

WONDER Stories Quarterly

PUBLICATION OFFICE:
404 North Wesley Ave., Mt. Morris, Ill.

Published by
STELLAR PUBLISHING CORPORATION
H. GERNSBACK, Pres.
I. S. MANHEIMER, Sec'y S. GERNSBACK, Treas.

Vol. 2
No. 2

WINTER
1931

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE SCARLET PLANET
By Don M. Lemon 150
Through the hostile civilization of this strange world three men moved on the strangest quest that the secret order had ever given.

THE MAN OF BRONZE
By A. L. Fierst 206
The scientist revealed—at his best and at his worst . . . the conflict of nations behind the scenes . . . torture and triumph for some . . . disaster for others . . .

THE MARK OF THE METEOR
By Ray Cummings 220
Three desperate humans fight off the death of suffocation and starvation in interplanetary space. Adrift . . . alone . . . they struggled on . . .

PITHECANTHROPUS ISLAND
By I. R. Nathanson 228
Marooned, they faced death from every side . . . besieged they felt the merciless savagery of the ape-man . . . but then strategy took a part . . .

THE MARTIAN NEMESIS
By George B. Beattie 238
Famed . . . honored everywhere, he thought he had escaped from the dreadful secret of his past. But the seeds from Mars grew and flowered . . . and at last the Nemesis came . . .

THE HOUR THE CONQUEROR CAME
By Edsel Newton 252
Like a deluge the "multiple" poured down upon the unsuspecting city . . . while from the hills the cohorts of the Legion watched and waited . . .

THREE WORLDS TO CONQUER
By D. D. Sharp 262
Pulled from the earth, they floated in space, satellites of water . . . a grim battle for preservation was being fought on this lifeless world . . .

OUR COVER ILLUSTRATION

taken from Ray Cummings' thrilling story, "The Mark of the Meteor" we see the gigantic meteor just after it has plunged through the bow of the doomed space ship. Shooting vertically upward in a vain effort to change the course of the ship, the rocket exhausts flame furiously. Mars in the background gleams green and gold.

WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY—Entered as second-class matter September 13, 1929, at the Post Office at Mount Morris, Illinois, under the act of March 3, 1879. Title registered U. S. Patent Office. Trademarks and copyrights by permission of Gernsback Publications, Inc., 98 Park Place, New York City, owner of all trademark rights. Copyright, 1931, by Gernsback Publications, Inc. Text and illustrations of this magazine are copyrighted and must not be reproduced without permission of the owners.

WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY is published on the 15th day of September, December, March and June, 4 numbers per year. Subscription price is \$1.75 a year in United States and its possessions, in Canada and foreign countries, \$2.00 a year. Single copies 50c. Address all editorial communications to Editor, WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY, 96-98 Park Place, New York. Publishers are not responsible for lost Mss. Contributions

cannot be returned unless authors remit full postage. WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY is for sale at principal newsstands in the United States and Canada. Printed in U. S. A. IF YOU WISH TO SUBSCRIBE TO WONDER STORIES QUARTERLY, make out all remittances to the Stellar Publishing Corp. Be sure to mention the name of magazine you wish to subscribe for, as we are also agents for the following magazines: RADIOCRAFT, WONDER STORIES, and EVERYDAY MECHANICS. Subscriptions can be made in combination with the above publications, at a reduced club rate. Ask for information. Subscriptions start with current issue. WHEN YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRES, we enclose a renewal blank in the last number. No subscriptions continued unless renewal remittance received. Change of address: Always give us old as well as new address and notify us as far in advance as possible.

STELLAR PUBLISHING CORPORATION

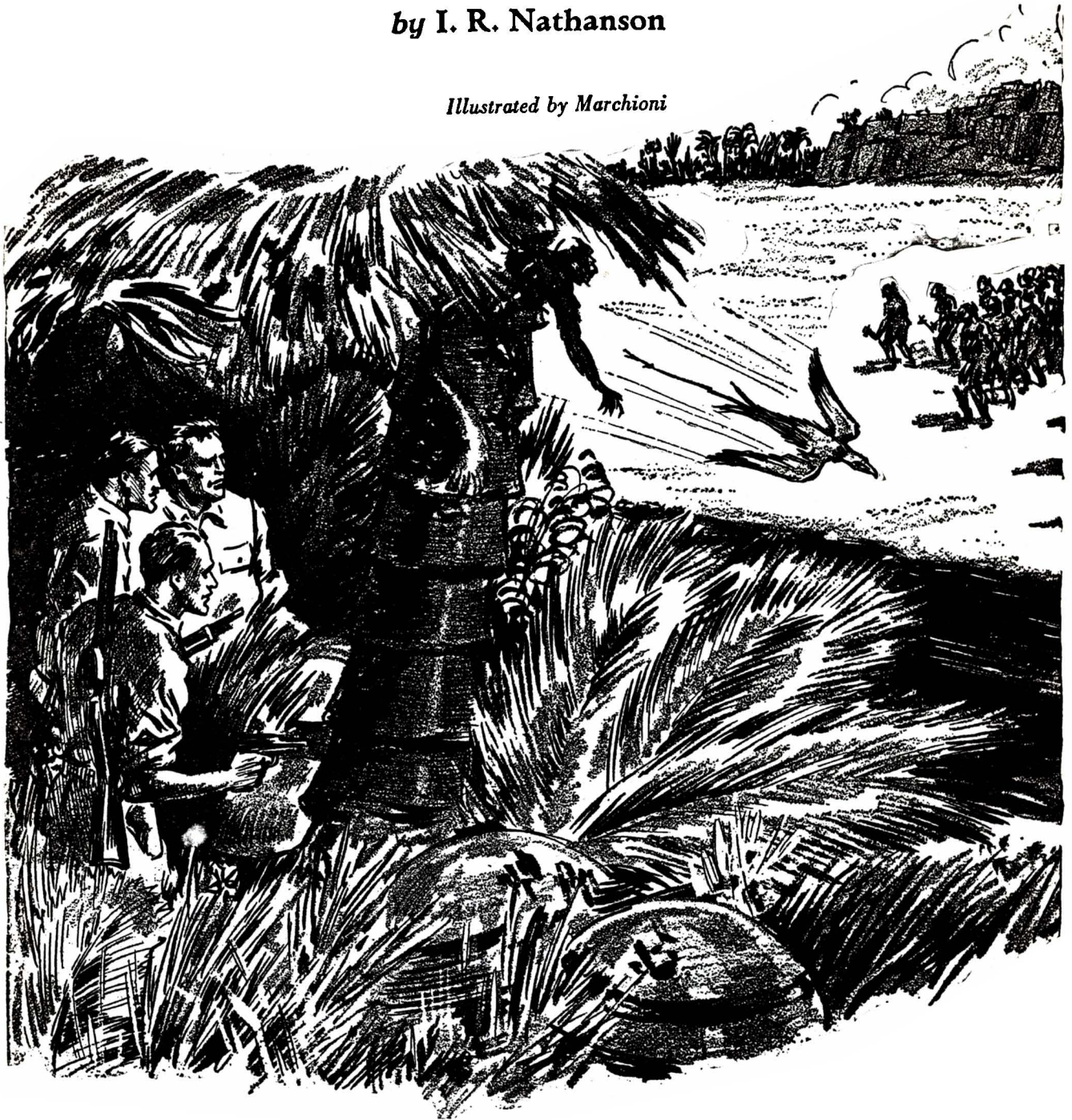
Publication Office, 404 N. Wesley Ave., Mt. Morris, Illinois. Editorial and General Offices, 96-98 Park Place, New York City
16-17 King William St., Charing Cross, W.C. 2
Paris: Hachette & Cie., 111 Rue Reaumur
Australian Agent: McGill's Agency
179 Elizabeth St., Melbourne



