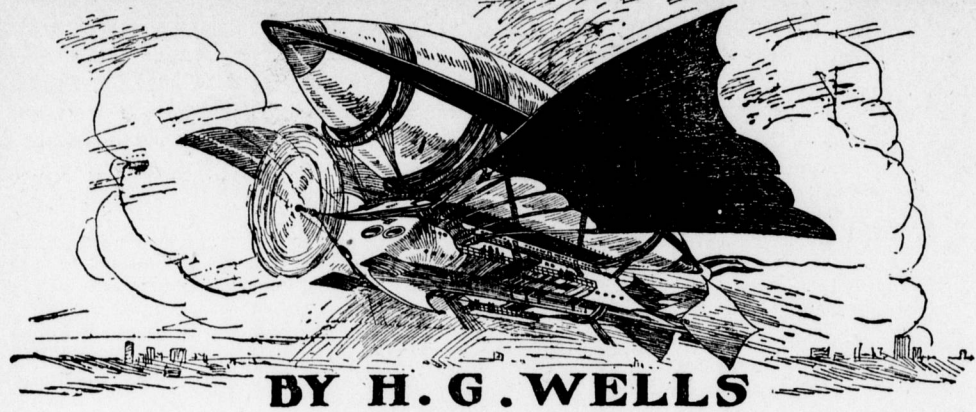


The War in the Air



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 Drachentflieger.

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." An American fleet of warships is destroyed by German warships and Germany's air fleet, which reaches New York and finds the city unprepared.

New York Surrenders.

SEVERAL of the Staten Island guns, and especially that at Giffords and the one on Beacon Hill, were remarkably well handled. The former, at a distance of five miles and with an elevation of 6000 feet, sent a shell to burst so close to the Vaterland that a pane of the prince's forward window was smashed by a fragment. This sudden explosion made Bert tuck in his head with the celerity of a startled tortoise. The whole air fleet immediately went up steeply to a height of about 12,000 feet, and at that level passed unscathed over the ineffectual guns. The airships lined out as they moved forward into the form of a flattened V, with its apex toward the city, and with the flagship going highest at the apex. The two ends of the V passed over Plumfield and Jamaica bay respectively, and the prince directed his course a little to the east of the Narrows, soared over the upper bay, and came to rest above Jersey City in a position that dominated lower New York. There the monsters hung, large and wonderful in the evening light, serenely regardless of the occasional rocket explosions and flashing shell bursts in the lower air.

It was a pause of mutual inspection. For a time naive humanity swamped the conventions of warfare altogether; the interest of the millions below and the thousands above alike was spectacular. The evening was unexpectedly fine—only a few thin level bands of clouds at seven or eight thousand feet broke its luminous clarity. The wind had dropped; it was an evening infinitely peaceful and still. The heavy concussion of the distant guns and those incidental harmless pyrotechnics at the level of the clouds seemed to have as little to do with killing and force, terror and submission, as a salute at a naval review.

Below every point of vantage bristled with spectators—the roofs of the towering buildings, the public squares, the active ferries, and every favorable street intersection had its crowds, all the river piers were dense with people. Everywhere shopkeepers had left their shops, men their work and women and children their homes to come out and see the marvel.

"It beat," they declared, "the newspapers."

And from above many of the occupants of the airships stared with an equal curiosity. No city in the world was ever so finely placed as New York, so magnificently cut up by sea and bluff and river, so admirably disposed to display the tall effects of buildings, the complex immensities of bridges and monorailways and feats of engineering. London, Paris and Berlin were shapeless, low agglomerations beside it. Its port reached to its heart, like Venice, and, like Venice, it was obvious, dramatic and proud. Seen from above, it was alive with crawling trains and cars, and at a thousand points it was already breaking into quivering light. New York was altogether at its best that evening—its splendid best.

"Gaw, what a place!" said Bert. There came an end at last to that pause. Some wireless communications had failed of a satisfactory ending, and fleet and city remembered they were hostile powers. "Look!" cried the multitude. "Look!"

