

# ON A TORN-AWAY WORLD



*Roy Rockwood*

# **On a Torn-Away World**

[Chapter 1 - SHOT INTO THE AIR](#)

[Chapter 2 - MARK HANGS ON](#)

[Chapter 3 - THE FLIGHT OF THE SNOWBIRD](#)

[Chapter 4 - "WHO GOES THERE?"](#)

[Chapter 5 - BETWEEN TWO PERILS](#)

[Chapter 6 - ON THE WINGS OF THE WIND](#)

[Chapter 7 - DROPPED FROM THE SKY](#)

[Chapter 8 - PHINEAS ROEBACH, OIL HUNTER](#)

[Chapter 9 - THE EARTHQUAKE](#)

[Chapter 10 - THE BLACK DAY](#)

[Chapter 11 - THE WONDERFUL LEAP](#)

[Chapter 12 - THE GEYSER](#)

[Chapter 13 - NATURE GONE MAD](#)

[Chapter 14 - ON THE WING AGAIN](#)

[Chapter 15 - A PLUNGE TO THE ICE](#)

[Chapter 16 - PROFESSOR HENDERSON REVEALS](#)

[THE TRUTH](#)

[Chapter 17 - ON AN ISLAND IN THE AIR](#)

[Chapter 18 - IMPRISONED IN THE ICE](#)

[Chapter 19 - A NIGHT ATTACK](#)

[Chapter 20 - THE HEROISM OF THE SHANGHAI](#)

[ROOSTER](#)

[Chapter 21 - MARK ON GUARD](#)

[Chapter 22 - THE WOLF TRAIL](#)

[Chapter 23 - THE FIGHT AT ALEUKAN](#)

[Chapter 24 - THE FLIGHT TOWARD THE COAST](#)

[Chapter 25 - THE HERD OF KADIAKS](#)

[Chapter 26 - THE ABANDONED CITY](#)

[Chapter 27 - THE WHALE HUNT ASHORE](#)

[Chapter 28 - ON THE WHALING BARK](#)

[Chapter 29 - WHEN THE SEA ROLLED BACK](#)

Chapter 30 - AN ENDURING MONUMENT—  
CONCLUSION  
Copyright

# Chapter 1 - SHOT INTO THE AIR

"Hurrah!" shouted Jack Darrow, flicking the final drops of lacquer from the paintbrush he had been using. "That's the last stroke. She's finished!"

"I guess we've done all we can to her before her trial trip," admitted his chum, Mark Sampson, but in a less confident tone.

"You don't see anything wrong with her, old croaker; do you?" demanded Jack, laughing as usual.

"'The proof of the pudding is in the eating thereof; not in chewing the pudding bag string'," quoted Mark, still with a serious countenance.

But like Jack he stood off from the great body of the wonderful airship, and looked the completed task over with some satisfaction. Having emergency wings, she was also a plane. She was white all over and her name was the *Snowbird*. Jack and Mark had spent most of their time during this vacation from their college in building this flying machine, which was veritably an up-to-the-minute aerial vehicle, built for both speed and carrying capacity.

The hangar in which the machine had been built was connected with Professor Amos Henderson's laboratory and workshop, hidden away on a lonely point on the seacoast, about ten miles from the town of Easton, Maine. At this spot had been built many wonderful things—mainly the inventions of the boys' friend and protector, Professor Henderson; but the *Snowbird*, upon which Jack and Mark now gazed so proudly, was altogether the boys' own work. The sliding door of the hangar opened just behind the two boys and a black face appeared.

"Is eeder ob you boys seen ma Shanghai rooster?" queried the black man, plaintively. "I suah can't fin' him nowhars."

"What did you let him out of his coop for?" demanded Mark. "You're always bothering us about that rooster, Washington. He is as elusive as the Fourth Dimension."

"I dunno wot dat fourth condensation is, Massa Mark; but dat rooster is suah some conclusive. When I lets him out fo' an airin' he hikes right straight fo' some farmer's hen-yard, an' den I haster hunt fo' him."

"When you see him starting on his rambles, Wash, why don't you call him back?" demanded Jack Darrow, chuckling. "If I did, Massa Jack, I'spect he wouldn't know I was a-hollerin' fo' him."

"How's that? Doesn't he know his name?"

"I don't fo' suah know wedder he does or not," returned the darkey, scratching his head "Ye see, it's a suah 'nuff longitudinous name, an' I dunno wedder he remembers it all, or not."

"He's got a bad memory; has he?" said Mark, turning to smile at Washington White, too, for Professor Henderson's old servant usually afforded the boys much amusement.

