulped McGuffy. "Do something, you lummo! *Anything!*"

"I reckon I better give her me seat. The

"O people of Lataki," he boomed, "in reward for her great faith and courage I, the God of the Sky, surrender my throne to the Princess Latea. Henceforth she shall rule thee in my stead."

O'Leary looked to McGuffy for approval. The aviator nodded and grinned. Leave it to O'Leary to pull them out of a hole!

Instead of the resounding cheers the flyers expected, a dead silence greeted the mandate. At one stroke the flustered O'Leary, always ill at ease in the presence of female beauty, had destroyed the Latakians' belief in him as a god. For it had been written for time immemorial in Lataki that never would a deity so recognize a mortal.

The awed reverence and worship shining from Latea's black eyes died and was replaced by a stunned expression.

Rakivi mumbled to himself, "An impostor! I was right, there is no God of the Sky."

The warriors of Latea exchanged wondering, uneasy glances and a low mutter-

"Death To The Impostor. There Is No God Of The Sky!"

God o' the Sky is supposed to be perlitte, I think."

Flushed to the color of his mop of red hair, O'Leary stammered in Latakian:

"O Princess Latea, take my seat and— and—take my seat—I mean—take my seat."

Latea raised her bowed head. Astonishment was written on her countenance.

"Take thy *throne*, O God of the Sky? Did I hear aright? Thy humble subject is to occupy thy *throne*?"

"Now you've done it, you big ape!" whispered McGuffy. "Leave it to you to ball up the works." "Nuts on ye!"

O'Leary got up and stretched forth his right arm.

ing arose from their ranks. Unuk's soldiery tightened grips on their weapons as hope crept back into their breasts.

"You're on the spot, you big fish," snapped McGuffy. "Give a lady your seat, will you? A storm is gathering down there. No telling what these Latakians will do, now that they know they have been humbugged."

"Ye're so damn smart, why didn't ye do somethin'?"

The Princess Latea arose. Proudly, defiantly she stood, looking up at O'Leary.

"You are not the God of the Sky." Her voice vibrated with the intensity of her feelings. "By your black magic you have tricked us."

"Look here, lady," stumbled the incensed O'Leary, using English, "what do ye expect fer nothin'? Is it nice to treat us this way? Two guys what risked their lives to—"

"I do not understand your strange tongue," said Latea. "It carries no meaning to my ears. Think not that I, and my people, are ungrateful for your saving me from the sacrificial knife of Unuk. They are but shocked by the cruel shattering of their hopes. Who you are and whence you came, we do not know, but you are our welcome guests and we thank you for your valiant deed."

"Princess Latea," replied O'Leary, humbly, "as you say, I am not the God of the Sky and my comrade here is not the Messenger from the Clouds. We are of a nation strange to you, many leagues beyond the kingdom of Lataki.

"We are mortals, as are you and your people. Murokaii who—"

"Murokaii?" she interrupted, eagerly. "Murokaii sent you to save his princess and his people?"

"Yes, Murokaii sent us, O Princess. Sent us from our far-distant country known as America."

"The Princess Latea thanks you, noble warriors of America." Latea bowed her head. "Your ship of the sky, O Warrior? And its descending thunder? I do not understand."

"The handicraft of mortals, O Princess." O'Leary stopped to listen to the ominous murmuring rising from the amphitheatre. "What would you have us do now, O Princess?"

"The situation is grave, O Warrior of America. The soldiery of Unuk take heart. I fear that they will revolt and destroy us should their doubt in the God of the Sky be further confirmed."

"Where is the accursed Unuk, high priest of Lataki?"

"Long since he fled into the temple with

Alok, his under priest. Right now they plot to—"

From out the sky sounded a dreadful, terrifying voice so great in volume that it could be heard for miles.

"Hearken to the God of the Depths, warriors and people of Lataki," it thundered. "I command you from the Realm of the Sky, where I have destroyed the false god of the House of Latea."

The listening thousands cowered in terror.

"I command you to arise and to slay the impostors who descended from the heavens in their ship of the sky," went on the appalling voice. "I command you to slay all of the House of Latea. Those of you who stood craven shall suffer my wrath. Unuk, my high priest of Lataki, reigns supreme over my Kingdom of Lataki. Herewith witness my symbol of wrath. From the skies shall hurtle down on you a bolt of fire and thunder."

From out of the west resounded a terrific screaming. Timed to the second, Unuk's scientists on the plateau had sent a robot-controlled messenger of destruction over the mountains into Lataki.

THE sky-terror screeched down out of the heavens and crashed into a street crowded with Unuk's soldiers beyond the north end of the amphitheatre.

A staggering sheet of flame, an ear-splitting blast and, in a mighty column of swirling, twisting black smoke, masonry and mangled bodies were hurled skyward.

"Arise and destroy all who have opposed me," thundered the mysterious voice. "I, the God of the Depths, command you."

Stunned, the soldiery of Unuk and the civilian populace were unable to move or even to cry out.

O'Leary sprang into action.

"O Latea," he cried to the awed princess trembling before him, "it is but a trick of the scientists of Unuk. The voice does not come from the sky. There is no God of

the Depths. Rally your warriors around you. Order them all to the platform here. Our only hope is to occupy the temple, and to fight. Hasten, before the soldiers of Unuk and the people recover from their shock."

"I believe you, O Warrior of America."

Latea ran to the edge of the platform overlooking the lake and the amphitheatre and stretched forth a shapely arm.

"Be not deceived by the black magic of Unuk, my warriors and my people," she cried in her ringing, musical voice. "The God of the Sky still reigns supreme and will protect you. I call on all those loyal to me to rally to my aid here on the temple platform."

An ominous silence. Not a move.

"Warriors of the House of Latea," pleaded the princess, "do you not hear your ruler calling on you? I command you to rally to my standard."

"The Guard obeys thy sacred command, O Princess." Rakivi stepped forward, sword on high. "O Kadii, where are *thy* forces?"

Kadii went to the platform edge.

"For thy God and thy Princess!" His voice thundered out into space. "Need I ask thee more, soldiers of Latea?"

With hoarse cheers and weapons brandishing, the valiant warriors of the House of Latea poured up the stone staircase from the causeway below.

Then the carnage commenced.

Green Stars of Glory

ON command from Kadii the bows of Latea's archers on the platform twanged, mowing down the front rank of the still-petrified Guard of Unuk. From behind the rampart of dead and wounded bodies, the rear rank of Unuk's archers came out of its apathy and returned the fire.

The air sang with the barbed messengers of death, men on both sides, pierced by the feathered shafts, dropping like flies.

Disregarding the arrows whizzing about him O'Leary caught up Latea in his arms and ran with her into the temple. McGuffy wasn't far behind with Taa. The aviators then returned to the fight.

Before the soldiers of Unuk on the causeway below had realized what had happened, clouds of arrows sang across the lake and they went down in bloody heaps.

"Our crate, Terence!" cried McGuffy. "They're sinking it."

"Let 'em!" returned O'Leary. "It ain't no good to us, if Kadii's detail got all the junk out."

Spurred to frenzy by the mysterious voice from the sky the warriors in Unuk's canoes had gathered around the wrecked plane and were hacking at it with their short swords.

On the platform the guard of Unuk charged Latea's warriors—outnumbered five to one. Savage hand to hand fighting resulted. O'Leary and McGuffy were caught in the general mêlée.

McGuffy was the center of a swirling ring of soldiers. Stocky legs apart, he swung his heavy sword wickedly. At each blow he blotted out a life. There was no withstanding his powerful arm. A soldier dropped to his hands and knees and crept stealthily up behind the white man to stab him in the back. Just as he arose for the fatal thrust an arrow ripped through his throat. He flopped around like a wounded peacock, in his gaudy feathers. A taunting cry of derision was thrown at him by the archer of Latea who had dispatched the arrow.

By sheer weight of numbers O'Leary had been pressed back savagely to the dizzy edge of the platform. Unuk's guardsmen thirsted for his blood. To the one who killed the impostor great reward awaited, that they knew.

Another backward step to avoid the thrusting spears and hacking swords would send O'Leary tumbling into the lake sixty feet below. His automatic long since had

**HER FAITH IN THE
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**BUT SHE BRANDED
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MAGIC ARROW**



**Princess
Latea**

been emptied, but had not checked the bloodthirsty rush against him, for the thundering fire of the strange white men now had lost its spell, dwarfed as it had been by the magnitude of the fire and thunder displayed by the God of the Depths.

Suddenly a lane was hewed through Unuk's crowding soldiers and Rakivi, with six of his guard, demons gone berserk, were at O'Leary's side.

"Thanks," said the Sky Hawk as he clove a feathered skull to the chin with his sword.

The white man's language was strange

to Rakivi, but nevertheless he understood. He nodded and smiled as he slew a copper-skinned warrior who had pressed too close.

The stream of reinforcements pouring from the stairway to the assistance of the outnumbered warriors soon decided the fight in favor of the House of Latea.

When the last of Unuk's soldiers on the platform had either gone to his death, or had been hurled into the waters of the lake, Kadli rallied his fighting men and ordered everybody into the temple.

Some time later O'Leary and McGuffy held a council of war.

"Pete," said O'Leary, "Kadli ain't got

a chance to hold the temple. All of 'em will be kilt like rats in a trap, whin Unuk sinds over his crates loaded with explosives. Shure an' the temple will be blasted to bits."

"To say nothing of what the disintegrating rays will do to it," agreed McGuffy dismally. "Looks like we're all cooked."

As though he had read their thoughts, Kadii joined them.

"O Warriors of America," he said, "fear not that the foul Unuk will attempt to destroy us from the air with his ships of fire and thunder, for on the apex of the temple is the image of the craven God of the Depths. If that image be destroyed, so will be destroyed the power of the evil god, and of its high priest. Unuk, although an unbeliever, is to crafty, and vain, to undermine his own teachings."

"Your words have lifted worry from our minds, O Kadii," replied O'Leary. "Still, the defenders of the temple can endure but a short siege, without water and food, and arrows for their bows."

"The House of Latea can hold the temple for a hundred moons, O Warrior of the Crimson Hair. The wily Unuk built it more for a fortress than for a place of worship, to provide himself with a secure retreat if our house should conquer. Water and food and arrows are in plenty, stored for the purpose."

"It is well, O Kadii. The equipment brought from my ship of the sky, where is it?"

Kadii pointed proudly to a wall of the temple. Everything was there, including the two high-powered Springfield rifles.

"Pete," said O'Leary, "git ready the range-o-scope an' the short wave receivin' set. We gotta know what's happenin' on the plateau and—" He stopped, significantly.

"And what's happening in the U. S.," supplied McGuffy, grimly.

"That's it, pal. Step on it now, while I make a look-see of the place. Terence X.

O'Leary ain't gonna hang around here long, with Uncle Sam in so much trouble."

"Now you're talking, big boy!"

O'Leary started on his tour of inspection. What he saw materially increased his respect for the Latakian officers and their men.

Under direction of Kadii the warriors had been divided into three reliefs. The first relief now was posted throughout the temple at all points where damage might threaten. Scouts had thoroughly searched the gloomy corridors and passages for lurking enemy spies, and were making their reports to Rakivi.

The entrances opening on the sacrificial platform had been barricaded with slabs of stone. In rear of these breastworks, which rose to within a few feet of the tops of the entrances, firing-steps had been fashioned. On the firing-steps were picked archers, waiting for an enemy to expose himself.

THE sun was sinking in the west. O'Leary rejoined McGuffy, who was having trouble with the range-o-scope and the short wave set. Neither would work.

"I've followed Murokaii's instructions to the letter," informed McGuffy, "but it's no go. See what you can do, Terence."

It was almost dark when O'Leary admitted defeat. Shrugging gloomily, he walked over to one of the entrances. McGuffy scratched his head, then started all over again.

O'Leary mounted a firing-step and peered over the parapet of stone slabs.

The somber shadow of the towering pile of masonry had crept far out on the lake and over the causeways, like a tide of black ink.

While O'Leary watched, as though a curtain had been drawn, night enveloped the city. There had been no twilight.

One by one yellow dots of light appeared in houses beyond the lake, until soon their combined twinklings resembled a myriad of fire-flies.

