The Lonely Voyage *of* Monsieur Portier

"The Devil's Darning Needle"—The Champion Aeronaut of Uncle Sam's Secret Aviation Camp Performs One of His Most Hazardous and Exciting Exploits.

By HENRY M. NEELY, Author of "The Fourth Finger," "The Darning Needle Stings," etc.

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(Continued From Yesterday.)

"CERTAINLY," Sayville agreed. "Only—do you mind telling me what it is?"

"Th' windjammer!"

"Windjammer? What windjammer?"

"Don't y' remember th' windjammer we saw th' day his nibs, th' Secret'ry w's down here watchin' us fly? Load-w'lt oil an' gasleen up th' Bay, she did, boun' f'r Sidney, New Sout' Whales—three 'r four months before she gits there an' not likely t' sight another ship f'r two months at least."

Sayville sat erect as though an electric shock had struck him.

"By gad, I believe you're right," he muttered. "It's a long chance. Lord only knows where she is by this time but she would certainly solve our problem. Where do you figure she has got to?"

"Well, let's see. She left five days ago. We've had pretty steady breezes since aroun' here. If she's struck th' same weather, she's made good, mebbe, a hundred mile a day, takin' runnin' an' beatin'. She'll be about five hundred mile sou'east be sou' this minit."

Sayville did some rapid mental calculation.

"We have enough gasoline to go six hundred miles," he said. "If we should miss her, what then?"

"Then our friends miss us—forever an' ever, amen," said Colligan. "That's all. It's all part 't th' service."

Sayville nodded grimly.

"I'll go you, Barney," he said. "It's our only chance."

The faint gray twilight that preceded the dawn found them still flying steadily, a good two miles high. Both men on the seats were silent and tense. They had sat thus ever since their momentous decision had been reached. They were huddled down with the biting chill of the early morning and their eyes were strained and red with the constant, unblinking vigil that they had kept, peering constantly down through the baffling blackness for every sign of light that might show from a ship below.

They had loosened the bonds that had fettered their prisoner and had mercifully removed the gag from his mouth. He sat up now behind them, sullen and rumpled but he knew he could do absolutely nothing in his precarious position high in the air, where his least move might disconcert the man at the controls and plunge them all to a horrible end. Humiliated but still furious, he nursed his flaming wrath inwardly and the venom of his glance showed the inextinguishable flames of hatred that burned white-hot in his rebellious soul.

A shaft of white light shot over the eastern rim of the earth—precursor of the dawn that was still invisible from the surface of the sea below. Slowly the whole east lightened and then the thin edge of flame that proclaimed the sun cut up through the haze and spread in a flame of glory above them. Gradually as the sun rose, it lowered until it finally bathed the earth many minutes after it had beaten fully upon them two miles above.

Sayville stirred his cramped limbs and coughed with the fog in his throat. Colligan glanced up at him and shrugged.

"I know what y'r thinkin'," said the Corporal. "Th' less we say about it th' better w'll feel. We'll lose our nerve if we talk about it."

Sayville nodded.

"Yes," he agreed, "but we shall have to admit the unpleasant facts unless we sight her soon. Maybe she has gone farther east."

"I'm thinkin' she's made better weather than we thought," said Barney. "There ain't a breath 'f air but it looks t' me 's if th' sea w's heavn' pretty high like they'd been havin' some good blows down there—though fr'm up here, it's pretty hard t' tell. Anyhow, we'd better keep goin' as we are fr a bit."

He leaned over and took the binoculars from their case, sweeping the entire horizon with them once he had them adjusted. For five minutes more they flew in utter silence, save for the shrieking of the maelstrom they created in the air. Suddenly Colligan gave a little exclamation and handed the glasses to Sayville.

"Se what y' make 'f them specks over there on th' rim 'f th' world," he said. "All th' way over there t' th' east."

Sayville levelled the binoculars and studied the specks a moment.

"By gad, Barney," he muttered, "it is five topsails sure as you are born. Take the glasses."

He handed them to the Corporal and turned his own attention to the control mechanism. With the shoving of a lever they dived downward and a turn of the wrist swung them to the left until they were headed straight for the tiny white spots that they had seen peering over the horizon. Behind them, M. Jacques Porier forgot his hatred in his anxiety to see what it was that so excited his captors and craned his neck to look over their shoulders. But, without the aid of the binoculars, he could see nothing.

