

## AIRSHIPS 1896 (2) CALIFORNIA

### 1896 December 1 (Tues. eve.) Daily Californian (Bakersfield), p. 1.

THE AIRSHIP. / Still More People Who Are Sure They Saw It.

W.H. Sanborn and Robert Blodget, connected with McKelvey's store, saw the mysterious light low in the southwestern heavens about 7:30 o'clock Friday evening from the back door of that establishment. They declare that it moved out of their sight within a short space of time and it also had a descending and ascending or undulatory movement. It was a very large light, resembling in color an electric light. These gentlemen do not claim that it was an airship, but a mysterious moving light, and that's all.

Several people in the Lowell addition saw the same mystery at nearly the same hour in the direction of Tejon. They stoutly maintain that it was moving and had a reddish appearance.

Stories similar to these are reported by reputable citizens all the way up the valley to Sacramento. These people have certainly seen something or else they have gone daft, and the Californian is prepared to say that the people whose names are here used are anything but daft. They are of the best and most trustworthy of our citizens.

It is reported that C.P. Fox declares that the mysterious illuminator is a proof of the great fact [of] the near advent of co-operative socialism, and that the light is a gathering cohesion of the meteors which Flammarion, the great French astronomer, predicted would shower upon us a short time ago, into a planet all their own, whereon man is to help his neighbor and every neighbor help his man. That its roving nature is to gather material and when the fullness of time arrives, that is when this co-operative planet gets grown, it's going to back up to Mount Whitney and take aboard all those who desire to go into that good world from Kern and surrounding counties.

An effort was made this morning to see Mr. Fox for the purpose of authenticating this report, but he could not be found. His closest friends however declare that the report is true in every detail.

Reports come from Delano that the airship was seen there Sunday night. The whole population turned out to gaze at the heavenly visitor and there is abundant assurance that if not a real airship, still something mysterious was seen floating in the air.

On the same night something was seen in the sky at Mojave, which those who saw it are decidedly of the opinion was the airship.

Word comes from Los Angeles that the airship was seen there last night and the hills were covered by people who turned out to gaze at the visitor.

### 1896 December 1 (Tues.) Daily Colusa (Calif.) Sun, p. 2.

OBSERVATIONS. /

The airship craze created perhaps more excitement than the expected stars would have done had they kept the engagement made for them by the astronomers. Jupiter, Venus and poor old Mars all lost their identity in the public mind and became for an evening or so, hallucinations to prey upon the general credulity. Some in the excitement of the hour had their poetical genius developed, others became scientists and accounted for the wonderful phenomenon and others again calculated for private enterprise, endeavoring to make calculations to lay claim to aerial space and establish riparian rights, so to speak, in the skies, where they might locate future ships and rest in midair above the wondering and envying world, then to cash their claims and further extend their speculations in the new area opening to them. Those can succeed who believe they can and believing, they peopled the upper world with all sorts of crafts going in all directions and equipping them with lights, hearing voices and music, they dreamed more than the fertile imagination of Mother Shipton ever predicted. Now the sad disappointment came leading in leaden reality to divest the aerial world of its charm and hand the sceptre over to common sense. All this serves to point the moral to adorn the tale that Barnum told us about mankind loving to be humbugged. It is a fact that the majority insisted on being humbugged, they strained the point to believe they saw ships in the air with great wings, and all agreed with the first

individual who would point out something as surely the thing the believer desired to pin his faith to and to carry such convictions to every one in reach.

The very clouds were shaped and trimmed to fit the idea and convey it a-scooting across the firmament, and for once a fellow-feeling made us wondrous kind and the interior press joined the great metropolitan dailies in spreading the joy and good news of this great humbugery.

(Eureka) Daily Humboldt Standard, Dec. 1, p. 1. Horen (Champion arsp story...)

Salinas D. Journal, 12/1,2. Astronomers of the great observatories go their pile on the size of their glasses, but those who look for airships and see them, it is said, go more on the depth of their glasses.

**1896 December 1 (Tues.) Ferndale (Calif.) Semi-Weekly Enterprise, p.5a, b.**

Was It An Air-Ship?—In our last issue we published an item to the effect that on last Thursday night R. W. Robarts and Henry Francis had seen the much-talked-of air-ship, but when we printed the local we supposed it was all a joke. We have learned since, however, that the gentlemen named, as well as several other reputable citizens of our town, including Druggist Ring and T.H. Brown, did discover a very peculiar light in the heavens on the night mentioned. It was seen early in the evening about east of north of Ferndale, and slowly traveled in a westerly course, moving at times up and down, and finally vanishing from sight at a rapid pace in a southeasterly direction. The light was different in appearance from anything ever before seen by any of the gentlemen, and the question is what was it? The San Francisco papers are full of airship talk, and the entire state is in excitement, the strange vision having been seen in the heavens by various people in different sections. The Call publishes some startling statements regarding the invention of an air-ship, and names Gen. W.H.H. Hart as the attorney for the man who claims to have sol(ve)d the problem of aerial navigation. But a deep mystery still surrounds the “sensation.”

—A correspondent to the (Eureka?) Times, name withheld, claims that the much talked of air ship is a reality. That he knows all about it; that he was present in San Francisco at a meeting when the company was formed to construct it according to the ideas of two men; that the strictest secrecy has been maintained; that the ship passed over Eureka on the evenings of Nov. 17th and 20th, and that he received a letter recently from one in charge of the company's affairs, stating that the work was completed, that the air ship worked to a charm, and to look out for it in the vicinity of Eureka between the 15th and 20th of November (Dec.?).

**1896 December 1 (Tues. morn.) (Los Angeles) Herald, p. 2.**

A CELESTIAL PHENOMENON. / Is It the Airship or Only Acute Indigestion? / Los Angeles Wants a Share of the Wonder—Many Think They Saw It Last Night.

That apparition overhead

May be an airship, but we doubt it.

How can we know until we've read

The Sunday sermons preached about it?

—News Letter.

Sober-minded citizens do not as a rule indulge in star-gazing to any great extent and consequently the wonder of the heavens are to many of them a sealed book. But the airship contagion has struck the town and there are many who will not rest comfortably until they are satisfied that they have had a glimpse of the latest sensation. Accordingly even in Los Angeles there is danger of the “airship neck” being contracted.

Fuel was added to the fire of expectancy on Friday night by a well-known newspaper man, who in the intervals of endeavoring to prick holes in Snyder's spelling sprung upon an innocent representative of the Associated Press a thrilling story of the airship having been sighted that evening in the neighborhood of Westlake park, its peculiar construction was described with vivid details and the newspaper man proceeded to draw on his imagination and the credulity of his colleague by recounting

how the airship had come to grief on a neighboring hill, but that its owner had got off with only a sprained ankle. The aforesaid scribe may have had a touch of Scotch second sight or something stronger, and after all may have been only foretelling the collision on the Pasadena electric road yesterday afternoon.

Nevertheless the fable took flight and sensational expectancy has lent strength to its wings.

Last night rumors of an airship filled the air—to the sober-minded observers with more effect than did the airship.

A telephone message was received at the California club yesterday afternoon stating that the airship had been seen floating over Baldwin's ranch. E. J. Baldwin returned to San Francisco from a three months' eastern trip on Saturday and the Misses Ashley are living in the neighborhood of Pasadena.

A crowd of about a hundred men, women and children gathered at the corner of Spring and Temple streets last night and some of them declared that they had seen the airship.

The excitement increased until an astronomical looking individual chanced by and was overheard to remark:

"It is amusing to see these groups of people gazing at the planet Venus and thinking from its great size and brilliancy it must be an airship or some other human production."

By the aid of a very powerful telescope one citizen declared that he saw Julius H. Martin, the Republican candidate for mayor, attached to the tail of the airship, anxious to escape from terra firma, which was growing all too hot for him with the Parkhurst push on one side and the saloon men on the other, making life a burden to him.

But perhaps all this excitement and imagination may be due to too lavish indulgence in turkey last Thursday. /

#### ANOTHER ACCOUNT.

Edward H. Hutchinson contributes the following observations on the phenomena:

One of the queerest and plainest of commentaries on the need of "popular science" ever seen in this city was the general interest in the "airship" manifested by the public last night. Most of the people on the streets in the early evening had heard rumors concerning a flying ship supposed to be sailing around in this section. Some one who had not before noticed that the planet Venus was at its brightest stage started the report that the planet was the flying ship in rapid motion toward the city. Then the crowd watched Venus and was certain that the motion thereof could be seen with the naked eye, flying rapidly out of the west.

An hour later most of the crowd had been at supper and had reappeared on the street. Venus had disappeared in the west and the "red planet," Mars, had appeared high in the eastern sky.

Some observant genius reported that the "airship" had passed over the city and was rapidly receding into the lofty eastern sky.

And there hung the "red planet," Mars, midway between Capella and the glories of Orion, a little north of Aldebaran, and far below the "sweet influence of the Pleiades," which moved the heart of Job so many long ages ago. A little knowledge of astronomy would be infinitely pleasing to everybody, would be very easily acquired with the help of some one who knows anything thereof, and would prevent any such wild rumors as the wild notion that Mars is a "flying ship," or that Venus is an airy cruiser in the atmosphere of this world.

If the sky should be clear tonight the glorious stars may be seen as I have indicated, and at about 9 p.m. the observer who will look below Orion or Job's coffin will see Sirius, the brightest star in the sky, burning like a magnificent celestial electric light. Seven or eight degrees north of Sirius is Procyon, and as much farther in the same direction are Gemini or The Twins; and the only one of these that was not there a million years ago, and which will not be there a million years from now is Mars, the red warrior planet, which revolves around the sun about once every two years.

**1896 December 1 (Tues. morn.) Los Angeles Daily Times, p. 5.**

THE AIRSHIP ROMANCE. / PEOPLE WHO THINK THEY HAVE SEEN THE REAL THING. / Some of Them Mistake Mars and Venus for the Flying-machine. A Los Angeles Man Engages in Airship Building. /

The people of California will soon be suffering from "cricks" in their necks. Nightly, as soon as the sun goes down, every man, woman and child turns out and with head thrown back, begins gazing skyward in search of the airship. Each day that passes adds to the number of believers who are convinced that they have seen the new wonder. Witnesses are cropping up in every part of the State, who have seen strange lights in the heavens. For some days the contagion was confined to the northern part of the State, but it has now spread to Los Angeles, and last evening the streets were crowded with open-mouthed gazers at the skies, to whom every star of more than usual brilliancy appeared a full-fledged airship.

Sacramento was the spot first favored with a visitation from the mysterious vessel. On the night of Tuesday, November 17, numerous citizens assert that they saw a brilliant searchlight moving over the city. Apparently some emulation was aroused among the witnesses. Those that spoke first saw only the light, but their successors gave more and more vivid descriptions of the appearance and construction of the strange visitor. Finally the last man to testify eclipsed all his predecessors by relating a conversation carried on by the occupants of the airship as they passed over his head. All of these veracious witnesses assert that they were entirely sober and had not been hitting the pipe.

Oakland and San Francisco valiantly came to the front with columns of corroborative testimony, and the climax was reached when a Mr. Collins, an Oakland attorney, announced that he was the legal advisor of the inventor of the machine, and was familiar with its plans of construction. Mr. Collins received enough free advertising to satisfy a patent medicine man. He was soon compelled to share his honors with ex-Attorney-General W.H.H. Hart, who was also retained as counsel by the unknown inventor. Gen. Hart gave out the interesting information that the airship is a vessel of war and is to be used to aid the Cuban revolutionists by dropping packages of dynamite upon Capt.-Gen. Weyler's head. Gen. Hart and his associate counsel, Mr. Collins, differ somewhat in their descriptions of the general appearance of the airship, but both agree in the appropriate statement that the motive-power is gas. Both attorneys decline to give their client's name. They say, however, that he has already constructed two airships and a third is on the stocks.

Last Friday evening numerous citizens of Los Angeles discovered a bright light in the heavens near the southern horizon. It was first observed about 6 o'clock and attracted the attention of many people who were on their way home. The most intelligent account of this particular appearance of the phenomenon is that given by Capt. Frank B. Taylor, U.S.A., No 3211 Key West street. About 6:30 Friday evening Capt. Taylor was called out by a neighbor and his attention was directed to the light which was then near the horizon. To the naked eye the object seemed like a brilliant electric light or like a fixed star, although no scintillation was perceptible. Capt. Taylor brought out a field-glass and made a careful observation. In describing the light as it appeared through the glass, he said:

"The light was apparently at a considerable distance, perhaps fifteen or twenty miles. Through the glass it appeared pear-shaped or like a soap bubble when suspended from the pipe, with the apex tilted a little to the left. About one-fifth of the surface, on the left-hand side, was dark and the remainder was very bright and covered at regular intervals with still more brilliant spots. It was up about 20 or 25 deg. in the heavens and appeared to be moving away in a southwesterly direction. I watched it through the glass for about ten or fifteen minutes. It finally disappeared, apparently going toward the ocean. I did not think it was an airship. It seemed more probable that it was some novel affair sent up by someone to impose upon people. It might have been a fire-balloon, although it hardly had that appearance. I could not see any indication of a car or any other attachment, though if there were anything of the kind it probably would not have been visible."

Many of the neighbors watched the mysterious light through Capt. Taylor's glass. Among them was George P. Taylor, who had first seen it from the street car half an hour before. He described the light as very brilliant, with the prismatic colors of a mass of bubbles. Mr. Taylor considered it something unusual, although he was unable to determine the character of the strange visitor.

Last night expectant wonder-seekers were again treated to a sight of the new luminary, which seemed to appear in suggestive proximity to that part of the heavens which Venus should occupy at this season. The airship seemed, however, to be in the condition unkindly ascribed to its observers, by some skeptics, for its course was decidedly unsteady. It appeared above the southern horizon and moved along in an erratic way. The news rapidly spread that the flying-machine was billed for another exhibition, and hundreds of people turned out to see the wonder. The majority of them fixed their gaze upon Mars, and that inoffensive planet was promptly equipped with wings, tail and a full cargo of

dynamite. Doubtless some of the spectators overheard the remarks of the inhabitants, and this testimony may be expected soon.

INVENTED HERE.

San Francisco and Sacramento have had a monopoly of the airship long enough, and Southern California now gets into the game through the enterprise of a patriotic and inventive citizen of Los Angeles.

This patriotic patron is a business man who has had experience in the manufacture of fireworks. He learned from the reports of the appearance of the aerial mystery that an airship consisted of a light in the sky, and he prepared to supply that light. With a hot-air balloon and an aluminum reflector, he constructed a flying ship a few days ago, and last night he launched the craft into the illimitable blue from his home in the southwestern part of the city.

It was a simple contrivance, just a paper balloon with a wire basket containing a sponge saturated with alcohol, and over the sponge an aluminum funnel. When the alcohol was ignited the funnel conducted the hot air into the balloon and reflected the light downward. For popular purposes, this machine is just as good as a cigar-shaped car with wings, and a searchlight. In fact, any bright planet or star served as an airship last night, and hundreds of persons stood on street corners and gaped at Mars or Sirius by the hour. The evening star, when it blazed up in the southern sky early in the evening, was a most brilliant success as a flying ship, and attracted more admiring attention than ever before had been bestowed upon a planet. More than a hundred persons are willing to swear that the evening star bobbed up and down with a wavy motion, and finally landed just back of the Soldiers' Home, and they were sober, too.

**1896 December 1 (Tues.) Los Angeles Times, p. 6.**

THAT AIRSHIP AGAIN. /

The Call is, as an English paper said of McKinley a few days after the election, "a creature of sublime faith." It was the first to discover the existence of a "majestic monarch of the skies" that was simultaneously to be seen hovering over Red Bluff and Bakersfield, the Alpha and Omega of the great basin formed by the confluence of the San Joaquin and Sacramento. As the machine could not be in two places that were over four hundred miles apart, the Call was about to "throw up the sponge" and confess that it had been cruelly buncoed, when suddenly a rescuing angel appeared on the scene.

This was no less a person than William Holy Heavenly Hart, ex-attorney-General of the State of California and likewise of counsel in the famous Blythe will case. He accounts for the ubiquitous character of the mysterious pilgrim of the azimuth by a statement that there are three of these airships, two in nightly operation and the other nearly completed. At first there was only one airship, the existence of which was stoutly denied by the Chronicle and the Examiner. Now there are three. They multiply as fast as did the heads of the [Lernean] hydra when struck off by the club of Hercules.

Last night, in this city, several people said they saw the spook of "the desert and illimitable air" moving steadily in the direction of Santa Monica. It was at a great altitude, so as to be scarcely visible to the naked eye and inspired the ancient army of old soakers to repeat their wonted question, "Have I got 'em again?" Astronomers have predicted the approach of no comet, so it cannot very well be one of them. We must leave this deep and inscrutable mystery to be unraveled by the Call and the ex-Attorney-General, with the lord high executioner and the groom of the back stairs to bring up the rear of this weird procession.

**Marysville Daily Democrat, 12/1. The Air Is Full of Them.**

The last place heard from where the airship was seen Sunday evening last is Forbestown, its presence there being vouched for by the local minister and others. There are twenty-one other towns mentioned where it was seen the same night, ranging from San Diego to Redding. These places fix the same hour when the craft was seen, yet the distance between the locations is fully 200 miles.

**1896 December 1 (Tues. eve.) Oakland Tribune, p. 1.**

SAYS HE SAW IT. / Cass Gilson Gives a Graphic Description of the Airship. / HE WATCHED IT MOVING. / It Was About 1500 Feet Above the Level Ground. / SIDE PROPELLERS WORKED. / It Was Cigar Shaped With a Tail Like a Fish's. /

The airship has again been careering through Oakland atmosphere, and has even permitted a favored few to catch a glimpse of its metal sides and patent wings. Those who have seen it refuse to believe that they were misled by their imaginations or have mistaken Mars or Venus for electric light streaming from the fancied head of a mythical airship.

Now a young electrician of this city declares on his word of honor that he has seen the airship at close range, and describes its exact appearance. The young man is Case Gilson, a son of Professor Gilson, ex-superintendent of Schools and principal of the Normal Training School. His testimony is supported by other young men who saw the strange aerial navigator at the same time.

Gilson and his friends saw the airship twice during last Thursday evening, at 8 and 8:30 P.M. The skies were perfectly clear, and a strong northwest wind was blowing. The airship was moving rapidly from the southeast towards the north in the teeth of the wind. No light was visible, merely the weird peculiar body silhouetted against the clear skies. Case Gilson, his small brother and the Petah brothers distinctly saw the strange sight, and Gilson describes its appearance very graphically.

"The airship was moving very rapidly from the southeast towards Lorin, and not a light was visible," said Gilson. "It was about 1,000 or 1,500 feet in the air and looked like a great black cigar with a fish-like tail. If it had side propellers, they were revolving so rapidly that I could not see them. The body was at least 100 feet long and attached to it was a triangular tail, one apex being attached to the main body. The surface of the airship looked as if it were made of aluminum, which exposure to wind and weather had turned dark. I saw all this distinctly, and I am willing to take any oath to the truth of what I say.

"The airship went at a tremendous speed. As it neared Lorin it turned quickly and disappeared in the direction of San Francisco. At half past 8 we saw it again, when it took about the same direction and disappeared.

"I have studied the subject of airships to a certain extent, and I see no reason why one should not be successful. I know that I was not mistaken about the airship and took a kite for the real thing. It was an airship, of that I am convinced."

Gilson has some ideas of his own on the construction of airships, and since seeing the strange objects in the skies has become more enthusiastic than ever.

Percy Drew was another individual favored with a glimpse of the airship. He says it visited Oakland Saturday night. It then carried a red light and moved with its usual quickness. Both young men agree that the ship was of enormous size, measuring at least 100 feet in length. Gilson thinks nitrogen gas is used to lift the machine, and that Fargo electric batteries supply the propelling power.

Gilson is at present the only person who has openly declared that the machine was visible on a clear night. Its previous appearances have been on cloudy, obscure nights, when persons may have been misled by taking stars for electric lights and clouds for the shadowy form of an airship. Gilson is also an amateur astronomer, and declares that he could not mistake a star or a cloud for an airship. He believes that if the French made a partial success of an airship in 1888 it is not surprising that American enterprise has perfected plans for a machine which is now successfully navigating the atmosphere. Why the machine does not appear in the daylight no one seems to know, and until it does unbelievers will continue to scoff.

#### HOW ABOUT THIS?

A San Josean Declares That He Travelled on the Ship. / By Associated Press to The Tribune.

SAN JOSE, Dec. 1.—The champion air-ship story of the season is told by John A. Horen, an electrician in the employ of the Electric Improvement Co., of this place....

Riverside Enterprise, Dec. [1?],3. A TRIAL TRIP. / Constable Westerfield Sails Over San Bernardino in His New Airship.

Constable Westerfield, who came in from Indio yesterday, states that the Enterprise story regarding his airship is correct. He also adds that the story published in the San Bernardino papers to the effect that an ariel ship was seen sailing over that town a few nights ago is correct also, as it was his invention that was seen.

On the date mentioned he took a short spin with his ship just to see how the machinery worked, and in doing so he came as far west as San Bernardino.

**1896 December 1 (Tues.) (San Bernardino, Calif.) Daily Times-Index, p. 8.**

THE WONDER OF WONDERS / Mysterious Air-Ship Appears Over San Bernardino / SEEN BY MANY WITNESSES / [ ] of the Air An Assured Success [ ] the Marvel of the Century [ ] a Trip to This City and [ ] Turns and Sails Away in [ ] Direction of Riverside County. /

Ever since the days of the Montgolfier brothers of France, over a century ago, first demonstrated the feasibility of per-[ ] leaving the earth and sailing in the air by means of the balloon, one of whom [ ] his faith by losing his life in one of the attempts, the subject of aerial navigation has been a fruitful one for speculation and experiment. Brains have been wracked and fortunes wrecked in the attempt to construct an air-ship that could make headway against the currents of the atmosphere in the same manner that a vessel on the ocean turns its course of flight to any point wished.

The difference in the surroundings of the two are, however, different, the density of the water making it possible for a very heavy object to float if properly constructed to make the necessary displacement, while the lightness of the atmosphere has rendered it exceedingly difficult to accomplish the same results. Bags of gas of various shapes have been tried, but they only float before the wind as the introduction of machinery sufficiently powerful to overcome this propensity compels the balloon to carry a weight that makes even floating an impossibility.

These obstacles are being gradually overcome by the progress science is making, and the discovery of aluminum, a very light but strong metal, and electricity, a powerful force for propulsion, are making it possible, when these are properly combined to sail on the air as one sails on the ocean, and the time is not far off—even if not already arrived—when this will be an assured fact. The only thing to be overcome now appears to be to secure the necessary electricity without the usual weight of storage batteries or dynamos.

For several weeks stories have been afloat and published with all proper attention to detail announcing the fact that in the northern portion of the State such an air-ship has been sailing around, appearing at many different points, and has been seen by persons of such undoubted veracity that there seems little room for doubt. The inventor seems to be enjoying the mystery most thoroughly and is evidently making a perfect test of his machine in every respect before he allows it to come to earth and be critically examined by the public.

Reports have come down that it was heading this way and a day or two ago it was seen, as the report goes, hovering over Los Angeles. Last night it appeared over San Bernardino and was seen by hundreds who gazed in awe-struck wonder as it shifted from point to point, finally taking its departure towards Riverside, almost on a line from here with Box Spring mountain, evidently being under as perfect command as a vessel at sea, obeying the rudder easily and sailing rapidly, there being but little or no wind at the time may have been favorable to its movements.

One of the first to discover the strange wonder was Dr. W.H. Stiles, who was standing at the corner of Third and D streets and he watched it for some time, until it moved off in the direction of Riverside. He thought it was just about over the West Coast Lumber yard on First street when he discovered it, not very high in the air, but just above the tops of the buildings. It appeared to carry a very strong electric arc light, and the peculiar appearance and shifting of this light called his attention to it. While he looked at it quite a crowd collected, many of whom started down D street to First to obtain a better view of it, but before it could be reached the mysterious visitor had sailed off toward Riverside. This was about 7 o'clock or a little earlier in the evening.

J.A. Lamb watched the moving light for some time and could not determine what it was, but said that "possibly it might be a surveying party come down from the moon." The light appeared to him to be an electric light of great power, entirely different in appearance from the stars or the city electric lights. It sailed along slowly and disappeared in the southwest.

Mrs. J.G. McLean saw the visitor as it sailed along up a short distance above the tops of the buildings and at first thought it was a light attached to a balloon or kite, but it sailed too smoothly, without any bobbing up and down or uneven motion, but went along smoothly. It had the appearance in size of a mast arc light, but it was much brighter and more intense. The time was between 6:30 and 7 p.m., probably near the latter.

Many others were questioned as to the light and all agreed upon the fact that such a light appeared and was carried upon an air-ship of some kind, not very high up above the ground, and that it was continually in motion, and went off in the direction of Riverside. If it is not the veritable air ship seen in the northern portion of the State it is probably the one that was to be built in San Diego some months since, an account of which appeared in the Times-Index at the time. That was to start out to cross the Rocky Mountains and go to the Atlantic seaboard.

(Redwood City) Times-Gazette, Dec. 1, p.3; and Riverside Enterprise, Dec. 1, p.3. A TRIAL TRIP. / Constable Westerfield Sails Over San Bernardino in His New Airship.

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(San Diego) Evening Tribune, Dec. 1,2. Gen. W.H.H. Hart, ex-Attorney-General of California, has dropped the Anneke Jans case for the present, and has taken up the Call's flying machine. Hart is evidently a man who just loves a soft snap. Next to securing \$300,000,000 for the old Dutch woman's heirs, the success of this particular flying machine is the surest thing on earth. San Diego Evening Tribune, Fri. Dec. 1, 1. Horen.

San Diego Sun, 12/1/1. A bright light was thrown landward from the ocean last night between 8 and 9 o'clock, which it is believed by many to come—not from an airship—but from the cruiser Philadelphia.

12/2/1. Oregon inventor goes insane.

12/2/2. San Diego had a bright light on its own account Monday night, but it did not rush into print with an airship story, as they do in the north, but simply admitted that the cruiser Philadelphia had gone by and threw a flash-light in this direction. That is one of the differences between San Diego and the northern part of the state.

### **1896 December 1 (Tues.) San Francisco Bulletin, p. 1.**

AND HE FLEW. / Here's a Man Who Rode in the Airship. / From California Far Over the Sea. / He Saw the Gleaming Lights of Honolulu / And He Has the Reputation of Being a Hard-Working, Sober Man. /

San Jose, Dec. 1.—The airship story of the season is told by John A. Horen, an electrician in the employ of the Electric Improvement Company, at this place.

Horen says he has a patent on an electric platinum sheeting apparatus, and by appointment he went to San Francisco on Thursday to see the inventor of the airship, who wished to inspect the apparatus.

Said Horen: "We went on horseback to a point on a sandy beach where the airship was, got aboard and rose very high. The height was registered by a meter on the ship. The inventor does not count distance traveled by miles, but by degrees, after leaving the starting point.

"On Thursday afternoon we traveled westward, and before daylight the next morning saw lights. The inventor said they were the lights of Honolulu.

"We turned east, and on Saturday evening about dark landed near where we started from. The airship arose by means of two propellers whose movement was noiseless and swift.

"The inventor is 45 years old, but I cannot tell anything concerning him. The motive power of the airship is not steam or electricity. It is a wonderful machine and can be stopped and made to stand still in the air anywhere, and comes down as lightly as a feather."

Horen lives at the New York Exchange Hotel and went to San Francisco on Thursday. Some seem to give credence to his story, and all admire his ability as an accomplished story-teller, and say he is the best liar of the year. He sticks to his story, and bears the name of being a hard-working, sober man.

The conductor of a Union-street car stopped his car near Franklin street last evening to allow the passengers to watch the "airship" that was passing over the city.

The people were certain that the thing was the much-talked-of flyer, but later on it was discovered to be a toy balloon with a light attached.

#### **1896 December 1 (Tues.) San Francisco Bulletin, p. 4.**

##### A HARBINGER OF PEACE. /

The San Francisco journal which has especial charge of the airship declares that instead of being an agent of destruction, it will bring into the world the peace and good will that have been struggling almost 1900 years for ascendancy over the war lords of this and preceding generations. The tactics of the coon which came down from his perch on a tree when he saw Davy Crockett prepare to line his trusty rifle in his direction will be emulated by these warlike war lords. "In the event that an airship could be made to destroy a city," says the man who had the \$10,000,000 proposition under consideration, "that in itself would firmly establish the peace of the civilized world." Such, however, is not the history of mankind. From the time when savages threw stones at each other, weapons of war have evolved from the sling armed with the deadly stone to the 14,000-ton warship that could lie outside the Golden Gate and send shot and shell into the heart of San Francisco. There is no reason to suppose that governments would cease to fight when their interests pointed in that direction because the invention of an airship made war more deadly than ever.

p. 4. It is a sad thing that happened to the airship, getting tangled in the rigging of a steamer, but likely to happen to airships getting too close to shore. No blame can be attached to the whaler Orca. She simply vindicated the primacy of the ships of the sea. The collision did not hurt her.

#### **1896 December 1 (Tues.) The Call (San Francisco), p. 1.**

SAILED OVER LOS ANGELES / Three Strange Lights Seen Above the City of Angels. / BACK ON THEIR COURSE / Hart Tells Why His Client's Airship Takes to Great Altitudes. / IS MUCH EASIER TO OPERATE / The Attorney Gives an Account of a Wonderful Electric Storage Battery. /

Every day and every night add more testimony from those who have seen or claim to know something about the mysterious lights that for the past two weeks have appeared in the sky from Central to Southern California. Every day and every night add to the number of those who are converted from skepticism to a belief that these lights are attached to an airship or aerial craft such as the world has never seen before.

Whatever all these mysterious things may be it stands to reason that the mystery cannot exist for ever, and in all probability the truth will be known ere many days or weeks pass. It is the purpose of The Call to secure this knowledge and present it to the public, be it airship or hoax.

The telegraphic dispatches published in yesterday's Call gave accounts of the appearance of strange lights making rapid flights over the San Fernando Valley, in Los Angeles County. Last night the people of Los Angeles City were treated to the strange sight. Two fixed lights passed over the city at a high rate of speed and at a very great distance from the earth. A third light that appeared to have all the characteristics of a searchlight in the hands of a skillful manipulator was also seen in conjunction with the two fixed lights. These passed according to reports from the northwest to the southeast and two hours later they reappeared, passing from the southeast to the northwest. A number who witnessed the phenomenon were inclined to believe that some practical joker was sending up toy balloons from the hills, but those who believed in the airship theory were unable to understand how toy balloons could pass in opposite directions over the same course, or what kind of toy balloon was used that could stay up at a high altitude with lights ablaze for over two hours.

Ex-Attorney-General W.H.H. Hart, the attorney for the inventor, while discussing the power that could be or is used for airships, made public some very interesting information regarding the new Fargo storage battery in which he is interested. He stated that the whole apparatus of a twenty-horsepower storage battery weighs only about 125 or 130 pounds. The receiving jars proper have been reduced to such a small compass that they weigh less than three pounds, and that a jar of this size can be charged from an ordinary incandescent light wire. Under such circumstances the master of an airship would

have but little trouble in taking in "fuel" that would enable him to travel a great many miles. He could have his ship secreted in the hills, walk into any town along the route on which he might choose to travel, hire a room in a hotel, tap a wire, fill his soda bottles with chain lightning and resume his voyage through the upper air for another hundred miles or more.

The proposition seems almost too gigantic to be true, but stranger things have happened in the realm of science within the last few years.

A late dispatch received last night from Los Angeles reads as follows:

"The mysterious airship was seen again here to-night. The thing moved about over the city for an hour. There is no doubt as to the genuineness of the phenomenon, whatever it might be. Jack Faulkner, Richard Sweet and other reputable citizens, who were directly under the strange visitor, state that they saw its wings. It created great excitement on the streets to-night."/

WHY HE SAILS HIGH./ Attorney Hart Tells Why the Airship Is Taken Far From the Earth.

General W.H.H. Hart still insists that the much-talked-of airship is a reality and that the thousand or more people who have seen lights moving in the sky and were able to discern the outlines of an object above were not the victims of high-pressure imaginations. He goes still further and asserts that there are two airships now moving about in the heavens over the Golden State, a large one and a smaller one. He believes that one is now in the southern part of the State and the other is prowling around through heretofore unexplored space in the more northern latitudes.

"Then your inventor must have an assistant who understands aerial navigation as well as himself," was suggested to General Hart.

"Yes, he has," was the response. "He told me that there is very little trouble in handling the machine. All that is required is a good cool-headed man with a fair amount of common-sense and one who is not likely to become excited or lose his presence of mind at high altitudes.

"I have no doubt that he has such men with him. At least he told me that he had. You must remember that an airship is very easy to handle at extremely high altitudes—much easier than near the surface of the earth."

In explaining what he meant by this assertion General Hart gave some interesting information as to why the lights are always seen at such great distances from the earth. He illustrated his point by calling attention to the fact that an ordinary gas or hot-air balloon, on being released from the ground, darts like an arrow from a bow into the air and that the farther away from the earth it gets the slower its upward flight.

"The reason for this," he explained, "is that after the balloon has reached a certain altitude the gas that carried it to that point is not so much lighter than the surrounding atmosphere and its buoyancy is thereby decreased. Then aerial navigation becomes practically easy, for the operator does not have to expend power in forcing the balloon filled with gas and the airship attachment against the wind. This is the reason that the inventor has gone so high when experimenting with his ship. He tells me that at a great height he can go against the wind with comparative ease, but that at 300 or 400 feet from the ground he is compelled to use up a great deal of power."

The subject uppermost in the general's mind, the freeing of Cuba from Spain, came to the surface in the conversation, and the attorney said that "the inventor is likely at any time to pack up his smaller airship and start for the scene of bloodshed and trouble."

"It can be easily done," he said. "In the first place the material of the outfit is light and the ship can readily be packed in cases and shipped away by rail without attracting the least attention, and it would take but a short time to put it together again."

"How could this be done when your power is a storage battery that will only last six hours?" was asked.

"There would be no difficulty about that," was the response. "The Fargo storage battery can be recharged anywhere where there is an electric-light wire, and there are electric power and lighting plants in all of the towns from here to Arizona, and from Arizona to the Southern states.

"The whole apparatus of the twenty-horsepower Fargo battery does not weigh over 125 pounds, and the storage battery proper can be carried in your overcoat pocket, it not weighing over three pounds. Each section weighs but a little more than a sodawater bottle filled with water. He could come into this office and charge his entire battery by tapping one of these incandescent-light wires. So, you see that he could take his ship across the continent without any trouble at all. Speaking of the expedition to Cuba reminds me that already I am beginning to receive letters from people who desire to go as volunteers in

the new aerial navy. Here is one. I will read it to you, but not give the writer's name: / Madera, 11-29-'96.

W.H.H. Hart—DEAR SIR: If it is possible please consider me as a volunteer for the party in the airship to go to Cuba. I am 40 years of age and in perfect health and strength. Am a fairly educated man, a good telegraph operator, stenographer and typewriter operator. I understand that it will be a very hazardous enterprise, but believe me, there is no danger that I am not perfectly willing and glad to face.

I shall fear nothing and will go anywhere and do anything my superiors may command or desire. It does not matter to any one if I am killed, as I have no ties. I have no family, relatives or persons relying

upon me, and for that reason alone I should be sent. I will take any obligation as to secrecy, faithfulness, etc. and willingly answer with my life for it. High altitudes do not affect me. Please let me hear from you at your earliest convenience. Most respectfully, -----.

"Will you engage him?"

"I will not. I will hand his letter over to the inventor, and he will do with the proposition as he sees fit. I have no doubt but what, as he is related to the electrician of Maceo's army, all the arrangements were made as to the crew and other details before he came to this part of the continent. As I have said before, he came here to test his airship in the high altitudes, the lower heavier strata of air and the fogs from the ocean. He wanted to test it under ocean conditions. In the East the wind blows from the land to the sea, but here it blows in from the sea, and in an expedition over Cuba he wants to be thoroughly familiar with ocean atmosphere. The last time I saw the inventor his purpose was to operate his ship in the high, dry atmosphere over the southern part of the State, and from the telegraphic accounts in The Call he must be there now with one of his airships. We are told that his lights have been seen by hundreds in Los Angeles County, and I have no idea that they were jack-o'-lanterns or fakes." SEEN OVER LOS ANGELES. / The City Excited Over Bright Lights Apparently Under Some One's Control.

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Nov. 30.—Los Angeles is excited and people are gazing upward from every corner at what all who have seen them declare are the lights of an airship. The altitude of these strange lights was very great and the movement was from northwest to southeast. Passengers on board many of the streetcar lines witnessed the zigzag glimmer as it floated slowly and placidly through the upper air.

Most of the force of the two morning dailies saw the lights, which reappeared after two hours' time going in the opposite direction. Some of the witnesses describe the appearance of these lights, two of which were fixed, while a third light had the characteristics of a searchlight and was apparently under the operation of a skilled manipulator.

These lights were seen by so many reputable citizens that the town is talking nothing else to-night except the strange lights and the probable influence of the invention, if it proves such, upon methods of warfare and the transmission of intelligence from one part of the world to another. The probability of the ship is conceded on all hands, and much speculation is rife as to its most important uses in peace and war.

The latest and most conclusive evidence extant reached this city to the effect that Foreman Woods, on Lucky Baldwin's ranch at Santa Anita, had seen the visitor this afternoon by the full light of day. H.A. Unruh, manager of the ranch, places the utmost reliance in the word of his foreman and in consequence said to a Call correspondent that this statement satisfied him. There is some ground for the report that a genuine airship was being operated among the foothills, not only in the night but in the daytime.

This information was telephoned to the Chamber of Commerce in this city today. This information staggers the most credulous. Serious people, judges and prominent business men have now been led to conclude that there is more in aerial philosophy than they had ever dreamed of.

Foreman Woods' description tallies with the published accounts and pictures in The Call during the past week, namely: as to its birdlike wings and other characteristics. Mr. Woods claims to have had a good, plain view of the winged visitor, and describes in detail its every part.

The hull or body, he says, is of oval shape, while the wings are long and fashioned remarkably like those of an American eagle. Its rapid movement through the air is what impressed Mr. Woods the most. The machine, he said, was traveling against the wind, and at a rate of speed equal to the fastest train.

