

AIRSHIPS, 1896 (3), NEVADA, WASHINGTON, OREGON, ETC.

Principal Sources:

Arizona Historical Society, Tucson; Arizona State Library, Phoenix; University of Arizona, Tucson
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University of Oregon Library, Eugene
University of Washington Library, Seattle; Washington State Archives, Olympia

Arizona

Flagstaff Sun-Democrat—0
(Globe) Arizona Silver Belt—0
(Holbrook) Argus—0
(Kingman) Mohave County Miner (no relevant dates)
(Kingman) Our Mineral Wealth
(Phoenix) Arizona Gazette
(Phoenix) Arizona Republican
Phoenix Daily Herald
(Safford) Arizona Bulletin
(Safford) Graham County Guardian and Gila Valley Farmer
(Solomonville) Graham County Bulletin
Tempe Daily News (no relevant dates)
Tombstone Prospector—0
(Tucson) Arizona Daily Citizen
(Yuma) Arizona Sentinel—0

D.C.

Washington Morning Times
Washington Post

Hawaii

(Honolulu) Hawaiian Gazette

Idaho

(Boise) Idaho Daily Statesman
(Idaho Falls) Idaho Register
Lewiston Teller—0
(Silver City) Idaho Avalanche—0

Illinois

Chicago Tribune

Indiana

(Indianapolis) Indiana State Journal

Iowa

Mason City Globe-Gazette

Kansas

Bronson Record

Missouri

(Benton) The News Boy
Kansas City Daily Journal
Kansas City Star
St. Louis Globe-Democrat
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Montana

Great Falls Tribune
Missoula Messenger—0

Nebraska

(Nemaha City) Nebraska Advertiser
Omaha Daily Bee

Nevada

(Austin) Reese River Reveille
(Battle Mountain) Central Nevadan
Belmont Courier—0
(Carson City) Morning Appeal
Carson City News
Carson Weekly
(Dayton) Lyon County Times
(Elko) Free Press—0
(Ely) White Pines News—0
Genoa Weekly Courier—0
Pioche Weekly Record—0
Reno Evening Gazette
(Reno) Nevada State Journal
(Reno) Plaindealer—no '96
Virginia (City) Daily Territorial Enterprise
Virginia Evening Chronicle
Virginia Evening Dispatch
Wadsworth Dispatch—0
(Winnemucca) Daily Silver State
Yerington Rustler

New York

New York Journal
New York Sun
New York Times
(New York) Thrice-a-Week World
(New York) The World (daily)
(New York) The World's Sunday Magazine
Utica Morning Herald and Daily Gazette

Oregon

(Albany) Weekly Herald-Disseminator
(Albany) States Rights Democrat
Ashland Semi-Weekly Advertiser—0
Ashland Semi-Weekly Tidings
(Ashland) Valley Record (no relevant dates)
(Astoria) Daily Morning Astorian
Astoria Daily Budget (no '96)
Athena Press—0
(Aumsville) Marion County Record
(Baker City) Weekly Bedrock Democrat—0
Bandon Recorder
Condon Globe
Coquille City Herald
Corvallis Times—0
(Dallas) Polk County Observer
Dayton Herald—0
(Eugene) Broad-Axe (no relevant dates)
Daily Eugene Guard—0
(Eugene) Oregon State Journal
Eugene Register
(Florence) West
(Forest Grove) Washington County Hatchet—0
Fossil Journal
Grants Pass Bulletin
(Grants Pass) Rogue River Courier
Hillsboro Argus—0
Hillsboro Independent—0
Hood River Glacier (no '96)
(Jacksonville) Democratic Times—0
Junction City Times—0
(Lakeview) Lake County Examiner

(McMinnville) Telephone-Register
(McMinnville) Yamhill County Reporter (no '96)
(Marshfield) Coos Bay News
Medford Mail
Newburg Graphic—0
Oregon City Enterprise—0
(Oregon City) Oregon Courier—0
Portland Chronicle (no '96)
(Portland) Evening Telegram
(Portland) Morning Oregonian
(Portland) Oregon State Journal
(Roseburg) Plaindealer
Roseburg Review
(St. Helens) Oregon Mist
(Salem) Daily Capital Journal
(Salem) Oregon Statesman (w)
(The Dalles) Times-Mountaineer
(Toledo) Lincoln County Leader—0
(Union) Weekly Eastern Oregon Republican—0
(Warrenton) Port Oregon Tribune
Weston Leader (no relevant dates)
Woodburn Independent—0

Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Inquirer

Utah

(Park City) Park Record—0
(Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News

Washington

Aberdeen Herald
Anacortes American
(Arlington) Haller City Times—0
(Asotin) Asotin County Sentinel
Bellingham—see New Whatcom
Buckley Banner—0
(Castle Rock) Cowitz Advocate
(Chehalis) People's Advocate—0
Chehalis Bee
Chehalis Nugget—0
Chelan Leader
Colfax Gazette
Colton News-Letter
Cosmopolis Enterprise—no '96
(Dayton) Columbia Chronicle (97)
Ellensburg Capital ('96, '97)—0
Ellensburg Dawn
Ellensburg Localizer—0
(Everett) Democrat—0
Everett Herald—0
(Friday Harbor) Islander—0
Haller City Times
Hoquian Washingtonian—0
Kalama Bulletin—0
(Kent) White River Journal—0
(Montesano) Weekly Vidette
New Whatcom (Tri-Weekly) Blade
(New Wheaton) Daily Reveille—0
Okanogan Outlook—no '96-'97
(Olympia) Daily Olympian
Olympia Palladium—0
(Olympia) Washington Standard
Pomeroy Washington Independent—no relevant issues
(Port Angeles) Challan County Courier—no '96-'97

(Port Angeles) Democrat-Leader—no relevant issues
(Port Angeles) Tribune-Times—no relevant issues
(Port Townsend) Weekly Leader—0
Pullman Herald
Seattle Argus
Seattle Evening Times
Seattle Post-Intelligencer
(Shelton) Mason County Journal—0
Snohomish County Tribune—0
(Snohomish) Eye
South Bend Journal—0
Spokane Daily Chronicle
(Spokane) Spokesman-Review
Sumner Herald—0
Tacoma Daily Ledger
Tacoma Morning Union
Tacoma (Daily) News
Tacoma News Herald—0
Vancouver Columbian Weekly—0
Vancouver Independent—0
Vancouver Register
Vashon Island Press
Waitsburg Times—0
Walla Walla Daily Union—(Nov. '96)—0
Walla Walla Statesman—no '96
(Waterville) Big Bend Empire—0
Wenatchee Advance—no '96
Wilbur Register

Wisconsin

Milwaukee Sentinel

Wyoming

(Laramie) Daily Boomerang

1896 January 23 (Th.) (Washington, DC) Morning Times, p. 4.

SHOT A MAN ON THE WING. / Jan Holodnock Was Taking a Fly by Night. / Pittsburg Commercial Gazette.

The little mining hamlet of Cranberry, near Hazleton, Pa., has the distinction of having a resident who has produced what is believed to be the first successful airship. The perfecter and inventor of this piece of mechanism is a poor Lithuanian, Jan Holodnock, who, under the pretense of being ill, has held aloof from his fellow-countrymen and devoted months of labor and time to his invention, which is jealously guarded in the attic of his humble home.

Last night Jan gathered his apparatus, and, by traversing alleys in order not to attract attention, succeeded in reaching a huge culm bank, which towered like a miniature mountain high above the surrounding village.

From this elevation the inventor was to jump into space. However, several of the villagers saw the queer looking form on top of the culm pile, resembling a huge vampire. Like wildfire the report spread that a devil or some uncanny monster was terrorizing the village. The crowd rapidly increased to an excited mob, and several shots were fired at Jan.

The inventor, realizing his danger, leaped from the bank. There was a flapping of wings and a whirring sound of rapidly revolving propellers, and the air ship gracefully floated over the heads of the now thoroughly frightened mob below. One of them in the excitement aimed a rifle at the air ship. Immediately at the discharge of the gun it was seen that it had taken effect. The machine was observed to be falling rapidly and struck the earth with considerable force.

The natives were at first afraid to approach the grewsome object, but the more bold gradually drew near. They heard moans issuing from the wreck of the air monster, and later what was their consternation to realize[,] their fellow-countryman encircled in a network of steel wires and canvas. After being extricated none the worse but for a few bruises, he explained matters to the satisfaction of his friends, and they assisted him to carry his machine home.

Jan claims that had it not been for the rifle ball smashing one of the main levers he would have demonstrated the power of his machine to move in any direction, ascend or descend and to fly against opposing currents of air. The inventor says he will reconstruct his machine. The secret of its manipulation

he would not divulge, but intimated that its movement was similar to the natural flight of a bird.

1896 February 8 (Sat.) (Benton, MO) The News Boy, p. 2.

A REMARKABLE phenomenon occurred at Nirvana, Mich., on the night of the 27th. A large fire-ball, apparently about the size of a bushel basket, fell to the earth at an angle of 20 degrees. When it struck the snow it rebounded and floated off at nearly the same angle it fell, and finally disappeared behind the hills. It is thought to have been one of those meteoric bubbles sometimes seen at this latitude.

1896 February 15 (Sat.) (Mineral Park, AZ) Mohave County Miner, p. 6.

A remarkable phenomenon is reported to have occurred near Nirvana, Michigan. A large ball, about the size of a bushel basket, fell to the earth at about an angle of 20 degrees. When it struck the snow it rose and floated off at the same angle it fell, until it disappeared behind the hills. It is thought to have been one of the meteoric bubbles which are sometimes seen in that latitude, consisting of a phosphorescent gas inclosed by a thin film. In the year 1832 thousands of the meteoric bubbles fell throughout this country and many people thought the world was coming to an end.

1896 February 28 English Mechanic (v. 63), p. 33.

Science News.

The Madrid meteor, as it is called, seems to have been observed in Ireland, for a correspondent of one of the Irish papers writes: "I observed what I thought was a very red star, but moving up rapidly from the south to north in a straight line. I called out to a member of my family to come out and see the strange sight, and we both rushed to the back of the house and watched it go straight north, until the trees on the hill behind hid it. It was very high over all the other stars and clouds. When we read the account of what happened at Madrid, we came to the conclusion it must have been what we saw."

1896 March 1 (Sun.) Galveston (TX) Daily News, p. 15.

Madison's Mysterious Light. / Chicago Record.

"The light" that has been bothering the people of Madison, Ind., for so long has reappeared. It appeared some years ago and frightened a number, then it died away and was forgotten. Recently a young man named George Phillips was walking near the cemetery on Riker's ridge when, as he claims, the light reappeared. It seemed to come out of the ground at his feet; it rose up, went over his head and disappeared in the earth behind him. Phillips fainted and had to be carried home. Since that time it is claimed that it has been seen at ex-Sheriff Hogland's place, on the Canaan road, and a man named Brown, who saw it on his farm near the toll gate at Riker's ridge got a gun and shot at it. It remained stationary and the shot seemed to have no effect.

The light is described by those who have seen it as a globe of fire, steady and not flickering. It never remains still long enough for people to get close to it. Captain John David, who was pilot of the General Buell for many years, says he has heard of "the light" for the last fifteen years, and has seen it twice. No one knows what it is, but nearly every night parties are organized to drive out to Riker's ridge in carryalls to try to see it.

Washington (D.C.) Morning Times, Sunday April 12, 1896, p. 16.

We Can Have a Navy in the Air (coming inventions).

1896 July 17. English Mechanic (v. 63), p. 496b.

Saturn—Comet?...

I was taking a look at Saturn last night July 13, in trying to find him—"having no finder I have to keep moving the movement about till I can fix him"—there came into the field a streak of light on the west side of the planet, and curved from it almost crescent-shaped. Not knowing what it could be, I stuck to it, and kept it in the field. Now, instead of moving across the field of the telescope like Saturn, it went "though much more slowly" in quite the contrary direction, and was, in fact, going to meet the planet. I closely watched it from 10 o'clock till quarter past 11, and then it had sunk too near the horizon to see clearly. During the time I was watching it two or three little stars went through it, or perhaps I ought to say, it passed them. It certainly was going toward Saturn at a good rate, and I should think it was nearer to the planet than any of his moons when I had to give it up. In length it was longer by comparison than the breadth of Saturn, rings and all. Is it a comet? I could distinguish no nucleus. / Turnbridge Wells, July 14.

A. W.

Aug. 14, p. 59. Balloon in Canada seen by Indians.

1896 July 29 (Wed.) The Sun (New York), p. 1.

FIREBALLS ON SEA AND LAND. / Novel Sights at Far Rockaway During a Thunder Storm.

FAR ROCKAWAY, July 28.—Two fireballs burst here last night during the storm. One fell into the sea and the other on the road.

The first one was seen about half a mile out at sea in front of the United States Casino. Those who saw it declare that a bright light first appeared in the sky, which circled around in a spiral, and sank slowly down to the water in the form of a ball of fire. On reaching the sea it burst and a great mass of illuminated foam or mist rose about it.

The second ball fell on the road in front of the Ocean House. It burst with a loud report and frightened the women severely who were on the piazza of the hotel.

1896 July 31 (Fri.) Philadelphia Inquirer, p. 2.

WHAT WAS THIS? / Marion Citizens Were Treated to a Novel Sight. / An Object Resembling a Flying Machine Followed the Long Island Coast Line. / Special to The Inquirer.

MARION, L.I., July 30.—A flying machine, a dragon or an evil omen—for all these things different people think the object was—was seen from the sound coast abreast of East Marion, L.I., just at sunset Wednesday evening. The object was high in the air, but the sky was clear, and it could be easily distinguished.

On the front of the object was a powerful headlight which gave it the appearance of a ball of fire. Mrs. Clarence Schellinger, the wife of an industrious farmer, who occupies a cottage on the sound beach, was the first to notice the strange visitor and the glaring light greatly frightened her. She exclaimed to her husband, who was working near by, "Come, quick! A ball of fire is coming in the direction of our house."

When Mr. Schellinger arrived a few seconds later the object was nearly abreast of their cottage and was plainly discernible. Speaking to a reporter Mr. Schellinger, whose word is thoroughly reliable, said:

"The machine was traveling about a mile in two minutes in a straight line. The centre of it appeared to be a large round ball about a foot wide, which carried a blazing headlight. On each side there were two large appendages somewhat triangular in shape, which resembled the wings of a bird and appeared about 4 feet wide and 9 feet from tip to tip.

"I was at once convinced that the object was a flying machine and as it was about a mile in the air its size must have been enormous. The wings were plainly visible and were moving up and down in regular bird-like fashion. When I first saw it I hurried for the field glasses. Returning in a few seconds I found that the object had passed over the house and was speeding to the east. Then we could not see the headlight, as the body hid it from our view.

"Apparently the flyer was following the coast of Long Island, for it was much nearer our shore than the Connecticut coast. I think there was somebody inside the machine directing its movements, but am not certain."

From other observers it was learned that the light on the machine had the color of an ordinary artificial kerosene light. It was traveling to the east in a straight line. It remained apparently at the same height as when first seen. Mr. Schellinger and his wife watched the great artificial bird until it vanished in the distance and then returned to the house, being greatly excited. Mr. Schellinger still holds the idea he first had that the object was an enormous flying machine.

1896 August 7 (Fri.) Manitoba Morning Free Press (Winnipeg), p. 5.

ACROSS THE MOON. / Professor Brooks Watches a Meteor's Flight.

While Professor William R. Brooks, M.A., F.R.A.S., director of the Smith observatory, in Geneva, N.Y., on Tuesday, July 21, was observing the moon with the 10-inch equatorial telescope, he saw a dark round object pass slowly across the moon in a horizontal direction from east to west, says the New York Herald.

Professor Brooks believes that it was the passage of a dark meteor between the earth and moon, and it remained dark because it was too far outside the earth's atmosphere to become ignited. It is well known that space is filled, so to speak, with these meteoric bodies, and that they only become visible as luminous objects when they enter the earth's atmosphere. The friction caused by their rapid passage through the air heats them to incandescence, and we see them as luminous meteors, or, as they are more familiarly termed, shooting stars. The meteor which Professor Brooks saw may have been more than one hundred thousand

miles away, or midway between earth and moon. It may, indeed, have been much further away than this, and really nearer to the moon than to the earth; or, it may have been only just beyond the earth's atmosphere. The real size of this meteor is not known because of uncertainty in its distance. The apparent diameter was about one-thirtieth that of the moon. The moon was in the gibbous phase, being three days before the full. The duration of the flight of the meteor over the moon was between three and four seconds.

1896 August 28. *English Mechanic*, p. 37.

An American astronomer, Mr. Gathmann, is stated to have reported on Saturday last, at noon, he observed a body cross the sun's disc in eight seconds. Its distance from the earth was about a thousand miles, and it appeared to be a body of about 45 feet in diameter. Mr. Gathmann describes it to be one of a number of satellites revolving about the earth, but this is the first instance such a body has been known to cross the sun's disc.

p. 181. Letter to *Scientific American* on dark meteors from M. DuC. Muller.

228. Swift's two "comets."

343, 363. Sacramento airship.

276. Sea serpent off Lowestoft.

329. Observer sees bright star and doesn't recognize; p. 347—probably Arcturus; p. 365—maybe Jupiter.

p. 41a. Peculiar Object.

The note on pp. 12 and 64, of Prof. W. R. Brooks's observation of a meteor crossing the moon's disc on July [15?] sent me off to my observation book, where the following occurs:—"1896, Jun 27 1h. a.m. Peculiar object whilst looking at the moon with 2-inch power 44, a tiny black object, slightly elongated, slowly sailed past from west to east, the one transit occupying 3 or 4 seconds. I believe it was a bird." I may add to this that nothing like fluttering was observed. The elongated form gave me the impression of its being a bird at a great distance. Frank C. Dennett. / 60, Lenthall-road, Dalston, N. E. p.39. Andree's balloon apparently seen by Indians.

p. 67. Two letters saying if size and distance estimates are anything like correct, the body's apparent diameter would be ten times the sun's and cause an eclipse—probably saw a goose or crane.

1896 September 4 (Fri.) (Nemaha City) *Nebraska Advertiser*, p. 5.

THE "WAGO OWANHAN." / A Mysterious Light That Hangs in a West Virginia Canyon.

An old-time West Virginia wonder is again causing quite a discussion among the reading and thinking people of Wyoming and adjoining counties. The "wonder" referred to is the mysterious light which has been known since times almost prehistoric as the "Wago Owanhan."

This phenomenal light, say the *St. Louis Republic*, appears to emanate from a certain spot on the precipitous sides of the great Pat Wess canyon. It casts its ghostly sheen across the waters of the river, lighting the surroundings not with a "sickly, pale, white light," but with a phosphorescent glow of sufficient brightness to make the reading of a newspaper or a book possible on the darkest night. According to some investigators of the "Wago Owanhan" the light does not emanate from any spot on the canyon's side, but hangs out over the river, like a luminous cloud or fog. This appears to have been the case at the time when Prof. [Tobluro] and Mr. I. E. Christian—the latter of [Occano], W. Va.—visited the spot. On the 15th and 19th of last February an expedition, headed by Mr. Christian, again visited the "Wago Owanhan." Snow was falling rapidly at the time and Mr. Christian says that every flake, when it reached a height of about 200 feet above the water, "would blaze out with dazzling brightness" and remain luminous until it reached the surface. A scientific investigation of the phenomenon will be made.

