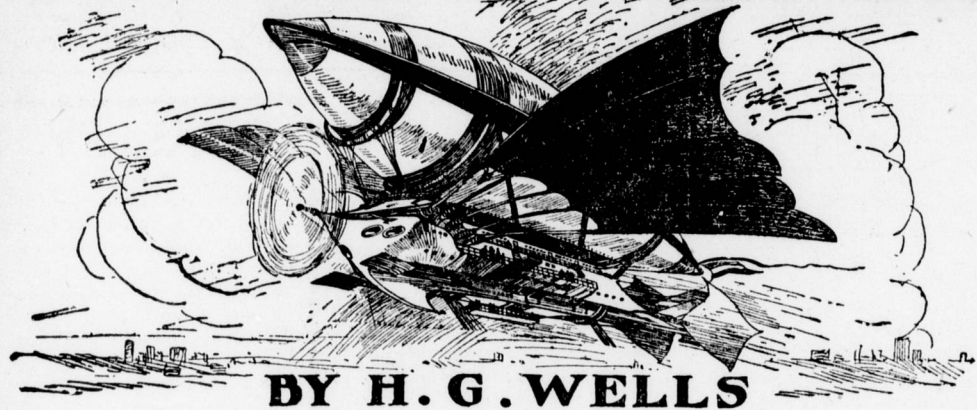


The War in the Air



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 Drachenflieger.

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. Graf von Winterfeld denounces Bert as an impostor, but offers him £500 for Butteridge's secret. The prince agrees to take Bert along "as ballast." The wireless brings news of a great naval battle between the German fleet and the north Atlantic fleet.

A Battle on the Sea.

ETHER there was no news of the naval battle that morning or the prince kept to himself whatever came until past midday. Then the bulletins came with a rush—bulletins that made Lieutenant Kurt wild with excitement.

"Barbarossa disabled and sinking!" he cried.

He walked about the swinging cabin, and for a time he was wholly German. Then he became English again. "Think of it, Smallways! The old ship we kept so clean and tidy! All smashed about and the iron flying about in fragments, and the chaps one knew—Gott!—flying about too! Scalding water squirting, fire and the smash-smash of the guns! They smash when you're near! Like everything bursting to pieces! Wool won't stop it—noting! And me up here—so near and so far! Der alte Barbarossa!"

"Any other ships?" asked Smallways presently.

"Gott! Yes! We've lost the Karl der Grosse, our best and biggest. Run down in the night by a British liner that blundered into the fighting—in trying to blunder out. They're fighting in a gale. The liner's afloat with her nose broken, sagging about! There never was such a battle—never before!"

So it was the news of the battle came filtering through to them all that morning. The Americans had lost a second ship, name unknown. The Hermann had been damaged in covering the Barbarossa. Kurt fretted like an imprisoned animal about the airship, now going up to the forward gallery under the eagle, now down into the swinging gallery, now poring over his maps. He infected Smallways with a sense of the immediacy of this battle that was going on just over the curve of the earth. But when Bert went down to the gallery the world was empty and still, a clear inky blue sky above and a rippled veil of still, thin sunlight cirrus below, through which one saw a racing drift of rain cloud and never a glimpse of sea. Throb, throb, throb, throb, went the engines, and the long, undulating wedge of airships hurried after the flagship like a flight of swans after their leader. Save for the quiver of the engines it was as noiseless as a dream. And down there somewhere in the wind and rain guns roared, shells crashed home and, after the old manner of warfare, men toiled and died.

As the afternoon wore on the lower weather abated and the sea became intermittently visible again. The air fleet dropped slowly to the middle air, and toward sunset they had a glimpse of the disabled Barbarossa far away to the east. Smallways heard men hurrying along the passage and was drawn out to the gallery, where he found nearly a dozen officers collected and scrutinizing the helpless ruins of the battleship through fieldglasses. Two other vessels stood by her, one an exhausted petrol tank, very high out of the water, and the other a converted *Kaiser* *Wright* was at the end of the gallery, a little apart from the others.

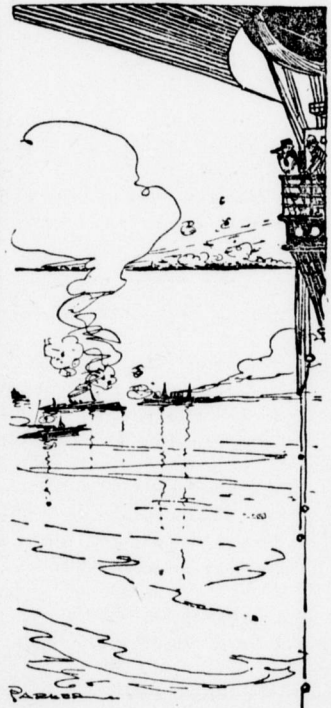
"Gott!" he said at last, lowering his binocular. "It is like seeing an old friend with his nose cut off—waiting to be finished. Der Barbarossa!"