The hills about the city are lined with gazers watching for a late reappearance of the ship. To this mass of evidence a hackman, whose occupation keeps him up all night, adds that he has seen the ship as late as 8 A.M. This gentleman, whose name is Carroll, describes the appearance of searchlight features with clearness.

He says that he is absolutely certain that what he saw was an aerial machine under the guidance of an intelligent being, and that the searchlight was capable of revealing objects on the earth and the general topography of the country to the operators.

### **1896 December 1 (Tues.) San Francisco Examiner, p. 2.**

That Airship Again. / It Was a Toy Balloon with a Reflector, and It Floated Over Los Angeles.

Los Angeles, Nov. 30.—The airship fakir has been at work here, and the result of his labors tonight caused much excitement among the promenaders on Spring street. Shortly before 7 o'clock a brilliant light like the rays from a locomotive headlight was seen in the air over the southwest part of the city. It bobbed up and down and slowly moved to the northwest, disappearing over the hills at about 8 o'clock. Charles Fuller Gates, a bicycle expert stated this evening that he believed the affair to be a practical joke on the part of some residents of the University, who had prepared a six-foot paper hot-air balloon with an aluminum reflector, so that the flames from the sponge would be reflected downwards. That the airship was a trick arrangement there is no doubt, but it was enough of a success to be the talk of the town; and until late at night many people kept their places on the curbstones scanning the sky in the hope of its return.

Dec. 1 p.6—From the Papers of the Coast: Speaking of airships, "they've got 'em" in about every town of size, except Napa. This is a temperance town.—Napa "Register."

### **1896 December 1 (Tues.) San Jose Daily Mercury, p. 8.**

YARN OF THE AIR. / Sensational Story Told by an Electrician. / CLAIMS HE RODE IN THE SHIP. / Startling Assertion That He Passed Over the Hawaiian Islands and Returned in Two Days. / [pic.: John A. Horen, Who Claims to Have Taken a Trip in an Airship.]

John A. Horen is an electrician in the employ of the Electric Improvement Company, who left here last Thursday and returned yesterday with a sensational story of having had a voyage on an airship.

As a consequence he has been subjected to a great deal of bantering on the part of his associates, whom he could not convince that his statement was founded on fact. Even viewed as fiction Horen's story is interesting and is given for what it is worth.

Horen is a hard-working, intelligent mechanic, and he told his startling story last evening to acquaintances at the New York Exchange Hotel, where he stops. Mr. Hirsh, one of the proprietors of the hotel, said Horen had taken a trip to San Francisco Thursday, as he claimed, and did not return till yesterday. Horen has become well known among telephone and electric light employes during his seven months' residence in this city. He is recognized as an expert operator and experimenter with electrical apparatus.

In an interview with a Mercury representative last evening, Horen said he had solemnly promised not to reveal anything that would give a clew as to the inventor of the airship or anything as to the principles of its construction. In general, however, the machine, he says, was made of aluminum plates of remarkable thinness and lightness, and strength was obtained by having them ribbed. When spread out for flight the ship was 163 feet in length and fifty-six feet wide. Horen said he was taken into the confidence of the inventor, as the latter wished to take advantage of an electric platinum sparking apparatus that Horen has invented.

"By appointment," said Horen, "I met the inventor in San Francisco last Thursday afternoon, and we went on horseback to a secluded spot on the sandy sea shore, where the great machine was disclosed. I had not been let into the secret till I was brought face to face with the machine itself. I had no difficulty in applying my apparatus to the motor and then the inventor invited me to take a ride in the airship. We stepped into an inclosed carriage in the center of the machine that had windows of mica, or some other transparent and very light substance. The motive power is a great secret. It is not steam or

electricity, but electricity enters into it to a small degree. The bearings on the machine are not exactly ball bearing but they operate similar to that kind of bearings. We arose by means of two propellers, one on each end of the machine, to a great height. The movement was so noiseless and swift that a passenger is not conscious of it. The height was registered by a machine inside the car. The airship travels at a much greater rate of speed than has been guessed at by any one. The inventor does not count his progress by miles, but by degrees on the earth's surface. His average speed in flight he claims is two degrees an hour, or 138 miles. The flight in question was taken out over the ocean. Near morning the inventor pointed below to some twinkling lights on some land and said that was Honolulu. He then took a circuitous course and landed near the point we started from shortly after dark Saturday evening.

"I should think the man is about 45 years old. He has been working on his airship for twelve years, never changing the principle. He told me he believed he had a perfect machine now. He can light as easily as a feather will drop to the earth anywhere, and can also stop almost dead still in mid air if he wishes to. The inventor did not seem to be at all excited over his wonderful machine, but talked to me about it just as if it was a wheelbarrow.

"I asked him when he was going to patent it, but he said he would not be in a hurry for a few weeks yet unless there was danger of exposure. He wants to perfect something about the bearings of one of the propellers, and then he says he will fly to New York and begin his application for a patent by means of the working machine. He does not need to fear exposure from me, as I could not give the principle of operation of the machine if I wanted to do so.

"Notwithstanding his great faith in the machine the inventor always takes with him a life preserver that he has also been working upon for many years. This machine is a combination of parachute and balloon. By means of some chemical the balloon is inflated after the parachute is spread, and with it a man would be enabled to float around in the air a great while, or until he reached a safe landing place."

(San Jose) Evening News, 12/1/4. He Made the Trip.

John A. Horen, who is said to be a hard working and intelligent mechanic and for that reason is to be believed, is reported to have just returned from a trip in the airship to Honolulu. He says the rate of speed was 138 miles an hour. Horen is an electrician in the employ of the Electric Improvement company.

(Santa Barbara) Daily Independent, 12/1. Horen.

San Diego Evening Tribune, 12/1. Horen.

Stockton Evening Mail, Dec. 1,8. Champion Arsp story of the season.

### **1896 December 1 (Tues.) (Woodland, CA) Yolo Semi-Weekly Mail, p. 1.**

MYSTERY EXPLAINED. / The Airship Problem Is At Last Unraveled—A Bird in the Case. / King Lee of Washington Perpetrates a Good Joke With the Assistance of a Pelican. /

The Mail of Thursday contained an interview with Obe Lowe, in which he stated most positively that he saw the much talked-of and mysterious airship while in Sacramento the evening before. He was subjected to a great deal of "joshing," but stuck to his story with a tenacity truly commendable.

King Lee, the Republican "boss" of Washington, was in Woodland Saturday and exploded the great airship mystery. King is somewhat of a hunter himself and occasionally brings home some game, even if he has to purchase it from someone who is more expert with a gun. He went out on one of his expeditions Wednesday, and after wasting considerable ammunition he finally wounded a huge pelican, which he bore triumphantly into the famous riverside town that refused to take the name of [Boruek].

He is mild-mannered and of a retiring disposition, but he has a great head and is a schemer for generations back, and he was not long in concocting a plan to have some fun at the expense of those afflicted with the airship craze. Here is a description of what followed in his own words:

"I took Mr. Pelican out into a woodshed in the evening, and after tying a Japanese lantern to one of his legs, put a candle into it, lit it and turned him loose. He sailed around in a circle for a few minutes to get his bearings, after which he lit out over Sacramento. I followed him over, and taking a

position on J street soon had a crowd 'rubber-necking' themselves in great shape. I had for my audience several State officials, lawyers and many others calling themselves prominent citizens. It was great sport, you bet. They all swore they could see the body of the airship and figured it out to be from 50 to 300 feet long. The old pelican would occasionally squawk, and all would declare that they could hear voices. It was a picnic, but I dare not give the snap away for fear of being mobbed. A San Francisco Call reporter was present and taking down in shorthand all that the 'prominent citizens' would say. I gave him a great '[f l],' and, if you remember, the Call 'dished up' my pelican airship in great shape Thursday morning. Break the news gently to Obe Lowe and "tell him that you saw me."

With this King jumped on the train for home, and the last seen of him he was trying to light a punk cigar with a second-hand toothpick. Thus has the greatest mystery of the age been exploded. Next! [also in The Mail of Woodland, 11/29/1.]

p. 1. It Is Said... That many Woodlandites are on the lookout for the airship. [also in The Mail of Woodland, 11/28/1.]

Woodland Daily Democrat, Dec. 1, p. 2. Venus is very luminous these Dec. evenings and it is possible that some people have mistaken it for an airship.

The Calif, arsp story didn't lose anything on its eastern journey. By the time it reached Kansas City it was treated with all seriousness and the machine was described as 150 feet in length, operated by a rudder and wings and capable of carrying 15 people. [April '97?]

Quake and quiver little light, / How we stare at you each night./  
Up above the world so high / Tis the airship on the fly. /  
When the blazing sun has set / And the grass with dew is wet, /  
Then we stand and catch la grippe / Just to watch the famed airship—/  
Early morn and late at night, / Gaunt and shivering forms and white /  
Shaking as with ague chill, / Watching for the airship still.

—H.A. Deaner.

### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) Daily Colusa Sun, p.2.**

Saw the Airship.

Santa Cruz Sentinel: Fred R. Howe says he saw the airship sailing over Salinas in the direction of Monterey, Saturday evening. It was in sight for twenty minutes and caused much excitement, people rushing out of stores and residences to look at it. Fred is convinced that he saw the airship and does not believe it to be a fake. Fred is not a drinking man, and is not known to be in love. [also in Salinas Democrat 12/5/1.]

Bridgeport Chronicle-Union, 12/2/2. The Call "scooped" the Examiner badly on the airship, and the Examiner has attempted to make its readers believe it is a fake; that there is no such thing in existence, but the evidence seems to be strongly in favor of the Call, and even the New York Journal, the Examiner's partner, publishes a full account of its appearance, with a cut of the machine and a view of the people of Sacramento on the streets looking at it. The Examiner should be honest and own up that the Call "scooped" it.  
11/28/2 SF.

### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) (Eureka, Calif.) Daily Humboldt Times, p. 2.**

An Airship (ed.).

It is a charming pastime with most people to build "aircastles." They cost but little time, no money, drive dull care away and buoy up one's spirits. One half of the pleasure we gain in this life is in building these aircastles and the hopefulness growing out of them. Hope is the great mainstay of our existence; take this away and life would indeed be dreary. But aircastles are not exactly airships; one implies fixity and the other movement. The subject of aircastles never will be solved, that of airships will be. Has it already been solved? Many think it has and that this coast has the honor of solving the

problem. Many people of the city of Sacramento and others in the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys claim to have seen a verifiable air ship moving in different directions, perfectly obedient to its helm, and heard human voices issuing therefrom. Later others claimed to have seen it along the coast near San Francisco and three or four days ago some members of the Arcata high school observed bright lights in the heavens moving rapidly along; then it was seen by a very few of Eureka's "wide awake" people and last but not least the word now comes from Blocksburg that it passed over that city of hills and blocks. None of these people, however, tell us what they had eaten and drank the day and evening they saw the wonder, or what caused the ecstasy of joy in their minds and souls that produced the sensation. All those statements might be enveloped in a halo of doubt, had not a correspondent of the Times assured us that the problem had been solved. Eureka would be foolish, indeed, to let a couple of little towns like Sacramento and San Francisco bluff her on a proposition of this kind.

Much brain power and tens of thousands of dollars have been spent in endeavoring to successfully navigate the air. That it will be successfully accomplished no one can gainsay. More wonderful things have already been accomplished by the use of electricity. The whole internal system of the human body can now be photographed and exposed to the human eye. More wonderful still the mind has been explored by the electric ray and thought traced upon a material substance and it too exposed to the human eye. And yet still more wonderful, if possible, the blind have found eyes in this electric ray and can again see and enjoy the beauties of nature. Wonderful, indeed, are the discoveries of science. With these facts before us who dare say that the successful navigation of the air will never be accomplished? Who can say that it has not already been successfully accomplished?

(Eureka) Daily Humboldt Standard, Wed. Dec. 2, p. 4. The two mysteries of the day—the air ship and the white owls—are on display in R.W. Skinner & Co.'s show window. The air ship was manufactured by the Skinner brothers and the owls which were captured on the peninsula were mounted by William Rotermund. The air ship is unique and the birds are beautiful. They attract considerable attention.

Fresno Morning Republican, Dec. 2, 4. Caught the Airship (Visalia Times)/ Craycroft. "The arsp has been...captured.

Daily Morning Union (Grass Valley, Calif.), Dec. 2, p. 3. Whatever became of the airship? Has anybody seen it lately?

### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) Los Angeles Times, p. 11.**

SAN BERNARDINO. / The Air-Ship a Regular Nightly Visitor—Seen by All.

SAN BERNARDINO, Dec. 1.—(Regular Correspondence.) Several hundred people last night and this evening have been gazing at the heavens with mouths agape and eyes wide open at the newfangled, sure-enough air-ship with electric light, flashlight and all concomitants. It has been seen each evening about 7 o'clock low in the western horizon and moving rapidly toward Los Angeles. It has the appearance of an electric light of ordinary power, and appears to be four times as large as Jupiter, so they say. Doctors, lawyers, editors and such, whose word is truth itself on 'change, are unimpeachable witnesses of these facts. The local evening paper gives a full column of its valuable space to detailing the particulars of this new-found wonder. It is the evening star Venus, in all its glory, really appearing much as described.

Los Angeles Herald, 12/2/2. Not the Airship (meteor falls near ship Willkommen).

Los Angeles Record, 12/2/1. Air-Ship Did It. (Hearne becomes insane.)

Los Angeles Times, 12/2/2. Horen.

p.6. Railway travel in Arizona is evidently quite conducive to somnolency. The other night two prisoners, destined for Yuma, were put on board a train at Phoenix in charge of three deputy sheriffs. It does seem that one of these officials might have watched these prisoners while the other two slept. But all three of them had evidently been up all night looking for the air-ship, for they all fell asleep, and the two convicts made their escape. There should be some punishment for such negligence.

When you see a man going along the street with his breath smelling strong of emotional insanity, don't say that he is drunk, obfuscated, exhilarated. Don't even intimate that he "has got a

turkey.” Just say quietly that he “has seen the air-ship” and no further references to artificial moisture will be deemed necessary.

**1896 December 2 (Wed.) Marysville (Calif.) Daily Appeal, p. 3.**

OROVILLE. / FLYNN'S FAIRY TALES.

The Register evidently has great regard for the veracity of Joel Flynn of Berry Creek. It had two items yesterday touching on the matter.

One said that he left home on Sunday night and started for Oroville. He had gone but a short distance when he saw the mysterious air ship which landed near him and the inventor offered to give him a ride. Flynn accepted and he went into the air so high that he came near freezing, but he landed in town in a short time.

We have been wearing a button entitled, "I am somewhat of a liar myself," and this we immediately took off and handed to Joel, who accepted it without a word. /

According to the other he says it was exceedingly cold up there on Saturday morning. He heard his chickens making a strange noise and went out to investigate. A big fine rooster was trying to crow, but the crows as they came from his windpipe froze together and when Joel first saw him there were a foot or more of these crows all in a string hanging from the rooster's mouth.

Meridian Musings. Our quiet little village took part in the air ship excitement last week. At about 7 o'clock a bright star appeared. Excitement soon ran high. Some declared they saw it sway through the atmosphere and believed it was coming to Meridian. The effects of the excitement was different on individuals.

It moved some men to run tell their wives. Others were moved to bet on its coming, others believed a mild stimulant was better.

Silence soon reigned, the star rose higher, stopped its supposed swaying and peace was restored by Constable Gibson.

Marysville Daily Democrat, 12/2. Horen; shower of birds.

Fresno Morning Republican, 12/2p.2b. / AIRSHIP VIEWS OF PROSPERITY.

"I sometimes wish," said the man in the airship, airily, as was his wont, "that I was back at home in Mars."

"So would I, too," said the woman in the airship, as she bound a fresh piece of steak on his eye, "if I had such an eye as you've got. How'd you get it?"

"Had a little argument."

"What was it about?"

"Well, you see, it was this way. I hid my airship in a dog kennel over here by Oroville, you know, and went down town to get acquainted. Just as I come up to a group of men one of them says:

"'Since McKinley's elected the mills is startin' up an' prosperity has arrived.'

"'Come off!' says another. 'Here's Ketchum & Squeezum has just failed, an' when I went to make a deposit with the bank this mornin', they'd only allow me 1 per cent less interest than they allowed a month ago. That's an elover prosperity.'

"They debated a while, and I got interested; so, finally, I says:

"'Was you expecting prosperity?'

"'We was,' says the first man.

"'Not by a dum sight,' says the other.

"'What's prosperity?' says I. [no more.]

(Los Angeles) Herald, 12/2/2. Not the airsp / ship Willkommen saw meteor. / 11/22/2 SF, Sacra.

**1896 December 2 (Wed. eve.) Riverside (Calif.) Daily Press, p. 5.**

THE AIR SHIP / Sailed Over Box Springs Last Night / Who Saw It?

At last the mysterious and mighty airship that has been seen and sworn to—as to its existence—in the northern part of the state, and especially over and in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay, has made its appearance in this vicinity.

The air vessel, from description of spectators, is an elongated, almost cigar-shaped body, with a wing at side of about 30 feet wide and of the shape of a devil-fish's membraneous appanages. So the inventor must have taken the devil-fish or the stingaree from which to study his principle of locomotion instead of a bird, as about all the other recent inventors have done; and the size and shape of the flying machine suggests a reservoir for gas. And the machine, too, appears to float at will, or speed away. A searchlight is plainly visible to the people on earth, the operator of the machine using it in the manner a steamboat does.

The aerodome was seen by a number of people in San Bernardino at 7 o'clock last night and passed over Riverside shortly after, continuing on toward Los Angeles.

J.C. Lamb and Mrs. J.G. McLean of San Bernardino saw and watched the airship out of sight, but to Dr. W.H. Stiles of that place goes the honor of first discovery. According to the Times-Index, people in the vicinity of Third and D streets at a few minutes before 7 p.m. were startled with a terrific yeowl. The crowd rushed to where the figure of Dr. Stiles stood gazing upward with a horrified, distended stony stare. They, too, thereupon stared their stony stares, for hovering above them was the great, unimaginable aerodome.

If the people of Riverside failed to see the airship as it passed over their city it was, alas, because they too seldom turn their eyes heavenward.

#### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) Sacramento Bee, p. 1.**

Navigating the Air. / Organization of the Pacific Company with \$20,000,000 Capital. / A Mysterious Corporation Which Means Business. / An Airship to Pass Over the Capital City in Broad Daylight, and Its Appearance to Be Advertised Some Days Ahead—Some Interesting Data. /

The Bee is in receipt of a communication from the Atlantic and Pacific Aerial Navigation Company, whose office is in the Spreckels Building, San Francisco. It reads as follows:

Editor Daily Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, Cal.—Dear Sir: We know not what the aerial visitor is, which is being seen in many portions of the State, but we know that in a few months at furthest we will have an air-ship which will without peradventure navigate the great upper ocean.

The inclosed circular will give you a good idea of what the ship will be. This ship, when built will pass over Sacramento in broad daylight, the daily papers being notified before hand of its coming.

Very truly yours, / C. A. SMITH. /  
AN IMMENSE CAPITAL (NY airship company).

#### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) (Sacramento, CA) Record-Union, p. 4.**

HE SAW IT. / A Michigan Bar Boy's Air-Ship Contribution.

A boy at Michigan Bar writes the following under the heading "Strayed Into the Country":

"On the evening of the 27th of November, as the citizens of the quiet mining village of Michigan Bar were enjoying themselves, one of them, who was outdoors, espied a strange light about the size of one of the Interior Development Company's electric lights, floating slowly through the heavens in a northerly direction.

"It was pronounced at once to be the lost airship. It was probably going to locate a claim on the Trilby property."

Salinas D. Journal, 12/2, 2. It is a wonder that the airship should create so much comment on the part of the press. From time immemorial even fools built castles in the air. But perhaps a wise providence kept them still in order that other fools might not break their necks watching their flight.

Oakland Times 12/2,2. And now a man has been found who took a trip on the airship. Perhaps when he clears his head thoroughly with liberal doses of soda water his memory will be better.

San Diego Sun, Dec. 2,1. Oregon inventor goes insane.

2. San Diego had a bright light on its own account Monday night, but it did not rush into print with an airship story, as they do in the north, but simply admitted that the cruiser Philadelphia had gone by and threw a flash-light in this direction. That is one of the differences between San Diego and the northern part of the state.

**1896 December 2 (Wed. eve.) San Francisco Bulletin, p. 1.**

HIS QUICK TRIP / How the San Jose Inventor Met the Airship Man. / They Flew From Bolinas to Honolulu / And the Garden City Man Saw Stars. / When the Flyer Rose from the Beach His Nose Stuck to the Aluminum Floor. /

The eminent scientist and expert dynamiter (unknown)[,] having read that the small irrepressible boy of the land is abroad with the tissue paper petard and the light of Asia[,], determined to remove his airship from the populous precincts of San Francisco county to the smooth beach of Bolinas. There is the forest primeval, the whispering pine and the hemlock, and not even a poet to sing the praises of the winged thing within twenty-five miles.

“Hush,” exclaimed the eminent scientist and bloodthirsty dynamiter, putting his finger to his nose and turning to the man from San Jose with the patent wind-log who was invited to accompany the bashful inventor to Hawaii.

“Sh, I’m on,” replied the man with the patent log. “Nobody spoke.”

“Nay, but what are the wild waves saying, fellow?” angrily asked the eminent scientist (and man of mystery), picking up a sea shell and applying it to his ear.

“Oh, they won’t give up anything, on the [lead],” sharply retorted the patent log man, peering into the port hole of the airship, which great birdlike, streetcar-like, balloon-like, cigar-like craft was tugging restlessly at its anchor chain as if longing to blow out its aluminum skin, moist with the dew of eve, and rise to higher and more congenial altitudes.

“When do we start?” he then added impatiently.

“Step this way, and look out you don’t stub your toes on the doorsill, you might give the lawyers and inkling where we are. I would hate to become involved in litigation; I might never get another chance to fly till after death. But hold—here comes my trusted messenger. He has the latest dispatches from the interior,” spoke the eminent scientist and dynamiter.

“You’ve been discovered in the State of Washington, near Mount Tacoma, and one half hour later were seen floating over Los Angeles,” exclaimed the messenger breathlessly. “They still have you located at San Jose, and if you get away while the Lick telescope is turned on the Santa Clara electric cars you are safe from observation. And, by the way, the friction caused by that run from Tacoma to Los Angeles at the rate of 100 miles a minute melted the butter in the after cabin and fried that round steak. You will not require the services of a cook on your Honolulu trip. Now, shall I return to the stable near Ross Valley and watch for your return and remove the restless kicking mule when I see the color of your flashlight?”

“Yes, begone, and see that the society people all attend the german, for I fear on my coming back I may be discovered,” replied the eminent scientist and reckless dynamiter, brushing the dust off the starboard propeller and trying the self-acting rudder with the tail like a fish and scales like a corner grocery.

The patent log man stepped within the aluminum apartment and drew a long breath. “Condensed air,” he ejaculated.

“Yes, a very necessary thing in these days,” answered the eminent scientist. “People cannot make a living without it. Five thousand pounds pressure to the square inch. One can live a long time on a few [inches] of it, if he has god lungs.—are you on board?”

Before the patent log man could answer his nose struck the floor of the flying machine and remained glued there. He tried to rise, but he could not. He pivoted around on his proboscis for several minutes, tugging with all his strength. On a sudden the floor fell from under him and his head struck the ceiling so hard that all the air was full of airships, with twinkling stars between.

“We have come to a stop,” calmly remarked the eminent scientist.

“What struck me?” indignantly asked the patent log man.

“The floor of the ceiling,” was the answer; “you see we rose at the rate of 500 miles a minute. Ordinarily a man who falls rises again at the rate of about 200 miles a minute. In a prizefight this is

sometimes different, however. You tried to rise, but you had 300 miles per minute against you, and your nose wouldn't come up. When I stopped you got it in the neck—the halt was so sudden.

“What lights were those I saw?” asked the patent-log man, in a dazed sort of way.

“They might have been those of the Farallones, but don't bother about them; I'll show you the sparks of Hawaii in two minutes; there they are now!”

The patent-log man looked beneath him. Thousands of sparkling things were visible. “That's a torchlight procession in honor of the release of Queen Lil,” said the eminent scientist.

After several minutes the eminent scientist and expert dynamiter pulled out a bomb and ruffling up his whiskers, whispered in dreadful tones:

“See this petard? I shall drop this on the first man who discovers my secret! I have another one that I intend to drop on Weyler. I had the drop on the old scoundrel the night before last, but he escaped under a coconut tree.”

The eminent scientist and expert dynamiter said no more. He didn't have time. The bomb suddenly exploded and great darkness followed. When the patent-log man came to he was lying in jail.

“What am I here for?” he asked in a rage.

“Airshipomania,” replied the station-keeper, as he finished writing “drunk and disorderly, no property,” in a large book.

p.4. The next time Mr. Horen of San Jose goes a-flying out over the sea to Honolulu in an airship he should at once, upon coming home, proceed to beat his wife, not because the lady deserves it, nor because that kind of practice is at all to be commended, but to the end of the preservation of that unanimity of assertion on the part of husband and wife which does so much for the promotion of domestic accord. A wife can give no testimony against her husband. That is true. But when the lady says he was sound asleep in bed at a time when he says he was flying toward Hawaii there is at once aroused a grave suspicion of something wrong in the domestic economy of the family. Mr. Horen should look to his diet or, to paraphrase the estimable Mr. Bagnet, he should preserve discipline.

#### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) The Call (San Francisco), p. 14.**

SAW THE AIRSHIP AT CLOSE RANGE / One of the Most Startling Tales Yet Told of the Mystery. / DESCRIBED IT IN DETAIL / Seen by a Son of Professor Gilson of the Normal Training School. / STANFORD BOYS IN THE SWIM / Treated to a View of What They Believe Was the Light of the Midair Cruiser. /

Mystery deep and impenetrable still enshrouds the mysterious client of ex-Attorney-General Hart and his tantalizing and equally mysterious cruisers of the upper air.

From Oakland comes a tale told by the son of Professor Gilson of the Normal Training School that is the most startling yet contributed on the subject. He claims to have seen the aerial wonder at short range and gives what he earnestly asserts is a detailed description of the flier in full flight.

Other interior points also send reports of aerial moving lights which are supposed to belong to some aerial craft or crafts.

"I have heard nothing from the inventor of the airship for some days," said General Hart yesterday, "and from the reports received by The Call I have no doubt he is experimenting in the dry and high altitudes of the interior, as he told me he intended to do." This was all the attorney for the mysterious inventor of the equally mysterious aerial craft had to say on the subject yesterday, though he expects to be able to give some additional interesting information in a few days. /

SAW THE AIRSHIP. / Graphic Tale Told by a Son of Professor Gilson of the Normal Training School.

OAKLAND, Cal., Dec. 1.—Case Gilson, a young electrician of this city, declares that he has seen the airship at close range and is able to describe it.

Case Gilson is a son of Professor Gilson, ex-Superintendent of Schools and principal of the Normal Training-school. His testimony is supported by other young men who saw the strange aerial navigator at the same time.

"The airship was moving very rapidly from the southeast toward Lorin, and not a light was visible," said Gilson. "It was about 1000 or 1500 feet in the air and looked like a great black cigar with a fish-like tail. If it had slide [side?] propellers they were revolving so rapidly that I could not see them. The body was at least a hundred feet long, and attached to it was a triangular tail, one apex being

attached to the main body. The surface of the airship looked as if it were made of aluminum, which exposure to wind and weather had turned dark. I saw all this distinctly, and I am willing to take any oath to the truth of what I say.

"The airship went at a tremendous speed. As it neared Lorin it turned quickly and disappeared in the direction of San Francisco. At half-past 8 we saw it again, when it took about the same direction and disappeared. I have studied the subject of airships to a certain extent and I see no reason why one should not be successful. I know that I was not mistaken about the airship and took a kite for the real thing. It was an airship; of that I am convinced."

Gilson and his friends saw the airship twice during last Thursday evening at 8 and 8:30 o'clock. The skies were perfectly clear, and a strong northwest wind was blowing. The airship was moving rapidly from the southeast toward the north in the teeth of the wind. No light was visible, merely the weird, peculiar body silhouetted against the clear skies. Case Gilson, his brother, and the Petan brothers distinctly saw the strange sight, and Gilson describes its appearance very graphically.

Gilson is at present the only person in Oakland who has openly declared that the machine was visible on a clear night. Its previous appearances have been on cloudy, obscure nights, when persons may have been misled by taking stars for electric lights and clouds for the shadow[s] of an airship. Gilson is also an amateur astronomer and declares that he could not mistake a star or a cloud for an airship.

Percy Drew was another individual favored with a glimpse of the airship. He says it visited Oakland Saturday night. It then carried a red light and moved with its usual quickness. Both young men agree that the ship was of enormous size, measuring at least 100 feet in length. /

OVER THE CAMPUS. / Skeptical Students See the Alleged Cruiser of the Upper Air.  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, Cal., Dec. 1.--Those mysterious lights supposed to be a part of the airship were visible to several students on the campus here last night about 10:30 o'clock, and their excitement was intense. Most of those who saw the lights sweep across the sky have heretofore been most skeptical about the existence of any such creation as an airship, and it is amusing to note their uncertainty, now that their own eyes have witnessed the peculiar lights.

Among those who saw the inexplicable lights are R.S. Garfield, C.F. Aaron and H.H. Hindry. Ordinarily the announcement by some of the students that they had seen the airship would be received with a wink, or a counter remark on "wheels that needed oiling," a comment on the virtue of temperance; but Hindry, Garfield and Aaron are reputed to be little given to practical joking and absolutely free from any other characteristics that might make their story incredible.

Hindry was rather averse to talking about what he had seen, but as it had somehow reached the ears of all the students, he thought best to give an account of it. In substance he stated that he was looking out of his window when some one called his attention to the peculiar antics of one of the lights in the heavens, resembling a very large star or planet. "I watched the light pointed out and thought it was a planet at first, but when the darn thing began to rise and sink and to shoot rapidly from one side to the other I knew enough about astronomy to know that it was no star or planet. I rubbed my eyes to make sure I really saw what I thought I saw, but when I opened them it was still there and continued its dartings about for some minutes, though constantly receding and growing dimmer.

"It was high in the air and apparently many miles off when we saw it, and was going in a northerly direction toward San Francisco. I'll swear I don't know whether it was a real airship or a 'fake.' I'm inclined to think it might have been a balloon, but it moved in such a peculiar manner."

R.S. Garfield also saw the light, and fully corroborated Hindry's account of its appearance and motions. "The light was in a part of the heavens where there was no other large star, and it was so noticeable that I watched it, thinking it a planet and wondering which one it could be. Then it commenced to rise and sink, and a little later flew off at a tangent as though struck by a gust of wind. I called up my roommate and let several other fellows know about it, and we watched it until it faded away in the distance. I wouldn't bet that it was an airship, but if it was not it was a most ingenious contrivance and gave a very powerful light."

C.F. Aaron is quite communicative about it, and is sure he saw, if not the airship, at least the same light that has been exciting the public for two weeks past. Neither he nor any of the other spectators claim they could distinguish any form above or about the light with which it might be connected. All are hopeful that it may be visible again soon to all, for they are receiving an undue amount of guying at the hands of their more skeptical friends. /

IN MERCED'S SKY. / The San Joaquin Valley Treated to a Sight of the Aerial Lights.

MERCED, Cal., Dec. 1.—Merced was treated to a visit last night by the airship that has been provoking so much discussion. A bright, red light appeared in the sky to the west of the town about 8:15 o'clock. Observers at first thought that it was a particularly bright star, but as they watched it the light grew larger and brighter and other lights showed themselves on the mysterious visitor. It came in from the west, circled to the north over the town, and seemed to rest in its flight about over the center of the business portion of Merced.

Among the observers of the phenomenon were T.M. Edmunds (the Wells-Fargo agent) and J.B. Olcese (a prominent Merced merchant). Mr. Olcese noticed it as he was on his road home, and called the members of a dramatic club, who were rehearsing in the opera-house, to see the lights. At that time the flying wonder was headed for the north and was rapidly passing out of sight, the watchers keeping it in sight until it had grown to be quite a small speck in the darkness.

Some skeptics scouted the idea of its being an airship, and maintained that it was a large star, but the light was too large and brilliant for that. Others stoutly declared that it was a balloon sent up by some practical joker, but the light was visible too long for such an explanation. What served to attract the greatest amount of attention was the peculiar quality of the light, which did not present the characteristics of the ordinary electric light or of the gas lights that people are accustomed to. Many who were inclined to be skeptical beforehand are now firm believers in the existence of this wonderful and mysterious visitant. /

ABOVE HIGH MOUNTAINS. / Two Mysterious Lights Over Robinson's Ferry, Calaveras County.

About the time the airship is said to have taken its flight to the southern part of the state lights were seen over several localities in the course indicated. According to W.H.H. Hart the inventor desired to test his ship in the higher altitudes. Whether he went as far east as the foothills of the Sierras is a matter of conjecture. However, P. F. Perryman of Calaveras County claims to have seen the lights of the mystery of the sky, for he sends the following letter to The Call:

Robinson's Ferry, Calaveras County, / Nov. 26, 1896.

Five miners here and myself last night saw the two lights, which we believe were attached to an airship. The one light in advance in the direction in which they were traveling convinced me that it was of an electrical character. It would be steady for a while and then die out. The other light, which seemed to be of a different character, containing more orange rays, remained equidistant from the other in its career through the air. Both lights oscillated up and down in passing across our vision in a direction from left to right looking down the river. These lights were a considerable distance off and seemed to be at a considerable elevation. They remained in view but a very few minutes, passing out of sight behind the hills forming the river canyon walls on the right looking down stream. You may use this letter as you please, as it is no fake and I am willing to make affidavit to the facts contained herein. P. F. PERRYMAN.

p. 7. THE AIRSHIP. (adv.)

Which mysteriously floated over this City and vicinity for some time was seen rising at 7:30 o'clock last evening by a multitude of at least 10,000 people, corner Twelfth and Market streets. It was a sight never to be forgotten.

On the side of the ship in bold letters were the words "Smoke Mild Half Million Club Cigars." The navigator turned its prow toward the Union Iron Works, whence it returned at 9 P.M.

Messrs. Adelsdorfer & Brandenstein were offered a sum for it quite in excess of their expectations by the representative of the Cuban revolutionists. Cubans can appreciate a good article, and the Half Million Club is the mildest and best cigar in this market. To-night the airship will make another ascent from Twelfth and Market streets at 8 o'clock. It is worth seeing.

SF Chronicle, 12/2/5. Not an Airship. / Only a Meteor That Plunged Hissing into the Seething Sea.

New York, Dec. 1.—The German oil-tank steamer Wilkommen, which arrived to-day from Dantzig bringing 6,000 bags of best sugar reports that shortly after midnight on the 17<sup>th</sup> a huge meteor shot across the sky from the southeast to the northwest and plunged hissing into the sea some distance ahead of the Wilkommen. Almost immediately afterward a huge sea like a tidal wave broke over the steamer's bow and swept aft, luckily doing slight damage.

p. 6. The San Jose man who described a trip in an airship which lasted only one night and yet included a voyage to Honolulu and return holds the belt as the champion liar of the present contest in

falsehood and exaggeration. It takes a fine nerve to reel off a story about a 4,000-mile round trip in a single night. Nothing like this has been done since the days of the "Arabian Nights."

**1896 December 2 (Wed.) San Francisco Examiner, p.**

PIERCING THE VOID, OR ON TO HONOLULU. / A Story in One Chapter Narrating the Marvelous Adventures of John Horen. / Being a Faithful Account of a Trip by Night Amongst the Clouds and Over the Sea. / TO WHICH IS ADDED A SEQUEL. / The Last Making It Clear That It Remains Easier to Talk Than to Fly, Even in California. /

SAN JOSE, December 1.—"There is nothing gives a man such spirits" wrote Byron in "Don Juan," "leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry, as going at full speed." There must be something in it, after all, for even now, three days subsequent to his return, Mr. J.A. Horen sparkles with such life as even his most intimate friends knew not that he could manifest.

His return from Honolulu, that is to say. As the bird flies, the Hawaiian capital is more than 2,000 miles from San Francisco, and as Mr. Horen is a busy man and couldn't afford to while away much of his time voyaging to and from the Summerland of the far Pacific, he got aboard one of the five hundred and eighty-seven airships floating hither and thither out here in the West, made the round trip in twenty-four hours and is feeling very nicely, thank you.

Mr. Horen is chief electrician of the San Jose Electric Improvement Company, and is well known as an expert in his line. If it be wondered how he came to be the guest of the inventor of the airship in which he flew away as on the wings of a dove—for as such guest he traveled—let it be known that he is an inventor on his own account. It is all very clear, as he explains it. A sparking apparatus patented by him was purchased by the airship man for use on a gas engine. The contrivance declined to work properly, so the San Francisco firm that had sold it sent a messenger to Horen telling him "a mining man" who had bought a gas engine had experienced trouble with the sparking attachment and offering him \$50 to go and "fix the thing."

Last Friday, according to Horen, he journeyed to San Francisco, where he met the "mining man," who proved to be forty or forty-five years of age and of heavy build. He didn't look a bit like the inventor General Hart has introduced, nor did he move about in an atmosphere of somberness and pain that brought up thoughts of Cuba. On the contrary, he was talkative and Jovial and argued strongly in favor of peaceful settlement of international disputes.

Nevertheless, there were two points in common between him and General Hart's unknown—both had dark eyes and both declined positively to give either name or address.

The stranger took Mr. Horen to a train and they slow-coached it for about fifty miles northeast of the metropolis. Then they traveled on horseback to a lonely spot.

Where the secret [sacred?] owl, on pinions gray, / Breaks from the rustling boughs.

The destination was reached about nightfall. Greatly to his surprise the electrician from San Jose found himself in front of a structure which he afterwards found to be 163 feet in length, 52 feet wide and 23 feet high. It was shaped somewhat like one of Mr. Vining's best Market-street cars, but its arching sides, which came together at the prow like the bow of a ship, glistened in the semi-darkness and proved to be made of aluminum. Near the bottom was a row of curtained windows like the windows of a car, and a door with four folding steps. At either end was a propeller, sixteen or twenty feet in diameter, and in front was a "telescopic apron," whatever that may be, "which could be adjusted to raise or lower the great structure in its course."

"This," said the "mining man," as he struck a match, "this, sir, is my airship."