Pithecanthropus Island

by I. R. Nathanson

Illustrated by Marchioni



ALL day long, since early morn, with but a brief stop the night before, the three aviators had been winging their way over the turquoise blue waters of the Pacific, weary yet happy over their success so far; the steady symphony of the mighty engines sweet music to their almost deafened ears.

And now the inky blackness of night embraced

them in its blind bosom. Still they drove on and on, their metal bird roaring along at nearly a hundred miles an hour toward their goal in distant Australia.

The first faint streaks of the dawn cheered them on their great transoceanic adventure—the spanning of the mighty Pacific from the Golden Gate to Sydney. Then in the distance threaten-

PITHECANTHROPUS ISLAND



Presently through the jungle came the clear sound of the bell. The apes, every one, stopped in their tracks to listen intently.

ing storm clouds appeared and rapidly drew near. They could see the rain curtains of the storm swiftly approaching over the billowing waters, and soon they were enveloped in a blind world of fiercely lashing rain and buffeting wind.

"We are in for a bad one," penciled Captain Howard Franklin, pilot and commander of the giant plane, *The Golden Gate*, to the other two fliers, his bosom friends and co-venturers. "We must try and skirt the storm area if we can, or rise above it."

Ten thousand feet up, and still they were in the clutches of the fiercest storm in their experience. In vain they battled to this side and that,

up and down, ever seeking an escape from the battering wind and the swirling rain which now smote them with all the seeming force of a solid waterfall. In vain they sought to escape by descending almost within striking distance of the tempestuous waves of the angry ocean below, only to rise and struggle desperately up and away from the deadly danger. The storm area must have been of immense extent and height. Finally they gave themselves up to the merciless elements in a fierce endeavor to struggle ahead, trusting to the power of their great mechanical bird to pull them through. They were still more than a thousand miles from Australia.

For long anxious hours they battled on, soaked

to the skin and miserable from the piercing cold. *The Golden Gate* was pounded and twisted and often turned away from its course. They were flying totally blind through a swirling darkness, split by frightful flashes of lightning. At times the combined strength of Captain Franklin and his co-pilot and navigator, Ray Dunlap, was hardly equal to holding the wheel, the great plane all but slipping from their control. And then the earth-inductor compass went out of action, with only the steering compasses to guide them, adding greatly to their difficulties.

"Will the storm never cease!" spoke Captain Franklin aloud, the fierce wind tearing the words from his teeth without a sound.

Suddenly to their frightened senses came an ominous sound. One of the motors coughed and spluttered, picked up again reassuringly, and then went dead altogether.

"Sound the 'S.O.S.' Dick," signalled the commander grimly to Williams the radio operator.

"Generator out of commission," he replied. "Cannot raise a sound."

With blanched faces they tore on at a greatly reduced speed, their two remaining motors still going, although it became increasingly difficult to maintain altitude, what with the vast downpour and raking wind. The drift indicator showed that they were being blown far out of their course.

Anxiously they peered through the swirling gloom for a possible sign of land, hoping against hope. They were now completely lost and far, far from any of the known island of the South Pacific.

And then another dread sound occurred—the starboard motor, too, began to miss.

"Looks like taps for us," communicated Dunlap, "unless we can land somewhere real soon."

A number of times the dark promontories and cliffs of the storm fooled them; they imagined

they saw real land. The storm was gradually diminishing, and to their great joy there appeared the dark shape of land not far away—or was it land? The stuttering motor was threatening to die out at any moment.

The fury of the storm had by now abated, and they could make out the ghostly outlines of some large island, whose wooded shores stretched away to a great distance. They had lost their direction entirely and were at a loss to make out their whereabouts; but land they must regardless, for at any moment they were in danger of a watery grave in the storm-tossed waters beneath them.

Reaching the island they flew over an unbroken forest for many miles, looking for a safe place to land. Spying a break in the green forest top, Captain Franklin headed for it and effected a landing on a level sandy beach alongside a narrow river.

Half-Seen Danger!

"**W**HEW, that was a narrow escape!" he exclaimed.

"Praise God," agreed Dick Williams, although he could scarcely hear what the other said. "That was as near to 'Davey Jones' Locker' as ever I care to be."

Shortly after, the hurricane, which had been rapidly diminishing, came to an end, and they were able to make out their immediate surroundings. They found themselves on a rock-strewn level of a river valley. On one side, to their right, the narrow river, clear and deep, moved swiftly north, a thick, and impenetra-

ble jungle on its far side reaching clear down to the low banks. On the other side, to their left, about a hundred feet or more from the river's edge, high bluffs rose precipitously, hiding the landscape beyond behind their frowning crests, although the edge of a thick forest growth was visible on top.