With a sudden impulse he handed his glass to Bert, who had peered beneath his hands, ignored by every one, seeing the three ships merely as three brown black lines upon the sea.

Never had Bert seen the like of that magnified slightly hazy image before. It was not simply a battered ironclad that wallowed helplessly; it was a man-of-war still floated. Her powerful engines had been her ruin. In the long chase of the night she had got out of line with her consorts and nipped in

between the Susquehanna and the Kansas City. They discovered her proximity, dropped back until she was nearly broadside on to the former battleship and signaled up the Theodore Roosevelt and the little Monitor. As dawn broke she had found herself hostess of a circle. The fight had not lasted five minutes before the appearance of the Hermann to the east and immediately after of the Furst Bismarck in the west forced the Americans to leave her, but in that time they had smashed her iron to rags. They had vented the accumulated tensions of their hard day's retreat upon her. As Bert saw her she seemed a mere metal worker's fantasy of frozen metal writhings. He could not tell part from part of her, except by its position.

Smallways woke the next night to discover the cabin in darkness, a draft blowing through it, and Kurt talking to himself in German. He could see him dimly by the window, which he had unscrewed and opened, peering down. That cold, clear, attenuated light which is not so much light as a going of darkness, which



They Had Smashed Her Iron to Rags. casts inky shadows and so often heralds the dawn in the high air, was on his face.

"What's the row?" said Bert.

"Shut up!" said the lieutenant. "Can't you hear?"

Into the stillness came the repeated heavy thud of guns—one, two—a pause, then three in quick succession.

"Gaw," said Bert, "guns!" and was instantly at the lieutenant's side. The airship was still very high, and the sea below was masked by a thin veil of clouds. The wind had fallen, and Bert, following Kurt's pointing finger, saw dimly through the colorless veil first a red glow, then a quick red flash and then at a little distance from another. They were, it seemed for a while, silent flashes, and seconds after, when one had ceased to expect them, came the belated thuds—the first thud! Kurt spoke in German very quickly.

A bugle call ran through the airship. Kurt sprang to his feet, saying something in an excited tone, still using German, and went to the door.

"I say! What's up?" cried Bert. "What's that?"

The lieutenant stopped for an in-

stant in the doorway, dark against the light passage. "You stay where you are, Smallways. You keep there and do nothing. We're going into action," he explained and vanished.

Bert's heart began to beat rapidly. He felt himself poised over the fighting vessels far below. In a moment were they to drop like a hawk striking a bird? "Gaw!" he whispered at last in awe-stricken tones.

Thud! Thud! He discovered far away a second ruddy flare flashing guns back at the first. He perceived some difference on the Vaterland for which he could not account, and then he realized that the engines had slowed to an almost inaudible beat. He stuck his head out of the window—it was a tight fit—and saw in the bleak air the other airships slowed down to a scarcely perceptible motion.

A second bugle sounded, was taken up faintly from ship to ship. Out went the lights. The fleet became dim, dark bulks against an intense blue sky that still retained an occasional star. For a long time they hung—for an interminable time, it seemed to him—and then began the sound of air being pumped into the balloonette, and slowly, slowly the Vaterland sank down toward the clouds.

He craned his neck, but he could not see if the rest of the fleet was following them. The overhang of the gas chambers intervened. There was something that stirred his imagination deeply in that stealthy, noiseless descent.

The obscurity deepened for a time, the last fading star on the horizon vanished, and he felt the cold presence of cloud. Then suddenly the glow beneath assumed distinct outlines, became flames, and the Vaterland ceased to descend and hung servant and it would seem unobserved just beneath a drifting stratum of cloud, a thousand feet perhaps over the battle below.

In the night the struggling naval battle and retreat had entered upon a new phase. The Americans had drawn together the ends of the flying line skillfully and dexterously until at last it was a column and well to the south of the lax sweeping pursuit of the Germans. Then in the darkness before the dawn they had come about and steamed northward in close order with the idea of passing through the German battle line and falling upon the flotilla that was making for New York in support of the German air fleet. Much had altered since the first contact of the fleets. By this time the American admiral, O'Connor, was fully informed of the existence of the airships, and he was no longer vitally concerned for Panama, since the submarine flotilla was reported arrived there from Key West, and the Delaware and Abraham Lincoln, two powerful and entirely modern ships, were already at Rio Grande, on the Pacific side of the canal.