"The vessel," Mr. Horen explains, "is steered to right or left by the propellers. On top of the vessel is a bridge, running fore and aft, but I didn't learn what it is used for. Within, the cabin is ten feet high. The windows seemed made of mica. On each side of the cabin are fifteen double seats. Forty tons is the carrying capacity of the ship. The propeller shafts run directly through the vessel, the motive power being supplied by machinery concealed within a box. This box is about 4 1/2 feet high, 5 or six feet long and about 5 feet wide. I couldn't say what was in the box, but the motive power seemed to be some sort of gas."

About [ ]:15 o'clock, Mr. Horen having worked awhile on the sparking apparatus, and the darkness having grown intense, the inventor called out something which might have been: "What, ho! let the portcullis fall!" and away they flew.

Within half an hour San Francisco had been left behind.

At the bow stood the inventor, his hand upon a rudder. Near him were three gauges. One indicated 1,000, another 360 and the third 150. Whether motor pressure or revolutions were thus indicated Mr. Horen could not make out. This may have been due to the dimness of the light, for the cabin was only faintly illuminated. And, by the by, it is a fact somewhat discouraging to those who have repeatedly seen the ship skimming about all brilliant in the heavens that the craft displays no light that could possibly be seen from the earth when she gets above the housetops.

Mr. Horen states that the ship sped on and on over the sea, and as he was dozing in an early morning nap the inventor shook him by the collar and asked:

"Do you see those lights down there?"

"I do," replied the electrician.

"Well, then," said the inventor, "know that we are immediately above the city of Honolulu."

"Lord!" exclaimed the man from San Jose. "How I do like airships!"

They circled about the Hawaiian group until they felt sufficiently refreshed by the balmy climate and then made for California, arriving at their starting point at dusk of Saturday.

Which was doing pretty well for an airship that was only a beginner.

Mr. Horen was told by the sky captain that he guessed he wouldn't make any trips for three or four days, because the bearings of the stern propeller had heated and new boxing would have to be put in.

But by Sunday, the captain thought, everything would be in trim for a neat little pleasure jaunt, and Mr. Horen was invited to [take] a day off and run over to New York. He says he accepted the offer, inasmuch as he could take a turn on Broadway and get back in time to look after his usual Tuesday engagements.

To-day the electrician is having his share of work explaining. He does it with the utmost gravity and says he is willing to make affidavit to all he has said concerning the experience.

San Jose is puzzled. /

MRS. HOREN EXPLAINS. / And the Gas Escapes From Another Airship.

John A. Horen, the San Jose electrician, who has given certain good people the hope that yet a little while and they could lunch, run up four steps, shut a door, pull a lever, fly over to a soiree at Blenheim Castle and be back for breakfast, has his home at 249 Stevenson street, in this city.

His wife, on being told last night of his wonderful tale, laughingly explained that Mr. Horen is a star practical joker and was having some sport at some one's expense.

She added that at the time the gentleman says he was hovering over Honolulu he was doing some of the soundest sleeping of his life, and not in an airship, but in his bedroom, Stevenson street, San Francisco. He came to this city on Friday, remained at his home until Monday and then returned to San Jose.

This seems to leave General Hart's unknown in his accustomed position of vantage.

[Illus.: THE AIRSHIP IN WHICH JOHN HOREN VOYAGED. / From a pencil sketch by the San Jose electrician who made the round-trip run from San Jose to Hawaii without leaving Stevenson street.]

p. 1. They May Build the Airship. / Organization of the Pacific Company with 20 Millions Capital... / Mysterious Corporation of Which Wall Street Has Not the Slightest Knowing.

### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) San Jose Herald, p. 1.**

A PRACTICAL JOKER. / John Horen and His Voyage on an Airship. / His Wife Says He Made the Trip While in Bed Sound Asleep.

The story published in a local paper of this city about John Horen's trip in an airship to Honolulu and return in two days is explained by the man's wife in San Francisco.

The yarn was too gauzy to be believed and everyone declared it a fake at the time. That their opinions were correct is borne out by the following article in this morning's Examiner:

"John A. Horen, the San Jose electrician, who has given certain good people the hope that yet a little while and they could lunch, run up four steps, shut a door, pull a lever, fly over to a soiree at Blenheim Castle and be back for breakfast, has his home at 249 Stevenson street, in this city.

“His wife, on being told last night of his wonderful tale, laughingly explained that Mr. Horen is a star practical joker and was having some sport at someone’s expense.

“She added that at the time the gentleman says he was hovering over Honolulu he was doing some of the soundest sleeping of his life, and not in an airship, but in his bedroom, Stevenson street, San Francisco. He came to this city on Friday, remained at his home until Monday and then returned to San Jose.

“This seems to leave General Hart’s unknown in his customary position of vantage.”

(San Jose) Evening News, 12/2. Lost His Head / The Air Ship Fake Drives a Man Insane (Portland, Ore.)

12/3//2. Airship inventor in Haywards.

12/16/2. Lewis insane over airships in San Diego.

### **1896 December 2 (Wed. morn.) (Santa Barbara, Calif.) Morning Press, p. 7.**

The airship has found local adherents at the San Julian Rancho. Night before last Mr. H. Dibblee, when in front of the ranch house, observed a peculiar, undulating, iridescent light. He called the remainder of the household, among them Miss Bell, our informant, and on the horizon was still visible the phenomenon, which presently disappeared in the distance, travelling at a high rate of speed. The story is as well authenticated as any in the Call and speaks for itself

### **1896 December 2 (Wed. morn.) Stockton Daily Independent, p. 3.**

AIRSHIP CRANKS. / They Still Pass Current Through the State.

The air ship has not yet gone out of existence as the reports seen in the daily papers show, but the strangest of all dispatches is the one which came yesterday from San Jose, where they asserted that they had found a man who went to San Francisco one evening and took an air ship voyage as far as Honolulu and back the same night.

The report came down from the mountains yesterday that the air ship had been started from San Francisco for the purpose of bringing the San Francisco morning papers to [Sonora] on Sunday morning, but that at 2 o’clock this morning neither ship nor papers had arrived. According to some of the papers of the State none are reported as having seen the ship unless the statement is made and sworn to before a notary.

Most people throughout the State are making fun of the phenomenon, though some profess to believe what is told them.

Of the ship and the reports regarding the same the Oakland Tribune has the following to say:

“There is one confirmed skeptic in regard to the airship. He is Professor Burckhalter of the Chabot Observatory. His time has been taken up lately by persons who are anxious to view the aerial machine through the telescope. Many persons have advanced the theory that the airship is a clever advertising dodge of some gas company that is trying to boom a new kind of illuminating gas. Professor Burckhalter laughs at this theory as well as others.

“If there were any airship I would turn the telescope on it, you may be sure,” said Professor Burckhalter today. “What people have been taking for the brilliant electric light of an airship is nothing more or less than one of the two planets, Mars or Venus. People want to believe in the airship and it is astonishing the way they deceive themselves. Venus is as brilliant as an arc light and does move very slowly through the heavens. Anyone who pays a little attention to the heavens might be deceived into believing it an electric light gleaming through the clouds. Last Saturday night when there was such excitement over the airship, what people were looking at was the planet Mars, which appeared very brilliant that evening.

“The theories in regard to the airship are pure imagination. If there were any strange objects in the heavens we would certainly know of it, and all these theories are, I believe, pure fakes.”

### **1896 December 2 (Wed.) (Woodland, CA) The Mail of Woodland, p. 2.**

Saw the Visitor.

Robert Lee of the Mail, says that he saw the mysterious aerial visitor, or airship, passing over Woodland Monday night about 10 o'clock. His description tallies with that given by several others.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) Anaheim Weekly Gazette, p. 1.**

THAT AIRSHIP. / AWFUL EFFECT OF THANKSGIVING TURKEY UPON AN INSANE EDITOR.  
/ From the Santa Ana Blade.

The identical airship that waved its icy hand at Sacramento and gave the marble heart to Placerville and which set all San Francisco agog as it soared over the Twin Peaks of the metropolis, passed us by last night.

Speeding through the heavens at a breakneck pace and with a fearful disregard for any of the fixed planets which might be in its way, this great unknown thing with eyes of fire and tongue of flame was seen high in the air twixt the hours of 11 and 12 Thursday eve.

Its flight was marked by a trail of twinkling lights. And so low did it fly that the hum of its hundreds of wheels could be distinctly heard as it rolled and bowled along in a trackless sea of virgin ether.

Many there be who saw the lights of this nocturnal and aerial rover. Beatrice Harriden's famous ship was nowhere in point of commotion created. The testimony of the more credulous eye witnesses can be secured to the end that they heard singing and instrumental music aboard the queer traveler which chose so uncommon a path and such unseemly hours for its trip from north to south.

All unannounced it came straight out of the banks of space above Anaheim as the last minutes of a happy Thanksgiving were being ticked away. Only late travelers abroad, while the city lay sleeping, saw the strange visitor. From the north it came sailing along, rising and falling in an unsteady but rapid course to the southland.

It was full ten minutes after it hove in sight before the last rays of its electric brilliancy faded away in the southern skies. When directly overhead the shape of the ship was easily discernible. It resembled a huge Silkwood cigar. From either end extended propellers and from the sides light paddle wheels. As from time to time the rays of powerful electric lights from within played upon the outside of the flying affair it was evident the sides were either aluminum or steel, they glistened so.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) (Auburn, Calif.) Placer County Republican, p. 3.**

Ships in Their Heads. /

Auburn has been no exception to the cities and towns throughout the State that have fallen victims to the air ship craze, which threatened to unbalance the reason of many good citizens, and leave them hopeless maniacs, craning their necks to discover the alleged aerial wonder. The subject, for the time, has been an all-absorbing one, and many of the inhabitants have been constantly on the watch for the sky ship.

In order that there should be no disappointment, several of the local scientists arranged two large paper balloons one night last week, and after stationing parties in different localities in order that there should be no mistake in discovering the famous "air ship," the balloons were sent heavenward, and immediately the cry went up that the air ship was passing and a large number of people witnessed the flying phenomenon.

The wind was unfavorable to carry the "air ship" over the more thickly populated part of Auburn, but enough saw it to be convinced that it was a reality. One man declared that he could distinguish voices, and could discern the rays of the searchlight on board. Another described it as having large canvas wings, and various other graphic descriptions were given. There was no little surprise, when it was learned next day that the "air ship" was nothing more nor less than two large tissue paper balloons. Such was the air ship that passed over Auburn, and it is probable that this joke has been perpetrated all over the State, which has given rise to the voluminous newspaper articles and the nightly searching of the skies for the ship that never turned up.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) Daily Californian (Bakersfield), p. 2.**

There are about 200 people in this town who are ready to take their perpendicular oaths that they saw that airship, or something like it, in the heavens last night.

p. 7. Most of the airships that are now being watched of nights sink below the horizon with the certain regularity of the twinkling star.

4, 7. The airship did not venture out last night, or at least it was not seen. Probably it is taking a trip to Honolulu.

Dec. 2, 4. Horen.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) Daily Colusa (Calif.) Sun, p. 3c.**

COUNTY NEWS.

PRINCETON, Dec. 3—Our citizens were treated with a visit from the airship last night. About 9 o'clock a strange light was observed in the heavens in the vicinity of Maxwell. It kept getting closer and closer and finally sailed over our town and was soon lost to view, traveling directly east. This is no fake. While we do not pretend to say it was an airship, we do say it was not a star, as several of our best citizens will testify. It is certainly a strange object whatever it may be. It traveled rather fast and at times seemed to rise and after sailing on for a while would lower itself but always keeping in an easterly direction until at last it disappeared in the direction of Oroville.

The fishermen say the airship landed at the beach at Pacific Grove. W.H.H. Hart says his client is out navigating the air.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) (Eureka, Calif.) Daily Humboldt Standard, p. 1.**

Ferndale News.

Several citizens of Ferndale last Thanksgiving evening witnessed a light in the air, similar to the one described as having been seen over other parts of the state, and supposed to have been an air-ship. It was first seen in an easterly direction from town, and was moving northward with steady motion, except when raised or lowered. After traveling in this direction for some distance it turned off at an angle easterly until lost from sight. Those who saw it will hazard no opinion as to what it might be, but all agree that the light was different from anything they had ever before witnessed, and scout the theory that it was a meteor.—Oracle.

**1896 December 3 (Fri.) Fresno (Calif.) Semi-Weekly Expositor, p. 7.**

IS THERE AN AIR SHIP? / An old Friend of the Supposed Inventor Talks. / HE CLAIMS THE FLYING MACHINE EXISTS. / The World Will Know of It in a Few Weeks—A San Jose Citizen Claims to Have Been Aboard the Aerial Craft. / From Tuesday's Daily.

"If I was to tell you that Dr. Benjamin and myself are old friends and that I have known of his airship for months, the people around here would at once say 'Ah, yes. The widows' friend is giving us another of his stories.' But I do tell you the airship is a fact."

The speaker was I.N. Thomas of Visalia, and he was in Fresno on other business than looking after airships.

"Now listen to me," said Mr. Thomas. "Don't quote me by name because if you do people will never believe you, but I am honest in what I say. There is an airship in existence that will fly. I know it. How I know is none of your business or that of anybody else just now. Of course all sorts of stories have been written about the machine, some of them true, but most of them false. However, I tell you there is an airship, a practical machine, and no matter how much joshing the people give me, I tell you that this time I'm not joking. Benjamin has an airship. I might have taken a ride on it, but I'll admit that I am a little shy on new inventions, especially when they fly and the breaking of a crank or a wing

would give the passengers a long drop. If the people will wait a week or two they will find out I am not joking. The airship has not been seen in this valley, to my knowledge, nor is it coming just now, but it is in use in around Oakland and will continue to fly in that neighborhood until all the mechanism is perfected.

"I tell you again," insisted Mr. Thomas, "that I am in dead earnest and no joke. The airship has been invented, and in less than six month from this time the world will know of it."

Mr. Thomas's statement was made with apparent earnestness, and knowing it was to be published, the gentleman iterated and reiterated that he was not joking. As to Mr. Thomas and Dr. Benjamin being old friends the fact is well known, and it is reasonable to suppose if the latter had an invention such as is claimed, he would probably have told his old friend about it.

The latest airship story comes by telegraph and reads as follows:

(Champion airship story of the season) /

The Visalia Times of yesterday tells the following airship story as related by our versatile mayor. The Times says:

The airship has been captured...he has captured.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Georgetown (Calif.) Gazette, p. 3.**

N. Wentworth saw the sky-ship from Auburn Wednesday night last week, and Mrs. Jackson and others saw the mysterious light here last Thursday night about 10 o'clock. It was visible about half a minute, moving in a northeasterly course. At times two lights were visible.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Livermore (CA) Echo, p. 3.**

LOCAL ECHOES. /

That Livermore has not entirely escaped the airship craze was evident on Wednesday evening of last week, when a large proportion of First street people stood for more than an hour in the middle of the street intently watching a bright star that was visible at the time in the eastern firmament.

Los Angeles Times, 12/3, p. 7. All Along the Line.

It has come! We said it would. That influx of jokes and joshes anent our own air-ship, which has been skimming the skies o' nights hereabouts for as much as some time. The funny men of the East have sharpened their pencils while preparing to heap contumely upon us. First in the field is the Chicago Record. It casts a gibe at San Francisco by saying that the city by the bay "claims the honor of having produced a really practicable flying machine," and then remarks that "credibility is lent the report by the fact that any one who has been there for one season knows that there are really not enough ways to get out of that town." Next!

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Marysville Daily Democrat, p. .**

SAW THE AIRSHIP. / A Sutter County Farmer Who Gazed Upon the Winged Puzzle.

E. T. Schellenger, a well-known resident of Sutter county, who resides with his family on a farm three miles east of Sutter City, has a reputation for honesty, integrity, and veracity that has never yet been questioned. Therefore, when it is announced that Mr. Schellenger's name is to be added to the list of those who have gazed upon that winged puzzle of the air, the airship, his acquaintances, who heretofore have been skeptical concerning the muchly mooted rumors will begin to think there is something at the bottom of it all.

To his friends in Yuba City and Marysville to-day Mr. Schellenger related a tale of a flying machine which he feels positive passed over Sutter county last evening. When found by a Democrat reporter on D street he was the center of an interested group, the members of which were plying all sorts of questions and receiving earnest, straightforward replies.

"About sundown last evening," said Mr. Schellenger, "my wife and son were riding along the county road between Sutter City and my home, when the boy saw a bright light of unusual hue moving

slowly along the northeastern sky and coming in the direction of our place. He remarked to his mother than he believed that it must be the airship of which they had read so much, but my wife paid little heed, and no more was thought of it.

“An hour later when the family was seated about the supper table the hired man appeared at the dining room door and announced that there was a fire in the neighborhood. I told him to take the field glasses and try to locate it. He obeyed and had proceeded but a few steps outside the door when he shouted lustily for us all to come quick. It was then that I saw the mysterious traveler in the air. At first it appeared as a collection of lights that constantly changed from a bright [ ] to a blue color, and when I looked at the object more closely I could discern a revolving fan in the midst of the lights. The machine was probably half a mile away when we first viewed it and did not seem to be any higher than the tree-tops. It gained great speed and seemed to be under the control of someone. Once it swerved to one side, as if it were going to swoop down upon the earth, but it soon rose again and disappeared in the sky over the Humphrey and Wadsworth places, and in the direction of Knight’s Landing. You may believe there was something there,” concluded Mr. Schellenger.

#### STRANGE LIGHTS IN THE SKY. / Some Marysville People Who Have Witnessed Them.

Several persons in this city saw strange lights in the sky last night. While they did not see huge pinions like those of a condor flashing in the glare of the lamps they are positive that some animate or inanimate thing with a light attached moved across the heavens.

Will J. Greely, who works in the Buckeye Mill and resides on F street, not only saw the moving lights but he called upon his neighbors to witness them, that his statements of the morrow might not lack verification. Charles Brown, the drayman, and Mrs. Greely and Mrs. Brown watched the light speed across the firmament in the direction of Woodland and nothing can make them believe that their eyes were deceived. Of course they are as skeptical as everybody else about airships and wish to be counted as only seeing strange lights in the heavens that had an oscillating motion and seemed to be under the control of some one. It was about 10 o’clock when they located this light, which had attained a great height.

Last Saturday evening about 7 o’clock Mrs. E. B. Gray, who resides on H street, watched a strange light that moved across the city in her neighborhood only a few hundred feet above. It hovered about for nearly fifteen minutes and then shot up and away.

Robert Boyd, bookkeeper for White, Cooley & Cutts, and his brother, Eugene, saw the same sort of light in the vicinity of the convent about the same hour Monday evening.

#### 1896 December 3 (Th.) Merced (Calif.) Star, p. 3.

##### THE AIRSHIP. /

The manipulator of the much-discussed airship, whoever he may be, has at last taken in Merced in the course of his nocturnal flights, and there are many firm believers in the existence of the wonder, who were skeptical previous to Monday night.

About 8:30 Monday night a very bright red light was seen approaching Merced from the west. The light rapidly grew larger and brighter, until coming nearly over the town the visitor veered around describing a large circle in the air and as rapidly disappeared, going almost directly north. During the time it was making the circle observers noted three large lights, which merged into one as it started off on the northward course.

Speculation was rife as to the nature of the strange visitant. Some skeptics could not be convinced and insisted that some practical joker had sent up a balloon with a light attached to it, nor would they change their belief when enthusiastic watchers pointed out that whatever it was, it was going at a high rate of speed directly against the wind. The majority of those who saw the wonder are firmly convinced that the airship is now a settled fact and that Merced’s aerial visitor was the invention that has been so much discussed of late.

(Modesto) Daily Evening News, 12/3/p.4. Portland—Herne goes crazy over airships.

Oakland Tribune, Dec. 3, p. 4. The air ship is still exploited in some of the San Francisco papers. New witnesses are brought forward who have seen the ship at midnight. The biggest fool thus far is the man

who told the story about going to Honolulu and back in an air ship. When an air ship other than a balloon performs a journey under complete control of a hundred miles, there will be some better evidence than anything that has thus far been produced.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) National City (Calif.) News, p. 2.**

LOCAL MENTION.

—A large meteor was seen passing over this city last Friday night.

p4. As might have been expected from such a machine as the alleged successful airship of a San Francisco lawyer, it has succeeded in raising the wind in that city, but nothing else.

Nevada City Daily Transcript, Dec. 3,3. Got 'Em Bad./

Down in Los Angeles they have it even worse than in Sacramento. One of the papers in speaking of the appearance of an alleged airship says that "this is an occasion for deep thought."

Dec. 5,3. Beats the Airship (shower of birds in La.)

**1896 December 3 (Th.) Oroville (Calif.) Register, p. 2.**

Air Ship at Forbestown.

Harry P. Stow was in town yesterday from Forbestown and said that one of his most reliable and trustworthy men at the Goldbank mine, Thos. E. Goyne, was positive that he saw the air ship on Sunday evening.

It was a little after 7 o'clock when Mr. Goyne saw the bright light carried at the bow of "Aerial," and after watching it a moment observed that it rose and fell and did not remain stationary like a star. He ran into the house and called Mrs. Anson, who came out to satisfy herself and she was so convinced that she called the Rev. Mr. Kiest, who studied the floating light attentively.

Then Mr. Goyne ran down into town and in a few moments half the people in Forbestown were straining their eyes and craning their necks noting the position and the movements of the mysterious moving light. It seemed to have a wave-like or oscillating movement and this was observed by fully 100 people.

Mr. Stow did not see the light himself, but said the gentleman who first observed it felt confident that it was the mysterious visitor that has been floating over the Sacramento valley.

Sam's Air Ship.

Sam Marks has surely caught the air ship fever for yesterday he was busily engaged in working at a model of a new machine that was evidently intended to sail through the air like the man on the flying trapeze. He claimed it was only a China Devil machine but we don't believe either the Chinese or the Devil ever saw a similar machine and we take it for granted that it is a model of a new air ship or at least a flying machine.

Keep watch for the next day or two and see if you see anything of a queer form flying overhead just after dark.

Oroville Register, 12/3/p.2. A WONDERFUL METAL. / Is It Used in the Newly Discovered Air Ship.

It will be remembered that some years ago a man discovered a wonderful metal in Pine Nut, Nevada. This peculiar metal was contained in clay and the man accidentally discovered it by using some of the clay for a back to his stove. Some hours after building a fire in the stove he found that the back had disappeared and in place of it was a clear white metal with scarcely any weight to it.

Now the man who discovered and used that metal was in Oroville yesterday. In fact he has been here a number of days. He does not wish his name published but we met him and talked with him for fifteen or twenty minutes. We do not know of course whether he has anything to do with this mysterious air ship or not, but if there was any truth in the report of the wonderful metal discovery, it is possible that he has kept the secret and used the new metal in constructing this wonderful floating ship.

(Quincy) Plumas National-Bulletin, Dec. 3, p.3.

Airships have been seen in the Sacramento sky, and during the next 30 days the chicken in Josephine County, Oregon, with \$1.38 in coarse grain gold in its crop, and the hemlock roots in Skagit, Washington, yielding visible gold in their ashes, should be heard from. All three stories were due November 15. The Yuma, Arizona, white gold that would sell for \$24 an ounce is very late in reporting this year.—Mining and Scientific Press.

The Airship Explained. / The following from the Chicago "Herald" is submitted as an explanation of the nature and attractiveness of the late airship phenomenon in this State:

An autumn day, / A sunny sky, / A hill that is steep and dusty: / A bloomer girl, / A shining wheel, / A wind both strong and gusty. / A sudden breeze, / A bloomer filled, / A rise with naught to guide her; / A soaring maid, / A lonely road, / A wheel without a rider.

p.4. A couple of planets shining in the blue overhead and a hot-air balloon with a lantern attached, let loose by a practical joker, can do wonders in convincing the intelligent people of two cities that there is a real ship whizzing about in the evening sky. Last night, belief in the Oroville airship sank when Venus went down in the West, but it arose again when Jupiter came up in the East. The supposition was that the marvelous craft had circumnavigated the globe from West to East and was coming up on the other side.—Oakland Enquirer.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Riverside (Calif.) Daily Enterprise, p. 3.**

INDIO'S NEW AIRSHIP / Will Set Sail in Almost One Month. / A Trip Will Be Made From a Desert Point to Riverside Via San Jacinto and Murrieta. /

For some weeks past the question as to whether or not a mysterious air ship has been floating around over the northern citrus belt, has been the all-absorbing topic of discussion up this way, and as yet the matter seems as far from real solution, as when first broached.

As a matter of fact the people down this way have cared very little whether their northern cousins had seen an air ship or not, and when they learn that Riverside county is soon to be the scene of a real test of a real air ship, they will care less as to the northern claim.

The Enterprise has it on good authority that an airship, that will fly, is in process of completion at the energetic but quiet town of Indio and that it is the inventor's intention to make a trial trip within a few days.

The inventor of the ship is none other than Constable J. Smelser Westerfield. He has been quietly at work on the ship for some months and he informed a few of his friends, while in the city the other day, that it was bound to be a great success. Mr. Westerfield takes no stock in the claim that an airship has been seen up north. He says the report is a fake, and that his airship will be the first successful venture in that line. It is Westerfield's intention, if he is ready in time, to come to this city on the trial trip, via San Jacinto, Murrieta and Corona, with a view to taking on as passengers, Supervisors Shaver, Thompson and Compton, and bring them to town for the next meeting of the Board.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Salinas (Calif.) Index, p. 1.**

That Air Ship Again.

A large, spherical body with scintillating lights, high up in the sky and majestically sailing over these benighted regions where Monterey and Pacific Grove are supposed to lie was observed by a dozen people on the streets of Salinas about 7 o'clock last night. The word was quickly passed along the street and soon there were many dozens of men anxious to catch a glimpse of the aerial vessel. A gentleman talking through the telephone to Pacific Grove was told to wait as the operator in that town wanted to see the airship. The vision lasted about fifteen minutes and then disappeared. There is no question about its being an airship because there are any number of credible witnesses ready to swear they saw it.

p. 2: Horen.

That airship business was a godsend to the great San Francisco dailies, as it filled in a gap between election and the holidays.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) San Francisco Bulletin, p. 4.**

THEY DO THINGS BETTER IN OREGON. /

A Portland dispatch says that a man who had placed too much credence in the stories of the California airship has been committed to an insane asylum. The authorities of Oregon evidently do not allow citizens the latitude in the indulgence of eccentricities that are permitted in California. The habit of taking fakirs seriously may detract somewhat from the gaiety of nations, but it adds to the well-being of communities. One trouble with practical jokers is that they seldom know at what point to stop. They are apt to continue to shake the skeleton of a joke after the spirit has passed from it. Sometimes they even imagine they are objects of interest while their friends are debating whether or not the time has arrived to order them to the padded cell. The Oregon method of dealing with lunatics meets hearty approval in this State. We are here somewhat too easy with freaks and criminals. We allow a craze to wear itself out. Meantime the patience of the community is sorely tried.

p.4. Barring the fact of a patent inability to fly, the airship which came to grief out on Twin Peaks seems to have answered admirably the purpose for which it was designed. It hurt nobody, and made a newspaper sensation for a day.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) The Call (San Francisco), pp.1, 9.**

THE AIRSHIP DESCRIBED BY FISHERMEN / Say That It Landed on the Beach Near Pacific Grove. / SEEN AT SHORT RANGE. / The Men Assert That They Conversed With the Three Aeronauts. / ABOUT SIXTY FEET IN LENGTH / The "Call" Correspondents Will Visit the Place To-Day for Corroborative Evidence. /

According to the testimony of two fishermen of Pacific Grove, Monterey County, an airship landed on the beach yesterday about fifteen miles north of that place and they held a conversation with and dined with the aeronauts. The fishermen described the airship, which they say they viewed from a distance of fifty yards and asserted that it is about sixty feet long and made of metal.

The Call correspondent, who interviewed the fishermen states that they have the reputation of being truthful and responsible toilers of the sea. However he will today visit the place where the airship is said to have landed. If the fishermen's story be true the aeronauts will surely have left behind some evidence of their visit.

W.H.H. Hart, the attorney for the inventor, stated yesterday that he had not heard of his client recently, but he believes that he is still navigating the sky somewhere over the southern part of the State.

A letter received by The Call from five residents of Watertown gives the information that they saw an airship pass over their locality on the 29th ult. bound apparently to the north. /

NEAR PACIFIC GROVE. / Two Fishermen Say They Saw the Airship on the Ocean Beach. PACIFIC GROVE, Cal., Dec. 2.—That the problem of navigating the air has at last been successfully solved there no longer remains a doubt.

At an early hour this morning, some fifteen miles from this city, two Italian fishermen, Giuseppe Valinziano and Luigi Valdivia, while engaged in their vocation, were completely terrorized by seeing an object descending from the heavens, which to their terror-stricken imaginations seemed to be falling directly upon their boat. When the object had fallen within some few hundred yards of the water it floated easily and at a moderate speed until it landed on the sandy beach. The airship, for such it proved to be, seemed to be under the perfect control of its occupants, three in number.

Immediately on landing they alighted and picking up their ship, carried it back from the beach and into the woods. As soon as the two fishermen had recovered from their astonishment they drew in their nets and attempted to make a landing, and after several unsuccessful attempts to get through the surf, which was very rough, a landing was made.

During this time the persons who had so strangely appeared upon the scene were watching the action of the fishermen, and upon the first signs of a successful landing one of the party advanced to meet them and warned them away from the spot where the ship was concealed. But Valinziano, who is a man of considerable intelligence, was not to be got rid of so easily, and engaged the aeronaut in conversation with the intention of learning as much as possible concerning the strange visitor. At first the man who had met them at the water's edge refused to answer any questions or allow the two fishermen to proceed further toward the spot where the ship was located, threatening to use force if

necessary to prevent their doing so, but finally seeing that Valinziano and his companion were determined not to leave without obtaining at least a glimpse of the aerial traveler, milder counsels prevailed.

Telling them to remain where they were until he could consult with his companions the aeronaut left them and disappeared in the woods, remaining away some fifteen minutes, and on his reappearance beckoned Valinziano and his companion to advance.

Upon their arrival at the edge of the woods they were met by the entire party. One who appeared to be the leader courteously bade them "Good morning" and said: "I suppose your curiosity has been aroused by our rather unusual mode of traveling. I am not yet ready to make my discovery known to the public, but hope to be able to do so as soon as some slight changes are made in its construction. Until such time I must refuse to allow any one to make a close inspection. You are welcome to get such a view of the ship as you can from a distance, but any attempt at closer inspection will meet with forcible resistance."

The man who had done nearly all the talking for the party was addressed by his companions simply as "captain." He declined to give any information as to where the ship was constructed or where he intended going, saying it was simply an experimental trip.

While this conversation was being /p.9/ carried on his two companions were busily engaged in working about the ship, which the captain admitted was in need of repairs before they could continue on their journey.

The party of aeronauts were well supplied with provisions, and soon after landing began preparations for a meal and cordially invited the two fishermen to join them, which invitation was accepted.

Shortly afterward Valinziano and his companions began making preparations to return to this city, but were urged by the captain to remain, that repairs would soon be made and they could see the airship launched. The captain was very urgent in his request for them to remain, and finally prevailed upon them to do so, but later in the afternoon he informed them that it would be impossible to complete the repairs in time to make an ascension that night.

Valinziano now thinks the purpose of the aeronauts was to detain him until it would be impossible for him to reach the city in time to give publicity to his discovery before the airship had resumed its flight. One of the party, an elderly man and slightly deaf, who seemed to be the machinist of the ship's crew, was addressed by his companions as Stewart.

Valinziano is able to give but a slight description of the ship, as he was not allowed to approach closer than fifty feet, but says it appeared to be easily sixty feet in length and cigar-shaped, with a steering apparatus, the latter being the part on which repairs were being made.

The ship was constructed of some light-colored material, and from the vague description of the machinery, most of which is concealed, the motive power is thought to be electricity.

Large wings, of which there are a great many, were closely folded against the side of the ship. The two fishermen got started on their homeward trip about 4 P.M., and, having contrary tides to contend with, did not reach this city until 10 P.M.

At first his fellow-fishermen were inclined to make light of his story, and thought him a victim of hallucination, but Valinziano is anything but visionary, and is well known as a most reliable and intelligent man, and there is no doubt but that he is stating facts.

The Call correspondent has arranged to leave here at daylight in company with Valinziano as guide, and visit the spot where the aeronauts made their camp. While it is probable they have long since taken flight they must have left some indications of their visit. /

ANGELENOS CONVERTED. / They Give Interesting Testimony Regarding the Mystery of the Day.  
LOS ANGELES, Cal., Dec. 1.—The evidence that an aerial navigator is abroad in this part of the State is accumulating from many quarters from scores of individuals of unquestioned veracity.

All manner of more or less sensational reports were current upon the streets here last evening. One was that the ship had collapsed and fallen upon the Nadeau Hotel. Another was that it had swept over the Wilson block, opposite the Nadeau, and had suddenly risen to a great height.

Colonel Chase of the Nadeau denied having corralled the visitor for private uses, but had seen the lights overhead, along with half a dozen guests. Judge W.A. Ryan got a peep at the visitor on his way from dinner, and as a result his incredulity regarding aerial machines has been entirely removed.

Managing Editor Creighton of the Herald and several members of his staff saw the interesting machine. Mr. Creighton does not undertake to say that what he saw was an airship and neither does he dispute that apparent fact.

Conductor Johnson of the university line saw strange lights overhead and called the attention of his passengers to them while his car was at Second street, on Spring. Necks were craned and a great crowd soon gathered about the car and enjoyed the sight for several minutes. The editorial force of the Morning Times saw the lights and were greatly interested in the spectacle. /

THEY SAW AN AIRSHIP. / Five Men Near Tulare Lake Witnessed Its Remarkable Flight.

According to the written statement of five men of Watertown, Fresno County, the airship passed over that part of the State in its flight to the northward. General Hart of this city, the attorney for the inventor, a week or so ago stated that the aeronaut proposed to take his airship into the higher and lighter atmosphere of the southern part of the State.

Since then hundreds of people in Los Angeles and along the route have seen lights that convinced them that they had seen the illuminated evidence of a ship of the sky.

From the later accounts the vessel must have started upon its return trip about the last day of November, as shown by the following letter sent from Watertown: / Watertown, Fresno County, Calif. / Nov. 29, 1896.

Editor Morning Call, San Francisco, Cal.—DEAR SIR: An airship of great magnitude passed over our town this evening at 8:45.

The light first appeared about ten miles south of here in the vicinity of Tulare Lake, and passed directly over the postoffice building, which is located near the southwest corner of section 11-19-19, M.D.M., and disappeared to the northward, in the direction of Mendota. The elevation at this point seemed to be about 400 feet, although at times it approached much nearer the earth. The light was intensely brilliant as it approached. After passing, the form of the ship and the propelling apparatus was plainly discernible against the clear sky. Human forms could be distinctly seen, but no intelligible utterance could be heard.

We would not hazard an opinion as to the rate of speed, but would say not less than fifteen miles an hour.

The undersigned are prepared to make oath to the above statement:

Robert McQuarrie, Postmaster. / C.B. Hurlbut, Secretary West Side Canal and Land Company. / G.H. Brooman, artesian well-borer, Watertown, Fresno County. / H. Jerome Spaulding, caterer. / R. Preston Hurlbut, civil engineer.

[Fac-simile of letter received from Watertown, p. 9] /

Viewed by Daylight.

SACRAMENTO, Cal., Dec. 1.—Since the publication of the airship items from various portions of the State in The Call it has leaked out that some of the most responsible people in this city saw a strange object in the clouds on the afternoon preceding the first public sight of the mysterious searchlight in this city.

They claim that this object was at such an enormous height that they were unable to plainly distinguish its form, but also say that when it turned they caught the glint or shine as of a metallic object, and that frequently sheets of paper would slowly flutter earthward as though the occupants were casting them out for the purpose of ascertaining whether their vehicle was approaching or receding from the earth.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) San Francisco Examiner, p. 9.**

Too Much Airship. / An Oregon Man's Mind Is Deranged by the Stories and He Is Sent to an Asylum.

PORTLAND, (Or.), Dec. 2.—From brooding over the sensational stories of the appearance of an alleged California airship and his failure to perfect an invention of what he claimed was an aerial vessel, Henry W. Herne, an eccentric individual living west of this city, has been committed to an insane asylum. Herne a few days ago became violently excited over the airship stories and declared one of his ideas was stolen in its makeup. The old man refused to eat and secluded himself from his neighbors till the attention of the authorities was called to him.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) (San Jose) Evening News, p. 2.**

A PICTURESQUE PREVARICATOR /

San Jose appears to be securing considerable distinction in connection with the air-ship fake. Report came from Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland and other places that the mysterious arial wonder had been seen, but it remained for a San Jose man to declare that he had taken a voyage in the airship. J. A. Horen, an employee of the Electric Improvement Company, claims to have been a passenger on the arial vessel; that he sailed from San Francisco to Honolulu and returned. Mr. Horen goes into detail regarding the vessel, and is very explicit in describing the ship and its operation. This narrative is now denied by Mr. Horen's wife, who lives in San Francisco. She asserts that at the time her husband alleged that he was hovering over Honolulu, he was sound asleep in the family residence in San Francisco; that he went from San Jose to San Francisco on Friday and returned to the Garden City on Monday. While the general public regard Mr. Horen as a picturesque prevaricator, his friends declare him to be a practical joker.

p. 2. The airship has not yet been seen in Gilroy except by visitors. The natives never drink any of that justly celebrated vintage. They know better.

A man of Portland, Ore., who has been puzzling his brain with an airship invention for sometime past, has become insane. Some of the wheels slipped a cog.

SF Chron.: San Jose man who described...Arabian Nights.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) (Santa Barbara, Calif.) Morning Press, p. 4.**

AIRSHIPS.

Mischievously inclined people, taking advantage of the common credulity of mankind in general, and of Californians in particular, are now busy devising means for "air ship" sensations. The tale started for obvious purposes by a San Francisco paper is well suited to its purpose. Aerial navigation is now occupying the serious thought and scientific investigation of men as practical as Hiram Maxim, the inventor of the murderous weapon bearing his name. Progress has been made, and tests with aeroplanes have greatly widened our field of knowledge in this direction. The great journals have published every "discovery," every plan "sure to work," every detail of numberless machines. The subject has been more publicly exploited than the much heralded Roentgen ray, and as a consequence the people at large are ready for any new development. Taking advantage of the present state of the primary scientific development of this tremendous problem, the story comes exactly at the right time. And just here comes the trouble with the "fake" story. It is not impossible; yet the study of aerial problems has not progressed far enough for practical results. The only thing a sensible man may say is that its development here without the public and the press in general being aware of it is well nigh so. The time is not yet ripe for cigar shaped dirigible "floaters." This being the condition of the public mind, air ships are seen nightly, and the mischievous have already sent up, according to the Los Angeles papers, cleverly devised balloons with electric attachments. In conclusion all floating lights should be taken diluted or with a grain of salt.