The narrow, sandy valley formed between the



I. R. NATHANSON

MAN, to some people, is a fallen angel; and to others he is merely a superior type of ape—able to read, write, think and have sentiments. Perhaps he is a bit of both; but certainly we have never escaped completely from our ape ancestry.

Our instincts of idle curiosity; our superstitions, our terrible fear of the elements; many of our customs are all remnants of our past that we have carried with us up the ladder of civilization. In the present story our author shows us vividly how our understanding of the nature of our ancestors may well prove invaluable to us in a tight place.

But what our author brings out principally in this exciting story is the great gap of suspicion and prejudice that separates the various forms of life. Since we humans have acquired something of a control over nature we are not always concerned with the struggle for existence and we do not immediately view other beings instinctively as foes. But there is no doubt that to our ape ancestors a strange form of life became immediately an enemy—and a meeting of the two meant the extinction of one or the other; and it meant also a corking story.

bluffs and river was visible for some few hundred yards north and south, following the river bends out of sight a short distance beyond. There was just about room enough for a take-off straight on ahead, where there was a break in the cliffs around the bend.

All that day they toiled in the steaming hot atmosphere, plagued by hosts of crawling and flying insects, the sun a glaring furnace. Occasionally they were startled by the strange noises of wild beasts moving through the jungle on the opposite side of the river. A number of times they were interrupted in their work by the sudden appearance of some huge ungainly creatures strangely elephantine in shape, who crashed through to the river's edge to drink; these stopped and hesitated a moment upon seeing the men, then evidently deciding they were of no account proceeded to drink, the while their wicked little eyes took them in.

And once a troupe of about a dozen of these odd-looking elephants appeared around the bend coming toward them on their side of the river; and after stopping to drink and flounder about in the water at some distance from them, returned whence they came, to the aviators' relief.

"These are not elephants," Ray Dunlap, greatly excited, exclaimed in a low tone to the other two. He was formerly a professional paleontologist and assistant professor of comparative anatomy, who had forsaken his original calling a few years before in exchange for the lure of adventure in the air. His old-time professional interest went suddenly on fire at this apparition in the living bone and flesh of a supposedly extinct form of life. "If they are not mammoths, then I know nothing of comparative anatomy."

"Mammoths!" the others exclaimed in unison. "Mammoths? . . ."

"Unquestionably," he replied. "You have looked upon a survival of the southern mammoth, *Archidiskodon Imperator*."

All three wondered in amazement.

They experienced several other unpleasant intrusions when the clumsy hulk of some gigantic rhinoceros drew close to them, eyed them suspiciously and after taking a drink moved off. At such times their hearts were in their mouths, for they knew of the ugly temper of these beasts; and feared a sudden, unexpected charge, in spite of the rifles they had with them, might well wreck their precious airplane and leave them marooned on this wild and unknown island.

Not until the end of the day was deepening into the mysterious gloom of the forbidding jungle was their work completed. By that time the dusk was made hideous by the fearful sounds of unknown beasts of prey. The daring aviators, although injured to the greatest dangers in the air, were somewhat unnerved by being thus suddenly thrown into the midst of such primeval surroundings.

As the gloom thickened, furtive shapes appeared and vanished in the jungle opposite, around the river bends, and even peered down at them from the bluffs above; huge shapes, small shapes, all indistinct in the greying twi-

light—twin coals of fire stabbing at them through the darkness.

Twenty some feet up on the high rocky bluff nearest them, was visible a wide ledge overhung by a huge jutting cliff. Ray Dunlap suggested spending the night up on that ledge; but Captain Franklin was in favor of remaining for the night in the cabin of the plane.

"I don't intend to leave my machine to the tender mercies of some of these beasts," he said.

"But this would be taking an unnecessary risk," Ray Dunlap objected. "I believe we can protect the plane as well as ourselves better from the bluff. Why not spend the night in the safety of the ledge up yonder, where we can keep an eye on the plane; and if any prowling beasts come too near for good, scare them off with a shot or two. And in the morning we can be on our way."

Acting upon his suggestion, a survey revealed—after considerable difficulty, as the sides of the bluff was almost vertical—that the ledge under the overhanging cliff formed a sort of open cave, safe from dangerous beasts above and easy to protect from those below, the while a close guard could be kept on the plane.

So taking their arms and some other equipment with them, the three aviators clambered to the ledge. They were very tired; and making themselves as comfortable as they could, with one eye and ear cocked for any untoward sight or sound from man or beast, they fell asleep.

With the first break of morning, the sky a deep clear blue free of any signs of storm, the three friends jumped up from their rocky beds, eager to be on their way. As they looked over the ledge, imagine their astonishment to discover that *the Golden Gate was nowhere to be seen!*

"GOOD God!" Captain Franklin ejaculated. "What could have become of our airplane! Somebody must have taken it while we slept!"

Stunned and puzzled they looked anxiously up and down the narrow valley, half expecting to see it, half expecting and fearful of an attack by some savage tribe of wild men. Their fingers tightened on their rifles.

"But who in the heck could have carted it away?" Dunlap spoke excitedly. "Surely nobody could have flown it away, or we should have heard the motors. And anyhow I never heard a sound; it does not seem possible we three slept so soundly."

And beyond the hideous noises of the jungle beasts which had kept all three from sound sleep most of the night until well toward morning, neither one had heard a sound to indicate that anything was wrong below their perch—or had they fallen soundly asleep for a while just before they woke? . . .

"It was sure lucky for us we stayed up here during the night," remarked Dick Williams.

Captain Franklin set his jaw determinedly. "We simply must recover our plane," he spoke emphatically. "I don't care who did it—they're not going to get away with it without a fight from me. Let's get down and investigate; they cannot have toted it far."

With that the three men carefully clambered down. Plain as a sign post the wheel and tail marks of the plane led north up the valley. With the greatest caution, yet determined to recover their stolen machine at any cost, they followed the tell-tale marks, eyes and ears alert, weapons in hand; stopping now and then to peer carefully about them. Each was armed with a repeating rifle, two of which were of heavy bore; also each carried an automatic revolver.

"Who could have taken that plane?" they kept repeating over and over to themselves and to each other. No civilized men would have done that. There could be no reasonable doubt that a race of savages lurked near—perhaps of cannibalistic tendencies.

As they neared the upper river bend, the marks of the dragged plane swept around with the bend to the right. Straightening out, the tracks led up the narrow valley, the river on their right becoming choppy and foamy from many jutting rocks; while on their left the cliffs were getting lower and lower.