His maneuver was, however, delayed by a boiler explosion on board the Susquehanna, and dawn found this ship in sight of and, indeed, so close to the Bremen and the Weimar that they instantly engaged. There was no alternative to her abandonment but a fleet engagement. O'Connor chose the latter course. It was by no means a hopeless fight. The Germans, though much more numerous and powerful than the Americans, were in a dispersed line measuring nearly forty-five miles from end to end, and there were many chances that before they could gather in for the fight the column of seven Americans would have ripped them from end to end.

The day broke dim and overcast, and neither the Bremen nor the Weimar realized they had to deal with more than the Susquehanna until the whole column drew out from behind her at a distance of a mile or less and bore down on them. This was the position of affairs when the Vaterland appeared in the sky. The red glow Bert had seen through the column of clouds came from the luckless Susquehanna; she lay almost immediately below, burning fore and aft, but still fighting two of her guns and steaming slowly southward. The Bremen and the Weimar, both hit in several places, were going west by south and away from her. The American fleet, headed by the Theodore Roosevelt, was crossing behind them, pounding them in succession, stemming in between them and the big modern Furst Bismarck, which was coming up from the west. To Bert, however, the names of all these ships were unknown, and for a considerable time indeed, misled by the direction in which the combatants were moving, he imagined the Germans to be Americans and the Americans Germans.

[To be continued.]

A GLANCE AT WORLD AFFAIRS

THE great mechanical problems connected with the construction of the Panama canal, which is to be opened in January, 1915, pass in review in the annual report of the isthmian canal commission. The record of one year's achievements in the gigantic task that is being worked out under congressional appropriations had then aggregated \$293,561,486.

"With both slides and breaks" the commission says, "The question is one of ultimate amount of excavation, and whatever the feeling elsewhere there is no apprehension on the isthmus as to the final outcome among those acquainted with the facts."

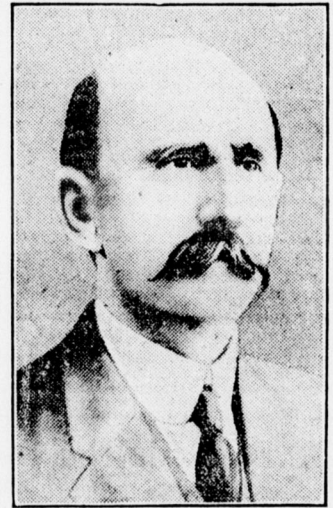
The commission thus answers predictions that the canal would be overwhelmed by gigantic landslides, preventing the execution of the project.

The total appropriations made by congress left \$81,639,531 of the estimated cost of the canal yet to be appropriated.

The visit to Panama of Sir Sydney Oliver, governor of Jamaica, who went there admittedly for the purpose of making an official report as to his inspection, is likely to have an important bearing on the proposed extension of fortifications to Jamaica. The governor was accompanied to Panama by Lieutenant Wyndham, a military expert.

From Farm to Governor.

W. C. McDonald, the first executive of the infant state of New Mexico, has lived there for thirty years and has taken hold of his job with the firm



W. C. McDonald, the First Governor of New Mexico.

conviction, to use his own words, that "New Mexico is standing at the threshold of a great future." At the same time Governor McDonald declares that the people of New Mexico must cooperate one with the other to develop her vast resources and accomplish her up-building.

Governor McDonald has lived thirty years in New Mexico. He was born in the state of New York and is fifty-three years of age. He was educated in the New York public schools and was brought up on a farm.

An Expiring Commission.

The national monetary commission goes out of existence this week, following its report to congress regarding a revision of the currency system of the country. The commission's knell was sounded in the senate on Aug. 14 last, when, by a vote of 56 to 6, it was instructed to submit its report and dissolve. The bill on the subject, which was offered by Senator Burton of Ohio, was a substitute measure for the Cummins bill, which had called for a report and dissolution last December.

Agricultural Expositions.

Pittsburgh is getting ready for the annual show of the Pennsylvania Dairy union, the Pennsylvania Live Stock Breeders' association and the State Horticultural association, which takes place at Duquesne garden Jan. 15-20. The promoters of the exhibition, of which the Keystone State is proud, have engaged men of national prominence to deliver a number of illustrated lectures as a feature of the occasion.