Santa Cruz Sentinel, Dec. 3,2. Aerial navigation is to be discouraged, because airships may get tangled in the rigging of the stars, or the stars may dart into the rigging of the ships.

Street politicians who run on wind had better keep at least one foot on the earth.

Dec.11,4. Ghost in Tenn. ca.1865—round ball rolled in and out of house.

Santa Cruz Surf, 12/3/1. Too Much Airship. (Hearne, a Portland man, goes crazy over airship reports.)

Stockton Evening Mail, Dec. 3,4. Members-elect of the Legislature are hopeful that the airship omen may be significant of the advent of Col. Mazuma.

4,6. Herne sentenced to asylum.

Ventura Independent, 12/3/3. The airship has failed to pass over Ventura, but Los Angeles took the fever and a host of her citizens have seen the mysterious wanderer of the night, illuminated with bright red and white lights sailing high in the heavens over that enterprising metropolis of the sunny south.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) Tulare County Times (Visalia, Cal.), p. 2.**

CAUGHT AT LAST. / Mayor Craycroft of Fresno Captures an Airship. / The Queer Craft Found Stranded in a Weed Patch at Madera. / A Complete Explanation of the Strange Lights Seen in the Heavens the Past Two Weeks. / (From Monday's Daily Times [Nov. 30, p.1].)

The airship has been captured. At least one of the species has.

It was reserved for C.J. Craycroft, Mayor of Fresno, to accomplish this fact.

Mr. Craycroft is in Visalia to-day and was seen by a Times reporter at the court house where he was settling with the Tax Collector.

A few words brought up the subject of the airship. "I had the fortune to capture one of the things the other day," remarked Mr. Craycroft. Everyone in the crowd was attention in a moment.

"Last Saturday I was in Madera," continued the speaker, "and while there I visited a tract of about five acres that I have there with a brick yard on it and some orchard. Looking through the weeds at my trees I suddenly came on a queer looking craft. It was made of tissue paper in red, white and blue and in the shape of an oval balloon. At the bottom was a small oval shaped paper box open below with two wires stretched across the opening. The whole thing was about five or six feet long.

"I at once made up my mind that this was one of the things that had been seen at night by the people of this valley. I folded it up and took it home with me to Fresno where it is now on exhibition.

"I am satisfied that the machine was run by some kind of gas. The small paper box showed signs of having had some kind of liquid in it and was partially burned. The label on the outside of it could not be distinguished on account of the scorching it had received."

Mr. Craycroft said the whole machine or balloon did not weigh a pound. The box at the base had evidently contained the solution that formed the gas that extended the tissue paper covering. The box being open allowed the light to shine through. This was the headlight of that wonderful airship that has been keeping Californians on the tiptoe of expectancy for several days.

Some practical joker has been amusing himself by sending up a number of these paper balloons like the one found by Mr. Craycroft. The plan is simple and inexpensive, and when set going at night the effect is weird enough, and no harm is done.

Mr. Craycroft says he wants the San Francisco Call airship reporter from that city to come down and thoroughly examine the thing he has captured.

(Visalia) Tulare County News, Dec. 3, 1c. As Venus, the evening star, sinks in the west behind the shadows of the darkening halo, it must feel abashed at being dubbed so frail a thing as a peregrinating airship. But that is just what is happening to evening's second sun.

p.2. An exchange is thankful for the airship stories, which have crowded columns of reports of crime out of the big daily newspapers. Wish we could be thankful for a social system that was not a propagator of crime.

Ventura Independent, Dec. 3, p.3.

The airship has failed to pass over Ventura, but Los Angeles took the fever and a host of her citizens have seen the mysterious wanderer of the night, illuminated with bright red and white lights sailing high in the heavens over that enterprising metropolis of the sunny south.

**1896 December 3 (Th.) Weekly Visalia (Calif.) Delta, p. 1.**

THE AIR SHIP. / THE VESSEL SEEN AGAIN BY SOBER HANFORD PEOPLE. / THE AERIAL VISITOR SEEN LAST THURSDAY EVENING. / Our Special Correspondent Believes the Atmospheric Phenomenon is Caused by the Reflection of a Searchlight on a Man-of-War. / (Special Correspondence of the Delta.)

Hanford, November 27.—The air ship, the what-is-it, the General Hart exterminator of General Weyler, the aerial glow worm, the Star of Bethlehem, the phenomenon, the Larkins vision, the Mathewson-Hornbeak truth, or the searchlight of a McKinley Portuguese protectionist, looking for sheep feed and higher prices for his wool, was plainly seen from this place last evening at twenty minutes past 6 o'clock.

It was first seen at or near the Coast Range, a little south of west from Hanford, and traveled at the rate of twelve miles per minute, in a northeasterly direction.

The ship was apparently launched at Bald mountain, in San Luis Obispo county and as it slid from its ways in that aerial ship yard and sallied forth, the wonder of all who had the opportunity to behold it, it was to the admiration of the older people, while children gazed at it with a show of misgivings.

In appearance it resembled a bright star, only its light was of a more reddish hue. In its course it seemed to sail with a wavy motion, as of a ship riding high waves: first up, then down and out of sight, as if it had gone down in the trough of the sea.

Its course seemed to be from Bald mountain, northeast, skirting the boundary line between Kings and Fresno counties, thence in and across the counties of Fresno and Madera toward Mariposa, where it was lost to view in the horizon.

The people here are anxiously waiting for the mighty telescope of the Lick observatory to be turned on the what-is-it, even if they have to take a wing shot, and bring it to the earth, where it may be inspected and given a name.

Until the look-out on Mount Hamilton does this, the people of the San Joaquin valley will believe it is an atmospheric reflection of a strong searchlight from some battleship cruising up and down the coast, manned by naval officers, who have nothing else to do but to play tricks on Uncle Sam's subjects, who, fortunately or unfortunately, happen to be landsmen, and that the upward and downward course of the what-is-it is caused by the ship's motion riding over the waves. /

#### A BASE LIBEL.

Visalia and Hanford also saw the fiery eye of the airship on the eve of Thanksgiving, but those who saw it differ widely in their descriptions of the monster. In this connection it has been observed that Hanford is a great place for soft drinks while Visalia adheres tenaciously to its partiality for red licker.—Fresno Republican.

#### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Weekly Visalia (Calif.) Delta, p. 2a.**

The now famous air ship is getting to be numerous. On Tuesday evening it, or its light, was reported at Red Bluff and adjacent towns. On Wednesday evening the mysterious light was reported at Los Angeles, San Fernando, Visalia and other places in this county, Fresno and San Jose. Thursday it was seen again by Visalians and people in Petaluma thought they could see a dark cigar-shaped object bearing the light. One, two and three lights have been seen. In all towns it is reported at about the same hour, 7 to 7:30 o'clock in the evening. Many persons who have seen the strange lights are in every way reliable, and as people in different places give the same descriptions, there can be no doubt that lights or reflections of light were seen. But as it would be impossible to see lights from any body floating in the air at the same moment in Los Angeles, Visalia and San Jose, hundreds of miles apart, the light must be something else than that of an airship. It was reported again as seen in this city yesterday evening. Here is a chance for some scientist to explain the cause and peculiar action of this ethereal will-o-the-wisp.

#### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Weekly Visalia (Calif.) Delta, p. 2f.**

UNCLE DAN'S STORY / He Tells a Fresno Expositor Reporter About the Airship. /

"If I was to tell you that Dr. Benjamin and myself are old friends and that I have known of his airship for months the people around here would at once say, Ah, yes. The 'widows' friend' is giving us another of his stories. But I do tell you the airship is a fact."

The speaker was I.H. Thomas of Visalia, and he was in Fresno on other business than looking after airships.

"Now listen to me," said Mr. Thomas. "Don't quote me by name because if you do people will never believe you, but I am honest in what I say. There is an airship in existence that will fly. I know it. How I know it is none of your business or that of anybody else just now. Of course all sorts of stories have been written about the machine, some of them true, but most of them false. However, I tell you there is an airship, a practical machine, and no matter how much joshing the people give me, I tell you that this time I'm not joking. Benjamin has an airship. I might have taken a ride on it, but I'll admit that I

am a little shy on new inventions, especially when they fly and the breaking of a crank or a wing would give the passengers a long drop. If the people will wait a week or two they will find out I am not joking. The airship has not been seen in this valley to my knowledge, nor is it coming just now, but it is in use in and around Oakland and will continue to fly in that neighborhood until all the mechanism is perfected.

"I tell you again," insisted Mr. Thomas, "that I am in dead earnest and no joke. The airship has been invented, and in less than six months from this time the world will know of it."

Mr. Thomas' statement was made with apparent earnestness, and knowing it was to be published, the gentleman iterated and reiterated that he was not joking. As to Mr. Thomas and Dr. Benjamin being old friends, the fact is well known, and it is reasonable to suppose if the latter had an invention such as is claimed, he would have told his old friend about it.—Fresno Expositor.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Weekly Visalia (Calif.) Delta, p. 3.**

Our Neighbors. / Tulare.

Tulare, Dec. 2.—...

Quite a number of reliable Tulareans saw an unusual light in the heavens Sunday night and there are those who believe the much talked of airship was seen. The various accounts of those who saw it agree in most particulars—the differences being only such as would arise from different vision. A gentleman from Waukens reports having seen the same thing.

KINGS COUNTY.

The Hanford Sentinel has an artist who puts in his spare moments drawing pictures of the airship.

KERN COUNTY.

The airship was seen in Kern county. The Bakersfield Morning Echo says the eye-witnesses were full of "red licker."

THEY'RE THANKFUL.

E.O. Larkins is thankful for the reason that he has seen the airship.

p.4. City and County. / Have you seen the airship?

### **Visalia Daily Times (Calif.),**

Dec. 3, 3b. Several parties were out with field glasses last night looking for the airship. Several stars looked very much like airships, but they didn't seem to move. They conclude that if they do not see them in the same places this evening they were airships indeed.

(adv.) The Airship Has Been Seen in Tulare, but you have never seen such Fine Clothing at such Low Prices as is being sold at the Creditors' Sale of Schoenemann & Zumwalt. / JOHN GILMAN, Agent.

### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Tulare County Times (Visalia, Cal.), p. 1.**

ANOTHER "AIRSHIP" CAUGHT. / It Resembled Clearly the Article Captured Near Fresno. / (From Tuesday's Daily Times.)

The Call and all the rest of the big dailies that have been publishing column after column of stuff about the airship didn't seem to take kindly to the expose of the fake now going the rounds, and an account of which first appeared in full in the "Times." They don't say much, if anything, about the paper balloons found.

A tissue paper balloon similar to the one found by Mayor Craycroft of Fresno and reported in the "Times" Monday evening, was discovered in the rigging of a vessel in San Francisco bay Sunday evening. The thing was captured and taken to the Bulletin office. The sailors thought the queer-looking thing might blow up, but no explosion came. The Bulletin concludes its description as follows:

"Finally one of the men clambered up on the fo'castle-head and gazed aloft. A limp thing hung to the fore truck. Bravely he volunteered to secure it, and secure it he did.

"Napoleon had his Waterloo and the eminent scientist and dynamiter his shipwreck. Away with him to the crematory! His petard was a tissue paper torpedo, and his gas-ship a hot-air balloon fully six feet high and eight feet in circumference, with wire attachments and receptacle that must have contained

oil. It was black with smoke and a hole was torn in the top when the pressure of gas had been too great for the cubic measurement of the body that confined it." /

Out Again Last Night.

"Great Scott! There goes the air ship!" Such was the exclamation of a Visalian last night as he was going home from the postoffice after the train had come in. He pointed to the west and a "Times" representative noticed a light sure enough. The light was moving in a northerly direction. It was the air ship returning to Oroville perhaps, after a little journey up the San Joaquin valley.

People in Visalia have been noticing strange lights at night for many days, aye years, but they always called them shooting stars, meteoric shows, etc., before. Now we know they were air ships. / [Dec. 1, p.1.]

p.2. Strange lights are being seen in different portions of the State at night by large numbers of people and the talk about airships is becoming a fad. We do not believe the heavens is [sic] crowded with flying machines, but something out of the usual is being noticed nearly every night by reliable people. The question for our learned men to determine is, what is it?

#### **1896 December 3 (Th.) Tulare County Times (Visalia, Cal.), p.4.**

THE AIR SHIP AT TULARE. / Many Reputable Citizens See the Nocturnal Wanderer.

TULARE, November 30.—Over one hundred Tulareans positively assert that they saw the now famous airship that has been wandering around in different sections of the state. Those who saw it say it first appeared just west of town last evening about 7 o'clock, and was going in a southwesterly direction. About 8:30 o'clock it came back and could be seen just over [O] street, between the residences of E.T. Cooper and Mrs. C. Castle. It came down quite a distance, then went up and took a straight shoot for Hanford. Red, white and blue lights were seen in succession, but no part of the ship was seen. They seemed to have perfect control of the ship, as they moved it around in many different directions. It was seen from every section of the city, and many people watched it as long as it was in sight, and to prove that it did appear and was not a fake, you can ask any of the following well-known people who will verify this statement: Mr. and Mrs. L.E. Schoenmann, Mrs. C. Castle, Miss Nellie Wilson, Frank Coble, Mr. and Mrs. W.G. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. M.S. Tarkington, Mr. and Mrs. A. Young, Mrs. E.W. Holland, Miss Lulu Downing, Frank Anderson, F.B. Gobin and M.T. Carkeek. / [In Daily, Nov. 30, p.3.]

The Air Ship Again.

TULARE, December 1.—The airship seems to be all the talk here today, and the question asked by every one is: "Did you see the airship? One young man while out star gazing was surprised at seeing a bright light with a dark object above it pass about 2000 feet above him and he stopped. Presently he heard voices very distinctly saying: "Tell them what you saw." [In Daily, Dec. 1, p.3.]

p.4. Tulare Locals (from Friday's Daily Times).

George Richardson has a model of an air ship, which can be seen at his shop. Jan. 7, 1897, p. 4. Atlantic and Pacific Aerial Navigation Company proposed.

#### **1896 December 3 (Th.) (Watsonville, CA) Pajaronian, p. 3.**

Did you see the airship last Thursday night? Several street crowds affirmed that they saw the airship—but then airships are becoming so common that they do not attract as much attention as they did a few weeks ago. Every meteor is now classed with the airship tribe. Pacific Grove and Salinas had the airship Saturday night, and several other towns between Puget Sound and San Diego claimed it at the same time. It has a wonderful ability to be at the same time at several places distant from each other.

#### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) (Auburn) The Placer Argus, p. 1.**

AIRSHIPTOMANIA. / (Bulletin.)

The eminent scientist and expert dynamiter (unknown) having read that the small, irrepressible boy of the land is abroad with the tissue paper petard and the light of Asia[,] determined to remove his airship from the populous precincts of San Francisco county to the smooth beach of Bolinas. There is the forest primeval, the whispering pine and the hemlock, and not even a poet to sing the praises of the winged thing within twenty-five miles.

"Hush, exclaimed the eminent scientist and bloodthirsty dynamiter, putting his finger to his nose and turning to the man from San Jose with the patent windlog who was invited to accompany the bashful inventor to Hawaii.

"Sh', I'm on," replied the man with the patent log. "Nobody spoke."

"Nay, but what are the wild waves saying, fellow?" angrily asked the eminent scientist (and man of mystery), picking up a sea shell and applying it to his ear.

"Oh, they wont give up anything, on the dead," sharply retorted the patent log man, peering into the port hole of the airship, which great birdlike, streetcar-like, balloon-like, cigar-like craft was tugging restlessly at its anchor chain as if longing to blow out its aluminum skin, moist with the dew of eve, and rise to higher and more congenial altitudes.

"When do we start?" he then added impatiently.

"Step this way, and look out you don't stub your toes on the doorsill, you might give the lawyers an inkling where we are. I would hate to become involved in litigation; I might never get another chance to fly till after death. But hold—here comes my trusted messenger. He has the latest dispatches from the interior," spoke the eminent scientist and dynamiter.

"You've been discovered in the State of Washington, near Mount Tacoma, and one half hour later were seen floating over Los Angeles," exclaimed the messenger breathlessly. "They still have you located at San Jose, and if you get away while the Lick telescope is turned on the Santa Clara electric cars you are safe from observation. And, by the way, the friction caused by that run from Tacoma to Los Angeles at the rate of 100 miles a minute melted the butter in the after cabin and fried that round steak. You will not require the services of a cook on your Honolulu trip. Now, shall I return to the stable near Ross Valley and watch for your return and remove the restless, kicking mule when I see the color of your flashlight?"

"Yes, begone, and see that the society people all attend the german, for I fear on my coming back I may be discovered," replied the eminent scientist and reckless dynamiter, brushing the dust off the starboard propeller and trying the self-acting rudder with the tail like a fish and scales like a corner grocery.

The patent log man stepped within the aluminum apartment and drew a long breath.

"Condensed air," he ejaculated.

"Yes, a very necessary thing in these days," answered the eminent scientist. "People cannot make a living without it. Five thousand pounds pressure to the square inch. One can live a long time on a few inches of it, if he has good lungs—are you on board?"

Before the patent log man could answer his nose struck the floor of the flying-machine and remained glued there. He tried to rise, but he could not. He pivoted around on his proboscis for several minutes, tugging with all his strength. On a sudden the floor fell from under him and his head struck the ceiling so hard that all the air was full of airships, with twinkling stars between.

"We have come to a stop," calmly remarked the eminent scientist.

"What struck me?" indignantly asked the patent log man.

"The floor of the ceiling," was the answer; "you see we rose at the rate of 500 miles a minute. Ordinarily a man who falls rises again at the rate of 200 miles a minute. In a prizefight this is sometimes different, however. You tried to rise, but you had 300 miles per minute against you, and your nose wouldn't come up. When I stop you got it in the neck—the halt was so sudden."

"What lights were those I saw?" asked the patent log man, in a dazed sort of way.

"They might have been those of the Farallones, but don't bother about them; I'll show you the sparks of Hawaii in two minutes; there they are now!"

The patent log man looked beneath him. Thousands of sparkling things were visible. "That's a torchlight procession in honor of the release of Queen Lil," said the eminent scientist.

After several minutes the eminent scientist and expert dynamiter pulled out a bomb and ruffling up his whiskers, whispered in dreadful tones:

“See this petard? I shall drop this on the first man who discovers my secret! I have another one that I intend to drop on Weyler. I had the drop on the old scoundrel the night before last, but he escaped under a cocoanut tree.”

The eminent scientist and expert dynamiter said no more. He didn't have time. The bomb suddenly exploded and great darkness followed. When the patent log man came to he was lying in jail.

“What am I here for?” he asked in a rage.

“Airshiptomania,” replied the station keeper, as he finished writing “drunk and disorderly, no property,” in a large book.

**(Auburn) Placer Argus**, 12/4/1. County News. / Lincoln News.

Lincoln "has got 'em." The air machine (of Will Herzford) floated over the town last week, but Will had another toy balloon that he failed to conceal.

Colusa Sun, 12/4. It seems Meridian was not left out of the airship excitement.

### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) Dixon (CA) Tribune, p. 2.**

WINTERS, /

Airships are becoming as numerous about Winters as grasshoppers in summer time and every evening a half dozen of them may be seen ascending from the backyards of as many cranks. It is becoming monotonous and silly.

F.J. Bonney returned from his trip to the East last Monday night. He reports that there are not many airships afloat at present throughout the Eastern States.

PLEASANT VALLEY. /

We have as yet failed to see the much-talked-of airship though we have kept a sharp lookout. There are many who doubt the truth of there being an airship. We have not decided yet whether it is true or false, but we are satisfied that someday it will be true and we or our descendants will yet fly across the continent.

DAVISVILLE. /

What is it? This thing they call the airship, I mean. It has not yet been my good fortune to see this mysterious wanderer, and at present the nights are too chilly for star-gazing. But accepting the stories told of it as wholly or partly true, we must believe there is something in them. It is certainly not a meteor. Meteors adhere strictly to a single direction and are generally in a hurry. It cannot be a kite or a balloon, for either of these must go with the wind. It cannot be a toy machine sent up simply to mystify the people, for the simplest of these would be too expensive for frequent repetitions, and I do not take stock in any airship, which, if of any size, would certainly require powerful machinery and produce a noise that would be heard a long distance. Now, I'm not going to say that it is not an airship, for in this age of scientific discovery, when one may talk to a friend across the continent, or by means of the X-ray explore that same friend's internal structure, lights, liver and gizzard at closer range; when one may listen to the songs and speeches of a past generation, or gaze upon the portraits of stars that lie beyond the reach of the Lick telescope, I may doubt, but I will not dispute. If a man should tell me that he had discovered a practical route to Mars, or the moon, I should consider it possible. And so there may be an airship. I don't know and cannot say there isn't, but supposing such a thing to exist, is it not almost incredible that some level-headed observer has not detected it before this? The inventor of this machine may have rendered [it] invisible by the use of some hue outside of the visible spectrum, like Ambrose Bierce's mountain lion, but it still must be a substance, and in its passage athwart the sky it must eclipse the stars that lie in its path. The arc it describes in passing from horizon to horizon would determine its distance. This obtained it would be an easy task to calculate its speed, and the time of passing a given star would fix its length. Its depth might be determined by the vertical distance of the stars eclipsed, and your trained observer be able to give a better sketch of this strange thing than the average man could obtain if it were lying on the ground before him. Why don't these influential journalists who talk so much about the airship get our old friend Barwick hold of it?

Have you seen the airship? If not, you are not in the fashion.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) Ferndale (Calif.) Semi-Weekly Enterprise, p. 1.**

NEWS OF THE COUNTY.

Several residents of the Swanger section claim to have seen the air-ship last Sunday night.  
p.4. Champion airship story (Horen).

Colfax Sentinel, Dec. 4, p. 3. Forest Hill.

There seems to be something in the air in this vicinity. Perhaps it is Collins' airship.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) Fresno (Calif.) Morning Republican, p. 4.**

They Saw It, Too.

The people of Watertown, in this county have the airship fever in its worst form. Yesterday's Call contains a letter signed by five distinguished citizens of that place declaring that they saw the aerial craft on the evening of November 29th going northward. It was of "great magnitude" and passed directly over the magnificent postoffice building of that place, nearly colliding with a cornice. The ship had an "intensely brilliant" light and human forms were plainly seen on the craft. The gentlemen who saw all this and are willing to make oath thereto are: Robert M. Quarrie, postmaster; C.B. Huribut [Hurlbut], secretary West Side Canal and Land Company; G.H. Broonian, artesian well-borer; H. Jerome Spaulding, caterer; R. Preston Huribut, civil engineer.

Napa D. Journal, 12/4/2. It's a mighty jay town in California just now that can't report an airship or two flying overhead nightly. It's strange that none report to sight of one in the daytime. Maybe not so strange, either.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) (Hollister, Calif.) Free Lance, p. 8.**

Local Items.

A number of our citizens maintain they saw the light of the mythical airship last Tuesday night about 7 o'clock, in the vicinity of the San Juan valley. The light was also seen over Castle's ranch the same evening. We won't believe the story until Jefferson shows us a photograph of the ship.

Hayward Review, Dec. 4,3. The airship fake is dying out, locally and generally. This week several Hayward people noticed a light which they thought came from an airship, but a little investigation showed it was nothing more than the new arc light which the Board of Trustees has had put up in the Meek district.

Ventura Free Press, Dec. 4, p.5.

And now it is reported that the airship has been seen by Ventura people, or they imagine they have seen it. It is probably a large hoax, and will be exposed before long. But you can rest assured that some means for navigating the air will yet be discovered.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) Marysville Daily Appeal, p. 1.**

AIRSHIP TALK. / Several People Have Seen Moving Lights of Late.

The sensational airship news which has recently been published in the papers from one end of California to the other has many believers even in this section of the country.

E.T. Schellenger, of Sutter City, who was in town yesterday entertained several of his friends with an account of something wonderful he had seen moving in the heavens about 6 o'clock Wednesday night.

It first appeared to him as if it was a red ball of fire that was moving slowly along and as it spread out he thought he could see wheels moving. The light was continually changing from red to a blue color,

and then several lights would appear which made the machinery appear clearer. It moved in the direction of Knights Landing.

He said he had read considerable about the air ship, and had considerable faith in the invention, and had little doubt but that what he had seen was the mysterious visitor that was puzzling all the scientists.

Several residents of this city also saw moving lights in the heavens on Wednesday night about 10 o'clock.

It seems strange that although no one has seen more than one air ship at the time, that it should be seen in places hundreds of miles apart at the same time.

A telegram from Portland tells of a man who became so greatly interested in the reports that he finally declared he was the airship inventor himself, and that he had brought his invention to an almost perfect condition. He asserted that some Californian had stolen one of his most valuable ideas; and was using it in the San Francisco airship.

**Marysville, Calif., Daily Appeal, Dec. 4, p. 3. Oroville.**

Sam Marks has surely caught the airship fever for yesterday he was busily engaged in working at a model of a new machine that was evidently intended to sail through the air like the man on the flying trapeze.

BIGGS. /.../ RIO BONITA HAS 'EM TOO.

The people living at Rio Bonito, especially at the Hatch and Rock Company Orchard were greatly excited Wednesday night shortly after dark, by the appearance of a bright light in the heavens which cast a broad ray on the ground showing objects as clearly as in the day time. They watched the mysterious aerial navigator until it seemed to pass over the Butte mountains in the southwest and notwithstanding the jeers and jokes of their hearers when reciting the particulars of what they saw those who saw the strange object are sound in their belief that aerial transportation has been invented.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) Merced (Calif.) Express, p. 3c.**

The air ship passed over Merced Monday evening last and was seen by a number of our citizens. It was high in the heavens and carried a red light such as the boys attach to their paper balloons before sending them skyward. Monday night the boys started their aerial ship from the cluster of willows on Bear Creek and it was a mile high before nightwatchman Dick Meehan saw it and gave the alarm. The streets were soon crowded with people looking at the "thing" while the boys stood behind a large electric light post about to explode with laughter. Scat, you boys.  
p.2. The airship fake seems about over; now for something else.

Napa Register, Dec.4,1. Speaking of airships, "they've got 'em" in about every town of size except Napa. This is a temperance town.

Red Bluff Daily People's Cause, Dec. 4,4. A WONDERFUL METAL / It is Used in the Newly Discovered Air Ship, [from Oroville Register: Man from Nevada discovered light metal by accident.]

Now the man who discovered and used that metal was in Oroville recently; in fact he has been here a number of days. He does not wish his name published, but we met him and talked with him for fifteen or twenty minutes. We do not know of course whether he has anything to do with this mysterious air ship or not, but if there was any truth in the report of the wonderful metal discovery it is possible that he has kept the secret and used the new metal in constructing this wonderful floating ship.

Riverside Daily Press, 12/4/5. All the people of Riverside failed to see the airship as it passed over their city. It was, alas, because they too seldom turn their eyes heavenward.—Riverside Press.

This may be one explanation, but would rather think it is because Riverside is a prohibition town, says the San Bernardino Sun.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) St. Helena (Calif.) Star, p. 3.**

What Was It In The Air? /

The airship so enthusiastically and exhaustively described by the San Francisco Call has been seen passing over St. Helena. At least an object attached to which were powerful lights was seen Tuesday evening, moving toward the west, lowering and rising and plainly discernible to an astonished group standing on terra firma. The object was first seen by Miss Wade who called the attention of E.L. Cave to it as he was passing Mr. Cutwaters' home. Soon quite a number has assembled and were gazing heavenward. On going home Mr. Cave had his wife go to the back porch and together they watched for some time what the Call pleases to term an airship. The sight was witnessed shortly after the supper hour and as all whom we have heard say anything about it are strictly temperate the mystery deepens.

(San Bernardino) Daily Times-Index, 12/4,5. AIR-SHIP LOCATED. / An Indio Constable Lays Claim to the Honors. /

A claimant to the air-ship honors has been found and the report of its meandering above the city on Sunday night, which appeared in the Times-Index of the following day, has been substantiated. The Riverside Enterprise of this morning has the following:

Constable Westerfield, who came in from Indio yesterday, states that the Enterprise story regarding his air-ship is correct. He also adds that the story published in the San Bernardino Times-Index to the effect that an aerial ship was seen sailing over that town a few nights ago is correct also, as it was his invention that was seen. On the date mentioned he took a short spin with his ship just to see how the machinery worked, and in doing so he came as far west as San Bernardino.

(San Diego) Evening Tribune, 12/4, p. 1. San Bernardino people have got the craze, as dozens of her citizens claim to have seen the mysterious airship coming from the direction of Los Angeles and sailing away toward Riverside.

San Francisco Bulletin 12/4/4. Barring the fact of a patent inability to fly, the airship which came to grief on Twin Peaks seems to have answered admirably the purpose for which it was designed. It hurt nobody, and made a newspaper sensation for a day.

### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) The Call (San Francisco), p. 1.**

PLUNGED FROM A DIZZY HEIGHT. / An Airship Lying Helpless on the Twin Peaks. / IT LANDED SUDDENLY IN A DITCH. / Two Men Came to Grief in a Forty-Foot Mystery. / IT IS RUN BY GAS AND ELECTRICITY. / Speculation as to Where It Came From—The Owners Very Reticent. /

An airship built of galvanized sheet steel, forty feet long, caused much excitement among the people on the Mission hills last evening. They saw it sail over the Twin Peaks and then getting out of order in some way it made a wild plunge into a gulch 200 yards south of the Corbett road, near what is known as Stanford Heights.

Its two occupants were turned out of the cockpit in which they stood and landed badly bruised in the bottom of the gulch.

When seen late at night by two Call reporters the huge metal affair presented a pitiable appearance.

The propeller was twisted and bent; one elevating fan was ripped off and lay on the ground, while the other was badly twisted from the force of the shock.

A large hole in its side permitted the escape of a sickish smelling gas. The steering apparatus, rudder as it was called, which had been on the bow was also broken off.

As stated, the machine was about forty feet long and was of cylindrical shape, with both ends cone-shaped.

Near by stood one of the bold, but unlucky aeronauts, J.D. deGear of 538 Fulton street.

He looked woefully at the wreck, and thanked his lucky stars that he was still alive. The other man, the inventor, had disappeared as soon as he found that no bones were broken.

Dr. Gear positively refused to reveal the name of the inventor.

Dr. Gear upon being pressed told in substance the following story of the airship and the accident:

"I am a tin-roofer and metal-worker, and the inventor who has the money is a well-educated man. Some time ago we decided to build an airship, and we built this one in the Mission. We put it together up the hill back of here in a clump of trees.

"This was our first attempt to make a flight. The hydrogen gas used is made from muriatic acid, and the fans and propellers are operated by electricity.

"This evening the inventor and I started out from the hill up yonder to see how it would work, but after we got started we failed to rise over ten feet from the ground, as the metal of the fans was too thin for the work they had to do.

"In a short time we saw we had trouble ahead, for we lost control of it and away we went.

"I can't describe the sensation better than to say it was a feeling similar to that one has when he had a nightmare and dreams that he is falling.

"You see we started high up the hill so our downward flight was very long, or so it seemed to us. But we were in for it and did not have very long to wait.

"When we struck we struck hard in the soft ground, and the force of our flight carried us over and into the gulch, where we were thrown to the bottom of the ditch.

"No, I will not tell who the inventor is nor where it was built. We are not discouraged, for we know we can fly when this is perfected. It needs strengthening."

"Is this one of the ships seen over the City with electric lights, etc.?" was asked.

"No, it is not. We don't know any of the people connected with airships the papers have mentioned.

"This is a private enterprise. D--- the luck," and he scraped a chunk of mud off his coat.

The first news of the unfortunate airship was obtained from Emile H. Lapon, who has a milk ranch about 200 yards from where the airship lies. In his words he said:

"I was about to go to bed when I heard a h--- of a noise down the pasture. It sounded like a collision of trains loaded with coal-oil cans.

"A second later I heard two voices down the gulch crying 'Help, help!' I went down there with the lantern and found this affair."

Mr. Laplace [sic] says that the ship could not have been built near this place for there are no trees there to conceal it and he knew every inch of the country thereabouts.

He is sure that the airship came from a distance, but how far he is unable to say.

He says that as soon as the inventor learned that he was about to telephone to town from the Almshouse, he skipped out for the city, but not before the two had stripped the wrecked vessel of all the electric appliances and storage batteries, so as to prevent curious outsiders from getting an idea of the theory and principles they are working on.

The machine adheres, in a manner, to the usual cigar shape. It is about forty feet in length and is built of galvanized sheet steel.

The main body or hull of the contrivance is cylindrical in shape, ten feet in diameter and twenty feet in length.

Attached with rivets and thoroughly soldered to the body are two metal cones each ten feet in length.

Two eight-bladed fans, each a few inches over six feet in diameter, are located on top of the body, and are evidently capable of tremendous speed.

The vessel is fitted with a huge propeller, also eight-bladed, which is furnished with power from a steel shaft running to the center of the hull.

A similar shaft runs forward and protrudes through the end of the front cone, and to this shaft the rudder or steering apparatus is attached.

In the center of the ship lies the secret which its builder refuses to thoroughly explain—the vessel's motive power.

He acknowledges the power to be an intricate electrical apparatus, run by storage batteries and connected by means of a worm and cogs to the driving gear.

He also says that the storage batteries are capable of carrying sufficient electricity to run incandescent lights, one of which, the aeronaut said, is always brightly burning when the aerial machine is in motion.

Buoyancy is produced by gas generated within the hull by means of muriatic acid and other chemicals.

The gas has a nauseating odor and fumes which leave a sweet taste on the lips and produce drowsiness.

It does not seem to be a common gas. What its capacity as a lifting gas is, however, another proposition.

It must be unusually great as the airship, built of sheet steel, carrying fans, a propeller, electrical apparatus and two men, weighs many hundreds of pounds.

The gas produces sufficient buoyancy to almost lift the ship and its load from the ground.

After being filled with gas the top fans are revolved at great speed, and after the machine is lifted a few feet above the earth the propeller is set going and, the navigators say, the machine sails away.

The machine sailed quite a distance, according to its builder's testimony, before it woke the neighborhood with the thunderous rattle of its impromptu landing.

It was stripped of all its electrical apparatus and the inventor, who risked his life in order to perfect the machine, skipped sway in the dark and hid away his treasured secrets./

A STRANGE VISITOR. / Excitement Caused by the landing of a Tin Ship Near the Almshouse.

Captain Reddy, superintendent of the Almshouse, reported last night that a man called at his office about 2:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon and asked for the telephone number of the Chutes. The number was given and he called up Mr. Riley.

In the conversation he said to Riley: "We will make a break or make a start to-night." The man who used the telephone gave his name, but Captain Reddy does not remember it.

Last night a boy came to the Almshouse very much excited, saying that the airship had fallen in a gulch between Sunnyside and the Almshouse.

In an interview Captain Reddy last night gave this narrative:

"Dr. Conlin and I started for the place where the ship was reported to be. We found the machine about a mile from the Almshouse. It was between thirty and forty feet long and weighted, I should think, 250 pounds.

"It was made of common tin, and to it was attached propeller blades made of the same material. The man in charge of the ship said he had started from the hill above. I examined the machine, and it looked too heavy and clumsy to fly.

"There was no storage battery visible. The man said he had a partner who had taken the machinery out. He said the lifting power was gas, but I saw no compartment or place where sufficient gas could be stored to lift the ship. I did not see the ship in the air, although the boy who gave us the news said he saw it come down.

"I examined the contrivance closely," continued Captain Reddy, "and observed that it had been freshly painted, but the paint was worn off, indicating that it had been dragged over the ground some distance. The propeller was very flimsy, and seemed as if it could not impart any force in revolving. The tin of the body of the ship was dented in places.

"From the story told about the partner who had removed the machinery, and from the flimsy appearance of the machine, I came to the conclusion that the whole thing was a fake, and that the airship had been dragged to that place."

#### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) San Francisco Chronicle, p. 5.**

AN AIRSHIP WHICH RODE IN A WAGON. / WAS PLANTED IN A GULCH. / THE LATEST FAKE TO DECEIVE THE CREDULOUS. / Built of Galvanized Iron and Conveyed to a Secluded Spot.  
/

The Call's airship was found early this morning.

The "seraph of the air" spread its wings like a "giant condor of the Andes" and slid down the hill in the vicinity of the Sunnyside House on the Corbett road and with a peculiar whirring sound scraped all the paint off its underside.

It landed ignominiously, like its great prototype invented by Darius Green, for lucklessly the spot chosen for its resting-place was a cow pasture.

Sunnyside House on the Corbett road fronts a milk ranch and the herders heard a noise shortly before midnight that they describe as like an earthquake. Rushing forth they heard cries proceeding from an ill-favored gulch where the cows ruminant at night time. Going to the spot they found a strange looking craft of metal, modeled, no doubt, after a seagull with wings and propellers.

They did not examine the machine closely, for the writhing forms of two men appealed to their humanity. The writhing forms were soon out of their misery and recovered sufficiently to explain that they were the inventors and builders of an airship in which they had been sailing about when the machinery got out of order and they fell to earth. In proof they pointed to the immense cigar-shaped metallic tube, with its propellers and wings. Messengers were hurried to the Almshouse for medical assistance and word was conveyed to the press.

When the Almshouse physicians and the reporters arrived it took but a moment to puncture the "fake." Captain Reddy recognized in Professor J.D. deGear, the inventor, a man who had, through the Almshouse telephone, called up a prominent local amusement director during the afternoon whom he assured that everything was all right and that "she would go tonight, sure."

The reporters found that the airship was constructed of galvanized iron; that the paint was not yet dry upon it, and that the propeller blades would bend at a touch, and the thing was left to rest where it had fallen.

The inventor vainly endeavored to convince them that it had once sailed the skies, but under close cross-questioning admitted that it had been hauled to the crest of the hill on a wagon, dumped over and dragged down into the gulch where it was found.

### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) San Francisco Evening Post, p. 3.**

THIS AIRSHIP HAS NEVER SOARED / It Could Only Rise Aided by Block and Tackle. / Probably Designed by Enterprising Local Showmen. /

The "airship" which last night plunged from a dizzy height in the neighborhood of the Sunnyside Hotel, has one or two serious defects.

