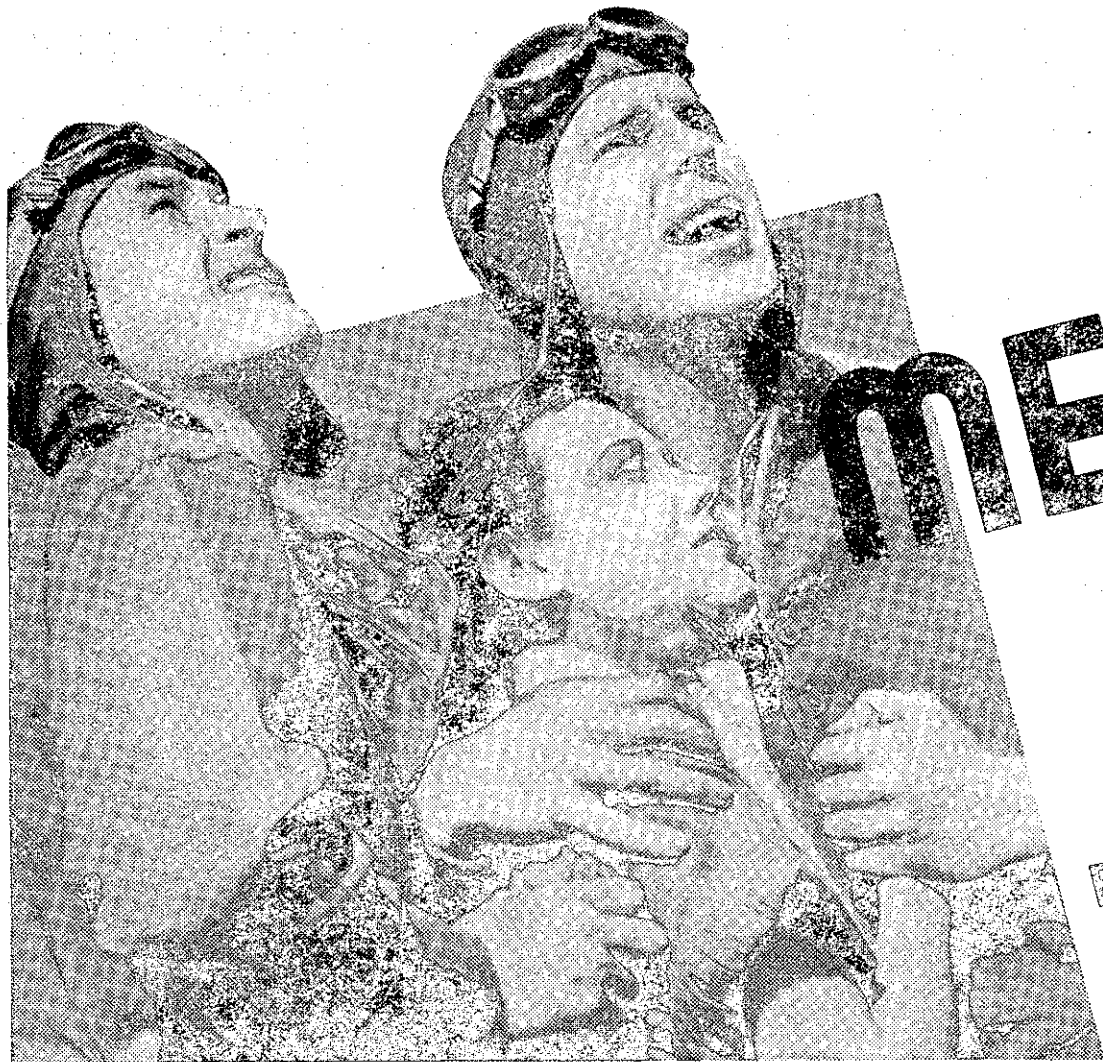




MEN WITH WINGS

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

SYNOPSIS.

Because he has not learned instrument and "blind" flying, Pat Falconer, wartime "ace," crashes into the Atlantic in a fog in May, 1927, in a monoplane built by his life-long friend, Scott Barnes. He is rescued by Barnes and Barnes's mechanic, Joe Gibbs. Charles A. Lindbergh successfully makes the flight. The loss of the plane, financed by Falconer, is a shock, for Pat, Scott and Peggy, Pat's wife, have been interested in flying since 1904, and Scott and Pat have been building and flying planes since 1914.

CHAPTER IX.

PAT FALCONER'S failure to span the Atlantic and bring fame to Falconer aeroplanes was insignificant in the light of what happened two years later. Eight years of prosperity had sent the market sky-high, wages were increasing, and everyone believed the rosy path to easy living had been found when the tragic surprise came—the market crash of October, 1929.

Word of the falling market, suicides, bank failures and other financial catastrophes penetrated even as far as Underwood, Maryland, where Hiram Jenkins still edited the "Daily Record" the way he wanted to in face of the heckling of his city editor, Hank Rinebow.

Hiram, his hat on his head, his feet on his desk, sat in his private office reading his favourite newspaper—the "Record"—when Hank rushed in, spluttering.

"Hiram!" he exclaimed, excitedly. "They're going to close the Stock Exchange for a couple of days! Do you realise what that means?"

Hiram continued to eye the newspaper.

"Yes. Speakeasies'll be more crowded than usual."

"Bein' news, we won't print it, will we?" Hank demanded, bitterly.

"Nope!" snapped Hiram.

"Why, you old fool, we're going through the greatest panic in American history!" Hank stormed. "We're havin' a whole month of Black Fridays! Banks're failing, the Stock Market has gone down for the third time, people are jumping out of windows in flocks, like pigeons!"

Hiram leaped to his feet and shook his finger dramatically.