From both causeways, now occupied by Unuk's regiments, huge bonfires flared up, lighting the tiers of empty seats of the amphitheatre with dancing crimson. When a warrior threw fuel upon a fire his shadow, magnified to immense proportions against the banks of seats, appeared like some prehistoric monster. The wind blowing from the mountains carried rolling black smoke clouds, edges tinted red by the burning lava, far over the housetops of the city.

At intervals flaming arrows shooting high into the air from the temple and landing in the black spaces between the bonfires, forcefully reminded O'Leary of starshells in No-man's-land. Those falling on the causeways among the soldiers were stamped savagely underfoot, but not before feathered shafts from Latea's archers following swiftly in their wake had found billets in coppery forms.

O'Leary went back to help McGuffy, who still labored unsuccessfully on the knotty problem of the range-o-scope and the short wave set.

Out of the sky thundered that appalling voice again. Hollowly it reverberated throughout the temple.

"I, the God of the Depths, command that my soldiers assail the temple and slay the infidels therein."

Immediately trumpets started sounding and soon unending columns of Unuk's warriors, eight abreast, were climbing the causeways to the attack.

The flyers took post at a window looking out on the platform and opened fire with their Springfields. A warrior dropped at every shot.

The platform and the causeways soon were a shambles of dead and dying. Unuk's soldiers didn't have a chance against the expert archery of the defenders, but still, spurred on by the command of the terrible, revengeful God of the Depths, they resolutely climbed to destruction.

Finally the awful slaughtering of their

comrades sickened stomachs and the attack halted.

A deputation, protected by white feathers held high on spears, climbed over the heaps of dead and stopped in front of a temple entrance.

"What do you want, dogs of Unuk?" demanded Kadii.

"We bring an ultimatum to the Princess Latea."

The princess was notified. She mounted a firing-step.

"Speak," she commanded.

"O Princess Latea of the exiled House of Latea," replied the spokesman of the deputation, "Unuk, high priest of Lataki, presents you with his ultimatum."

"And what is that ultimatum?"

"That the two white strangers who came from out the sky be surrendered into his hands."

"And if I refuse to surrender the white strangers?" Latea asked Unuk's spokesman.

"All of your followers outside of the temple, men, women and children will be put to the sword."

THE princess paled under the awful threat, but when she spoke her voice was clear and steady.

"Before I answer," she said, "I shall consult with the white strangers."

O'Leary stepped forward and saluted.

"O Princess Latea," he said, "our lives are in your hands. We do not value those lives so highly that we would have them spared at such a cost of innocent blood. My comrade and I ask the privilege of leaving the temple, not as prisoners of Unuk, but as warriors going forth to battle the enemy surrounding us."

"Bravely spoken, O Warrior of America."

McGuffy raised his right arm in salute.

"O Princess Latea," he said, "my comrade has spoken for me."

"And now I shall speak for the House of Latea." The princess, faced the group

on the platform. "Dogs of Unuk, go tell your evil master that the Princess Latea refuses to surrender the white strangers. That they came out of the sky to aid her and the cause of the House of Latea, and

aces, Captains Terence X. O'Leary and Peter Maher McGuffy, were killed in Washington by a machine gun operated by a gangster. Red Murtha, leader of the killers, so confessed as he died from bullet

El Paso Crumbles To Nothingness Under The Devastating Wrath Of Unuk.

that they shall remain under her protection until they care to leave."

"Then, O Proud Princess, the slaughter commences within the hour."

O'Leary sprang to the firing-step.

Unuk's deputation faced around.

"We warriors of America fear not your God of the Depths," declared O'Leary, "and we despise your braggart of a high priest. Carry this, the challenge of the white strangers, to your dog of a master. If the non-fighting men, women and children are spared, sometime between now and dawn, we shall leave the temple to fight Unuk's so-called might. Dare he, and dare your God of the Depths, accept our challenge on those terms?"

"You bray like an ass," returned the wrathful spokesman, "but your arrogant message shall be carried to the Mighty Unuk. Your answer will come from the skies."

The deputation left the platform.

"Don't mention it, lady." O'Leary, red to the ears, unconsciously lapsed into his own tongue under praise from Latea. "Me an' Pete kin take care o' ourselves."

The Princess returned to the room set aside for her and Taa.

FROM the short wave set sounded a metallic voice. The aviators wheeled about in astonishment.

"What the ——!"

"—It came to life itself!" gulped McGuffy. "Listen!"

And this is what they heard:

"—is authentic that our two army

wounds received in an attempted hold-up of the Sixth National Bank.

"The destruction of El Paso by the mysterious, robot-controlled planes is just another catastrophe to be added to our already long list. We must resolutely face—"

McGuffy disconnected the set.

"I can't bear to listen to any more of it, Terence," he apologized. "What in the name of the saints can we do?"

"The Outlet o' the Lake o' Whispering Waters, Pete. I'm gonna try an' swim it."

"Have you gone mad?"

"Ye heard me. If I kin reach Murokaii, I'll grab one o' his scout planes an', through the air lane, set tail on Unuk's plateau."

"And then?"

"I'll swipe a death-ray ship an' land it on the lake here."

"And what shall I be doing?"

"Waitin' here in the temple, ready to dive into the lake to come aboard o' the ship. Thin we'll fly back to the plateau an' blast thim factories. After that we'll wing back to the good old U. S. A. And, havin' won over the God o' the Diphth, the Latakian woman an' childrin and old men will be saved."

"A sweet and simple program! It's so easy that I am going instead of you."

"No, ye don't! Ye ain't got no initial what stands for ixcellent."

"Then we'll toss for it," declared McGuffy. "Break out that good luck quarter you always carry."

"Okay, Pete. Heads I go; tails you go.

The loser waits for the other here in the temple."

"Heads!" announced O'Leary, triumphantly. "I go, and ye stay."

"Lemme see the damned thing," demanded McGuffy, suspiciously. "It's mighty queer it always comes up heads."

O'Leary threw the quarter out of a nearby window.

"Cripes, ye don't think I'd deceive ye, do ye, pal?" he asked in injured tones.

The coin which O'Leary had picked up in his travels and had so religiously kept from his pal, was stamped the same on both sides—heads.

From the black skies reverberated that awful voice. Unuk was answering the white strangers.

"The God of the Depths accepts the challenge of the arrogant warriors of America. The noncombatant men, women and children of the House of Latea shall be spared if the white strangers triumph. If not, all shall be put to the sword. Herewith witness my wrath."

Barely a minute had elapsed than four terrific explosions shook the City of Lataki. Unuk, as before and timed to a split-second, had dispatched his sky-engines of destruction.

O'Leary and McGuffy sought Kadii and Rakivi and told them of their proposed venture. The Latakian commander took them before the Princess.

"O Warriors of America," she said, "you are noble and brave, and your stout hearts are filled with mercy for our helpless women and children. May the God of the Sky bless and speed your daring mission. Should you return from your far-distant America, you will find the House of Latea still defending the temple."

"We shall return, O Latea," replied O'Leary. "And we shall bring to your aid our warriors of the air, famed throughout our land as the Black Wings."

"It is well, O Warrior of the Crimson Hair. I thank you."

Saluting, O'Leary and McGuffy withdrew, accompanied by Kadii and Rakivi.

"O Warrior of the Crimson Hair," said Kadii, "a secret passageway leads from the temple to the Outlet of the Whispering Waters. Rakivi shall guide you. First, though, to protect you from the icy chill of the rushing, underground waters, your body must be rubbed with the tallow of llamas."

"I thank you, O Kadii. With me I shall take a rocket of green stars. If, watching from the temple, you should see it burst high in the sky you will know that I have safely reached the outlet and have dived into the torrent."

"It is well," answered Kadii. "The God of the Sky be with you."

Not long afterward O'Leary and McGuffy stood at the entrance to the secret passageway. Their hands were gripped.

"Good luck, Terence," said McGuffy, huskily.

"I'll be seein' ye, Pete. Be ready fer yer swim to me ship."

No other words were spoken.

Led by Rakivi, O'Leary disappeared into the yawning blackness of the tunnel.

Kadii and McGuffy, gravely silent, went to a firing-step for their anxious vigil. With eyes strained into the blackness of the night, they waited. Time dragged painfully by.

"Thank God!"

A thread of fire had curved up into the sky. It burst into green stars.

"Good old Terence," husked McGuffy. "They can't lick you."

The Sky Hawk Screams

HIGH in the blackness burst the rocket of green stars fired by Rakivi.

The naked O'Leary poised himself on a rock jutting into the raging waters, ready for his hazardous plunge.

"Fer Uncle Sam," he muttered to himself. "Damn ye, Terence, prove that the 'X' stands fer ixcellint."

He glanced uneasily at the ominous, towering mountain barrier, then at the cauldron of whipping, lashing spray where the torrent disappeared into the bowels of the earth. O'Leary shuddered at the sight.

Drawing in a deep breath, he gritted teeth and dived.

As the icy waters closed above his head the breath seemed to be driven from his lungs. He rose to the surface and was swept swiftly along. Unuk's camp fires on the banks shot by him like lightning. Chilled through, he struck out lustily to start his blood circulating again.

Like a chip, he was swirled around protruding rocks, helpless in the grip of the boiling waters. The banks grew steeper and steeper.

Suddenly he was whipped madly about in the clutch of a mighty whirlpool, then was sucked under. He held his arms before him to protect his head from possible sunken rocks. An irresistible force carried him on and on, tumbling and spinning and throwing him about at will. His chest felt as though it were being crushed. By strength of will alone he kept his mouth tightly shut. A sledge hammer pounded his skull. Then his head seemed to burst wide open and everything went black.

WEARILY he opened his aching eyes. The current had jammed him into a crevice between two rocks. When consciousness had fully returned he saw he was in an underground cavern. The blackness meant little to his night-sight. Rushing waters thundered in his ears.

He rubbed and beat his benumbed body to coax the blood through his veins. His arms were cut and bleeding. He cast gaze around and shuddered. Bleached bones of human skeletons were everywhere among the rocks. Skulls stared vacantly at him. The remains of the Latakians who had at-

tempted the passage, and had always failed.

Grim resolution began to shine from his bloodshot eyes. He must carry on; must again commit himself to the relentless underground torrent. Sucking in a full breath he silently prayed, then slipped into the raging waters.

That which followed was a hideous nightmare until his senses mercifully left him.

When he again opened his eyes he found himself lying on a cot in a wooden hut. Murokaii, Lokaii, Klva and Tinga stood looking down at him.

Captain Terence X. O'Leary, Sky Hawk, had won his battle with the Outlet of the Rushing Waters; had won for Uncle Sam.

While fighting to recover his faculties, O'Leary stared up into the friendly faces.

"Inject more of the serum, Lokaii," ordered Murokaii. "It is time."

O'Leary felt a sharp prick in his left arm, then new life flooded through him. He sat up on the cot.

"Murokaii," he cried, "roll out yer scout plane, I gotta go back and—"

"The range-o-scope revealed to us what occurred on the lake and on the platform," interrupted Murokaii. "We thank you, Captain O'Leary."

"But ye don't know *all* what happened."

O'Leary related his story.

"But you must rest, Captain O'Leary. You are too weak for—"

"Rist hell!" cut in O'Leary. "Me an' Pete came through with our contract, now I'm holdin' ye to yers. What's yer answer?"

"The word of Murokaii is sacred."

"Atta bye! Step on it now. That scout plane, a .45 with plinty o' ammo, a portable range-o-scope an' flyin' duds fer me an' Pete. Mrs. O'Leary's son Terence is takin' off to kick a high priest in the pants."

"But the barrier of the disintegrating rays? The night is too black to follow the air-lane."

"The blacker the better. I'll see Unuk's skunks, but they won't see me. Savvy?"

Murokai spat out some orders and his three lieutenants hurried from the hut.

"Unuk prepares for a mighty attack," informed Murokai. "I fear it is to be directed against your country. Come, and look into the range-o-scope."

What O'Leary saw through the ground glass of the marvelous instrument sent cold chills coursing through him.

On the plateau, lighted a dull, glaring red by the reflection from the fields of molten lava, he counted thirty-six of the robot-controlled planes in a row, their ugly noses pointed into the north.

And the United States lay to the north.

Thousands of lives of his countrymen and millions of dollars of property and equipment would be destroyed once that awesome armada of the air was dispatched on its terrible mission, that he knew.

