

# Up in the Clouds

by Beulah Earle

## SIXTH INSTALMENT

Monty Wallace has just arrived in California, having broken the East-West cross country airplane record. Natalie Wade, mistaken by him for a newspaper reporter writes the exclusive account of Monty's arrival, and succeeds in securing a trial job with a paper in exchange for the story. Natalie becomes attached to Monty.

Although she discovers Monty's love for her is not sincere, Natalie admits that she loves him. She is assigned by her paper to report Monty's activities for publication. Jimmy Hale, the newspaper's photographer, becomes Natalie's co-worker.

Natalie interviews Jabe Marion, a wealthy airplane builder, who decides to build a record-breaking 'round the world plane for Monty. Marion's daughter, Sunny, exquisitely beautiful, is attracted to Monty. She invites Natalie to dine with her when they meet the aviator unexpectedly.

She did manage to get a thermos jug of water from the field office and she sent all this to be loaded into the cabin plane which Monty was now using.

They got off with no one the wiser. Sunny and Jimmy Hale paid no attention to the boys who put the sandwiches and drinks aboard. Monty did a neat bit of pretending when he badgered Natalie to ride with him.

With apparent reluctance she went aboard, sitting close beside him in the narrow forward cabin of the plane.

The rear seat space had been used for auxiliary fuel supply so that there was no great comfort for two persons in the craft but it did not matter on so short a flight.

Natalie had never been aloft before but she gave the matter little thought. Monty Wallace, she knew, was an expert pilot. That was enough for her. During the take-off she was watching as best she could to see whether Jimmy Hale suspected her purpose and at the last instant was sure he did.

Reverberations of the motor made conversation difficult even in the little cabin, and Natalie was content to be quiet. She had time now to note that they were rising slowly as Monty set his course for the peninsula across the border.

She had a strange feeling that they two were in a small planet of their own winging through space; that they were the only inhabitants and that nothing mattered but themselves. There was a thrill in the thought. A world with Monty Wallace was world enough for her.

She settled herself beside him and he smiled across at her but said nothing.

Hour after hour they winged over the brown California countryside. It was a glorious, golden afternoon. The roar of the motor lulled the girl into deeper contentment. She gave herself up to the ecstasy of each moment and was sure that success must somehow be theirs on this sudden journey.

When she moved a little, hunting for a more comfortable position after an hour or two, he shifted so that his arm went about her and he drew her toward him. It seemed the natural thing in their flying little world and she let herself lean pleasantly against his shoulder.

It was some hours before they began their search in earnest.

"Keep an eye out on your side," Monty shouted at her. "If you see anything, signal and I'll circle. Watch for smoke in unusual places or for any sign of a wrecked plane."

She nodded but when she found that there were mountains and sandy wastes alternately below, she suddenly realized how futile was their quest, for almost any of the dark valleys might hide the two men and their small plane.

"I'm afraid it's no use," she cried once and he cut the motor to reply.

"There's a chance," he said. "I got into trouble down here once and I'm headed for the same place. There are down currents in some of these valleys that you don't expect.

We may not be able to do much tonight but in the morning there's a possibility."

The girl had known that they must spend the night somewhere on the peninsula but she had given it little thought. Her reputation might suffer but it was a matter of life and death for the two pilots and she could not think of herself in their extremity.

It was true, of course, that there had been no need for her to make the trip but it was a chance to help the lost pilots and do a good job for the paper as well. She offered a little prayer for their success and scanned the distant earth more eagerly than before.

But there was still no sign of the men and the impression grew on her that only sheer luck could bring them to the rescue in time to be of any service.

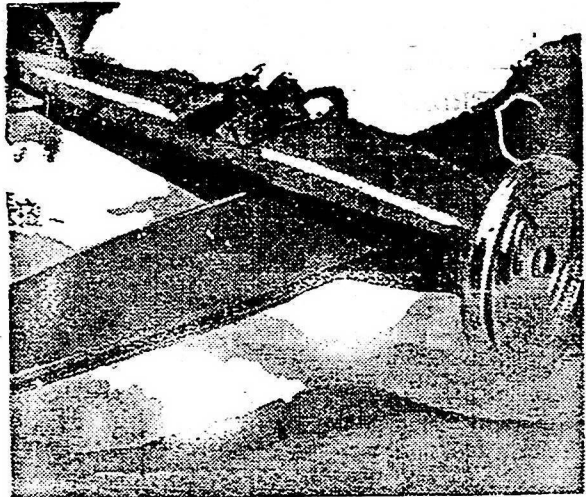
Once they passed another plane and veered toward it till they dis-

For an instant she knew terror. She swept the circle of the fire's dim light with her eyes for sight of him but he was nowhere to be found.