1896 September 4. *English Mechanic*, v. 64, pp. 67-68.

Bodies on the Sun's Disc.

[39047] There is an account in the "*Scientific News*" (p. 37) of a supposed body seen crossing the solar disc by an American observer. It is stated: "This is the first instance such a body has been known to cross the sun's disc." On reading the above, I was at once reminded of an article in *Recreative Science*, on Meteors, written many years ago by Mr. E. J. Lowe, then of the Highfield House observatory. It will be found in the number of that publication for November 1859, p. 138. The article, verbatim, ends as follows:—"One other phenomenon deserves notice. In 1845, M. de Gasperis and Sig. Capocci, on the 11th of May, witnessed a great number of black bodies cross the sun's disc. In 1849, Mr. Brown, of Deal, on the 5th of February, saw two. Other observers have witnessed the same phenomenon, and Messier, in 1777 saw 200 dark bodies cross the solar disc. Mr. Dawe conceives the appearance to be due to seeds floating in the atmosphere, while the Rev. W. Reed disputes Mr. Dawe's notion. To say the least, the subject is worth a few years' careful attention. It must, however, be borne in mind that, in all probability, they are within a few thousands, perhaps hundreds of miles distance; therefore a telescope will require focusing

expressly for this purpose, as the focus of the sun, for instance, would perhaps allow the bodies to pass across the disc without being seen. Prof. Erman has stated that the cold days of the 5th to the 7th of February, and the 11th to the 13th of May were owing to the passage of falling stars between us and the sun." / S. J. JOHNSON, F.R.A.S.

1896 September 8 (Tues.) New York Times, p. 1.

AERONAUT MAY BE DROWNED. / Burning Balloon Drops into the Waters of Hell Gate.

Several persons on Ward's Island about 6:30 o'clock last night saw a large balloon about 800 feet in the air and drifting toward the southeast. When about 300 feet south of "Nigger Rock" the balloon was seen to be on fire. In an instant it began to descend rapidly, and, striking the water of Hell Gate, sank immediately.

Keeper Gleeson, Messenger Patrick McGovern, and a dozen others who saw the balloon from Ward's Island, state that there was a basket attached to the balloon, and in the dusk of the evening they saw in it what they supposed to be a man, and from his motions he was either throwing out ballast or waving a flag. When the basket descended into the strong current of Hell Gate the balloon settled over it and the mass disappeared so quickly beneath the water that a party which put out in a boat at once could find no trace of it. Those who saw it say the balloon was burning when it struck the water.

The men on Ward's Island believe that the balloonist was caught under the canvas, and, being unable to extricate himself, was drowned. A tug which was passing at the time the balloon struck the water kept up a constant whistling, and it was thought that the balloonist possibly might have been picked up by the craft.

[Denver Evening Post, Sept. 8, p. 3, "A Balloon Afire," adds:]

...by the craft, although those familiar with the currents and tides in this part of the river say that this was almost impossible. The man could scarcely live a minute, no matter how powerful a swimmer he might be, in the water near Nigger Rock in the flood tide. The current was so swift that no one could make headway against it. They say it would undoubtedly throw a swimmer against the sharp rocks with so much force that it would stun him. If he escaped the rocks he would be borne up the stream and his chances of making the shore would be small.

The balloon was of the kind ordinarily used in making ascensions for a display. It came from the northwest and probably was sent up at some Labor day celebration in New Jersey.

The police are confident that the aeronaut was drowned and the work of dragging for the body will be begun this morning. Several places up the sound were telephoned to last night, but at none was there a report of a steam launch coming in with a man rescued from drowning.

1896 October 11. *Popular Astronomy* 4(5) (November 1896), pp. 275-276.

At the setting of the Sun on Sept. 20th, chancing to look out of the window to watch its sinking behind a spur of the Sierra Madres, my eye instantly caught a very bright object, by estimation about a degree above the Sun's upper limb. At that time about one-third of the Sun had already set. Repairing quickly to the veranda of Echo Mountain House, from whose windows I had detected this stranger, I saw it with greater distinctness, and seizing an opera-glass, my suspicion that it was a comet was confirmed, and also to my amazement, the glass revealed a much fainter one, the three bodies forming a right angle triangle. A second and much finer field glass, a very excellent one, was procured which showed them in like manner as the first. About a dozen of the guests of the hotel saw both objects precisely as they appeared to me. The Sun's light, by smoke near the horizon (for weeks huge fires have burned on the mountain north of us) was so weakened that the eye could look at it without discomfort, a condition which must have diminished the normal light of the comet also.

The objects simultaneously set behind the mountain about four minutes after the disappearance of the upper limb of the Sun. The brighter of the two must have been several times more brilliant than Venus which was not visible for some time after the Sun sank and then only as a faint point of light.

Now, if the bright one were a comet, and of course it was, then the other, to be a companion of it was much out of the proper direction from the Sun, and so the question arises, were they both comets?

The next night arranging for it, with the great glass pointed to the place, I swept with the 4 1/2-inch comet-seeker from its station on the roof of dark room close by, but saw nothing until half of the Sun had set when with difficulty I discerned one of the hunted bodies. If this which I now saw were the most brilliant one, its brightness must have diminished enormously as it was no more conspicuous with the telescope than it had appeared with the opera-glass on the night previous. After gazing at it for a few seconds, I rushed to the 16-inch telescope for a view, if possible, but the eyepiece being beyond my reach, I hastily returned to the smaller glass only to find that both Sun and comet were hopelessly gone behind the mountain. I have not seen them since. It was among the strangest of my experiences.

I am greatly wondering why the brighter body, so conspicuous as it was, was not observed elsewhere.

LEWIS SWIFT.

Lowe Observatory, Echo Mt., Cal.,
October 11, 1896.

1896 October 23 (Fri.) (Portland) Morning Oregonian, p. 8.

HOME-MADE METEORS / A CLEVER HOAX PLAYED ON THE PEOPLE OF MOUNT TABOR. / ...

Last Tuesday night Montaville, the flourishing little town on the eastern slope of Mount Tabor, was said to have been visited by a shower of meteors. A great excitement prevailed over the unusual event, and the phenomenon is still commented on. A select few, however, knew that a great hoax had been successfully played on the good people there and this is how it was worked:

It was a quiet evening Tuesday, boys in the village were playing on the common near the church, and men were discussing politics, when lurid flames flashed up in several directions, startling the community. Near the church where the boys were playing a great ball of fire seemed to have fallen from the heavens, spitting and sending forth sparks. On the [Rate] Line road was another of the same kind. Oscar Garfield Murray slapped the fire out with his hat on the one near the church, but it was too hot to pick up at once. He finally was able to carry it home. It was tasted by Mr. O.G. Murray, and he found it tasted like sulphur and lye.

The piece found on the Base Line road was similar. The smaller piece was carried to Mr. Cable's drug store, on the Base Line road, who was greatly interested. He had the precious lump inclosed in a glass jar, which he labeled "Handle with care. Part of the meteor which fell on the night of the 20th." Mr. Cable offered \$20 for the other and larger piece of the meteor, but nothing short of \$100, gold standard, could reach it.

The big piece was turned over to Professor Leatherman, as he was thought to be the man who could tell something of its composition. The professor overhauled several works on meteors, and the composition of the heavenly bodies, but could find nothing to compare with this new and strange article.

Hundreds have examined the specimen at Mr. Cable's drug store. A piece of the stuff left exposed to the air quickly crumbled to dust.

The number of people who claim to have seen the meteor fall is astonishing. A minister swore he saw it descend near his church. But all these good people are way off. The soft crumbly stuff they imagine was a meteor is simply the remains of the material used to produce the effect.

Some boys were in the city Tuesday and procured some of the material used to produce red and green fire, which they distributed around the Villa and set on fire at the right time. The stuff which was picked up afterward was simply what was left after it had burned out.

The specimens Mr. Cable has carefully bottled up for fear it might get away and the big lump Professor Leatherman has are pieces of the burned-out crust.

A Remarkable Meteor.

Wheatland, Calif., Oct. 23.—A most remarkable meteor was seen a few minutes after 6 o'clock this evening. It appeared in the west as a star of the magnitude of the evening star, and in close proximity to Jupiter. It increased in size until within twenty degrees east, when it gradually separated, first into one comet-shaped meteor, then into two, and finally into three distinct comet-shaped meteors. Tandem it sped toward the east, parallel to the horizon. When forty degrees west, it suddenly disappeared. Parties who witnessed the rare sight are at a loss to explain what it really was. In brilliance it resembled ordinary meteors, but, in view of the fact that it moved very steadily and slowly when compared to a meteor's flight, and was not attracted to the earth, but traveled parallel to it, it is believed to have been in space beyond the atmosphere of the earth. Its subdivision into three parts, which resembled as a whole three comets joined to one another, is unprecedented and beyond explanation.

(Silver City) Idaho Avalanche, Oct. 9, p.2. Snake 12-15 feet long seen near Garin, MO.

1896 October 24 (Sat.) (Portland) Morning Oregonian, p. 3.

CITY NEWS IN BRIEF /

METEORS SEEN IN THIS CITY.—The remarkable meteor mentioned yesterday morning in a dispatch from Wheatland, Cal., was noticed in this city. Mr. W. G. Lovell, residing at Kearney and Sixteenth streets, was looking out of the window about 6 o'clock Thursday evening, and noticed three balls of fire passing across the southern sky about 10 degrees above the horizon, going toward the east, traveling in a horizontal line, about half a degree apart. They passed over about 30 degrees of the horizon and disappeared without falling. Mr. Lovell noticed them particularly, as it seemed strange to him that they should be traveling in a horizontal line, instead of falling, as meteors, or "shooting stars," usually do. It seems that very few persons noticed the phenomenon, as Mr. Lovell was the only person who mentioned the matter to an Oregonian reporter yesterday. Last evening, however, Mr. Fred D. Matthews called to say that he had seen the meteor Thursday evening at Woodburn. He had just come in from hunting, and was at

a farmer's barn, having his horse hitched up, when his notice was attracted by three globes of fire travelling from west to east across the sky, not far above the horizon, going in a straight line, and finally disappearing. Each of the globes had a trail of fire behind it. They traveled quite slowly, and formed a grand spectacle. Mr. Matthews looked at his watch, and saw that it was just 10 minutes past 6. This description tallies exactly with that of the phenomenon seen at Woodlawn, Cal., at the same time, except that there the meteor appeared as a star of the magnitude of the evening star, increasing in size until within 20 degrees east, when it gradually separated into two and then into three parts, resembling as a whole three comet-shaped meteors, joined to one another. Usually when phenomena of this kind occur dozens of people will mention the matter to The Oregonian reporters during the succeeding day, but so far the two gentlemen above mentioned are the only ones who have reported seeing this wonderful meteor. The generally accepted theory in regard to meteors is that they are masses of matter which become heated in passing through the atmosphere surrounding the earth, but as this meteor traveled slowly and did not fall toward the earth, but traveled on a parallel course, the supposition that it was in space beyond the atmosphere of the earth is probably correct.

Nov. 2. An Arc of 15 [Degrees].

San Francisco, Nov. 1.—A meteor, leaving a broad, scintillating trail, traversed fifteen degrees of the northwest heavens about ten minutes past noon today. It was seen at a point about thirty degrees above the horizon, and in the half second of its flight, shone as an electric glare.

1896 November 17 (Tues.) Omaha (NE) World Herald, p. 6.

WATCHED A METEOR. / An Oregon Man Who Traced the Course of One. / (Portland Evening Telegraph.)

The remarkable experience of witnessing a meteor flashing across the firmament, watching it in its course and seeing the stone drop to earth within a few yards of where one is standing comes to but few people, yet such a happening occurred recently to Ben Hall, a painter of Albina, Ore. It was shortly after 10:30 p.m. that Hall started from the store of Joseph Turner to go to his lodgings. Reaching the corner of Rodney avenue, Hall was startled by a sudden illumination of the sky toward the east. Gazing aloft Hall saw what at first he took to be a ball from a Roman candle fired from some pyrotechnic display incident to the many processions. As the flaming globe approached, however, it assumed such size that the Roman candle supposition was precluded. Nearing the earth, the oncoming ball of fire could be seen to be bringing with it a trail of bluish sparks, which left the main body with a peculiar crackling sound resembling the snapping of charcoal.

Barely missing the roof of the house at the corner of Sellwood and Rodney avenues, the visitant from the heavens took a long, swooping flight, as though repelled by the earth's surface, finally alighting in a bed of hardpan on the corner of Rodney and Russell avenues, burying itself to a depth of some five inches. The distance from where Mr. Hall was standing to where the meteor alighted was so slight that he had a fair view of that portion of the meteor exposed. From this same a shower of sparks, much the same as though the component parts of the meteoric visitor contained a percentage of salt-peter.

Going over to the spot where the fragment of some heavenly body, broken loose in space, had alighted, Hall found the meteor still at white heat. Having no means of handling it, he returned to the cigar store of Turner and informed the people there of the phenomenon he had witnessed.

Hall and two other men then returned to the lot corner of Russell and Rodney avenues. On the way an empty lard kettle was picked up, and reaching the spot an attempt was made to scoop the fragment of a disintegrated planet into this plebeian receptacle. The piece of a "busted" star, however, evidently did not appreciate such lowly treatment, for upon being moved it emitted fumes so pungent and nauseous as to drive the meteor hunters away. After waiting some minutes for the stone to cool, the party again tried to get it into the kettle, but were again driven back by the odor of the gasses. A third attempt was, however, successful, and the meteor was borne back to Turner's.

The piece is of an irregular shape, muchly resembled a lump of hard clay that had broken loose from a cut and rolled to the roadbed below. It is some nine inches long by four inches deep and four inches wide at its maximum points, tapering to about two and three-quarters inches at the point. It weighs three pounds six ounces. One side and end appear a deep black, as though burned in lighted tar. The other parts present a gray clayish color. Contrary to the usual idea of extreme hardness attached to meteoric stones, this visitor is quite soft, it being possible to pick off pieces with one's finger nail.

1896 November 18 (Wed.) Utica (N.Y.) Morning Herald & D. Gazette, p. 7.

AN "ANGEL" IN WAYNE COUNTY. / Residents of Two or Three Villages Claim to Have Seen a Strange Apparition.

WOLCOTT, N.Y., Nov. 17.—The villages of South Butler, Butler Center and Slyburg, all in Wayne county, are greatly excited over an apparition which has appeared in that section recently, and for which

there appears to be no possible hypothesis except a spiritual one. The visitor is nothing less than an angel, or at least it bears every appearance of one, and is seen in broad daylight and in a clear sky. Its first appearance was on Nov. 2, about 3 p.m., when it was seen by at least a score of people within a radius of five miles of Butler Center. R.D. Mark, a farmer living near Slyburg, M.B. Newton, a mechanic whose home is in Savannah, A.W. Miller, farmer, and D.F. Everhart, school teacher, both of Butler Center, have seen the apparition. Mr. Everhart says:

"I was returning from Wolcott on Nov. 2 when I noticed an object floating in the air about 100 yards away and nearly over my head. Its appearance was that of a girl about 20 years of age, clad in a long, white robe, with the arms bare. On its shoulders were a pair of long white wings, which were nearly motionless. At first the features were clearly visible, but as the object floated higher, they gradually became indistinct. The day was clear and not a cloud in sight. I saw it for fully 20 minutes. To be convinced that I was awake and not dreaming I even pinched myself. I said nothing about it for several days, fearing ridicule, until I heard others speaking of similar occurrences."

The stor[ies] told by others named are the same in all essential details and it has created great wonder and some alarm throughout that section.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 11/18/6. APPARITION IN THE AIR. / Hundreds of New Yorkers Describe What Seemed to Them an Angel. / Special Dispatch to the Globe-Democrat.

SYRACUSE, N. Y., Nov. 17.—The people of three villages in central Wayne county are much stirred over an apparition which has appeared in that section and for which there appears to be no possible hypothesis except a spiritual one. The visitor is nothing less than an angel, or, at least, it bears every appearance of one, and is seen in broad daylight. Its first appearance was on November 2, when it was seen by at least a score of people. R. D. Mack says:

"I was returning from Wolcott when I noticed an object floating in the air about 100 yards away. Its appearance was that of a girl clad in a long white robe, with the arms bare. On its shoulders were a pair of long white wings, which were nearly the full length of the body. The day was clear and I saw it for fully 20 minutes. I said nothing about it for several days, till I heard others speaking of similar occurrences."

The story told by others named is the same in all essential details, and it has created great wonder and some alarm.

11/15/29. Live mastodons seen in Alaska.

(Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, 11/18/7. News of the West.

Sunday promenaders along the waterfront in Seattle, Washington, and downtown streets about 5 o'clock, were recently treated to the sight of a mirage, says the Post-Intelligencer. The sun had just sunk below the Olympics. A path of light reached from the sun to the clouds, then, bending, came down to the water, making a bright ray of reflected sunshine. A schooner with sails all stretched passed through this stream of light, making a reflection seemingly 200 feet above it, an exact image of the vessel.

1896 November 19 (Th.) Chicago Tribune, p. 1.

Sacramento Folks See Queer Things / Declare They Saw an Airship Sail By Sunday Night and Heard People's Voices Singing a Chorus. /

San Francisco, Calif., Nov. 18.—[Special.]—The Sacramento Bee prints columns of interviews tonight with reputable citizens, who declare they saw an airship, seemingly under perfect control, pass over the city in the direction of San Francisco at 10 o'clock last night. One of the eyewitnesses says:

"The traveling light was about 1,000 feet high at first, but rose to probably 2,000 feet. When it passed over the street car company's barn a crowd of employees came out, and they claim they distinctly heard people's voices singing in chorus."

Linemen of the Portal Telegraph company claim to have seen the same visitant near Suisan on Sunday evening. The impression here is some one has solved the mystery of aerial navigation and is conducting experiments at night in order to escape impertinent curiosity.

1896 November 20 (Fri.) (New York) The Sun, p. 6.

A Syracuse dispatch to the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* represents the Onondaga Reservation as perplexed in the extreme by an "apparition." It is an apparition with improved, modern ideas, and kindly consents to appear in broad daylight, as only a thoroughly new-school ghost would ever think of doing. The attire of it is a long white robe and a pair of long, white wings. "It has created great wonder and some alarm," says the dispatch, with a somewhat suspicious gravity. No wonder or alarm in the Onondaga Reservation. Everybody in that happy region knows that the Hon. JAMES JEHOSHAPHAT BELDEN was elected to Congress on Nov. 3, and furthermore that Mr. Belden is a gentleman who is able and willing to celebrate his triumph in a comely, even if expensive, manner. The whole sky over Syracuse has

been full of fragments of set pieces for two weeks. The so-called apparition was sent up as the Angel of Harmony, but can't come down. In the politics of the Onondaga Reservation there is never even standing room for the Angel of Harmony. The long white robe will get ragged and the long white wings will drop off. The Angel of Harmony will never be allowed to enter the Onondaga Reservation save as unrecognizable fragments.