"Dunno 'bout his memory," grunted Wash; "he's gotter good forgettery, suah 'nuff. Leastways, when he starts off on one o' dese perambulationaries ob his, he fergits ter come back."

"Let's see," said Jack, nudging his chum, "what *is* that longitudinous' name which has been hitched onto that wonderful bird, Wash? I know it begins with the discovery of America and wanders down through the ages to the present day; but a part of it has slipped my memory—or, perhaps I should say, 'forgettery'."

With a perfectly serious face the darkey declaimed:

"Christopher Columbus Amerigo Vespucci George Washington Abraham Lincoln Ulysses Grant Garibaldi Thomas Edison Guglielmo Marconi Butts."

"For goodness sake! Will you listen to that!" gasped Mark, while Jack went off into a roar of laughter.

"Don't—don't it make your jaw ache to say it, Wash?" cried the older lad when he could speak.

"Not a-tall! not a-tall!" rejoined the darkey, shaking his woolly head. "I has practised all ma life speakin' de berry longest words in de English language—"

"And mispronouncing them," giggled Jack.

"Mebbe, Massa Jack, mebbe!" agreed Washington, briskly.

"But de copy book say dat it is better to have tried an' failed dan nebber to have tried at all."

"And did you ever try calling the rooster back, when he starts to play truant, with all that mouthful of words?" queried the amused Mark.

"Yes, indeedy," said Washington, seriously.

"Don't he mind, then?"

"I should think he'd be struck motionless in his tracks," chuckled Jack.

"No, sah," said Washington. "Dat's de only fault I kin fin' with dat name—it don't 'pear to stop him. An' befo' I kin git it all out he's ginerally out ob sight!"

That sent both boys off into another paroxysm of laughter. Meanwhile the darkey had come into the great shed and was slowly walking around the flying machine. "What do you think of her, Wash, now that she's finished?" asked Mark.

"Is she done done?" queried the darkey, wonderingly.

"She certainly is," agreed Jack.

"De chile is bawn and done named Nebbercudsneezer, heh? Well! well!"

"No; it's named the *Snowbird*," Mark retorted. "And tomorrow morning, bright and early, we shall sail on its trial trip. The professor is going with us, Washington. Of course, you will come, too?"

"Lawsy me! don't see how I kin!" stammered Washington White, who always wished to be considered very brave, but

who was really as timid as a hare. "Yo' see, Massa Mark, I'spect I shall be right busy."

"What will you be busy at?" demanded Jack.

"Well—well, sah," said Wash, "if dat Shanghai don't come back befo', I shall hab ter go snoopin' aroun' de kentry a-huntin' fo' him. He'll be crowin' 'bout sun-up, an' he suah can't disguise his crow."

"If Andy was here, he would surely want to go with us," declared Jack to Mark. "Andy Sudds isn't afraid of anything."

"My! my!" cried Washington. "Yo' don't fo' one moment suppose, Massa Jack, dat I's afeared; does yo'?" "No, you're not afraid, Wash," returned Jack, chuckling. "You're only scared to death. But you go ahead and hunt your rooster. See that you keep him from flying too high, however, or we'll run him down in the *Snowbird*."

"Pshaw!" said Mark. "That rooster is so fat he couldn't fly high, anyway."

"And perhaps the *Snowbird* won't fly very high; eh?" retorted Jack, letting a little anxiety creep into his voice.

"But dat rooster suah *kin* fly high," said Washington White, eagerly. "Yo' gemmens knows dat he's flowed as high as de moon—he, he!"

"And 'flowed' is a mighty good word, Wash," chuckled Jack. "Ah! here is the professor, Mark."

Professor Henderson was an aged man with snow white hair and beard. Although he was not physically as strong as he once was, his brain and energy were not in the least impaired by advancing years. He had taken the two lads, Jack Darrow and Mark Sampson, both orphans, under his care some years before, and under his tuition and by his aid they were much farther advanced in knowledge of the practical sciences than other boys of their age.

The professor welcomed them cordially and at their request gave a thorough scrutiny to the various mechanical contrivances that went to the make-up of the flying

machine. He pronounced it, as far as could be known before a practical test, a perfect mechanism.

"And we will try it to-morrow morning, boys," he said, with almost as much enthusiasm as Jack and Mark themselves displayed. "You have completed the machine in excellent time, and I "un likewise ready to make the experiment."

"What experiment, Professor?" asked the boys in chorus.

"Haven't you noticed what I was tinkering on at the other end of the shop?" queried Professor Henderson, in surprise.