The city of Houston also will be a point of interest to farmers at the same time. Beginning Jan. 15 and continuing until the 28th, the Texas Labor exposition is held in that city. Its object is to stimulate interest in farming and improvements of land, to show the benefits derived from scientific agriculture and to "put Texas in a proper light before the world." The exhibits will include specimens of soil and products, and there will be illustrations of agriculture in all its branches, among these being dry farming and irrigation methods. The exhibits will occupy twenty acres of space.

National Peacemakers.

Lieutenant General Sir R. S. S. Baden-Powell, who organized the Boy Scouts of England, thinks that the development of this big organization into an international association would mark a step in the movement for universal peace among nations.

As the boys will be the men of the coming generation, the idea has possibilities.

Per Capita Circulation.

The per capita circulation of money in the United States is \$34.54, according to a statement issued by the treasury department. To arrive at this fig-

ure the fiscal experts estimate that the population of the country is fast approaching the 100,000,000 mark. Besides their calculation on the census of 1910 they estimate that there were 94,670,000 persons in the United States on Dec. 1, 1911. The census showed that the population on April 15, 1910, was 91,972,260.

The total amount of money in circulation on Dec. 1 last was \$3,270,582,753. The assets of the United States government were \$345,943,923. This makes the total stock of money in this country \$3,616,526,676.

Politics and Railroad Rates.

Members of the Democratic national committee are in Washington to settle upon the date and place for holding their convention. St. Louis seemed to have a safe lead over Baltimore on the eve of the decision. The delegates to the coming convention will number over 1,000, more than ever before, being based on the new apportionment.

Washington will be the mecca next month of railroad men. They are coming from Minnesota, Kentucky, West Virginia, Missouri and Oregon. It isn't a pleasure trip, as indicated by the fact that they will bring an army of legal lights. The railroad men go to Washington for the hearing of the state railroad cases before the United States supreme court. The issue is whether the national government has jurisdiction over rates within states. Governors from the states interested will attend the hearing.

New Eskimo Tribe Reported.

Members of the Winnipeg Historical society have a letter from Stefansson, the arctic explorer, in which he tells of having lived with a race of Eskimos which had never seen a white man.

Stefansson said he had visited more than 500 uncivilized Eskimos, almost all of whom had never seen a white man, yet who were "more admirable in character and in deportment than civilized people generally are."

British Admiralty Changes.

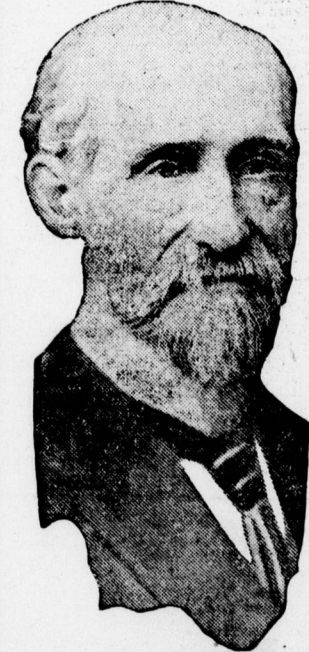
Changes that have gone into effect in the British navy are believed to indicate the development, on progressive lines, of the reform policy instituted when Admiral of the Fleet Sir Arthur Wilson was appointed to heal the discord caused by the older officers' reluctance to accept the reforms. Admiral Sir Francis Charles Bridgeman has been made first sea lord, replacing Admiral Wilson.

Vice Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg now is second sea lord, replacing Vice Admiral Sir George Le Clerc Egerton. Prince Louis of Battenberg has a great reputation as a scientific and practical officer.

The changes came as a surprise to the public and evidently were the outcome of Winston Churchill's interference to the admiralty. Mr. Churchill denied that the changes implied any reflection on the outgoing sea lords, who, he pointed out, were due to retire early in 1912.

The Liquor Issue in Georgia.

Former Governor Joseph M. Brown, Democratic candidate for state executive of Georgia, at the election this week made his campaign for the nomination on the platform to submit all proposed liquor legislation directly to the voters. As in most elections in



Joseph M. Brown, Gubernatorial Candidate in Georgia.

Georgia for a dozen years, the contest resolved itself around the liquor question, the candidates taking different positions on the matter.

"Woman's Rights."

A woman governor! This is not a reality—yet. But the proposition obtained the indorsement of the lower house of the California legislature. That body passed a bill which would open every elective office in the state to its women.