Natalie sat up shivering. She glanced toward where the plane had been and caught the outline of its dark wings against the sky. She tried to assure herself that everything was all right. But she knew that without Monty she faced death.

It was a strange fact but somehow it wasn't new. Somewhere in her consciousness that feeling had existed before. She wondered about that and then she knew why it seemed so. Subconsciously her whole life was anchored to this man. Her love made him necessary to her everywhere as he was to her here on the bald desert.

She must hold him somehow. She must find him here in the dark and grapple him to herself with every bond she could discover.



Hour after hour they winged over the brown California countryside.

covered that it was another searcher. For an hour or more, however, they had been beyond the territory of the rest of the hunt, and Monty still flew with that serene confidence that gave her hope.

When the shadows below grew so long as to be grotesque and they knew that the quick night would presently close them in, Wallace headed the plane for the open country and just as the sun sank over the horizon he set it down in a careful landing as near as he could to a patch of low woods that indicated the presence of water.

They had not for some time seen one of the small coast villages or any other human habitation.

When they had climbed out and stretched cramped limbs, Monty's first thought was for the safety of his own plane and from a tool compartment he took iron stakes and rope with which he fastened it securely.

"Let the wind blow now," he said when he had finished. "The ship will be here in the morning and that's the main thing."

Natalie set out what food they needed and they ate sparingly. "It's going to be a little cold tonight," Monty said. "I think we'd better have a little fire to warm us up before we turn in."

He gathered some sticks from the nearby underbrush and built a generous fire in the shelter of a dune at some distance from the plane.

"You may have to sleep in the plane to keep warm," he told her, "but it will be better here if we can keep you comfortable."

He scooped out a little hollow and heaped a sandy pillow for her head in the most sheltered spot and kept the fire going till Natalie drowsed in the grateful warmth.

"I wish we'd thought to bring some blankets," he said presently. "We may need them before morning. The nights get pretty cool sometimes."

The girl slept then while he sat beside her to reassure her. When she waked, the fire had burned low and she moved to draw her light coat more closely about her. Then she reached out her hand to touch him and found that he had gone.

But just then a sudden crash in the darkness sent her screaming to her feet. Something alive was there in the shadow of the line of brush, something that moved through the dark. And then she knew what it was. Monty's voice hailed her in answer to her cry.

"Here I am," he called. "I was out getting some more wood for the fire. Are you all right?"

Instantly her terror died. The world righted itself. Yes, she told him, everything was all right. . . . she had been alarmed to find him gone and then that crashing had startled a scream out of her.

"It was a small dead tree," he laughed. "I swung my weight on it to bring it down and it came with a crack. There'll be all the wood we need."

He appeared now dragging the tree with him. When he drew near he saw her teeth were chattering and without a word he took her into his arms.

"Be quiet now," he told her. "You're mostly scared. I'm sorry. I didn't think you'd wake while I was gone. You seemed to be sleeping soundly."

When he had reassured her, he tossed wood on the fire till it blazed high. Then he made her sit beside him and held her close once more till she was warm.

"You won't go away again," she said presently. "Stay where I can touch you."

He told her he would.

"I'm afraid you're not been getting any sleep," she said a little later. "You lie down there in the place you made for me. I'll lean against you for warmth and watch the fire."

When he had slept a little, she moved to thrust the log farther into the coals. But he waked quickly and took the task from her hands.

"This is no good," she said. "You'll be sleepy when you're flying tomorrow. We'll let the fire go and huddle together. Then we can both get some sleep."

And when she had gone into his arms she slept again and knew that he held her tightly while he slept.

In the morning she waked warm and happy. The rising sun had crept over the desert rim. A soft, warm breeze heralded the day. She knew that his cheek touched her hair and for long minutes she lay still so as not to disturb his rhythmic breathing.

The sun waked him in a little while and he found her smiling down at him. "You were very sweet to me," she said. "It makes up for some of the things I've held against you."

She bent to kiss his rough cheek. "There's a time and a place for everything," he laughed as he sat up. "This is the time and place for hunting lost pilots. We'd better be getting aloft."

He lifted her up and kissed her. "I love you to death when you are like this," she told him. And he kissed her again.

While Natalie delved again into the box of provisions and brought out enough for a meager breakfast, Monty Wallace was busy loosing the ropes that held the plane.

