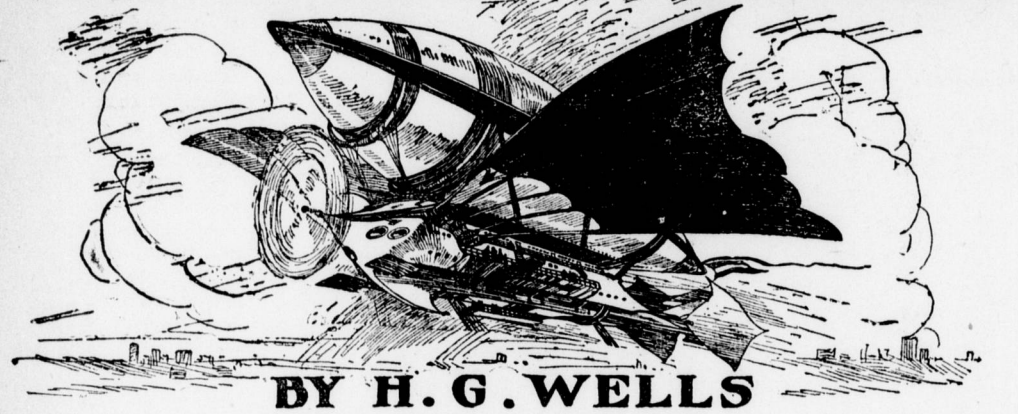


The War in the Air



BY H. G. WELLS

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PROLOGUE OF THE STORY.

Germany, hating the Monroe doctrine and ambitious for world's supremacy, secretly builds a vast fleet of airships and plans to surprise the United States by means of a sudden attack. Her airship fleet consists of great dirigibles of the Von Zeppelin type and small aeroplanes called Drachentfeger.

Prince Karl Albert commands the German airships. Germany and England have both been endeavoring to buy an extraordinary flying machine invented by Alfred Butteridge, who arrives at a British seaside resort in a runaway balloon, accompanied by a lady in whom he is interested.

Bert Smallways, a motorcycle dealer in hard luck, who is in love with Miss Edna Bunthorne, and his partner, Grubb, are impersonating a pair of "desert dervishes" at the seashore. Bert catches hold of the basket of the balloon and falls into it just as Butteridge and the lady fall out.

The balloon carries Bert across the North sea. He finds drawings of Butteridge's airship in some of Butteridge's clothing and hides the plans in his chest protector. His balloon drifts over Germany's immense aeronautic park. German soldiers shoot holes in it and capture Bert. They think he is Butteridge. Soldiers carry him to the cabin of the Vaterland, flagship of the air fleet. Lieutenant Kurt guards him. The vast fleet starts across the ocean to attack New York. Bert considers selling Butteridge's airship plans.

An Offer For the Plans.

What should he ask for the things? Somehow £20,000 struck him as about the sum indicated.

Memories of pretty Edna clustered round that impression. They led Bert's mind step by step to an agreeable state that found expression in, "I'll marry 'er if she don't look out." And then in a flash it followed in his mind that if he sold the Butteridge secret he could! Suppose, after all, he did get £20,000. Such sums have been paid! Of course risks were involved. "I'll 'ave old Butteridge on my track, I expect!"

He meditated upon that. He declined again to despondency. As yet he was only in the beginning of the adventure. He had still to deliver the goods and draw the cash. And before that—just now he was by no means on his way home. He was flying off to America to fight there. "Not much fighting," he considered; "all our own way." Still, if a shell did happen to hit the Vaterland on the underside!

He got up presently and wrapped himself about with Mr. Butteridge's overcoat and all the blankets, for the air was very keen. Then he peeped out of the window to see a gray dawn breaking over clouds, then turned up his light and bolted his door, sat down to the table and produced his chest protector.

He smoothed the crumpled plans with his hand and contemplated them. Then he referred to the other drawings in the portfolio. Twenty thousand pounds if he worked it right! It was worth trying anyhow.

Presently he opened the drawer in which Kurt had put paper and writing materials.