"Why, I see that you have a long steel plank there, with some kind of a compressed air contrivance at one end," said Jack.

"Is that what you mean, Professor?" queried Mark.

"That, boys," said the scientist, with some pride, "is a modern catapult—an up-to-the-minute catapult which, had it been known to the ancients, would have enabled the hosts of Joshua, for instance, to batter down the walls of Jericho without the trouble of marching so many times around the city."

"And what has a compressed air catapult got to do with the *Snowbird*?" queried Jack. "You propose launching your flying machine in the usual way," said the professor. "I see you have wheel trucks all ready to slip under her. We will not use those wheels, boys. I have a better plan. We will launch the *Snowbird* into the air from my catapult."

"Great goodness, Professor!" cried Mark. "Is that practicable?"

"We'll know after we have tried it," retorted Professor Henderson, drily.

"How did you happen to start working on this catapult idea?" asked Jack.

"Well, I can't tell you everything," replied the inventor, "for it is partly a secret."

"Huh," laughed Mark. "You're mysterious. You haven't joined forces with some department of our government, or with another country?"



The professor smiled, thinking how keen this young man always proved himself to be.

"You've guessed it," he replied. "And I'm sorry I can't explain more to you."

"We understand," said Jack. "And no doubt this machine is a super-catapult."

"True," was the answer. "Of untold use to the scientific world. For the present I shall confine testing its efficiency right in this place. Now is my chance."

"But of what advantage will it be to our flying machine to start it in this way?" "Stop and think, my boy," said the professor. "Just as an aeroplane can literally be shot into the air within a very short space, so can your airship. Of course, this is not necessary, but we will be able to start the ship much faster that way than we could with just the motors."

"You'll make history, Professor," added Jack. "Exciting headlines for the papers."

"Sure enough," said Mark enthusiastically.

"The publicity doesn't interest me," replied the scientist.

"Moreover, my super-catapult must remain a secret, as I told you a while ago."

"So you really propose to launch the *Snowbird* in this way?" asked Jack.

"We will be shot into the air. If you are sure of your machine, I am sure of my catapult, and we will try the two contrivances together."

In the morning all rose bright and early and prepared the *Snowbird* for her trial flight. Washington White had indeed disappeared—possibly in search of his Shanghai rooster—and Andy Sudds was off on a hunt. Therefore the professor and his two young comrades essayed the trip alone.

Jack and Mark tossed a coin to see who should first guide the great air machine, and Mark won the preference. He, as well as his chum and the professor, had already donned their aeronautic uniforms, and he now strapped himself

into the pilot's seat. The steering apparatus, the levers that controlled the planes, and the motor switch were all under his hand. While in flight the *Snowbird* need be under the control of but one person at a time.

The professor had rigged his catapult so that he could release the trigger from the flying machine. Mark said he was ready; the professor reached for the cord which would release the trigger.

"Start your motor, Mark, a fraction of a second before I release the compressed air," commanded Mr. Henderson. "Now!"

The motor of the flying machine buzzed faintly. Jack's eyes were on the speed indicator. He suddenly felt the great, quivering flying machine, which had been run out of the hangar on to the steel plank of the catapult, lurch forward. The feeling affected him just as the sudden dropping of an elevator from a great height affects its passengers.

The finger of the speed indicator whirled and marked forty miles an hour ere the flying machine left the steel plank, and shot into the air with the fearful force of the compressed air behind it.

Both Mark and Jack were well used to guiding aeroplanes and other air machines. But this start from the ground was much different from the easy, swooping flight of an airship as usually begun. Like an arrow the *Snowbird* was shot upward on a long slant. It was a moment ere Mark got the controls to working. The propellers were, of course, started with the first stroke of the motor.

But Mark Sampson was nervous; there was no denying that. At the instant when the nose of the airship should have been raised, so as to clear the tops of the forest trees and every building on the Henderson place, Mark instead guided the rapidly flying *Snowbird* far to the left.

It skimmed the corner of the stable by a fraction of a foot, and Jack yelled:

"Look out!"

His cry made Mark even more nervous. The tall water-tank and windmill were right in line. Before the young aviator could swerve the flying machine to escape the vane upon the roof of the tower, and the long arms of the mill, they were right upon these things!

The fast-shooting *Snowbird* was jarred through all her members; but she tore loose. And then, in erratic leaps and bounds, she kept on across the fields and woods towards Easton, never rising very high, but occasionally sinking so that she trailed across the treetops, threatening the whole party with death and the flying machine itself with destruction, at every jump.