A quarter of a mile further on, the river bent to the right again, almost looping back on itself. As they reached the middle of the bend the bluffs on their left flattened out and gave way to the angled forest edge. A little farther on they came to a wide break in the forest, forming a sort of twisting jungle avenue; and straight into this the tracks of their plane turned in.

Here they paused. To enter boldly into the mouth of the forbidding opening, with the gloomy jungle on either side hemming it in, the broad avenue-like way swallowed up a short distance within the fastnesses of the jungle, was enough to make the stoutest hearts pause and take heed. An ambush perhaps? . . .

"What a sweet place for innocents to poke into," Dick whispered, his perennial good humor showing itself even in the face of this great danger. "Those pesky savages can sure think up a lovely slaughtering place."

After some hesitation they decided to follow the trail wherever it led. Wearily they entered the forbidding opening into the jungle and progressed along. The way was padded down by innumerable passing feet.

"Our fight through the storm was a featherbed compared to this," further remarked the voluble Dick.

"Not so loud," cautioned Captain Franklin somewhat irritably, "or you may find a permanent featherbed on the mossy jungle ground."

"Gives one the creeps just the same. Fine mess." A minute or two of silence, and his urge to speak reasserted itself. "Holy jimminy—if my mother knew I was here!"

"Oh, shut up, will you," this time from Dunlap. "Cheer up; maybe tomorrow by this time you'll be stewing in some nice big pot—or sooner."

"Think they'll have a pot big enough for the two of us?" the irrepressible young fellow answered, the present great danger seeming not to effect him in the least bit.

"No!" came the sharp retort; "only big enough for one—you're too fat; I am too skinny."

"Then I hope you give them the indigestion," and Dick grinned. The others could hardly repress a smile.

CHAPTER II

Pithecanthropus Attacks!

A SLIGHT noise in the nearby bush made them silent and alert. What was that? Cautiously they crept along. They had by now pierced inside the jungle avenue for a distance of about three hundred yards. The trail here curved to the left.

"Look what's here," exclaimed Dunlap. Simultaneously all three noticed a number of articles belonging to them scattered along the trail; a helmet, a glove, a few tools; and farther on the scattered contents of Captain Franklin's suit case; a pair of trousers, his traveling alarm clock, a tooth brush and other articles. The suit case was torn to pieces.

As they came around the twisting curve, they were startled into immobility by a strange, heart-stopping creature which had suddenly stepped out of the bush and stood staring at them with fascinated wonder in its eyes.

The three men and the strange creature stood facing each other for a few moments, one a surprised as the other; astonishment and suspicious hostility written all over its bestial features.

And well might the three venturers have been surprised and shocked at the sight. For the thing standing there a short distance in front of them, one foot poised in the very act of movement, was unlike anything they had ever seen. It was grotesquely manlike in appearance, yet not man; ape-like in features, yet not quite ape. It stood quite straight and erect on muscular legs, the full height of an average man; but its face was hardly that of a man, its heavy jowl and great protruding jaw covered with a stubby beard.

Tremendously prominent bony eyebrow ridges arched over deep-sunken eyes that glared fiercely at the intruders. Down his almost flattened forehead, a mane of brownish hair reached to the very brow-ridges, giving the creature a most ferocious aspect. The large head, thrown somewhat forward from a thick neck, set on an enormously powerful body; bulging knotted muscles on the back and shoulders and long arms revealing tremendous strength. The creature was very hairy, although parts of his face and body showed a smooth brownish skin beneath a sparser covering of hair.

In one hand, huge and talon-like, the man-ape, or ape-man, or whatever it was, carried a massive club with a large stone tied to the end. In his other hand he gripped a large sharp-edged rock. Around his waist a strip of skin, belt-like, held in place another sharp stony instrument of some kind.

For a long time the three men stood silently facing the strange being who was so shockingly like a man, yet not quite a man. Then quickly, with a low guttural sound that seemed to rumble from its throat, bringing answering sounds from

nearby, it stepped back and slipped out of sight in the thick jungle.

"*Pithecanthropus erectus*,* or I miss my guess," Ray Dunlap exclaimed in stupefied amazement. "Good heavens, it seems impossible!"

The trio stood still for a few seconds, looking at each other, somewhat unnerved, undecided whether to advance or retreat. Suddenly without any warning whatsoever, a huge rock hurtled through the air with amazing force, barely missing Dick's head and bringing up against a nearby tree trunk with a resounding thud. Dick ducked his head, and the other two involuntarily did likewise, oddly enough after the stone had passed.

Had it connected, the missile would have crushed his skull like an egg-shell. The next instant another rock came through the air, followed by several more, the throwers, whoever they were, keeping out of sight.

Hastily the three men withdrew to the more open river bank. As they neared the opening, another stone zipping by caught Dick's shoulder a glancing blow. He let out a yell of pain, and with an angry oath turned about, rifle ready to fire, but not a sign of any assailant.

Out in the open, with the sheltering river at their back, they halted to decide on their next course of action.

"This is no place for little boys, with such things lurking about," Dick Williams exclaimed after a pause. "I'd hate to meet that bozo alone here unarmed. What is it, Professor Dunlap," he said, turning to the other; "you used to know quite a bit about those things. Shall we call that a man or not?"

"It is neither man nor ape," Dunlap answered. "It is most likely Mr. *Pithecanthropus* in person."

But I thought his last grandfather died a million years ago," Captain Franklin joined in. "Dead men rise up never"; nor dead ape-men."

"That is true. But it oftens happens in the biological scale of life that a remnant of an ancient life-form survives in secluded parts of the globe. In Australia and the Pacific islands we find a good many examples of this. We cannot be far from the island of Java, where the fossil remains of such a creature was found near Trinil by Dr. Eugene Dubois in 1891. The name *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, signifies, the ape-man who walked erect.

"Java was at one time connected with the Asiatic mainland, as no doubt was this island. It appears to me as if some of these otherwise extinct creatures survived here on this forsaken island to the present day, unknown to the rest of the world. This should settle the great controversy which has raged over *Pithecanthropus* these many years." The enthusiastic light of the scientist gleamed in Dunlap's eyes. "What a find, what a find! *Pithecanthropus Erectus* in the living flesh and blood!"