They hurtled on in their breathless rush, the tremendous speed of the machine increased by its downward glide. At more than two hundred miles an hour, they soon made short work of the distance that kept the topsails out of range of the naked eye.

"Tis th' windjammer," cried Colligan exultantly. "'Tis th' darlin' little ship herself, same as we saw her sailin' down th' Bay five years ago—'r w's it only five days? My respects t' you, sir, an' y're soom aviator."

Sayville smiled.

"And my respects to you, sir," he said, "and you are some pal to have on a venture like this. Have you a calling card to send to the captain when we land?"

"I have that. I took it fr'm th' hip pocket 'f our guest 't honor here. It's an automatic an' a good one."

By this time, the vessel lay clearly in view. She was wallowing in a dead calm, the seas still heaving from a previous blow but not a breath of air now stirring her great white sails. The creaking of the booms came to them when they got over her and they saw the faces of men upturned to gaze in wonderment as they circled and dived for their landing.

In a great splash of spray, they topped one roller, leaped the gully, plunged into the next and, slowing with the drag of the water, took the regular rise and fall of the sea until they came to a complete stop within fifty feet of the heaving ship. Sayville looked up at the line of men peering over her rail.

"Can you send a boat out to us?" he called. "We want to talk to the captain."

(Concluded Tomorrow.)

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Bedtime Story For the Little Ones

"Uncle Wiggily and the Ding-Dong-Ding Pussy."

By HOWARD, B. GARIS.

MOTHER GOOSE, the Old Woman who lived in a Shoe, and Old Mother Hubbard hurried one day across the field and through the woods, to the hollow stump bungalow of Uncle Wiggily Longears, the rabbit gentleman. Nurse Jane Fuzzy Wuzzy, the muskrat lady housekeeper, looking out of the hollow stump window, saw them.

"My goodness, Uncle Wiggily!" cried Nurse Jane. "Oh! Look who's coming this way."

The bunny uncle stepped to the window beside the muskrat lady.

"They're coming here," said Mr. Longears. "Mother Goose, Mrs. Hubbard and the Shoe Lady. You aren't giving a surprise party, are you, Nurse Jane, that they are coming to?"

"No indeed," answered Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy. "Though to see the three of them coming this way is a surprise to me. Something must be the matter. See how worried they look."

"Trouble, I suppose," said Uncle Wiggily. "Well, if they are in trouble it will give me pleasure to help them out. Open the door, Nurse Jane."

"Why, they can't get in here," said Miss Fuzzy Wuzzy. "Our little hollow stump bungalow is too small for Mother Hubbard, Mother Goose and the Shoe Lady, or even one of them."

"So it is," agreed Uncle Wiggily. "I'll have to go outside to talk to them," and he did, politely hopping outside the hollow stump.

"Oh, Uncle Wiggily!" cried Old Mother Hubbard. "Oh, dear!"

"Such trouble!" exclaimed the Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe, but whom I shall call the Shoe Lady, for short. "Oh, such trouble!"

"It's Pussy!" said Mother Goose. "She's gone!"

"Gone?" asked Uncle Wiggily. "Gone? Who is Pussy?"

"Why, you know," said Mother Goose. "Pussy is a cousin to Fuzzo, Wuzzo and Muzzo, the three little kittens, who lost their mittens."

"Oh, yes, to be sure," said Uncle Wiggily. "I remember! So Pussy has gone, has she? What happened to her?"

"That's what we don't know, and what we came to you to have you find out," said Mother Goose. "You see Pussy—that's her first name, her last one is Mew—Pussy Mew came on a little visit to Mrs. Purr, who is her aunt and the mother of the three kittens who lost their mittens."

"Oh, yes, I remember!" said Uncle Wiggily.

"Well, Pussy is lost," spoke the Shoe Lady. "She went out to the store for Mrs. Purr while Fuzzo, Wuzzo and Muzzo were taking their tail-chasing lesson, and Pussy did not come back."

"What did she go to the store after?" Uncle Wiggily wanted to know.

"A yeast cake," answered Mother Hubbard. "But the yeast cake didn't come back, either."

"Not having any legs, I don't see how it could," said Uncle Wiggily. "But what is it you want me to do, ladies?" he asked, making a polite bow.

"Find Pussy Mew," said Mother Goose. "You were so clever at helping the king and queen and the maid in the garden hanging out the clothes, when along came a blackbird that nipped off her nose; that I'm sure you can find Pussy for us. We're real worried about her. Please find her."