Bert Smallways was by no means a stupid person, and up to a certain limit he had not been badly educated. His board school had taught him to draw up to certain limits, taught him to calculate and understand a specification. He was not incapable of grasping the idea of the Butteridge flying machine. But he found it stiff and perplexing. He copied sketches, he made notes, he made a quite tolerable and intelligent copy of the essential drawings and sketches of the others. Then he fell into a meditation upon them.

At last he rose, with a sigh, folded up the originals that had formerly been in his chest protector and put them into the breast pocket of his jacket and then very carefully deposited the copies he had made in the place of the originals. He had no very clear plan in his mind in doing this, except that he hated the idea of altogether parting with the secret. For a long time he meditated profoundly—nodding. Then he turned out his light and went to bed again and schemed himself to sleep.

The hochgeborenen Graf von Winterfeld was also a light sleeper that night, but then he was one of those people who sleep little and play chess problems in their heads while away the time, and that night he had a particularly difficult problem to solve.

He came in upon Bert while he was still in bed in the glow of the sunlight reflected from the North sea, below, consuming the rolls and coffee a soldier had brought him. He had a portfolio under his arm, and in the clear early morning light his dingy gray hair and heavy silver rimmed spectacles made him look almost benevolent. He spoke English fluently, but with a strong German flavor. "You came to us, Herr Pooterage, against your will," he said.

"Ow d'you make that out?" asked Bert after a pause of astonishment. "I chug by ze maps in your car. They were all English. And your provisions—they were all picnic. Also your cords were entangled. You haf been tugging, but no good. Also—where is ze lady?"

"Ere, what lady?" "You started with a lady. That is evident. You started for an afternoon excursion—a picnic. A man of your temperament, he would take a lady. She was not wiz you in your balloon when you came down at Dornhof. No! Only her chacket! It is your affair. Still I am curious."

Bert reflected. "Ow d'you know that?" "I chug by ze nature of your farious provisions. Well, let us get to business. A higher power—his voice changed its emotional quality; his magnified eyes seemed to dilate—"has brought you and your secret straight to us. So"—he bowed his head—"so pe it! It is ze destiny of Chermamy and my prince. I can understhandt you always carry zat secret. You are afraid of roppers and spies. So it comes wiz you to us, Mr. Pooterage, Chermamy will pay it."

"Will she?" "She will," said the secretary, looking hard at Bert's abandoned sandals in the corner of the locker. He roused himself, consulted a paper of notes for a moment, and Bert eyed his brown and wrinkled face with expectation and terror. "Chermamy, I am instructed to say," said the secretary, with his eyes on the table and his notes spread out, "has always been willing to pay your secret. We haf indeed been eager to acquire it—fery eager, and it was only ze fear that you might be on patriotic grounds, acting in collusion with your British war office, zat has made us discreet in offering for your marvelous invention through intermediaries. We haf no hesitation whatever now, I am instructed, in agreeing to your proposal of a hundred thousand pounds."

"Crickey!" said Bert, overwhelmed. "I peg your pardon?" "Jest a twinge," said Bert, raising his hand to his bandaged head. "I haf performed my instructions. And ze title of paron, zat also can be done. It can all be done, Herr Pooterage." He drummed on the table for a second or so and resumed: "I haf to tell you, sir, zat you come to us at a crisis in—Welt-Politik. There can be no harm now for me to put our plans before you. Before you leave this ship again they will be manifest to all ze world. War is perhaps already declared. We go—to America. Our fleet will descend out of ze air upon ze United States—it is a country quite unprepared for war eferywhere—eferywhere. Zey have always relied on ze Atlantic and their navy. We have selected a certain point—it is at present ze secret of our commanders—whichever we shall seize and zen we shall establish a depot—a sort of inland Gibraltar. It will be—what will it be?—an eagle's nest. Zere our airships will gather and repair, and thence they will fly to and fro ofer ze United States terrorizing cities, dominating Washington, levying what is necessary until terms we dictate are accepted."

