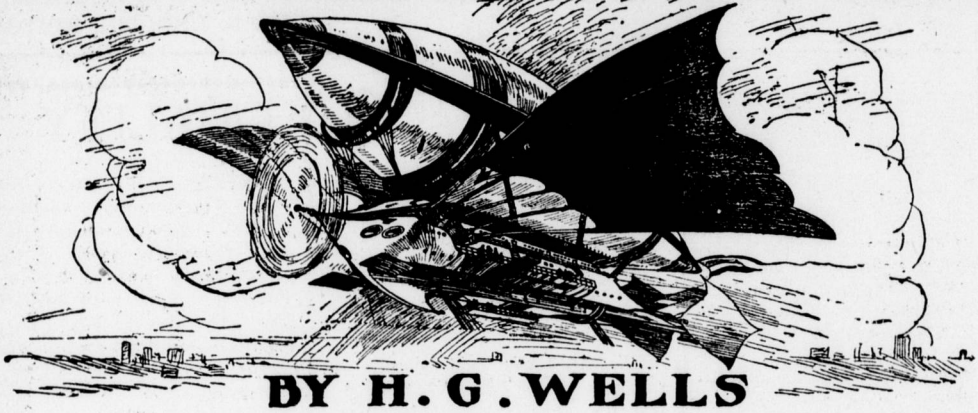


# The War in the Air



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 Butterdidge, 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 Butterdidge and the lady fall out.

The balloon carries Bert across the North sea. He finds drawings of Butterdidge's airship in some of Butterdidge'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 Butterdidge. 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 Winterfield denounces Bert as an impostor, but offers him \$500 for Butterdidge's secret. The prince agrees to take Bert along "as ballast." The German and American warships engage in battle on the sea, and the German air fleet reaches the scene.

### Drachenflieger in Action.

At first only the Vaterland of all the flying fleet appeared upon the scene below. She hovered high over the Theodore Roosevelt, keeping pace with the full speed of that ship. From that ship she must have been intermittently visible through the drifting clouds. The rest of the German fleet remained above the cloud canopy at a height of six or seven thousand feet, communicating with the flagship by wireless telegraphy, but risking no exposure to the artillery below.

It is doubtful at what particular time the unlucky Americans realized the presence of this new factor in the fight. No account now survives of their experience. We have to imagine as well as we can what it must have been to a battle strained sailor suddenly glancing upward to discover that huge long silent shape overhead, vaster than any battleship, and trailing now from its hinder quarter a big German flag. Presently, as the sky cleared, more of such ships appeared in the blue through the dissolving clouds, and more, all disdainfully free of guns or armor, all flying fast to keep pace with the running fight below.

From first to last no gun whatever was fired at the Vaterland and only a few rifle shots. It was a mere adverse stroke of chance that she had a man killed aboard of her. Nor did she take any direct share in the fight until the end. She flew above the doomed American fleet while the prince by wireless telegraph directed the movements of her consorts. Meanwhile the Vogel-stern and Preussen, each with half a dozen drachenflieger in tow, went full speed ahead and then dropped through the clouds, perhaps five miles ahead of the Americans. The Theodore Roosevelt let fly at once with the big guns in her forward barbettes, but the shells burst far below the Vogel-stern, and forthwith a dozen single man drachenflieger were swooping down to make their attack.

Bert, craning his neck through the cabin porthole, saw the whole of that incident, that first encounter of aeroplane and ironclad. He saw the queer German drachenflieger, with their wide flat wings and square, box shaped heads, their wheeled bodies and their single man riders, soar down the air like a flight of birds. "Gaw!" he said. One to the right pitched extravagantly, shot steeply up into the air, burst with a loud report and flamed down into the sea; another plunged nose forward into the water and seemed to fly to pieces as it hit the waves. He saw little men on the deck of the Theodore Roosevelt below, men foreshortened in plan into mere heads and feet, running out preparing to shoot at the others. Then the foremost flying machine was rushing between Bert and the American's deck, and then bang came the thunder of its bomb flung neatly at the forward barbettes and a thin little crackling of rifle shots in reply. Whack, whack, whack, went the quick firing guns of the American's battery, and smash came an answering shell from the Furst Bismarck. Then a second and third flying machine passed between Bert and the American ironclad, dropping bombs also, and a fourth, its rider hit by a bullet, reeled down and dashed itself to pieces and exploded between the shot torn funnels, blowing them apart. Bert had a momentary glimpse of a little black creature jumping from the crumpling frame of the flying machine, hitting the funnel and falling limply, to be instantly caught and driven to nothingness by the blaze and rush of the explosion.