But that was not all. Some distance from the robot-planes were three monster ships of the disintegrating rays, each with its ten propellers idling. Their noses also pointed menacingly into the north.

At least five hundred yards from the three air-monsters was still another. Several of Unuk's captive scientists stood close to it, apparently discussing some matter of importance, judging by their gestures.

"How will you seize the death-ray ship you want?" asked Murokai. "Against such odds, it is impossible."

"Don't ask me how. I jist gotta. And I will."

"Truly you are brave, Captain O'Leary, but at times your bravery verges on the foolhardy. Of a certainty you will have to face the sleeping-rays of Unuk's hire-lings. How do you propose to overcome them?"

"With me gat. I'll shoot first."

"Take these pellets with you." Murokai handed the Sky Hawk a metal pill-box attached to a gold chain. "Hang them around your neck so you can get at them without delay. One pellet is an antidote

for the sleeping-rays—an even gamble with death."

"A evin gamble with death? I don't git ye."

"The pellet either will nullify the effects of the sleeping-rays or will stop the heart, permanently. There is no telling which course the powerful drug will follow, thereby making its use an even gamble with death."

"Okay, an' thanks." O'Leary snapped the chain about his neck. "I suppose ye gotta shake well before usin'?"

"If the sleeping-rays should strike you, only by a tremendous exercise of will power is it possible to stave off their action long enough to put a pellet in the mouth and swallow it."

"Ye know, Mr. Murokai," grinned O'Leary, "I'm sure havin' one swell time since meetin' ye an' yer little playmates."

It went over Murokai's head, for he answered, very seriously, "We have tried our best to make it pleasant for you, Captain O'Leary, and it warms my heart to know that we have succeeded."

"Ye win." O'Leary's grin widened. It was no use.

Presently Kiva announced that the scout plane was ready, with the portable range-o-scope aboard. He brought the flying togs requested by O'Leary.

Ten minutes later, an automatic belted about his waist, O'Leary gave the scout the gun. She roared into the skies, winging east.

ON the immense plateau the manufacturing plants of Unuk were working at fullest capacity turning out the sky-engines to be used against the United States. The high concrete chimneys spewed black smoke and the blast-furnaces roared and flared.

The horde of brain-doctored, copper-skinned warriors still drilled to the monotonous cadence of the giant metronome.

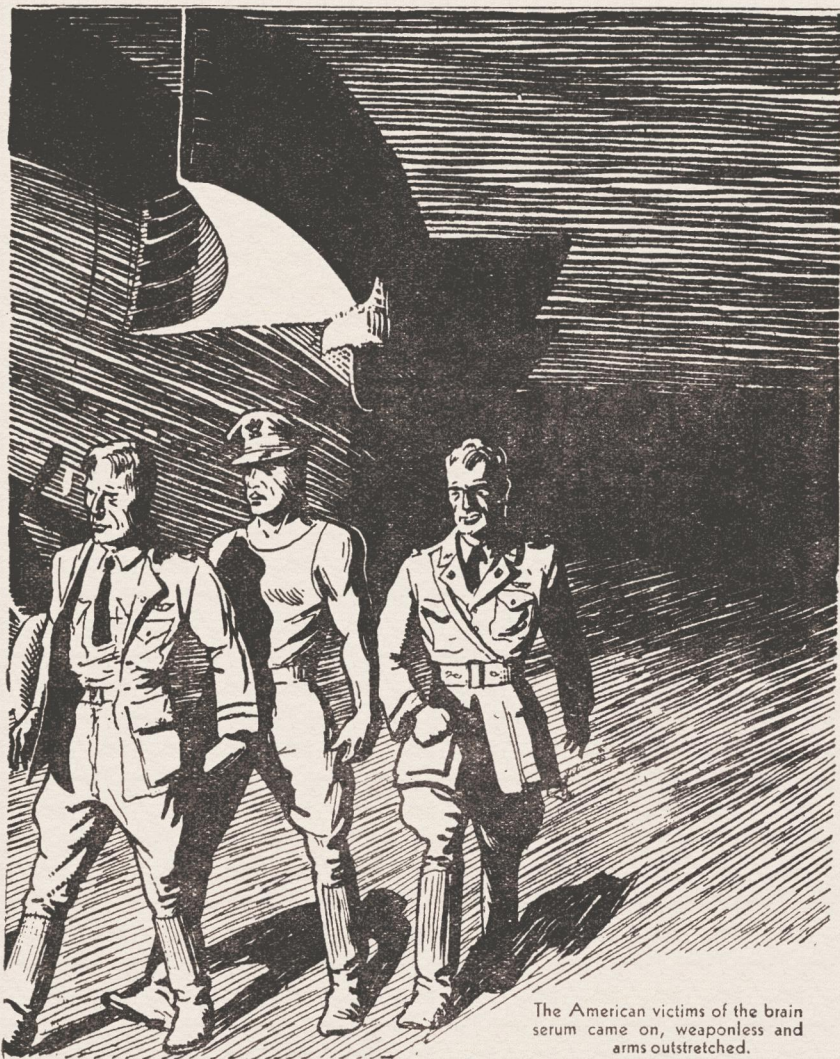
The fields of molten lava roared and



"Don't make me kill you, fellers,"
O'Leary pleaded. Then, stiffening,
"Stand back or I fire!"

rumbled and stabbed the weird scene with splashes of dancing red. Heavy smoke rolled ominously toward the City of Latak.

On his stone dais, overseeing it all, set Unuk. His hairless head, a living skull, shone crimson in the reflection from the inferno of lava. His rat-eyes glinted with hate.



The American victims of the brain serum came on, weaponless and arms outstretched.

Beside him stood his under priest, Alok. At the foot of the dais were grouped black-robed priests and several of Unuk's subjugated scientists.

The high priest placed a receiver to his ear and listened. Then he laughed his cackling, fear-inspiring laugh and swept a bony, shriveled arm out over the plateau.

"Behold the might of the Supreme Ruler

of the Universe," he rasped in his strained, high-pitched voice. "Dare the outside world pit its puny strength against it?"

"Those who dare, O Unuk," replied Alok, "shall be destroyed by the wrath of the Supreme Ruler."

"Well spoken, O Alok."

"Those in the temple, O Unuk?" The memory of the treatment he had been ac-

corded in the throne room of Latea still burned hotly within Alok. "Would it not be well to send over a ship of the death-rays and crumble the pile of stones into nothing? Thereby destroying the arrogant House of Latea which dared pit itself against your might?"

"Have a care, O Alok. Dare you criticize the judgment of the Great Master?"

"Your forgiveness, O Mighty Unuk?"

"Would you that I destroy my *revenge*?" Again that cackling laugh. "With the Latea dogs dead, where would be my satisfaction? No longer could I watch them suffer."

"No longer could you watch them suffer, O Unuk."

"But with them living. Ah!" The high priest laughed and laughed. "But with them living, I can mete out my punishment in small, but sufficient, portions to keep them in lasting torment."

"To keep them in lasting torment, O Unuk."

"When I have loosed this, my greatest blow to date, against the insolent nation in the north—" Once more a sweeping arm took in the plateau. "—then I shall start thinking of the dogs in the temple. But not until that nation in the north is completely destroyed shall my wrath descend."

"The challenge of the insolent white strangers, O Unuk?" The crafty Under Priest still tried to bring about a speedier revenge on the House of Latea. "Even though the voice of the God of the Depths from the skies accepted the challenge and pledged the safety of the women and children should the white strangers win, would it not be better to—"

"Ha! Ha! Ha! Should they *win*? Win against the Mighty Unuk? You babble like a child, O Alok."

"Your humble servant babbles like a child, O Unuk."

"For years, for years, I say, the dogs of Latea shall be kept entombed in the temple. Kept in a living grave. And the white

strangers? Should they venture forth they will be snuffed out like torches dipped in the lake. You down there, dog! Unuk cried to a scientist. "Is it not time to loose my wolves of the sky into the north?"

"The sky-engines are not yet quite ready, O Unuk. The thirty-six of the explosive-death which are to destroy San Francisco must be timed to the second."

"And the four ships of the rays, dog?"

"They will follow those of the explosive death, O Unuk, but one hour in their rear. The entire navy of America is now concentrated in the Pacific and shall be blasted by the rays into atoms."

"Tarry not too long with your magic, dog." The high priest turned to Alok. "And then comes England," he cackled.

"And then comes England, O Unuk."

"These two white strangers—"

"San Francisco calling the Mighty Unuk," announced a scientist at a short wave set.

"Throw the voice to me here, dog. And Alok, burning sulphur between the toes of the dog for daring to interrupt me."

"Your command shall be obeyed, O Unuk."

A STACCATO voice from a loud speaker echoed above the roaring of the seething lava.

"San Francisco reporting to Lataki. The Chief of the American Air Force and his staff just flew into San Francisco for a conference with navy officials. An explosive plane set for BF163A478 and dispatched at timing, RVD34C259, Code 15WG74, will annihilate all in the conference. I now shall repeat instructions for direction and timing. Direction, BF163A478 and—"

The loud speaker was disconnected by the scientist who, with a head receiver clamped to his ears, was making the notations.

Suddenly from an immense structure of mammoth horns pointing in all directions into the skies there sounded a resonant

buzzing, like the drone of an approaching motor.

"A ship in the air, O Mighty Unuk," cried the scientist at the plane-detector.

"What dog dares to fly contrary to my command?" demanded the high priest, in anger.

"It is a strange ship, O Unuk, but small and of little power."

"A strange ship?" The high priest, a coward at heart, commenced to tremble. "The rays?" he shrieked. "Will not the rays stop the flying dog?"

"It cannot pass the barrier of the rays, O Unuk," reassured Alok. "It will be blasted into smoke."

"But the white strangers came through the air-lane?"

"True, O Unuk, but in the light of day. The night is black and mortal eye can't align the conical peak with the baldfaced crag."

"I did but jest, O Alok," cackled the high priest in relief, "The craven Murokai, if he still lives, tries again, O Alok."

Had the high priest but seen the resolute, grim face of O'Leary as he expertly handled the controls of the approaching plane, his steel-blue eyes keeping the conical peak in unswerving line with the baldfaced crag, he would have screeched in terror and would have run for the protecting underground passage close to his stone dais.

"The dog soon will answer to me," cackled Unuk. "Hear how the horns of the detectors are roaring. Ha! Ha! The dog comes close—closer—and closer—"

A shrill screaming of wires and a phantom ship streaked down out of the red-dened skies. It leveled off above the drilling warriors, then with twin streams of fire and thunder spewing from its nose, landed on the plateau and taxied toward the dais.

Terrified by the hammering machine guns, the drilling warriors broke formation and scattered to all points of the compass, throwing away their weapons as they fled.

For a short space Unuk sat petrified. Emitting a piercing shriek, he scrambled down from the stone dais and scurried into the underground passage, cackling in fright. Mouthing his terror, Alok followed him.

The rest of the priests were running madly, hands covering shaven skulls. The scientists stood for a moment, undecided, then hurried after their Supreme Master.

The taxi-ing ship slewed around and came to a stop a few yards from the dais. Out of cockpit leaped a red-headed demon. From his hand spat fire and thunder. At each deafening crack a running form pitched to the ground and lay there.

O'Leary slipped a fresh clip into magazine and continued firing. Not so much that he wanted to kill the fleeing Latakians, but to give him time to size up the situation and to spread additional terror.

Less than fifty yards from him was the detached death-ray ship, its ten propellers ticking.

O'LEARY worked fast. Emptying his automatic, he shoved another fresh clip home, sprang back to the scout, got out the portable range-o-scope and McGuffy's flying outfit, then ran to the sky-monster, pistol advanced.

Huddled together before the ship stood five of the captive, brain-doctored Americans. Evidently they were familiar with the death-dealing powers of that black muzzle confronting them, for their eyes were focused on it in fear.

"Byes," announced O'Leary in clipped, commanding tones, "I'm a Yank. Ye fellers are Yanks. Uncle Sam's in trouble. Are ye with me?"

"We are the humble servants of the Mighty Unuk," answered the leader in hollow, mechanical voice, as though repeating lines long rehearsed. "We serve our Supreme Master alone. We must destroy the United States Navy and all Americans who oppose us are doomed to death."