"Go on!" said Bert. "We could haf done all zis wiz such Luftschiffe and Drachentfieger as we possess, but ze accession of your machine renders our project complete. It not only givs us a better Drachentfieger, but it removes our last uneasiness as to Great Britain. Wizout you, sir, Great Britain, ze land you lofed so well and zat has required you so fill, zat land of Pharisees and reptiles, can do nozzing—nozzing! You see, I am perfectly frank wiz you. Well, I am instructed that Chermamy recognizes all this. We want you to place yourself at our disposal. We want you to become our chief head flight engineer."

"We want you to become our chief head flight engineer. We want you to manufacture. We want you to equip a swarm of hornets under your direction. We want you to direct this force. And it is at our depot in America we want you. So we offer you simply and without haggling ze full terms we demanded weeks ago—one hundred thousand pounds in cash, a salary of three thousand pounds a year, a pension of one thousand pounds a year and ze title of paron, as you desired. These are my instructions."

"That's all right, of course," said Bert, a little short of breath, but otherwise resolute and calm. The secretary contemplated Bert's collar with sustained attention. Only for one moment did his gaze move to the sandals and back. "Jes' lemme think a bit," said Bert, finding the stare debilitating. "Look 'ere," he said at last, with an air of great explicitness, "I got the secret." "Yes."

"But I don't want the name of Butteridge to appear. See? I been thinking that over."

"A little delicacy?" "Exactly! You buy the secret—leastways, I giv it you—from bearer. See?" His voice faltered him a little, and the stare continued. "I want to do the thing anonymously. See?" Still staring, Bert drifted on like a swimmer caught by a current: "Fact is, I'm going to edop' the name of Smallways. I don't want no title of baron. I've altered my mind. And I want the money quiet like. I want the hundred thousand pounds paid into banks—thirty thousand into the London and county bank branch at Bun Hill, in Kent, directly I 'and over the plans, twenty thousand into the Bank of England, 'arf the rest into a good French bank, the other 'arf the German National bank. See? I want it put there right away. I don't want it put in the name of Butteridge. I want it put in the name of Albert Peter Smallways. That's the name I'm going to edop'. That's condition one."

"Go on," said the secretary.

"The next condition," said Bert, "is that you don't make any inquiries as to title. I mean what English gentlemen do when they sell or let you land. You don't arst 'ow I got it. See? 'Ere I am—I deliver you the goods; that's all right. Some people 'ave the cheek to say this isn't my invention. See? It is, you know—that's all right. But I don't want that gone into. I want a fair and square agreement saying that's all right. See?"

His "see" faded into a profound silence.

When at last the Graf von Winterfeld left Bert Smallways he left him in an extremely deflated condition, with all his little story told. He had, as people say, made a clean breast of it. He had been pursued into details. He had had to explain the blue suit, the sandals, the Desert Dervishes—everything.

"It is fery curious and amusing, yes, but I am afraid the prince may be annoy. He acted wiz his usual decision—always he acts wiz wondrous decision, like Napoleon. Directly he was tolt of your descent into the camp at Dornhof he said, 'Pring him! Pring him! It is my schtar!' His schtar of destiny! You see? He will be dithwarted. He directed you to come as Herr Pooterage, and you haf not done so. You haf triet, of course, but it has been a poor try. His chugments of men are fery just and right, and it is better for men to act up to them—completely. Especially now. Particularly now."

He directed you to come as Herr Pooterage, and you haf not done so.

Particularly now.

[To be continued.]



"We want you to become our chief head flight engineer."

Representatives of the leading cloak and suit manufacturers of the United States have announced the following spring styles for women:

Suit jackets will be cut on straight lines, slightly fitted, the predominating lengths to be twenty-six inches and shorter, with a tendency toward rounded front effects.

Skirts will be cut with few gores and on straight lines, with some panel and tunic effect, the slightly raised waist line (with inside belting) to continue in favor; one sided effects to be strongly featured.