Smash came a vast explosion in the forward part of the flagship, and a huge piece of metal work seemed to lift out of her and dump itself into the

sea, dropping men and leaving a gap into which a prompt drachenflieger planted a flaring bomb. And then for an instant Bert perceived only too clearly in the growing, pitiless light a number of minute, convulsively active animalcules scorched and struggling in the Theodore Roosevelt's foaming wake. What were they? Not men—surely not men! Those drowning, mangled little creatures tore with their clutching fingers at Bert's soul. "O God!" he cried. "O God!" almost whimpering. He looked again and they had gone, and the black stem of the Andrew Jackson, a little disfigured by the sinking Bremen's last shot, was parting the water that had swallowed them into two neatly symmetrical waves. For some moments sheer blank horror blinded Bert to the destruction below.

Then, with an immense rushing sound, bearing as it were a straggling volley of crashing minor explosions on its back, the Susquehanna, three miles and more now to the east, blew up and vanished abruptly in a boiling, steaming welter. For a moment nothing was to be seen but tumbled water, and then there came belching up from below, with immense gulping noises, eruptions of steam and air and petrol and fragments of canvas and wood-work and men.

That made a distinct pause in the fight. It seemed a long pause to Bert. He found himself looking for the drachenflieger. The flattened ruin of one was floating abeam of the Monitor; the rest had passed, dropping bombs down the American column; several were in the water and apparently uninjured, and three or four were still in the air and coming round now in a wide circle to return to their mother airships. The American ironclads were no longer in column formation. The Theodore Roosevelt, badly damaged, had turned to the southeast, and the Andrew Jackson, greatly battered, but uninjured in any fighting part, was passing between her and the still fresh and vigorous Furst Bismarck to intercept and meet the latter's fire. Away to the west the Hermann and the Germanicus had appeared and were coming into action.

In the pause after the Susquehanna's disaster Bert became aware of a trivial sound like the noise of an ill greased, ill hung door that falls ajar—the sound of the men in the Furst Bismarck cheering.

And in that pause in the uproar, too, the sun rose, the dark waters became luminously blue, and a torrent of golden light irradiated the world. It came like a sudden smile in a scene of hate and terror. The cloud veil had vanished as if by magic, and the whole immensity of the German air fleet was revealed in the sky, the air fleet stooping now upon its prey.

"Whack, bang, whack, bang!" the guns resumed, but ironclads were not built to fight the zenith, and the only hits the Americans scored were a few lucky chances in a generally ineffectual rifle fire. Their column was now badly broken. The Susquehanna had gone, the Theodore Roosevelt had fallen astern out of the line, with her forward guns disabled, in a heap of wreckage, and the Monitor was in some grave trouble. These two had ceased fire altogether, and so had the Bremen and Welmar, all four ships lying within shot of each other in an involuntary truce and with their respective flags still displayed. Only four American ships now, with the Andrew Jackson leading, kept to the southeasterly course. And the Furst Bismarck, the Hermann and the Germanicus steamed parallel to them and drew ahead of them, fighting heavily. The Vaterland rose slowly in the air for the concluding act of the drama.

Then, falling into place one behind

the other, a string of a dozen airships dropped with unhurrying swiftness down the air in pursuit of the American fleet. They kept at a height of 2,000 feet or more until they were over and a little in advance of the rearmost ironclad, and then stooped swiftly down into a fountain of bullets and, going just a little faster than the ship below, pelted her thinly protected decks with bombs until they became sheets of detonating flame. So the airships passed one after the other along the American column as it sought to keep up its fight with the Furst Bismarck, the Hermann and the Germanicus, and each airship added to the destruction and confusion its predecessor had made. The American gunfire ceased, except for a few heroic shots, but they still steamed on, obstinately unsubdued, bloody, battered and wrathfully resistant, spitting bullets at the airships and unmercifully pounded by the German ironclads. But now Bert had but intermittent glimpses of them between the nearer bulks of the airships that assailed them.

