



MEN WITH WINGS

BASED ON THE TECHNICOLOR
PARAMOUNT PICTURE OF THE
--- SAME NAME ---

CHAPTER I.

NICK RANSON'S long, lean legs propelled him across the bleak, wind-swept sand dunes. He headed for the weather-beaten observation station of the United States Weather Bureau, jerked open the door and lunged inside. His chest heaved as he fought to get air into his bellowing lungs.

He saw the elderly, bewhiskered telegraph operator peering in amazement at him over the tops of rimless spectacles as he peeled off his hat and overcoat.

"I'm from the 'Daily Record'—Underwood—Maryland—" he panted as he whipped out a Press card and pressed it under the telegrapher's nose. "Got to get a story through. I'll dictate right to the key."

"All right, mister," the telegrapher agreed.

"Special to the 'Daily Record,' Underwood, Maryland," Ranson began. "By Nicholas Ranson. Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. December seventeenth, nineteen hundred three. This little village nestled among the sand dunes is in an uproar to-night, for near here to-day two brothers from Dayton, Ohio, named Wilbur and Orville Wright, presented mankind with a nice, new, shiny pair of wings!"

"I don't see no uproar," protested the bewildered operator.

"I'll make one," promised Ranson, and went on dictating. This was just the beginning of the long report of the flights, four in number, which ended at dusk when the fragile machine was overturned and destroyed by a gust of wind.

As his message was delivered to the shabby offices of the "Daily Record" several hundred miles away, Hiram F. Jenkins, owner and managing editor, stared at it. The usually benign expression on his plump, rosy face gave way to amazement. Angrily he flung down the copy, pulled off his hat, ran his hand through his white hair. Then he ferociously grabbed a bell on his desk, rang it. The summons brought a stoutish, bald man from the editorial rooms, where several reporters and copy editors sat at their desks.

"Have you read this, Rinebow?" Jenkins demanded, slapping the voluminous report.

"Yeah," replied Rinebow. "Hank!" Jenkins blasted. "That Nick Ranson has spent sixteen dollars and eighty-five cents—a small fortune—to tell me that that machine got off the ground and stayed there twelve seconds. I told him the story would be good if both brothers got killed because their father is Bishop Wright, of Dayton. I said we'd have a great human interest story providing nobody was left. A story of tragedy, sorrow, bereavement. So he sends me five columns when nothing happens! I could jump out this window and stay off the ground that long myself. I'm sick of hav-

ing people disobey my orders. I'm going to fire Nick!"

Goaded by Rinebow, Jenkins said he would fire anybody he wanted to, write the copy, set the type and even get out on the corners and sell papers.

"That's where you belong," agreed Hank. "Out selling papers."

However, the next day, when Ranson walked into the "Daily Record" offices it was he who lost his temper. He faced Jenkins and Rinebow as they warmed themselves before a pot-bellied stove.

"Where's my story?" he demanded, when Jenkins failed to respond

to congratulations on the fact that the paper had scooped the world on the flights at Kitty Hawk.

"I didn't print it," the managing editor confessed.

"Didn't print it!" Ranson blew up. "Why—that was the first man-carrying, powered flight in history! They've been waiting twenty centuries for this!"

He paced the floor, trying to regain his self-control.

"So you didn't print it!" he stormed. "The greatest story since Robert Fulton sailed his steamboat down the Hudson. The flying machine has arrived. It's

here. It's going to change travel and time and customs and war and nations!"

He raised his clenched fists in helpless rage.

"You had a chance for once in your life to be first with the latest—and muffed it. Well, this finishes me! I'm through with the newspaper business. Some day, when you're standing on the ground looking up at me you'd better keep your mouth closed—or I'll drop an oil can in it!"

He whirled, went out of the office, slamming the door behind him. Hiram Jenkins looked forlornly after him, turned to Rinebow. Rinebow taunted:

"Well, you fired him."

Ranson hurried to his home, a modest five-room frame bungalow, located on a quiet, unpaved street. He rushed up the steps of the porch, crossed it, opened the door and went into the living room. With the sound of the closing of the door he heard joyous footfalls. A pretty young woman gave herself to his outstretched arms. Behind her came a joyful girl of eight years.

"Martha," Ranson said to his

(Turn over page)



Top: When aviation was young these lads were air-minded. Pat and Scott, two young characters in "Men With Wings," with their big home-made kite. And (right) the horrifying moment when the inventors' plane crashes . . . "the plane started downward, nose first, toward the base of the jutting rock. The wires screamed, the motor went even faster. Then above all this came the single, heart-rending cry of Martha Ransom . . ."