"I git ye!" O'Leary's jaws clicked. "The brain-serum is still workin'. Now listen to me, Yanks. *I'm* yer Supreme Master now, with this gat. Ye'll do what I say, an' ye'll do it quick, or ilse, so hilp me God, I'll kill ye. I hate to do it, but there's too much at stake not to."

"We shall obey only the Mighty Unuk," came the dismaying reply. "That is our answer to you."

"An' this is the Sky Hawk's answer to Unuk. I'll handle this crate without ye, and I'll blow him an' his factories higher than stars. Stand where ye are, still as death, or I'll punch holes through ivery mother's son o' ye."

"You shall not command the ship of the Supreme Master."

Despite the menacing gun the five Americans moved slowly forward, as though in a trance, taking steps of but an inch or so.

"God fergive me," hurled O'Leary at them, "fer killin' me own countrymin, but all who don't stand aside is gonna die. Uncle Sam comes first."

Eyes narrowed and chin forward, he waited.

High Priest's Revenge

IMMEDIATELY O'Leary's forty-five had ceased its fire and thunder, the terror of the skulking Unuk and Alok had passed.

"The sleeping-rays," cackled the high priest. "Where are you, dogs? The sleeping rays!" Insanely he screeched it. "The sleeping-rays! The sleeping-rays! Blast the white dog with the sleeping-rays!"

"Blast the white dog with the sleeping-rays! repeated Alok, parrot-fashion.

Black-robed priests, sleep-producing guns in hand, advanced to the entrance of the passage and peered cautiously out on the plateau.

"The white dog is aboard the ship of the death-rays now, O Unuk," called back one. "The cabin door is open. He stands still.

He points the fire and thunder at the crew. The crew advances into the ship after him, but with short and halting stride."

"Loose the sleeping-rays, you craven dogs!" shrieked Unuk. "Loose the rays on the white dog and on the crew. Put the white dog to sleep, then comes the revenge of Unuk."

"Then comes the revenge of Unuk," mouthed Alok.

The fiendish laugh of the high priest rolled and echoed in the underground passage.

"Three more steps and I fire!" O'Leary's warning to the Americans was harsh and grating. "Fer 'God's sake, stop! Stop! Stop!"

The Sky Hawk's forehead was beaded with sweat at thought of killing his countrymen.

The Americans took another mincing step forward, then still another. O'Leary's trigger finger gathered in the slack to fire.

Sharp, hissing reports sounded from the entrance of Unuk's skulking-place. The sleep-producing rays had been loosed.

O'Leary felt an unseen fist jolt him fiercely on the jaw. He staggered. The automatic dropped from his hand. His vision clouded.

Two of the Americans crumpled to the cabin floor, then the others tumbled across the bodies of their fallen comrades.

Fighting with all he had, the Sky Hawk tottered and swayed. Wildly he grabbed at empty space to keep from falling. His brain wouldn't function. What had happened to him?

Down he wilted and lay flat on his face.

From somewhere a voice was calling to him, faint and distant. What was it saying? Something about a pellet. Ah! Feebly a hand groped for the gold chain about his neck, but couldn't make it.

There resounded a thundering, metallic voice over the plateau; a voice issuing from a collection of mammoth amplifying horns.

But the Sky Hawk didn't hear it.

Like A Tidal Wave Unuk's Hostile Warriors Closed In On O'Leary.

"The Mighty Unuk commands that all his humble servants charge the ship of the death-rays and take captive the white dog," boomed the voice. "Harm him not, so that he shall suffer the prolonged torture."

From every direction started a mad charge of thousands of copper-skinned warriors, shouting and cheering and brandishing weapons in the air.

Like a tidal wave the hordes of Unuk's soldiery rolled on toward the sky-monster until the ship was surrounded.

Of a sudden the ten mighty propellers emitted a thunderous roaring and a crescendo of deafening blasts resounded from the monster's exhausts.

Like the destroying juggernaut it was, the gigantic steel ship cut through the human walls barring its path. Mangled bodies were tossed about as are snowflakes in a tornado.

And so staggered into the reddened ceiling over the plateau Unuk's vandal of the skies; see-sawing, pitching, and floundering drunkenly.

At the controls was a red-headed American ace, his eyes glassy and his body twitching. Valiantly he fought a horrible smothering at his heart which made his breath come in short, wheezing gasps.

"Fer—Uncle Sam," dropped hoarsely from his blued lips. "Fer Uncle—Sam—damn ye Terence—fer—Uncle Sam."

As the ship lurched and rocked the inanimate bodies of the American crew tumbled and rolled and slid about as does a cargo broken loose in the hold of a ship caught in a storm.

With throttle wide open the ship rushed skyward in its crazy course.

Unuk cursed and shrieked and cackled, but to no avail.

There was no pursuing the escaping sky-engine, for on the discharge of the sleep-

ing-rays it had been in direct line with the three other ships of the yellowish-white eyes, and all the crews had been incapacitated. It would take at least twenty minutes to man the sky-monsters with fresh crews.

Now at least ten thousand feet high, the ship leveled off and, still staggering and lurching, flew around aimlessly in circles, its doughty pilot battling to regain his faculties.

FROM a firing-step of the temple McGuffly, although in the grip of despair, continued his vain search of the skies.

Kadii knelt beside him, silent and grave. Long since he had given up hope. Even the Warrior of the Crimson Hair could not be expected to perform miracles. Miracles were for gods, not for mortals.

"Come on, Terence," pleaded McGuffly. "The 'X' stands for excellent, big boy. Don't let 'em lick you, Sky Hawk. Come on, Terence, come on. Uncle Sam needs us."

Solemnly Kadii shook his head in resignation.

"O Warrior of America," he said to the suffering aviator, "too much time has passed. Long ere this the Warrior of the Crimson Hair would have appeared, if he had successfully negotiated the outlet."

"You are right, O Kadii."

McGuffly rose to his feet, exposing himself to Unuk's archers. An arrow whizzed past his head. He paid no attention to it.

"I shall attempt to swim the outlet. Will you guide me there, O Kadii?"

"Tarry, I command you, O Warrior of America." From behind them had sounded a musical, ringing voice. "If one's faith in good is strong enough, that faith can conquer all obstacles. Latea has spoken."

"My faith in my comrade has no bounds, O Gracious Princess."

McGuffy raised his arm in homage to the beautiful Latakian woman of the olive skin.

"Then do not allow that faith to falter, O Warrior of America."

"Right, Beautiful Lady."

McGuffy had spoken in English. He cupped hands to mouth and bellowed into the night, "Come on, you big baboon, I'm still betting my shirt on you."

In answer an awed muttering welled up to the temple from Unuk's regiments on the causeways. It grew and grew in volume until it resembled distant thunder.

McGuffy strained eyes into the blackness, but could see nothing. Then he heard the resonant hum of propellers and exhausts. Louder and louder!

"It's him!" he shouted. "It's *him!* The Sky Hawk is coming! *The Sky Hawk is coming!*"

"I thank thee, O God of the Sky."

The Princess Latea knelt and reverently touched her forehead to the stones.

DOWN out of the inky blanket of night roared O'Leary's ship and landed on the Lake of Whispering Waters. Between churning walls of water it raced toward the base of the temple. There it swished completely around in an immense lathering of spray and stopped, its ten propellers ticking.

"I'm coming, you Sky Hawk!"

In his joy and excitement McGuffy leaped down from the firing step, gathered the princess in his arms and planted a smacking kiss on her lips.

"So long, Beautiful Lady!" he cried. "We'll come back to Lataki!"

Kadii's sword flashed into hand. The heavy blade uplifted to strike he advanced on the aviator.

"Stop!" Latea commanded to him. "It may be a sacred custom of the far-off America. I accept his homage."

"Atta girl!" McGuffy turned and slapped Kadii on the back. "So long, Napoleon. And many thanks!"

Springing back on to the firing-step, he pushed aside a staring warrior, jumped down on the temple platform and ran to its dizzy edge, divesting himself of all but his kilts and sandals on the way.

Arms poised over head, his body curved down through the night and disappeared with a clean-cut splash into the waters so far below.

Frozen in their tracks and staring at the sky-monster riding the lake, Unuk's warriors had paid no heed to the diving man.

Close to the high priest's ship bobbed up a head.

From one of the port holes a waiting stalwart form in the uniform of an American army aviator thrust down a muscular arm and the swimmer was lifted aboard.

"You big baboon!" McGuffy's dripping face hid the tears running from his eyes. "I—I bet that quarter was double-headed."

"Ye—ye dirty bum!" choked O'Leary. "Ye think I'm a lousy chiseler like ye? The good saints ferbid."

McGuffy flashed a look around the cabin and pointed inquiringly to the bodies of the captive American crew.

"Sleep-rays, Pete. They'll come out o' it bye'n'-bye. The ray almost got me. I near missed the air lane too; was knocked about like a punchin' bag. But here I be. Slip that range-o-scope into place, thin git on that yellin' eye forward, while I'll handle the ship."

"Did you bring me some clothes?"

McGuffy and O'Leary were losing no time while they talked.

"Yeah, but I dropped 'em, Mr. Siptimber Morn."

"And me with nothing on but these lousy kilts?"

"There ain't no ladies around. Listen, ye blast the devil out o' the stadium whin I take off. It'll strike the fear o' the Sky God into Unuk's soldiers. Be shure'n not

hit 'em. We don't wanna murder the poor, misguided fools."

"Right. And then?"

"Through the air lane to smash Unuk's factories an' the ships ready to take off. After that, it's back to the good old U. S. A."

"And how, Sky Hawk!"

O'Leary gave the monster the gun. He threw a look back at the platform of the temple and nudged McGuffy.

On the dizzy edge of the platform stood the Princess Latea, a shapely arm extended in farewell to the departing warriors of America.

"Ain't she a honey!" ejaculated O'Leary in admiration.

"I'll say so! I *kissed* her goodbye."

"Now I'll tell one, ye cockeyed liar."

Up into the blackness thundered the sky-monster, flying east. At fifteen thousand feet it came about and headed due west.

As it winged above the amphitheatre it dipped nose. A blinding shaft of light shot downward with a terrific, unearthly screaming and the immense coliseum stronghold of Unuk, crumbled into clouds of swirling, twisting smoke, blown to atoms.

Zooming, the destroying sky-engine regained the altitude lost and flattened out, again headed due west.

"The baldfaced crag!" O'Leary pointed through a whirring propeller. "An' the conical peak right behind it. America ho!"

Unuk's Revenge

FLYING true as a rifle bullet, O'Leary had pointed the ship for the air lane and now held her on that course, the guiding marks one behind the other. McGuffy worked to get the range-o-scope into commission.

Seated on his stone dais, Unuk gazed out over the plateau. Whipped into obedience by the potent spell of the brain-serum, his warriors had resumed their cruel drilling. But the thirty-six robot-planes loaded with

explosives were missing, as were the three ships of the disintegrating rays.

Fearing to disconnect the death-ray barrier lest more mysterious bolts drop on him from the air, the high priest had ordered his messengers of destruction to take-off through the air lane on their lethal mission against the nation in the north. Consequently the ships had left much earlier than had been originally scheduled, due to the greater distance to be covered.

"How fast do my factories produce my ships of the sky?" Unuk glared at his under priest.

"Seven of the explosive-death each day, O Unuk. And one of the destroying-rays every moon, O Unuk."

"Double the production! Speed up the dogs of science with torture. Three moons hence I shall strike with a mighty armada, and that armada must be strong enough to paralyze forever the arrogant dogs of America."

"Strong enough to paralyze forever the arrogant dogs of America, O Unuk." Alok gazed nervously into the dancing red above him. "The sky-engine stolen by the white dog, O Unuk?"

"The child babbles again!" Savagely the high priest struck his underling on the mouth.

"The child babbles again, O Unuk, and has been punished."

Nevertheless the words of Alok had stirred the fear still lurking in his master's heart.

"Did we not see the white dog tumble out of sight?" cackled Unuk. "Was it not caught in the rays and destroyed? Even if it should return to America, what then? One against my armada. Were he alive, the white dog would not dare venture back to the plateau. The craven-hearted dog would—"

A loud, warning hum from the plane-detector made him swallow the rest.