It struck Bert suddenly that the whole battle was receding and growing small and less thunderously noisy. The Vaterland was rising in the air, steadily and silently, until the impact of the guns no longer smote upon the heart but came to the ear dulled by distance, until the four silenced ships to the eastward were little distant things. But were there four? Bert now could see only three of those floating, blackened and smoking rafts of ruin against the sun. But the Bremen had two boats out; the Theodore Roosevelt was also dropping boats to where the drift of minute objects struggled, rising and falling on the big, broad Atlantic waves. The Vaterland was no longer following the fight. The whole of that hurrying tumult drove away to the southeastward, growing smaller and less audible as it passed. One of the airships lay on the water burning, a remote monstrous fount of flames, and far in the southwest appeared first one and then three other German ironclads hurrying in support of their consorts.

Steadily the Vaterland soared, and the air fleet soared with her and came round to head for New York, and the battle became a little thing far away, an incident before the breakfast. It dwindled to a string of dark shapes and one smoking yellow flare that presently became an indistinct smear upon the vast horizon.

Never before had Bert Smallways seen pure destruction, never had he realized the mischief and waste of war. His startled mind rose to the conception; this also is in life. Out of all this fierce torrent of sensation one impression rose and became cardinal—the impression of the men of the Theodore Roosevelt who had struggled in the water after the explosion of the first bomb. "Gaw!" he said at the memory; "it might 'ave been me and Grubb! I suppose you kick about, and get the water in your mouf. I don't suppose it lasts long."

He became anxious to see how Kurt was affected by these things. Also he perceived he was hungry. He hesitated toward the door of the cabin and peeped out into the passage. Down forward, near the gangway to the men's mess, stood a little group of air sailors looking at something that was hidden from him in a recess. One of them was in the light diver's costume Bert had already seen in the gas chamber turret, and he was moved to walk along and look at this person more closely and examine the helmet he carried under his arm. But he forgot about the helmet when he got to the recess, because there he found lying on the floor the dead body of the boy who had been killed by a bullet from the Theodore Roosevelt.

The boy lay just as he had fallen and died, with his jacket torn and scorched, his shoulder blade smashed and burst away from his body, and all the left side of his body ripped and rent. There was much blood. The sailors stood listening to the man with the helmet, who made explanations and pointed to the round bullet hole in the floor and the smash in the panel of the passage upon which the still vicious missile had spent the residue of its energy. All the faces were grave and earnest; they were the faces of sober, blond, blue eyed men accustomed to obedience and an orderly life, to whom this waste, wet, painful thing that had been a comrade came almost as strangely as it did to Bert.

A peal of wild laughter sounded down the passage in the direction of the little gallery and something spoke—almost shouted—in German, in tones of exultation.

## A GLANCE AT WORLD AFFAIRS

THE meeting of the Democratic national committee on Jan. 8 clears the decks for the national conventions, and the first stage of the presidential campaign has begun. This may be called the primary stage since it concerns the election of delegates. Several states actually have presidential primaries, and in others one party or the other provides for the election of delegates by the primary system.

The national conventions this year will be larger than ever before because of the new apportionment. Each will have more than 1,000 delegates. In the Republican convention a majority will nominate, as heretofore, while in the Democratic a two-thirds majority will be required.

### The Tariff Board.

The report of the tariff board on the wool and cotton schedules has been delayed longer than was anticipated. The first promise was that it would be ready when congress met on Dec. 4. Then it was put over to a later date. Now that it is before congress we may expect another tariff debate, to open which will eclipse even that of the special session.