Separate skirts to be cut on the lines of suit skirts; trimmings to be so ap-

A GLANCE AT WORLD AFFAIRS

MAYOR STANLEY K. SHANK of Indianapolis, who came into national prominence recently by selling potatoes and apples in the open market at less than half the price dealers were charging, is still trying to cut the cost of living by means of a municipal purchasing agent. He has appointed a man to go to the city markets and see that a shortage of all commodities is prevented. The reason Mayor Shank began his crusade against high prices is



Mayor Shank of Indianapolis, Who Is Trying to Reduce Cost of Living.

plied as to give the appearance of more fullness.

Separate coats to be full length and less fitted, with a tendency toward loose enveloping effects.

Novelty features in suit and separate coats will include the sloping shoulder. The suits of 1911 will be worn by many husbands when the coming year's fashions for women are in effect. As to sloping shoulders, a whole lot of men have 'em now, for capricious Dame Fashion hasn't been easy on them in the matter of femininity's fine raiment for winter.

Standard Oil's Knell Close. It is a matter of a very short time when the Standard Oil company must dissolve in conformity with court decree. The corporation, following the judgment of the United States circuit court, which was confirmed by the United States supreme court, was allowed until Dec. 21 to go out of existence, this date being an extension of time, to which the additional privilege was allowed the corporation of asking for even more margin if it was found impossible to conclude its affairs at the expiration of the amended time limit. The court's decision originally gave the company thirty days to dissolve and prohibited it from engaging in interstate commerce during that time.

Two New Stars in United States Flag. Uncle Sam now has forty-eight stars in his national emblem, due to the advent into the Union as states of Arizona and New Mexico. Arizona elected her governor and other state officers on Dec. 12. New Mexico still has to elect her senators and will do so in January.

A Curfew For Motorists. Frank B. Sanborn, known as the sage of Concord, Mass., and famous as the biographer of Emerson, Thoreau and Alcott, recently made a request for a law sending every automobile in Massachusetts to its barn at 11 p. m. Professor Sanborn urged that a special license and a high fee be required for night speeding. He would grant these licenses only to physicians or in emergency cases. Eleven o'clock, Mr. Sanborn said, used to be known as the "time for honest folks to be abed and for rogues to be running."

Florida's Gift to Battleship. The people of Florida have presented a silver service to the battleship named for that state. The ceremonies attending the presentation occurred at Pensacola, Governor Gilchrist making the gift in the name of the donors. The silver pieces, sixty-one in number, bore designs typical of the peninsula state.

South Pole Expedition. The Japanese antarctic expedition aboard the Kaiman Maru, which was forced to return to Sydney, Australia, last spring, is making its second attempt to reach the south pole. The expedition is in command of Lieutenant Shirase and on the previous attempt got as far as 74 degrees south, but was forced to return on account of stormy weather and ice packs, the vessel proving unfit to resist the ice pressure.

Rear Admiral Vreeland. It was understood at the time it was announced that Rear Admiral Richard Wainwright was to retire from the United States navy this week that his successor would be Rear Admiral Charles E. Vreeland. The latter officer commanded the battleship Delaware, which was sent to the coronation of King George V. of Great Britain. He was naval aid to John Hays Hammond, American special ambassador to the crowning ceremonies. Rear Admiral Vreeland, who is a son of New Jersey, entered the navy in July, 1906.

National Civic Pride. In line with the spirit of the times is the object of the American Civic association, which on Dec. 13, 14 and 15 held its seventh annual convention in Washington. "A More Beautiful America" is its slogan, and its influence is rapidly making itself felt. A feature of the convention was an exhibition of National park views under the auspices of the department of the interior.

Style Decrees Sloping Shoulders.

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YULETIDE IN MANY LANDS.

Christmas Day Oddly Celebrated in Foreign Countries.

Christmas celebrations are drawn from diverse sources and are by no means all of Christian origin, in so far as the ceremonies and festivities are concerned. In fact, there is more of pagan than of Christian in them, and many of them antedate the religion of Christ.