Screeching in fright he deserted his throne and ran for the underground pas-

sage, Alok and the priests scampering after him.

From the lurid red ceiling over the plateau roared the sky-monster and turned toward the air field.

"Pete! Pete!" cried O'Leary in dismay. "We're too late. All the ships is took off fer America."

"Taken off? Then we've got to cut them off, Terence, *somehow!*"

"But the speed o' the death-ray ships is the same as ours," groaned O'Leary. "We're a lot faster than the robots, but lookit the start they've all got on us."

"We've got to do *something.*"

"Right, Pete. We'll blast the factories, thin take after thim an' trust in God."

"Go to it, Sky Hawk. There's nothing else left for us."

In reply O'Leary whipped around and headed for the concrete chimneys and flaring blast-furnaces. He paid no heed to the warriors so far below him, who had thrown down their arms and were staring up in terror at the winging juggernaut.

"Stand ready with the yeller eye, Pete, and don't miss. Knock 'em cockeyed. *Now!*"

Nosing over, O'Leary dived down at the factory town. McGuffey pulled a lever and projected the disintegrating rays from the forward knob.

The aviators gasped at the awful destruction. The shaft of blazing light streaked true to its target, the heart of the town, accompanied by that horrible mechanical screaming from the glaring, yellowish-white eye in the monster's nose.

Under the blast the huge concrete chimneys toppled and crashed, and the stone buildings melted like miniature wax structures subjected to the white-hot flame of a blow-torch.

Three times the air-monster circled over the town, diving and zooming and diving, its irresistible shaft of brilliance blasting into atoms all it struck.

Not daring to use up more time, O'Leary

winged away for the air lane, through which he must escape to commence his apparently hopeless race with Unuk's ships speeding to the United States.

In the wake of the sky-monster columns of smoke swirled skyward from the blasted town. Here and there a concrete chimney had been left standing and blast-furnaces still glared, but the might of Unuk had received a blow from which it would not recover soon.

AROUND and around winged O'Leary vainly looking for the air lane. Then an unnerving realization staggered him. While flying east, and also on the short trip west, the two guiding marks had been comparatively easy to steer by. But what mark beyond the conical peak should he use while flying west from the plateau?

"What's wrong, Terence?" anxiously inquired McGuffey, again trying to make the range-o-scope work.

"I—I think we're done fer, Pal. How we gonna fly *wist* through the rays, with nothin' to guide us?"

"We've just *got* to, Terence."

"All right, we'll gamble. I'll line the conical peak with the baldfaced crag behind us an' thin try an' fly by compass."

"But the compass is screwy. Look at it. You know the rays attract the needle."

"Yeah, I fergot. Anyway, here goes. I'll be me own compass. Hold tight!"

Resolutely O'Leary set his course and opened throttle wide, gambling with grim Death.

They almost had negotiated the fields of molten lava far beneath them when seemingly a thunderbolt struck the speeding ship.

O'Leary was knocked back against his seat and the controls were jerked out of his hands. The ship was tossed about as a terrier tosses a rat. It was all McGuffey could do to hold on. The insensible Americans were tumbled and thrown around.

O'Leary managed to regain his grip on

the controls, but to no avail. The mighty ship was at the mercy of the still mightier air currents.

Then the monster went into a spin. The boiling lava, whirling dizzily, rushed up to meet them.

By a superhuman effort O'Leary jerked her out and down she shot, screeching like a soul in torment.

In desperation, the Sky Hawk pulled back on the stick with all his strength. The answer was so unexpected that the monster nearly went over on its back. Expertly righting it, O'Leary flattened out. Steadily the ship winged along as if death-rays were unheard of. Although it had not actually been caught in them, it had come so close that another yard or so would have spelled destruction.

"Just like good old Lulu Belle!" The Sky Hawk felt as limp as a wet rag. "Ye done—it—sweetheart—ye done—it."

"You're a wiz—big boy!" gasped McGuffy. "A sure-enough wiz."

"Ye're tellin'—me?"

Silently the aviators offered up prayers of thanksgiving to their Maker for their miraculous escape.

Presently O'Leary dived sharply. McGuffy, his nerves still jumping, cried out in alarm.

"Grab a eyeful below," said O'Leary. "Murokaii an' his byes listenin' at us wing over."

"I'm no lousy cat." McGuffy sighed in relief.

"Won't hurt to salute 'em, Pete. Jist to let 'em know it's us."

"Sure! But *how*?"

"Thim pritty kilts o' yers. Skin 'em off, weight 'em, an' I'll dive lower. Thin ye drop yer teddies out. Murokaii will find 'em in the mornin'."

"And leave me in a pair of llama-skin shorts?"

"Fer good old Murokaii, Pete, o' the brilliant sinse o' humor."

When the ship had zoomed on its way

a pair of brightly colored kilts was left hanging in a tree in front of Murokaii's hut.

"I bet he'll parcel post 'em back to us," grinned O'Leary, "with a note of apology."

Not more than a few seconds had been wasted by their friendly gesture to the Latakian chieftain.

The smiles left their faces and they settled down to the grim chase in front of them, the ship winging due north at top speed.

McGuffy as yet had not got the range-oscope working.

"Ag'in I say, America ho!" cried O'Leary. "Show yer stuff, ye space-eater! Overtake the murderin' skunks."

O'Leary to the Rescue

NOW that the barriers of rays were far in the rear the compass functioned properly. Anxiously O'Leary's night-sight pierced the blackness hemming them in. There was nothing in the sky.

At the terrific rate of speed the ship was traveling the Pacific Ocean soon lay beneath him. It was what O'Leary had been waiting for to guide him. He changed his course to north by northwest.

Lataki, he long since had guessed, was somewhere in Peru, or in one of the neighboring South American countries.

Of a sudden he galvanized. The short wave set had gone into action. A tinny, guttural voice in the strange accent of the Latakian tongue was broadcasting.

"Lataki calling San Francisco."

The aviators froze into attitudes of listening.

"Lataki calling San Francisco." A rush of static. "Three ships of the disintegrating rays and thirty-six of the explosive-death, direction and timing as instructed, now in air en route to destroy San Francisco." More static.

"Frisco!" O'Leary pointed his ship due northwest. "O God."

"Due to a necessary delay the ships of



UNUK'S ROBOT PLANES OF EXPLOSIVE DEATH BLOW NEW YORK HARBOR AND THE STATUE OF LIBERTY TO FRAGMENTS WHILE THE PRIEST OF THE DEPTH GOD GLOATS

the explosive-death will not arrive at objective until daylight. The three ray-ships will destroy Pacific fleet as scheduled.

"The new ray-ship of the increased speed was stolen by two of Murokaii's American flyers. It partly destroyed factories. Now

believed to be returning to the United States.

"Warn the three ray-ships to be on the watch for it and to destroy it. Answer immediately you notify them, by command of the Mighty Unuk."



O'Leary and McGuffy exchanged tragic looks.

"Come on, sky elephant," coaxed O'Leary, hoarsely. "We gotta ketch the murderin' skunks."

"If—if I could only get this damned range-o-scope working," husked McGuffy. "Then we might locate them."

"Evin so, how kin we ketch up with 'em?"

"Are you forgetting what was said about the increased speed?"

"Geeze!"

Presently the short wave set hurled its answer back to Unuk.

"San Francisco calling Lataki." A loud crackling. "The ray-ships warned. Stolen ray-ship cannot escape their vigilance.

"American squadron known as Flight 13 of Black Wings just landed in area to be destroyed by robot-planes. Stand by for further information."

THEIR color gone, O'Leary and McGuffy bent to their respective jobs of steering and the range-o-scope.

O'Leary checked the speed chronometer of the ship.

"Pete," he gulped in amazement, "she's doin' better'n a thousand miles a hour, believe it or not.

"*A thousand miles!* Impossible."

"She is, Pete. We oughta run right over them robot-planes,"

Shaking his head in unbelief, McGuffy snapped a switch on the range-o-scope, then stared eagerly through the circular ground glass.

"She works, Terence!" he cried. "She works! But it's too dark to see anything."

"Take the controls. Keep her northwist."

They quickly exchanged places and O'Leary looked into the range-o-scope. His eyes lighted with a sudden fire.

"I see 'em!" he yelled. "The three ray-ships. North by northwist, Pete, an' not so far ahead. Give her iverythin' ye got!

Bust yersilf, baby, we've sighted the skunks."

O'Leary's joyful tidings left McGuffy speechless as he coaxed every iota of speed from the roaring monster.

"On the forward ray!" O'Leary took the controls away from McGuffy. "I don't need the range-o-scope. I kin see 'em now with me naked eye. An' they don't see us."

O'Leary swung due north and, bent forward in seat, peered through the port hole.

The three sky-monsters, unaware of the menace in their rear, seemed to be standing still, the manner in which O'Leary's ship overhauled them.

Then McGuffy saw them, betrayed by blue flames spitting from their exhausts. He told O'Leary.

"Git ready with the yellin' eye. The ship in the middle is our meat. I'm gonna climb right over it an' dive down on its tail. Knock hell out o' the skunk."

Up curved the attacking ship into the black sky. Its wings dipped.

That shaft of incandescent light, with the awful screaming, streaked from the nose of the diving ship.

McGuffy's target, on which he had registered a direct hit, split asunder in the blinding ray of light and shattered into tiny particles. These flying particles then magically changed into blobs of smoke, which the churning air currents swirled around and around.

The two surviving air-monsters, caught in the maelstrom of powerful currents, were tossed about as though they were but toys.

Suddenly they righted themselves and streaked in opposite directions, all their yellowish-white eyes spewing the blazing shafts.

Frantically their pilots whipped here and there, diving, zooming and turning in fruitless effort to locate in the pitch blackness the mysterious destroyer.

"How do ye like it?" hissed O'Leary. "Ye kin dish it out, but ye can't take—" His words were cut off by a startling

development. The night, in a large area, had suddenly turned into blazing noon. The sky was filled with floating white lights which almost blinded him.

"Okay! Two ag'in one! Suits me. But David is got it on ye in speed, Goliaths."

Then followed an appalling spectacle which caused short wave sets to flash around the world news of the strange pyrotechnic display occurring in the skies.

It appeared as though all the fiery comets known, and unknown, to astrologists had massed over the Pacific and were engaged in a battle of extinction among themselves.

Then abruptly the phenomenon faded, the floating points of brilliance died and only two blobs of swirling smoke were left.

"And that's that!" O'Leary wiped his forehead. "It was hell while it lasted."

"Phew!" McGuffy wet his parched lips. "It's the closest to death I ever want to come."

"But we saved the Pacific fleet for Uncle Sam, Pete."

"Thank God, yes."

"Now if we kin only overhaul them robot-things aimed at Frisco. Cripes, it's gittin' light. Daybreak'll soon be here."

"And they are to strike around daybreak," groaned McGuffy.

"The range-o-scope, Pete! Keep yer eye peeled on it for the skunks."

"It's gone blooey again, Terence."

"Thim air currints was enough to wreck anythin', I guess. I feel kind o' blotto mesilf."

With gazes strained in front of them, the flyers scanned the lightening skies.

NEAR a hangar of a U. S. air field across the bay from San Francisco stood a group of air and navy high officials talking in anxious voices.

The coming day was streaking the east. In the uncertain light could be dimly seen a squadron of ships warming up to take off.

Overhead the air now and then hummed

as a plane on night patrol flew over the large field.

"There is no doubt, Admiral Benton," said General Merton, Chief of the U. S. Air Force, "that the strange phenomena over the Pacific is connected in some way with the activities of our mysterious air enemies."

"It looks that way, General Merton. What terrible catastrophe is in store for us now, I wonder. I hardly believe the country can stand another. It again is on the verge of a general panic. If that happens, what then?"

"Yes, what then?" The air chief sighed dismally. "A nation in the throes of terror needs no outside influence to smash it."

"The morale of the fleet has reached the crumbling point, officers and men alike. Can't blame them, poor fellows, helpless as they are against the destruction liable to crash down on them at any time. If they only were able to fight it."

"That's it, exactly! Were we able to fight it?"

"The morale of the Black Wings seems to be high." The admiral took in the field with the sweep of an arm. "A marvelous air unit."