They were presently aloft again and this time she went into the crook of his arm as naturally as though the place belonged to her.

"We're right about where they are likely to be," he told the girl and bade her keep close watch of the rough country below.

At noon they were still hunting from one canyon to another and they munched sandwiches as they flew. It was while they still ate that the girl started suddenly up and peered through the window at her side.

"There's something down there!" she cried, over the motor roar. Monty nodded and swung the plane in a steep bank about the spot so that they could both look down.

"It's a plane," he bellowed, and circled cautiously downward.

They could see presently that the wreck of a biplane lay in a small canyon. There was no sign of life about it. As they came about on one of the arcs of the circle their own ship whipped suddenly over and Natalie saw that Monty made a quick movement to right it.

He zoomed the frail monoplane then, and told Natalie of the treacherous air currents that would make landing difficult.

"Wait," she cried. "Don't land yet. If they were alive and around the wreck they would be up and waving at us now, wouldn't they? Either they're dead or they've started out somewhere. Let's hunt around to see if we can find some sign of life."

He nodded at the suggestion and began widening the circles in which

## BERKELEY

(Held over from last week.)  
The annual bazaar and bake sale, under the auspices of the Ladies' Guild, will be held at the home of Mrs. Dodds on Saturday afternoon. Miss Maude Acheson of Inistloge is visiting with Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Atkinson.

Recent visitors at the Kirk home were Mr. and Mrs. L. LaHaye, Mr. A. E. Johnston of Owen Sound and Mr. L. Knowles of Newmarket. Mrs. Geo. Caswell and Elsie attended the funeral in Markdale on Friday of the former's aunt, Mrs. McClung.

We extend our sympathy to Mrs. Art. Stafford in the death of her mother, Mrs. J. Subject. The funeral was held on Saturday from the home of the above to Williamsford Lutheran Church.

The Ladies' Aid are holding a social and bazaar in the Church on Friday evening, November 12th.

Mr. Solomon Grund left on Tuesday to spend the winter months in Toronto.

The Hallowe'en social held in 70 school on Friday evening was well attended. Prizes for costumes went to Mr. E. Noble for best lady; Mrs. Everett Ritchie for best man; Florence McLaughlin and Mary Gilpin for best child. A program, games and lunch brought the evening to a close.

Rev. E. C. Rorke, B.A., L.Th., of Dundalk conducted the service in the Anglican Church on Sunday afternoon.

The anniversary services were held in the United Church on Sunday at 11 a.m. and 7.30 p.m. The choir and pastor of the church were in charge at each service.

they flew. Now and then he swooped low over some moving object but found usually that it was a shadow or some movement of tree or bush.

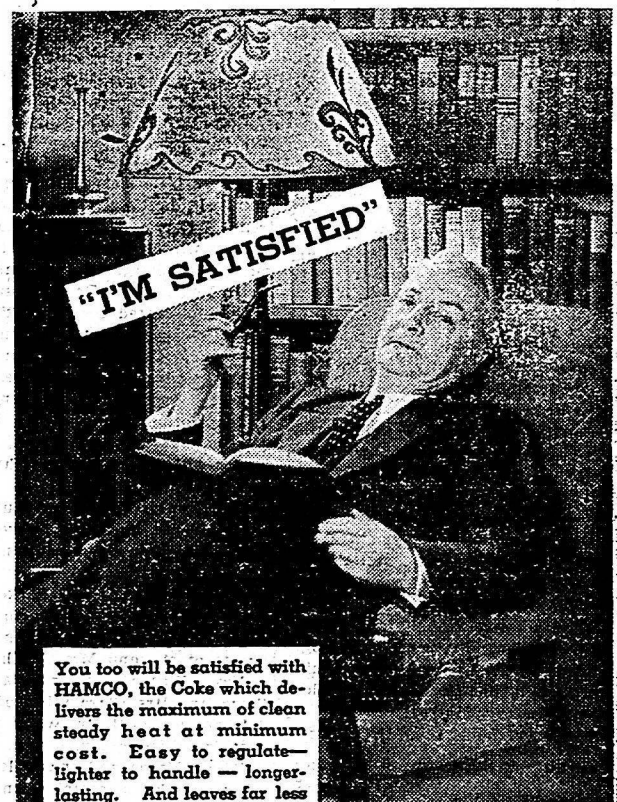
They were about to give up after half an hour of this when suddenly below them two pigmy figures rushed into a clearing and danced madly, waving their arms at first and then ripping off their coats and helmets.

## CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

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