An expert inspected the mystery carefully this morning and made the startling discovery that the glory of the heavens and a morning paper was a rank fake of large proportions.

The tenth wonder of the world is about forty feet in length by eight in diameter. It is built of galvanized iron, and has a circular well big enough to hold two people.

There are no side keels to steady the machine, which, if raised to any height, would inevitably take the shortest cut to earth, the heaviest point downward, and no favors whatever shown to unfortunate maniacs who might chance to be on board.

Quite rational airships have from time to time been constructed, but the Sunnyside meteor has obtained no pointers from any of them. It is simply a big cylinder of galvanized iron. Not even its surface is corrugated, as even the schoolboy student of dynamics could have suggested was necessary for strength and safety in flight.

As even the driver of a locomotive moving at the rate of thirty miles an hour keeps in the shelter of the hood to breathe comfortably, it is presumed that the "inventor" or the ship did not expect to go to Honolulu and back in a night.

The steerer of the machine evidently expected to sit astride it without any protection from sun or wind. His situation might be regarded as perilous but for the fact that the alleged soarer has no propulsive power, and could not possibly leave the solid mother earth unless assisted by some sort of block and pulley arrangement.

The tale of the arrival of the air ship is graphically told by the employes of a neighboring milk ranch, who had the distinguished honor of hearing the sounds produced when the structure was unloaded from a wagon and sent sliding down the hillside to its present humble resting place.

It has not yet been definitely announced whether the directors of an enterprising scheme intend to "discover" the air ship where she lies with the paint still wet upon her unpalpitating sides, or whether they will reconstruct and improve their rather clumsy attempt before springing it upon an eager and indiscriminating public—at 25 cents a head.

[pic.: The Alleged Airship as it Lies Near Sunnyside Hotel.]

### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) San Francisco Examiner, p. .**

THAT AIRSHIP, IT WON'T STAY PUT. / Cornered in a Forest Near the Sad Sea's Shore, but Gets Away. / Even the Hardy Fishermen of Monterey Who Saw the Thing at Bay Evanish. / ESCAPES LIKEWISE FROM STANFORD. / Academic Groves No More Congenial to this Wanderer of the Void Than Pacific Grove or Oroville.

PACIFIC GROVE, December 3.—You remember, reader, that sonorous line of Henry V: “All things are ready, if our minds be so.”

Apparently the San Francisco daily yclept the "Call" has this point of view as to the airship, that phantom of the night. The airship is ready, heaven be praised, if only the human intellect can bolstered be to think so. Venus, Mars or which you will of the "isles of light"—indeed, any old thing, will answer the purpose, provided it be viewed from a friendly standpoint, as witness the stories—fast growing beyond numbers, no two agreeing—for which that journal staunchly vouches.

Somewhere, surely, amidst this multitude of floating things the air ship ought to be, on every principle of the philosophy of chance.

“Tis hard if all is false that I advance.

A fool must now and then be right by chance.”

Howbeit, the report that it has been at anchor on the beach of Monterey will have to be courteously and reluctantly but none the less stoutly denied.

This report, published in the "Call" this morning, begins in this way:

That the problem of navigating the air has at last been successfully solved there no longer remains a doubt. At an early hour this morning, some fifteen miles from Pacific Grove, two Italian fishermen, Giuseppe Valinziano and Luigi Valdivia, while engaged in their vocation, were completely terrorized by seeing an object descending from the heavens, which to their terror-stricken imaginations seemed to be falling directly upon their boat. When the object had fallen within some few hundred yards of the water it floated easily and at a moderate speed until it landed on the sandy beach. The airship, for such it proved to be, seemed to be under the perfect control of its occupants, three in number. Immediately on landing they alighted, and, picking up their ship, carried it back from the beach and into the woods. As soon as the two fishermen had recovered from their astonishment they drew in their nets and attempted to make a landing, and after several unsuccessful attempts to get through the surf, which was very rough, a landing was made.

A close search of the peninsula fails to reveal this convenient forest, and the most faithful questioning of all the fishermen who go down to the sea thereabouts has not yielded the faintest tidings of the men with the musical names—Giuseppe Valinziano and Luigi Valdivia. Nor at Monterey could aught be heard or seen of them, or of any who had ever set eyes on them or ever expected so to do.

Nevertheless, inquiry was not altogether fruitless. It yielded this plain tale: The conductor of the train running from San Francisco to Pacific Grove said: "At 2:30, just as we were about to push out of the Third and Townsend depot, a man hurried up to me and asked if I would kindly deliver a letter to the Pacific Grove telegraph operator and ask him to wire it to the "Call" office after 7:30 o'clock. I did as I was told, and that's all I know about it." The telegraph operator here declares that the telegram which was spread on the "Call's" first page this morning in all the glory of leaded type, was forwarded by request of a man who handed him an envelope and said: "Wire this to the 'Call.'" A.W. Jones Jr., the "Call's" correspondent here, denies that he was the author or sender of the message. And there you are.

“The dispatch is so absurd that the people are disgusted. They think we are a set of idiots down here to thrust such nonsense in our teeth,” said a member of the Town Board. "The story is a mass of the silliest lies and an imposition on common sense. The sooner such bosh is called off the better."

For all that it may be well to keep in mind this editorial declaration of the "Call":

The "Call" correspondent, who interviewed the fishermen, states that they have the reputation of being truthful and responsible toilers of the sea.

#### AND NOW STANFORD.

How a Sensation Declined to Be Spoiled by Facts.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY, December 3.—It may be just as well to explain that the "Call" story, published yesterday, to the effect that the airship had at last been seen here, is untrue.

The story was to the effect that three university students saw a light Monday night about 10:30 o'clock which they were inclined to think was the light of an airship. The students were represented as being very much excited over the sight and very much puzzled as to the true nature of it, and as having

changed from a state of skepticism regarding the existence of an airship to one of perplexity and credulity.

The facts of the case are that the three students in question saw a light, but knew from the first that it could not be attached to an airship, because its motion was such as to prove conclusively that its support was a kite or balloon driven about by the wind. For the sake of a joke the three students claimed to have seen General Hart's aerial visitor or one of the swarm of them that fills the air every night according to the testimony of eye-witnesses whose veracity cannot be impeached. Their story soon spread about the men's dormitory and occasioned some talk, but very few were blind to the fact that the boys were "joshing." Indeed, quite a number of other students saw the "mysterious" light at the same time and knew that the three had no idea that there was anything wonderful about it. Then a little later in the morning, when the students began to arrive from Palo Alto, it was learned that the light was that of a fire balloon sent up by Douglas Bartholomew, the proprietor of the Palm Restaurant. The "Call" correspondent was informed of the solution of the matter, but his story was already written, and it was better to add the weight of the testimony of University students to the support of a fantastic sensation than to spoil a good yarn, so along it went to the "Call" and lo! another trustful "scoop."

The students are agreed, however, with the "Call's" opening statement:

Mystery deep and impenetrable still enshrouds the mysterious client of ex-Attorney-General Hart and his tantalizing and equally mysterious cruisers of the upper air.

Certainly nothing has been observed here that tends to strip away any of this raven mystery.

This all, of course, taking the "Call's" word for it, that there is a mystery.

#### An Airship at Twin Peaks.

One airship has been captured at last, but it wasn't the Shortridge Thunderbird. It was just a big cigar-shaped galvanized tank, with lots of wheels and a "bright, weird light."

Emil Laplace, the florist, who lives on Stanford Heights, about half a block south of the Twin Peaks, was startled out of his slumbers last night by a most frightful clatter and unearthly uproar in a deep ravine near his home. He roused his family and they all rushed out to ascertain the cause of the clamor.

They found that J. de Gear had come to grief in his initial attempt to fly. His machine had collapsed and he himself was somewhat bruised by his fall.

De Gear says that for five or six month past he has been working on a flying machine for a capitalist whom he will not name. The machine consists of an iron or steel tank, cigar-shaped and about forty feet long. In the center is an opening, where the navigator sits and steers. There is a propeller in front and one at the rear and one on each side. The tank is filled with gas and then the propellers are set in motion by a small electric motor that also feeds an incandescent headlight.

De Gear and his employer took the machine out to Stanford Heights last night. They got it onto a hill of sharp grade and then set the dynamo in motion. De Gear got in and soared about fifteen feet down hill when the crash came and then they picked him up. He says that there was not enough gas on board and that the wheels were too small. He will haul the wrecked airship back to town to-day and perhaps will some night try another flight.

San Francisco Examiner, Fri. Dec.4 p.6—Viewed in relation to the airship, with which it is intimately associated, there seems to be some doubt as to whether insanity is cause or effect.

#### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) San Luis Obispo Tribune, p. .**

Local Brevities. / Came from San Luis.

The Visalia Delta has found out the origin of the airships. The little interior daily beats the Call all to pieces. The Call originated the fake, but it did not find out its origin. Listen to the Delta: "The ship was apparently launched at Bald Mountain in San Luis Obispo county, and its course seemed to be from Bald Mountain, northeast, skirting the boundary line between Kings and Fresno counties, thence in and across Fresno and Madera counties toward Mariposa, where it was lost to view in the horizon."

Local News. In a recent issue of the Call, a former San Luis Obispoan is interviewed in regard to the airship. It is George A. McCahey of Sacramento. George thinks there is something in the mysterious "bird" in the heavens.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) Santa Barbara (Calif.) Daily Independent, p. 4.**

AN AIRY YARN. / Did the Mysterious Air Ship Visit This City? / A Strange Object Seen By a Lone Citizen on a Dark December Night. /

At last Santa Barbara has an air ship; when last seen the mysterious visitor was scudding over the hills toward the Cuyama on a short cut to Washington. The only man who saw the strange craft, so far as known, is I.B. Leach, the stage agent. He insists that he was not dreaming of stages, but that he was very wide awake, and that he saw something moving through the air between nine and ten o'clock at night, as he was going home. He will not swear that it was an air ship, but he is positive that there was a bright light, evidently carried by some large object, moving slowly from west to east, and at a regular distance from the earth; it neither rose nor fell, but continued a steady flight; he watched it for fully five minutes, and saw it disappear across the mountains.

"It may have been a big balloon sent up by some one in Lompoc; or may be it was the air ship; I don't know what it was," was the way Mr. Leach dismissed the subject when asked regarding it. "I told the folks when I got home, but I have not talked about it outside, for fear it would get in the papers, and then people would say, 'Another blank fool.' It was Wednesday night when I saw it; I watched again last night but if it returned I can not state, as I did not see it.

"It was no toy balloon, that is certain; the light was too large, and it did not rise as a balloon would, but kept about parallel with the earth's surface. Perhaps some joker sent up a large cloth balloon, with a light attached, or it might have (been) the airship with two or three men aboard."

Mr. Leach lives up town, and was on the deserted back streets when he saw the object; otherwise he would have called some one's attention to it.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) (Santa Barbara, Calif.) Morning Press, p. 3a.**

Either the Sacramento air ship has floated down this way, or a party of young ladies and gentlemen returning from a party about midnight last night have been basely deceived. If it had been a party of young men alone there would be room for the suspicion that the dancing lights observed were phenomena of their overheated brains, but the presence of the ladies precludes the thought. What appeared to the party were moving lights in the eastern heavens, somewhere in the vicinity of Mt. San Jacinto, and they at once suggested the airship. If it was not this aerial voyager, what was it? This poser will be open to answers for twenty-four hours.—Pasadena Star.

Santa Rosa Daily Republican, 12/4/2. The airship craze is reported to have sent one person to an insane asylum. It occurs to us that the institute for feeble minded would be a more appropriate place for people who are daft on that question.

(Sonora) Democratic Banner, 12/4, p.2. The many flying ships darting about the stars should startle no one. All things are possible since the advent of prosperity.

**1896 December 4 (Fri.) Ukiah (Calif.) Republican Press, p. 1.**

AERIAL APPARITIONS / A QUEER SIGHT SEEN BY MEN WITHOUT A GUN. / The Airship Discovered While on the Way to Centerville—Evidence to Prove That Fort Brown Was Closed on the Night of the Phenomenon.

At last the great aerial wonder has appeared in Mendocino county. From the time the telegraph brought the news of the remarkable discovery made by stargazers at Sacramento local quidnuncs had been scanning the heavens above Mendocino, momentarily anticipating the advent of Ex-Attorney-General Hart's great literary wonder. They were certain that it would appear in time, for there has yet been no sensation discovered that did not find its counterpart in this prolific clime.

They were not mistaken. The airship has been seen, and that too by gentlemen whose veracity is as unquestioned as were the witnesses to the hatchet incident in the life of the Father of his Country.

Saturday afternoon Dr. E.G. Case and William Held Jr. left for Potter valley, to be present at a banquet which was given by Court Sanhedrim, A.O.F.

The air was cool and crispy, and the team sped along swiftly. When the two gentlemen passed Fort Brown the lights in the barracks were out. This fact should not be forgotten, as it forms a very important link in the chain of corroboration of the remarkable story that follows.

In due time the travelers reached the Sam Neill place, this side of Centerville. It was here that the phenomenon was for the first time witnessed, which had best be told in the words of Stenographer Held, from notes taken on the spot:

"We had been driving along rapidly," said Mr. Held, "and I was nearly asleep from the somniferous effect of my companion's conversation. I was occasionally aroused by the jolting of the buggy, but immediately relapsed into slumber when a smooth place in the road was reached. All at once I was awakened by a very bright light, which burst on us suddenly with a blinding glare.

"I thought at first that the buggy robe had caught fire from a spark from the doctor's cigar. As soon, however, as I recovered from my momentary apprehension, I saw, about 200 yards above us and sailing rapidly along in the upper air, what appeared to be the headlight of a prehistoric locomotive.

"As my eyes grew accustomed to the blinding glare I saw the indistinct outlines of an object which resembled one of Paul Baier's Christmas cigars magnified 750,000 times. The light from the reflector beneath the aerial wonder was glinted back from what seemed to be two immense aluminum wings. Immediately above the cigar-shaped object was a balloon-shaped air-vessel to which the object below was evidently attached.

"The airship approached us from the east. It flew with a wavy, undulating motion, and disappeared over the range to the west. Of course, I do not suppose the story will be generally credited, but as to its reality I have not the slightest doubt."

Dr. E.G. Case corroborated the statement made by Mr. Held.

"I was driving at the time," said the doctor, "and was suddenly startled by a very bright light, the effulgence of which I can but imperfectly describe. As soon as the glare enveloped the horses they became frightened, and for a moment or so I had all I could do to pacify the team. The circle of light moved rapidly northward, and I soon got the team back in the road. I then had the leisure to examine the remarkable sight.

"The objects, for there were two of them, evidently attached to each other, were cigar-shaped, and the electric searchlight emanated from the bottom of the air raft thus formed. They were distant from the earth not more than 200 feet, and I could plainly hear a humming noise either caused by the passage of the airship through the atmosphere or by the working of the machinery. The object went northward some miles evidently, and then circled to the south. It was going quite rapidly, and soon disappeared from view. I am positive it was an airship, and so confident am I that it will so prove to be that I am willing to bet a box of the best cigars in town that the solution will be given in less than six months."

State of California / County of Mendocino SS

Henry Hopper, being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he is a resident of Potter valley; that he was present in Centerville Saturday last, November 28, 1896; that he then saw E.G. Case and William Held, with both of whom he is acquainted; that they were both duly sober, and bore no evidence of having taken a drink of any kind of intoxicating liquid. Henry Hopper.  
Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of November, 1896.

Dr. J.C. McCroskey, / Notorious Publican.

State of California / County of Mendocino SS

Lucien Edwards being first duly sworn, deposes and says that he is a white male citizen of the United States over 21 years of age; that Saturday November 28th, he went to Potter valley in company with William Melton; that Fort Brown was open at the time; that they stopped at that place and took two drinks each; that they drove into Potter in the evening; that they saw no airship. / Lucien Edwards.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 30th day of November, A.D., 1896. / Oliver Cleveland, City Marshal.

AT HOME AND ABROAD /

W.T. Kahler swears upon his Stradivarius that he saw the airship last evening. It was sailing south along the western horizon, and had its three electric searchlights in action.

Winters Express, 12/4/8. Got 'Em Yet.

As we said last week, we've got 'em bad and have 'em often, and the airship seems to be responsible for the whole business. Here's a sample of how it effects one well known young man, who is ardently paying court to one of the belles of the vicinity. His is a bad case; but now that the weather is too cool for moonlight walks, we trust his cure will be as rapid as his degeneration:

I've a secret in my heart, Sweet Marie; / A tale I would impart, love, to thee.

If you would the airship see, / You should sit upon my knee,

Then I'll show you where 'twill be, / Sweet Marie, Sweet Marie,

Oh, I know just where 'twill be, Sweet Marie.

Oh, it sails right through the air, Sweet Marie;

It will surely be up there, Sweet Marie.

If you go to see the light, / Just come with me to-night,

You will make my heart so light, / Sweet Marie, Sweet Marie,

Oh, you'll make my heart so light, Sweet Marie.

(Woodland) Yolo Semi-Weekly Mail, 12/4, p. 2. THAT AIRSHIP. / Organization of the Pacific Company with \$20,000,000 Capital. /

A New York dispatch says that a company with a capital of \$20,000,000 has been organized in that city to build airships.

The following appeared in the Bee of Wednesday:

The Bee is in receipt of a communication from the Atlantic and Pacific Aerial Navigation Company, whose office is in the Spreckles Building, San Francisco. It reads as follows:

Editor Daily Sacramento Bee, Sacramento, Cal.—Dear Sir: We know not what the aerial visitor is, which is being seen in many portions of the State, but we know that in a few months at furthest we will have an airship which will without peradventure navigate the great upper ocean.

The enclosed circular will give you a good idea of what the ship will be. This ship when built will pass over Sacramento in broad daylight, the daily papers being notified beforehand of its coming. Very truly yours, / C. A. SMITH. [also in The Mail of Woodland, 12/4/2.]

#### **1896 December 4 (Fri.) Sutter County Farmer (Yuba City, Calif.), p. 6.**

Pennington Points. /...

If the testimony of reputable witnesses is to be believed the famous air ship was in our vicinity Sunday night. It passed about three miles north of Pennington in a westerly direction, and after an unsteady wave-like motion, seemed to settle below the horizon in the distance. A single bright light was plainly visible though the form of the ship could not be clearly discerned.

News from Live Oak.

EDITOR FARMER: Of course we have seen meteors, and we saw the airship or winged angel as we call it, for it was hatched and raised right in this neighborhood. Several years ago a young buzzard was caught and belled, but as the clapper had worn out, he was recaptured by the Bryanites, the bell plated with free silver and furnished with an electric light and storage battery attachment and was turned loose as a mascot for the party. Therefore the aforesaid buzzard having been in perihelion with the planet Venus, while making nightly flights over neighboring towns has rattled a great many well meaning but emboozastic people.

Nicolaus News.

Pat Mulvaney and some of the boys caused quite a consternation among the Nicolausites by calling attention to a light and making them think it was the great wonder of the 19th century—the air ship.

**Ventura Free Press, 12/4/5.** And now it is reported that the airship has been seen by Ventura people, or they imagine they have seen it. It is probably a large hoax, and will be exposed before long. But you can rest assured that some means for navigating the air will yet be discovered.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Contra Costa (Calif.) Gazette, p. 2.**

The air is filled with rumors of air ships, but whether there have been air ships in the air or not is a mooted question. Hundreds of people think they have seen the mysterious ship sailing through the heavens, however, and all are no doubt honest in their belief, but W.H. Warren, a chicken rancher living near Haywards goes the star-gazers one or two better by asserting that he has not only enjoyed a flight in such a ship, but that he is also the inventor of the craft. He says it will carry one man, and is satisfied that he has solved the problem of aerial navigation. In a recent trial trip he had perfect control over the machine. He rose to a height of 100 feet and maneuvered the machine in every direction. The machine is cigar shaped and furnished with wings and a tail. The motive power is gasoline, but the inventor says he will use electricity. He got his idea from watching seagulls fly. This is fully as "fishy" as the air ship tales that have been floating about, as the inventor not yet produced the machine in support of this claim.

Arcata Union, Dec. 5, p. 2. Perhaps the air ship will be given a rest now in the great San Francisco dailies until the great Sharkey-Fitzsimmons muddle is settled.

Daily Colusa Sun, 12/5, p.3. All sorts of airships have been found in all sorts of places.

A fire balloon sent up by a restaurant man at Palo Alto created the excitement about the airship at Stanford University.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Daily Humboldt Times (Eureka, Calif.), p.4.**

About Town

A red lantern at the top of a flagpole on Torrent engine house Wednesday night was mistaken by many for the mysterious light of the equally mysterious airship. So keen were the imaginations of some of the beholders, that with the aid of it and their opera glasses they were enabled to see the outlines of the airship and a man who was supposed to be the engineer.

Dec. 12 p. 2 Inventor La Roche of Hoboken plans to fly to Calif in 48 hours.

Jan. 2 '97 Mr. Eddy of [Riponne] N.J. flies kites.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Fresno (CA) Morning Republican, p. 5.**

GEORGE JENNINGS' STORY. / A Fresnan Who Knows the Airship's Inventor.

George Jennings, one of the proprietors of the Grand Central hotel bar, claims to have positive knowledge that the airship which has been soaring about in the skies, actually exists and is now resting on mother earth somewhere in Fresno county. Mr. Jennings asserts with all seriousness that the inventor of the craft, who is an old time friend of his, came into his saloon day before yesterday and gave him the important information. The ship had been carried by the air currents away from the coast, and not until this county was reached could a landing be effected.

The inventor came to the city to take the train for San Francisco, where he has gone, Mr. Jennings says, to get material to make some improvements on the steering apparatus of the craft, which is defective. He described the machine to Jennings as being about sixty feet long and constructed of aluminum, with electricity for motive power. Mr. Jennings says he is to have a ride when the ship is completed. He refuses to give the name of his friend, the inventor.

**Weekly Galt (Calif.) Gazette**

Dec. 5, 1. (Oregon) Burt Hillyard alleges that he was hypnotized by Spanish hypnotists at Portland and while unconscious of his surroundings was married. 97-0

(San Andreas, Calif.) Calaveras Prospect, Dec. 5, 4. The airship continues to be seen by reliable witnesses every night in various parts of the State. There must be about fifty of them sailing about according to all counts.

(Santa Rosa) Sonoma Democrat, Dec. 5, p. 4d.

The gentleman of "undoubted veracity" has been around again. He was last seen in the Petaluma Argus office. He says the flying machine was afloat the night Barham spoke in Petaluma, October 27th, and he and a wagon-load of men saw it. The unbelief of the Argus was "caved down the bank" by the statement of this gentleman of undoubted veracity. If he had said on the way "from" instead of "to" a political meeting at which Barham spoke, it would have been reasonable to suppose that the man believed he had seen a flying machine, but that he thought he saw it before he got to the meeting throws suspicion on either the credibility or the sanity of the man of undoubted veracity.

**(Grass Valley) Weekly Telegraph, Dec. 5 p. 1.**

Local Shorts.

The mysterious airship was seen at Chico, so says the Enterprise, and was witnessed by many citizens. It's about time for Grass Valleyans to see it here.

(A young man in Nevada City sees a light in a second-story window and yells "airship")

Dec. 12,4. The fishermen say the airship landed on the beach at Pacific Grove. W.H.H. Hart says his client is out navigating the air.

26p.1. Wildman at Deadman's Flat.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Los Angeles Herald, p. 7.**

Orange County.

J. C. Calloway, assistant cashier of the Commercial bank in this city, as authority for the following statement: On the evening of Wednesday last, from his home on Spurgeon street, he saw, as a considerable elevation in the northwest heavens, two lights near together, the one a small light, the other appearing three times the size of the surrounding stars. These lights, maintaining their relative positions to each other, moved in a northeasterly direction, seeming to approach the earth. He watched them until they grew indistinct. The same lights had been seen by Frank Galloway in the southwest an hour or two previous. Mr. Galloway does not claim to have seen an airship. He saw nothing but the light; heard no sounds of any character, but says he knows the lights were not ordinary meteors, for several of these lights flashed past the two which appeared so mysterious both in appearance and in motion. The same objects were seen by other citizens also. No one can explain their character.

Los Angeles Record, 12/5/2. An Oregon man who acquired airshiptomania has had to be taken to the asylum along with the aircastle architects. The only safety nowadays lies in three meals and a good sleep. Pork-and-beans is not esthetic, but it has anchored down many a drifting mind.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Marysville Daily Appeal, p. 1.**

LIGHT IN THE HEAVENS. / Plainly Seen at Browns Valley—Anxious Marysville Watchers.

Last evening about 7:30 o'clock a telephone dispatch was received from Browns Valley stating that the air ship was then seen passing west of that place going in the direction of San Francisco. The lights appear to be about five miles distant and were watched for some time until they disappeared. The light was described as a bright electric light and at that distance looked as large as a good-sized lantern. Rae D. Swezy at Swezy's ranch near Browns Valley reported seeing the light which was watched by four other persons at that place and all were satisfied of the genuineness of the apparition. Upon receipt of the news at Marysville many citizens turned out to look for the aerial visitor.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Marysville Democrat, p. .**

IT IS COMING. / The Second Trial of the Oroville Airship to be Made Tomorrow Evening. / Will Pass Over This City.

The doubting Thomases who refuse to see aerial crafts these nights are to have an opportunity to witness the real genuine article tomorrow evening as it speeds by over this city en route from Oroville, the place of its manufacture, for San Jose.

The following letter which was received at the Democrat office today, is self-explanatory:

“Dear Sir.—Weather permitting we expect to leave Oroville Sunday night about 7 o’clock on another trial trip in our new ‘airship.’ San Jose will be our destination. Our schedule is to pass over Marysville at 7:30 p.m. Any of your readers that doubt the genuineness of our invention will have all doubts removed if they keep a lookout for us Sunday night.” / Yours truly, / Northern California Air Ship Co.

IT CAUSED SOME EXCITEMENT. A hot-air balloon with a light attached was turned loose in the vicinity of Brown’s Valley last evening by a joker, who telephoned instructions to this city to keep a lookout for an aerial craft in the eastern heavens, which was headed this way. But the balloon went south, as many can testify who stood in D street and watched it until their feet got cold.

### **1896 December 5 (Sat.) Mendocino (CA) Beacon, p. 1.**

OUR UKIAH LETTER / . . . / The Airship is Seen in the Vicinity of Ukiah—A Brief Description of the Same.

UKIAH, December 3.—Ukiah is never behind the times in anything, not even when it comes to the airship. The course of this mysterious craft is well defined from San Francisco up past this place. It was seen at Petaluma, the following day at Cloverdale, next at Talmadge, and Saturday evening at Potter valley. At Potter valley it was seen by two parties, Dr. Case and Wm. Held, of this place, who were north bound for Centerville. When about two miles south of that place their horses shied at a light that suddenly flared up out of the darkness about them. As soon as their horses could be got under control and their buggy righted they looked about them for the cause of the accident. Off to the west could be plainly discerned the outlines of what was evidently a long, narrow cigar shaped craft suspended from what appeared to be a balloon or gas reservoir of some sort. James Thornton, a teamster who was some distance behind Case and Held, reported on his arrival in Centerville that he had considerable trouble with his horses owing to a strange light which they became frightened at, and described the craft the same as the others. James Spottswood, of Pomo, also saw the strange visitor, and E.E. Holbrook, proprietor of the Centerville hotel, arrived on the scene in time to see the light disappearing in the distance at wonderful speed.

The editor of the Herald evidently apprehends that the story of the air-ship is not true, for in his paper of yesterday he says that the Call correspondents are reaping a harvest by seeing (!) the airship. On behalf of the Call correspondent, I might say that Hersinger should not judge others by himself and imagine we all have sank so low in the level of honesty and veracity as to manufacture news.

### **1896 December 5 (Sat.) (Mokelumne Hill) Calaveras Chronicle, p. 3a.**

The airship is now a thing of reality. It was seen Thursday evening on the top of Stockton Hill and the bold navigation of the air was interviewed by one of our most prominent citizens. The navigator said he was having a splendid time, and that he visited the old historical town of Mokelumne Hill for the purpose of sampling some of that splendid whisky that is kept by the Oasis Saloon.

**(Mokelumne Hill) Calaveras Chronicle, 12/5/3b.** The Airship in Calaveras. /

The mysterious cruiser of the upper air, which has been seen in different parts of the State for the past two weeks, has now struck Calaveras County, as the following letter to the S. F. Call will show:

Robinsons Ferry, Calaveras Co., Nov. 26, 1896. / Five miners...P. F. Perryman. [see SF Call 12/2/14.]

### **1896 December 5 (Sat.) Pacific Grove (Calif.) Review, p. 2.**

That the airship landed within fifteen miles of this city was no fake. We are prepared to substantiate the recital for the reason that we have personally interviewed the aeronauts. Wednesday, as we had thrown ourself back into the depths of our crimson velvet upholstered patent revolving office chair with gold bullion fringe and diamond headed nails, over weary from cutting coupons and reckoning our income, we heard the clank of chains and glancing up we observed the fluke of a solid silver anchor caught into the marble lintel of the bay window of the tenth story of the building. Pressing an electric button at our elbow, the window swung noiselessly back, whereupon the bottom step of a flight of marble stairs was lowered into the sanctum down which tripped a Hindoo page attired in silken hose, slashed violet velvet doublet; and satin corselet, laced with silver chains. Doffing his diamond encrusted cap bedecked with a heron's plume, he knelt gracefully upon one knee and presented upon a golden salver, a rose colored, gilt edged, violet lined note from the satiny, creamy folds of which escaped the subtle fragrance of imprisoned rosebuds. Under the effulgent rays of the arc lights surmounting the marble statuary adorning our rosewood escritoire we discerned these lines: "Just tell them that you saw me." Catching up a golden pen with diamond tip and sapphire handle, presented us by Gale Bros., we traced the elegant response, "Rats." With a tinkling as of cymbals the anchor was loosed, the stairs spirited within the airship and we were alone to make record of the greatest newspaperial scoop of the country.

**December 5 (Sat.) Redwood City, Calif., Times-Gazette, p.3.**

COAST AND BAY-SIDE NEWS. /...

The whole of California seems wild over the newly invented airship, and the people of Pescadero have a word to say relative thereto. It—the airship—sailed over our little town, and away far off over the "white elephant" on pebble beach one night last week, and to the surprise of all it was captured. Yes, verily, it fell by a shot from the rifle of Constable Geo. Smith, and to add greatly to the surprise of those present, it proved to be a large rubber bladder or balloon bearing the advertisement of a firm in San Francisco. George has the airship on exhibition now so that all may see what one-half the world is worrying over.

The Woman in Black.

A spook in sombre robes is said to be seen evenings between the hours of 9 and 10 o'clock on Stambaugh street. The denizens of that part of town are greatly wrought up over the strange apparition and steps are being taken to have the ghostship find some other quarters for her meanderings. Several parties have seen a tall woman in black quietly walking up and down the street [at] night for over a week and no one has had the temerity to inquire about her apparent aimless wanderings.

Santa Rosa was visited about a week ago by a woman in black and the result was that six houses were entered and robbed, one gentleman having \$3,000 stolen from his residence.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Redwood City (Calif.) Times-Gazette, p. 3.**

To William Brown belongs the honor of discovering the much-talked-of airship. Early Monday morning he saw a small object somewhat the shape of a balloon descend on one of the Brittan hills and went at once to the place. He found a toy balloon about three feet high and encircling it was the advertisement of Nolan Bros., shoe dealers, San Francisco. Inside was a red light, and no doubt those who saw it in the skies the evening before were sure they had seen the flying machine. Many metropolitan firms take this means of advertising and this may account for the numerous airships seen by people throughout the State.

(Redwood City) Times-Gazette, Dec. 5, 3. Menlo Park Matters. / A clambake was enjoyed by a party of young men of the village Monday afternoon on the marsh. The party lingered on the watery waste in the hope of seeing the famous airship, so minutely described by Messrs. Smith and Becker, but it hovered not in sight.

Riverside Daily Press, 12/5/1. The Chicago Record is unkind enough to remark that San Francisco's air ship story may be true for credibility is lent the report by the fact that any one who has been there for one season knows that there are really not enough ways to get out of that town.

**(Riverside) Press and Horticulturalist, 12/7 p.5.** The air ship sailed over Box Springs last night.

Salinas Democrat, 12/5/1e. Two Airships. / Two airships were observed...columns of the Owl.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Sacramento Bee, p. 9.**

Here and There. /

Sacramento is getting a whole lot of glory out of her air ship. Accounts of it have been spread broadcast over the land, and the impression has got out that this city harbors a magnificent army of romancers.

As might have been expected, the big Sunday editions of the New York papers reached here yesterday with glowing accounts of the aerial wonder.

The Journal—W.R. Hearst's paper—edifies the New Yorkers with an entire page concerning the ship. A little over half of this page is taken up with a picture of the ship in full motion, sailing over Sacramento, and across the bottom of the page is to be seen a crowd of excited Sacramentans looking skyward. In the group may easily be recognized Joseph Steffens and J.O. Coleman, of the Chamber of Commerce; General J.G. Martins, Major W.A. Gett, Jr., General A.L. Hart, and what might easily be taken for N.E. White of the Record-Union, the only news paper man up to date who has actually seen the airship. / \*\*\*

The headlines of the Journal's account are of interest: HAS THE GREATEST PROBLEM OF THE AGE BEEN SOLVED? / A WORKING AIR SHIP SEEN ON THE PACIFIC COAST. / UNDER PERFECT CONTROL IT CARRIES FIFTEEN MEN AND A SEARCHLIGHT. / INVENTED BY A WEALTHY MAN AND COST \$100,000. / IT HAS WINGS TO STEADY IT, A SCREW AND A BIG GAS TANK. / \*\*\*

The Journal account informs us that: "On the evening of Tuesday, November 17th, many citizens of Sacramento, California, were surprised by the sudden appearance, directly over the city, of a startling aerial craft. The peculiar night visitant made its appearance about 7 o'clock. People standing on the sidewalks saw coming through the sky, over the housetops, a huge and brilliant light, propelled swiftly by some mysterious force. So brilliant was the light that as it flashed past suburban residences the inmates ran to their doors expecting to find a neighboring house in flames. Instead they saw a wonderful craft of the sky."

Interviews are published with Mayor Hubbard, Charles H. Lusk, Cashier of the Street Railway Company, and other well-known home people. All through the account Sacramento gets the glory attached to the discovery, which, all must admit, she is certainly entitled to.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) The Call (San Francisco), pp. 1,2.**

HEARST AND HIS TWO FACES / Editor Hearst Has One Opinion East and Another Here. / The "Journal" Describes the Invention and Credits the Phenomenon. / News of the Aerial Visitor as the Wires Flash It From Neighboring Localities. /

The many Jekyll-Hyde features of "Little Willie's" journalistic character are beautifully exemplified in the two views of the phenomenon that has recently appeared in the heavens hereabouts which have from time to time appeared in the Examiner here and in the New York Journal of New York City—both Mr. Hearst's newspapers.

In spite of the testimony of many reputable witnesses that strange moving lights have been seen in the sky the Examiner has continually referred to these phenomena as the result of "red eye" and midnight walks near breweries.

The following parallel columns concerning the airship, taken from Mr. Hearst's two papers, give a fair idea of how little one may depend upon anything seen in either paper:

AN AIRSHIP SEEN. / N.Y. JOURNAL,  
Nov. 28)

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 27.—The biggest problem of the age has been solved. Man has won what seemed to be his hardest battle with nature. A successful airship has been built. Scientists all over the world are tremendously interested by the stories which have been telegraphed from here; nearly every-body on the Pacific Coast is widely excited over the matter.

The story sounds like one of the romances of Jules Verne, but its truth is testified to by so many reputable citizens that there seems to be no reason whatever to question its accuracy.

EVIDENCE FIRST CLASS. / (N.Y. Journal,  
Nov. 28)

A WORKING AIRSHIP SEEN ON THE  
PACIFIC COAST—UNDER PERFECT  
CONTROL—IT CARRIES FIFTEEN MEN  
AND A SEARCH LIGHT.

The Pacific Coast newspapers are full of stories about an airship seen hovering above Sacramento and other towns. The testimony concerning it seems to be unimpeachable, but certain details are lacking which make Eastern inventors and scientists doubt the accuracy of alleged eyewitnesses.

IT WAS A REALITY. (N.Y. Journal, Nov.  
28)

It swiftly drew near the city, sailing evenly to the southwest.

Then it dropped nearer the earth, but suddenly shot up into the air again, as if the force that whirled it through space were sensible to the danger of collision with objects on the earth.

That much hundreds of prominent residents of Sacramento saw, and it caused consternation in all parts of the city, where groups gathered at the corners until far into the night listening to the tale of those that had seen it.

ONLY A DELUSION. (S. F. Examiner, Nov.  
24)

The man who has not an airship in his back yard in these days is poor indeed. The man who has not seen a fleet of airships maneuvering in the skies has left California ashamed of himself. He is like the man who fell out of the balloon. He is not in it. They come not in single ships, but in battalions. The county or town in the State which

PROBABLY DUE TO LIQUOR. (San  
Francisco Examiner, Nov. 23)

There are men who see queer things when they don't have a gun, and others who encounter wonders of an early morn or even at dewy eve when it has been more dewy than the law allows.

THE RESULT OF BEER / (S.F. Examiner,  
Nov. 23)

At Sacramento a man wandering in the immediate vicinity of a brewery saw a great light and a dark mass moving up and down the sky.

IT COULD NOT BE. (Examiner, Nov. 23)

What this thing is nobody knows. That it is an airship capable of carrying human freight seems impossible of belief, in view of the record of failure in the past. If some joker has turned loose a fire balloon to perplex and mystify that might account for the airship on an intelligible basis.

SURELY AN AIRSHIP. N.Y. Journal, Nov.  
28.

For purposes of self-protection during the pendency of his application for letters patent, the inventor has not disclosed all the details of his contrivance. Enough, however, has been discovered to show that he has found the true principle of aerial navigation. The excitement here has assumed the form of a tremendous sensation. It is the one topic of conversation in every

cannot produce a machinery bird or two is hiding its head in shame.

village, town and city in the State. In California the prevailing question to-day is: "Have you seen the airship?" That there is reason for that question the following facts strongly demonstrate:

The strange thing about the positions of the two papers is the fact that the descriptions that appeared in the Eastern paper were probably written in the Examiner office. They doubtless represent the San Francisco editor's real views, while the light vein pursued here has doubtless been because the paper pooh-poohed the real news the first day and was driven to give it later, after the chagrin of being beaten by The Call the first day.