1896 November 21 (Sat.) (Winnemucca, Nev.) Silver State, p. 2.

SACRAMENTO'S WONDER.

The editor of the Sacramento Bee and thousands of other reputable citizens of California's capital city have been completely thrown off their base by the appearance, in mid air over the city, of a most remarkable "what is it" on Tuesday evening last. The Bee especially seems to be as much worried over the phenomenon as the Examiner is over a steak out of the "California tenderloin."

The thing as described was somewhat in the shape and of the appearance of an egg shaped balloon in full illumination, with paddle wheels attached, and issuing forth sounds and music as of human voices, male and female. It oscillated and gyrated at different angles, dips and spurs and wobbled up and down—seemed to be in a hurry and withal had happy, hallelujah go easy instincts. It picked up a hammer from the steeple of St. Paul's church, carried it two miles and dropped it in a hay stack with a note addressed to the trustees thanking them for the loan. Numerous eye witnesses solemnly aver that they saw it moving through the air and that its lights wobbled up and down like a brakeman's lantern signaling a train to stop. The Bee, to give greater credit to the thousands of witnesses, declares that of the forty thousand men and women of Sacramento every one was sober on the eventful evening between 6 and 7 o'clock and that all were more or less nervous or scared at the narration of it.

There are two theories advanced by the Sacramentans who have returned to their normal equilibrium to account for this wonder of wonders. One is that the A.P.A's., having no further use for their billy goat since the result of the late election, put it in the usual trim for a regular initiation of a candidate, inflated its paraphernalia with gas and turned it loose, bedecked with Chinese lanterns and a music box attached. The other is that Mark Hanna sent Grove L. Johnson a mechanical contrivance, representing an annex to the coming prosperity, to be used by the Republicans in their jollification in the event of McKinley's and Grove's election; that when Grove found that he was defeated he refused to put it in the street parade, but that the editor of the Record Union clandestinely inflated it and set it off on the evening named in honor of McKinley's election; that he put the paddles to it to indicate to Grove L. [I.?] that the Republicans would hereafter paddle their own cause without his assistance, especially as a candidate. The Silverites, Democrats and Populists down there, it is said, are inclined to believe in the latter theory rather than the goat theory. They say it was a most admirable representation of Hanna's promised prosperity that the paddle wheels indicated that the prosperity would simply be actual or the stock of prosperity would be material for the trusts' speculations; that the wobbling up and down of the lights indicated that what prosperity might come would be very checkered—now you see it and now you don't see it—and that the sudden disappearance of the moving panorama of wonderful sights indicated as sudden a disappearance of the prosperity that "may hove" into sight in the next four years.

However, whatever it was, or whatever it pretends [portends?] it cannot be reasonably denied or doubted that the thing actually occurred as alleged by our frightened neighbors of Sacramento.

(Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, 11/21/5. Sacramento, SF

1896 November 22 (Sun.) (Salem) Oregon Daily Statesman, p. 3.

A Strange Airship. / Startling Visitation Over the Capital of California—Sacramentoans Sorely Puzzled About the Strange Craft.

The Sacramento correspondent of the San Francisco Call has this to say of a remarkable air ship seen floating over that capital on November 17th last:

The one topic of conversation in this city today... [Call, Nov. 19, p.1.]

Ashland (OR) S-W Tidings, 11/23, p.2. Sacramento.

Portland Oregonian, 11/22. This Ship Flies.

Tacoma (WA) Daily Ledger, 11/22/5. Airship Mystery Solved.

Chicago Tribune, 11/22, p. 10. Neighborhood Pestered by Pets. (Story from Oakland, CA, of a woman who kept 30 dogs, 15 goats and numerous other animals around her home, until complaints caused local police to intervene.)

There are some people in Temescal today who will swear that they saw the airship sailing over the Rich residence early this morning, and that it had a headlight on it as bright as the constable's star.

1896 November 23 (Mon.) Chicago Tribune, p. 1.

Airship That Flies. / Great Problem Now Claimed to Have Been Solved. / One Said to Be in Use. / Owner's Attorney Describes a 75-Mile Trip. / It Is Seen by Thousands. / Inventor a Wealthy Man Who Has Not Yet Secured Patents. / Built on Entirely New Line. /

San Francisco, Cal., Nov. 22.—(Special.)—While the streets of Sacramento were crowded with thousands at nightfall this evening there suddenly appeared coming from the east and moving toward the southwest a great white light, which heralded the approach of the first navigating airship.

As it passed slowly over the city at the height of about 400 feet the white reflected glare shut out from view in a partial gloom the shape of the aerial vessel, though there was distinguished a long dim form below and behind the light.

To bear out the stories of the sighting of an air navigating ship the Chronicle has found the attorney of the inventor in George D. Collins, who says the secrecy already observed is to be kept up until a patent is secured.

Describes the Ship and Inventor.

Is Easy to Control.

Storms and Wind Have No Effect.

Oroville, Cal., Nov. 22.

1896 November 23 (Mon.) Kansas City (MO) Star, p. 7.

IS THERE A REAL AIR SHIP? / Californians Stirred Up Over an Alleged Invention—Stories of an Attorney.

San Francisco, Nov. 23.—According to a story printed in the Chronicle yesterday an air ship sailed over Sacramento about 1 o'clock last Monday morning and was seen by many people. A few nights later the same light is said to have startled the people of Oakland and other places.

George D. Collins, a lawyer of this city, declared Saturday that he had been acting as attorney for the inventor of the air ship, a wealthy man, until seven years ago a citizen of Maine. This man, Collins declared, had spent \$100,000 on his work and his patent application was now on file in Washington.

Collins described the machine as of metal, 150 feet long and built to carry fifteen persons. It was constructed on the aeroplane principle with two canvas wings each eighteen feet wide and a bird's tail rudder. The motive power was a mystery.

Collins declared that he saw the machine rise ninety feet, move against the wind, make a series of circles and descend. He declared that Monday night the air ship started from Oroville and flew sixty miles in a straight line over Sacramento and then went seventy miles further and landed near Oakland.

The inventor found, during this trial trip, Collins declared, that the ship had a wave-like motion that made him seasick and he was working to remedy this, after which he proposed to fly over San Francisco forward and back. He had forsaken past ideas and constructed the machine on a new plan and was sure it could fly to New York.

The inventor is believed to be Dr. E. H. Benjamin, an alleged dentist, who has occupied rooms in an Ellis street lodging house for the past two years. Collins said last night: "This morning the inventor came to my office in the Crocker building and told me that he had tested the merits of the ship in last night's storm with the greatest success. The wind currents were very contrary, and the test was one that tried the merits of the machine in the hardest possible manner, but it came out of the ordeal in good order, and having braved the storm as well as any bird. He started from the locality where the vessel is housed and flew over Alcatraz and cut through the Golden gate, skirting the Cliff house, and returning by the same route across the bay. He hovered over the seal rocks for fully ten minutes and played his searchlight on the seals themselves. His intention is to make another trip this evening, probably over the same ground, running on his return trip as far as Sacramento."

Many skeptics declare that an airship 150 feet long could not be secreted near here without the fact being known, and hold that those who claim to have seen the airship saw meteors.

From Oroville comes the report that no one who ever saw an airship being constructed near there can be found, and yet there is a rumor that some man has been experimenting with different kinds of gases and testing those that are lighter than air. The experiments were made some miles east of the town and no one is able to give any further details.

Lawrence (KS) Daily World, Nov. 23, 96, p. 1. Calif. arsp. / Nov. 25, 2. Arsp a fake.

1896 November 23 (Mon.) Portland Oregonian, p. .

Oroville Wants the Honor.

Oroville, Calif., Nov. 22.—The rumor that the airship, which is alleged to have passed over

Sacramento, was constructed near this town, seems to have a grain of truth in it. The parties who could give information if they would, however, are extremely reticent. They give evasive answers, or assert they know absolutely nothing about it. Not a single person who saw or knew of an airship being constructed near here can be found, and yet there is a rumor that some man has been experimenting with different kinds of gases and testing those that are lighter than air. The experiments were made some miles east of the town, and no one is able to give any names of the parties, who are evidently strangers, and seeking to avoid publicity.

Tacoma (WA) News, 11/23/2. (ed.)

The air ship seems at last on the point of being supplied by a Californian. Edison will get left. Have you noticed that with all his inventive genius he often does get left? Bell beat him out on the telephone. His method of running trains by electricity, of smelting ores, of furnishing the improved and perfect electric light, of using the waves in warfare, and other big promises are yet undeveloped. His phonograph is still little better than a toy. He is always just going to do things, and other men put in and do them.

p. 3. Patent Office Hasn't Heard of It. / At the patent office today nothing could be learned...gave little credence to the Sacramento reports.

12/3/1. Secret of the Haunted Camp. / Marietta, Wis. The haunted camp is now a fit companion for the San Francisco airship.

1896 November 23 (Mon.) (Salt Lake City, Utah) Deseret Evening News, p.1.

No Patent Applied For.

Washington, Nov. 23.—At the Patent Office today nothing could be learned of the application for a patent on the flying machine alleged to be making successful flights in the neighborhood of Sacramento. The rules of the office forbid any disclosure of names of applicants or the character of the invention for which they seek protection. Inquiry among the patent attorneys known to control the Pacific Coast business failed to disclose any knowledge of the alleged success in aeronautics. Prof. Langley of the Smithsonian Institution, who has experimented scientifically for some time to demonstrate the best methods of solving the question of aerial navigation, excused himself from discussing the matter. His manner indicates plainly that he gave little credence to the Sacramento reports.

Ashland (OR) Tidings (s-w), 11/16/1. W.F. Brinton, of Washington, IA, has an airship.

11/23/2. Sacramento airship.

(Portland, OR) Evening Telegram, 11/23, p.1. San Francisco, Sacramento.

Seattle (WA) Evening Times, 11/23, p.2. Like a Romance (San Francisco)

Spokane (WA) Spokesman-Review, 11/23/1. Collins, Oroville; 24/2. Probably fake.

Tacoma (WA) Daily Ledger, 11/23/6. Oroville.

(Laramie, WY) Daily Boomerang, 11/23, 1; 11/24, 3. Sacramento, SF arsp

Omaha Daily Bee, 11/23/2. Say They Saw an Air Ship (SF, Oakland)

Kansas City Daily Journal, 11/23/1 A Ship That Flies / Startling California Tale

St. Paul Globe, 11/23/4. Has Sailed the Air / San Francisco Lawyer Tells a Startling Tale of a New Invention.

St. Paul Pioneer Press, 11/23/1. Machine Flies Like a Bird (SF, Oroville).

(Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, 11/23/3. The Airship a Fact / Californians Tell a Story of a Mysterious Flying Machine

1896 November 23 (Mon.) Silver State (Winnemucca, Nev.), p. 3.

SACRAMENTO NOT IN IT. / People in Winnemucca Saw the Airship One Day Before Sacramentans.

It may sound untrue at this late date, and especially so since so much has been reiterated in the California papers, that the airship which passed high up over the housetops of Sacramento a week ago today sometime between the hours of six and seven o'clock in the evening, was no myth or hallucination on the part of the people who say they saw it, because right here in Winnemucca on Monday, a week ago yesterday, at the uncanny hour of midnight, what seemed to be a "schooner" from which shone a powerful electric light, was seen by "Friday" as it flitted along like a ball of fire in the skies. He also heard voices and music like those Sacramento people, but says he thought at first it was Tommy, Patty, Joe and some of those other boys out serenading in a balloon, so did not pay much attention to it until he heard a voice say: "Lower the ship," and with opened eyed wonder he saw a hand protrude from the monster of light and take the Chinese Masonic flap from the high mast which stands immediately in front of the joss house. Then like a flash it flapped its wings and soared high in the air on its way west. The Mongols will swear to the truth of this statement for they have lost their flag.

A number of Winnemucca ladies declare that there is no mistake but that an aerial traveler passed directly over this town, exhibiting a magnificent searchlight at the hour above mentioned. They were up patiently waiting for their husbands to return from lodge and as they sat by their windows they saw what they thought to be a golden chariot resplendent with light, and horses with wings, behind which sat angels with harps and crowns of flowers upon their heads from which sparks of light shone bright as the stones in a crystal mine. "O, no, it was no dream, for we saw and spoke about it next day among ourselves and we all agreed that it was an omen, an apparition, which we read once in a paper would appear to a few of us four years before the end of the world in 1900."

We are positive many other Winnemuccans saw this mysterious visitant and as we go to press our "devil" and Jim are having a quarrel as to who saw it first.

More About Sacramento's Fake.

A dispatch from Washington says that at the patent office yesterday nothing could be learned of the application for a patent of the flying machine alleged to be making successful flying trips near Sacramento.

The rules of the office forbid any disclosures of the names of applicants or the character of the invention for the parties. Search among the patent records how controlled by the Pacific coast business failed to disclose any knowledge of the alleged success in aeronautics.

Professor Langley, of the Smithsonian Institute, who has experimented scientifically for some time to demonstrate the best method of solving the question of aerial navigation, excused himself from discussing the matter. His manner indicated plainly that he gave little credence to the Sacramento reports.

Virginia (NV) Evening Chronicle, 11/23/2 Calif.; 25/2, Red Bluff; 27/1, Prof. Cole's flying machine—
N.Y. Journal; 12/1, Horen.

(Carson City) Morning Appeal, Tues. Nov. 24, p.3.

There are thousands of people in California who believe that a flying machine has been invented that sailed from Oroville to Sacramento and from there to Oakland one night last week. It was seen first at Sacramento and the inventor promises to exhibit it over San Francisco in a few days

(Astoria, OR) Daily Morning Astorian, 11/24/1. San Francisco airship fake.

(Salem, OR) Daily Capital, 11/24/p.1. San Francisco arsp.

(Salem, OR) Oregon Daily Statesman, 11/24/1. The Flying Machine (SF)

Portland Oregonian, 11/24/1. Collins; 24/4, ed. on kites

Tacoma (WA) Daily Ledger, 11/24/2. No patent found.

Washington (DC) Post, 11/23, 1. Air Ship That Sails (Sacramento, SF)

11/24, 2. That Sacramento Airship. / Story of Its Performance Generally Discredited in SF.

1896 November 24 (Tues.) (Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, p. 4.

CALIFORNIA'S AIR SHIP. /

The supposedly perfect air ship of California, to which considerable attention was given in the press dispatches of Sunday and Monday, and of which first mention was made in the News last week, continues to attract much notice. One reason of this is the mysterious night voyages which its builder is said to be making, to the astonishment of very many Californians, who declare they see the strange craft, brilliantly illuminated, moving about each evening. Salt Lake City also has one eye-witness to the strange things that have been going on—Mr. Hardman, of an eastern merchants' protective agency in this city. He has been to San Francisco, and his account does not differ from that told in the News on Saturday evening.

Whether the air ship is really an accomplished fact, or whether somebody is engaged in a huge practical joke, probably will develop in a few days, since the alleged inventor of the California vessel, which has caused as much astonishment among the civilized denizens of the Golden State as Cortez' cavalry is said to have done to the soldiers of Montezuma, has promised through his lawyer to give a public exhibition some day this week, when everybody will be permitted to behold the wonder which he claims to have accomplished.

Will all the efforts of the centuries in aerial navigation, it would be a source of gratification to mark the close of the nineteenth century with the invention of a successful air ship. Heretofore all inventions have proved signal failures, and it is not certain that the right one has come at last. But the fact that it will come is by no means improbable, since such an accomplishment would be easily within the scope of the sovereignty of man as announced at the beginning of his career on this planet, when he was given "dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

1896 November 24 (Tues.) Chicago Tribune, p. 2.

ONE DR. BENJAMIN, THE AIRSHIP MAN. / Lodging-House Tenant of San Francisco Said to Have Solved the Problem of Aerial Navigation.

San Francisco, Cal., Nov. 23.—The inventor of the mysterious airship which has been puzzling local scientists and others for the last week is believed to be Dr. E. E. Benjamin, an alleged dentist, who occupied rooms in an Elliott street lodging-house for the last two years, but so far has successfully evaded all attempts to discover his identity. His attorney, Collins, today said:

“This morning the inventor came to my office in the Crocker Building and told me that he had tested the merits of the ship in last night’s storm with the greatest success. The wind currents were very contrary and the test was one that tried the merits of the machine in the hardest possible manner, but it came out of the ordeal in good order, having breasted the storm as well as a bird.”

He started from the locality where the vessel is housed and flew over Alcatraz and cut through the Golden Gate, skirting the Cliff House, returning by the same route across the bay. He hovered over Seal Rocks for fully ten minutes and played his searchlight on the seals themselves.

The story of the airship is not generally credited. George D. Collins, the attorney whose name has been connected with the inventor as an applicant for a patent, admits that he was retained for such services, but ridicules the story of the Sacramento flying machine, but declares his client is working on a machine which is a combination of aeroplane and tailless kite. Attorney Collins, however, says he has not seen the flying-machine, which he discredits as to its alleged performance.

Washington, D.C., Nov. 23.—At the Patent Office today nothing could be learned of the application for the patent of the flying-machine alleged to be making successful flights in the neighborhood of Sacramento, Cal. /

Chicago inventors do not put any credence in the reports of a successful flying machine having been made in California. Octave Chanute, who has been making a long scientific investigation into the complex physical problems which must be overcome in the successful air motor, said yesterday he could not command patience to read the full account of the new ship, because of its patent absurdities.

“The solution of air navigation has been ‘solved’ so often at one jump by inventors, cranks, and journals,” said he, “that it is now almost too late for even the public, which does not lay claim to any special information upon the subject, to be fooled. I look confidently for the eventual mastery of the problem of air travel. So do many men, whose opinions I respect highly, and whose attainments in scientific pursuits must command attention. But I do not expect to see the whole complex problem solved with one fortunate achievement.

“Air locomotion is not merely getting a vessel to rise in the air. Furnishing a motive power sufficiently light and strong is a big enough task to puzzle a generation of scientists. It will be a big step when that much is accomplished. Other things must also be studied out just as difficult.

“I do not believe this Western inventor, whoever he is, has mastered any single one of these problems, and he will go down to fame if he shows the way through the least of them.”

William Paul, the inventor of the “Albatross” flying machine, who experimented under Mr. Chanute’s direction in Indiana last summer, is also skeptical of the California achievement.

William Avery, who operated Mr. Chanute’s models, and who is working on a machine of his own conception, says he thinks the California ship story is a canard.

1896 November 24 (Tues.) Chicago Tribune, p. 6.

THAT CALIFORNIA AIRSHIP.