## Chapter 2 - MARK HANGS ON

Professor Henderson and his adopted sons—Jack Darrow and Mark Sampson—had been in many perilous situations together. Neither one nor the other was likely to display panic at the present juncture, although the flying *Snowbird* was playing a gigantic game of "leap-frog" through the air. The professor had himself constructed many wonderful machines for transportation through the air, under the ground, and both on and beneath the sea; and in them he and his young comrades had voyaged afar.

Narrated in the first volume of this series, entitled, "Through the Air to the North Pole," was the bringing together of the two boys and the professor,—how the scientist and Washington White rescued Jack and Mark after a train wreck, took them to the professor's workshop, and made the lads his special care. In that workshop was built the *Electric Monarch*, in which flying ship the party actually passed over that point far beyond the Arctic Circle where the needle of the compass indicates the North Pole. Later, in the submarine boat, the *Porpoise*, the professor, with his young assistants and others, voyaged under the sea to the South Pole, the details of which voyage are related in the second volume of the series, entitled "Under the Ocean to the South Pole."

In the third volume, "Five Thousand Miles Underground," is related the building of that strange craft, the *Flying Mermaid*, and how the voyagers journeyed to the center of the earth. The perils connected with this experience satisfied all of them, as far as adventure went, for some time. Jack and Mark prepared for, and entered, the Universal Electrical and Chemical College.

Before the first year of their college course was completed, however, Professor Henderson, in partnership with a

brother scientist, Professor Santell Roumann, projected and carried through a marvelous campaign with the aid of Jack and Mark, which is narrated in our fourth volume, entitled, "Through Space to Mars." In this book is told how the projectile, *Annihilator*, was built and, the projectile being driven by the Etherium motor, the party was transported to the planet Mars.

Later, because of some knowledge obtained from a Martian newspaper by Jack, they all made a trip to the moon in search of a field of diamonds, and their adventures as related in "Lost on the Moon" were of the most thrilling kind. The projectile brought them safely home again and they had now, for some months, been quietly pursuing their usual avocations.

The knowledge Jack Darrow and Mark Sampson had gained from textbooks, and much from observation and the teachings of Professor Henderson, had aided the lads in the building of the *Snowbird*. It was the first mechanism of importance that Jack and Mark had ever completed, and they had been quite confident, before the flying machine was shot from Mr. Henderson's catapult, that it was as near perfect as an untried aeroplane could be.

"Hang on, Mark!" yelled Jack, as the great machine soared and pitched over the forest.

Her leaps were huge, and the shock each time she descended and rose again threatened to shake the 'plane to bits. Mark swayed in his seat, clutching first one lever and then another, while Professor Henderson and Jack could only cling with both hands to the guys and stay-wires.

The sensation of being so high above the earth, and in imminent danger of being dashed headlong to it, gripped Mark Sampson like a giant hand. He felt difficulty in breathing, although it was not the height that gave him that choking sensation. There was a mist before his eyes, still the sun was shining brightly. The startling gyrations of the flying machine for some time shook the lad to the core.

But Jack's cheerful cry of "Hang on!" spurred Mark to a new activity—an activity of hand as well as brain. He knew that something had fouled and that this accident was the cause of the machine making such sickening bounds in the air. She was overbalanced in some way.

With Jack's encouraging shout ringing in his ears, Mark came to himself. He *would* hang on! His friends depended upon him to control the machine and to save them from destruction, and he would not be found wanting.

One lever after another he gripped and tried. It was one controlling the rising power that was fouled. He learned this in a moment. He sought to move it to and fro in its socket and could not do so. He had overlooked this lever before.

Again the *Snowbird* dashed herself from a height of five hundred feet toward the earth.

They still flew over the forest. The tops of the trees intervened, and Mark managed to counteract the plunge before the prow of the machine burst through the treetops. She rose again, and using both hands, Mark jerked the wheel stick into place.

At once the flying machine responded to the change. She rode straight on, slightly rising as he had pointed her, and Mark dared touch the motor switch again. Instantly the machine speeded ahead.

"Hurrah for Mark!" shrieked Jack. "He's pulled us through."

"He has indeed," agreed the professor, and they settled into their seats and gave attention to the working of the apparatus. Mark now had the *Snowbird* well under control.

Jack changed places with his chum and managed the *Snowbird* equally well. At his touch she darted upward at a long slant until the altimeter registered two thousand feet above the sea. And the sea was actually below them, for Jack had guided the flying machine away out from the land.

"Boys," said Professor Henderson, quietly, "you have done well—remarkably well. I am certainly proud of you. Some

day the people of the United States will be proud of you. I am sure that the inventor's instinct and the scientist's indefatigable energy are characteristics you both possess."