"I'll try," promised Uncle Wiggily. So in a little while off he started, limping along on his red, white and blue tail silk hat with his barber pole rheumatism crutch on his head. Oh, no! excuse me, if you please—I mean he had his crutch under his paw and his hat on his head.

Over the fields and through the woods went Uncle Wiggily until pretty soon he came to the hollow stump school where the lady mouse taught the animal children their lessons. The bell was ringing, for it was time for the children to run out to play at recess.

"Ha! I wonder if Pussy Mew could have gone to school, forgetting to come home with the yeast cake," said Uncle Wiggily. "I'll inquire."

He asked the lady mouse teacher, but she said that Pussy was not in school, so Uncle Wiggily hurried on, looking all through the woods and over the fields. But no Pussy did he find until, all at once, as he came near a well, he felt thirsty for a drink of water.

"Oh, how I wish I had a drink!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "I wonder if I could get one."

He went to the edge of the well, but it was an old one, and there was no rope or bucket by which water could be pulled up. Then the old rabbit gentleman saw something shining brightly down at the bottom of the well, and he called out:

"Is any one down there who could give me a drink of water?"

"Yes, I am down here," was the answer, "but I cannot give you a drink of water for I cannot get up myself."

"Who are you?" asked Uncle Wiggily, surprised like.

Just then the school bell rang again, and a voice said:

"Ding-dong bell, Pussy's in the well.
Who put her in? Little Johnnie Green.
Who pulled her out? Big Johnnie Stout.

"Only that last part isn't right," the voice went on, "for Big Johnnie Stout hasn't come to pull me out. But I am in the well, as you can tell by the ding-dong bell. Oh, dear! I don't know what to do. I want so much to get out."

"I'll help you, Pussy," said Uncle Wiggily, kindly. "I have been looking all over for you. But if you are in the well how is it that you did not sink to the bottom?"

"Because I have with me a yeast cake that I went to the store to get," was the answer. "The yeast cakes makes bread light, so it will rise, and it made me light, so I could rise to the top of the water."

"Good!" cried Uncle Wiggily. "It was the shiny tinfoil of the yeast cake I saw at the bottom of the well. I'll soon have you out now, Pussy."

He gave a jump over to a wild grape vine, gnawed off a piece with his strong teeth, and then, using the grape vine as a rope, he lowered it down into the well. Pussy took hold of it with her claws and paws, putting the yeast cake in one ear, and Uncle Wiggily easily pulled her out. She was wet, but not hurt at all.

"Oh, thank you, Uncle Wiggily," she said. "So it was you, and not Johnnie Stout, who pulled me out?"

"Of that there is no doubt," laughed Uncle Wiggily. "But did Johnnie Green push you in?"

"No, I stumbled and fell in," answered Pussy. "Everything about me in the Mother Goose story is wrong except the part like ding-dong bell. Pussy's in the well. I really was in."

Then Pusey hurried on to her aunt's house with the yeast cake, and all was well. And Mother Goose was very thankful to Uncle Wiggily for having helped the little cat, who, ever after that was called the "ding-dong-bell pussy."

So in the next story, if the piano music doesn't go to sleep in the bookcase, where the phonograph can't find it to play with, I'll tell you about Uncle Wiggily and the Shoe Lady.—Copyright, 1916, by McClure Newspaper Syndicate.

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SCHOOL DAYS

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By DWIG.

The Daily Novelette

Return of the Great Detective.

When Chris Columbus lowered sail
And landed from his smack,
I guess his first act was to mail
A picture post card back.

"HAVE a seat, Mr. Visikts. Oh, not at all—I know your name is Visikts because you sent your card in," said the great detective.

"Marvelous!" breathed the short, thick-set man who had just come in by the door. "Well, I'll get right down to business. I returned home last night from a three-days' convention of the Retail Hack Drivers' association, and my home was gone from its accustomed place. There was nothing there but a dancing academy above a vacant lot."

The great detective, seemingly stumped for once, stroked his chin with his violin. At last his face brightened.

"Are you in favor of military preparedness?" he asked.

"Most emphatically not!" replied his visitor angrily.

"Ah-hah!" ejaculated the great detective. "My suspicion is verified. You are not in your right mind."

And he yawned and rose to 'phone for the loghouse wagon.

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