"They don't make them any better, Benton. Still, they are not so optimistic as they appear. Underneath their veneer is a decided uneasiness. Their morale is liable to crack any minute. The death of Captains O'Leary and McGuffy was a great blow to the Black Wings. Those two dare-devils were the life of the outfit, and the mainstay."

"God Almighty, will you look!"

The terrified cry rang out from a hangar. "That thing coming out of the south!"

High in the sky roared one of Unuk's monstrous robot-destroyers. And far in rear of it came another.

Frozen with horror, white faces stared up into the dawn from hangars and field.

Then the indomitable spirit of the famous Black Wings asserted itself.

A pilot, although his color had blanched, shouted hoarsely:

"Into the air and get 'em, Black Wings. We can do it."

The spell of terror was broken. Pilots ran to their ships and those already waiting in cockpits opened throttles. The ticking propellers roared and dust whirled and eddied in the wash of the taking-off planes.

Thundering like an express train the thing in the sky streaked over the field. Suddenly it dived and with a weird screaming shot down into the bay far beyond.

A muffled detonation reverberated lowly on the early morning air.

Then over came the second thing with a deafening roar, to shoot down from the sky as had the other.

A mighty flash, then a terrific blast made the ground shake. High into the air shot a column of shattered stone and twisted steel girders. Several blocks away a nine-story building had been destroyed.

Then still another of the things thundered over and, screaming insanely, dived into a residential street.

AFTER the resultant staggering flash it seemed that the world had split wide open. The walls of the doomed houses buckled and fell with resounding crashes amid clouds of dust and smoke.

Terrified people, some unclad, pouring out of the undestroyed houses ran shrieking in all directions.

The valiant Black Wings, now in the air, raced to meet others of the monsters rushing out of the south.

"Isn't it awful?" groaned the air chief. "How—how can we fight such destruction?"

"We—we can't, Merton," gasped the admiral. "We just *can't*."

Then a heroic deed was enacted in the skies. A Black Wing pilot purposely collided, head on, with one of the monsters.

A searing sheet of fire was followed by a clap of thunder. When the smoke had

cleared the Black Wing ship had disappeared, and with it the phantom-destroyer.

"God, what heroism!" cried the admiral. "But how futile!"

"See, more are coming!" Tragically the air chief lifted a pointing arm into the south. "San Francisco will be wiped out in a shambles of blood and fire."

Machine guns stuttering, the valiant Black Wing pilots tried to bring down two more of the air vandals as they streaked by. They just as well had spared their efforts, for all the good accomplished.

From across the bay resounded two explosions that echoed ominously.

"Look, Merton, will you look?" Admiral Benton seized an arm of the Air Chief. "Appalling! We are—are doomed."

"The thing that sunk the battle-cruisers." The air chief's eyes were wide and staring. "The ship of the disintegrating rays. What a horrible thing it is!"

"Merton, it is the end," choked the admiral. "The end of the United States. The country never will recover from this awful—"

"My God! My God!" General Merton's outstretched arm trembled and shook. "Look! Look! What is it doing?"

"I—I don't—don't know—I—"

Like a giant projectile fired from a mammoth cannon, the thing had streaked across the sky directly in the path of more of the oncoming robot-destroyers.

The Black Wing ships, appearing like gnats in comparison with the sky Goliath, had buzzed after the monster, their machine guns hammering.

But that was not what had brought the wondering outcry from the air chief. From the nose of the Goliath had shot a shaft of dazzling brilliance, accompanied by an ear-splitting screaming. And the two leading robot-destroyers had exploded with mighty concussions of flame and smoke.

The Black Wing pilots, probably dazed and confused, still buzzed around the Goliath, pecking at it with their machine

guns. The monster paid no more attention to them than does a fighting mastiff pay attention to fleas.

Petrified with mingled hope and amazement, for miles around thousands of souls watched the terrible drama in the heavens.

That awful thing actually was destroying its own kind; was fighting on the side of the United States.

Throats choked up and eyes filled with tears of thanksgiving.

People knelt and prayed to their Maker. Others shouted and cheered. Some cursed in their joy and excitement. The majority, however, stood astounded, unable to grasp the significance of what was happening.

"Thirty-three!" The air chief was counting out loud mechanically, not conscious of the fact. "Thirty-four!"

Another of the robot-planes was blasted into smoke by the Goliath.

"Thirty-five!"

A detonating explosion reverberated in the skies.

"Thirty-six! Altogether thirty-six came over."

"What—what did you say, Merton?"

"Thirty-six! Thirty-six! Are you deaf?"

"The Black Wings have killed it!" Admiral Benton caught hold of the air chief for support. "It is crashing—it is *crashing!*"

"Look out!" thundered a voice. "It's coming down, right on top of us."

There followed a mad scampering to get out of danger.

Over and over hurtled the sky Goliath as it fell from the heavens, the Black Wings,

their machine guns yammering, following it down. The monster was doomed.

About a thousand feet from earth it neatly came out of its fall, leveled off, and made a perfect landing on the field.

It taxied up to the admiral and the air chief. They were too frozen with wonder and incredulity to run.

A DOOR of the metal hulk flew open and a grinning, red-headed Mick leaped out. Behind him followed another Harp, clad only in shorts of sheepskin.

"O'Leary?" gasped the air chief. "McGuffey?"

"Who was ye ixpictin', Gin'ral?"

"Please pardon my scanty raiment," said McGuffey. "But this lousy baboon left my pants hanging in a tree near Lataki."

"Gin'ral Merton," cut in O'Leary, "back in Washin'ton, many moons ago, me an' Pete promised to stick by ye if ye iver got in a jam. Have we delivered?"

"I—I—what—what—?" It was all the air chief could muster in speech.

"Thin perhaps ye kin tell us how the rose garden o' the Prisdint's wife is comin' along. Shure an' we came back to water it."

"O'Leary? McGuffey? Am I seeing things?"

"Ye ain't seein' much on Pete, Gin'ral. He's kind o' bare."

Suddenly O'Leary grew serious.

"Gin'ral, we got a lot o' things to tell ye. Where kin we do it? After that, I'm thinkin' me an' Pete and some Black Wings will make another trip to Lataki for Uncle Sam."

ANOTHER BIG NOVEL NEXT MONTH

O'LEARY, DYNO-BLASTER

OR

ADVENTURE OF THE AGELESS MEN

By **ARTHUR GUY EMPEY**

WAR BIRDS

THE COCKPIT

THE HANGAR OF THE WAR BIRDS

THIS IS THE MEETING PLACE OF THE "WAR BIRDS" FLYING CLUB. EACH MONTH NEWS OF THE ORGANIZATION AND MEMBERS WILL BE DISCUSSED.

THE C.O.'S MESSAGE

BIG NEWS

Gentlemen:

The war is over. We have come to our own Armistice Day and this should be an historic meeting. By the expressed will of you who make the WAR BIRDS, we have put a period to the tales of a war that was settled seventeen years ago, to the ancient hates and the ancient feuds. A new spirit is dawning for the members of this organization.

We are proud of those days that are done. We do honor to the heroes of the great war and we feel that we have profited by our study of it. We do not want to see the spirit that sent young boys into flaming skies die out. We will continue to boost

every movement for the development of a greater patriotism or for the preservation of those traditions which made American boys and men fling aside personal ambition to serve the cause of country in a crisis. We are forsaking none of those things for which the WAR BIRDS have stood since their first meeting.

We do not believe, however, that we need wars to develop the qualities of heroism nor that it is necessary to pit one's strength against the champions of another nation in order to prove that strength. If there is one thing that all of us have learned from our study of the World War, it is that

(Turn to page 116)

THE ADJUTANT,
WAR BIRDS,
149 Madison Ave.,
New York City, N. Y.

MARCH, 1935

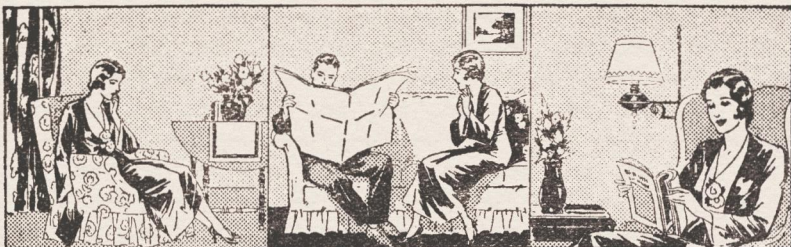
I would like to become a WAR BIRD but do not wish to take the examination for a commission at this time. Please enroll me in the Non-Com's Mess.

Age..... Name.....

Street or Post Office Box.....

City or Town and State.....

Best two stories in this issue. 1..... 2.....



I was so lonely and friendless, a newcomer to town. Neighbors had made their polite calls, but I noticed they never came again.

The nights were so long and dull. My husband hid behind his paper, bored and unhappy. I was almost desperate myself.

One day I read how a lonely woman became popular by learning to play through the U. S. School Home Study Course. I sent for details.



When I found how simple this short-cut to music was I sent for the course. It was fun to learn. Before long I was playing tunes. But I didn't tell Bob.



Then came our party. When I sat down at the piano and played, a ray, peppy tune, Bob was dumb-founded—but the party was "made."



Now we're invited everywhere. They call me "the life of the party" with my music. I'm so happy I learned this easy U. S. School way.

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This new "print-and-picture" method is literally as easy as A-B-C. The U. S. School simplified instructions, written by expert teachers, first tell you what to do. Then a picture shows you what to do. Then you do it yourself and hear it. No possibility of mistakes because the diagrams are right before you every step of the way.

And you learn so much more quickly by this newly perfected

method than was possible in the old-fashioned, tiresome, scale-practicing way. Now you play real tunes almost from the start—*by note*. Every lesson is a fascinating game and you can actually hear yourself make progress. No teacher to fuss you. No wearying scales to plague you. No interference with business or pleasure, because you choose your own time at home.

New Joys For You

Just imagine yourself the center of a jolly, enthusiastic crowd, playing the season's latest song or dance hit. Or turning to the classics and re-

creating the masterpieces of the world's greatest composers, making them live again with your own talent. Think of what it means to have the pleasures and the solace of music at your instant command, ready always to bring variation and color into your life.

As a musician, too, there should be many an opportunity to earn good money by your playing. Thousands of our pupils have done this and thus paid for their U. S. School course many times over. Many have organized their own orchestras and entered a profitable musical career.

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Prove to yourself without cost how easily and quickly you can learn to play. Send today for our booklet, "How You Can Master Music in Your Own Home." With it comes a Free Demonstration Lesson which shows graphically how simple this expert home instruction really is. You'll see how easily you can become an accomplished musician, as many thousands of others have.

You owe it to yourself to get this valuable booklet and Demonstration Lesson at once. No obligation whatever on your part. Be sure to mail the coupon TODAY. U. S. School of Music, 4443 Brunswick Bldg., New York City.

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Please send me your free book, "How You Can Master Music in Your Own Home," with inspiring message by Dr. Frank Crane, Free Demonstration Lesson and particulars of your easy payment plan. I am interested in the following course:

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Voice and Speech Culture	
Harmony and Composition	
Drums and Traps	
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there were great men, heroic men and patriots on both sides. The pity of it was that worth while men had to kill one another when so many worthless individuals in all of the competing nations survived.

Your letters have called our attention to that fact. You have protested against the necessity in war fiction for clothing all of the men of any nation with the cloak of villainy. You recognized the necessity for presenting villains in tales of adventure but the war-air story narrowed the fields of villainy. You have felt that the picture was not always true; that noble men should be pitted against men who had forsaken the standards of honor—and that the war story did not always permit that.

Reading your letters up here at H.Q., we realized that something must be done to satisfy your sense of fair play, the new and tolerant spirit that was growing up as the soul of the WAR BIRDS.

We are proud of the development of character and the sense of fairness and justice within the organization and we do not want to run counter to that development in the fiction fare that we set before you.

We read your letters and with them before us had many conferences—and still another thing came out of those letters.

We found that to you, Terence X,

O'Leary represented the spirit of adventure, of dauntless, reckless, laughing courage. You wanted more of him. You wanted longer yarns. You wanted Terence X. O'Leary serials but you didn't want to wait two months or three for the climax. Moreover, you wanted The Sky Hawk pitted against his natural foes—the evil, the scheming and the vicious. You did not want him forever pitted against a nation with which we had ceased to be unfriendly.