THE three friends were in a quandary. Without the recovery of their plane, if it were in-

*The Java ape-man. The original was discovered in the remains of bones in Java in 1890. From these remains a hypothetical man was reconstructed who constituted a sort of missing link between man and ape.

deed in sound condition, they were reduced to the status of modern Robinson Crusoes, only in a much more dangerous environment. To make matters worse, their ammunition was limited, as they had never counted on such a contingency; and after that should be exhausted, they would be in a sorry plight indeed. They were quite a number of miles from the open sea. And to reach it, in the hope of signalling a passing vessel, would necessitate a long march through these hostile surroundings.

"We simply must retrieve our plane, come what will," spoke Captain Franklin determinedly—"if those pesky ape-men have left it in a condition to be flown."

The other two agreed.

But here was the dilemma: To follow the trail of *The Golden Gate* through the jungle meant the facing of the unknown dangers which lurked there. And yet there was no other way out.

So after repairing to the safety of the ledge on which they had spent the night before, to refresh themselves with food, as well as to allow time for those ape-men to leave the vicinity, the three once more set out bravely yet cautiously on their dangerous mission. It was then early in the afternoon, the sun blazing fiercely overhead, the heat stifling and oppressive.

Sometime later they had penetrated a considerable distance northeast into the jungle along the broad well-trodden trail, the marks of the plane on the ground still plainly visible. They moved in single file, stopping often to peer ahead and listen.

The thick walls of the jungle hemmed them in. All around were dense thickets of thorn bushes, tree ferns, long hanging mosses and underwood lianas; nipa dwarf-palms, rattans and lofty trees were intermingled and interlaced with hosts of parasitic plants in bewildering confusion.

They passed enormous fungi which grew in great numbers; and the heavy fragrance of wild orchids and other jungle flowers hung in the air. Occasionally gorgeously colored parrots screeched by; or the stillness was broken by some chattering monkeys; or the sounds of small animals as they darted past. And once a troop of the mountainous mammoths crossed their path, the while the men threw themselves down in the grass till in their crashing progress through the jungle, the huge beasts were out of sight.

Captain Franklin, who was in the lead, stopped abruptly as he suddenly became aware of a large animal crouched a short distance in front of him. It rose slowly and with a cat-like tread began to advance towards them on short, powerful thick-set legs armed with enormous claws. The animal was larger than any tiger or lion either had ever seen; its huge head thrust forward between massive shoulders, its cruel gleaming eyes fastened on the aviators. From its slithering upper jaw two huge saber-like tusks—horribly long—extended almost the full width of its dreadfully wide, open mouth. Fearful snarling sounds came from its throat—it meant business, of that there could be no doubt.

For a few brief seconds the three men, unaccustomed to such things, were frozen with hor-

ror. The next instant the beast charged with a most terrifying roar. Repeating rifles spat fire in quick succession, and the last spring of the ferocious animal landed it exactly on the spot from which Franklin had leaped in the nick of time. The great beast was mortally wounded. It struggled desperately to its feet, giving vent to the most blood-curdling sounds, the while more lead was pumped into its body. Shortly after it expired.

Cautiously they drew near for a closer view.

"A surviving *Machairodus*," Dunlap exclaimed, once more greatly astonished. "Old saber-tooth himself! I declare, this island is full of living fossils!" He stooped over the dead saber-toothed tiger and examined the enormously long canine teeth; they must have been all of seven inches long. The three men shuddered and moved on.

A short ways further on they came to an open break in the matted jungle. After some difficulty they picked up the trail again and determinedly plunged into another broad, avenue-like opening into the jungle beyond, whither the trail distinctly led. The opening entered the forest and swung to the right in a great curve. Where it led they could but guess, but the determination born of desperation spurred them on.

Rounding a turn they came directly face to face with five or six of the ape-men marching toward them.

Besieged!

A STONISHMENT and hostility was plainly depicted on their forbidding faces; their huge gnarled hands distinctly tightening on the heavy clubs and the sharp rocks which they held in their grasp. Clearly they resented this intrusion of their kingdom.

At the sound of a deep guttural sound from the foremost ape-man, the creatures dropped out of sight. The three men, fearful of a sudden attack or another volley of hurtling rocks, stepped back around the shelter of the bend and began a hasty retreat.

They had scarcely taken a dozen steps when the ape-men appeared and with fierce menacing sounds that were half shouts and half growls made toward them, brandishing their clubs, and the leader hurled a large stone with great force and cunning accuracy which missed by a hair.

At the command of Captain Franklin the three dropped to their knees and fired point blank at the on-rushing ape-men. The sound of the fire reverberated loudly, two of the charging creatures falling in their tracks. The rest taking fright moved quickly out of sight, howling and yelling with terrifically loud voices. From the distance came many answering calls.

In the meantime the three friends turned and fled precipitously toward the river, looking back as they ran to see if they were being pursued. Loud savage cries came to their ears in increasing numbers, and soon many dusky shapes moving swiftly in their direction made them aware they were the object of a savage hunt through the jungle. They redoubled their efforts to

reach open ground before they should be overtaken.

The men were good runners and in the pink of condition; but in spite of their best efforts and although they had a good start, the ape-men were gaining on them, their eager cries sounding ever nearer, the foremost drawing ever closer in hot pursuit. Silently the fugitives sped on, their breath coming in short gasps. What if some other ape-men should cut off their retreat with these savage foes behind them!

It was a dreadfully cruel chase, the chances greatly against the unfortunate men. So far they managed to keep ahead, but one stumble—a twisted foot— At intervals they turned and fired at their pursuers in the hope of scaring them off; but the ape-men were not to be turned from the pursuit of their quarry.

Reaching the open river level at last, the men sprinted more easily toward the sheltering ledge. Almost spent and exhausted they reached the foot of the friendly cliff, the savage horde not far behind them. With their last strength they clambered up the steep face of the bluff, the last few feet amidst a shower of pelting stones, any one of which spelled disaster, and none too soon threw themselves face down on the ledge.

Fully a hundred of the ape-men swarmed beneath, their cries bloodcurdling in their ferocity. Rocks and stones came up in a perfect shower, rebounding from the face of the cliff; their peculiar position as they lay prone, however, shielding them from immediate harm.

Acting under a concerted shout a number of the savage creatures began climbing up the cliff toward the unfortunate men.