"That's praise indeed!" exclaimed Jack, smiling at his chum.

"When the professor says we've won out, I don't care what anybody else says."

"Do you think the *Snowbird* is fit for long-distance travel?" asked Mark of Professor Henderson, now displaying more eagerness than before.

"I do indeed. I think you have a most excellent flying machine. I would not hesitate to start for San Francisco in her."

"Or farther?" asked Jack.

"Certainly."

"Across the ocean?" queried Mark, quickly.

"I do not see why any one could not take a trip to the other side of the Atlantic in your 'plane," replied the professor.

"With proper precautions, of course."

They reached the land and came safely to rest before the hangar without further accident. The professor was delighted with the working of his catapult and at once made ready to call the attention of the Navy Department to his improvement in the means of launching an airship from the deck of a vessel. Ere he had written to the Department, however, he and his young friends were suddenly made interested in a scheme that was broached by letter to Professor Henderson from a fellow-savant, Dr. Artemus Todd, of the West Baden University.

Professor Henderson and Dr. Todd had often exchanged courtesies; but the university doctor was mainly interested in medical subjects, while Mr. Henderson delved more in the mysteries of astronomy and practical mechanics.

The doctor's letter to Professor Henderson read as follows:

"Dear Professor:

"I am urged to write to you again because of something that has recently come to my knowledge regarding a

subject we once discussed. As you know, for some years past I have been investigating not the *cause* of aphasia and kindred mental troubles (for we know the condition is brought about by a clot of blood upon the brain), but the means of quickly and surely overcoming the condition and bringing the unfortunate victim of this disorder back to his normal state. In our age, when mental and nervous diseases are so rapidly increasing, aphasia victims are becoming more common. Scarcely a hospital in the land that does not have its quota of such patients under treatment—patients who, in many cases, have completely forgotten who and what they are and have assumed a totally different identity from that they began life with."

"We know that, in some cases, hypnotism has benefited the aphasia and amnesia victim. His condition is not like that of the mentally feeble; he has merely lost his memory of what and who he previously was. Believing that all disease, of whatsoever nature, can be safely treated only through the blood, *this* ill to which human flesh is heir particularly must be treated in that way, for we know that a stagnant state of the blood in one spot, at least, is the cause of the patient's malady. Therefore I have been experimenting botanically to discover a remedium for the state in question—something that will act swiftly upon the blood, and directly dissipate such a clot as is spoken of above."

"My dear Professor! I can announce with joy that this remedium is discovered. I obtained a specimen of a very rare plant brought back from Alaska by a miner who wandered into the fastnesses of the Endicott Range, far beyond the usual route of gold miners and in a district which, I understand, is scarcely ever crossed by whites and which is, indeed, almost impassable, even in the summer months. With the aid of this herb—*Chrysothele-Byzantium* (it was known to the ancients, but very rare)—I have brewed a remedium which, in one case at least, instantly



cleared the blood vessels of the patient and brought him back to a knowledge of his real self."

"But my supply of the herb is gone. It reached me in its dry state, or I should have first tried to propagate it. It seeds but once in seven years and therefore is rare and hard to grow. But I must have a supply of the *Chrysothele-Byzantium* seeds, plants, and all. I look to you, my dear Professor Henderson, for help. To you space and the flight of time are merely words. You can overcome both if you try. I need somebody to go to the northern part of Alaska—that is, beyond the Endicott Range—to obtain this rare plant for me. You have already flown over the North Pole and a trip which carries one only three or four degrees beyond the Arctic Circle is a mere bagatelle to you."

"Yes! it is in you I place my hope, Professor. The hopes of many, many afflicted people may be placed in you, too. I ask you to fly to this distant place and obtain for me the herb that will do humanity such great good. Under another enclosure I send you drawings of the plant in its several states and a full and complete description of how it was found. You can make no mistake in the *Chrysothele-Byzantium*. You know that I am a cripple, or I would offer to join with you in this search. But at least I am prepared to pay for any expense you may be under. Draw upon me for ten thousand dollars to-morrow if you so desire, and more if you need before the start. The Massachusetts Bay Trust Company, of Boston, will honor the draft. Make up the expedition as you see fit. Take as many men with you as you think necessary. Make all preparations which seem to you fit and needful. I limit you in nothing—only bring back the herb."

"Remember I shall impatiently await your return and look for your success—I expect nothing but unqualified success from your attempt. You who have achieved so much in the past surely cannot fail me in this event. I await your agreement to attempt this voyage with confidence. I must