AIRSHIP AT LIVERMORE. / Editor Ellis of the "Herald" Gives His Views of the Machine.

The following article will appear in the Livermore Herald to-day, giving the views of Editor Ellis:

The Herald may be a little late in coming to the front with an airship story, but nevertheless it has one, and as for its authenticity no man in Alameda County can doubt. The parties who witnessed this remarkable phenomenon are none other than the Rev. John Kirby of Oakland, presiding elder of the Oakland district, and Rev. Hugh Copeland.

Rev. Mr. Kirby was in Livermore Wednesday of this week and in the presence of Rev. Mr. Alexander, pastor of the Methodist Church, and Madison Beck of the firm of Beck & Co., made this statement:

"On the evening of November 22 Rev. Hugh Copeland and myself were riding in a buggy in the vicinity of Knights Ferry in Stanislaus County. We were just crossing a bridge when our attention was riveted to an object about a quarter of a mile ahead of us. It appeared at first like a huge ball of fire that rose from the earth.

"We were traveling in a southwesterly direction at the time and stopped our buggy to gaze in wonderment upon this startling and unexpected scene. It sailed along above the surface of the ground for probably 100 yards, then gradually raised higher and higher. Had it continued its course when we first saw it, it would have passed almost directly above us, but instead made a half circle to the west and north and was about the same distance when it reached a point opposite to us as it was when we first noticed it. Before it passed us we could plainly see two lights in front and at right angles of the flying machine, and as it was going by we saw a light, that was not visible before, attached to and at the rear of the object. We watched it for some time before continuing our journey. It could not have been a meteor because it did not go to the earth, but skimmed along rapidly.

"Had I been alone I might have believed that my eyes deceived me, but there was Mr. Copeland, who witnessed the same scene, and there is no possibility of our being mistaken. I had believed that the successful navigation of an airship was beyond the reach of mortal skill, but I look at it in a different light now. I do not claim, mind you, that what we saw that night was a genuine airship, but the natural question that arises is, If it was not an airship, what was it? I saw enough to convince me that the papers have no grounds to picture this phenomenon in the light of a burlesque. When we reached Stockton the following day the papers were full of descriptive accounts of an airship in Yuba County that pictured exactly what we had seen on November 22."

OAKLAND, Cal., Dec. 3.—The Rev. John Kirby, presiding elder of the Oakland district for the past two years, and pastor of the Park-street M.E. Church of Alameda six years previous to that, was interviewed at his home on Park street, Alameda, to-night. He repeated and confirmed the story as told above and added: "After reading the accounts of the airship in The Call I clipped them and forwarded

them to Mr. Copeland at Oakdale. To-day I received a reply in which he says: 'If there is an airship we shall share in the glory. People in Oakdale saw it on the same night.'" /

STRANDED NEAR FRESNO. / The Great Airship Caught in a Current and Sent Southward.

FRESNO, Cal., Dec. 4.—The skepticism of the people of this city regarding the existence of the airship has been removed largely by a strange statement of George Jennings, one of the proprietors of the bar in the Grand Central Hotel. He is a thoroughly reliable man and there is good ground to give credence to his story. He avers that he is practicing no deception. Mr. Jennings asserts that there is no question that an airship exists and that it has been sailing through the skies as reported. He talked with the inventor and the craft is now somewhere in Fresno County, not far from this city.

Mr. Jennings was interviewed by a Call correspondent this evening and made the following statement: "Yesterday shortly before noon a man appeared at my place of business and inquired for me. The stranger was covered with dust and travel-stained. I recognized him as an old friend whose name I cannot possibly give at present. It is true the airship is in Fresno County, just where I do not myself know. This man who was in here is one of the inventors. He told me that the trip to this county was involuntary upon the part of the men in the airship. In other words the machine came itself and they couldn't stop it.

"His statement was that they were flying, as usual, around Contra Costa County hills and rose to a height of about 1000 feet. Suddenly the airship struck a current of air and refused to answer its steering gear. It was borne rapidly southward against all efforts to change its course until suddenly the current of air seemed to lessen and the machine once more became manageable. The men aboard at once descended and flew about looking for a hiding place, which they at length found.

"My friend told me that the airship was made principally of aluminum, and that the rising and falling was accomplished by improved aeroplanes, while the motive power was electricity. He says the machine is perfect, except for the fact that at times it refuses to be steered in a given direction, and that it will not stand still in the air. He has gone to San Francisco and will return with some material and men probably to-night. He said if the news from Washington was satisfactory, he would bring his airship over to Fresno where every one could see it.

"I know the man well," concluded Mr. Jennings. "He had no reason to tell me such a story if it was not true. He had no business here, knows no one but myself and left without asking any favors. Moreover, he wanted the matter kept quiet." /

OVER SELMA. / Reputable Citizens View a Strange Aerial Traveler.

SELMA, Cal., Dec. 4.—The airship, or some other aerial traveler of like appearance, passed over Selma last night between 9 and 10 o'clock. It was seen by many reputable citizens. N.W. Stewart, grain merchant, went to the door of his residence about 9:30 o'clock and saw a light approaching from the west. It had the appearance of a locomotive headlight, and was apparently about 150 feet above the earth.

Mr. Stewart called to his family, and all saw the wonderful light pass over the town and disappear in an easterly direction. It was traveling at about the speed of a passenger-train.

G.S. Reichard, attorney-at-law, and many other persons also saw the remarkable light.

There is no question about an airship having passed over this part of Fresno County last night. /

THE WOMAN IN IT. / Strange and Circumstantial Story of a Sailor Passenger.

SAN LUIS OBISPO, Cal., Dec. 4.—William Gordon reached this town this morning. He states that he is a native of South Carolina and a truthful person, a graduate of Berkeley, but recently a sailor and just from New York.

His story is that yesterday evening about 9 o'clock, he was at Indio, and responded to the inquiries of a stranger who was looking for some one able to splice a rope. Gordon, being a sailor, offered his services, which were accepted, and he followed the man who claimed to have a haybaling outfit about a mile from town to a place where he found a cigar-shaped structure about 80 feet long and 25 feet in diameter. The structure was standing on projections, and had under it two propellers, five-bladed, say 15 feet across. There was a huge tail, which served as a rudder, of which the tiller-ropes had parted. Gordon spliced them.

The structure was of metal. There were a number of windows and two doors. The interior was divided into compartments and the motive power, which the captain stated was compressed air, seemed to operate machinery contained in a great case and controlled by levers.

Gordon was invited to come along and did so. He was given the rudder, operated by a wheel, and followed the courses given him as shown by compass. They rose in the air to a great height, probably

3000 feet, and took a northerly course and traveled at enormous speed. In a few hours they passed over Los Angeles, easily known by its great number of lights and then sped over Ventura, Santa Barbara and other places, and about 3 ' o'clock this morning settled down in a place in the mountains about eight miles southeast of this city.

Here the manager of the airship announced his intention of stopping a while and Gordon was sent for water, but after going a short distance he turned and discovered the strange vessel disappearing.

The airship man, Gordon says, was of swarthy appearance and spoke Spanish to the only companion he had, a woman. /

#### A Fake of Showmen.

It developed yesterday that the cigar-shaped galvanized iron tank, constructed to resemble an airship, which was found late Thursday night in a gulch near the Almshouse, is a "fake" creation. It was carted to the point where found in order to provide some cheap advertising for a local place of amusement. Owing to the darkness and lateness of the hour the imposition escaped exposure, as there was neither opportunity nor time for a close or full investigation.

[pic.,p.l: The Great California Airship, as Shown in an Illustration in the New York "Morning Journal" of Sunday, November 28. The Article Which Accompanies the Illustration Says that the Witnesses of the Phenomenon Are All Credible.]

#### 1896 December 5 (Sat.) San Francisco Chronicle, p. 6.

CREDIT WHERE IT IS DUE. /

The lone pre-eminence which the Call has reached in respect of airship news will not be disturbed in any way by professional jealousy. We hasten to affirm this, because the Call now and then seems anxious, not to say distraught, upon that very point. A while ago it said, with every appearance of heat, that its account of the first visit of the flying bladder in these parts had been "exclusive." Though the claim overlooked the fact that the weird tale of the Sacramento apparition had been put on all the news wires at once by the jocose star-gazers of the capital, the Call's journalistic neighbors let it have its own way. Since then that paper has again and again proved its right to a monopoly of news about the airship, and can be safely recommended to any one desirous of knowing the draught, speed and time schedule of the giant windbag, as revealed by nightly observations.

In yesterday's issue our veracious and enterprising contemporary outdid even its opening record. It described an airship built of galvanized sheet steel which two men, aided by a full cargo of hydrogen made from muriatic acid and an electric engine, presumably made from something else, had navigated the air over the Twin Peaks until, breaking from control, it had plunged into a ditch. This was a great scoop, the other papers saying merely that the alleged monster of the upper deep had been carted up the hillside on a truck and dumped down an incline by some practical jokers. Lacking the scientific attainments of the Call this journal did not suppose that a few cubic feet of hydrogen confined in a sheet-iron boiler, could raise the boiler, and engine and two men into the realms of thin air, but it seems that we were mistaken. There lay the airship, and there stood a man who said that he had come down in it. What could be more conclusive than that? If the Call was the only one to realize the full meaning of the spectacle at the time, so much the better for the discernment and perspicacity of that great paper and so much the worse for journals that do not know the proof of things when they see it.

Now that strict attention to business has enabled the Call to solve the disturbing mystery which has been so productive of that new disease called the "airship neck," let us hope that it will turn its mind upon the sea serpent and let the world know about that. Undoubtedly it could secure the aid of competent witnesses. Mr. Collins is still living, and as for General Hart, while his practice has not been in admiralty courts, we do not doubt that he regards the sea serpent in the light of a familiar spirit, and would be happy to support the Call's hypotheses with any amount of corroborative data in return for free advertising.

p. 6. Airier than the new airship.

Wouldn't it be a good idea in these days of airship fakes, which are swallowed by credulous newspaper people, to reproduce the old "Moon hoax" which fooled so many New Yorkers years ago?

Secretary Francis of the Interior Department suggests a lump sum as the proper way to settle the Pacific roads' indebtedness to the Government. Why doesn't the Secretary discuss something feasible, like airship competition to the railroad monopoly?

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) San Francisco Chronicle, p. 16.**

DIZZY FAKE OF STANFORD HEIGHTS. / TIN TOY OF A METAL ROOFER. / THE "AIRSHIP" COULDN'T FLOAT ON WATER. / An Absurd Contrivance Bestowed in a Ditch for the Edification of the Credulous. /

All in the neighborhood of Stanford Heights turned out yesterday to look and laugh at the fly-by-night airship which ran off the track late Thursday night and ditched itself conveniently close to the Almshouse telephone. In consequence the Sunnyside inn did a thriving business in steam beer, of which Professor Frank de Gear, press agent of the weird machine, got more than his share. He and his brother, George, borrowed blankets and sheets from the milk ranch and carefully covered the "airship" to protect it from the rude gaze of the public, and then, lest a too curious investigation should strip it of its coverings, drove stakes and stretched ropes about it at a respectful distance.

The small boy is no respecter of ropes, and the seraph of the air, fallen from "dizzy heights," was soon stripped of its covering. Down into its interior one of them made his way by tearing up the floor of the cockpit. Once inside the full splendor of the fake was revealed.

The cylinder, about six feet in diameter, was built up around wooden ribs, and the plates, instead of being riveted together, were nailed to these ribs. The "sickening smell of gas made from muriatic acid and something else" came from the use of muriatic acid as a flux for the solder used in closing some of the joints.

The propeller shafts were fixed firmly in blocks of wood. They had no bearings and were never intended to revolve. Instead, the propellers revolved upon the shaft as loosely as the wheels of a carriage upon their axles. There were no worms and gearing to communicate power to the propellers, and if there had been a speed of fifty revolutions a minute would have thrown every one of the flimsy blades off, for they were made simply of galvanized iron, with rods around the edges to stiffen them, and were fastened to the hub by three rivets each. An inconsiderate skeptic tore one of the blades from its fastenings with his fingers and carried it home as a souvenir of the "airship."

Upon the inside of the cylinder, in great red letters, were these mystic words: "Juniata, H.M. & S., 30x96, 16-117."

An enthusiastic believer in aerial navigation declared this to be a cabalistic sign indicative of the forces used to propel the "mysterious visitant." A more practical every-day fellow said it was the brand of the metal used. Holbrook, Merrill & Stetson confirmed the latter view and said that it denoted a certain brand of galvanized iron made for them, of size 30x96 inches and of weight sixteen ounces to the square foot and 117 pounds to the bundle. They also knew De Gear, but had no record of the sale to him of any such material.

That Havana is in no danger of annihilation at the hands of De Gear is a certainty. Indeed the latter will have not even the consolation of getting the "airship" on exhibition. The amusement manager who had engaged it as a forthcoming attraction has decided to have no more to do with it. "After the newspaper articles of this morning," said he, "it would prove to be a negative attraction."

Still there are people who believe that the problem of aerial flight has been solved by De Gear, and among those most thoroughly convinced are these who in public print yesterday declared it had fallen from "dizzy heights," that it was built of galvanized steel; that it had cleft the air on its gigantic pinions. That the builder of this famous flying machine drew his inspiration from the same source as comes all these assurances of the existence of an airship is made certain by a comparison of the contrivance itself with the published pictures of the "mysterious aerial craft cleaving the sky like winged lightning," as drawn by "special artists from descriptions" given by reputable people.

That the clumsy contrivance did not fall from any height dizzy or otherwise is proved by the fact that the mucky soil whereon it reposes is not indented in the least, and the sharp-pointed prow did not force its way a hair's breadth into the bank against which it was supposed to have struck.

Jefferson de Gear, brother of the press agent, called at the "Chronicle" office last night and made a statement as to the purpose of constructing the machine.

"I am not its inventor," he said. "I was simply employed as an expert cornice-maker to build the machine and put it where it was found. Yes, it was built for exhibition purposes. It took over three bundles of galvanized iron to construct it, and the thing weighed over 400 pounds. I build it in two nights and one day, and had eleven men working on it Wednesday night. I think I deserve credit for the job; it was a good piece of work."

Fired Him at San Luis Obispo.

SAN LUIS OBISPO, December 4.—A man of good appearance arrived late to-night. He says his name is William Gordon, and that he came to this country in an airship from San Bernardino county, and was then made to leave the ship by the owner, who went north. The man seems to be sane.

The Airship at Lodi.

LODI, December 4.—Between 6 and 7 o'clock this evening several reputable citizens saw the alleged airship traveling rapidly to the south. One man says he saw some kind of a body above and below the brilliant light, and is convinced that some large object passed through the air going northwest.

(Pics: The Almshouse "Airship" As She Lies and the Press Agent Ditto. Jefferson de Gear, Builder of the Fake Airship. (Sketched by Chronicle Artist.)

### **1896 December 5 (Sat.) San Francisco Examiner, p. 1,2.**

AN AIRSHIP IN THE MUD. / Night of Weird Whirrings, Cries and Crashes Behind Twin Peaks. / After Clearing Two Fences the Vessel Landed on End in a Small Ditch. / Story of the Man Who Built the Machine According to Another's Ideas and Plans. / HE PRONOUNCES IT A FAILURE. / T.D. De Gear Is an Inventor Himself, but Lays No Claim to the Devising of the Cigar-Shaped Craft. /

The hull of an airship is in a ditch on the ocean side of Twin Peaks, and for a time at least church steeples, clock towers and factory chimneys are safe from all but the soaring imaginations of the men who believe that "the prostrate leviathan of the air crashed down from dizzy heights and met all but complete annihilation in the bed of a foaming mountain torrent."

J.H. de Gear, the man who built the machine, declares it thus far a failure, and he announces that until he hears from the inventor—a mysterious and opulent unknown—does not know when nor whether another attempt to fly the machine will be made. Nothing could induce this Captain Nemo of the air to name the inventor. His only statement of a positive nature in reference to the matter was that he (De Gear) had not invented it, but had been engaged merely as a mechanic to carry out the ideas of another.

At present the machine is in a field, its sharp torpedo bow buried in the bank of an almost dry creek and the other tapering end up in the air bereft of the propeller which whirred so terribly as to arouse the few slumberers of the vale and the inmates of the Almshouse hard by.

All the machinery and mystery of the apparatus have disappeared, and nothing now remains to make the eyes of the passing dairyman start but the iron cylinder with its central pole and conical ends. At present it is the plaything of the small boy, who amuses himself and terrifies the cows by blowing into the small hole at the upper end of the hull and producing a most distressing noise.

De Gear went out yesterday afternoon to the scene of his alleged aerial endeavors and told the story of attempt and failure. Within a hundred feet of the road and an equal distance from a small saloon which is experiencing a boom on account of it, lay the airship. Behind a clump of trees on the other side of the road, in a place "unknown to public view," De Gear builded the ship. Like the famous Nautilus of Jules Verne, it was made in sections, and each section came from a different part of the city. Some of the parts were built where all the hull was "laid off," as shipbuilders say, in the basement of the builder's house on Fulton street.

Almost every galvanized iron shop in the city has done work on this," said Mr. de Gear, "and none knew what the parts were for. The apparatus or the machine was put together close to where the trial was made. It was not loaded on a wagon and hauled out to Sunnyside. Now I don't know anything about the inventor's ideas except what he told me. He had an electric motor in the apparatus, and he had a number of bags of hydrogen gas, which he expected to generate in the machine as he needed. Well, something went wrong. The gas did not generate quickly enough, and the fans were not strong enough."

That something went wrong was evident, for the battered under side of the apparatus showed it had been hit below the belt before it was counted out.

"The inventor was not on board," said Mr. de Gear.

"He did not want to get in, so I tried it myself. I don't know just how I got down, but the airship did lift a little, sometimes one end, sometimes the other, and I suppose that is how we made the fences so nicely. The fans were going about 1,400 revolutions a minute, and they were not strong enough to stand the strain; in fact, they collapsed, and that is what caused the smashup."

De Gear, though he denies emphatically that he did anything else but the mechanical work of putting the air-ship together according to the plans of a well-to-do experimenter, is nevertheless an inventor himself. He made the Archimedean propeller which was tried in the bay some time ago. The trouble with it was that the steamer to which it was fitted would only go ahead, and nothing would induce it to go astern—the only thing to do was to keep going. He is also the inventor of a water bicycle, which he hopes soon to test practically. His biggest success, as he himself says, is a steam beer governor, and from it he derives a neat revenue.

In speaking about the air-ship he said it had taken nearly six months to build. It /p.2/ is thirty-nine feet long from tip to tip and seven feet in diameter. The cylindrical barrel is eight feet long and the hole in the top is three feet in diameter. The fans are all alike--two horizontal and one vertical and each seven feet in diameter. Just behind the forward fan there is a rudder by which the vessel was to be steered. The idea of the horizontal fans, the builder says, is to change the altitude of the ship, and they are on the same principle as the toy which boys play with occasionally. They have a small fan on the end of a rod and by the aid of a string impart a very rapid motion to it, which causes it to soar upwards. The gas was to give the whole apparatus buoyancy and was under a pressure of between eighty and ninety pounds. The hull is made of galvanized sheet steel number 26, Birmingham gauge. The longitudinal seams are "locked" and soldered on the inside. The circumferential seams are double riveted and supported on the inside with hoops of wood. So far as the exterior goes the ship is a very neat piece of work. It is smooth and shapely.

De Gear is very anxious to explain that he is not an "air-ship crank." He does not believe the necessary strength and lightness can be obtained for the purpose of building such a craft from the materials at hand nowadays.

The saloon man and his neighbor are willing and anxious to have the story of the wonderful ship retold with variations as often as any one will listen, and many a rancher drove over yesterday to look at the thing and discuss it in the saloon. The stories told were fearful. The noise in the night, the whirr, the crash, the cries for help from the inventor and the ditched experimenter, the mud which was ploughed up by the tail fan, the cows which were frightened until all the milk was sour and the mysterious man who did not dare trust himself to the machine he had devised were all subjects capable of indefinite enlargement and variation every time the story was retold. The watchman who was installed at dawn was unable to stand the strain and succumbed early in the afternoon.

[Illus.: p.1. THE SO-CALLED AIRSHIP THAT NEARLY COST TWO MEN THEIR LIVES. (& pic. of J.S. De Gear)

p.2. THE AIR-SAILOR MAN OF TWIN PEAKS CREATES A SENSATION. (Broke a Fence; Scared Some Juniors; A Victory for Science)  
A SOCIETY EVENT ON TWIN PEAKS.]

San Francisco Evening Post, 12/5, 18. Another Sea Serpent. / He Was Sighted Off Borneo and Was a Wonder.

### **1896 December 5 (Sat.) San Francisco Examiner, p. 6.**

#### **THE AIRSHIP NUISANCE.**

"Fake journalism" has a good deal to answer for, but we do not recall a more discreditable exploit in that line than the "Call's" persistent attempt to make the public believe that the air in this vicinity is populated with airships. It has been manifest for weeks that the whole airship story is a pure myth. All the other papers in the State have treated it in the proper spirit. They have described the progress of the delusion lightly, letting their readers know of the remarkable stories told by practical jokers or by

unbalanced enthusiasts, but doing nothing to mislead them. But the "Call" has gone on, day after day, persistently exploiting the hoax with a dull seriousness that has become exceedingly wearisome to acute readers and dangerously deceptive to confiding ones. It has had new airship fakes every day, each introduced with "scare heads," assuring the trustworthiness of the story.

The Hornbrook enterprise was praiseworthy compared with this stupidly prolonged attempt to humbug the community in a matter of local interest. One case of airship insanity directly due to the fake has been reported from Oregon. Two men in this city, apparently trying to turn the craze to financial account in the dime museum line, have just taken the trouble to build a forty-foot galvanized-iron "airship," and roll it down a hill, with the chance of flattening themselves under it.

A paper may not be able to pay for genuine news, but it is never compelled to resort to persistent falsehood for lack of matter to fill up with. Shears and paste are cheap, and the "Call's" exchange list contains material with which it could fill its space a hundred times over without attempting to infect its readers with a silly craze.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) (San Francisco) Pacific Rural Press, p. 355.**

Pith of the Week's News.

The airship continues to hold its own as a subject of public discussion. It is alleged to have been seen in all parts of the State and the visual evidence in support of one such ship is quite as good for fifty. The only person whose talk may be considered serious is Mr. W. H. H. Hart, the well-known lawyer, who soberly declares that he is the attorney of an inventor who has recently built and operated two airships in this State and that he is now engaged in building a third. He has been able, Mr. Hart declares, to attain and sustain for several hours a speed of about twenty miles per hour and is making improvements designed to vastly increase the efficiency of his ship. Mr. Hart does not claim to have personally seen these ships, but he says they undoubtedly exist and that San Francisco will soon be given an opportunity to view them in broad daylight. A cock-and-bull-air is given to Mr. Hart's story by his addition to it that his client is negotiating with the Cuban junta for the destruction of Havana by dynamite and that he will demand for such services something like \$10,000,000. People generally have come to regard the whole thing as a hoax, but there are many who assert that they have seen the mysterious air ship and are willing to stake any sum upon its existence.

Dec. 19, p. 387. Pith of the Week's News.

Interest in the airship has about died out. There are still those who stoutly affirm its existence, but the general judgment is that it was a pure fake.

**San Leandro Reporter, 12/5 p. 3. Lorenzo Locals.**

At last the airship has visited Lorenzo. Ben Peterson saw it twice last week.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Santa Ana (Calif.) Standard, p. 3.**

Local News.

The ubiquitous airship has been seen in Santa Ana, this time by J.C. Galloway and son Frank, who first observed it Wednesday evening from a rear window in their residence. It appeared as two bright lights and was going at a good speed in a northwesterly direction.

Dec. 12,p.3. The airship has not been sighted this week. It has probably taken a trip to the moon.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Santa Barbara (Calif.) Morning Press, p. 6.**

Local Air Ships.

The air ship has found another adherent in the person of Mr. Leach, the manager of the Los Olivos and Santa Barbara stage line. Mr. Leach saw a peculiarly brilliant moving light several nights ago in Santa Ynez, and last night saw the same phenomenon directly over the mountains while walking

up Garden street in this city. Mr. Wilson Dibblee, when questioned yesterday as to the light seen from the San Julian rancho, said that he could not account for the light which moved rapidly and with an undulating motion and was within the range of vision for a time sufficient for the whole household to examine it. He of course disbelieved in the air ship and attributed the strange and brilliant light to a drifting balloon with electric attachments.

Stockton Evening Mail, Dec. 5,6. If airships can be made to hover over the same scenes next spring and keep off frost with a shower of rockets or hot water they will serve a useful purpose.—Tulare Register.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) Vacaville (Calif.) Reporter, p. 4.**

Elmira. / Have you noticed the airship? (Thanksgiving dinner in local Elmira house.)  
...After dinner the company in as comfortable attitudes as they could get themselves, began some interesting conversations on such subjects as always interest good neighbors, but everything soon drifted into a medley on the belated airship alleged to have been spied in Elmira's atmosphere and in the tules. A few favored members of the company stoutly maintained that they had been permitted to have an eye on a veritable flying light. No make-believe about it, for they saw it flop its wings. The more unfortunate ones did not call the others liars, but they were decidedly skeptical....

Woodland Daily Democrat, Dec. 5,2. Capay Cullings.

There is no question but that we have the best county in the state no matter whether the airship is a delusion or a fixed fact.

**1896 December 5 (Sat.) (Yreka, Calif.) Siskiyou News, p. 10.**

MONTAGUE CULLS.

The air ship was seen by several people last Wednesday evening and they will so state if questioned about it. The ship passed over about 8 o'clock on its way to Portland. It stopped to take water at the Southern Pacific water tank, but Mr. Barrett, who runs the pumps, had taken the precaution to lock the tank. They then tried the pump at Gruber's Hotel, but were foiled again, as the pump had been busted by the frost.

Sausalito News, 12/5,3. The Airship. /

The airship has been seen from San Rafael, and the sight would be worth two columns in a city daily. A gentleman on the South Side discovered it two evenings ago sailing in the eastern heavens, or east of overhead. He watched it until he became perfectly satisfied that its red light, with streamers floating behind, clearly identified it as a terrestrial production, and then called out a neighbor to share the discovery with him. O, no, said the second citizen, that is the planet Jupiter or Mars. Its light was very strong and bright, and a slight haze in the heavens was illuminated with the red light. He brought out a good glass which clearly revealed the bright planet, and extinguished the airship idea, and a chapter in current daily literature was lost.— Journal.

p.3. Sausalito can go other towns one better on the airship business. One of our prominent young men saw three at one time as he was returning home from the big fight about 12:30 Wednesday night.

**1896 December 6 (Sun.) Daily Morning Union (Grass Valley, Calif.), p. 3.**

THEY SAW AN AIR SHIP.

The people of North Bloomfield have got the airship craze. Four reputable citizens of that place claim to have plainly seen the mysterious object in the skies on Friday night. It may be possible that the anti-debris spies are now hovering over the hydraulic mining sections in the new balloon style of navigation.

Fresno Morning Republican, 12/6/2. The Air Ship Struck (adv.)

**1896 December 6 (Sun.) Los Angeles Times, p. 29.**

The Eagle [commentary column].

If there is some sort of a ship sailing around in the Eagle bird's domain of the upper air, he would like to know it. To be sure, people who have unduly dined on pie, Welsh rabbit and lobster salad, are having visions of flying machines all up and down this golden coast. What I want is an affidavit from some underfed, normal citizen who does not peer into the emptying glass darkly. Let no hitter of the pipe and no dreamer of dreams that are full of hair-breadth escapes and visions of wild animals come to me with tales of the mechanical flyer, but let some sober citizen who can tell a hawk from a handsaw and an air-ship from Sirius or the evening star, relate the story and the thing will be considered.

For my part, I do not believe that anything will ever soar through the empty space between us and the stars unless it has fragile bones and feathers like the Eagle family. I opine that nature has made atmosphere for us and us alone in which to navigate, and that man who wants to boss the earth and the water that swells and roars in sullen cadences against the beetling cliffs that fringe the salty sea, will have to be satisfied with that. If we catch any blamed flying machine monkeying around among the clouds there will be trouble. We have a pre-emption right on the blue empyrean—us Eagles have—and no conglomeration of gas and wings and cog-wheels shall come meandering along the unhedged highways of the starry region without a protest. Call off your aluminum flyers or we bird people will spill you.

**1896 December 6 (Sun.) The Call (San Francisco), p.1.**

HEARST'S AIRY CHAMELEON. / In the New York Journal It Is a Bona Fide Flying Machine, / IN THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER A FAKE. / Illustrations of the Sacramento Street Scene Were Sent From This City. / AN OSTRICH-LIKE ATTEMPT TO DELUDE THE PEOPLE. / Conflicting Stories Printed by the Siamese-Twin Faker Show the Unreliability of the Two Shameless Papers. /

A further study of the New York Morning Journal's page indorsement of the San Francisco airship story confirms the opinion that it was written in the Examiner office of this city.

The illustrations of the street scene here during the passage of the aerial visitant appear to have been drawn in the Examiner office here.

The Call today reproduces in a diminutive form the picture that the Journal printed across an entire page, being a street scene in Sacramento during the night when some bright object passed over the City, attracting the attention of all who had eyes.

The incident illustrates as plainly as did the two views Mr. Hearst held on the gold question how the young millionaire toys with the truth and fakes here and there to cater to the strange mob that reads his papers.

Another illustration of the absolute unreliability of the Examiner—and like instances appear in the Journal—is seen in yesterday's issue. Great space is given to the account of a supposed airship that was discovered in a gully near Twin Peaks a few nights ago. The Examiner's misleading description and great illustration might lead the reader to believe a bonafide airship had been found, whereas the most cursory examination shows that the tin rattle-trap discovered was a clumsy fake, probably projected by some advertising man who will seek to exhibit it later.

A little more detailed study of the article that appeared in the Journal of November 28 shows how fully the paper gave credence to the story which the Examiner here ridiculed because The Call had the news first. Among other things, after quoting a number of people, the Journal said:

"Hundreds of similar interviews could be obtained. Many practical electricians saw the strange light. All of them maintain that the searchlight was electrical in character. They say, too, that to produce a light of such power and brilliancy would require at least one horsepower, and that would mean a vessel capable of sustaining half a ton weight for the light alone. One thing all the witnesses of the phenomenon are positive of; that is that the searchlight was white, like that shed by an arc lamp.

"The inventor of the successful airship is Dr. E.H. Benjamin of San Francisco. It is, however, suspected that this is an assumed name to conceal the inventor's real identity. His attorney is C.W. Collins, a prominent lawyer with offices at rooms 21 and 22 Crocker building, San Francisco."

Describing the appearance of the phenomenon seen in Sacramento, the Journal said:

"On the evening of Tuesday, November 17, many citizens of Sacramento, California, were surprised by the sudden appearance, directly over the city, of a startling aerial craft. The peculiar night visitant made its appearance about 7 o'clock. People standing on the sidewalks saw coming through the sky, over the housetops, a huge and brilliant light, propelled swiftly by some mysterious force. So brilliant was the light that inmates went to their doors expecting to find a neighboring house in flames. Instead they saw a wonderful craft of the sky."

Throughout the Journal article the affirmation is made that what was seen was some craft in the sky, while every line that appeared in the Examiner pooh-poohed the idea. The articles side by side show how unreliable the Examiner is in its handling of local news. Its real views appear in the Journal's account of the airship, while every line in the Examiner was written from the spirit of envy because it was originally beaten in the news.

As later evidence of the puerile, fantastic double-dealing of the Examiner of this City may be adduced the contradictory attitude of its local and editorial treatment of the "fake showman's" airship, exposed in *The Call*. In the local columns this is treated as a solemn, incontrovertible fact, to be viewed by visitors to Twin Peaks. Turning over the page, an editorial says:

/ Two men in this City, apparently trying to turn the craze to financial account in the dime museum line, have just taken the trouble to build a forty-foot galvanized-iron "airship" and roll it down a hill, with the chance of flattening themselves under it. /

Again, in the face of the straight newsgiving of *The Call*, and the warm championship of the airship by his *New York Journal*, Mr. Hearst in the Examiner of yesterday says, editorially:

/ "Fake journalism" has a good deal to answer for, but we do not recall a more discreditable exploit in that line than the persistent attempt to make the public believe that the air in this vicinity is populated with airships. It has been manifest for weeks that the whole airship story is a pure myth. /

Shears and paste are cheap, and the Examiner, in its disgruntled envy caused by being outclassed in giving the news, might try to redeem itself by extracting some airship news from the columns of its Eastern supplement, the *New York Journal*.

[pic.: The Sacramento Crowds Gazing at the Wonderful California Airship. (Reproduced from the *New York "Morning Journal"* of November 29.)]

### **1896 December 6 (Sun.) *The Call* (San Francisco), p. 6 (ed.)**

WITH ITS OWN PETARD. /

The Examiner was hoist with its own petard yesterday morning in a most awkward but highly entertaining way. It undertook with characteristic impudence to shift its established reputation as Monarch of the Fakers to other shoulders, with the result of fastening that reputation all the more firmly upon its own. In an editorial article entitled "The Airship Nuisance" which opens with the appropriate confession that "Fake journalism has a good deal to answer for," the Monarch of the Fakers presumes to take *The Call* to task for publishing the news upon the subject of the airship. It charges *The Call* with a "prolonged attempt to humbug the community," and describes those who have testified to having seen the strange lights and other indicia of an aerial traveler as "practical Jokers or unbalanced enthusiasts." It derides the whole subject as a "silly craze."

While engaging in this sort of drivel editorially the Examiner locally delivered itself over to an already exploded airship fake of the rankest kind, devoting a page or more to the congenial labor of giving it the appearance of truth. In the headlines and body of the article it describes the Twin Peaks contrivance as flying, and in a half-page illustration depicts it and the man who it states flew in it. That the Twin Peaks airship was a clumsy fraud it only required daylight to discover, and the fact that it was such was known about town at least twelve hours before the Examiner went to press. In fact it was just such a fake as led many people to believe it to be of that newspaper's own devising. It is evident that in this as in several other more or less important respects the right hand of the Monarch knoweth not what its left hand doeth.

By a happy coincidence *The Call* was enabled to supply yesterday another apt example of the duplicity of Mr. Hearst's organs in the matter of news. The *New York Journal* of last Sunday devoted an entire page to the California airship, giving a large cut of the vessel passing over Sacramento, with a

long descriptive article under such headlines as "A Working Airship Seen on the Pacific Coast," and the like. The body of the Journal article contained the statements of many witnesses to the phenomenon, with the repeated assurance that they were persons of unimpeachable credibility and good repute. The article was evidently sent to the Journal from the Examiner office in San Francisco, and our "deadly parallel" proved that it was written at the very time when the local faker was casting all sorts of ridicule upon the idea of an existing airship, and was asserting that alleged observations thereof were had in suspicious proximity to breweries, and were made by those who had been viewing the heavens "through a glass darkly," so to speak.

The Call has carefully abstained from the expression of any opinion regarding the existence or non-existence of an airship, and intends to continue in so to do while the subject remains in its present condition of doubt. It desires to submit, however, the following proposition to candid minds. If in its airship stories the New York Journal was indulging in an unwonted approach to the facts, has not the Examiner been willfully keeping itself at quite a distance away from them? It may be remarked incidentally that there is nothing unusual in this, for the reason that the Monarch of the Fakers could not well expect to sustain its reputation as such without being watchful to have the width of the continent between itself and the truth.

Without in any way deciding whether the stories of the airship are true or false, let the impartial reader consider the relation of Mr. Hearst's two newspapers toward it, by the light of each other. The Journal of last Sunday declares that "a successful airship has been built." The Examiner of yesterday asserts that ["]the whole airship story is a pure myth." The Journal repeats that "The testimony concerning it seems to be unimpeachable." The Examiner insists that its alleged observers are "practical Jokers or unbalanced enthusiasts." The Journal reiterates that the truth of the story "is testified to by so many reputable citizens that there seems to be no reason to question its accuracy." The Examiner asseverates that any paper which publishes such a "persistent falsehood" is attempting to "infect its readers with a silly craze."

What do the public think of this exhibition of deliberate double-dealing on the part of the two newspapers whose owner is Mr. Hearst? What do people who believe in truth and decency the country over think of Mr. Hearst anyway? From the above revelation of his right to the title of "Monarch of the Fakers," it must be evident that he has missed his vocation, and that instead of posing as a journalist in two cities he ought to be engaged in making grimaces, singing ballads, shuffling cards, or selling gewgaws in the side-show of a circus or the byways of a county fair. As King of the Gypsies and Monarch of the Fakers Mr. Hearst is an immense success.

SF Chronicle, 12/6/21. See the Airship (Hale Bros. adv.)  
p. 28. To Preach on Airships.

OAKLAND, Dec. 5.—The Rev. Edward Davis, the poet-preacher of Oakland, has chosen an up-to-date topic for his sermon at the Central Christian Church on Sunday evening. The subject will be "Airships, or Lights that Pass in the Night." In the course of his address Mr. Davis will speak of some of the recent triumphs in the scientific world.

### **1896 December 6 (Sun.) San Francisco Examiner, p. 6.**

#### **A JOURNALISTIC FAILURE.**

It is a matter of general comment that our local contemporary, the "Call," is in serious straits—in fact, that its decline in circulation and income has become so marked that a change in its management has become imperative. There has been much speculation as to the cause of this decadence. It is well known that for a time after Mr. Spreckles placed the "Call" in the hands of the present publisher the paper gave promise of becoming a valuable property. Its circulation rapidly increased, and it seemed to have found a clientele that liked the sort of material it furnished. Why should this promise have been so soon and so completely disappointed, so that the "Call," which only a year and a half ago seemed destined to win and hold the second place in Pacific Coast journalism, is now not regarded as seriously in the field of competition at all?

This question is of interest to "The Examiner" as well as to the public, for notwithstanding all that is said of the business jealousies of newspapers, the true interest of a paper is not promoted by the decay of its rivals. Competition is the life of trade here, as everywhere else. The railroads that pay dividends,

as a rule, are those that have energetic competitors; our State University did not begin to advance until Stanford was established to spur it on, and the condition of journalism in the absence of competition is illustrated by the state of the Portland "Oregonian." It is with no satisfaction, therefore, that we answer the question: "What is the matter with the 'Call'?"