The alleged airship which is reported to have been flying through the atmosphere of California by night and hiding modestly in the mountain fastnesses by day is said to be constructed of metal and to be 150 feet long. No specific width is given, but even if the narrowest limit be assigned, it is apparent that the vessel itself must be a very bulky contrivance. To lift such a weight and sustain it in the air either some vast quantity of gas would be required or some mechanical agency. The gas theory is inconsistent with the claims for the ship’s attainments, for with gas the vessel would be at the mercy of the winds and could not be controlled in the way credited to this mysterious ship. But any motive power capable of propelling this immense body through the air at will could only be obtained from a generating mechanism that would add correspondingly to the weight of the ship. Tons more of weight would be added, moreover, by the rest of the equipment which the ship is said to possess. There are complete accommodations for fifteen passengers, a storage battery weighing half a ton to supply power for illumination, and heavy mechanism for manipulating aeroplanes and canvas wings. When all this weight is added to the weight of the vessel itself the aggregate would be so great that a very extensive mechanical plant would be required even to lift the mass, not to speak of doing it easily, and subsequently propelling it, birdlike, through the air of many miles and against the force of adverse and high winds. And yet this is the proposition the friends of the inventor ask the world to accept. The world will want further proofs than the vague statement of an alleged attorney before accepting, and will not be disposed to discuss the matter seriously.

This accommodating attorney, who so mysteriously keeps his client in the background, further states that a “wavelike motion,” with a tendency to produce seasickness, is the final obstacle to the

complete solution of the problem. This wealthy inventor claims to have surmounted every other barrier and to have constructed a vessel that has been cavorting among the clouds of California to the amazement of the populace and the present entertainment of the rest of the world. A hint of this triumph of human ingenuity over the law of gravitation and the caprice of the winds first came from Sacramento a few days ago, but inspired only a mild and amused interest in the scientific world. The details, designed to be more convincing, have followed promptly, however, to the discomfiture of scoffers, and their confusion will be pitiable, if not absolute, when the aerial navigator lands on the Lake-Front Park on its way to New York, which the inventor promises will happen within a few weeks, or as soon as he can overcome that annoying wavelike motion.

The manifestations of this century wonder seem to have been confined as yet to a nightly display of a "great white light" and the dazzling spectacle has been vouchsafed only to the citizens of Sacramento. As to the light or its greatness or whiteness there can be no doubt, for its rays reflected fore and aft from the airship were so intense that the ship itself was completely hidden from view. But it is easy to see that such a light could come from no object other than an airship, even if a "dim, long form" behind the white light were not convincing evidence. But in addition to this it must be remembered that on a previous nocturnal excursion of this vessel the wondering spectators heard its occupants singing popular songs of the day, or night, and surely that settles any possible controversy over the facts.

But as a clinching argument the attorney of the inventor admits everything. He reveals, moreover, the subtle consideration of his client for the scientific glory of the far West. This crowning achievement of the ages narrowly missed being made in Maine. This was the home of the master mind; but, as his attorney expresses it: "He came to California in order to be able to perfect his idea away from the eyes of other inventors." It is plain that this is merely a modest evasion of the real purpose of the great man to bestow signal distinction on California. Maine is known to be sufficiently free from any disconcerting abundance of inventors, so that some spot in the woods could have been found where the experiments could be tried in comparative privacy. Yet praise must be bestowed on this genius for the success of his efforts to maintain secrecy. Not a suggestion of his great work reached the public until that "white light" with its "long, dim form" trailing behind shone in the heavens above Sacramento, and even at Oroville, Cal., where the ship was constructed, no one yet knows of its existence. No one there has seen it or heard of it, and the closest approach to knowledge of the truth in that place is contained in a vague rumor that "some man has been experimenting with different kinds of gases."

It is unfortunate that a grateful public is denied also the name or identity of the inventor, so that it could pour out to him its sympathy in his final hour of affliction while he is wrestling with that wavelike motion. There are thousands of persons who have had experience with wavelike motions and even subsequent seasickness or something akin to it, and some of these might be able to make valuable suggestions as to possible remedies. Strong black coffee is held as an effective counter-irritant in many cases. In any event this inventor must not permit a false pride to stand in the way of perfecting his device not that he has gone so far. Let him retain all his other secrets if he will, but he should take the people into his confidence respecting that wavelike motion, so that something may be done for it.

Chicago Tribune, 11/19, 1. Sacramento Folks See Queer Things.

11/23, 1. Airship That Flies.

11/25, 6. One report said the airship went out to sea. If so it was probably to find more "gulls."

That California airship has degenerated now into a tailless kite. In a few more days the inventor—of the story—will probably confess it was nothing but a firefly.

11/28, 14. More About That Airship Fake. / Well-Told Humbug—The Flying Machine Throwing Down Dynamite from the Clouds on the Spaniards.

12/2, 1. Takes an Airship Trip to Honolulu.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 11/24/6. California airship story not generally credited.

Omaha Daily Bee, November 24, 1896, p. 4.

Reports of the mysterious airship which has been hovering over San Francisco would go to indicate that the problem of aerial navigation has been solved. It will be strange if the discovery has been made, as seems probable, by an inventor heretofore unknown, instead of by one of the distinguished scientists who have made researches in this direction.

11/23/2, 11/24/1. SF airship.

St. Paul (MN) Pioneer Press, 11/24/2. That Machine Bird / The Sacramento Story Declared to Be a Fake.

p.4. Until that California air-ship is seen sailing over St. Paul we decline to wax enthusiastic over it.

1896 November 25 (Wed.) (Indianapolis) Indiana State Journal, p. 1.

AN AIRSHIP AT LAST. / It Sails Several Hundred Miles and Lights Safely.

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 22.—The Chronicle prints a story which would indicate that the air ship in practicable form is an established fact. About 1 o'clock last Monday morning the inhabitants of Sacramento who were astir at that hour claim to have seen an air ship passing rapidly over the city. Some

mere said they saw a bright light, while others went so far as to say they saw a cigar-shaped flying machine and heard human voices from it. The residents of Oakland also say they saw the same sight.

The story of the mysterious air ship has been told all over the State and has created considerable amusement, as it was generally believed to be a hoax. The Chronicle prints an interview with George D. Collins, a reputable lawyer of this city, who says that the air ship is a reality. Attorney Collins says:

“It is perfectly true that there is at last a successful airship....

“I saw the machine one night last week at the inventor’s invitation....

“The reports from Sacramento the other night were true....

“In another six days several defects...constructed it on an absolutely new theory.”

In spite of Mr. Collins’s statement there are many skeptics who say flatly they do not believe this story. It is almost incredible that an air ship 150 long could be secreted in any building near San Francisco without the fact having been made public. The mysterious lights seen over Sacramento, if any were seen, are thought to have been meteors.

[Same in New Orleans Daily Picayune, 11/23/, Problem of Aerial Navigation Solved.]

1896 November 25 (Wed.) Kansas City (MO) Daily Journal, p. 4 (ed.).

FLYING MACHINES.

As might have been expected, the story about a party having been seen careering through the atmosphere above Sacramento on a flying machine several bright mornings ago turns out to have been the creation of a newspaper correspondent’s fancy. The narrative was related with considerable detail, and, as the name of a “prominent lawyer” who had seen the bold navigator cleaving the ambient was given, many people were deceived. The lawyer now says he has a client who is working on a machine, but he hasn’t seen it himself. Some weeks ago a very interesting piece of fiction was published in a Pacific coast paper detailing the adventures of an engineer who had invented a flying machine and who started with a companion one evening for the North pole. They arrived at the pole that night and got back home in time for breakfast the next morning. It is probable that this story nerved the newspaper correspondent to get up this later fake and publish it to the world.

The desire to fly has possessed the heart of inventive man ever since Icarus tried it long ago, and from that time down to the lamentable failure of Darius Green there have been many attempts. All have failed, however, and it may be many years before the problem is solved. Flying machines will doubtless be successfully constructed some day, but there are so many obstacles to overcome, so many abstruse problems to be worked out, that it will probably be a long time before aeroplanes, tailless kites or the more complex contrivances proposed will run the bicycle and the railroad out of business.

Within the last two or three years the study of aeronautics has been prosecuted by men of high scientific attainments. Formerly it was largely confined to charlatans who divided their time between flying machines and perpetual motion. But since the study is being prosecuted on true scientific lines it is reasonable to suppose that success will be attained at last.

1896 November 25 (Wed.) (Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, p. 3.

THAT AIRSHIP. / People of San Francisco Scanning the Sky for It.

San Francisco, Nov. 24.—Judging from appearances tonight, the people of this city have gone daft over the flying machine which is alleged to have soared through the heavens during the past few nights. On every street corner down town hundreds of people were gathered, with heads thrown back, giving eagerly at the sky. Anything from Jupiter to the moon was picked out as the airship by credulous people, who stood looking at the planets until aching necks and limbs made them desist. Early in the evening a fire balloon went sailing through the air, and the newspapers were overwhelmed with telephone messages from various parties who thought they had discovered the marvelous airship.

(Portland, OR) Evening Telegram, 11/24, p. 1. Red Bluff, Chico, Leesville.

(Tucson) Arizona Daily Citizen, 11/25/1. Red Bluff and San Francisco.

Seattle (WA) Evening Times, 11/25, p. 2. Red Bluff

Tacoma (WA) Daily Ledger, 11/24/3. Thousands of people looking for the airship.

Tacoma Daily News, 11/25/4. Red Bluff.

1896 November 25 (Wed.) Virginia (Nev.) Evening Chronicle, p. 3.

A LOCAL AIRSHIP. / It Was Invented by George Cummings, Lately an Unsuccessful Candidate for Lieutenant Governor—All Right, But Needs Fixing

There is a local airship; but few people know of it and few ever saw it; yet it has flown up in the air several times and come down again. It is the invention of George Cummings, who was lately defeated for

the Governorship of Nevada, as the candidate of the Populist party. George started to invent it about eight years ago and he has not finished yet; it is all right in its way but it needs a little fixing.

The airship is kept in a secret room at the home of the inventor near the round-house. It is the property of the inventor and Walter Pearson, and is known as the Pearson-Cummings navigator, and "Meteor" is the whizzing cognomen painted in large letters on its side. Gasoline furnishes the motive power, and the ship is inflated with gas to float it. It is shaped like a cigar, weighs about 150 pounds and has already demonstrated the power to raise 40 pounds besides its own weight.

Mr. Pearson is authority for the statement that it is a success as far as the principle of flying is concerned. It is too small; that is all. Why a larger machine is not built is a secret of the inventor, who is at present experimenting with a new valve, presumably intended for the ship.

The only other person who has ever seen the ship besides the inventor and his partner is Owny Gee: Gee was permitted to look at the machine because they thought he could stand the shock and they wanted him to sit on it till they got ready to let it fly.

On two or three occasions after dark, on very black nights, the ship made test flights at the end of a rope. It never had a passenger, but sailed aloft in the gloom some night at the thrilling altitude of a hundred feet, for the reason that neither the inventor nor his partner could persuade the others to make an ascension, and they could not send Gee because they needed him on the ground to hold the tether rope, and no infant air-ship new at the business, could expect to lift Gee from the earth.

It is a long time since the "navigator" demonstrated that it could fly but neither Pearson nor Cummings have ever been induced to make a flight. Both think that it would be an honor and a distinction to be its first passenger, and both think the other fellow is entitled to be honored and distinguished. It is proposed that they take the ship out to the 26-Mile Desert, and after padding that gleaming waste with spring mattresses, make an ascension there. The experiment would interest the Comstock, and their personal experience would, no doubt, be full of excitement and possibly result in glory to them, mundane or heavenly.

p.2. Red Bluff

11/27, p.1. Prof. Cole's flying machine—NY Journal.

(Carson City, NV) Morning Appeal, 11/25, p.3. The California Air Ship.

New York Times, 11/25, p.4. Topics of the Times.

—If the stories told by several scores of people living in and near Sacramento are to be believed, the problem of aerial navigation has been solved and a thoroughly successful flying machine is already in operation. Who built it, or where, nobody pretends to say, but numerous residents of the city mentioned declare that on the evening of Nov. 17 an airship, lighted and apparently moved by electricity, passed over their heads, moving rapidly in the direction of San Francisco. The night was dark and stormy, so the size and form of this sky traveler could not be made out with any distinctness, but the voices of her passengers were heard. Some who watched the strange object say that the people on board were singing, while others report that there came plainly to their ears orders given by the airship's commander to its steersman. All this, of course, may be the product of an ordinary November meteor multiplied by several vivid imaginations, or it may be merely a literal flight of the Western fancy, but the witnesses are curiously numerous, their tales hang together fairly well, and there is not inherent improbability in the supposition that some one of the many experimenters at work in this line may have won the long-predicted and confidently expected victory.

1896 November 25 (Wed.) Chicago Tribune, p. 6.

The California airship which began its career as a monster aerial craft 150 feet long with a passion for midnight cruises above the City of Sacramento has suddenly dwindled away to the meager proportions of a tailless kite. That swift flight of eighty miles against adverse winds ending in a graceful circling descent on a friendly promontory; that fascinating journey across the bay and through the Golden Gate to the ocean, where the vessel "hovered for fully ten minutes over Seal Rocks," and even roused from their slumbers the seals themselves with the celebrated white search light; all those other minute details of the perfections of the craft with the insignificant exception of a wavelike motion productive of nausea, appear, alas! to be evidence of flight indubitably, but a flight in which a husky California imagination was the only participant. Even the tailless kite is credited with no more substance than adheres to an undeveloped idea and there does not appear to be a single material fact of the picturesque story left on which to hang a shred of faith unless it be that wavelike motion. That undoubtedly exists and in a state of violent action, and if it has been unable to sustain an airship it has certainly sustained the reputation of California as the source of joyous visions.

That California airship has degenerated now into a tailless kite. In a few more days the inventor—of the story—will probably confess that it was nothing but a firefly.

A SHIP THAT FLIES. / SAN FRANCISCO LAWYER TELLS ALL ABOUT IT. / Says It Was Built by a Client of His and That It Is a Grand Success—Has Flown 130 Miles and Is Capable of a Trip to New York. /

San Francisco, Nov. 22.—The Chronicle prints a story which would seem to indicate that the airship in practical form is an established fact.

About 1 o'clock last Monday morning, the inhabitants of Sacramento who were astir at that hour claim to have seen an airship passing rapidly over the city. Some merely said they saw a bright light, while others went so far as to say they saw a cigar-shaped flying machine and heard human voices from it. The residents of Oakland also say they saw the same sight a few nights ago.

The story of the mysterious airship has been told all over the state, and has created considerable amusement, as it was generally believed to be a hoax. The Chronicle this morning prints an interview with George D. Collins, a reputable lawyer of this city, who says the airship is a reality. Attorney Collins says:

"It is perfectly true that there is at last a successful airship in existence, and that California will have the honor of bringing it before the world. I have known of the affair for some time and am acting as attorney for the inventor. He is a very wealthy man, who has been studying the subject of flying machines for fifteen years, and who came here seven years ago from the state of Maine in order to be able to perfect his ideas away from the eyes of other inventors. During the last five years he has spent at least \$100,000 on his work. He has not yet secured his patent, but his application is now in Washington. I cannot say much about the machine he has perfected, because he is my client, and besides, he fears that the application will be stolen from the patent office if people come to know that his invention is practicable.

"I saw the machine one night last week at the inventor's invitation. It is made of metal, is about 150 feet long and is built to carry fifteen persons. There was no motive power as far as I could see; certainly no steam.

"It is built on the aeroplane system and has two canvas wings eighteen feet wide and a rudder shaped like a bird's tail. The inventor climbed into the machine, and, after he had been moving some of the mechanism for a moment, I saw the ting begin to ascend from the earth, very gently. The wings flapped slowly as it rose, and then a little faster as it began to move against the wind. The machine was under perfect control all the time.

"When it got to a height of about ninety feet, the inventor shouted to me that he was going to make a series of circles and then descend. He immediately did so, beginning by making a circle about 100 yards in diameter, and then gradually narrowing it until the machine got within thirty feet of the ground. It then fell straight down, very gracefully, and touched the earth as lightly as a falling leaf.

"The reports from Sacramento the other night were true. It was my client's airship that the people saw. It started from Oroville, in Butte county, and flew sixty miles in a straight line, directly over Sacramento. After running up and down once or twice over the capital, my friend came right on a distance of another seventy miles and landed at a spot on the Oakland side of the bay, where the machine now lies, guarded by three men. The inventor found during his trial trip that his shap had a wave like motion that made him sea sick. It is this defect that he is now remedying.

"In another six days the trouble will be done away with, and it is then his intention to give the people of San Francisco a chance to see his machine. He will fly right over the city and cross Market street a dozen times. I cannot tell you where he is housing the ship or what his name is, as I am under a pledge of secrecy, but it is a fact that the machine does its work perfectly and will astound the world and revolutionize travel when it has been displayed before the public. The inventor can fly with it to New York to-morrow if he wants to.

"He has forsaken the ideas of Maxim and Langtry [sic] entirely in building the machine, and has constructed it on an absolutely new theory."

In spite of Mr. Collins' statement there are many skeptics who say flatly they do not believe his story. It is almost incredible that an airship 150 feet long could be secreted in any building near San Francisco without the fact being made public.

The mysterious lights seen over Sacramento, if they were seen, are thought to have been meteors which passed within range of the vision of belated citizens, who thought they saw an airship.

Oroville, Cal., Nov. 22.—The rumor that the airship which is alleged to have passed over Sacramento was constructed near this town seems to have a grain of truth in it. The parties who could give information if they would, however, are extremely reticent. They give evasive answers or assert they know absolutely nothing about it. Not a single person that saw or knows of an airship being constructed near here can be found, and yet there is a rumor that some man has been experimenting with different kinds of gases and testing those that are lighter than air. The experiments were made some miles east of town, and no one is able to give any names of the parties, who are evidently strangers seeking to avoid publicity. [also in KC Weekly Jnl and Agriculturalist, 11/26/5.]

FLYING MACHINES.

As might have been expected, the story about a party having been seen careering through the atmosphere above Sacramento on a flying machine several bright mornings ago turns out to have been the creation of a newspaper correspondent's fancy. The narrative was related with considerable detail, and, as the name of a "prominent lawyer" who had seen the bold navigator cleaving the ambient was given, many people were deceived. The lawyer now says he has a client who is working on a machine, but he hasn't seen it himself. Some weeks ago a very interesting piece of fiction was published in a Pacific coast paper detailing the adventures of an engineer who had invented a flying machine and who started with a companion one evening for the North pole. They arrived at the pole that night and got back home in time for breakfast the next morning. It is probable that this story nerved the newspaper correspondent to get up this later fake and publish it to the world.

The desire to fly has possessed the heart of inventive man ever since Icarus tried it long ago, and from that time down to the lamentable failure of Darius Green there have been many attempts. All have failed, however, and it may be many years before the problem is solved. Flying machines will doubtless be successfully constructed some day, but there are so many obstacles to overcome, so many abstruse problems to be worked out, that it will probably be a long time before aeroplanes, tailless kites or the more complex contrivances proposed will run the bicycle and the railroad out of business.

Within the last two or three years the study of aeronautics has been prosecuted by men of high scientific attainments. Formerly it was largely confined to charlatans who divided their time between flying machines and perpetual motion. But since the study is being prosecuted on true scientific lines it is reasonable to suppose that success will be attained at last.

1896 November 26 (Th.) (Carson City, Nev.) Morning Appeal, p. 3.

AIR SHIP OF WINNEMUCCA.