Women may carry revolvers! This is fact, not fancy, so far as Chicago and the suburban towns south of that city are concerned, the men's vigilance committees of five towns having accorded the privilege to the opposite sex. The women also were told they could wear constables' badges and shoot night marauders.

Next!

THE BARCELONA RIOTS.

An Englishman Describes an Unexpected Adventure in Spain.

One of the English war correspondents at Tripoli was telling a group of American acquaintances some of his experiences during a career that has taken him all over the world.

"By far the most annoying adventure I ever made," he said, "was at Barcelona, Spain, during the riots there a few years ago. I arrived in Barcelona late one evening, was driven straight from the railroad station to my hotel and flung myself into full evening dress, as I desired to call at once on one of the principal city dignitaries.

"In spite of the fact that the city was under martial law, everything seemed perfectly quiet. I walked several blocks without seeing anything that would suggest the scenes of violence which had been enacted but two or three days before in Barcelona.

"Suddenly, turning a corner, I realized that it had been quite justified.

"A soldier laid hold of me. Other soldiers surrounded me. The street was full of them.

"Without heeding my protestations that I was a peaceable foreigner they pushed me roughly toward a group of persons in the middle of the street.

"These persons, carefully guarded by the soldiery, were busy taking large cobblestones from a barricade and depositing them at one side of the thoroughfare, thus opening it to traffic.

"Soldiers prodded me and motioned to the cobblestones. Their signs were far too clear for any misapprehension as to meaning.

"Gingerly, endeavoring to protect my gala garments as much as possible, I stooped, picked up a stone and bore it to the side of the street and dropped it. Then I stood still.

"But the soldiers, now or the broad grin, signified, in eloquent dumb show, that my evening's work had just begun.

"So I sighed and set to work. For fully an hour I picked up cobblestones, took them to the side of the roadway, dropped them and went back for more.

"Later I learned that the soldiers, having wrested the barricade from rioters shortly before my appearance, had decided that the simplest way to clear the street was to seize every casual passerby and press him into service as a cobblestone remover.

"But the others were more suitably garbed for the work than I was."

MANY HUED TROPICAL FISH.

Queerly Colored Beauties—A 250 Pound Black Sea Bass.

In spite of all the beauties which were brought home, the prize of the expedition was a great ugly looking 250 pound jewfish, or black sea bass, with seventeen spine-like spines on his dorsal fin, well armed underfins and a most forbidding looking face, says a writer in the Christian Herald. There are four species of this fish to be found around the coasts of the United States, two in the Pacific and two in the Atlantic. This specimen is, however, the largest living one that has ever been exhibited. In the tanks about the walls of the aquarium are all the curiosities and sparkling little gems of the sea that were the reward of the recent expedition.

For true beauty, for the living example of the fairy handed touch of nature, an iridescent dream from the silent depths of the ocean, probably nothing can excel the butterfly fish. He is a delicate water color masterpiece, almost circular in shape and so thin that he is fairly transparent. Bright stripes of sky blue and brilliant straw yellow play upon his sides, and around him just back of the head there is a ring of polished black, and just at the base of his tail he carries a spot which may be black, white or invisible, as he wishes. The humming bird fish also has brilliant colors. He is a little fellow, about four inches in length, with a head of brilliant blue and body so green that it glows like bright foliage in the sunlight. Around his neck, if a fish may be said to have any neck, he has three complete rings which shade from chocolate brown to the deepest of black. Many others from the tropic seas carry these same bright colors.

The angel fish is a quiet dove gray in color, but over her sides and back she can sprinkle spots of brilliant blue at will, and along the edges of her feathery fins are stripes as blue as the summer sea. The pork fish, who gets his name from his piglike head; the parrot fish and the elephant fish, both of whose faces suggest those more familiar creatures for which they are named, are not to be outdone in color. Bright blues and greens, they change at will or fade into a dull gray when they wish to hide themselves from their enemies.

Metals in the Human Body.

The human body contains, among other constituents, about two pounds of phosphorus, which is essential to the health of the bones and the vigor of the brain. This phosphorus, if extracted and put to another use, would make up about 4,000 packages of friction matches.

Besides phosphorus, the body contains a few ounces of sodium and half an ounce of potassium. The quantity of the latter would be sufficient for many experiments in a class in chemistry.

In addition to sodium and potassium there are a few grains of magnesium, enough to make the "silver rain" for a family's stock of rockets on a Fourth of July evening or to create a brilliant light visible at a considerable distance. —Harper's Weekly.