"What are they doing?" "What?" Down through the twilight sank five attacking airships, one to the navy yard on East river, one to city hall, two over the great business buildings of Wall street and lower Broadway, one to the Brooklyn bridge, dropping from among their fellows through the danger zone from the distant guns smoothly and rapidly to a safe proximity to the city masses.

At that descent all the cars in the streets stopped with dramatic suddenness, and all the lights that had been coming on in the streets and houses went out again. For the city hall had awakened and was conferring by telephone with the federal command and taking measures for defense. The city hall was asking for airships, refusing to surrender as Washington advised and developing into a center of intense emotion, of hectic activity. Everywhere and hastily the police began to clear the assembled crowds. "Go to your homes," they said, and the word was passed from mouth to mouth. "There's going to be trouble." A chill of apprehension ran through the city, and men hurrying in the unwonted darkness across City Hall park and Union square came upon the dim forms of soldiers and guns and were challenged and sent back. In half an hour New York had passed from serene sunset and gaping admiration to a troubled and threatening twilight.

The first loss of life occurred in the panic rush from Brooklyn bridge as the airship approached it. With the cessation of the traffic an unusual stillness came upon New York, and the disturbing concussions of the futile defending guns on the hills about grew more and more audible. At last these ceased also. A pause of further negotiation followed. People sat in darkness, sought counsel from telephones that were dumb. Then into the expectant hush came a great crash and uproar, the breaking down of the Brooklyn bridge, the rifle fire from the navy yard and the bursting of bombs in Wall street and the city hall. New York as a whole could do nothing, could understand nothing. New York in the darkness peered and listened to these distant sounds until presently they died away as suddenly as they had begun. "What could be happening?" They asked it in vain.

A long, vague period intervened, and people looking out of the windows of upper rooms discovered the dark hulls of German airships gliding slowly and noiselessly quite close at hand. Then quickly the electric lights came on again, and an uproar of nocturnal news vendors began in the streets.

The units of that vast and varied population bought and learned what had happened. There had been a fight, and New York had hoisted the white flag.

"We have surrendered. Dear me! Have we?" was rather the manner in which the first news was met. They took it in the same spectacular spirit they had displayed at the first apparition of the air fleet. Only slowly was this realization of a capitulation suffused with the flush of passion. Only with reflection did they make any personal application. "We have surrendered!" came later. "In us America is defeated." Then they began to burn and tingle.

The newspapers which were issued about 1 o'clock in the morning contained no particulars of the terms upon which New York had yielded, nor did they give any intimation of the quality of the brief conflict that had preceded the capitulation. The later issues remedied these deficiencies. There came the explicit statement of the agreement to victual the German airships, to supply the complement of explosives to replace those employed in the fight and in the destruction of the North Atlantic fleet, to pay the enormous ransom of \$40,000,000 and to surrender the flotilla in the East river. There came, too, longer and longer descriptions of the smashing up of the city hall and the navy yard, and people began to realize faintly what those brief minutes of uproar had meant. They read the tale of men blown to bits, of futile soldiers in that localized battle fighting against hope amidst an

indescribable wreckage, of flags hauled down by weeping men. And these strange nocturnal editions contained also the first brief cables from Europe of the fleet disaster—the north Atlantic fleet for which New York had always felt an especial pride and solicitude. Slowly, hour by hour, the collective consciousness woke up; the tide of patriotic astonishment and humiliation came floating in. America had come upon disaster; suddenly New York discovered herself with amazement giving place to wrath unspokeable.

As that fact shaped itself in the public mind there sprang up, as flames spring up, an angry repudiation. "No," cried New York, waking in the dawn—"no; I am not defeated. This is a dream." Before day broke the swift American anger was running through all the city, through every soul in those contagious millions. Before it took action, before it took shape, the men in the airships could feel the gigantic insurrection of emotion, as cattle and natural creatures feel, it is said, the coming of an earthquake. The newspapers of the Knype group first gave the things words and a formula. "We do not agree," they said simply. "We have been betrayed." Men took that up everywhere. It passed from mouth to mouth. At every street corner under the paling lights of dawn orators stood unchecked calling upon the spirit of America to rise, making the shame a personal reality to every one who heard. To Bert, listening 500 feet above, it seemed that the city, which had at first produced only confused noises, was now humming like a hive of bees—of very angry bees.