"Let 'em have it," commanded Captain Franklin. The fire of their weapons reverberated loudly above the din, echoing and re-echoing up and down the valley and from the high bluffs and jungle front opposite. Amidst shrieks of pain and hair-raising death-cries, the foremost of the clambering ape-men fell headlong to the rocky ground below; the rest hastily scrambled down, and the great horde stood away at some distance brandishing their clubs and throwing stones. The nearer approach of some of the more venturesome brought a volley of death-dealing bullets.

That the ape-men were possessed of real intelligence there could be no question. There followed no more blind rushes. Instead they withdrew to a safe distance, lurking behind boulders and bushes, calling to each other and rendering the air hideous with their fierce gibberish.

IT was a siege; and the aviators knew it, the outcome sadly against them. Now and then a threatening stone came flying toward them, warning them to be careful of exposure. For the time being there was nothing to be done but keep a close watch and save their ammunition.

"Savages of a very low order have been known to be very inconsistent in their purposes," observed Dunlap. "Perhaps these creatures may tire of this presently and go away."

"Oh, if such a glorious idea would enter into their lovely heads," came from Dick.

Presently Dunlap's observation seemed about

to be borne out; for first a few, then a larger number began to move away with deliberation, and disappeared around the upper river bend. The rest, however, stayed where they were, exposing themselves more and more, lulled into evident carelessness or ignorance of the destructive power of the men's weapons.

"Looks as if you are wrong," commented Franklin. "They are up to something that bodes no good for us."

Feeling quite safe, however, from a frontal attack, the three relaxed somewhat, although keeping a close lookout. The ape-men had ceased their stone throwing, but were lolling about, carrying on a continuous gibberish, occasionally brandishing their clubs and grimacing in their direction.

"They are certainly in love with us," spoke the ever jocular Dick. "Look what sweet faces they are making at us." He threw a mock kiss at the ape-men.

"Better keep your fool head and fat body out of sight, you idiot," caustically warned Dunlap. "They know a fat juicy steak on the hoof when they see it."

"Oh, well, we'll just sizzle together," and he grinned broadly, his fine teeth showing.

The ledge on which they were sheltered extended about three feet beyond the upper edge of the bluff. As mentioned before, the cliff immediately above the ledge was concaved, giving them a great measure of protection. But there was no way to obtain a footing from then on to the top. And the distance from the top of the cliff to their ledge was altogether too great a drop, even should any of their enemies take it into their heads to attack from that quarter. So while they were in a trap, still there was no way for the enemy to reach them, that they could see. They held an impregnable fortress.

Fortunately they had enough food with them which by strict economy would last them several days, and their thirst could be slaked by a tiny trickle of water which dripped from the arched rock over their shelter. For the time being at least the men could breathe with a fair measure of safety.

They sat down under the arched lee of their protecting cliff discussing their dreadful predicament, frequently creeping to the edge of their position to see that none of their besiegers ventured too near. As Captain Franklin lay face down peering down at the enemy, a sudden rustle involuntarily caused him to draw back with a jerk. And well for him that he did so, for the next instant a huge boulder, which must have weighed a quarter of a ton, came down from the top and striking the very spot where his head had been a moment before, crashed into fragments with a thundering noise, small pieces showering them from the violence of the fall.

Franklin's face went deadly pale, beads of perspiration on his forehead. None spoke a word, shocked by the narrowly escaped tragedy. A pandemonium of howling cries broke loose, the ape-men dancing about in wild glee.

"So that was what they were up to," he remarked presently. "That bunch that went up

the bend must have climbed the low bluffs there and got to our position immediately above us."

From then on they had to use greater caution than ever, for the slightest exposure brought down a huge boulder, accompanied by many savage yells of delight. It must have been great fun for the ape-men.

CHAPTER III

The Home of the Ape-Men

"I AM going to pick off one of those babies," declared Dick, who was an excellent marksman. "Perhaps one will oblige us by falling down on our ledge, and our professor here can be served with the delight of seeing one of those 'pithecanthrowbangs' at close sight." Saying which he edged forward on his back, his rifle trained at the top of the cliff. The next moment he fired, and amidst a chorus of yells one of the ape-men came hurtling down from above, landing with great force right at their feet, shot through the head—stone dead.

"There you are, professor," he laughed, "look your specimen over; hope you live to report your findings to the scientific journals."

The creature was indeed a forbidding thing to look at with his hairy muscular legs, his altogether human torso, hairy, powerful; his immense shoulders and bulging arms,—but that bestial face, with the great protruding jaw, those terribly frowning supra-orbital ridges, the flattened nose, and low, receding forehead. It made one shudder. One could scarcely repress a feeling that here lay a man, bestial of face, yet still a man; and yet—and yet—one could hardly feel it was altogether human.

It seemed more as if the Great Sculptor had not quite finished, leaving much, here and there, rough and imperfect. In his huge hairy hand, the dead ape-man still clutched his powerful club, a sharp rock tied to the end with sinewy thongs. And still held in place by the strip of some animal skin, which formed the belt around his waist, protruded a sharp, knife-like flint, no doubt used for cutting. Clearly the ape-men were tool-using animals, crude but far from unintelligent. His kind no doubt belonged to the humanoid stem, but were of a different genus, and far from *Homo sapiens*.

After Dick's shot had brought one of them down, the rest kept out of range. Their intelligence, their powers of reason and mental association was thus attested, for undoubtedly they associated the thunder-like reports of the fire-arms with quick death. From then on they were more wary.

As the day began to draw to a close, and the sounds of the hunting animals of the night began to be heard, the ape-men withdrew by twos and threes and small groups; and shortly after, the last one disappeared behind the river bend. For the time being the three aviators were relieved.

In the darkness of the primeval night which surrounded the trapped men, they discussed their situation and made plans for the morrow—pro-

viding the ape-men did not return to the attack with the first approach of day. After a first impulse to flee the spot, all three decided that for the present the safest place was where they were. In the morning they would see.

"Come to think about it," spoke Captain Franklin, "I am wondering if those savages live somewhere up the river front. If so, perhaps we can get to their encampment or village or whatever it be, by following the river instead of venturing through the dangerous jungle. The jungle avenue may be just a short cut. We might locate our plane that way with less danger."

"By jove, you may be right," agreed Dunlap. "Nothing like trying."