A number of Winnemucca ladies declare that there is no mistake but that an aerial traveler passed directly over this town, exhibiting a magnificent searchlight at the hour above mentioned [sic]. They were up patiently waiting for their husbands to return from lodge and as they sat by their windows they saw what they thought to be a golden chariot, resplendent with light, and horses with wings, behind which sat angels with harps, and crowns of flowers upon their heads from which sparks of light shone bright as the stars in a crystal mine. "O no, it was no dream, for we saw and spoke about it next day among ourselves and we all agree that it was an omen, an apparition, which we read once in a paper would appear to a few of us four years before the end of the world in 1900.

Nov.24 ed.; 25, 2 article; Dec. 3, Horen.

1896 November 26 (Th.) Mason City (IA) Globe-Gazette, p. 3.

It is now thought that the air ship fake in California was nothing more or less than a soap bubble from the pipe of the little boy of the Platte, passing over the west to the bosom of the mighty deep, where its bursting would not disturb Mr. Cleveland's quiet Thanksgiving service.

1896 November 26 (Th.) (McMinnville, Ore.) Telephone-Register, p. 3.

Tuesday night several of the boys about town saw the Sacramento air ship sail over this city, at least they saw lights in the heavens. This they swear to.

Dec. 10, 1. Heron.

(Albany, OR) Weekly Herald-Disseminator, Nov. 26/4. The flying machine craze has given some news fakir in San Francisco a chance to spread out on an entirely sensational piece of fiction, and get it into the dispatches. The real work of the flying machine experiments seems now to be turned into the line of experimenting with kites, as the lifting medium instead of the old balloon. A step possibly in the right direction.

Anacortes (WA) American, 11/26, p. 4. SF arsp (from SF Chronicle).
Seattle Times, 11/26/4. Wonderful Mirages. (in Alaska)
Tacoma (WA) Daily Ledger, 11/26/2. Red Bluff.

(Roseburg, OR) Plaindealer, Th. Nov. 26, p. 2. The Mysts Flying Mach. (SF & Sacra.)
Roseburg, OR, Review, 11/26, p.2. SF; p.3. Red Bluff
(Lakeview, OR) Lake County Examiner, 11/26 p.2. Sacramento.
Medford Mail, Nov. 27,2. Calif arsp.

1896 November 26 (Th.) (Portland) Morning Oregonian, p. 2.

Red Bluff and the Airship.

RED BLUFF, Cal., Nov. 25.—Many residents assert that they saw the alleged airship in this neighborhood last evening. It was first noticed about 7 o'clock, and was thought to be a particularly bright star, but was moving rapidly in a southwesterly direction toward the mountains. It finally disappeared over the mountains. The summit of the mountains could be seen above the mysterious light as it moved west.

Soon after its disappearance, a telegram from Chico stated that the supposed airship had passed that town soon after 7 o'clock.

After it vanished, it again passed over Red Bluff, and then a telegram from Leesville said that the supposed airship had come from the direction of Red Bluff, and after making a few turns had returned in the direction from which it came.

Several citizens say that while at first only a light was visible, later the body of an egg-shaped object was visible moving quickly through the air. The theory that it was a star was rejected because of its distinctly rocking motion, which was like the motion of a kite.

1896 November 26 (Th.) (Roseburg, OR) Plaindealer, p. 3.

The Airship Fake.

The San Francisco papers are very much devoted to sensational matter. Any hallucination springing from the fevered brain of some irresponsible fakir who has less scruples for truth than for the flavor of his tea, is displayed in the Frisco papers with great scare heads to attract attention and enlarge their circulation.

The latest fake of this kind is the airship vagary now filling their columns. It is all a hoax, a silly fake got up in Frisco doubtless by some harum scarum hair-brained dreamer, after the style of a similar sensation about 20 years ago, when it was alleged that a certain chemist had discovered a chemical combination which properly proportioned and combined in a certain way would resolve the elements of water and set the rivers, lakes, seas and ocean on fire and thus bring about a destruction of the earth. Statements were made and certificates signed before officials that the chemist had actually burned up large bodies of water by his new discovery. That fake died down when brought under the test of a little common sense. So this airship of the Frisco papers will vanish in a few days or a week at most.

(Albany) States Rights Democrat, Nov.27,2 SF arsp /Dec.4,2 Chihuahua meteor / Dec. 28, 1894, 4. Mirage over Belleville, Que.

Eugene Register, Nov. 27,3. Calif, arsp.

Dec.11,1. Reading the airship and prize fight reports of California reminds one of the old saying that California has the largest trees, smallest matches and d-nest liars of any place on earth. / 11,8 SF Call

(Salem) Daily Capital Journal, Nov. 24, 1. SF
(Snohomish, WA) Eye, 11/26/1. California airship.
Vancouver (WA) Register, 11/26, p.3. California.

1896 November 27 (Fri.) (Tacoma) Daily Ledger, p. 4.

WHAT WAS IT? / Wonderful Apparition Seen Over Tacoma.

Tuesday night at about 12 o'clock Mr. and Mrs. St. John saw a peculiar phenomenon in the heavens as they looked out of their window on Tacoma avenue. Mrs. St. John first saw the strange light and called her husband's attention to it. It appeared to be high up in the heavens, east of Mt. Tacoma and moving slowly in a southeasterly direction. They were lying in bed and watched this heavenly stranger a long time. They first saw it through the north window in their room, but after awhile they could see it through a window several feet further south, without having changed their position in bed.

This proves that it must have traveled a long distance during the time they were watching it. Mr. St. John describes it as having the appearance of a brilliant electric searchlight and looked to be nearly the size of an arc electric light. It flashed often and each time sent forth various colored rays of light, shooting out from the center in every direction, like spokes from the hub of a wheel. It seemed to have a wavering motion and swayed back and forth in its course through the heavens like a vessel at sea in a storm. He is puzzled to know what it was. The article in the Ledger yesterday morning speaking of an airship in California struck him that possibly this stranger in the heavens might be

somewhat related to the California wonder.

Wilbur (WA) Register, 11/27, p.6. Calif. Arsp from SF Chronicle.

Daily Silver State (Winnemucca, Nev.), Nov. 27, p. 3. This and That. George Cummings of Virginia City, the defeated Populist candidate for lieutenant governor, is the inventor of a flying machine which has but one serious fault—it won't fly.

The California airship was seen from several towns in that state Tuesday evening—that is, a number of people are prepared to swear that they saw the ship and can accurately describe it.

The mysterious "lady in black" has again made her appearance on the Comstock. The apparition is the source of nearly as much speculation in Virginia City as the airship is in California. A number of prominent Comstockers are said to keep very late hours in expectation of a visit from the woman of mystery.

11/27/p.2. Medford (OR) Mail. California airship.

11/27,p.2. Brownsville (TX) Herald. Wonderful, If True.

1896 November 27 (Fri.) (New York) Thrice-a-Week World, p. 5.

AIRSHIP SAID TO HAVE PASSED OVER SACRAMENTO. [Pic.]

There are hundreds of persons in Sacramento, Cal., who say that they saw pass over that city on the night of Nov. 17 a veritable airship.

All of them say that they plainly saw the brilliant searchlight carried by the alleged craft, and some of them assert that they heard the voices of men in the airship.

Then there are others who declare that these aerial travelers used the English tongue, and that they plainly distinguished the words used and commands [issued] for the guidance and care of the air vessel.

Those who say they saw the aerial ship are reputable citizens, who reside along the route passed over by the air craft. Many of them lived fully a mile or two distant from each other, but their accounts all agree.

As far as can be learned from eyewitnesses, the body of the craft was oblong and egg-shaped, with fan-like wheels on either side, whose rapid revolutions beating the air served to propel the vessel directly against the wind, and in so doing caused the vessel to sway from side to side with a wavering motion, similar to that of a boat being forced against the rapid current of a stream.

Midway of the vessel and suspended directly beneath it was a brilliant search light about twice the size of an arc light, evidently so placed that the occupants could ascertain when the vessel approached too near the earth and was in danger of collision with lofty objects. Above the egg-shaped body towered a tall, indistinguishable mass, whose shape it was impossible to ascertain, owing to the fact that the onlookers' eyes were blurred by the brilliancy of the searchlight.

1896 November 28 (Sat.) Tacoma News, p. 4 (eds).

The Tourist of the Air.

The California air ship passed over Tacoma on Thursday night. It was a bright but wobbly light far up in the ambient atmosphere, like an arc light with a jag on. The cigar-like superstructure above it and the voices issuing therefrom could be imagined as easily here as in the state of glorious climate. For it doth seem to be an established fact that the air ship was indeed a baldheaded fake.

It is perhaps not surprising that so many Californians were found to testify to the reality of the air ship and the voices, or that a few of them even counted the number of men in the ship, and one conversed with the occupants. No fake is so raw that it does not attract believers. Some actually think they see what is described. Others, who do not wish ever to be left, immediately proclaim that they saw all and a good deal more than is described.

Recall the Post-Intelligencer's fake of Mount Tacoma being in eruption. That was a bold, bald hoax. Yet at once hundreds of people all over the Sound country began to testify their knowledge of the eruption by ocular demonstration, one of the most positive being a Port Townsend preacher of lively imagination and great credulity.

Let some one start a story that he saw Mayor Orr riding a bike on a trolley wire, and many would believe it.

1896 November 28 (Sat.) Kansas City (MO) Star, p. 2.

A METEOR IN KANSAS CITY, KAS. / People in Midland Park Saw One Early Last Night.

Residents of Midland Park, in Kansas City, Kas., were greatly surprised at 9:15 o'clock last night

by the appearance of a huge meteor, which winged its flight in a northwesterly direction, disappearing about 20 degrees above the horizon. It was so near the earth that it plainly lit up the entire neighborhood, shedding a greenish-blue light. Its course was plainly noted by those fortunate enough to see it.

1896 November 28 (Sat.) Silver State (Winnemucca, Nev.), p. 3.

The Airship Again.

The airship craze is not dead by any means, and the indications at present are not good for its passage into oblivion along with the other fakes that have been sprung on a credulous public. Here in Winnemucca there are a number of believers in the existence of the airship, and about 9 o'clock last night the hill in the vicinity of the courthouse was occupied by an excited throng of men, women and children gazing heavenward at a luminous object in the southern sky. Of course the unbelievers of the crowd declared that what was seen was simply one of the brightest of the planets, but we will venture to say that twenty people can be found in town this morning who will willingly swear that they saw the famous airship and who can give a more vivid description of the winged wonder than has yet been published in any of the faking newspapers of San Francisco.

1896 November 28 (Sat.) Dalles (Ore.) Times Mountaineer, p. 2.

CALIFORNIA'S FAKE.

For a week past California has been all agog over the report that a San Francisco dentist had invented, and successfully launched in the etherial atmosphere, an air ship. People in various sections of the state saw the mysterious bird sailing around in the heavens, with wings outstretched and head light gleaming. People who heretofore had born good reputations for veracity gave most graphic accounts of what they had seen, and evidently there was something in the air, in the imagination of those ordinary truthful people, or in their stomachs, to cause them to behold such remarkable visions. Most likely it was the latter. California's grapes were slightly over-ripe before they were made into wine this year, and during the excitement of the election, possibly Californians indulged too freely in their boasted product, causing their minds to be muddled and their vision to be inaccurate.

The fake, however, was working nicely, and possibly would have resulted in California having successfully solved the problem of navigating the air, at least in the minds of some, had it not been for Alexander D. McEvoy, of the American and International Detective Agency. He was somewhat skeptical, and set himself about to investigate whence came these strange lights in the heavens, and that flying machine so many had seen. The Examiner of the 24th gives this account of the result of his investigations.

"By quiet investigation McEvoy learned that Blair Park, in the northern suburbs of Oakland, is the place of operation of two men who have been hoaxing the people of Oakland and this city. He stationed himself in the park and watched for what he might see. At exactly 28 minutes after 10 o'clock he saw rising from Inspiration point, a high shelf on the Piedmont hills, about 500 yards from his place of observation, an object kiteshaped about ten feet in length, with wheels like little windmills. On the sides of the structure were lights, and from it hung a Japanese lantern, red in color and about one foot in diameter. It moved slowly before the wind. He plainly saw two men on the point and accosted them as they descended the path. They told him they were sending up objects such as he had seen to mystify the people and to give them material for newspaper articles."

It is probably unfortunate that Mr. McEvoy has thus exposed the fraud, for people enjoy sensation and like to be bilked. None are more susceptible than the Americans, and it is too bad we should have thus been deprived of the pleasure we were getting from reading accounts of the aerial flights of that mysterious bird. And it is too bad for California. She was getting a lot of free advertising from possessing the only successful and real airship in the world, and was gaining renown abroad that was making other places green with envy. But all fakes must fall, and this one went down with a thud.

The Dalles (Ore.) Times-Mountaineer, Nov. 28/3. Last Saturday night the people of Sacramento discovered what they thought to be an airship. Possibly Parrott, of Goldendale, has taken his machinery to California for a trial trip.

The flying machine the people of Sacramento thought they saw sailing around over that city a few evenings since has proved to be a fake, just like all other flying machines that have thus far been invented.

(Dayton, Nev.) Lyon County Times, Sat. .Nov. 28, 1896, p. 3.

Brief Mention. / —California people, from Truckee down to the bay, have been thrown into a state of excitement by seeing something pass through the air that they think is an air-ship. It is probably the McKinley wave of prosperity—ethereal.

Chicago Tribune, 11/28/14. More About That Airship Fake. / Well Told Humbug—The Flying Machine Throwing Down Dynamite from the Clouds on the Spaniards. (Hart)

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 Search Light. // Invented by a Wealthy Man and Cost \$100,000. / It Has Wings to Steady It, a Screw and a Big Gas Tank. /

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 the statements of alleged eye witnesses. No newspaper man has seen the ship as yet, either in or out of the air. Every effort has been made to get full particulars concerning what seems to be the solution of the greatest problem of the age, but many important points still remain to be cleared up. The people connected with the enterprise allege that these will be made clear as soon as patents are finally granted. There is certainly very good reason to believe that a great invention has come to light on the coast. /

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 air ship has been built. Scientists all over the world are tremendously interested by the stories which have been telegraphed from here; nearly everybody on the Pacific Coast is wildly 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.

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 village, town and city in the State. In California the prevailing question to-day is: "Have you seen the air-ship?" That there is reason for the question the following facts strongly demonstrate:

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 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.

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.

On reaching the extreme end of the city the strange object, as if careless of its obligation to maintain a straightforward course, descended dangerously near the tall chimney of the electric railway power house, and an anxious voice was distinctly heard to say:

"Lift her up quick. We will hit the chimney!"

The startled employes of the car stables ran to the corner and discerned a wonderfully constructed oblong sphere, brilliantly illuminated and seemingly under perfect control.

Clearing the chimney, it quickly shot into the sky, as if obeying some mystic touch, and ascending to a considerable height, continued on its southwesterly course and soon passed out of sight. Mr. Charles Lusk, general manager of the Central Electric Street Railway Company, with whose chimney the strange visitant almost collided, was at his home near the place. Happening to step outside at that moment, he saw the remarkable object. He went inside and told the inmates what he had seen. He then went to the stables and, mentioning the matter to some of the Carmen who had just come in from a trip, was amazed to learn from them that they had seen the object hovering in the neighborhood at the other end of town. More than that, they had heard noises and a voice plainly say: "We ought to get to San Francisco to-morrow noon."

Mr. Lusk says: "I assure you there is no mistake about this matter. I distinctly saw the object, but it was too far away and the night was too dark for me to clearly make out what it was. It rose and fell and swayed from right to left as if propelled by some highly tensioned motive power. Its movements were very graceful."

G. C. Synder [sic], foreman of the street car barn, says of it: "Of course, I know that an aerial vessel of some description passed over this building at about 6:30 o'clock last night. I saw the machine. It was at too great an elevation for me to clearly discern its form, but I distinctly saw the search light which was going directly into the wind. Hundreds of people in this section of the city saw it, and many men claim they distinctly heard the voices of the men in the ship."

M. T. Shelly, a gentleman of the highest esteem in Sacramento, says: "I distinctly saw the air ship. It had a very powerful headlight attached to it, and one time when the craft careened somewhat so as to

partially obscure the light, I got a good view of the vessel itself. It was cigar shaped, and was propelled by large wings, evidently operated by electricity.”

Mayor Hubbard states: “I did not personally see the airship, as I was engaged at my office in the City Hall when it passed over the city, but my daughter did see it, and when I arrived home she described it to me. She was particularly impressed with the brilliancy of its searchlight.”

Hundreds of similar interviews could be obtained. Many practical electricians saw the strange sight. All of them maintain that the search light 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 search light 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 Nos. 21 and 22 Crocker building, San Francisco. Mr. Collins talked freely about the wonderful ship, but would neither confirm nor contradict that statement that Dr. Benjamin was its inventor.

“It is true, said he, “that a successful airship has at last been invented and California will have the honor of bringing it before the world. I have known about it for some time, and have been acting as the attorney for the inventor, but his identity must be kept secret for the present.

“I will say, however, that he is a very wealthy man, who has been studying the flying machine question for fifteen years. He came to San Francisco seven years ago from Maine, to perfect his experiments, away from the eyes of other inventors. Since he has been here he has expended \$100,000 on the ship, and it is now complete. Application for a patent is now in Washington, and I cannot give out too much information for fear the idea may be stolen. I have seen the ship at the inventor’s home a number of times, and it is a wonderful aerial contrivance.”

One apparently reliable man says he has been in the inventor’s grounds and seen the airship. This man says:

“It is made of steel and aluminum, is 150 feet long and is built to carry fifteen persons. It is cigar-shaped in appearance, pointed at each end. It has two huge canvas wings, one on either side, like a bird, and a rudder fashioned after a bird’s tail.

“The immense metal cylinder is about forty feet in diameter and pumped free of air. The wings are operated by electricity, and although large are very light and on sensitive bearings, capable of very rapid motion. Immediately in front of the tail is a propeller, also connected with the electric current.

“The idea of the invention is very simple, yet effective. The cylinder furnishes all the sustaining power necessary for maintaining the ship at any height, with fifteen or a less number of people on board. The wings or aeroplanes are for the purpose of regulating the altitude of the ship and governing it against air currents and in cases of storm. The propeller supplies the means of driving it along and the rudder guides it in any desired direction.

“The top of the cylinder is cut out for a distance of about thirty-five feet, like the cabin of a boat, and there all the electrical apparatus and other mechanism of the airship is placed. There is a floor or deck over this cabin, and on this deck is where the passengers ride. It is surrounded by a high network and a canvas awning stretches over the entire top. From the sides of the awning are curtains, to be lowered in case of storm. It requires two men to operate the ship, one as pilot and the other as electrician or engineer, and to also look after the aeroplanes. The inventor laughed very heartily when told of the sensation he had created on his wild trip over Sacramento, and that he had been considered a comet or a meteor.

“Walking to the front of the ship he pointed to a powerful search light which revolved upon a huge pivot and which, he explained, was the strange white light the Sacramentans had seen last Wednesday night.

“On that night he had started from the locality where the vessel is housed and flew over Alcatraz and out through the Golden Gate, skirting the Cliff House, and returned by the same route, across the bay.