After the smashing of the city hall and postoffice the white flag had been hoisted from a tower of the old Park Row building, and thither had gone Mayor O'Hagen, urged thither indeed by the terror-stricken property owners of lower New York, to negotiate the capitulation with Von Winterfeld. The Vaterland, having dropped the secretary by a rope ladder, remained hovering, circling very slowly above the great buildings, old and new, that clustered round City Hall park, while the Helmholtz, which had done the fighting there, rose overhead to a height of perhaps 2,000 feet. So Bert had a near view of all that occurred in that central place. The city hall and court-house, the postoffice and a mass of buildings on the west side of Broadway had been badly damaged, and the three former were a heap of blackened ruins.

In the case of the first two the loss of life had not been considerable, but a great multitude of workers, includ-



Dropped the Secretary by a Rope Ladder.

ing many girls and women, had been caught in the destruction of the post-office, and a little army of volunteers with white badges entered behind the firemen, bringing out the often still living bodies, for the most part frightfully charred, and carrying them into the big Monson building close at hand. Everywhere the busy firemen were directing their bright streams of water upon the smoldering masses; their hose lay about the square, and long cordons of police held back the gathering black mass of people, chiefly from the east side, from these central activities.

[To be continued.]

A GLANCE AT WORLD AFFAIRS

THE world is moving fast these days, and revolutions that before would have occupied years are now accomplished in months. Hardly had the world become thoroughly alive to the news that there was a Chinese insurrection than a peace parley was called and the imperial representative had recommended a republic as the only way out. Hardly had Italy declared war against Turkey than the royal fleet was hammering at the doors of Tripoli and the city had fallen. The Ottoman empire is excluded from Africa in the course of a few weeks; the Manchu dynasty is ended in China in as many more. Yet both of these were ancient dominions that had lasted for centuries. The same swift action attended our own abrogation of the treaty with Russia. This pact had been in existence since 1832, or nearly eighty years. For more than thirty years there had been protests from America at the refusal of passports. Administration after administration had taken up the question, but nothing came of the complaints. Then in the twinkling of an eye the thing was done. One day there was a great meeting of protest in Carnegie hall, New York. Shortly afterward the abrogation resolution passed the national house of representatives by a vote of 390 to 1. Two days later President Taft notified Russia of the abrogation of the treaty, congress concurred, and it was up to Russia. Now the two nations are preparing to draft a new treaty. Truly history now moves with locomotive speed.

Children's Courts.

That special judges should be created for the children's courts is the firm conviction of Judge Julian W. Mack, member of the national court of commerce at Washington. Judge Mack has appealed to civic organizations in



Photo by American Press Association. Judge J. W. Mack, Who Urges Special Legislation For Children.

Chicago for their co-operation in the matter and hopes that the idea will be taken up by legislatures throughout the country.

Judge Mack presided over the juvenile court in Chicago prior to his transfer to the national capital and was credited with settling the cases coming before him with remarkable success from every viewpoint. He was not a stern judge, and he understood children well enough to administer the proper proportions of justice and mercy. Judge Mack believes that the adoption of his plan everywhere in the United States would effect a greatly needed reform in dealing with juvenile problems.

The Panama Exposition.

Although President Taft and Colonel Goethals have given repeated assurances that the Panama canal will be ready for ships in 1913, the exposition in San Francisco commemorating the opening of the big ditch will be held in 1915, the year originally scheduled for the completion of the canal. The president broke the ground for the exposition when in San Francisco last fall. Since that time the work of preparing for the big show has been going forward actively. One of the features planned is an immense exposition monument, which is to be made permanent and turned over to the federal government. This is to be the highest monument on earth, more than 800 feet in height, or 300 feet taller than the Washington monument.

The Dickens Centenary.