"I would suggest," continued Franklin, "that with the first break of dawn we go up the valley to the break in the bluffs and get on top of this cliff over our ledge. It seems to be the highest spot around here; and by climbing one of those tall trees up there we may obtain the layout of the land. We can then decide what best to do."

With the first streak of dawn, after a watchful night during which each took turns on guard, they ventured down from the safety of their perch, every sense alert to the slightest sign of danger. Swiftly yet cautiously they moved up stream where the break in the bluffs made an easy ascent. Climbing to the top, they doubled back and soon reached the top of the cliff which looked down on their sheltering ledge fully fifty feet below. There was not the slightest sign of the presence of any of the ape-men, although there were many lurking beasts.

While the other two stood guard, Franklin quickly climbed to the top of a tall rasamala tree, and soon obtained a comprehensive layout of the territory. It was just as he had surmised. The river swept around the bend to the east, bent south, then doubled back northwest and north again in a great sweeping turn forming an immense loop. There was every indication that the way through the forest was just a short cut to the river-front on the north side of the loop, where, as seemed quite likely, the ape-men were domiciled.

TWO hours later, the venturers came to a wide break in the cliff walls some hundreds of yards in extent, where the jungle growth appeared. Here another broad, well-trodden opening, similar to the one on the south side of the loop, led out unto the river bank. And there, plain as could be, were the tell-tale marks of the airplane on the ground leading out of the jungle and pointing to the left up the river. So far they seemed to be on the right track.

As they rounded the north sweep of the river loop, behind some jutting masses of rocks which hid them from view, there came to their ears the far-off sounds which they recognized as emanating from the ape-men. Hugging close to the shelter of the bluffs, which here again rose to a great height, they stole around the bend; and there, to their astonished eyes, was the abiding-place of the savage horde—and in the center of a large open sandy space near the river, *rested the long-sought-for plane!*

The three men could scarcely repress a feeling of triumphant exultation; they could have shouted for sheer joy at their discovery. But the next instant this feeling was dashed into icy coldness at the realization of the sheer difficulty of recovering the missing plane, so tantalizingly near. It was there all right; but what chance had they, armed though they were, against that wild horde of savage man-like beasts with their powerful clubs and fast hurtling, cunningly delivered stones.

What even if they killed a number in the attempt; the rest would surely get them. And what assurance had they that the plane was in flying condition? Perhaps those creatures had damaged and destroyed the vital parts, or at least rendered it unfit for flying. Their hearts sank within them.

A few hundred feet back in the direction from which they came, they had noticed the river bed was partly dry and rocky, great flat rocks jutting above the water, which here was at a low level, affording an easy crossing at that spot.

Acting on Dunlap's suggestion, they forded the river out of sight of the horde; and entering the jungle fringe which reached almost to the water's edge, turned left and cautiously moved along the bank, all the time keeping themselves completely out of sight behind the sheltering bush.

Arriving directly opposite the home of the ape-men, and stretched prone behind the thick foliage, they peered out and beheld a sight such as no living man had ever seen.

A wide sandy beach here lay before the high terraced banks of the river; and on the various levels of the high rocky bluffs or cliffs, some two hundred feet from the river's edge, there were many cave-like openings and large fissures in the rocky walls; the terraced broad ledges affording a safe lookout, the caves a home and shelter for these half-men creatures.

Between the bluffs and the river, in the center of the wide and long open space, rested the plane. The cliff-dwellings of the ape-men faced north, overlooking this straight-away stretch of river front, which here ran for three or four hundred yards east and west, from the bend near the ford to another bend in the river further up.

The ape-men were moving about to and fro or lolling on the ground or on the high terraces in front of their cave dwellings. Some were climbing up or down; others were engaged in scraping skins or industriously pounding away at the crude manufacture of their simple tools. So far as could be made out, they did not seem to know the use of fire.

The creatures were no doubt on the very bottom rung of achievement—a mere step removed from the lower animals. Except for the belt which the males wore, the ape-men went completely naked. The females also were totally devoid of any covering whatsoever, except for some necklaces made of shells or bone. In that they betrayed their human, even though remote kinship.

For the rest they were simply beasts, often snarling and growling at one another. At times, and for reasons which the observers could not

make out, a sudden rumpus would ensue between two of the males; and there would be much grimacing and gibbering; and in one instance resulted in a battle royal, a circle of the ape-men watching the contestants till one of them dropped with a crushed skull from contact with the pile-driving blow of a war club. After which there was much gibbering and excitement; but soon all was quiet again. A life did not matter so much after all.

A Strategic Plan

A MORE amusing sight was the sudden fierce tilt between two of the females, on account of some altercation between two of the ape-children. After a prolonged series of squeals and threatening grimaces, the two went at each other tooth and claw. Eventually they were separated by some of the males, each receiving resounding cuffs; and the net result was another deadly struggle between two of the males—husbands perhaps of the two females.

"Human, all too human," whispered Dick.

The youngsters frolicked about, the very little ones were carried on the hips of their mothers. Farther up, where the river showed in spots, some of the ape-urchins were leaping from rock to rock, a few of the more venturesome going almost clear across the river—only to be recalled by sharp commands or receive severe cuffs for venturing into forbidden territory. No doubt danger lurked in the jungle across the river.

As far as the men could make out from their station, the plane appeared unharmed. Except for the glass in the cabin windows and the wind shields, which were all broken, and many scratches and dents from rough treatment, *The Golden Gate* as a whole seemed to have suffered no vital damage.

Ape-urchins were gamboling and chasing each other in and out of the plane, or clambering over the wings and body. Underneath its wide-spreading wings lolled a dozen or more ape-men, shading themselves from the hot sun. Some were amusing themselves by turning the propellers; others now and then would poke or pound idly against the plane with their clubs. And all as they came and went paused frequently in wonder and astonishment to study this strange bird-like metal thing. Plainly they were puzzled by the meaning of it. In spite of their predicament the bird-men could scarcely repress smiles at the bewildered interest of the man-like creatures. At times when the handling of the machine grew somewhat rough, the men almost groaned, and could scarce resist a desire to fire into the horde and attempt a forcible seizure, but prudence held them in check.

"If only those savage creatures would desert this place for a short while," groaned Dunlap in a whisper.