“He hovered over seal rocks for fully ten minutes and played his search light over the rocks and on the seals themselves. He then darted off for Sacramento. As he neared the city he planed the search light up and down the streets and saw that the ship had been seen. In order that the residents might not scrutinize the workings of the vessel, he rose to a considerable height, but kept the light directed at the city. He hovered over several parts of the town for a few minutes as he saw that crowds were looking at the light. He then proceeded southward to the home of the ship.

“After showing the outside of the ship the inventor said that it was built on purely the aeroplane system and that the width of each wing was eighteen feet.

“He then climbed into the machine, with two of his assistants, and, after moving some mechanism for a few moments, it began to gently ascend. The wings flapped slowly as it rose, and then faster as it began to move against the wind. There was no hesitating about it. It rose slowly and steadily and was under perfect control all the time. The propeller had not yet been put in operation, but when at a height of about 100 feet the inventor shouted down that he was going to fly away and back again. In a moment the propeller was whirling around, and the wings were thrown in slanting position. Rapidly the ship sped forward, rising as it went, until it was almost out of sight. In a few moments he returned and came down to within fifty feet of the ground. He said that he was going to make a series of circles and then descend.

He set the ship again in motion, beginning by making a circle of 200 yards or more in diameter, which he gradually narrowed down until the ship was within twenty-five feet of the ground. It then stood still for a moment, and fell softly on the ground, touching it as lightly as a feather. The buoyancy and springiness of it was wonderful.

“After alighting the inventor said that almost two weeks ago he took a trip in the ship from Oroville, in Butte County, for sixty miles on an air line, flying directly over Sacramento. After hovering over the capital for a while, he sailed another seventy miles, and made a landing on the Oakland side of the bay. He found during this trip that the ship had a wave-like motion that made him sea-sick, and this defect he is now remedying.

“The most severe test he has put the ship to was ten days ago, when he started on a trip and got caught in a storm. He kept his course, although the lightning played all around the ship.

“The wind currents were very contrary, and the test was one that tried the merits of the machine in the hardest possible manner, but it came out of the ordeal in good order, having breasted the storm as well as any bird.

“The inventor says he has no [desire to] keep his invention a secret after [he gets] his patents. All he wants is to [be] protected. As soon as they arrive from Washington, he says that he will fly right [into] San Francisco in broad daylight, and [give] everybody a chance to see his wonderful machine in a way that can leave no doubt in any mind.”

[Illus.: Benjamin's Air Ship, as it Appeared to Trustworthy Witnesses.]

1896 November 29 (Sun,) Portland Oregonian, p. 4.

THE LAIR OF THE FAKER.

California has proved the richest American soil for propagation of the "fake"—a noxious weed introduced into the country within the present generation by what is called modern journalism. The fake at its best is a lie well told; that is, a piece of pure fiction drest with an air of probability and presented as truth. There are many famous literary fakes, such as the sixth book of the Eneid, the book of Mormon and Robinson Crusoe. The fake is to be distinguished carefully from the satire or parable. Neither the voyages of Gulliver nor "Pilgrim's Progress" is to be considered a fake. It is a necessary element of this sort of literary composition that it should be intended to deceive

This form of mendacity has many subdivisions, of which the oldest and most familiar is the fake marvelous—the hoax, which Poe made famous half a century ago, though he did not invent it. But modern journalism, catering to a keener taste than that for the merely marvelous, has invented a multitude of kindred forms—the fake criminal, the fake sanguinary, the fake horrible, the fake amorous, the fake scandalous, the fake of mere impertinent social or personal gossip. These run the whole scale of objects of morbid and prurient human curiosity, from horror and indecency to the common forms of personal detail which has no possible interest for the reader except that it is none of his business.

The fake flourishes through all the school of journals that imitate the New York World, which first used it as constant and staple stock in trade; but it has reached its most luxuriant development in San Francisco, whose newspapers print little else. It is easy to understand, from the history and social conditions of California, why it should afford a soil peculiarly adapted to fake cultivation. California society unites, strangely enough, many of the human sentiments and susceptibilities of the barbaric state with those of an overripe civilization. Some forty-five years ago there was a sudden relapse there of civilized man into the conditions of primitive savagery, followed by a superficial return to civilized manners and a swift decay of human vigor, accompanied with all the morbid symptoms of racial senile gangrene that mark a declining civilization. This rapid growth and decay accomplished in one generation the work of centuries of race development in other peoples, bringing the primitive brutality of the Sabine rapture and the inconceivable degeneration of the sixth satire of Juvenal, within the people of a single life[time].

This produced a peculiar mental receptivity of marvelous, horrible and obscene fiction by uniting in the typical Californian of today the credulity of the barbarian with the depraved taste of overmature civilization. He will believe any lie, but he likes best lies well spiced with horror and indecency. In this, as in another recent California study, the fastidious student may escape the handling of repulsive data by referring for illustration to any issue of any San Francisco journal. There are two very instructive instances, however, which may be presented without offense. These are particularly interesting as showing how universal is the fake spirit in California; that it is common to the most sensational newspaper of San Francisco and the richest and largest university in the state.

Wide attention has been drawn to the newspaper story sent out from San Francisco of a mysterious airship, invented by a man from Maine, built in secret and launched from a retired spot south of San Francisco, whence it made long voyages back and forth over the length of the state. This was as pure fiction as the story of the floating island of Laputa, though told with a clumsy imitation of all Swift's wealth of detail, including an interview with the "counsel" of the inventor—a lawyer who afterward denied all knowledge of either inventor or airship.

But it was swallowed gluttonously by the people of California, who blocked the streets nightly to

imagine that they saw the "oblong white body, enveloped in dim light," as it traveled to and fro in the air. Apparently Californians are still gaping up into the empty night, though the falsity of the story has been proved. Of course, no person of intelligence ever believed it.

Comparison is natural between this newspaper fake and the performance by which Dr. David Starr Jordan, president of Stanford University, lately amazed all who knew him in the East as a serious man of science. Dr. Jordan's fake was the "sympsychograph," a device of the "Astral Camera Club" for thought photography. In a solemn paper in the Popular Science Monthly he described this instrument for taking in the dark photographs of the human retina, which, when developed, discovered a dim image of the object uppermost in the consciousness of the subject. For example, one subject thought of a cat, and the article contains an engraving of the faint outline of a feline head, said to have been made from a photograph of his retina.

This would be excellent fooling, if done by an irresponsible scribbler in a lay publication, but the subsequent explanation of the editor that it was a joke saves neither Dr. Jordan's reputation nor that of the Popular Science Monthly from serious damage—outside of California, where the fake is a familiar encounter in literature, art, science, economics, politics, religion and pedagogy, as well as in journalism. This is not the first suggestion of kinship between Stanford university and Gulliver's academy of Lagado, whose most cleanly and rational educational process was the conveyance of knowledge to the brain by wafers administered through the mouth.

St. Louis Globe-Democrat, 11/29/15. Airship under construction in Hoboken.
(Boise) Idaho D. Statesman, Nov. 29 (eds.)

The latest story about California's airship is that it is to be used against the Spanish government in Cuba. It is proposed to sail the ship over Havana and demolish that city by dropping dynamite. The tale is about as improbable as any of the other nonsense concerning the wonderful flying machine. The ship no doubt had its origins in the dream of some San Francisco opium smoker.

Chi. Times-Herald: The story about 130 mile trip on a California flying machine sounds decidedly

piscatorial, but Calif. is said to have a most remarkable climate and perhaps it is fly time out there now.

SF Call: The very fact that so many reputable people believe they have seen an air ship is proof that the world is ready for such an invention and when the public is well prepared for anything it is not long before it comes.

Oct. 6. Flying machine invented in Georgia.

Nov. 4. Oklahoma man has bicycle flying machine.

Nov. 11, p.1. Lowell Observatory work.

Nov. 14. Iowa airship inventor named Brinton.

Nov. 23, p.1. San Francisco airship.

1896 November 29 (Sun.) New York World, p. 25 [The World's Sunday Magazine].

THE MYSTERIOUS AIRSHIP OF THE PACIFIC COAST. / (By Telegraph to the Sunday World.)

SAN FRANCISCO, Cal., Nov. 26.—On the night of the 17th of November, a number of people in Sacramento saw a strange object in the sky. Two brilliant beams of light high up in the heavens attracted their attention and the first impression was that it was some marvelous meteoric phenomenon. Closer observation revealed under the lights the dim outline of an oval-shaped body with what looked like fluttering wings. It swept down closer to the earth, and then a number of people say they distinctly heard the sound of human voices on board the strange craft, and the lights were manipulated from it like ordinary searchlights. Everybody then was certain that the mystery was nothing more nor less than an airship.

The fact was telegraphed far and wide, and it was recalled that Dr. Matthews, of this city, had long been working on such an invention.

Last night the excitement on the subject was increased by the reappearance of the mysterious aerial visitor. It first showed itself about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Just how many saw it there is not known, but two men who say they did see it went at once and reported the fact to Lieut. Fred Martin, chief of the Sacramento Signal Station. They described it as a dark, misty object traveling at a great height, yet clearly visible against the somewhat hazy sky.

In the evening the airship again appeared and was flashing two powerful searchlights. It was moving rapidly from the northeast and heading in a southwesterly direction. As it reached the southern boundary of the city it turned due west, and, after passing the city, headed towards the south and disappeared. It was visible in all about twenty minutes. Later in the evening it again approached, from the west this time, having evidently made the circuit of the city. It passed away to the north and east, allowing nearly all the residents of the city a chance to see it. Many, however, failed to get out of their houses in time to get more than a glimpse of the strange light as it swept rapidly away across the sky.

Among those who did see it was Prof. Dodge, of Galt, who is attending the teachers' convention now in session in Sacramento. Prof. Dodge said he was able to trace the outlines of the dark body from which the light emanated, but so indistinctly that he is unable to give any description of it.

All that is known definitely about the ship is that it is supposed to be the invention of Dr. E. H. Matthews, of San Francisco. It has been known for some time that Dr. Matthews was working at the problem of aerial navigation on somewhat new lines, but from the outset his work has been veiled in deep mystery, although from time to time there have been rumors that the inventor was near to or had actually attained very remarkable results. Mr. Collins, a lawyer of this city, for the time Dr. Matthews's legal representative, but latterly his interests have been in the hands of former Attorney-General Hart. Gen. Hart made a very cautious statement at the time the appearance of the air ship was first reported from Sacramento, but in an interview to-day he added much interesting information.

"As I said before," said Gen. Hart, "I have not myself seen the machine either in action or at rest. The idea is not to get the invention patented but to use it for war purposes. For this reason the greatest secrecy is maintained and I cannot reveal the names of the persons connected with the invention or with the actual construction of the machine.

"Now I will add this on the authority of a statement made to me by the inventor, and this is that he actually went over Sacramento at the time the people there say they saw the ship. By my advice my client is maintaining as much secrecy as possible, and of course I cannot go any further into particulars. I have implicit confidence in the invention and I believe it will be successful. It is very like one I examined in New Jersey, which I saw make several flights of from ten to twenty rods.

"The airship sometimes shows one and sometimes as many as three searchlights. These lights are under control and can be turned in any direction. Within a few days I have no doubt everybody will have unmistakable evidence of the existence of the invention. The machine itself will be made plainly visible to the public, but my earnest advice to the inventors has been and still is to keep the details of construction a secret."

THE INVENTOR'S DESCRIPTION. / (By telegraph to the Sunday World.)

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 27.

The strange craft is oval in general outline, with bow cut off abruptly, like a whaleback steamer's. Its length is about three times as great as its width. About the centre on either side are projections, like wings, extending straight out and widening, with square cut ends. They curve upward and outward. At rear is similar projection. There is a searchlight in forward end and another directly under the craft.—
Furnished by the Inventor's Lawyers.

[Illustration: (Drawn from telegraphed descriptions given to the Sunday World's San Francisco Correspondent by Lawyer Collins, of that city, and former Attorney-General Hart of California, representing the inventor, whose name is said to be Dr. E. H. Matthews.) / This strange craft, seen at night, has excited every one from Sacramento to San Francisco.]

1896 November 30 (Mon.) (New York) The Thrice-a-Week World, p. 1.

AIRSHIP FOR CUBAN WAR. / Former Atty.-Gen. Hart Tells The World About the California Mystery. / HAS FAITH IN IT AND ITS INVENTOR. / When a Third Vessel That Is Seaworthy Is Built Weyler May Be Paid a Visit. / THE PLANS SEEN AND SEEM PLAUSIBLE. / Better Adapted for the Purpose than Any That Mr. Hart Has Yet Examined. /

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 29.—Former Attorney-General Hart, as evidence of his faith in the new air-ship, which is said to have been tried with success here, has submitted the following statement to The World:

To the Editor of the World:

In reference to the airship which has been puzzling and astonishing many of the people of California I will say this: I have not seen it personally, but talked with a man who claims to be its inventor. I have spent several hours with him. He has shown me drawings and diagrams of his invention, and I am convinced that they are adapted for the purpose for which he has designed them more than any other invention making such claims that I have ever seen.

It seems to me that the evidence collected in reference to this airship, the character of the people who have seen it, the fact that it moves against currents of air as well as with them, and the fact that it has the power to dart from side to side or forward, ought to convince people that there is something in the invention.

I asked the gentleman who claims to be the inventor what his desires were in regard to carrying on the business, and he stated that he did not desire any money, that he did not ask or want anyone to invest in it; that he was not a citizen of California, and that he came here to perfect and test his airship, as the climate and currents of air here were most suited to his purposes. He further stated that he had progressed so well since coming to California that the state was certainly entitled to the [] of its invention, as it was [] in []

One, he said, was of large size capable of carrying three persons and a thousand pounds of additional weight; and the other was smaller, capable of carrying one man and five or six hundred pounds of freight.

The inventor also stated that he was a cousin of Mr. Lina, who is Antony Maceo's electrician, and that he expected to take the airship to Cuba for the purpose of aiding in the capture of Havana as soon as

he could perfect it and acquaint his associates with the handling of it. The man is of dark complexion, dark eyes and about five feet seven inches high and weighs about one hundred and forty pounds. He says he has three associates, all of whom are mechanics; that he uses two kinds of power, gas and electricity; that his lights are sometimes produced by electricity and sometimes by gas, with the aid of reflectors. He claims to have moved 120 miles in one flight, and in less than six hours and a half, and not going wholly with currents; that he uses electricity for propelling his vessel against the wind, and uses gas largely in going with the air currents, in order to save power.

It is proposed to build another airship, and one of the parties interested with him has told me that they were now at work on a third vessel, and that it would be so constructed that in the event of the machinery getting out of order and its falling into the water it could be used as a boat by detaching portions of the airship. When this is completed and ready for use the inventor intends to leave California for Cuba.

So far as the electrical power is concerned the Fargo storage battery is of sufficient capacity, as to power and lightness, to furnish the requisite power for aerial navigation, and the inventor proposes to use this power in connection with the other for his operations. The battery can be stored to its full capacity, which is twenty horsepower, in seventeen minutes. I am of the opinion that this airship will be a success, and its success far more probable at this time than Morse telegraphy was at the time Morse first offered the same to the public. So far as public opinion is concerned, the inventor does not ask anyone to invest in the enterprise. Perhaps this may be evidence of insanity. I will admit that this is the first time to my knowledge that anybody had anything in which he did not want anybody to invest money. / W.H.H. HART.
/

The Inventor's Description. / San Francisco, Nov. 27.

The strange craft is oval in general outline, with bow cut off abruptly, like a whaleback steamer's. Its length is about three times as great as its width. About the centre on either side are projections, like wings, extending straight out and widening, with square cut ends. They curve upward and outward. At rear is similar projection. There is a searchlight in forward end and another directly under the craft.—
Furnished by the Inventor's Lawyers.

[Illus.: MAY BE USED AGAINST WEYLER. / THE MYSTERIOUS AIR-SHIP SEEN ON THE PACIFIC COAST A FEW DAYS AGO. / (From descriptions given to the Thrice-a-Week World's San Francisco correspondent by lawyer Collins, of that city, and former Attorney-General Hart, of California, representing the inventor, whose name is kept secret.)] [same picture as World 11/29]

1896 November 30 (Mon.) Tacoma (WA) News, p. 2.

Beats the Airship. / An Angelic Aerial Apparition Agitates Rustics in New York State.

A letter from Wolcott, N.Y., Nov. 17, says:

The villages of South Butler, Butler Centre and Slyburg are greatly excited at present over an apparition which has appeared in that section recently and for which there appears to be no possible hypothesis except a spiritual one. The visitor is nothing less than an angel or at least it bears every appearance of one, and is seen in broad daylight and in a clear sky. Its appearance was on the second of November about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, when it was seen by at least a score of people within a radius of five miles of Butler Centre. Some of the people who have seen the apparition are: R.D. Mack, a farmer, living near Slyburg; M.B. Newton, a mechanic, whose home is in Savannah; A.W. Miller, a South Butler farmer, and D.F. Everhart, an ex-school teacher of Butler Centre.

Mr. Everhart, who is a well-educated man and not a spiritualist, gives the following account of its appearance:

"I was returning from Wolcott about 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Nov. second, when I noticed an object floating in the air, apparently about 100 yards away and nearly overhead. Its appearance was that of a girl about twenty years of age, clad in a long white robe with the arms bare. On its shoulders were a pair of long, white wings which appeared nearly motionless. At first the features were clearly visible, but as the object floated higher they gradually became indistinct through distance till finally the form faded from sight in the distance. It was a clear day and not a cloud in sight at the time. I should think it was about 15 or 20 minutes from the time I first saw the object till it disappeared. I could not believe the reality of the vision and even pinched myself to be convinced that I was awake and not dreaming. I said nothing about it for several days, fearing to be thought drunk or crazy, till I heard others speak of similar occurrences."

The story told by others who have seen the angel is the same in all essential details as that told by Mr. Everhart and few of them mentioned the incident outside their family circle for some days, until the story gradually became current. Several people have seen the vision since on clear days, as it has appeared on at least three different occasions and has created great wonder and alarm throughout that section. Not one has any theory concerning its appearance or errand.

(Some one with an artistically constructed kite is amusing himself—Ed.)

(Olympia, WA) Daily Olympian, 11/30, p.1. Oakland; W.H. Warren claims invention.

1896 November 30 (Mon.) Roseburg (Ore.) Plaindealer, p. 1.

COINCIDENTS. /

Thousands of assumed facts have been proven veritable realities to the minds of the credulous by coincidents which to the ignorant or uninitiated have accepted as proof positive that the assumed facts did take place as claimed.

Thus, for over 3000 years, the wise men of Egypt accepted the apparent cause of the rise and overflow of the Nile, to the appearance of the star Sirius just before and during the rise in that river. The Egyptian astronomers noticed that when this star appeared the Nile began to rise and that that phenomena was uniformly preceded by the appearance of that particular star. Hence in their ignorance they worshiped this star as the god of a plentiful harvest. But it is now well known that that phenomenon is only a coincident and not a cause. The rise of the Nile no more depends upon the appearance of Sirius than its appearance depends upon the rise in the Nile.