In Scandinavia one has, it is said, the greatest veneration for Yuletide of all countries. The courts are closed, old quarrels forgotten, feuds adjusted. A pretty symbol of the spirit that reigns is the practice of placing in a row every pair of shoes in each household, so that during the year the family will live in peace and harmony. Candles are left burning to show the way to "Yule trumpet" (the Christmas spirit), bringing the gifts. One sets a cake of meal in the snow as a Christmas offering. For the birds a sheaf of wheat is placed on a pole in front of each house to provide them with food.

In Serbia the Christmas customs are very curious. When the father brings home the Yule log he says: "Good evening, Merry Christmas." All present reply: "May God grant both to thee. Mayest thou have riches and honor." Then they throw over him grains of wheat. Presently a young tree is placed upon the coals, where it remains until morning, which is saluted by repeated pistol shots. Where a neighbor pays a visit he first throws grains of wheat through the open door, crying, "Christ is born." Those upon whom the grain has fallen answer, "He is born indeed." The visitor then enters and, striking the log with a piece of iron, adds, "For as many sparks as come out of you let there be as many oxen, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and beeshives." At length the mistress of the house throws a veil over the assembled guests, and the remains of the log are carried out into the orchard. The ashes are retained, as they are believed to bring good luck.

In some places in Swabia it is customary for a maiden inquisitive as to her prospective lover to draw a stick of wood out of a heap of Christmas fire logs to see whether he will be long or short, crooked or straight.

In the Swiss and Austrian Alps the peculiar belief obtains that animals have the gift of language on Christmas night.

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

HORN blown in Eiland haunt my dreams,
And softly through the doors of Sleep
Some half remembered Music
seems
Across the mists of Time to creep.

BUT sweeter than the call for-lorn
Of Faery voices comes the chime
Of early bells on Christmas morn
Across the widening gulfs of Time.

I HEAR from ghostly tower to tower
The ghostly peal of sound take flight,
And Music, like a passing shower,
Drifts, like a Memory, down the night.

I HEAR the bells, like calling birds,
Aloud, alone, ring out and fall
And reawake and scatter words
Of Hope and Joy, like silver hail.

I HEAR them call, the Christmas bells,
Past where the snows of Sorrow blow,
Where still the joy of childhood dwells
And all the dreams of youth
come true!
—Arthur Stringer in Designer.

A Last Minute Present.

At the eleventh hour last Christmas, says a contributor to the Housekeeper, I remembered that I did not have a gift for a friend I wished to remember. I knew that a gift of money would be very acceptable, yet it would never do to give her money in the ordinary way or in any way that would suggest charity. At last I hit upon this delightful way out of the difficulty, and it proved so successful that I "pass it on" this Christmas to others. I bought a little ten cent basket from the ten cent store and painted it a deep Indian red. Then I bought some English walnuts, picked out the largest, split them into halves and picked out the meats. In one or two of them I placed a few dimes, in one a bill, in another a number of stamps, and in the others I placed little jokes and slips of paper bearing little Christmas verses or thoughts. Then I glued the halves together and put them in the basket, tied a Christmas card and a spray of holly to the handle and sent it to my friend. She declared it was the most delightful gift she had ever received.

An Attractive Gift.

As an inexpensive gift at Christmas an attractive art calendar may be made at home. The actual labor consists in supplying a suitable photograph or a bit of scenery or a picturesque homestead or hut to which attaches historic interest, to be inserted in the space on the mounting boards, as these boards are being shown in the shops in most artistic colors, in various sizes and with a suitable and harmonizing calendar pad attached. Then, too, if one is clever with water paints, and one can soon learn to be if one is not already, the scene may be touched with color and thus represent a bit of thought and



Rear Admiral Charles E. Vreeland, Now Prominent Figure in Navy.

cer commanded the battleship Delaware, which was sent to the coronation of King George V. of Great Britain. He was naval aid to John Hays Hammond, American special ambassador to the crowning ceremonies. Rear Admiral Vreeland, who is a son of New Jersey, entered the navy in July, 1906.

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