Professor H. C. Emery, the chairman of the board, is professor of po-



Professor H. C. Emery, Chairman of the Tariff Board.

litical economy of Yale university. It is said that when President Taft appointed the board he submitted the matter to a large number of colleges, asking them to recommend three men fitted to serve on the board. Professor Emery was named on practically every list and headed many of the lists submitted. Mr. Taft therefore made him chairman, a thing that probably gave him all the more gratification since he himself is a Yale man. Professor Emery is only thirty-nine years of age, and he studied at Bowdoin, Harvard, Columbia and the University of Berlin. He was professor of political economy in Bowdoin before going to the same chair in Yale.

### The Monetary Commission.

The monetary commission ended its statutory existence on Jan. 8, and its report is likewise before congress. Its chief recommendations were for a national reserve association and an asset currency. The avowed object of this radical departure from our present financial system is to provide for a more elastic currency that may be used for crop movements and at other times when a large volume of currency is required. It is certain that these proposals will occasion a fight in congress since many members oppose an asset currency. It is also charged that a national reserve association will be in effect a central bank. Former Senator Aldrich was the chairman of the monetary commission.

### State Railroad Cases.

One of the most important hearings of recent times, originally set for Jan. 8 in the supreme court at Washington, has been postponed. This is the case in which the committee of governors, consisting of Governors Harmon of Ohio, Hadley of Missouri and Aldrich of Nebraska, is so much interested. When the governors' conference was held at Spring Lake, N. J., last fall the action that caused the widest comment of any there taken was the appointment of this committee to appear in the hearing of the Minnesota rate case. The issue involved in this case is that of federal control of railroad rates within the state. As a number of other cases from other states involving this or kindred principles were before the court, these were combined for one hearing. The governors stood for the right of the states to control the rates within their own borders. These are known as intrastate rates as contrasted with interstate rates, over which congress has undisputed control.

### Standard Oil Once More.

Notwithstanding the dissolution of the Standard Oil company, the directors of that corporation held a meeting at Bayonne, N. J., during the week. Other meetings were that of the American commission merchants in Cincinnati on Jan. 10 and that of the United States Golf association in Philadelphia, Jan. 13.

### Federation of Labor.

Because of the wholesale investigation of the dynamite cases and the charges against labor leaders in various parts of the land the meeting of the executive board of the American

Federation of Labor, which opened in Washington on Jan. 8, was of more than usual importance. Another thing that rendered it of especial interest to workingmen is the labor legislation now pending or about to be introduced in congress. This includes or will include an eight hour bill, employers' liability, child labor and many kindred subjects. The report of the congressional commission on employers' liability, which was recently prepared, gives assurance that some sort of legislation on this subject is probable during the present session.

### Governor Joe Brown.

The re-election of Joseph M. Brown as governor of Georgia on Jan. 9 followed the primary in which he beat Pope Brown for the nomination last December. In Georgia the Smith and Brown families seem to be in the ascendancy, as Hoke Smith and Joe Brown have been alternating as governor for some years. First Smith was elected, then Brown defeated him for renomination, next Smith turned the tables and beat Brown for a renomination, and now after Smith is elected to the senate Brown again wins, defeating Smith's candidate, Pope Brown, who, though of the same name as Joe, is not of the same family or faction in the party. Georgia's history during these alternating administrations will look to future generations something like a political teeter board.

### The Republic of China.

There are two men involved in the Chinese revolution in both of whom Americans are especially interested. They are Wu Ting Fang, former minister at Washington, and Sun Yat Sen, who spent years in America and England laying plans and raising funds for the present revolution. Wu Ting Fang was made minister of foreign affairs in the cabinet of the provisional republican government at Shanghai. Sun Yat Sen is the head of the republican movement for the whole empire, whose headquarters are at the ancient capital of Nanking. While Mr. Wu was dealing with the representatives sent by Premier Yuan Shih Kai, Dr. Sun and his friends were busy proclaiming a republic without waiting for the action of this conference. It seems safe to say that the Chinese republic, like the newest paper, has come to stay.

### Turkish-Italian War.

Tripoli now is accepted by the world as an Italian dependency. Even though there be no formal announcement of the fact, this is accepted in the capitals of the world. Italy will still have considerable fighting before she reduces the Arabs, but so far as Turkey is concerned she has lost her hold in Africa forever. The history of the war is now only a chronicle of skirmishes between the Italian troops and the natives in Tripoli.