"You're a sample of the kind of person who's causing all this trouble!" he bellowed. "The 'Daily Record' refuses to be un-

American! The 'Daily Record' refuses to admit there is a crash! The 'Daily Record' will keep its readers satisfied!"

"And as ignorant as the editor!" Hank yelled.

Hiram waved his arms expansively.

"Look around you!" he demanded. "A chicken in every pot, two cars in every garage, stores open, homes filled with happy people, streets full of automobiles, streams of shoppers—streams of—"

"People formin' into breadlines!" Hank scoffed.

Time proved that Hank, as always, was right. As the months passed, few people had money to buy Falconer aeroplanes. The number became less and less, until Falconer was only a faintly remembered name. By 1930, the once booming California factory was a wreck.

The long, low buildings were losing their paint, windows had been broken, and the once-green lawns were uncared for. The field beyond the plant, once trembling beneath the roar of motors, was deserted, save for tumbleweeds which rolled across it.

So reduced had the vast and flourishing organisation become that Scott, working constantly in his office, from which he could see the shops filled with half-completed wings, fuselages and motors, and Joe, sadly trudging from office to office with a time-clock swung over his shoulder, were the only employees.

Finally, Scott himself saw that no hope remained. One day he was gathering up his last personal possessions—the last thing he took from the wall was a model plane that had once belonged to Nick Ranson—making ready to depart for the last time. He was casting a final look around him when he saw Peggy coming toward him. She was followed by her daughter, Patty, now a girl of eleven.

He hurried through the junk-packed shop to join them. He saw Joe, who had deserted his rounds, sitting on a crated motor, opening his lunch pail, waved to him, continued onward to Peggy. He read sorrow in her face.

"I hope this isn't going to get you down," he said.

"Funny, I was thinking the same thing about you," she replied.

Patty saw Joe, ran to join him. Peggy added:

"When I drove in I saw one open

hangar marked with your name. What does that mean?"

"It means I'm still trying," he replied. "I've rented the hangar from Pat's creditors. I'm going to design a bomber for the Army."

"You'll need money," Peggy reminded him, flatly.

"None of yours," he said, sternly. "This is a gamble."

He saw a reminiscent, sad smile play around her features.

"Do you remember that I helped build the first plane you ever made that flew?" she asked.

"I—know how you feel," he said, nodding. "We'll talk it over with Pat."

He saw Peggy stiffen.

"It's too late," she said.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

While Peggy vainly struggled to find her voice, Patty indirectly gave him the answer. He heard her tell Joe, with whom she was sharing a sandwich:

"Dad went away to China last night."

"What did he go for?" Joe asked.

"I guess he couldn't stand

sitting around home—after losing everything," Patty said frankly, tears in her eyes. "There's fighting—"

Scott turned from the mechanic and the little girl to the sad-eyed woman who stood before him.

"I guess," he said, slowly, "if you want—you can help me—like you did before."

Pityingly, Scott put a brotherly arm over Peggy's shoulders. Silently, they walked toward the door of the factory.

"I guess mother is going. Good-bye!" Patty exclaimed, and followed.

A few minutes later, Scott returned to Joe, found him staring into space.

"Say, Joe!" he demanded. "Do you want a job where you won't get paid very often?"

Joe jumped to his feet, gulped on a sandwich, beamed.

"I thought for a minute you'd forget me, Boss," he said, happily.

That was the beginning. The four—Peggy, Patty, Scott and Joe—went to work on the bomber. They toiled night and day. Patty, who heard her mother talk of the days when she had worked on the early aeroplanes, did odd jobs while

Scott designed, Peggy figured, and Joe passed out tools, worked on the wings, fuselage and fittings. Scott was carrying out radical ideas. First he built a "mock-up," or non-flying, life-sized replica of the ship to be. It was made of cardboard, soft wood, anything he could lay his hands on.

The end was in sight two years after the job started.

Patty's hands were scarred with toil one night as she worked under the single floodlight in the hangar. Peggy sat on a stool behind a desk, writing down figures and erasing them. Scott worked in the front of the fuselage of what would some day be a twin-motored monoplane. Joe watched him operate the controls.

"I think everything's about right," Scott said, finally.

"Ya better lower that cowl and make the windshield bigger," Joe suggested.

"Why?" asked Scott.

"I hear th' Army likes to see where they're goin'," Joe answered.

Peggy laid aside her pencil, slipped from the stool and came to the side of the plane.

"Scotty, could I speak to you for a minute?" she asked.

Scott pulled himself out of the fuselage. Peggy took his arm and they strolled away from Joe and Patty.

"I've added and subtracted everything ten times," Peggy confided, hopelessly, "but we've still only got enough money to buy one motor—not including its propeller."

Scott grinned.

"Did we borrow back the wages we paid to Joe?" he asked.

"Two weeks ago," Peggy reported. "We—"

There came the sound of grating footfalls on the cement of the hangar floor. Peggy whirled, shaded her eyes, demanded:

"What's that?"

Scott stared into the night, too, as if his eyes were playing tricks on him, as a big voice came booming:

"Aren't you goin' to say hello to us?"

Scott looked closer, saw his Uncle Hiram and, behind him, Hank Rinebow. Both carried suitcases.

"I'm glad to see you!" Scott exclaimed, rushing forward.

"Reckon you'll be gladder in a minnit," Hank said, cryptically.

"What brings you out here?" Scott asked.

(Continued on next page)



★ "Scott rose amid the wave of hand-clapping. . . ★
'And now I want to introduce the pioneer of us all. She looks much too young—and beautiful—for such an introduction, but long before any of us flew she was up in the air—in pigtailed—in a kite.'" (A concluding scene from Paramount's Technicolor film, "Men With Wings.")