The three observers lay there in an agony of helpless despair. Their situation was desperate and seemed utterly hopeless. And the nearness of their airplane, which meant escape and freedom, was exasperatingly enticing and almost drove them mad. If only they could think of

something that would drive this wild horde away from the spot long enough to make away with the plane. They gritted their teeth in silent rage.

What was to be done? How outwit the ape-man and regain possession of their machine. Plainly something had to be done—and soon. But what—and how! Nor was their present concealed post any too secure. At any moment some prowling animal creeping upon them out of the terrors of the jungle at their back might force them to defend themselves and thereby betray their presence to the ape-men—and thus bring about another chase, this time perhaps a fatal one. For a long time they silently lay there, wretched, helpless and despairing.

At Franklin's whispered suggestion, they decided to move on and investigate the territory still farther up the river beyond the next bend. Carefully they skirted the jungle edge, following the bank till it swung again to the north, taking them out of sight and sound of the ape-men's abiding-place. Here they halted. The same unbroken jungle was at their back, the bluffs on the west side of the river falling almost to a level with the banks, giving way to dense forest growths which reached to the water's edge. The river here was very shallow and partly dry, affording an easy crossing.

"**I** HAVE an idea," whispered Captain Franklin. "Perhaps it may work, perhaps not. The idea may appear childishly foolish, but under these primitive circumstances it is well worth trying."

Eagerly the other two crowded close and listened attentively.

"As I see it, there is one thing to do—create some diversion that will draw these ape-men away from the vicinity of the plane long enough for us to grab it and make a take-off." He paused and his friends eyed him questionably, wondering what it could be he had in mind that could possibly bring about the miracle of such a diversion. A dubious expression rested on their faces.

"As you notice," Franklin continued, "the river here is very low and easily forded. Suppose we go back first to our ledge and get that alarm clock we retrieved in the jungle, cross over from here to the west side of the river and there set the clock ringing at some distance above the ape-men's abiding-place, timing it to ring, however, after we shall have retraced our steps close to the other ford below. These creatures are no doubt possessed of compelling curiosity, as are all creatures of the anthropoid or humanoid stem; and they may take it into their heads to investigate the source of the strange ringing sound, most likely utterly new to their ears, and thereby give us our chance."

After a moment's pause, Ray Dunlap spoke in a doubting tone.

"What, even if your scheme does work, and we get to the machine but cannot start it before we are spied—they may have put the engines out of commission."

(Continued on Page 282)

Pithecanthropus Island

(Continued from Page 237)

"Well, in that case," answered Franklin, "we are in for lots of trouble. We shall have to bolt for our safety-ledge. That is why I propose to draw them up the river so that, if we cannot start the engines, we can dash down stream and cut across through that break in the jungle to the other side of the loop, instead of going around, to avoid being cut off. That is the chance we shall have to take."

"And what if in a forced flight through that jungle avenue we should happen to run into a number of the ape-men who may be returning just then from some hunt—and that howling horde at our heels?"

"Then we shall have to shoot our way through the best we can," replied the other.

So it was decided.

* * *

A few hours later, with the afternoon far advanced, the three had forded the river below the cliff-dwellings of the horde; and after skirting the jungle edge on the opposite side of the river, recrossed out of sight around the bend over the upper ford. A short distance farther, where the bluffs gave way to the jungle, the aviators entered the forest growth and tied the alarm clock well up in a tree. After timing the alarm so it would ring in an hour, they repaired to the other side of the river just below the horde. The alarm was of the intermittent type and could ring repeatedly for a long time at frequent intervals; it also had an automatic shut-off that silenced it for about fifteen minutes, before it began another series of intermittent ringings.

Taking their station near the lower ford across the river opposite the dwelling-place of the savage horde, yet keeping within observing distance, the three men waited for the alarm to go off, their hearts thumping with excitement. Would it work?

Presently, through the stillness of the jungle there came the clear sound of the clamorous bell. The effect on the ape-men was startling. Every one, male and female, old and young, stopped in their tracks and listened intently. Then silence. Again the insistent ringing, loud and clear. Every one of the creatures stopped again with profound attention, exchanging questioning glances and looking plaintively at one another, plainly puzzled by the strange sound, totally new to their ears. As the ringing kept on and off, it seemed to get on their nerves, fear and curiosity seeming to struggle for mastery. Some of the braver ones began moving slowly in the direction of the sound with slow, hesitating steps, the more timid ones taking to the safety of their ledges.

Most of the horde, however, remained where

they were, evidently puzzled and undecided. After about five minutes, the intermittent ringing ceased. Gradually the ape-men calmed down, the more venturesome who had moved up a ways to investigate, decided to return; and presently the entire horde seemed to forget the strange luring sound which had so disturbed them.

The watching aviators were dreadfully disappointed. It had failed to work! What then? They exchanged rueful glances without saying a word.

Fifteen minutes later, the clamorous bell began once more. As it continued on and off, curiosity finally got the better of the ape-men. Gradually, singly and in groups, the entire horde moved up the river to investigate the source of the mysterious sound. Even the ape-children followed; and soon only two or three very senile males and a few females were the only ones who stayed behind, and even they walked up to the farthest end of the abiding-place.

As the horde of ape-men disappeared around the bend, the aviators ran to the nearby ford and over the narrow river crossing. Running swiftly to the machine, they soon found that, although it was battered and mauled, the engine, the wings and other vital parts had suffered no serious harm.

The sharp eyes of the few females and old males who remained behind soon saw them, and these laggards gave the alarm with shrill cries.

Swiftly and methodically the aviators worked; the propellers began to spin; and through the primeval setting there sounded the mighty blast of the three powerful engines.

Soon the returning horde was coming back on the run, brandishing their clubs and yelling with loud, blood-curdling cries. The foremost were now but a short distance away, running toward them with great leaping strides. *The Golden Gate* faced in the direction of the fast approaching ape-men, and with the three men safely inside, it began moving forward.

As Captain Franklin gave her the gun, the great plane bumped swiftly along, its great engines roaring; and with a final blast it rose into the air just above the foremost ape-men. Rocks and stones flew up in a shower, the apes' savage cries drowned out by the engines. The fugitives were off, and soon the strange scene below them was out of sight.

* * *

Twelve hours later, three tired aviators, weary, haggard but happy, circled over Sydney, Australia, their great conquering flight completed.

THE END