It was a big problem that your letters put up to us. We have tried to answer it and the answer is in your hands, **TERENCE X. O'LEARY'S WAR BIRDS.**

We think that you are going to be delighted with the new WAR BIRDS and with the modern spirit of it, the singing adventure that swings away from the barbarity of war and that takes you on flights of imagination where men do brave deeds unafraid—not waiting for the accident of war, but taking their adventure where they find it.

There may never be another war. The success of the League of Nations in settling the recent hard feeling in the Balkans gave hope to the world. We who knew one war, hope that the senseless slaughter will not occur again. But should it occur, it will

(Turn to page 119)

WING COMMANDER,
140 MADISON AVENUE,
NEW YORK, N. Y.

March, 1935

I hereby apply for membership in *WAR BIRDS*. I understand that I must successfully pass the required examinations to qualify and I promise to obey the rules of the organization if successful in winning my wings.

If booklets are requested, mark titles below and enclose five cents for postage for each booklet. They will help you pass your examinations. I enclose 15c. for my *WAR BIRDS* wings. (Members only)

My flight number is.....My rank is.....

Age.....Name.....

Pilot?.....Street or P. O. Box.....

World War Veteran?.....City or Town.....

Best story in.....State.....

this issue.....2nd Best.....

Check booklets below—

"Archy"—()

"Plane Facts"—()

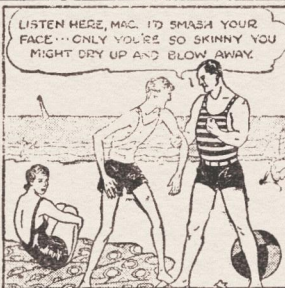
"War Planes"—()

"Synthetic Aces"—()

THE INSULT THAT MADE A MAN OUT OF "MAC"



HEY! QUIT KICKING THAT SAND IN OUR FACE!



LISTEN HERE, MAC. I'D SMASH YOUR FACE... ONLY YOU'RE SO SKINNY YOU MIGHT DRY UP AND BLOW AWAY.



SEE YOU LATER, GIRLIE...



THE BIG BULLY! I'LL GET EVEN SOME DAY

OH DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU, LITTLE BOY!

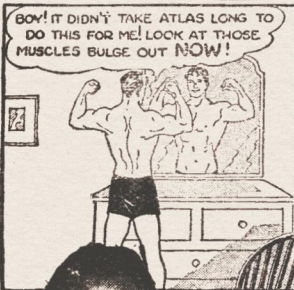


IT WAS NICE TO MEET YOU, GRACE. CAN I - ER - COME AROUND SOME EVENING?

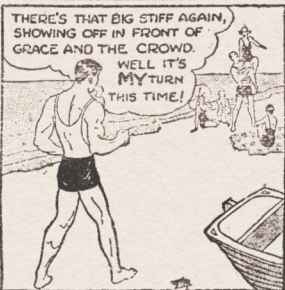
NO, I'M AFRAID NOT, I'M PRETTY BUSY, GOOD BY!



DARN IT! I'M SICK AND TIRED OF BEING A SCARECROW! CHARLES ATLAS SAYS HE CAN GIVE ME A REAL BODY, ALL RIGHT! I'LL GAMBLE A STAMP AND GET HIS FREE BOOK!



BOY! IT DIDN'T TAKE ATLAS LONG TO DO THIS FOR ME! LOOK AT THOSE MUSCLES BULGE OUT NOW!



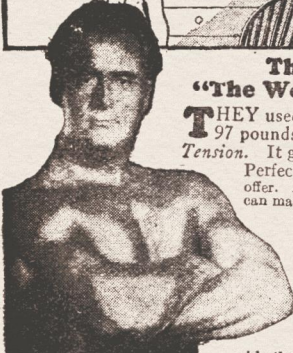
THERE'S THAT BIG STIFF AGAIN, SHOWING OFF IN FRONT OF GRACE AND THE CROWD.

WELL IT'S MY TURN THIS TIME!



WHAM! - NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO DRY UP AND BLOW AWAY!

OH MAC! YOU ARE A REAL MAN AFTER ALL!



The 97-lb. Weakling Who Became "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"

THEY used to think there wasn't much hope for me. I weighed only 97 pounds. I was a sickly scarecrow. Then I discovered *Dynamic-Tension*. It gave me the body that twice won the title, "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man." Now I make you this amazing offer. At my own risk I'll give you **PROOF** in just 7 days that my same method can make you over into a **NEW MAN** of giant power and energy.



FREE BOOK

I'LL PROVE You Can Have a Body Like Mine!

No. "It's"—"and's"—or "maybes." Just tell me where you want handsome, steel-like muscles. Are you fat and flabby? Or skinny and gawky? Are you short-winded, peepless? Do you hold back and let others walk off with the prettiest girls, the best jobs? Give me just 7 days! I'll PROVE that *Dynamic-Tension* without any pills or unnatural dieting or weights and pulleys that may strain your heart or other vital organs—can make you a healthy, confident, powerful **HE-MAN!** In just a few minutes a day! Mail Coupon NOW for my illustrated book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." Tells all about *Dynamic-Tension*. Shows actual photos. It's a valuable book! And it's FREE. Send for your copy today. Address me personally: Charles Atlas, Dept. 225, 115 E. 23rd St., New York, N. Y.

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115 East 23rd Street, New York, N. Y.

I want the proof that your system of *Dynamic-Tension* will make a New Man of me—give me a healthy, husky body and big muscle development. Send me your free book, "Everlasting Health and Strength."

Name..... (Please print or write plainly)

Address.....

City..... State.....

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CHARLES ATLAS
Holder of the title: "The World's Most Perfectly Developed Man"
HE-MAN! In just a few minutes a day! Mail Coupon NOW for my illustrated book, "Everlasting Health and Strength." Tells all about *Dynamic-Tension*. Shows actual photos. It's a valuable book! And it's FREE. Send for your copy today. Address me personally: Charles Atlas, Dept. 225, 115 E. 23rd St., New York, N. Y.

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ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

Zooming Rockets! Ray-O-Vators! You'll Bust Your Gee-String When You Fly With O'Leary And McGuffy Through New Perils That Are Strange And Terrible. There Is A Thrill On Every Page Of Next Month's Matchless Novel. Meet O'Leary In New Danger Skies.

IN NEXT MONTH'S

Terence X.
O'Leary's
WAR BIRDS
ON SALE EVERYWHERE MARCH 8

not be to the aging heroes of yesterday that we will have to look to warriors in the crisis. America will have to stand against any new menace on the strength of men who have met adventure bravely in the days of peace when no bugles blew to urge them on and when only the piping song of courage in a man's own heart was needed to bring out all of the qualities which other men showed in the days when the world ran red.

It is of such adventures and such adventures only that the new WAR BIRDS will speak. We stand, as we have done since the beginning, as a unique organization dedicated to patriotism and to the advancement of aviation. We have our ever expanding roll call of War Bird Flights, our ever increasing membership. We are proud of what we have been and of what we are. We are going to grow greater and, if we have changed, it is only in our entertainment demands. We have asked for a different brand of story and we have it.

Another thing, we will have a contest each month upon which you can sharpen your wits. We are going to have worthwhile cash prizes, special stunts of one kind and another; bigger and better features in the department.

So here we are in a brand new year with a new program ahead of us that is as modern as tomorrow's newspaper—a magazine crammed with more thrills than any on the market and the good old WAR BIRD organization that can always be trusted to tell us when we are wrong, to guide us into what it wants, to suggest and to cooperate.

You lads out front—as I've said a dozen times—have made this organization and you've made this magazine. As it stands today, I know you will be proud of it.

Watch for my very special announcement next month and, in the meantime, let us have your opinions as always,

Hail and salute,

THE C. O.

(Turn to page 121)



WHO WANTS TO MARRY A GIRL?

CERTAINLY, there is a girl you want to marry! But how are you ever going to make this dream come true on the money you're making? The wonder is not new to you, is it? **Quit wondering—start acting!** Thousands of men have acted by making themselves worth more money by acquiring more training for the job at hand and the job ahead. They have gotten this training in spare time. Their very first step was mailing this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools at Scranton. Why don't you do it?

INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOLS

"The Universal University" Box 5937-U, Scranton, Penna.
Without cost or obligation, please send me a copy of your booklet, "Who Wins and Why," and full particulars about the subjects before which I have marked X:

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If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada



WHEN SKY RAYS DESTROY

IT is written in history that a man looked on Robert Fulton's steamboat as it went up river on its first trip and said: "It isn't possible."

There are still a few people in this country of ours who look upon the automobile as a chariot of the devil and refuse to ride in it.

There are those, too, who will look at the picture on this page of a sky dreadnaught blasting a modern aircraft out of existence with a disintegrating ray and say: "It isn't possible."

Yet it is possible! Scientists have already destroyed objects by means of heat rays. This very week a German inventor comes forward with a ray pistol. He claims it is capable of stunning a human or animal at a distance of a mile and a half!

They laughed at Jules Verne when he envisioned the submarine and the airplane before these conveniences of today were invented. They laughed at his descriptions of the airplane and submarine, yet Verne described almost every detail of the modern

airplane and submarine before they were invented.

It is not too much to expect that we of this generation will see such sky monsters as the one depicted on this page. It may be only a matter of months until we do. Even now plans are being drawn for ships to carry mail and passengers through the stratosphere over our country and to foreign capitals at hundreds of miles an hour.

Combine one of these stratosphere crafts now in process of construction and the ray gun of the German inventor, and what do we have?

The answer is:

We have the ship you see on the cover of this magazine.

Each month will see a procession of interesting, thrilling ships and inventions in this magazine. You can keep up to the events of today with a daily newspaper. To get the news of tomorrow read **TERENCE X. O'LEARY'S WAR BIRDS**, Tell your friends about us!



Whoosh, Me lads—

After all the grand English in the C.O.'s speech, the poor old Adjutant is going to sound like Uncle Pete's wife from the old country. The officers can leave this meeting right away because, after hearing from the C.O., they aren't going to like it. But you, me fine rednecks, will have to like it—

You've got a book in your hand now that you've practically made by yourselves. The C.O. has a lot of fine explanations for why you feel the way you do—but the old Adj. was raised in a Non-Com's Mess and we were never asked for fine explanations. We were told what was what and we did our own figuring. The way I see it, you lads were just getting tired of trying to get a kick out of something that happened to a lot of other fellows a long time ago, and you want more thrills per gallon. Also, you don't want the same war featured in every story. That's the lowbrow, Non-Com slant of it, but I don't play by the notes—I play by ear.

All right, all right. Anybody that don't like catch as catch can music is excused—but it's reasonable.

Personally, I'm not going to talk about a book that talks for itself. I'd rather just gab a bit. There's the lad in the Bronx, for instance. I want to talk about him. Just turn to his ad in the swap column and read it. He's afflicted with fish. Brethern, I wish I could run his letter in here. It would break your heart.

It seems that the brother got himself two

(Turn to page 122)

**BE A
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*Earn
big pay*

LEARN IN 10 WEEKS

I'll Finance Your Training



Come to Coyne now! Get your training in the World's most fascinating, best paid profession. I train you at Coyne in a practical way so you can be prepared to take a real job and cash in quickly and, I'll FINANCE YOUR TRAINING. Two months after you are trained you can start paying me back in easy monthly payments from your earnings. Take over a year to pay AFTER training. Mail the H. C. LEWIS coupon today for details of this plan.

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Prepare for jobs as Designer, Inspector and Tester—as Radio Salesman and in Service and Installation—as Operator or Manager of a Broadcasting Station—as Wireless Operator on a Ship or Airplane—as a Talking Picture or Sound Engineer—HUNDREDS of Opportunities for fascinating, WELL PAID JOBS!

10 WEEKS' SHOP TRAINING AT COYNE IN CHICAGO—YOU DON'T NEED ADVANCED EDUCATION OR EXPERIENCE

I don't teach by book study. You get your training at Coyne by ACTUAL WORK on a great outlay of Radio; Broadcasting, Television, Talking Picture and Code equipment. And because we cut out useless theory, you get a practical training in 10 weeks, and that is why you don't need advanced education or previous experience.