### Home Rule Probable.

When the British house of lords was deprived of the veto power the success of Irish home rule became only a question of time. Parliament is now moving in that direction, and it seems probable that a home rule bill will pass the house of commons this year.

### The German Election.

On Jan. 12 was held a general election throughout the German empire for members of the reichstag. Interest was lent to the contest because of the general discontent over the terms of the Moroccan agreement with France and the popular resentment in Germany toward England. The Social-Democratic party conducted an aggressive campaign as usual.

### The Lorimer Case.

The second Lorimer investigation having been completed, perhaps we are about to hear the last of this famous case, as the verdict this time



Copyright by American Press Association. Senator William Lorimer, Whose Election Was Investigated.

should settle it. The majority of the first committee, it will be remembered, vindicated Lorimer, and after a long and sensational debate its findings were approved by something like six majority. The new congress was not satisfied with this finding, however, and ordered another investigation. In the meantime new evidence came to light. The committee also reported in the Stephenson case. Its verdict was in favor of the aged senator in a general way, although it condemned the lavish use of money in a senatorial election. (SBI)

## ARABIA'S DATE TREES.

Every Part of Them Is Made to Serve a Purpose.

To the Arab mind the date tree is the perfection of beauty and utility. Every part of this wonderful tree has its use to the Arab. The pistils of the date blossom contain a fine curly fiber, which is beaten out and used in all eastern baths as a sponge for soaping the body. At the extremity of the trunk is a terminal bud containing a white substance resembling an almond in consistency and taste, but a hundred times as large. This is a great table delicacy.

There are said to be more than a hundred varieties of date palm, all distinguished by their fruit, and the Arabs say that a good housewife can furnish her husband with a dish of dates differently prepared every day for a month.

Dates form the staple food of the Arabs in a large part of Arabia and are served in some form at every meal. Syrup and vinegar are made from old dates, and by those who disregard the teachings of the Koran a kind of brandy is distilled from them. The date pit is ground and fed to cows and sheep, so that nothing of the precious fruit may be lost. Whole pits are used as beads and counters for the Arab children in their games on the desert sand.

The branches or palms are stripped of their leaves and used like rattan for the making of beds, tables, chairs, cradles, birdcages, boats, and so forth. The leaves are made into baskets, fans and string, and the outer trunk furnishes fiber for rope of many sizes and qualities.

The wood of the trunk, although light and porous, is much used in bridge-building and architecture and is quite durable.

In short, when a date palm is cut down there is not a particle of it that is wasted. This tree has been called the "poorhouse" and asylum for all Arabia. Without it millions would have neither food nor shelter. One-half of the population of Mesopotamia, it is estimated, live in date mat dwellings.—Pittsburgh Press.

### His Downfall.



## BREAD FROM ACORNS.

How Indians of the Sierras Made Kernel Palatable.

The Indians of the Sierra country have their own method of transforming the bitter kernel of the acorn into a kind of bread that is said to be extremely palatable, and a correspondent has described the process as follows:

"They shucked and ground in the usual manner a large mass of acorn meat. A number of circular vats had been hollowed out of the black soil in the shape of a punch bowl. Into these was put the acorn pulp. At hand stood several large cloth baskets filled with water.

"Into these baskets they dropped hot stones, thus heating the water. Upon the mass of crushed bitterness they ladled the hot water until it was about the color and consistency of cream. Not a speck appeared. A buxom mullah (squaw) stood by each vat and with a small fir bough stirred the mass, skillfully removing any speck that floated on the surface. The soil gradually absorbed the bitter waters, leaving a firm white substance. This they removed so adroitly that only a small portion adhered to the soil. This they spread upon rocks to dry and afterward mixed it with water, patted it into thin cakes and baked before the fire."—Steward.

### Has Woman Town Clerk.

Newcastle West, a town in County Limerick, Ireland, has just appointed the first woman town clerk in the person of Mrs. John Flanagan, the widow of the late holder of the office.