Preparations are now practically completed in many all English speaking lands for the centenary celebration of the birth of Charles Dickens on Feb. 7. It is perhaps not too much to say that Dickens was the greatest novelist of England, if not the greatest of any land. He was in a sense the Shakespeare of fiction. By the power of his pen alone he effected many needed reforms and left the world kinder and more democratic. In some degree he created the modern Christmas. His vogue in his own day was tremendous, and his books still have an immense sale. For the present busy age he is perhaps a trifle too prolix and wordy, and it has been objected that he is commonplace, but that is only because he has been

so thoroughly read. Dickens started a new school of the novel. He pictured the common life of the people. Dickens' characters stand out. They are flesh and blood folks that the reader would know anywhere. Americans thought themselves slandered by his "American Notes" and "Martin Chuzzlewit," but even this resentment cannot affect their immense liking for the man.

The Ohio Primaries.

One of the hottest political fights in the country is now getting under way in the president's own state of Ohio. It concerns the selection of delegates to the Republican national convention. In the congressional districts the delegates are elected by the voters of the party by the primary system. State Chairman Walter Brown insisted that the delegates at large be chosen in the same way. The situation is complicated by the fact that Brown declared for Roosevelt and that the progressives are generally against the renomination of the president. Arthur I. Vorys, the national committeeman, represents the Taft forces. On Jan. 30 the president himself appeared at the state capital to attend the dedication of the government building. On the day previous he had been at the Tippecanoe club in Cleveland.

Still After Bathtub Trust.

Following the decision against the bathtub trust in the civil suit the government has started a criminal prosecution, which came to trial in Detroit on Jan. 30. Everybody who owns a bathtub is interested in this case, even though he uses it as a receptacle for potatoes or coal. The per capita of bathing is gradually increasing year by year, and a trust in bathtubs might in time become oppressive. At any rate, keeping clean is to be put on a competitive basis. There must be no monopoly on bathing. An important point in the case concerns the debated rights of the defendants to use their ownership of a patent in controlling the manufacture and sale of enameled ware made with patented tools.

An Ambitious Program.

London is preparing for the reassembling of parliament on Feb. 14. Premier Asquith has planned an elaborate program of legislation, the most important of which are Irish home rule, universal suffrage on the one man one vote principle, disestablishment of the Anglican church in Wales and reform of education along the lines advocated by the nonconformists. The house of lords will, of course, oppose home rule, but their power was so curtailed last year that they can give only a suspensory veto. Mr. Asquith promises to force the bill through in two years despite the lords. The proposed extension of the suffrage to practically every male adult was what aroused the suffragettes to fury recently when they smashed so many windows and got into jail for their pains; also for the pains of other people. The disestablishment bill for Wales and the education bill will meet the opposition of the Establish church, but are in the line of progress. Since the adoption of the single tax as a feature of the budget the British Liberals have been fairly making the world gasp because of their radicalism. Not only have they put the lords substantially out of business, but have passed old age pensions and recently enacted compulsory insurance for the sick and unemployed.

Arizona's New Senator.

The proclamation of the two new states of Arizona and New Mexico by the president, following their first state elections, will insure four new members of the United States senate. In New Mexico the result was very close, and complications have resulted, but in Arizona the Democrats had a clear majority. Candidates for senator were voted on in the primaries, and one of the men chosen was Mark

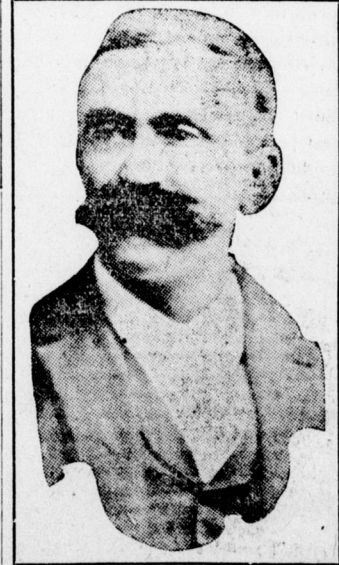


Photo by American Press Association. Mark A. Smith, Chosen Senator From New State of Arizona.

A. Smith, former delegate from the territory in congress. Mr. Smith's real name is Marcus Aurelius Smith, but he seems to prefer the shorter form. He was born in Kentucky in 1852, was educated there and admitted to the bar, removed to Arizona, was a prosecuting attorney and afterward delegate to congress for twelve years. [5B]

RAIN TREE LEGEND.