TALKING PICTURES—TELEVISION

Talking Pictures, and address systems offer great opportunities to the trained man. Television is the great new branch of Radio which is now being developed very rapidly. Be ready for your chance in Television. At Coyne you are trained on real Talking Picture and Television equipment.

Electric Refrigeration—Air Conditioning

Included at NO EXTRA COST
So that my graduates may have an all around training which increases their earning capacity, I am including for a short time my big new course in Electric Refrigeration and Air Conditioning. Here is your chance to get a practical training in this great new field at no additional cost.

MANY EARN WHILE LEARNING

WHEN YOU ENROLL AT COYNE YOU GET A LIFE SCHOLARSHIP. You get Free Employment Service for Life after graduation. And if you need part-time work while at school to help pay expenses, I'll help you get it if you will tell me your problems. Coyne is 36 years old. Coyne Training is tested—you find out everything about my course and my "pay after graduation plan" free. JUST MAIL Coupon for my BIG FREE BOOK.

H. C. LEWIS, President

**Radio Div., COYNE Electrical School
500 S. PAULINA ST., Dept. 35-3C, CHICAGO, ILL.**

**H. C. LEWIS, President
Radio Division, Coyne Electrical School
500 S. Paulina St., Dept. 35-3C, Chicago, Ill.**

Dear Mr. Lewis: Send me your Big Free Radio Book and all details of your Special Introductory Offer—and your plan where I can pay my tuition in easy monthly payments after I graduate.

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Address.....
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HA HA!
HA HA!

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WRITE INTERSTATE AID ASS'N, Dept. E-2, 75 E. Wacker, Chicago.

Make Money at Home
Grow Mushrooms in your cellar or shed. Exclusive new process. Bigger, better, quicker crops. More money for you! Enormous new demand. Write for Free Book, American Mushroom Industries, Dept. 980, Toronto, Ont.

fish and figured that a couple of fish would be good for whatever fish are good for.

He never stopped to figure that two fish are never satisfied to be just two fish. (My own idea is that that's what is the matter with the world, but never mind.) Anyway, these fish had ideas—or maybe the lad covered them at night with a newspaper that had an account of these famous Dionne quintuplets. Anyway, fish started to happen. And they kept on happening.

At the present moment, the brother is running out of glass bowls and whatnots and yelling for help. It will be quite a while before this magazine hits the stands, too, so I shudder to think of what will be happening in the Bronx by the time you read this.

There's no telling what a bunch of tropical fish will do with a good head start. I don't think I want to know. This first letter of his was appalling enough. I doubt if the brother will be able to take a bath until he gets help.

So, you lads from the Bronx—rally around and get yourself some of these fish. The lad's address is in his ad and one of the many curses of fish is the fact that you can't ship them. He says he will gladly deliver them personally. So—need I say more?

Oh. Oh. The C. O. just stopped by and he had an unkind look in his eye. He doesn't go for this idea of the Adjutant being kindhearted with WAR BIRD space, so I'll have to do more than just help a brother out. Stick around. I'm going to spin a parable out of the brother's troubles.

Just thinking of those fish reminds me of the problems that confront us up here at H.Q. Once a few ideas get to banging around in the WAR BIRDS organization, there's no telling how many you will have. We started simply and easily and we're a big outfit now with Flights happening every day, new members ganging in and ideas

picking up momentum so fast that the whole picture changes in a few months.

Take Terence X. O'Leary for instance. He started kind of slow and easy and just a few fellows wrote in—then blooie! It had to be more and more Terence—until you lads didn't even think a war was rough enough for such a staunch citizen. Now—well just watch and see what he does to the new picture. You've given him room and that's all he needed (like those Bronx fish). His troubles will be multiplying like the roll call of the Non-Com Mess and the more trouble for Terence, the more thrill for you. And that's the idea—

Speaking of the Non-Com Mess, that multiplying business is no joke. The Adjutant has had to sit up with ice packs on his head to keep him awake while he mailed out memberships this last month. I never saw anything like it. For some reason, you lads out front broke down, chucked the bashfulness and came a flocking.

I'm glad to see you, glad to welcome you in—and, Boys, we have got only a few hundred more to go before we are as numerous as the officers. That shiny booter from California is heckling me again and he still thinks my meetings are a disgrace and that the Non-Com's Mess is a blot on the face of a civilized world. But you boys have been rallying around and joining up, so the C.O. doesn't say much.

Come on, can't we make it a few hundred more? Do it, and I'll tell you the lad's name.


Yours for fewer fish,
THE ADJ.

WANT A MACHINE GUN?

MAJOR ANTHONY FIALA of Fiala Outfits, Inc., 47 Warren St., N. Y. City, has recently secured for sale to collectors a few of the Government 11 m/m Vickers machine guns in the aircraft model. These relics are interesting for the collector or for the club and originally cost

(Turn to page 124)

"I'M GLAD I LEARNED DRAFTING AT HOME BY MAIL. I PREPARED IN TIME"



A Good Job Soon!

For MORE PAY learn DRAFTING FROM AN ENGINEER

GET READY for Prosperity. Aviation, automobiling, electricity, machinery, building lines and other industries are now calling for draftsmen. Many new draftsmen will soon be needed. Be ready for Big Pay. Engineer Dobe will train you at your home by mail until you get that good job or will prepare you for better pay on the job you have. That's my written guarantee to you. All tools and drawing table sent at once if you enroll now. (Est. 1900).

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This book explains "My Pay-Raising Plan". It tells you how I help you find a real opportunity in any one of many big industries. NOW is the time to prepare for that job. **TODAY**—is the time to write for this free book! (No obligations).

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Write for catalog of Rifles, Guns, Colts, S. & W. Binoculars, etc. \$2 Deposit required on C.O.D.'s
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the United States Government something in excess of \$700 each. Major Fiala is selling these while they last for \$7.75, a remarkably low price.

All parts of this machine gun are in position and it is in full working order except that it has been spiked by the Government to prevent its ever being used to fire ammunition. Only under these conditions can machine guns be owned by individuals, and each gun bears a tag stating that it was mutilated by the United States Army.

This Vickers Aircraft model was considered the best machine gun used during the World War until the advent of the American Browning. It was used by several nations, including England, France, Russia and the United States. The 11 m/m model, however, was designed especially by the Army Air Service to use with a large caliber (.43) incendiary bullet against observation and other balloons, as it was found that small calibers often failed to ignite the enemy gas bags, merely poking a small hole through them.

The Government has sprung the barrel out of line on these guns so that it could not be used in firing. Certain minor parts in the action are also mutilated to prevent operation, but the mechanism can be operated "dry" and is in excellent condition, so that students of machine guns can acquire excellent dismounting practice in working with these. The complete gun has no sights as it was designed for rigid mounting on aircraft to fire through a rotating propeller. The synchronizing gears come with the gun.

This is the most unusual wartime relic we have seen made available to the public. It must have cost the Government more to do the "no-shoot doctoring" on each gun than they got out of the sale of them.

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stored in perfect condition. The recent advent of the new Army .50 caliber machine gun made these models obsolete.



CITATIONS AND PROMOTIONS

Note—A citation is not a promotion but each citation goes into the service record and counts in the officer's favor when names come up for the promotion lists. The following officers are cited in this month's orders:

The following officers and non-commissioned officers are cited for exceptional service in this month's orders:

- Second Lieutenants: Aloysius La Marsh, 50 Sq.
 Clyde Calvert, 22 Sq.
 Edward Allen, 1 Sq.
 Patrick Friscia, 1 Sq.
 Harry C. Fetter, 5 Sq.
 C. Carter, 45 Sq.
 Helen Hoffman, 43 Sq.
 Chas. E. Shanley, 5 Sq.
 Bob Roach, 38 Sq.

- Corporals: W. Swanson, 43 Sq.
 C. Dittman, 43 Sq. (Promotion to Sergeant approved effective February 1, 1935.)
 J. J. Carlin, 1 Sq.
 Chas. Cross, 25 Sq.
 Vale M. Barnes, 11 Sq.
 John Fiorilla, 3 Sq.
 George Horn, 5 Sq.
 C. G. Mrowiec, 34 Sq.
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(Turn to page 126)

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Dick Sweeney, 11 Broad Street, Truro, Nova Scotia, Canada, will trade a French officer's hat, badge of the Black Watch, buttons, etc., for a helmet of any kind.

Reeve Barrow, 2148 Government Street, Baton Rouge, La., will draw a comic pen and ink sketch from photograph and return your photograph unharmed for a dollar, or what have you?

William Sorenson, 3840 Palmer Street, Chicago, Ill., will swap a 37 mm. shell, enlarge your plans or build six-inch models to order for what have you?

John H. Good, P. O. Box 4, Beauharnois, P. Q., Canada, will exchange stamps, air mail and others. Send a hundred and receive like number in return.

David E. Bryant, 118½ E. Coneho Street, San Angelo, Texas, has sheet balsa, tissue wheels, prop, cement, etc., for what have you?

Charles Shanley, 16A Gray Street, Jersey City, N. J., has a number of German and American helmets, bayonets, gas masks, iron crosses, Spanish war trophies, etc., to trade for Cleveland kits or plans, true war time books on aviation, Luger or Mauser pistols, crosses from planes, stamps, or what have you?

R. L. Pohlman, 3854 No. Richmond Street, Chicago, Ill., has airplane pictures, plans, maga-

zines, models and 1914 book showing early type airplanes, motors, dirigibles. Wants guns or war relics.

Walter Ketcham, North Miami, Florida, has good plans for Pfalz scout, Fokker D-7 and S.E. 5 to trade for plans of Spad, Nieuport, Camel or Albatross.

John Erickson, 461 Dean Street, Brooklyn, N. Y., would like German trench equipment from World War, especially pickelhaube helmet for an American gas mask in good condition (or will pay cash for good equipment).

William F. Tobin, Dooittle Lake, Norfolk, Conn., has 90 cards to swap for a German Mauser rifle or iron cross.

Michel Hoslov, 5019 Louis Venillot, Notre Dame des Victoires, Montreal, P. Q., Canada, has complete golf set consisting of four clubs, seven balls, 35 tees—also hunting knife. Articles in very good condition. Will exchange for rifle, or?

Fred Colbus, 70 Farragut Avenue, San Francisco, Calif., announces something new; cartoon photographs, aeronautical subjects. Will swap.

Granger Williams, 6312 Blaska, Huntington Park, California, will swap accurate solid model plans of Junkers trench straffer for accurate plans of Nieuport 28 or Sopwith Dolphin.

Williard Campbell, 1230 Thirteenth Street, Lorain, Ohio, has old-fashioned watch and 3-foot telescope to swap for what have you?

Ralph Hopkins, Ogdensburg, Wis., has wood lathe, motorcycle engine plans, Vaugh Corsair, Wedell Williams, Curtiss Swift and many others. Also back numbers of air magazines. Wants good model kits, or what have you?

Edward Star, 240 Union Street, Lawrence, L. I., has several beautiful World War models detailed to limit to sell or swap for what have you? Would like prop hub.

Jack A. Searles, 5617 La Mirada Avenue, Hollywood, Calif., wants to trade full packets of book matches for others, U.S. or foreign. Collect them in your town and send them. Get in touch with me to arrange trades. Particularly interested in foreign match books.

Eugene Allen, 802 W. Watson Street, Lewistown, Mont., will trade complete darkroom photographic developing outfit for small printing press, or what have you?

Morris Green, 1448 Crotona Park East, Bronx, New York City, N. Y., will swap two tropical fish, a male and female; very little needed and easy to care for. Reproduce quickly. Information given with fish. What have you? Offer confined to Bronx members as fish have to be personally delivered. Fast answers requested.

Jimmy Womack, 9 Wrightsville Avenue, Wilmington, N. C., has several flying model plans to sell or trade. Also German helmet, grenade, model plans, airplane snapshots, model snapshots. Want snapshots of planes, solid plans, or what have you? Snapshot of Wilmington airport to all writing.

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29 x 5.25	-19	2.95	1.15
30 x 5.25	-20	2.95	1.15
31 x 5.25	-21	3.25	1.15
28 x 5.50	-18	3.35	1.15
29 x 5.50	-19	3.35	1.15
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32 x 4 1/2	3.35	1.15
33 x 4 3/4	3.45	1.15
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