The explanation at once of our contemporary's sudden access of popularity at the beginning of the Shortridge era and of its still more sudden collapse is to be found in the promises voluntarily made to the public when the new management assumed control, and of the manner of their fulfillment. When Mr. Shortridge took possession of the chair so long filled with honor by Mr. Pickering he said:

"Under its new management the 'Call' will not only be independent, but absolutely fearless. If any man can find a string on it we give him permission to pull in the whole thing."

It was on the faith of this pledge, and of others reiterating it in more emphatic form, that so many people began to read the "Call." But it took them a very few months to discover that the paper which had challenged any man to "find a string on it" was covered with strings to an extent unimagined before in San Francisco journalism. In the first place it was found to be the tender of a law firm. It manipulated the news and exerted its influence as a supposedly public journal to assist that firm. Through its aid the firm broke into the Fair will litigation. The paper plunged into the People's Home Savings Bank complication and attacked Judge Hebbard because he could not be used by its friends. It took sides in the Miller & Lux case to promote these personal interests. It has tried to create a judicial trust, through which an attorney should have the pick of the choicest business open to the profession. Pretending to represent the Republican party, it has tried to make that party ridiculous by imposing upon it a farcical Senatorial candidacy. It has had to be dragooned into a feeble opposition to the Funding bill, which consistency to his own record would have led its manager to support.

When Mr. Spreckels [imposed] an unscrupulous charlatan to act as the ostensible proprietor of a journal which, if not in the front of enterprise, had always coupled an honorable place in the esteem of San Franciscoans, he took chances that surprised his friends and admirers. But it must be said that while the Shortridge infusion has made the "Call" more ridiculous than it would have been without it, Mr. Spreckels' own contribution to the paper's policy has not made it more highly respected. The one thing he has demanded of the "Call" has been its eager assistance in his ambition to be a political boss. That duty once performed, he has apparently been willing that any resources left should be spent for the promotion of the fortunes of the Shortridge family. It was generous, but it was not journalism, nor business. A newspaper that is obviously nothing but an organ for the advancement of the personal interests of three or four men soon loses its value even for that purpose. Mr. Huntington sunk a million dollars in trying to make a personal organ of the New York "Star." Mr. Spreckels, if current estimates be correct, may get off a little cheaper if he retires from journalism at once, but it would not take him long, at the rate at which things were going when the expert took hold of the books, to break the Huntington record.

Salinas D. Journal, 12/6, 2. At last something tangible has been learned of the airship. A thing has been made of galvanized iron, intended to navigate the air. It ascended by means of a block and tackle and plunged head foremost into the mud, where it now lies stranded, disowned by its inventors.

### **1896 December 7 (Mon.) (Santa Rosa, CA) Daily Republican, p. 3.**

THE LOCAL NEWS/ The Airship at Windsor.

Two Santa Rosa young ladies, both school ma'ams of "highest integrity and undoubted veracity," claim to have seen the airship last week while they were returning at night from a visit to Healdsburg. When near Windsor they saw a rapidly moving body pass through the air. One brilliant light was visible and numerous intermittent lights were discernible at times. The thing seemed to be about forty feet long and was in plain view of the ladies while they slowly traveled two miles of the road.

Of course this must be conclusive proof that the airship is a real thing. It is not likely that any of the gentlemen friends of the young ladies will have the temerity to ask the ladies what kind of liquor they keep in Healdsburg. Neither lady had then seen John Hood's window and both lay claim to a healthy digestion and imagination.

Los Angeles Record, Mon. Dec. 7, p. 3. THAT AIRSHIP.

The Southwest News, published on Washington street, tells of a sober citizen of the heights whose astronomy was rusty. He mistook Venus for the airship and thought the planet was moving through space. Finally he became convinced of his mistake by tying himself to a telegraph pole and getting the pole between Venus and himself.

Marysville Daily Democrat, Dec. 7. Pirates of the Air (humorous tale).

Petaluma Daily Courier, Dec. 7, p. 3. A bright glare in the heavens attracted the attention of many citizens on Sunday night. Some were sure it was a display of northern lights. Others thought it was the reflection of a large fire.

Riverside Daily Press, Dec. 7, p. 4. In Oregon they do not tolerate any nonsense about airships. A man in Portland insisted that he saw one of the San Francisco aeroplanes sailing over that city and they immediately committed him to an insane asylum.

### **1896 December 7 (Mon. eve.) Woodland, Calif., Daily Democrat, p. .**

THE AIRSHIP AGAIN. / A Conductor and Three Passengers Positive They Saw It. / About a Thousand Feet High, Traveling Faster Than the Train and in the Direction of Alameda. /

Davisville, December 7—Conductor Corbell, who runs a freight train on the main line, was here this morning and told an interesting story about seeing an airship.

Last Friday evening his train ran into Oakland. While between Dixon and Elmira, and between 6:30 and 7 o'clock, a man named Byrns, who was riding in the caboose, saw two bright lights to the right of the track and traveling parallel with the train.

After watching it a few minutes he called the conductor. The phenomenon was so unusual that the conductor called two men traveling on the train in charge of some stock. These four men saw the light distinctly and their stories agree perfectly. They were about one thousand feet high and traveling in the same direction as the train. Their speed was greater than that of the train, however, and they watched the lights until they disappeared in the southwestern heavens,

One of the lights was as large as the head light of an engine. One of the stockmen offered to wager two carloads of fat cattle that there was no delusion about it but that it was a genuine airship.

George Little and his wife, of Davisville, partially confirm this story. A few minutes after six o'clock they saw something in the air that tallies exactly with the description given by the conductor.

Woodland Daily Democrat, 12/7,2. Davisville Doings.

The airship seems to have been laid aside for the present. Perhaps Swinnerton's sketch of last Saturday portrays the truth, and the machine has actually come to grief.

### **1896 December 8 (Tues.) Marysville Daily Appeal, p. 3.**

BIGGS. / . . / RIO BONITA HAS 'EM TOO.

The people living at Rio Bonito, especially at the Hatch and Rock Company Orchard were greatly excited Wednesday night shortly after dark, by the appearance of a bright light in the heavens which cast a broad ray on the ground showing objects as clearly as in the day time. They watched the mysterious aerial navigator until it seemed to pass over the Butte mountains in the southwest and notwithstanding the jeers and jokes of their hearers when reciting the particulars of what they saw those who saw the strange object are sound in their belief that aerial transportation has been invented.

**(Eureka) Daily Humboldt Standard, Tues. Dec. 8, p. 4.** A whole fleet of airships rode at anchor over Santa Rosa Tuesday night. Some clever boys made a number of kites that day and at night flew them high in the heavens. A gleaming lantern was hung to each kite. The appearance of the first kite called forth some startling comments from many who thought they were looking at the much talked about airship.—Santa Rosa Republican.

9,4. Grayish substance falls in sudden shower on lighthouse Nov.30, hard to remove.

**1896 December 8 (Tues.) Marysville, Calif., Daily Appeal, p. 3.**

Nevada City.

The people of North Bloomfield have got the airship craze. Four reputable citizens of that place claim to have plainly seen the mysterious object in the skies on Friday night.

13,2. The airship appears to have been dropped for matters of greater moment.

Petaluma Daily Courier, Dec. 8, p. 1. A bright blaze was noticed on the mountain east of town on Monday evening, and many citizens thought that a serious fire was in progress. However no reports of a blaze has as yet reached this city.

Red Bluff News, 12/8/1. Too Much Airship.

The airship fever which struck California recently was also to be found in Oregon (man goes crazy over airships in Portland).

p.2. [Astronomers say 1898 will be good year for meteors.] "...and then we shall have plenty of airships."

Riverside Daily Press, Tues. Dec. 8 p. 4.

The only well authenticated airship that has been seen in San Francisco, outside the newspapers, came to grief on its trial voyage. The inventor and a companion carried it to one of the sand dunes out in the Mission section and assayed to fly from one hill to another. The machine started all right, but quickly took a tumble and landed in a ravine, between the two hills. The "ship" was greatly demoralized and the two navigators were thrown out and badly shaken up. This event has not been given great prominence in San Francisco papers or in the telegraphic reports sent out from that city, but it without doubt truthfully represents the present condition of aerial navigation in this section.

San Francisco Call, 12/8, p.8. Designed an Airship. / Robert Nagler Dies Before His Plans Could Be Perfected. [illustration of his design.]

**1896 December 8 (Tues.) San Francisco Evening Post, p. 1.**

A KINETOSCOPE INTERVIEW WITH COLONEL SHORTRIDGE, THE NAPOLEON OF COAST JOURNALISM, ON THE FAKE NEWSPAPER. [Series of 5 illustrations with captions.]

A sensational and fake journal that seeks to enter the home is a demoralizing agent that I would class with a viper or a mad dog. Fake journalism has grown to such an extent that an honest journalist has to compete with a class of blackmailers, liars and gunfighters, which a fake naturally attracts. /

But the end is in sight. The paper which indulges in hippodroming the publication of salacious matter, the constant appeal to the vicious will soon give way to the serious, dignified and thoughtful journal with high aims and noble purposes. /

I believe in personal responsibility. A paper cannot be run by irresponsible hirelings when life, character and property are in [issue]. A newspaper business has got to stand the test of character and responsibility as any other business, and along those lines I have worked. Decency will triumph. While the people are slow to act they will array themselves on the side of decency and cleanliness, of law and order, and not salaciousness and sensationalism.

The only lasting fame and greatness is achieved by honest, high-minded effort. /

Sending up balloons and burning red lights are not evidence of journalistic enterprise. To own a paper and never be able to give personal supervision and know what it contains is not my idea of responsibility. You may hire assassins of character and then not be rated among the great men of the earth. You may take bribes and not stay bought, pander to the mob and traduce honestly acquired wealth and still it will not be a certificate of character. /

Talk about leg-pulling. There are others whose legs are being pulled.

Meanwhile I am pursuing the even tenor of my way, putting up the best battle I can for public good and local prosperity.

**1896 December 8 (Tues.) San Francisco Examiner, p. .**

FIVE HONEST MINERS. / They Never Saw Any Airship, and Want the Truth Known.

To the Editor of "The Examiner."—Sir: We notice an article in Wednesday's "Call" [Dec. 2], dated the 26<sup>th</sup> of November and signed by P. F. Perryman, saying that an airship was seen floating in the sky, directly over a high range of mountains near this town.

Now we, the five miners mentioned in that article as having seen the airship with him, do certify that such was not the case. It proved to be two young gentlemen, namely, William Dexheimer and James McCabe, who were returning home after having spent a pleasant evening visiting their best girls.

It was at quite a late hour in the evening, so they took the near path over the mountains. Each one of the gentlemen named carried a candle, which accounts for the two lights seen by Mr. Perryman.

Hoping you will publish this article in your valuable paper for the benefit of those who have seen strange sights of late floating in the sky or near the horizon and imagining the same to be airships.

THE FIVE MINERS / Robinson Ferry, December 4<sup>th</sup>.

SF Examiner, 12/8. THE AIRSHIP AGAIN. / This Time It Happened Over Camptonville, and the Main in It Was Deaf and Dumb. [see Marysville D. Appeal, 12/9/1.]

12/8/14. Died Before His Airship Sailed. / Robert Nagler Passes Away Before He Can Test His Aerial Invention. / Believed He Could Speed Through Space by Means of Spiral-Shaped Fans or Sails. / The Work of a Lifetime.

[Illus.: Robert Naglen [sic], Inventor and Manufacturer.]

**1896 December 8 (Tues. eve.) Woodland, Calif., Daily Democrat, p.3.**

THE MYSTERY SOLVED. / A Resident of Arbuckle Explains the Airship Phenomenon. / Aerial Navigation Successfully Accomplished Three Years Ago by Yolo and Colusa County Inventors. /

Mr. Editor: Sir—Now that I have had a chance to get a glance at the much-talked-about flying machine as it was passing over the Coast Range Mountains in a southwesterly direction, fifteen miles west of Arbuckle and about three miles north of Rumsey on Tuesday last, I will try and explain to the public the queer actions and also the mechanical construction of this wonder of the age.

Three years ago I submitted the plans I had drawn of an aircycle, with explanations, to Mr. E.W. Brown, of Davisville. He at once saw that there was no doubt as to the successful operation of a machine constructed on those plans and at once advanced the necessary funds for the construction of the same.

The machine consists of an aluminum tube twelve feet long and three feet in diameter pointed at the end like a cigar. Four feet under the tube and running parallel with it is a light steel frame similar to a tandem bicycle frame. Each end of this frame is connected with the tube. On the frame there are two seats, two handlebars and two pedals the same as on a tandem. The pedals operate the propeller and side wings. The propeller is used to force the aircycle ahead and the wings are used to ascend and descend as the operator chooses. There is also a rudder that sits behind the propeller the same as those on a steamship. This is operated by the handle-bars. This part is very simple. The difficult part is in obtaining the gas which is used in the tube and has great lifting power. This gas is obtained at an altitude of twenty-five miles above sea level. How this is obtained will not be stated here. Suffice to say that this is also simple when one has the instruments.

After the machine was finished Mr. Brown broke over the handlebar an empty beer bottle and pronounced her the Nonesuch.

After several little skims over the ground, Mr. Brown became more nerry and insisted on making longer and higher flights. The Nonesuch was a success beyond our expectations. We at last concluded to make a trip south. Doubting his life insurance, he told his friends that he was going to spend a few

days in the country. No one knew of our aircycle; all our experiments were conducted on dark nights. Everything being ready, we started south on the 1st day of March, 1893, at 10:30 P.M.

We could make thirty miles per hour without any exertion, and, with the wind at our backs, seventy-five miles an hour was easy. We could always make better time at night, for when we were surrounded by darkness, we did not experience that dizzy feeling that would come over us in the daytime.

On the morning of the 2nd day of March we landed near Los Angeles. Securing our cycle to a fence (which was necessary, for as soon as we dismounted there was an upward pull of 330 pounds) [?]

(Woodland) Yolo Semi-Weekly Mail, p. 2. It Is Said...That a great many Woodlandites are afflicted with the "rubber-neck," caused by looking for the airship. [also in The Mail of Woodland, 12/8/1.]

#### **1896 December 9 (Wed.) Daily Humboldt Times (Eureka, Calif.), p.4.**

THE MYSTERY EXPLAINED / Where and How the Airship Story Originated. / ... / The Truth About the Airship.

Now that the daily papers have run their wild riot upon the airship problem, the "Looker-On" in the News Letter will take the public into his confidence, and tell just what the phenomenon was. It is simply a large kite upon which electrical apparatus is cleverly arranged, which was sent skywards by the officials of the Meteorological Bureau for the purpose of determining the power of certain chemical compounds when exploded beneath rain clouds, to rip a hole in the soggy banks of vapor and let down a flood of water upon the parched earth. Those who followed the accounts of the airship's appearances, disappearances and reappearances, will recollect that the first reports of the strange spectre in the skies came from Sacramento. One of the most reliable residents of that town averred that he not only saw two men in the ship, but he heard them singing "Just tell them that you saw me." He was mistaken about the men, for there were none upon the kite sent up by the weather sharps. What he supposed were men were the large storage batteries of electricity fixed upon the cross-bars of the kite to supply the powerful arc lights fastened to the upper and lower points of the sky-scraper. Strange as it may seem, however, investigation has shown that the Sacramento man's musical ear was not deceived about the tune wafted down from the skies. Some wag attached to the Weather Bureau sent up with the kite a music box loaded with popular airs, and so arranged that it would let out its tunes automatically. Just as the rain searcher crossed Sacramento the time lock opened and poured forth "Just tell them that you saw me" upon the midnight air. The Sacramento man, therefore, was not laboring under the effects of an excited imagination He was just telling the plain and simple truth in a Sacramento way.

The expense of sending this novel agent into the skies was borne mostly by a number of farmers of the San Joaquin, who, fearing to be taxed out of their lands by the formation of irrigation districts, determined to bring water down from the clouds at a minimum of expense and maximum of flood. Time fuses were set upon the chemicals borne aloft, so that the explosions would take place at the time when, according to estimates, the kite would reach the clouds. The magnificent success of the experi[ment] was illustrated best in the city. The heavy downpour of Monday night and Tuesday was the direct result of the visitation of the apparatus of the Meteorological Bureau to the rain-filled clouds. Upon this occasion, however, the experts put on a heavier load of chemicals than had been used before, with the result that everyone had to come in out of the wet.

Colusa Sun, 12/9/3. What has become of the airship?

#### **Daily Morning Union (Grass Valley, Calif.), Wed. Dec. 9, p. 3. Air Ship Again.**

Graniteville has a practical joker who has led the people up that way to believe an air ship is flying in the skies. Monday night the residents of the little mountain town thought they saw the mysterious air ship but upon investigation it was discovered that it was only a hot air balloon with a candle in it

#### **1896 December 9 (Wed.) Los Angeles (CA) Express, p. 7.**

THEY SAW THE AIRSHIP / Four Reputable Santa Anans Say So. / SOME OF THEM HAD THEIR EYE GLUED TO THE EVENING STAR. /.../ Correspondence of the Express.

SANTA ANA, Dec. 9.—The level-headed citizens of Santa Ana "haven't got 'em," but about four reputable men claim to have seen something very much resembling an airship, beside Jack ---- and party, who were intently gazing at the evening star and vowing she did move.

8,2. SF airship inventor dies; 9,2 Arsp lunatic in San Diego.

**1896 December 9 (Wed.) Los Angeles Record, p. 1.**

AIRSHIP IN PHOENIX. / United Associated Press.

Phoenix, Ariz., Dec. 9.—The flying machine has been seen here. G. Purdy, a lawyer, made the discovery. Some people however cruelly insist it was only a shooting star.

**1896 December 9 (Wed.) Los Angeles Times, p. 3.**

ARIZONA NEWS. /.../ Arizona Sets Up a Claim to an Airship of Her Own.... /

PHOENIX, Dec. 5.—(Regular Correspondence.) California needn't think she has any monopoly on her old flying machines. Arizona has had one of her own, and what's more, it was a crack-a-jack. It didn't fly in any of your calm and placid California style, but had the characteristic Arizona "git-up-and-git." T'was late in the evening and one of the prettiest nights ever seen in this world, though a very ordinary one for Phoenix. The stars twinkled and winked at one another as they looked down on Washington street and saw George Purdy Bullard, bent with his day's legal toil, taking his homeward way. He and a friend had just been discussing the California flying machine, when he chanced to cast one of his sky-blue eyes aloft. "There! There it is now!" he cried in a "gentlemen of the jury" voice, at the same time removing one of his thumbs from the armhole of his vest long enough to point upward. Sure enough, it was the flying machine. Of course it was the flying machine. His companion thought it a shooting star, when as a fact it was not. Flying machines travel very fast, in fact they run races with meteors—especially the Arizona flying machines. If further evidence is wanted it need only be said the G. Purdy B. is a legal luminary, and therefore competent to judge between the headlight of a flying machine and a shooting star. Certainly it was a flying machine! Score one for Arizona.

**1896 December 9 (Wed.) Marysville, Calif., Daily Appeal, p. 3.**

WOODLAND. /.../ A TRUTHFUL CONDUCTOR'S STORY.

Conductor Corbell, who runs a freight train on the main line, was in Davisville Monday morning and told an interesting story about seeing an airship.

Last Friday evening his train ran into Oakland. While between Dixon and Elmira, and between 6:30 and 7 o'clock, a man named [Ryans], who was riding in the caboose, saw two bright lights to the right of the track and traveling parallel with the train.

After watching it a few minutes he called for the conductor. The phenomenon was so unusual that the conductor called two men traveling on the train in charge of some stock. These four men saw the lights distinctly and their stories agree perfectly. They were about 1000 feet high and traveled in the same direction as the train. Their speed was greater than that of the train, however, and they watched the lights until they disappeared in the southwestern heavens.

One of the lights was as large as the head light of an engine. One of the stockmen offered to wager two carloads of fat cattle that there was no delusion about it but that it was a genuine airship.

George Little and his wife, of Davisville, partially confirm this story. A few minutes after six o'clock they saw something in the air that tallies with the description given by the conductor.

**1896 December 9 (Wed.) Marysville Daily Appeal, p. 1.**

“BILLY” MEEK'S AIRSHIP. / How It Agitated the People in the High Hills of Yuba.

These are quiet days at Camptonville and those worthies Meek and Mayo are able to indulge in almost any kind of an extravagance. The Examiner of yesterday contained the following just as forerunner of future revelations:

"Another airship has been seen. This time it went soaring over the tranquil little town of Camptonville in the latest approved fashion of airships, arousing the inhabitants from their slumbers by its unexpected appearance. The following is the remarkable story told by William Meek of Camptonville in a dispatch to the Examiner. Mr. Meek and his family are well known throughout the entire mining region of Northern California, where he has large mining interests. He certainly tells a strange story.

"This community was aroused at 9 o'clock last night by the excited screams of a young lady," he telegraphed. "The airship! the airship!" she cried, as she pointed to the northwest and looking in the [ ] residents saw floating in a northerly direction what indeed looked like a monster of the air. It was apparently descending when first observed and appeared to light on Ramm's Hill about two miles away from Camptonville. Five young men volunteered to investigate, and found the airship with one human being who could neither speak nor hear. After a consultation the party decided to write an inquiry of his wanderings, and after reading their questions he took from his pocket an alphabet and described his journey. He said that he came from the Montezuma mountains in his airship, leaving behind him a wife and two children who were in charge of the [postmaster] in that region."

Very much mystified the party left him, and, according to Mr. Meek, he was not seen again until 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, when he as suddenly and mysteriously disappeared as he had come, leaving behind him no trace of either his airship or himself. The young men, when pressed for further information, repeat the brief story of their interview with the man. As yet no one out of Camptonville has seen the man's original writing of the story of his wanderings through the ozone. Mr. Meek says the stranger would not give the name of the town from which he last set wing, nor whence he was going, nor yet would he tell the object of his visit to Camptonville. As to his airship he would give no details.

Nevada City Daily Transcript, Dec. 9 ,3. Vilest of the Vile. /

The San Francisco Examiner can be truly classed as the vilest organ published on the Pacific Coast. It is a disgrace to California, and only fit for slums of society. There is no honesty or decency displayed in its columns, and every issue seems to be worse than the last one published. Respectable people all over the country are fleeing from it as they would from a mad dog. It was once the pride of the State, but how changed. It now stinks in the nostrils of all who come in contact with it.

**Petaluma Daily Courier, Dec. 9, p. 3.** A couple of Windsor citizens claim to have seen the airship. It was forty feet long and was in sight about twenty minutes.

San Diego Union, 12/9/8. Another Airship Lunatic.

James Lewis was lodged in the county jail late Monday night charged with insanity. He was found roaming the streets in a demented condition by Officer McCarty, who lost no time in running him in. Lewis is 77 years old, and with unkempt hair and beard looks more like a wild beast than a human being. He labors under the delusion that some men took him north of the city and rolled him into a river. From there he was taken farther on to a castle, which was not on fire, where he narrowly escaped a horrible death. He is of a religious turn of mind and frequently during the night shouts prayers to heaven. He also claims to have made a trip to heaven in an airship. He says he is of Scottish descent, having come from Scotland. His examination has been set for 2 o'clock this afternoon.

[12/9. Report that Maceo killed.]

12/11. James Lewis, insane, was taken north by Constable Marks yesterday and placed in Highlands asylum.

**1896 December 10 (Th.) (Bieber, Calif.) Big Valley Gazette, p. 3.**

Lookout News.

That aerial monster, the airship, passed over our town about 10 o'clock Saturday night, going north and the only talk discernible was whether they were passing over Red Bluff or Lookout. If we "have to" we can refer to three reliable witnesses.

Oroville Register (wkly) , 12/10/4. Hurlton Happenings.

The air ship did not slight us, as our fellow townsman C. McDougal reports being disturbed in his slumber a few nights ago by a flash of light, followed by the echo of voices which appeared to emanate from some aerial schooner. //

Came on the Air Ship.

Joel Flinn said Monday that he left home on Berry Creek on Sunday night and started for Oroville. He had gone but a short distance when he saw the mysterious air ship which landed near him and the inventor offered to give him a ride. Flinn accepted and he went into the air so high he came near freezing, but he landed in town in a short time.

**Fresno Morning Republican, 12/10, p.2a.**

The airship which the afternoon contemporary recently crippled in this county has apparently recovered and has gone on a picnic down in Kern county. At any rate an airship having the same earmarks was seen there. It looked like a long, green cucumber and had a full brass band on board, which was playing patriotic airs. A banquet was apparently in progress. The sounds of merry voices were heard, and the odor of onions and whisky was gratefully sniffed by the leading citizens who saw it. The man who said that the airship is a fake has left the country.

Fresno Morning Republican, 12/10/3. FOWLER NEWS.

Fowler has no such visionary persons who see luminous bodies floating in the sky and call the attention of the public to silly prattle to fill newspaper space.

Fresno Semi-Weekly Expositor, 12/10, p.5. That Air Ship Struck (advertisement).

**1896 December 10 (Th.) (Healdsburg) The Tribune, p. 1.**

The Flying Machine Again.

The airship has once again been seen in Healdsburg. Parties whose integrity the editor of the Tribune would not dare to question single-handed saw the seraphic craft close to the earth Friday night perambulating about the railroad depot. The gentleman, who has been successful in keeping the machine far enough from the mundane sphere to maintain the secrecy of his invention, on this occasion was equally cautious against the obtrusive gaze of mankind, for he steered the airship up to Healdsburg when the fog was so thick that a snow shovel had to be attached to the aerial locomotive to clear the path. The parties who discovered the flying machine's second voyage to Healdsburg assert that the haze was that intense that when the mysterious navigator of the sky hove in sight it was within a stone's throw from where they stood in amazement and the inspissate [thickened] air. It came straight for the spellbound spectators and descended closer to the earth as it approached nearer, as if to rest the machine for a while on *terra firma*. Suddenly the man who operated the rudder looked and saw some people who might reveal the secret of conquering gravity. Quick as a flash the flying machine turned the nearest corner and, speeding above the orchard south of the depot, departed. In another moment it was high up in the air and out of sight. The lookers-on were overwhelmed with astonishment. They hurried to town as soon as they rallied and brought the startling intelligence to the philosopher of the community who pronounced it a well-defined case of mutual hallucination.

Los Angeles Record, December 10 p. 2. THE AIRSHIP. / United Associated Press.

Lick Observatory, Dec. 10.—A new comet was discovered last night. It is about as bright as a star of the 8th magnitude and is moving rapidly east.

**1896 December 10 (Th.) Nevada City (CA) Daily Transcript, p. 2.**

THEY THOUGHT IT HAD COME. / Some of Our People Were Sure the Airship Had Arrived Here.

There has been much talk and speculation of late regarding the airship reported to have been seen at different places. Nevada City is one of the towns that have not claimed the honor of a visit from the strange aerial craft. There was some conjecture this morning, however, that the inventor of the wonderful vessel had arrived in this city and was preparing to make a trip with Nevada City as the starting point. A small structure that resembles a pigeon house of large dimensions was being erected on Wyoming street, near the residence of Mrs. James Monro The little house surmounts one of the electric light poles, and is up in the air twenty-five or thirty feet. Some of those who saw it surmised that the airship man was here and was putting up a station from which to take a flight after having obtained a charge of electricity with which to run his flying gear.

Later on it developed that the Electric Power Company had the house built over the top of the pole for the purpose of protecting the lightning arresters from the rain. The purpose of the arresters is to conduct the lightning from the main wires to the ground and thus prevent it from coming into town. When the arresters are wet they do not always give the results expected, as was demonstrated not long ago during a rainstorm.

### **1896 December 10 (Th.) Oroville (Calif.) Register, p. 2.**

CHEROKEE NOTES. /

Ed. Register: The air ship has visited Cherokee. Several reliable parties claim to have seen it pass over town last Monday evening, about 10 o'clock. Sunday evening a number of Cherokeeites saw a bright light pass over the Sacramento valley from south to north, and saw it rise and fall, as though guided by an intelligent power. Some of the more imaginative claim to have heard voices. The occupants of the ship must have powerful voices to be heard at that distance.

Redwood City Democrat, Dec. 10, p.3. Menlo Park.

It was reported at Stanford last week that about three of the students stated that they had seen the airship as they saw a lighted object in the air. But the mystery has now been cleared. It was not an airship but a small balloon that was sent up by Douglas Bartholomew. Douglas and his parents lived here before they sought their present abode, Palo Alto.

### **1896 December 10 (Th. eve.) Riverside (Calif.) Daily Press, p. 5.**

THE AIRSHIP AGAIN. / Two Score People Saw It Sail Over Riverside Just Before Noon.

It will be difficult to convince a great many people in this city that they did not see the much-talked of airship a little before noon today. Some of our most reputable and best known citizens are willing to take oath that they witnessed the unusual phenomenon and are ready to describe the aerial navigator in detail.

Singularly enough accounts differ as to the exact shape of the airship and the distance it was from the observers. This much all agree upon: The ship when first seen appeared to be over Market street, and was bearing away rapidly towards San Diego. It is variously described. One well-known gentleman declared the thing had immense wings and a propeller in its rear. It appeared to him to be about 10 miles off and was going at an incredible rate of speed. Another gentleman, who is prominent in business circles, asserted that the machine was an immense round affair, and was operated by some sort of mechanism in its interior anatomy. Smoke was seen issuing from a funnel in the top, and the ship appeared about two miles away. Officer Stanley thought it looked like a huge bird and was positive it was guided by "human intelligence."

Others saw it, and give accounts substantially like those reported.

Among those who witnessed the flight of the airship were the following: M.J. Twogood, Fred Worsley, Roy Strock, Dr. Brenneman, Officer Stanley and C.C. Birdsall.

Rupert Shaw almost saw it, and had he not tumbled over a small dog just as it disappeared over the Rowell hotel, (the ship, not the dog), his name would have been included in the above list.

With characteristic enterprise The Press delegated 78 reporters to run the aerodome to earth and discover its inventor. They have been successful, and announce, notwithstanding protests on his part,

that Dave Milan is the responsible party. The airship was a tissue paper balloon inflated with hot air. It was six feet in diameter, and rose to a height of 100 feet, and then sailed away towards Arlington Heights. That's all.

Salinas Democrat, 12/10? Save the Airship. / Santa Clara Sentinel / Fred R. Howe...love.

**1896 December 10 (Th.) San Diego Union, p. 5.**

SAN DIEGO TO HEAVEN. / Marvellous Airship Journey of James Lewis, Now of Highlands.

James Lewis, the aged discoverer of an airship near this city, was examined as to his sanity yesterday and ordered committed to Highlands asylum. The statement of Lewis on the previous day that he had been rolled into a river belied his looks, for a dirtier man had not been seen at the jail for many a day. It was found advisable to examine Lewis in his cell on account of the nauseous odor arising from his person. The judge remained on the outside of the cell while Lewis, with eyes bulging out of their sockets and hands extended through the hole in the door used for passing through his meals, affirmed the allegations in one breath and denied them in the next.

He told of his taking passage on an airship starting at San Diego and flying through space at a lightning-like rapidity, and at last arriving at heaven, where a glorious reception awaited him. He was reluctant to return, but was finally persuaded to do so, and once more taking passage on the ship he made the return to San Diego in much less time than the upward voyage. He failed to remember the description and details concerning the airship, but an airship it was, he declared. The jailer is glad to get rid of him, for his ravings during the night kept everyone awake in the vicinity of the jail.

San Francisco Call, 12/10/7 (adv.) The Chutes (amusement park). / De Gear's Fake Airship! / The Greatest Humbug of the Century / No Extra Charge.

Columbia Theater. / Not even the airship creates the furor that... (adv. for melodrama, The Cotton King.)

SF Chronicle, 12/10/5. Insane Over Airships. / An Old Man Under Arrest in San Diego.

San Diego, Dec. 9.—Through long poring over marvelous airship stories, James Lewis, an old man past the three-score mark, has been ordered to the Highlands Insane Asylum. He was captured on the outskirts of the city violently insane, gibbering of flying [ ] into the sky for the airship that conveyed him from San Diego to heaven. He said an airship came down and took him aboard, landing him at the pearly gates and, after a short visit, he hurried back to San Diego.

When placed in jail the old man became frantic with rage and tore his long hair and beard. He told all sorts of airship stories, but his trip to heaven was the longest journey mentioned. He was so filthy that the examining board kept him in the cell, asking questions through the wicket and the judge stood six or eight feet back from the ancient aerial mariner.

12/13/28. (Kast's shoes adv.)

**1896 December 10 (Th.) San Francisco Examiner, p. [4] (ed.).**

**THE PASSING OF THE "CALL"**

The evidence that the peculiar combination of frontier journalism and flashy law practice introduced to this wondering town by the pair of worthies from San Jose is not a business success, form a certificate of good taste and morality for the people of San Francisco. Every creditor who clamors for his pay at the publication office of the "Call" testifies to the fact that unlimited assurance and complete emancipation from the encumbrance of principle are not sufficient equipment for a newspaper manager in this city. The reduction in the size of the paper to fourteen pages, the discontinuance of special cable dispatches, substitution of economical airship fakes for expensive telegraphic news, the cuts in salaries in all departments, the curtailment of the staff, are visible proofs of that straits to which these estimable gentlemen have been reduced by the double blow of a declining circulation and the stoppage of the Sprekels subsidies.

Notwithstanding his disastrous ventures in politics and journalism, Mr. John D. Sprekels still has many friends who believe [lost the rest].

Susanville, CA) Lassen Advocate, Th. Dec. 10, 3. The Arsp Again. / It is reptd at the N.-C.-O. office... on the rd.—Reno Gazette, Dec. 7.

**1896 December 10 (Th.) Ventura Independent, p. 3.**

CAUGHT ON THE RUN...

Assessor Jas. A. [Do lon] returned from Sacramento and San Francisco Friday night. Jim saw the fight between Fitz and Sharkey. Jim saw no foul and says Fitz could have licked the sailor in two rounds. Jim dodged the air ship matter, but finally acknowledged that he did see some strange lights while in Sacramento. "Our Jim" is looking well and says he had a good time, and is better than ever prepared to perform the duties of his office as assessor.

Last week strange and mysterious lights were seen floating over the ocean towards the Anacapa island. The light at times was dim, then bright, changed from white to a deep red, and waved in the air. Twenty-five or thirty people gazed at it on Wednesday night for a long time. It proved to be a bright star which rises off Hueneme, and the peculiar atmosphere that always floats around Anacapa island caused the star to act wild and uncanny. The star rises right up from the ocean and its first appearance is that of a light on the mast of a ship.

**1896 December 10 (Th.) Tulare County Times (Visalia, Cal.), p. 1.**

They Saw It Again.

C. D. Smith has returned to town after spending several days surveying near Woodville. He says on last Friday night he noticed a strange light towards the mountains, but supposing it to be a chance fire up in the pineries he thought no more of it. Shortly afterward two or three young people who had been attending a singing rehearsal at J. H. Grimsley's residence reported that they had seen the airship over towards Tulare lake. Mr. Smith thinks the light he saw in the direction of the mountains was the same light seen a few minutes later moving over the lake. The airship was probably making a nocturnal trip along the San Joaquin valley. / also in daily ed., Dec. 3 p.4.

**1896 December 10 (Th.) Tulare County Times (Visalia, Cal.), p. 4.**

AN INVENTOR. / Dr. E. H. Benjamin of San Francisco in Visalia. / The Gentleman who Has Gained Notoriety as an Airship Inventor. / He Confidently Expects to Succeed—Will Meet his Partner at Tulare. / (From Saturday's Daily Times.)

Dr. E.H. Benjamin of San Francisco is in town. He is the gentleman who has sprung into prominence recently by his connection with the famous alleged airship of Oroville.

Dr. Benjamin is the inventor of the airship, and if success crowns his labors he will no doubt rank in the future with great inventors like Morse, Whitney and Fulton. But that success has not yet been determined, and it is this uncertainty that makes Dr. Benjamin very reticent about his embryonic flyer.

A "Times" reporter called upon Dr. Benjamin at the Palace hotel this morning and engaged him in a pleasant conversation. He is a young man very approachable and easy of address.

He is a dentist by profession, and he said he was combining business with pleasure in his trip up the San Joaquin valley. He has a new invention in dentistry that he is introducing.

After his experience with the hordes of newspaper reporters in San Francisco, Dr. Benjamin proves to be still willing to speak of his pet invention. He said he was asked many times how long his airship was, how deep, how it was propelled, how it was raised in the air and how lowered, and so on, but he is compelled to refuse to answer for if his ship proves a failure he'll never hear the last of it, and besides, others might take out a patent on certain portions of the machine before he could.

"But my airship is a fact, and Geo. Collins of San Francisco is my attorney," remarked the doctor. "Attorney Hart of Sacramento is assisting Mr. Collins.

"People must remember that Morse was not successful with his telegraphic invention till he had failed many times. We have to make a good many changes yet, probably, but we are on the right track, I think."

Dr. Benjamin said he had been so bothered with reporters of the city dailies that he had lost patience with them, especially the Chronicle men. The reporters would camp on his doorstep all night and follow him everywhere he went. "I'd rather have a lot of bloodhounds after me than those fellows," said he.

He had registered under an assumed name at the hotels since he left San Francisco in order to escape notice, but when he arrived in Visalia and stepped into the Palace hotel the first man he met was Manager Franks, whom he knew in Santa Cruz.

The doctor will go to Tulare this evening, and there he expects to meet his partner in the airship business. They will confer together on some matters of importance.

"Well, doctor, when you get your airship in good working order be sure to come down and see us here in your machine," was the parting remark of the reporter.

"You may hear from us sooner than you expect," the inventor smilingly replied, as he disappeared across the street, / [in daily ed., Dec. 5, p.1.]

#### **(Visalia, CA) Tulare County News (Times?)**

Dec. 10, 1. Dr. E.H. Benjamin, a San Francisco dentist reported to be one of the founders of the late airship mystery, was in Visalia Saturday. He left in the evening for Tulare, where it is presumed he boarded a ship of his own invention with wheels under it and a locomotive ahead of it, and "sailed" back to the city.

Tulare County Times, Dec. 10, p.3 (Dec. 7, 4 in daily). When the rising sun tipped the Goddess of Liberty on the dome of the courthouse this morning a patch of tin that had been tacked over an aperture pecked by birds made a flashing light, and as the courthouse was hidden by fog a number of spectators thought the airship was passing. Quite a crowd collected to look and comment until the joke became apparent.