Supposed to Exist in Peru, but This Is Denied.

Another dream has been shattered—that of the rain tree. For years the records show that the rain tree has figured at intervals in newspaper articles, promoters' prospectuses and elsewhere as a reality. It was pictured as the most beneficent of trees, which absorbed moisture from the atmosphere and discharged it in streams from its branches to the thirsty earth. The rain tree has been described as the redeemer of all deserts. One of the latest reports has credited the rain tree to Peru, says the New York World.

United States Consul General Henry Robertson at Callao, Peru, having received numerous inquiries concerning the rain tree, recently undertook an investigation of the matter. He has reported the results to his government, and they dissipate the rain tree dream. He says that no such tree exists in Peru or elsewhere to his knowledge and quotes eminent botanical authorities in support of his statement. One of the letters says that in certain moist sections of Peru a certain tree becomes saturated, so to speak, and occasionally discharges a small amount of moisture. But the tree could not exist in other localities, so that it would not benefit arid lands.

After the consul reported the bureau of manufacturers asked the agricultural department about the matter. Assistant Secretary Hays replied that the rain tree legend is centuries old. He says that Australia has fallen a victim to the delusion and is planting many alleged rain trees. It is no more efficacious in condensing water than any other free growing tree. An English botanist, Secretary Hays said, once offered an explanation of the legend.

According to this authority, at times swarms of cicadas, or locusts, settle upon the trees and extract their juices, which drop upon the ground. The weather bureau investigated the rain tree legend and published an exposé of it in 1905.

LET THE PAST DROP.

What need you care if you've done your best
And things have gone wrong in spite of all?
Go to your couch at night to rest
And laugh at the way things changed to fall.
Never brood about what you couldn't stop.
Let the past drop.
Turn to the new tasks born today.
Forgetting the failure made before,
Forging ahead in the selfsame way
With the selfsame courage you knew of yore.
Worry won't help you to reach the top.
Let the past drop.
—Detroit Free Press.

HARDNESS OF DIAMONDS.

Some Placed on Steel Rails Will Sink In Under High Pressure.

A carpenter runs his plane over a piece of wood and out come the pretty, curly shavings. Now, if a plane is made with a diamond blade and the blade is set just right the plane when run over glass will turn out fine, thinest shavings, something like those made by a plane on wood. This gives some idea of the wonderful hardness of a diamond, yet there is something harder than a diamond. It is another diamond, or even the same diamond, for a diamond may be extra hard in one part and not so hard as it ought to be in another part, according to the New York Press.

The Kohinoor diamond was in places so hard the cutters feared they might have to give up work on it. Other parts of the stone were soft, if you could say any diamond is soft. If a diamond is placed between the ends of two heavy steel railroad rails and then by hydraulic pressure the rails are forced closer together and then still closer until they touch the diamond will sink right into the steel, almost like a key forced into beeswax.

Out in Arizona diamonds fell from the skies, according to meteorologists and mineralogists, as if from the stars. But these diamonds were mostly black, although there were some small clear ones. It seems the Arizona diamonds were mixed up with tons of molten iron. So one theory of the formation of diamonds is that they are made in heaven and imbedded in vast quantities of iron. They then fall to earth, and in centuries of time the iron wastes away, leaving the beautiful stone in the rough. In several parts of the United States diamonds have been found, not the meteor kind.

Edible Snails in England.

Burgundy snails are not the only ones eaten in France. The hedgerow habitants are also used, and though a contemporary, eager to make a political point, says we have no edible snails in England, it is in error. We have precisely the same snails which are served in savory fashion in the south of France. They are somewhat brown as to shell and of fair size, but not so large as "les escargots de Bourgogne," which is a favorite dish in Paris. This writer has assisted to collect the snails for a cook in a southern village. She kept them for a week under special treatment and then boiled them with red wine, grated ham and chopped nuts. There are few snails in England compared to France, owing to the hosts of birds that revel in snail diet. Well cooked fat hedgerow snails make a most appetizing, easily digested entrée. —London Chronicle.