So is this airship hallucination in California. It is a well known fact that generally in the month of November the appearance of meteors are the most common. Seizing upon this fact some clever newspaper scribbler has invented the airship story for the purpose of having something of a sensational character for his facile pen. Scarcely a night in a clear atmosphere like that of California, but what many of these meteors can be seen scudding through the air; so that a story that reads like the Aladdin's Lamp stories coupled with the highly imaginative wonders of a possible airship, and the fact of those often appearing meteors in November, these sensational writers are keeping the public mind on a strain with the story of this airship being nightly seen in those places named by them and those in the secret, similar to the story of the burning up of the world that went the rounds of the press about 20 years ago or the sea serpent story about 15 years ago.

Affidavits were plenty to the effect that bodies of water had been set on fire and consumed and that the sea serpent had been seen by scores of eye witnesses. So it is not strange that this hatched up story of an air ship has been launched upon the public and for the same purpose, viz. to make money off a credulous people.

Not that we believe an air ship cannot be constructed do we make these strictures, for it is highly probable that the air will some day be navigated; but when the means of navigating the air shall be discovered it will not be wrapped in a mystery, as to who the discoverer is and his place of abode. That ship too will sail in daylight instead of at midnight. No great discovery or invention has come down to us thus far in this century shrouded in mystery. We pronounce this whole airship story a clever fake.

Virginia (NV) Evening Chronicle, 12/1, p.1. Horen.
(Tucson) Arizona Daily Citizen, 12/1/1. Horen.

1896 December 1 (Tues.) (Portland, Ore.) Evening Telegram, p. 3.

THAT CALIFORNIA AIRSHIP / HAS BEEN FLOATING OVER THE CITY OF TACOMA. / It Slid Over Portland in the Fog, and Was Not Visible to the Naked Eye.

The airship craze, of which everybody has been talking for four days past, has reached Tacoma. The splendid fake has been seen there by Mr. and Mrs. St. John, who kept their mouths shut for several days before they gave it away to a live correspondent, who sent nearly three-quarters of a column about it to a California paper.

The mere fact that the aerial wonder, which is so greatly agitating the gentle Californians, has been seen as far north as the City of Hills does not speak well for the Portland press correspondents. It is news to say the ship has not been seen in Portland. They are more conscientious, perhaps, than their brethren, over in Washington, and their November "strings" will lack just so much of the airship stories as they failed to get up and wire away.

But there is another and a better explanation to be offered. The species of airships, which has been floating around California, does not thrive in an Oregon storm, and it may be that far above this dark haze which has shut the sunlight and the sky out of the Willamette valley for days, the airship has been scooting over Oregon territory unseen and unheard. To a certainty if this storm had not been occupying the undivided attention of every man, woman and child in Portland there would have been some one to discover the "cigar-shaped body," with "no motive power so far as can be seen."

Lame as the excuse of blaming it on the weather may appear, it is about the only explanation that the correspondents can offer their managing editors. In a purely speculative vein, it is suggested that the correspondents should organize a union and embody in the constitution a plank recognizing the utility of airships for legitimate news dispatches. Even the prosaic Associated Press has given a taste of the airship excitement in California. The local correspondents should call upon a few hundred people about town and insist that if they had not seen an airship one of these large, fine nights recently, they should have seen it,

and forthwith make them acknowledge their blindness.

That California flying-machine is truly a wonder. It is like the little wheel at the race track which gives you four on the red—"Round and round she goes, and where she stops, nobody knows." All that is really known is that the mid-air vessel sails here and there and everywhere, and thousands have caught just a glimpse of it, but that is all.

The airship, whether for purposes of fantasy or for the Cuban war, has made a few hundred pages of newspaper history in a remarkably short time. Any man who would like to get a touch of fame right now can achieve gratifying results by finding that flying machine—in his mind—if nowhere else. That the "bird" should have sought flight through the Oregon fogs, hunting a roosting-place on the hills of Tacoma is really surprising. When it reached the bay it circled around Point Defiance Park, but not liking the place, it flew far from the almost deserted village above the mud flats, and none save Mr. and Mrs. St. John saw the California owl-car. The inventor suffered slightly from seasickness, a press report says, and he was probably not able to have his usual evening's fun with his searchlights turned on the populist natives, as he sails through the air. That he did not stop in Oregon even on so short a sail will likely be resented. A Portland inventor of a flying-machine who journeyed to Chicago a few years ago to spring his invention on the credulous world has an idea that the Californian has stolen one of his ideas in regard to the steering of the machine, and he would forgive himself for the wish that the airship, while navigating under a slow bell, would collide with the dome of the state capitol at Sacramento, so that something more tangible and certain would be known of the mysterious nocturnal flyer.

One of the craziest pieces of fiction that ever assumed a place in a newspaper column in connection with this latest airship story was a dispatch from New York which was printed the very next day after the aerial wonder was seen at Oakland and Sacramento. This dispatch, in all seriousness, stated that a New Yorker had been working on a flying-machine which was to fly. Inasmuch as he had announced that his preparations were just about complete, it was thought he would take a breather across the continent for a trial trip. It was, in short, very likely the airship which had left New York some time within the previous 24 hours was trying its wings in the sunny air of California.

Over three thousand miles across the continent in 24 hours! Jules Verne is not in it. That airship, then, had to travel at the merry rate of 145 miles an hour, which doesn't seem like it would be such a tremendous rate until you would have a taste of the very thin atmosphere at the altitude in which the "flyer" traveled on its western course. And so, this mechanical bird, which may be or may not be hiding in the barren hills north of San Francisco, has been cavorting through unlimited space in the vicinity of the Golden Gate and Goat island ever since, without the consent of the Southern Pacific Company. If you really want to see this famous airship, which it is claimed may yet turn out to be an astronomical phenomena of some sort—if you want to know more about it yourself select the most prolific dream-producer in the way of foods that you can think of tonight and eat three times the usual quantity that's forbidden you when you dream of earthquakes and scenes at the dissecting-room or morgue—it's 10 to 1 that the airship will visit you in your dreams, for it is the offspring of a disordered brain, "begot of nothing but vain fantasy."

p.1. Horen.

Dec. 2, p. 6 AN AURORA BOREALIS LAST NIGHT / SMALL EDITION OF ONE FURNISHED BY "SPARKING" TROLLEYS. / Pretty Electrical Display in the East Side Suburbs—Wasn't an Airship Searchlight. /

(lights went out but trolleys worked)

The big black bank of clouds which was hovering over the Columbia river in the northeast and eastern sky last night portended a storm, and not a few persons were probably deceived into believing that an electrical storm was approaching. At least, some East Siders thought such was the case, until they made an investigation and found that the brilliant flickerings in the sky were caused by the trolley cars in the suburbs. One man came into a store on East Burnside street, with wide-distended eyes, and vowed he had seen the searchlight of the famous California airship turned on the town.

Seattle, WA, Evening Times, 12/1(2?). Champion Airship Story

Tacoma Daily News, 12/1/1. Horen.

(Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, 12/2/3. Heron.

(Marshfield, OR) Coos Bay News, Wed. Dec. 2, p.3.

The story of the flying machine, which is supposed to have been hovering over San Francisco at night, is undoubtedly a fake. If it was a genuine flying machine, there would be no need for it to meander around in the heavens under cover of night. It was probably a huge kite, with a few Chinese lanterns attached.

(New York) Thrice-a-Week World, 12/2/96, p. 2.

THE NEWS OF THE DAY AS THE WORLD'S ARTIST SEES IT.

[Pic.: This would be excellent use of the flying machine (bombs Morro Castle in Cuba).]

1896 December 2 (Wed.) (Portland, Ore.) Evening Telegram, p. 3.

YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THIS / AN EX-PORTLANDER WRITES ABOUT THE AIRSHIP. / Says It Is Operated by a Combination of Compressed Air and Electricity. /

A letter received here from an ex-Portlander, now engaged on one of the San Francisco newspapers, vouches most seriously for the existence of the California airship, conspicuously advertised by the San Francisco press, but which elsewhere is being stigmatized as a "fake." The writer enjoys such an exceptionally good reputation for his earnestness of purpose and veracity, that it justifies the publication of his statement. The letter is penned in a confidential strain to a friend, which is the only circumstance precluding the announcement of the writer's name.

He says that he has had ocular proof of the existence of this aerial contrivance which must, in the course of a few years, completely revolutionize the mode of travel on this globe. And the rapidity with which distances can be reached, he adds, will render the earth a comparatively small area of land and water.

"Through the medium of a mutual friend," continued the sanguine newspaper man, "I personally met the inventor of this airship—a man destined by his creation to revolutionize our entire social fabric. Do not think that I have gone daft upon this subject; but what the eye sees and that which the hand feels, must certainly have an existence. You will not gainsay me that? Before proceeding I wish to say that the reason why I have not exhaustively written upon this subject for the paper I represent, is that we have a regular scientific man on our staff, and no one meddles with the assignments or details of another."

Continuing his communication the writer says that he became acquainted with the inventor of the airship unprofessionally, in the Redwoods of San Mateo county, Cal., about 10 days ago. There he also saw the airship in which he himself, his friend, and the inventor took a flight that night.

"A sense of honor, founded upon a promise I made my host on that occasion," says the writer, "precludes me from giving you a description in detail of this most wonderful invention of this civilization. Do I wonder that the people, the masses, are skeptical? No! For didn't they doubt the possibilities of such geniuses as Fulton and Morse?

"The newspaper cuts I have so far seen of this ship are not fair reproductions of the original. But some of the descriptive articles I have seen recently come near solving the scientific features of the ship.

"The airship in which I made my ascent is 23 feet long, 7 feet of beam, as we would term it in nautical parlance, and 7 1/2 feet high from the ground. It is merely a rough model for experimental purposes, devoid of all the elegant and comfortable interior fittings later airships planned after this model will contain."

This master of the air, the writer adds, which has solved the problem of controlling the many and strong counter currents prevailing at a height of a mile or more above the surface of the earth, is mainly operated with a combination of compressed air and electricity. The storage room for this motive power does not take up more than two cubic feet. He adds that the most remarkable feature in connection with this marvelous invention is an apparatus by means of which the breathing atmosphere may be normalized. For instance, at a height of 10 miles or more above the air inside the ship, can be made as dense as it is on the earth's surface. Again, the ship may plow through space at a speed of 500 miles an hour, and the normal breathing of those within the ship will not in the least be discomforted.

The night herein referred to, the writer and his friends went to Los Angeles and returned, at an altitude of five miles, as shown by the air meter, and when they came back to the starting point, they felt as buoyant and refreshed as if they had had a good night's rest.

While no one in Portland, well acquainted with the writer would for a moment question his truthfulness, yet none here will believe in the existence of that marvelous airship until he or she sees it, and that in full operation, too.

(Albany, OR) Weekly Herald-Disseminator, Dec.3/4. The fake news man in San Francisco seems to have attained the acme of terrestrial glory, as he has succeeded in getting out almost the entire population to gaze at one of the planet stars with the idea that it was the light of an airship—said ship existing only in the imagination of said news fakir. The airship story has had quite a run and it is about time that some other sensation was put up to distract the public mind. // p.8. Horen.

Portland Oregonian, 12/2/9. Horen.

Tacoma (WA) Daily Ledger, 12/2/4. Horen.

(Lakeview, OR) Lake County Examiner, Dec. 3,2. One would imagine from the airships that are sailing around over Sacramento and other California towns that Capt. Nemo had arisen from the sunken Nautilus, and was prowling around 20,000 leagues in the air. / Nov.26,2. Sacr.

Dec.3,3. Take the first airship that passes your place, for the Lakeview house. They all come this way.

1896 December 2 (Wed.) (Salt Lake City, UT) Deseret Evening News, p. 3.

Latest Air-Ship Story.

San Jose, Cal., Dec. 1.—John A. Horen, an electrician, tells an air-ship story which some believe and others credit to a fertile imagination. Heron is the patentee of an electric platinum sparking apparatus, and says he went to San Francisco last Thursday by appointment to see the inventor of the air-ship apparatus, whose name he says he is pledged to conceal. He adds:

“We went on horseback to a point on the sandy beach where the air-ship was. We got aboard and rose very high. The height was registered by a meter on the ship. The inventor does not count distance by miles, but by degrees. We traveled westward, and before daybreak we saw lights which the inventor said were Honolulu lights. Saturday evening we finished our two days’ cruise and landed near the starting point. The air-ship rose by means of two propellers. The movement was noiseless and swift. It can be stopped and held stationary in the air and descends as lightly as a feather. The motive power is neither steam nor electricity.”

p.7. Now comes the Woodland, Cal., Mail with its explanation of the air-ship mystery. It declares that King Lee, of Washington, Cal., who is something of a hunter as well as a politician, had wounded and captured a huge pelican and when it was able to soar aloft he turned it loose with a Japanese lantern tied to one of its legs. Occasionally, Lee says, the pelican would squawk, and this was what some persons heard who said the occupants of the airship were singing as they passed over Sacramento. This is pretty rough on the warblers of the upper air currents.

1896 December 3 (Th.) Reno (NV) Evening Gazette, p. 1.

The Airship. / It Was Seen Floating About Southwest of Town Last Night.

Reno has been favored with a visit of the much-talked-of San Francisco airship, unless some of the reputed citizens have wheels in their heads.

A strange light was visible floating about in the western heavens last evening about 7 o'clock, and was seen by several gentlemen of unquestioned integrity.

Prof. N.E. Wilson, Professor of Chemistry, at the University Experiment Station, saw a strange light over the Mackey and Fair mountain southwest of town, and to use Prof. Wilson's own language: “A light as large as an electric arc light, I saw over the Mackey and Fair mountain last night about 7 o'clock; it seemed to be moving toward town and shortly disappeared over the mountain.”

“I would not like to say,” said Prof. Wilson, “that it was an airship, but it was something very phenomenal. My wife saw it at the same time I did.”

Harry Martin of the Reno Mercantile Co., and Manager Brown of the Western Union saw the same strange light. They are all reputable citizens and could not be mistaken.

The circumstance reminds one of a little story. Several years ago in Carson, a gentleman given to imbibing freely from the cup that makes merry, saw an ordinary mud turtle one night in a saloon in that city. His eyes (the man's, not the turtle's) began to bulge out, as he asked the proprietor, “What's that?” When told it was a turtle he said—“Sure! Well, I'm devilish glad it's a turtle, for I thought I had the jim-jams.”

The story, however, is in no way applicable to this case.

Oct. 29. Sea serpent off Borneo.

Nov. 23, p.1. No patent on airships.

Nov. 25, p.1. Red Bluff airship.

Dec. 1, p.1. The Boss Lie of the 19th Century (Horen).

(Carson City, NV) Morning Appeal, 12/3, p.3. Heron [sic].

(Albany, OR) Weekly Herald-Disseminator, 12/3, p.4. The fake news man in San Francisco seems to have attained the acme of terrestrial glory, as he has succeeded in getting out almost the entire population to gaze at one of the planet stars with the idea that it was the light of an airship—said ship existing only in the imagination of said news fakir. The airship story had quite a run and it is about time that some other sensation was put up to distract the public mind.

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(Lakeview, OR) Lake County Examiner, 12/3, p. 2. One would imagine from the airships that are sailing around over Sacramento and other California towns that Captain Nemo had arisen from the sunken Nautilus, and was prowling around 20,000 leagues in the air.

p.3. [Take the first airship that passes your place to the Lakeview house. They all come this way. (?)]

Roseburg (OR) Review, 12/3, p.2. Horen.

Seattle (WA) Evening Times, 12/3, p. 4. SF Call interview of Hart.

1896 December 4 (Fri. eve.) (Olympia) Washington Standard, p. 2.

Aerial Navigation. /

There is but little doubt but that the realm of the air will be the next field for scientific discovery, and that before another decade the principle of aerial navigation will be well understood and the reflective mind filled with wonder that the problem had remained so long unsolved. This is owing mainly to the fact that scientific discovery runs in cycles. The bent of inquiry has been running the past age in the line of electrical possibilities. One invention to utilize this occult force, has led to others, and there has seemed to be absolutely no limit to the wonders that have been brought within the range of practical utility.

The stimulus thus given to this branch of inquiry has led to a corresponding neglect of other fields, and the wide range of possibilities in aerial locomotion has suffered from the withdrawal of inventive ingenuity and its concentration upon the popular object of research.

It seems, however, that such limits have been reached in electrical discovery that it is almost impossible to find new objects to be subserved by further advance, and attention is now becoming concentrated upon some means of navigating the air.

The latest and most successful devices depart very radically from the balloon-shaped receptacle for the lifting power, and consists mainly in cylinders containing the gas, or aeroplanes placed at an angle which will lift the machine on the principle of the propeller-blade when motion is imparted by some contrivance under control of the navigator.

One of the most remarkable inventions of this nature is a cigar-shaped receptacle for the sustaining power, constructed of thin sheets of aluminum, lately patented by S.B. Battey, of New York. A car is suspended accommodating a dozen passengers. The most remarkable thing about the machine is its manner of propulsion, which consists of a series of explosions of nitro-glycerine. At the rear end is a sort of cup that opens rearward, into which pellets of that explosive are dropped at the rate of six a minute, out of a tube controlled by clockwork. Each pellet in falling closes an electric circuit developing a spark which ignites and explodes it. The explosion cup, besides imparting momentum, is turned to the right or left, for the purpose of steering.

In this connection, we reproduce the champion story of the season, which, if true, leaves but little more to be desired for covering all the essential qualifications for an aerial motor. [Horen]

such was the case, until they made an investigation and found that the brilliant flickerings in the sky were caused by the trolley cars in the suburbs. One man came into a store on East Burnside street, with wide-distended eyes, and vowed he had seen the searchlight of the famous California airship turned on the town.

1896 December 4 (Fri.) (Phoenix) Arizona Gazette, p. 8.

Local Briefs.

That air ship which has been floating around on the coast having been seen in Sacramento and San Bernardino, passed over Phoenix at 9:30 last evening, having been seen going directly east by Geo. Purdy Bullard and Senator W.A. Freeze, two gentlemen who know a freak when it hoves in view.

Dec. 6,8. Those who are skeptical about the existence of the air ship that passed over Phoenix a few nights ago about 9 o'clock in the evening are respectfully referred to Maurice Fleishman and George Fifield, who were with Judge Bullard and Sen. Freeze when the aerial vehicle passed over the city. It is described as carrying two search-lights, and the car attached as containing several passengers.

That airship which passed over Phoenix was not the "lost soul of the Bryan campaign" but a party of defeated gold republicans who have returned from a trip up Salt river and are now bound for Canton to receive their reward.

(Idaho Falls) Idaho Register 12/4, p.1. Horen.

Daily Silver State (Winnemucca, Nev.), Dec. 4, p. 3. The airship has just put in its appearance at Reno. The Riverside town is losing its grip. To maintain its reputation a whole fleet of airships should have been seen there long before this.

9,3. They have come to the conclusion down at Reno that the airship many citizens of the Riverside town beheld was Venus. The voices said to have been heard serve only to strengthen the theory of many scientific men that the planets are inhabited.

(St. Helens) Oregon Mist, 12/4, p.3. The Airship at Last (California)—from SF Pacific Rural Press.
(Albany, OR) States' Rights Democrat, 12/4, p.2. Meteor in Chihuahua.