#### **1896 December 10 (Th.) Weekly Visalia Delta (Calif.), p. 4.**

AN AIR-SHIP INVENTOR / A Gentleman Who Is Experimenting With an Air Ship. /

Dr. E.H. Benjamin of San Francisco, who has been prominently mentioned as the inventor of an air ship, arrived in town Friday evening, and registered at the Palace Hotel.

The Doctor was here on business connected with dental apparatus. He has invented a number of appliances used by dentists.

A representative of the Delta had a very pleasant chat with the gentleman Saturday, and he admitted that he was experimenting with an air ship, and feels hopeful that it will prove a success. He refused to disclose the nature of his vessel, stating that he does not want his plans known yet. He is now waiting for patents from Washington, and if they are received he will make an exhibition of his air ship at Fresno during the Citrus Fair.

The Doctor is an old friend of "Uncle" Dan Thomas of this city, and the latter persuaded the air ship inventor to exhibit his vessel at the Citrus Fair in Fresno, and he consented to do so, provided he received the patents.

"Uncle" Dan is enthusiastic over the scheme. The Doctor left on the evening train for Bakersfield, where his partner is staying. From there he will make a trip to Los Angeles and Phoenix, Arizona.

#### **1896 December 10 (Th.) Visalia (Calif.) Weekly Delta, p. 2.**

THE AIR SHIP / The Nocturnal Vessel of the Air Seen Again in Visalia. /

On Monday night the air ship was seen again in Visalia. Charles Abbott of Ball & Calcote's and Herbert Riley of W.R. Stuck's chop house were among those who saw the supposed air ship.

The aerial vessel passed over Visalia at great speed, and came from the north. A number of Visalians watched its approach and its flight to the south.

They say the ship passed over the city with an undulating motion, dipping down and up in graceful movements, while at other times it seemed to veer from east to west, as if tacking before a head current of wind.

The flash from what was supposed was an electric light was plainly observable, and at times was blinding in its intensity.

Nothing more than the light could be seen owing to the darkness. The framework of the vessel could not be distinguished.

One young man in his enthusiasm climbed an electric light pole in order to get a better view of the strange light in the heavens.

Officer Hayes got a glimpse of the light as it faded away in the south. He says that the light, when he first saw it, was very bright.

The spectators were thrilled with the sight of the peculiar light, and firmly believe it was the flash from the famous air ship.

Ferndale Semi-Weekly Enterprise

Dec. 11, p. 5a. —The Times says: "Now that the daily papers have run their wild riot upon the airship problem, the 'Looker-On' in the News Letter will take the public into his confidence and tell just what the phenomenon was. It is simply a large kite upon which electrical apparatus is cleverly arranged, which was sent skywards by the officials of the Meteorological Bureau, for the purpose of determining the power of certain chemical compounds, when exploded beneath rain clouds, to rip a hole in the soggy banks of vapor and let down a flood of water on the parched earth." And the Lord loveth a cheerful liar.

Hanford Journal Dec. 11,3. Visalia Has the Fever (fr. Delta). On Mon. night...famous airship.

Napa Register, Dec. 11,4. People of West Oakland thought the airship was in their midst when they saw an aluminum torpedo 30 feet long carried on a wagon.

Sacramento Record-Union, 12/11/p.3. THE AIR-SHIP. / (As explained by a 13-year-old girl.)

It was first seen one night in November, / And what it looked like I will try to remember,

It was long, it was broad, and many in it could ride, / It had a bright light, and a wing on each side.

"I saw it!" "I saw it!" all o'er you could hear, / From the men of our town (the ones who drank beer);

But the air ship fell in the ocean and sank, / And now the men know 'twas the beer that they drank.

Although they won't tell you they were drunk as loons, / They know that their air ship was one of two moons.

And many a man can see it this night, / If he drinks much beer, or if his mind is not right. —I.E.W.

#### **1896 December 11 (Fri.) (San Diego) Evening Tribune, p. 4.**

THE "AIRSHIP NECK" / Is the Fad in San Diego at the Present Moment.

As the popular song says, "It's a long time coming," but at last the airship craze has struck the city, and we may look for the breaking out of the new disease that has attacked the northern portion of the State called "airship neck." "Rubber neck" is ancient history now and is obsolete. It was not a San Diegan who brought the fad into play, however. Oh, no, he as a rule likes to go to bed too early to look for anything, no matter how exciting it may be, after dark, especially when it is only to be seen after midnight. Of course there are a few who might see the airship after that time if they cared to look. The policeman and night watchman are supposed to be where they see everything, but as a usual thing they don't. Barrels are left too convenient, and they have McInnes down too "pat" for him to catch them taking a quiet snooze.

About 3 o'clock this morning, as the night clerk of the Brewster was taking a little nap, he was startled by having one of the guests, a traveling man from San Francisco, by the way, come rushing up to the desk saying, "Oscar, it's over the city. I have been looking for it and have found it." Oscar was sleepy, but to humor the guest he went to the roof, when the drummer pointed out three stars close

together and told him it was the airship. Oscar couldn't see it that way, but the guest insisted, so he gave in for the sake of peace, but he made at least a dozen trips to the roof at the request of the San Franciscan between that hour and 6 o'clock, when it was declared the ship had sailed away to the northward. The traveling man told J.E. O'Brien this morning that he was as sober as a judge last night, and was certain he had seen the ship, as the Examiner had telegraphed to this city last night that the ship would be over this place during the night.

12,1. The Airship / Has not yet arrived, but something equally interesting has. The new Orchestral Regina (piano adv.)....

**San Luis Obispo Tribune, Fri. Dec. 11, 1. We Are In It.**

That air ship liar that went to Honolulu and got back between two days, showed fairly good nerve, but after all we have some local talent that would make a good Sharkey to his Fitzsimmons. Our local inventor left Indio Thursday night about 11 o'clock as an honored guest on an airship, and lit in the mountains east of Edna at 3 a.m. Thursday. For particulars of the construction of the vessel see the Call of any recent date.

Solano Republican, 12/11/2. Collinsville Items.

The victims of the airship fever are convalescent, and expect shortly to entirely recover from that terrible shock.

Whittier Register, 12/11, p.1. People in San Jose were startled the other evening, about 11 o'clock, on beholding a bright light moving rapidly in the heavens and they are convinced that they beheld the famous airship.

(Yuba City) Sutter County Farmer:

Dec. 11, p. 6. News from Live Oak.

There are only half a dozen people in this town who were permitted to gaze on that air ship. 18,6. News from Live Oak.

As Mrs. J.M. Hampton was coming to church with her family in a cart, the horse became frightened by an airship passing over and fell to the ground. They were all spilled out, but arrived at Sunday school on time.

**Weekly Antioch (Calif.) Ledger, Dec. 12,1.**

The excitement over the airship has reached Santa Rosa, and the presence of a bright light in the heavens a few nights ago, at 7:30 set hundreds of people star-gazing. The light appeared to be moving in an easterly direction, occasionally disappearing entirely from view with a dull red glow, only to reappear more radiant after a few seconds. It was impossible to see anything beyond the light, owing to the distance, but, when it finally disappeared there were many people willing to swear that the object beyond the light had huge wings. While it is just possible that the light seen was the work of some bold aeronaut there was nothing visible to show a balloon, and there are hundreds who believe it to be the famous airship that startled Sacramento.

(Eureka) Western Watchman, 12/12, p.4. A New Oracle.

The Times has an editorial writer who is a good deal like Jules Verne, for he mixes fact and fiction with an audacity that causes as much diversion as the mysterious airship.

**Los Angeles Express, 12/12, p. 7b.**

The airship fake has at last reached Riverside. Yesterday about noon the usual phenomenon was seen floating over the city, and many who had been daily watching for the strange sight had their curiosity satisfied for once. The airship was a tissue paper balloon six feet in diameter and inflated with hot air. It rose to a height of about 100 feet and sailed off towards the mountains.

**1896 December 12 (Sat.) Mendocino (CA) Beacon, p. 1.**

POINT ARENA NEWS. /...

That mysterious cigar-shaped craft, that has been seen so often in the aerial world of late, has not slighted Point Arena. Last Monday evening, after the greater portion of our inhabitants had retired for the night and the belated ones were returning from whist parties, clubs and church rehearsals, a strange sight appeared in the heavens, which was at once recognized as the much talked of airship.

It created considerable consternation. One householder was aroused from dreamland and mistook the clamor for cries of distress in the vicinity of his poultry yard. He rushed to the scene prepared to annihilate any chicken thief he might encounter. But a little investigating convinced him of his mistake and he thinks himself fully repaid for his disturbance by the magnificent view he had of the airship. Many other reputable townsmen caught momentary glimpses of this strangely lighted craft. Those who were fortunate enough to see it when it hove in sight tell us that at a very moderate rate of speed it sailed due north against the wind until the telegraph wires were reached. There the conductor seemed to slow up and have some trouble in going beyond, but in some way unknown to the onlookers this obstacle was surmounted. The doubting Thomases thought that a point had been scored at the wires; but no matter, we have had our airship if it was not a speedy one.

(Placerville) Mountain Democrat, 12/12/5. The airship brought Santa Claus and his pack last week to O'Donnell's.

Salinas Democrat, 12/12/4. The San Jose News reports the findings of several airships in back yards. The same may be the case in Salinas.

It is a wonder that airships should create so much comment on the part of the press. From time immemorial even fools built castles in the air. But perhaps a wise providence kept them still in order that other fools might not break their necks watching their flight.

(Woodland, CA) The Mail of Woodland, 12/12 p. 4. Rumsey Items.

The owner of the flying machine broke a cog in his last trip and is laying up in his mountain retreat for repairs, and the Cubans are still struggling for liberty.

San Francisco Examiner, 12/13/26. Things You See When Out Late / An Operetta That Goes on Wheels (comic libretto) [Illus. with airships.]

[Illus.: Stockton Independent, 12/13 p.8.—The I X L Clothing House (Yellow Kid and Santa Claus riding airship).]

Fresno Semi-Weekly Expositor, 12/14, p.3. Took the Airship Route (man attempts suicide).  
Woodland Daily Democrat, 12/14,3. Dunningan Dots.

The airship craze seems to be subsiding, and it is about time.

**Ferndale S-W Enterprise, Tues. Dec. 15, p. 5.** Items of Interest.

—Willis Spaulding, of Glendale, swears that he saw the airship on the evening of December 6.

—Several Blue Lakers thought they saw the airship the other night, but it turned out to be a paper balloon, sent up by some of the local geniuses of the town.

Livermore Echo, 12/17/1. Through long poring over marvelous airship stories James Lewis, an old man past the three-score mark, has been ordered to the Highlands Insane Asylum. He was captured on the outskirts of San Diego violently insane, gibbering of flying and peering into the skies for the airship that conveyed him from San Diego to heaven. He said a ship came down and took him aboard, landing him at the pearly gates and, after a short visit, he hurried back to San Diego. When placed in jail the old man became frantic with rage and tore his long hair and beard. He told all sorts of airship stories, but his trip to heaven was the longest journey mentioned. He was so filthy that the examining board kept him in the cell, asking questions through the wicket and the Judge stood six or eight feet back from the ancient aerial mariner.

**(Los Angeles) Evening Express, 12/15/7.** Corona Items, Dec. 14.—The airship fake has reached this place. Some parties mistook the evening star for the wonderful airship.

(Modesto) Daily Evening News, 12/15, p.1. The airship craze seems to have subsided. The mysterious aerial visitor has not been seen for several days past.

(San Rafael) Marin County Tocsin, Sat, Dec. 12, p.2. Bolinas.

No airships have been reported seen in this vicinity, although one young man saw a vision last Monday night that startled him more than if he had seen the mystic ship. No one knows just exactly what he did see but he shipped himself from Bolinas in hot haste. The last seen of him he was traveling toward Olema at breakneck speed; and above the din created by the clatter of hooves, the rumbling of wheels and the cracking of whips could be heard distinctly the echoes of the familiar Bowery song, "I'll never go there any more."

Salinas Democrat, 12/12/4. The San Jose News reports the findings of several airships in back yards. The same may be the case in Salinas.

It is a wonder that airships should create so much comment on the part of the press. From times immemorial some fools built castles in the air. But perhaps a wise providence kept them still in order that other fools might not break their necks watching their flight.

At last something tangible has been learned of the airship. A thing has been made of galvanized iron, intended to navigate the air. It ascended by means of a block and tackle and plunged head foremost into the mud, where it now lies stranded, disowned by its inventors.

Santa Cruz Surf, 12/16/4. Student sees "ghost," falls down stairs.  
Dixon Tribune, 12/17/2. Davisville.

The airship seems to have been laid aside for the present. Perhaps Swinnerton's sketch of last Saturday portrays the truth, and the machine has actually come to grief.

National City News, Dec. 17, p. 5. In Oregon they do not tolerate any nonsense about airships. A man in Portland insisted that he saw one of the San Francisco aeroplanes sailing over that city and they immediately committed him to an insane asylum.—Riverside Press.

Oakland Tribune, 12/17, p.1. Earthquake in England—At Eversham the shock was followed by a brilliant light in the sky.

Weekly Visalia Delta, Dec. 17, 4. A Fresno man tried to commit suicide in a hotel by turning on the gas. The Expositor says the attempt at suicide was by the airship route.

**(Visalia) Tulare County News, Dec. 17,4.** Dinuba Doings. / Dec. 16.  
The airship passed over Dinuba Tuesday.

### **1896 December 18 (Fri.) The Call (San Francisco), p. 8.**

**BIGGS SEES THE AIRSHIP.** / Over Fifty Citizens Watch Mysterious Lights at Night.

BIGGS, Cal., Dec. 17.—The strange and mysterious lights so often seen of late were seen by over fifty of our citizens this evening at 6:30, and no doubts exist here but that it was the much talked of airship. The lights were seen very plainly one mile southwest of our town and kept up a waving motion, passing out of sight in the direction of Colusa. The Red Bluff local stopped just outside of town to view it.

San Luis Obispo (Calif.) Tribune, 12/18,3. A Necessity.

If the San Francisco Call continues to inflict its airship fakes upon the people, it should be compelled to furnish proper institutions for those who for those who write wild stories about people who are "sure they saw an airship last night."

Ukiah Republican-Press, 12/18/1. At Home.

The airship has been seen at Point Arena. It is thought by some to have been the ghost of the San Benito.

**1896 December 18 (Fri.) (Woodland, CA) Yolo Semi-Weekly Mail, p. 2.**

METEOR OR AIRSHIP? / A Fine Description of a Very Mysterious Aerial Visitor. / By Mr. John Durst, Editor of the Wheatland Four Corners. /

It will be remembered that the Mail contained a description of a supposed meteor or airship a short time ago, which was viewed by several Woodlandites. Brother Durst, editor of the Wheatland Four Corners, in speaking of it said:

The phenomenon to which Brother Dungan refers could not be an airship. Should we by chance be mistaken the lighting of the ship would be extraordinary, a remarkable light such as has never yet been publicly introduced by man.

As the writer had the good fortune to witness this wonderful display, to have a clear view of it from its appearance in the western sky to its disappearance in the east, we feel justified in correcting Brother Dungan. This may be presumptuous as we are not authority on airships. Perhaps we should say instead, we feel justified in giving Bro. Dungan the particulars of these wonderful lights.

Whether airship or meteor, the display was most remarkable. It was early evening and twilight tempered the darkness of night. The atmosphere clear and crisp intensified the light of the evening star, giving it the appearance of an "airship headlight." While admiring the clear color of this well-known planet another light suddenly appeared as a twin companion to the star we were watching. As we looked, the light increased rapidly. Fully a minute it occupied in approaching, growing larger until when nearly at right angles to us it had gained the size, apparently, of an electric light globe. Suddenly it shot upwards throwing behind a tail of light—it resembled exactly a big sky rocket. Its upward flight was of the duration of a good, healthy rocket. At a height apparently of a hundred yards its course changed, as did its formation. It quickly, yet with precision, formed into two comet shaped bodies, then into three, and in this form it floated parallel to the earth for fully sixty seconds when it quickly faded.

Whether it was a meteor, a youthful comet on a lark, or a flying machine we cannot say, but we are of the opinion that it was a huge meteor passing close to or just within the earth's atmosphere. Close enough to produce combustion, to furnish the light we saw, but not close enough to be attracted by gravity.

We form our opinion upon the theory that a meteoric body in the ether is not subject to combustion. The moment a meteorite meets the oxygen of this atmosphere combustion commences and gravity draws the meteor toward the earth. The light, we say, came into view suddenly and faded suddenly.

Just what portion of the earth this visitor passed directly over we are unable to learn. To us it appeared but a few hundred yards distant to the northward of us, yet we hear as far north as Redding the light was seen still further north. [Same in The Mail of Woodland, 12/18/4.]

**1896 December 19 (Sat.) Contra Costa (Calif.) Gazette, p. 3.**

AIR SHIP YARN. / The Craft Flew From Contra Costa to Fresno County in Spite of all Efforts to Stop It.

There have been rumors that the air ship that was so much discussed a few days ago was in hiding in this county, but only one man has been found who thinks he saw the strange craft. The latest in regard to this matter we find in the Fresno Expositor. It sounds rather fishy, but it will no doubt be read with as much interest as if the narrator told the truth. This [is] what the Expositor says:

"Yesterday shortly before noon a man appeared at Mr. Jennings' place of business and inquired for him. The stranger was covered with dust and had evidently traveled a long ways. Mr. Jennings was sent for and recognized the stranger as an old friend, whose name he refuses to give at present. A dozen people saw the meeting and some of them overheard scraps of the low-toned conversation, their attention being drawn to the men by the surprise Jennings manifested. When asked about the interview in which the word airship had been overheard more than once Jennings said:

"It is true the airship is in Fresno county, just where I do not myself know. It is also true that the man who was in here a short time ago is one of the inventors. He told me that the trip to this county was involuntary upon the part of the men in the airship. In other words, the machine came itself and they couldn't stop it. His statement was that they were flying as usual, around Contra Costa county hills and rose to a height of about 1,000 feet. Suddenly the airship struck a current of air and refused to answer its steering gear. It was borne rapidly southward against all efforts to change its course until suddenly the current of air seemed to lessen and the machine once more became manageable. The men aboard at once descended and flew about looking for a hiding place, which they at length found.

"My friend told me that the airship was made principally of aluminum and that the rising and falling was accomplished by improved aeroplanes, while the motive power was electricity. He says the machine is perfect except for the fact that at times it refuses to steer in a given direction and that at times it will not stand still in the air. He has gone to San Francisco and will return with some men probably tonight. He said if the news from Washington was satisfactory he would bring his airship over to Fresno where every one could see it.

"I know the man well," concluded Mr. Jennings. "He had no reason to tell me such a story if it was not true. He has no business here, knows no one but myself and left without asking any favors. Moreover, he wanted the matter kept quiet."

Pacific Grove Review, 12/19/1. Through long poring over marvelous airship stories James Lewis, an old man past the three-score mark, has been ordered to the Highlands Insane Asylum. He was captured on the outskirts of San Diego violently insane, gibbering of flying and peering into the skies for the airship that conveyed him from San Diego to heaven. He said a ship came down and took him aboard, landing him at the pearly gates and, after a short visit, he hurried back to San Diego. When placed in jail the old man became frantic with rage and tore his long hair and beard. He told all sorts of airship stories, but his trip to heaven was the longest journey mentioned. He was so filthy that the examination board kept him in the cell, asking questions through the wicket and the Judge stood six or eight feet back from the ancient aerial mariner.

Petaluma Daily Courier, Dec. 19, p. 3. In the window of Guntermute's art store there is exhibited a counterpart in miniature of the airship which recently excited the people of the state. It is ingeniously constructed of celluloid board, and the propellers are small paint brushes.

### **1896 December 19 (Sat.) (Weaverville, Calif.) Weekly Trinity Journal, p. 3.**

Douglas City Items.

Monday evening we were greatly surprised upon receiving a call from the captain of the air ship. He was dressed in the regulation costume, oil coat, slouch hat, etc., but upon reaching terra firma found it impossible to walk into the house as he should, so tumbled in. He was warmly received by all and gave glowing accounts of his recent voyage. The following day his wife called to apply for the situation advertised in a previous number of the Journal—being fortunate enough to see a copy of that paper—but not being quite up to date was dismissed. She decided to visit a neighbor and failing to gain admittance at the door she made her way through the parlor window. Not receiving a warm welcome wherever she went she decided to join her husband in their air ship. / Miss M'Kinley.

(San Rafael) Marin County Tocsin, 12/19, p. 1. James Lewis goes insane over airships.

(Placerville) Mountain Democrat, 12/21/5. The airship brought Santa Claus and his [ ] back last week to O'Donnell's.

### **1896 December 22 (Tues.) Riverside (CA) Daily Press, p. 4.**

The Oakland Enquirer remarks that "some of the far-away little towns in the mountains and distant valleys continue to see airships. They should be ashamed of being so far behind the age. In the cities we have had that craze and have recovered from it. The lunacy is no longer fashionable." We

desire to remind our esteemed contemporary on the bay that there is no lunacy about the airship business in Riverside. The soarer was very accurately described by one of our citizens as shaped like a flour sack with a buzz saw on the end of it. And it was a well known fact that the "ship" was a balloon sent up by some boys of inventive genius and keen sense of humor. If there is any such reality about the various airships that have been floating about in the arid consciousness of Charles Mehitable Shortridge and William Henry Hoodoo Hart the fact has not yet been discovered.

**1896 December 23 (Wed.) (Woodland, CA) The Mail of Woodland, p. 4.**

News from Blacks. Blacks, Dec. 21, 1896.

We have nothing of great importance to say in regard to the airship, but still we have a man in this vicinity that did really see the ship, and said it had forty distinct lights. It is surely so, for his sister saw it.

**1896 December 24 (Th.) Santa Cruz Surf, p. 4.**

An Airship.

A few energetic and enterprising young men of this city have in construction an air-ship, which they say will soon appear before the inhabitants of this city. This may be a surprise to the populace of this city, and many may think it is the kind we have read about, but nevertheless they will have a chance to see for themselves. It is said to be a flying success, but you must not tell the Call and Examiner correspondents about it.

Dec. 26, p. 4. That Airship.

That airship mentioned in the Surf last Thursday evening, made its appearance sooner than was expected, and was seen for the first time at about 9:30 on Christmas morning. Its appearance drew a good many spectators, and for this reason the builders of the fly boat didn't do much experimenting. The air craft went up all right and is still in the air. This is the work of a few of the Y.M.C.A. Reds, and the Blue boys were greatly surprised at its appearance as they saw it shoot into the air from the third-story window. The ship is a clever bit of work and is attracting lots of attention. Its shape is like that of a torpedo, being about ten feet long and is entirely red. On each side are wings and at the stern is a propeller which revolves by the aid of the wind. A small red flag floats from a staff at the front. The airship is suspended from two poles on top of the Y.M.C.A., and will be lighted during the evening when the weather permits.

San Francisco Examiner, Dec. [Nov.?] 26, 6—Our esteemed contemporary, the "Call," would be fully justifiable in detailing a member of its justly celebrated staff to build an airship right away.

Tues. Dec. 22, p. 16—Came in an Airship. Santa Claus Discarded His Reindeer Team and Took to a Flying Machine to Visit Hale Bros. (Santa comes in model airship with flapping wings, in window, with model of San Francisco below and dolls looking up).

26, 2—Mirages in Alaska—monstrous serpents apparently several 100' long & sometimes w riders on their backs, are sometimes seen.

29,6—small illus. of Astron in '97—man looking through telescope at the moon, sky also full of airships.

**Colfax (Calif.) Sentinel, Dec. 25, 2.** Got 'Em at Yankee Jims.

Our friend J.N. Burke sends us word that ten persons standing on the verandah at his residence in Yankee Jims, saw the airship last Monday evening. Send us over a jug of that brand for a New Year's present.

Ferndale S-W Enterprise, Dec. 25, p. 5. Local News.

—The inventor of the celebrated airship has at last been discovered. Druggist J.H. Ring is the now famous man, and a perfect model of the aerial navigator can be seen in Jake's front window. Take a look at it, for he sails tonight—Christmas night—for the planet Mars.

Stockton Daily Independent, 12/29, p.1. Not an Airship (steamer will be almost as fast).

SF Call, Jan. 1, 7. [Advertisement for The Chutes—evening searchlight, balloon ascension.]  
Sacramento Record-Union, Jan. 2, 1897, p.8. "Berkey's Airship."

A rack-shamble wooden contrivance of some kind lies half-submerged alongside the bank of the American River near the Twelfth-street bridge. The natives out that way, when asked what it is, reply that it is Tom Berkey's airship.

San Francisco Examiner, 1/3/97. [Illus.: Attorney-General Hart Floats Airships.]

Sacramento Bee, Jan. 7, p. 4. DeForest's model airship.

### **1897 January 12 (Tues.) San Francisco Chronicle, p. 13.**

A Shower of Meteors. / A Brilliant Sight Witnessed at Butte, Montana.

People who were fortunate enough to be up at an early hour yesterday morning witnessed one of the most interesting celestial phenomena ever displayed to wondering eyes. It was a meteoric shower or bombardment of the earth by shooting stars. Several persons who saw it said the shower commenced, or was noticed first, about five o'clock and continued for about an hour. The sky was clear with the exception of a bank of clouds around the horizon. At first there were a few shooting stars and then suddenly the whole heavens lit up with a flash like lightening and it grew brighter and brighter until there appeared across the whole sky a trail of fire like the trail of a huge comet and from it in all directions shot stars or meteors.

The light gradually formed itself into a long streak like lightening and then moved in a slow zigzag, snakelike movement across the heavens and finally shaped itself into a perfect letter "Z," in which form it remained for a long time, and then slowly faded away. During all this time there were numerous shooting stars and the whole earth was lighted up almost as bright as day. The display lasted for the better part of an hour, but the greater light described was of much shorter duration. The phenomena frightened many people and several instances were related where horses were almost paralyzed with fear at the strange sight. —Anaconda Standard.

SF Call, 1/14/14. Hot Air Balloons.

Chief Crowley has received numerous complaints that hot-air balloons have been sent up in all parts of the City, and the faggots attached to raise them having fallen upon and set fire to roofs of houses. The Chief yesterday notified the captains of the different districts to arrest all persons engaged in the practice.

### **1897 January 16 (Sun.) San Francisco Call, p. 16.**

SHAPED LIKE A SPARROW-HAWK / General Hart Describes the Appearance of His Client's Airship. / Expects to Hear Any Day of the Destruction of Havana by Dynamite. / The Wondrous Aerial War Craft Are Equipped With Sails, Wings and Propellers. /

From recent press reports received from Cuba and from private sources of information, ex-Attorney-General W.H.H. Hart is now confident that two of the flock of three airships said by him to have been constructed by his mysterious and still unknown client are in Cuba, and being prepared for their work of destruction.

In conversation he said he expected to hear every day of an aerial attack on the Spanish forces in Havana.

"I have not seen the inventor of the airship," said General Hart yesterday, "for some time. I am informed that he started for Cuba some weeks ago. While I am not in direct communication with him, I am kept posted on his movements and in regard to his wishes by his representative, who is now superintending the completion of the third airship at a secluded place over in Marin County.

"From him I learn that just previous to his leaving the United States, the inventor made a final test of his large aerial cruiser. He took flight at a point in the San Joaquin Valley, and without stopping, alighted in the mountains near Pasadena, after having traveled a distance of about 350 miles. This was the longest trip he ever made at one flight.

"Here the machine was carefully taken apart, boxed and shipped to some point near Yuma, whence it was sent by rail to New Orleans. The smaller flying craft was shipped from here direct to New Orleans, and from the latter port they were transported to Key West, Fla.

"Three days after their arrival at the latter town the inventor and his aerial destroyers took passage on the Three Friends, and were on board that vessel when she had the encounter with the Spanish warships off Cuba.

"I am certain that the recent press dispatch from Cuba, stating that the rebels were preparing to drop dynamite into Havana by means of kites, was founded on information given out by the inventor. This was merely a ruse to cover up the real means by which the dynamite was to be dropped over the Spanish stronghold."

Then in a musing tone he continued: "I feel so well satisfied that the machine is a success that I am sorry I did not take an interest in the invention."

General Hart then consented to give a general description of the craft which for several weeks was supposed to have flown over the soil of California to the amazement and mystification of thousands of people.

Its sustaining power, he said, was an egg-shaped balloon filled with gas, the larger end of the balloon being the front. To the sides of this gas body was attached elbow-shaped sails, which were principally used to control the forward direction of the airship. These are so arranged that the cruiser can sail at an angle of forty-five degrees from the direction of the wind. These sails also serve to drive her forward in a favorable wind. When traveling against the wind the sails are laid close to the sides of the balloon, so that no portion is exposed to offer resistance.

From the balloon depends the airship proper, in which are carried the machinery, the crew and all other apparatus necessary to its navigation and control. This is shaped like the body of a sparrow-hawk and is equipped with wings patterned also after that bird. The wings are movable and are worked for propulsive power, or may be spread and made rigid to form an aeroplane. At the front and stern are propellers, which are used only in traveling against the wind or when desirous of traveling with it, but at an increased speed. When it is desired to remain stationary in midair the propellers are revolved in opposite directions and each at the necessary speed, as they work independently. The motive power for the wings and propellers is electricity.

In order to descend gas is allowed to escape from the balloon, and when another ascension is made the gas in the balloon is replenished from a supply of condensed gas carried in a cylinder.

Santa Cruz Surf, 12/16/4. Student sees "ghost," falls down stairs.

SF Call, 1/17/22. (eds.) It begins to look a little bit as if the Swanhilda were an airship.

### **1897 January 22 (Fri.) Sacramento Bee, p. 1.**

AND NOW LODI. / The Airship Now, It Is Said, Flies by Daylight.

LODI (Cal.), Jan. 22.—The airship craze was revived here by the appearance of an aerial navigator in daylight. Many people in Acampo, three miles north of here, saw it the other afternoon sailing over the plain. It seemed as big as a small house, and looked like built of canvass. It went southeast. Some farmers also saw it the same day near here. The ship seemed to be under perfect control.

### **1897 January 22 (Fri.) Stockton Evening Mail, p. 5.**

AIRSHIP REPORTED AGAIN. / It Was Seen Just After Sundown by People at Acampo. / Electrical Observations at the Stockton High School Indicate That It Was the Mail's Asteroid. /

LODI, January 22.—The airship craze was revived here by the appearance of an aerial navigator in daylight. Many people in Acampo, three miles north of here, saw it the other afternoon sailing over

as plain as the sun. It seemed as big as a small house, and looked as if it were built of canvass. It went southeast. Some farmers also saw it the same day near here. The ship seemed to be under perfect control.  
/

A telephone message was sent by the Mail to Acampo for further particulars, and it was learned that the strange visitor was seen at about dark—just after sunset. It was described by the Mail's telephonic informant as looking at first like a cigar box with a spark of fire in it and afterwards seemed as if it was burning. Among those who saw the sight were Mrs. Down and Mrs. Hattie Suter. It was east of Acampo and far distant in the sky.

A singular thing in connection with the airships reported as being seen in this region is that they are of the periodical type, and that about twenty-nine days elapse between the visits.

The San Francisco Call has quit on the airship racket, but the Mail still insists that its theory, advanced some time ago, that the thing seen is nothing but an asteroid caught by the earth's attraction, is correct—in other words that the earth has a baby moon having about the same period as the regular, every day moon. As pointed out before, the only time it would be visible would be at sunset, while the sky was dark and before the asteroid passed into the earth's shadow. Consequently the field of vision would change every day and there would be some twenty-nine days between drinks. The scientists at the Stockton High School report mysterious electrical disturbances there in the latrinalmetromopical batteries, which is thought to indicate the correctness of this theory. [issues for the next few weeks missing.]

Stockton Daily Record, Jan. 23, p.3. Lodi airship.

### **1897 January 24 (Sun.) Sacramento Daily Union, p. .**

That Aerial Mystery.

Eds. "Record-Union": Has there been no solution to this mystery about the so-called airship? That a bright light has been seen several times traveling through the air cannot be denied, for reputable citizens have witnessed it. Surely it can be no ignis fatuus, for whoever heard of one high in the air and traveling against the wind. It seems improbable that a huge bird is flying around at night with a lantern tied to its tail. Surely it cannot be meteoric in its make-up, for if it were it would have substance, and therefore it must fall to the ground either as a solid or in the form of ashes, and the light produced by its flight through the atmosphere would disappear. I don't think I got the "jim-jams," but I saw a bright light going through the air early yesterday morning. Its course was toward the northeast. The light as I compared it with the one on the State Capitol had the same appearance, but it was not quite so bright. It remained in sight for over twenty minutes. I don't call this an airship, but I would like to know, as many others would, the solution of this aerial mystery. / HAYWARD REED.

SF Call, 1/31/6. Sea serpent.

Sacramento Bee, Feb. 4, 97, p.5. TOO MANY AIRSHIPS. (A man was arrested for stealing a watch from another, the latter "had been out having a good time, and took too many airships as they came floating over the bar, with the result that he became befuddled....").

Sacramento Bee, Th. Feb. 4, 1897, p. 5. TOO MANY AIRSHIPS. / Bring a Man Into a Befuddled Condition, and He Loses His Watch. [A man "took too many airships" and became so drunk he was not aware that a thief stole his watch.]

Feb. 10,4. Air Ships Again. (Leonard Clawson and Adam Beck have applied for patents on a flying machine to sell for \$100 each.)

### **1897 March 20 (Sat.) (Sacramento) Record-Union, p. 8.**

Now for the Airship.

SAN JOSE, March 19.—Now that the all absorbing question of the world's heavyweight championship has been determined, the airship mystery is again attracting attention. A pale light,

moving with great rapidity over the city tonight has revived the theme, and many who saw the phenomenon are confident that the problem of aerial navigation has been solved.

March 28. Air Ship Strikes Kansas.

30. Omaha (Mysterious Aerial Visitor)

April 2. Kansas.

Los Angeles Herald, 4/11/'97. The Airship Fake (from Kansas City Star).

4/30. Omaha.

### **1897 April 16 (Fri.) San Francisco Call, p. 2.**

THE AIRSHIP VISITS SPOKANE. / Numerous Citizens of Undoubted Veracity Tell of Seeing the Mysterious Sky Craft.

TACOMA, Wash., April 15.—A strange light, resembling accurately the one seen over Minneapolis on April 10, was seen over Spokane this evening between 8 and 8:30 o'clock. It was moving west by northwest, which course would bring it over Puget Sound in a short time. James L. Ford, a reputable salesman of this city, who lives in Whiting's Addition, about two miles from the center of town, first saw it at 8 o'clock and describes it as follows:

"When I first saw it it must have been two miles high. It was moving faster than a star and seemed to be hovering over the town. It suddenly dropped several hundred feet, but it was too dark for me to make out its outlines, although the sky was clear. The light was larger than anything I ever before saw in the heavens. It occupied a space of four or five inches, according to my sight, in the sky, which means that it must have been of great size. While I watched it the light turned from an intense white to a light green. It slowly passed over the town and twenty-five minutes after it was first seen it disappeared beyond the northwestern horizon, seemingly sinking.

"It was maintaining a certain course. When first seen it was above us at an angle of about 45 deg. I examined it as well as I could with a powerful opera-glass, but failed to make out anything but the light. It was certainly operated by human beings."

All four of Mr. Ford's family testified to the same facts. Miss T. Kiesling, a trained nurse, with her mother and family residing near Ford's house, is also willing to make affidavit to seeing the same thing. Other people in different parts of the city also testify to having seen the light as it was disappearing beyond the horizon. They feel positive it was an airship.

At 9:45 Louis Titus and A. J. Charon saw the light again from the Spokesman-Review tower. It was moving west by south and hovering over the mountains to the west of this city.

(Selma) Fresno County Enterprise, 4/23/'97, p. 8. The Air Ship Again (adv.). / The air ship has gone east and is now in the Mississippi valley, but Nees and Chappell are still in Selma (insurance company).

(Fullerton) Tribune, 4/24/2. The Illinois airship fair has now begun to invent letters dropped from his mythical craft. And the amusing part of this joke is that the Eastern newspaper editors seem to be impressed with the novelty of these devices. The airship fake was worn threadbare in California before it was tried on the East, but its ready acceptance there is pretty clear proof of the public desire to be gulled.

### **1897 May 1 (Sat.) (Fullerton, Calif.) Tribune, p. 2.**

Seeing Airships.

No intelligent newspaper reader can have observed the numerous columns of airship literature which decorate and enliven our journals these days without commenting on the difference in the airship species as it is reported from different sections of the country. In Milwaukee, where the metropolitan beverage is lager beer and where people do not drink in the day time, the airship is always observed between midnight and 4 o'clock in the morning, and moves about in the atmosphere at a distance of a

few hundred feet from the earth, showing flickering lights and always seeming to be uncertain as to its course.

In Kentucky, where the stimulant of the commonwealth is plain bourbon whisky and where people not uncommonly take their breakfast after their cocktail, the airship is reported usually late in the afternoon, flying with phenomenal swiftness many miles above the earth and showing a brilliant electric headlight which bathes the entire state in a peculiar but glorious illumination.

It is in Chicago, however, that the airship appears to the best advantage. Chicago people mix gin with chartreuse, champagne with vinegar, red-eye with chaniti, and beer with absinthe, and the airship there is visible during each of the twenty-four hours of the day. It has red, white and blue lights on one side, and green, pink and yellow lights on the other. It shoots up and down, crosses, zigzags and swoops in parabolic circles from Lincoln park to the stock yards. Of all the airships which have been seen and reported since it first became a fad to do that sort of thing, Chicago easily and without dispute is entitled to the blue ribbon for its exhibit.

**1897 June 28 (Mon.) San Francisco Call, p. 4.**

THE SUMMER MONTHS. /...

Flying-ships have had their day and now a Georgia newspaper reports that a number of people in that State have seen flying through the air a strange figure resembling a woman with long floating hair. There need be no suspicion that Mrs. Lease is making a Southern tour. She has renounced politics.

(San Jose) Evening News, 10/4/97, p. 4. Air-Ship Insanity.

A man named Sam Martin is confined in the County Jail on an insanity charge. He says that he in company with three others had started from New Orleans in an air ship about 7 o'clock yesterday morning, arriving in San Jose about noon. These men he said, robbed him of \$300 in gold notes. He killed two of them, but the other man escaped and he wants help in capturing him.