

and with a sudden dart its heavy body left the ground. Rod had a second's vision of two monstrous wings sucking the air away from him, and a pair of talons flashed past his face.

He made one grab — and the next instant he felt himself lifted off his feet.

"Let go!" yelled Phil, but Rod hung desperately on. He could not have let go had he wished, for two sets of knife-like claws clutched deep into his wrist. Now in the air and now on the ground, they dashed along, for the bird could not sustain his weight.

A cry from Phil made him look down. Not fifty feet away was the brink of a cliff, a sheer fall of hundreds of feet, he knew. He tugged desperately to tear his wrists from the grip of the sharp claws; they clutched the tighter. He could not break loose! He shut his eyes; he was lost. Already he could feel the chill fear of the terrible fall creeping down his backbone.

And then — thump! He had struck the ground, while over him settled a grisly shape with tearing claws and beating wings. Then everything was still.

"What happened, Phil?" he asked some ten minutes later when he came to.