

The Yellow Dove
A Romance of the Secret Service
By George Gibbs
Author of "The Flaming Sword," "Madcap," etc.

Prelude

RIFTS of sullen gray in the dirty veils of vapor beyond the reaches of dunes where the sea in long lines of white foam, the hosts of host rushed along the sand.

And yet this tiny sound had a strange effect upon the desolate scene, for in a moment, as if they had been roused with teeth and fangs, the men of the front line began to rise and look toward the blundering machine.

"There goes Johnny look in the air," Caw'n get 'im, though, 'Strewth! 'E's a cool one—'e is!"

A hoarse order rang out from the trenches behind them—and the men ran for cover. The fog lifted a little and a shaft of light touched the leaden gray of the sea like the sheen on a dirty gun-barrel.

"Yes, they're arfter 'im. There comes hyshtashun, O'ell see 'em in the end of the day, but they'll be a long time coming."

"Garn!" said the one called Bill. "I never 'it anything but the dirt an' 'e can't 'elp that."

"The last time 'e kymed—down Wipers' way. There was a lull in the firing 'tween the lines of trenches where the head dutches comes a 'care-are—a real 'care with black 'cross, plumed an' all."

making important decisions are accentuated by the most unimportant details. Hammersley's good fortune was still a secret except to Miss Mather's most intimate friends, but the conviction was slowly growing in the mind of the staff that the man who had been sitting around in tweeds when every body else was getting into khaki, the engagement would never be announced.

"You don't really mean that, Hammersley," said Kipshaven amid smiles. "Well, don't," drawled the other. "All sissy rot—frightening. What's the use? Spotted my nose-shooting in Hesse-Nassau—no season at Carlbad—no season anywhere—everything the same with—summer—"

He came over to her at once, the monocle dropping from his eye. "Well, glad, s'actly good to see you, my dear, handsome no end."

and then with a contentment set his eyes. "Red Cross—'Oh, I say, Doris, that's your it rather thick on a chap—"

"The captain of a merchant steamer who saw it quite plainly reported that the power of the machine was simply amazing—that it flew at about six thousand feet and was lost to sight in an incredibly brief time."

"What will the War Office do?" Sandys shrugged expressively. "What would you do?" said the Honorable Cyril impudently.

leave the shores of England without being ransom'd, asked Kipshaven indignantly. "Oh," laughed Sandy, "answer me one that we've cause and, imprinted and we have the solution of the problem. A strict watch is being kept on the coasts, and the government employes—the postmen, police, secret service men of every town and village from here to the Shetlands have their eyes peeled—but not a glimpse have they had of him, not a sign of his arrival in England is safe, when spies are found in the official family at the War Office."

"I tell you, I believe we're honey-combed with spies," he growled. "For one that we've cause and, imprinted and we have the solution of the problem. A strict watch is being kept on the coasts, and the government employes—the postmen, police, secret service men of every town and village from here to the Shetlands have their eyes peeled—but not a glimpse have they had of him, not a sign of his arrival in England is safe, when spies are found in the official family at the War Office."

"I'll have my coffee first," laughed Byfield. "If you don't mind." "Coffee—then coffee," said Rizzio. "Jolly pleasant conversation this, remarked Hammersley. "Makes a chap a bit fatigued."

"The object of these remarks turned the blank stare of his monocle but made no reply." "Yes, I mean you, Cyril," went on the Earl steadily.

"I was never more in earnest in my life. How do you stand?" "Haw!" said Hammersley, with obvious effort. "I'm British, you know, and all that sort of thing. How can an Englishman be anything else? Silly rot—fighting—that's what I say. That's all I say."

"The Yellow Dove is occult," said Sandys, "like a witch on a broomstick." "A Flying Dutchman," returned Lady Rizzio, "is a much better name."

And he pushed a pouch and a package of cigarette papers toward the table. "It's a mix of my own. I hope you'll like it."

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"Well, rather," replied Captain Byfield, and he pushed a pouch and a package of cigarette papers along the tablecloth toward Hammersley.

CHAPTER II The Undercurrent

THEY were still discussing the strange story of Sandy when Lady Heathcote signalled her feminine guests and they retired to the drawing room. Over the coffee the interest persisted and Lord Kipshaven was not to be denied. If, as it seemed probable, this German spy was making frequent flights between England and the Continent, he must have some landing field, a hangar, a machine shop, flying over the North Sea between England and the continent had been sighted and reported by English vessels again and again, and each night had coincided with some unexpected move on the part of the enemy. Once it was seen just before the raid at Falmouth, again before the Zepelin visit to Sandringham.

"Well, rather," replied the captain.

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