1896 December 5 (Sat.) Omaha Daily Bee, p. 3.

Writes of California's Fake Airship.

DES MOINES, Dec. 4.—(Special Telegram.)—Lieutenant Walter S. Hughes, U.S.N., who is now stationed at San Francisco, has written to the editor of the Marshalltown Times-Republican, who is a friend, the following regarding the widely published story of a successful airship, which was constructed near Sacramento and repeatedly seen in California skies: "You can put the whole matter down as a fake, pure and simple. Some wag started the story and the papers took it up. Then a lot of other wags began to send up fire balloons from different points in this vicinity, and apparently all of the denizens of neighboring towns turned out for several successive nights looking at the stars, or anything else in the heavens that showed a light. If a successful airship puts in an appearance in the United States you can look for it to come from either Prof. Langley of the Smithsonian Institute or Hiram Maxim of New York."

Observe a Brilliant Aurora.

NORTH LOUP, Neb., Dec. 4.—(Special.)—Immediately following the balmy breeze which blew gently here all yesterday afternoon, and with which it may have had some mysterious yet intimate connection, a brilliant aurora was visible in the sky last evening. At times the luminosity reached high enough to cover all the stars in the constellation of the Great Bear, and occasionally momentarily of great brilliancy. The appearance known as "streamers" was not at all prominent, but few being noticeable at any time, and these low on the horizon, but the light extended from the northeast to a distance of about eighty degrees, and was, for brief intervals, of almost snowy whiteness, reminding one of the words of the writer of the book of Job of the "light which is bright in the skies when the wind hath passed and cleansed them;" when "out of the north cometh golden splendor." The phenomenon continued at intervals during the entire night.

1896 December 5 (Sat.) Reno Evening Gazette, p. 3.

The Airship Again.

The "airship" was seen again last night. A Gazette reporter was fortunate enough to "see it" floating over the Mackay and Fair mountain about 6:30 last evening. It was a very bright light, throwing out rays as if from an electric search-light. It finally disappeared over the mountain, the same way as the other night. We give it as our opinion that the "airship" was the evening star, Venus, now so brilliant in the southwestern heavens in early evening. The star, or "airship," is a magnificent sight and well worth seeing. The Gazette man takes no stock in the "airship" fake, and, while he may be mistaken, he is willing to stake his reputation as an astronomer that the "airship" is the evening star Venus.

Carson City News, 12/5/2. Airship in the mud fake.

12/5/3. Reporter's Note Book. Reno people are now seeing the airship, but it must be remembered the water is bad in the Riverside burg.

1896 December 5 (Sat.) Nevada State Journal (Reno), p. 3.

Scott Hart tells a story that he saw something passing through the air about 20 miles north of Reno and at an elevation of 500 feet. There was a light, then two more flashed out and he heard voices and the words, "We are four degrees too far north, change the course." Scott says he don't know what it was, but he say it.

1896 December 6 (Sun.) Carson City (NV) Morning Appeal, p. 2.

Scott Hart tells a story that he saw something passing through the air about twenty miles north of Reno and at an elevation of 500 feet. There was a light, then two more flashed out and he heard voices and the words, "We are four degrees too far north, change the course." Scott says he don't know what it was, but he saw it.—Reno Journal, (also Reno Gazette stories 6p.3, 8p3, 18p3

1896 December 7 (Mon.) Chicago Tribune, p. 4.

Milwaukee's Flying Machine Scare / Strange Looking Kite Causes Much Commotion Among the Inhabitants of the Cream City.

Milwaukee, Wis., Dec. 6.—[Special.]—Milwaukee tonight has a sensation similar to that enjoyed by Sacramento two weeks ago. Its people, or at least a considerable portion of them, believe that they saw a

flying machine floating over the bay about 4 o'clock this afternoon.

It was first sighted by Herman Nunnemacher, a millionaire who boards at the hotel. He was seated in his room at the Pfister Hotel, and, happening to look out over the lake, he was astounded to see what looked like a flying machine floating over the bay high in the air and moving up against the wind. He happened to have a field glass handy, and looking through the same saw something that appeared to him to be a man working the wings of the air craft.

Satisfied that it really was a flying machine he put on his hat and rushed out. When he got on the street he could no longer see it and came back, supposing it had passed over the city on the way to the north pole. Ten minutes later he saw it again. This time he was sure, and dashing down to the lobby of the hotel he shouted: "It is here again. It is a flying machine."

He had not returned to the hotel up to a late hour tonight. Hundreds of other people saw the strange sight and are positive that it was a sure-enough flying machine. Men who were in the Lake-Front Park, however, say that two men sent up a strange looking kite without a tail. It had huge wings and the men sent up a number of signals on the wire rope which was used to fly it with. It is one of the kites with which the army has been experimenting for some months.

1896 December 7 (Mon.) Milwaukee Sentinel, p.1.

THOUGHT IT WAS AN AIRSHIP. / A Huge Kite Over the Lake Causes a Stir on Land.

A huge kite was sent up from the Mahn-a-Wauk clubhouse on the lake shore yesterday afternoon, and people in the city who saw it thought it was a flying machine. Hundreds gazed at it while it was sailing away up in the air above the lake. Groups collected on corners, and there were those who claimed they could see the propeller of the "machine" in motion, while others were positive they saw people moving about. The kite was an immense affair, and appeared very much like an airship, with wings, rudder and mast. Its appearance in the sky created quite a stir on terra firma.

1896 December 7 (Mon.) Carson (Nev.) Weekly, p. 6.

THE AIR SHIP. / It Reached Carson Saturday Night.

The air ship may be a fake, it may be a balloon or it might be a kite with a lantern attached. No one can tell just what it was, but it filled the streets with people gazing skyward Saturday evening.

Lyman Frisbie says it was the first appearance of the famous air ship and it moved from east to west in an easy straight course. A brilliant light was visible for several minutes.

The light was seen by scores of citizens and a great many will vouch for its appearance, among the number being Lyman Frisbie, Mike Digeney, Jake Muller, Jr., Trace Chedie and Ed Bettencourt. Carson City News, 12/7/2. One man in Oregon has gone insane over the air-ship fake. Meantime thousands in California who were victims of this peculiar lunacy are recovering.

The inventor of the San Francisco airship knew too much to ride in his own invention. He expected to fool other people, but he was not a fool himself.

p. 3. A number of Carson people are willing to swear that they saw the airship Saturday evening. (Young people kissed each time they saw a shooting star; she showered him with lightning bugs. Comment—too cold for lightning bugs; must have been the airship.)

(Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, 12/7/7. News of the West. / Another Airship Story Afloat.

The Carson News is authority for the statement that Reno, Nevada, has been favored with a visit from the much-talked-of San Francisco airship, unless some of the reputed citizens have wheels in their heads. A strange light was visible floating about in the western heavens last evening about 7 o'clock, and was seen by several gentlemen of unquestioned integrity.

Roseburg (OR) Review, 12/7, 3. Meteor.

(Carson City) Morning Appeal, Tues. Dec. 8 p. 3: The Air Ship.

Ever since a light was seen in the sky above Sacramento and it was supposed that an airship was afloat, the natives of Carson have sat on their roofs and gazed out of windows until 12 o'clock at night waiting for a visit from the aerial mystery, but have waited in vain. Some times, they misconstrued Mars and Venus, and the light from the setting stars caused them to hold their breath waiting for the searchlight to peep over the hills.

Saturday night the long looked for event was supposed to have occurred and every man of repute saw the flickering light traveling toward the Pacific Ocean. Those who went home with joy in their hearts thinking they had seen the egg-shaped invader, may have a tired feeling when they learn that they may have seen something on the same layout as Reno—a star behind a cloud.

Some funny men were seen in the vicinity of Never's ranch with a fire balloon on Saturday night, but of course balloons are used to lie on the ground.

Carson City News, 12/8/3. The air-ship made its second appearance in Carson last evening and the boys that sent it up probably enjoyed the excitement it caused.

Chicago Tribune, 12/8, p.6. The flying machine epidemic has struck Milwaukee. Its progress since leaving California seems to have been along a kite shape track.

Vashon Island (WA) Press, 12/8/1. According to the San Francisco papers air line societies will soon be bidding against the transportation companies for business, as Frisco has a flying machine that flies.

Wednesday Dec. 9 p. 3: Airship Burned.

Last evening, what at first was taken for an airship slid over town. A bright light attracted the attention of many people and the word airship caused many to rush to a point of view. When over the western portion of the city the gasoline tank exploded and the ship burned up. A few minutes later Ed Patterson showed up with the remains of the ship in his hand which consisted of a piece of bamboo and a rag saturated with alcohol. The balloon was still burning when Patterson found it.

Corvallis (OR) Times, 12/9, p.3. Ghost.

Seattle (WA) Evening Times, 12/8, p.5. Airship inventor dies.

12/9, p.3. Airship stuck in the mud.

Tacoma (WA) Morning Union, 12/8, p.2. Fall of aerolite nearby.

(Albany, OR) Weekly Herald-Disseminator, Dec. 10/8. The iridescent stories in regard to the airship in California, the latest one telling of making a trip to Honolulu and return in one night, are getting so very thin and transparent as to become actually tiresome, and the California liars better change the subject, and try to find some other object on which to spread their sensations. They might open out upon the probabilities of the Durrant case coming to a termination some time during the next century for a change, and harp upon that theme with varying interest for a while.

Seattle Evening Times, 12/9/3. Airship stuck in mud.

(Ironton, MO) Iron County Register, Dec. 10, p.5. Missouri State News. / Large meteor over Louisiana, Missouri.

1896 December 10 (Th.) Central Nevadan (Battle Mountain) (wkly), p. 3.

What Could It Have Been?

A strange light appeared above the horizon almost north of here the other evening and traveling in a westerly direction and after some time disappeared from sight. It was not a meteor because it raised too straight from the earth, and it was not a lightening bug for this is not the right time of the year, but in all probability it might have been the new comet discovered by the Lick Observatory. If it was neither of these what could it have been? Dear people we do not want to unstring your nerves but it must have been an "airship."

17,3 Shower of birds at Baton Rouge, La,

1896 December 10 (Th.) Carson City Morning Appeal, p. 3.

The Air-Ship.

It is reported at the N.-C.-O. office that L.T. Stephenson, agent at Chat, saw the much talked of air-ship last night between Chat and the Summit, and had a talk with the inventor. Mr. Stephenson, so it is said, wanted to take a ride in the airship, but the operator would not let him get aboard. The Gazette does not get this story from Mr. Stephenson but from the train hands that were on the road.

1896 December 10 (Th.) Daily Silver State (Winnemucca, Nev.), p. 3.

And now it is positively asserted by the good people of Elko that the airship was seen there a few nights ago.

(McMinnville, OR) Telephone-Register, 12/10, p. 1. Horen.

Roseburg (OR) Review, 12/10 p.3. Robert Nagler.

(Dodge City, KS) Globe-Republican, 12/10 p.2. Topeka people who were out at 3 a.m. the other morning saw an immense meteor. People out at that time in Topeka are liable to see anything.

Carson City Morning Appeal, Fri. Dec. 11, p. 3: Air-Ships in Empire.

During several days past there has been rumors of an air-ship in Empire which was seen floating above Wiggin's Hall, and moving along like a large turkey buzzard hunting grub. Yesterday the Appeal received the following: / Empire, Dec. 9th.

Ed. Appeal:—I address this to you because I thought it might be of interest to your subscribers. On Monday evening Jack Garrity saw a flying machine pass over Empire. / Yours truly, / A Subscriber.

We have to say in this connection that we cannot give space in future to communications of this kind. If men rush into print every time they see an airship in the sky it will keep the papers filled up with nothing else. Air-ships are now so common a man might as well write the Appeal that he saw a four-wheeled wagon in the vicinity of Gardnerville.

Carson City Morning Appeal, Sat. Dec. 12, p. 3 (2?): Booher Has 'Em.

Editor Booher of Elko also seems to "have 'em" in a mild form. He says: "About 50 people at Elko were out watching a 'strange light' the other evening. The light seemed to rise above the horizon almost north of here and after rising far into the air traveled in a westerly direction and in about two hours disappeared in the west. It was not a meteor they say, for it raised too straight from the earth, and it was not a lightning bug for this is not the right time of year. It was not a bullseye lantern because it was too high up, and it couldn't have been a balloon because it traveled too steady and fast and remained visible too long. What was it then? Good people we do not want to startle you, but it must have been an 'airship.'"

(Albany, OR) States Rights Democrat, Fri. Dec. 11, p. 4.

A strange light was recently seen hovering over Knox's Butte. It is in order for the San Francisco Call to come up here and make a night flying machine out of it.

1896 December 12 (Sat.) The Dalles (Ore.) Times-Mountaineer, p. 4.

Last Saturday night when train No. 59 was coming over the hill this side of Blalock the trainmen were treated to a beautiful sight. A large and very bright meteor was seen falling from the heavens, and when apparently about a mile from the earth, seemed to stand suspended for a moment then passed on in its northerly flight. The meteor was visible for about five minutes, and had the appearance of an immense ball of fire flying through space.

The Dalles Chronicle, 12/12/3. A bright light in the southern sky shortly after 1 o'clock this afternoon was not caused by the appearance of San Francisco's airship. It was the sun.

1896 December 12 (Sat.) Territorial Enterprise (Virginia, Nev.) p. 2.

AIRSHIP YARNS. /

The airship continues to hold its own as a subject of public discussion. It is alleged to have been seen in many parts of Nevada and California and the visual evidence in support of one such ship is as good for fifty. The only person whose talk may be considered serious is Mr. W.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 that 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 20 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.

Daily Eugene (OR) Guard, 12/14/2 (Mon.). It is now time California papers were looking up a new sensation, as the fake air-ship story has been worn out.

1896 December 15 (Tues.) (Honolulu) Hawaiian Gazette, p. 6.

DID YOU SEE IT? / That Air Ship Floating Among Hawaiian Zephyrs. / ON BEAUTIFUL OUTING TRIP / 'Twas "On to Honolulu or Bust." / And it Busted—Like All of San Francisco's Most Choice Yarns. /

SAN JOSE, CAL., Dec. 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 587 airships floating hither and thither out here in the West, made the round trip in 24 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 a 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 \$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 40 or 45 years of age and of heavy build. He didn't look a bit like the inventor Gen. 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 Gen. 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 50 miles northeast of the metropolis. Then they traveled on horseback to a lonely spot.

Where the 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, 16 or 20 feet in diameter, and in front was “telescopic apron,” whatever that may be, “which could be adjusted to raise or lower the great structure on 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 10 feet high. The windows seemed made of mica. On each side of the cabin are 15 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 ½ feet high, 5 or 6 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 8:15 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.

Today 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 his 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 Gen. Hart's unknown in his accustomed position of vantage.

[Illustration: The Airship in Which John Horen Voyaged. / From a pencil sketch by the San Jose electrician, who made the round trip from San Francisco to San Jose. (SF Examiner illus.)]

1896 December 17 (Th.) Bronson (Kans.) Record, p. 1.

A Flying Machine Seen.

It was the privilege of a chosen few of Bronson's people to behold a prophet of the future last Friday evening. We might call it a special dispensation in consideration of the fact that people elsewhere were not so fortunate. The way it occurred was somewhat as follows:

On last Friday evening several of our townspeople glance their heagle hoptics up to the heavens and beheld a large object borne on the air high above the haunts of man. Authorities differ as to height from one to five miles and in size from that of a hat to a threshing machine. This object came sailing out of the west about five o'clock with a swift, steady motion. When directly over town it stopped for five minutes to take a picture or a census of the town, or, more probably, to eat supper. Five minutes would seem like a short time to eat, but when we consider the sedentary habits of the occupants of the flyer, and that their only efforts were expended in trying to breathe, we may conclude they stopped to chew. When the five minutes were up, the object swiftly disappeared on schedule time for the east.

What this object was we cannot say; we saw it not. The consensus of opinion calls it a flying machine, perhaps the one lately operating in California. Various theories have been offered in explanation. One is that some man threw his hat so high when the election returns came in, it was just coming down. Another says it was the dog told of in one of Jules Verne's stories which was turned loose half way to the moon and, being equally attracted by both, was drawn off through space by the suction of a rifle ball fired by one of the men. The dog is supposed to be getting back to terra firma. Another genius, basing his statements on experience, doubtless, says that there was only one person who really saw anything, and he, looking up over his forehead saw something moving in his eyelash and mistook it for a flying machine. We are inclined to throw out all of these theories and hold that it was a flying machine and should it so turn out, we will see to it that the aforesaid scoffers are made to feel the weight of our scorn. No man can safely say "I doubt" in this progressive age.

(Lakeview, OR) Lake County Examiner, Dec. 17, p. 3. Alturas has several well-developed cases of "airship." Wonder what kind of whiskey they have down in that section.

(Carson City) Morning Appeal, Dec. 17,3. "You've got airship," is the latest slang expression.

1896 December 17 (Th.) Reno (Nev.) Evening Gazette, p. 3.

The Airship Again.

The Long Valley Indians say they have seen the much talked of airship in the daytime. One Indian said to a Gazette reporter this morning, "Him big as a car, and goes all same as bird." The Gazette man asked if he had not heard about Johnson Sides lecture on fire water—if he did not think it wrong for Indians to drink whiskey. "Me no drink," said Jim. "Me heap see 'em all same as see you now. You think I dlink cause I see 'em airship. I see 'em, my mahala see 'em, my papoose see 'em too and other Injun he see 'em. No all drunk. My mahala dlink some time, but no dlink when he see 'em. While we don't question Jim's vision, or doubt but that he saw something, we confess a doubt about it being an airship. (reprinted in Carson City Morning Appeal, 12/18, p.3)

(Montesano, WA) Weekly Vidette, 12/18 p.3. Meteor seen from train no. 59.
(Olympia) Washington Standard, 12/18,3.

Our resident astronomer says the mysterious airship that has been causing such an excitement in Sacramento and other California cities, is nothing more nor less than a space-traversing vehicle from the planet Mars with a commission of scientists from that ruddy orb sent down to probe the acquaintance of earth's inhabitants, and that other and still more wonderful revelations are on the tapis [carpet].

1896 December 29 (Tues.) New York Times, p. 4 [Delaware airship sighting].

Topics of the Times.

—Those wild tales about an airship that came from the Pacific coast a few weeks ago created a momentary excitement and were then forgotten, except, possibly, by a few people who saw in the evidence on which the stories were based something more than a mere trace of consistency, and who were, therefore, disposed to suspect that under a vast mass of exaggerations and mendacity there might be hidden a more or less successful experiment in aerial navigation. Now from Delaware comes a report of another airship, or perhaps it is another report of the same airship. A farmer who rises early every morning to carry milk into Wilmington says that on Saturday, just as he and his hired man were returning from the barn to the house with their brimming pails through the chill gray dawn, they heard strains of music in the air above their heads, and a moment later a glass bottle fell at their feet and broke into fragments. Looking up, the men declare that they saw, half a mile from the earth and moving to the northeast, a huge machine, resembling a fish in shape, with wide-spreading wings, and a mighty tail. From the airship came the rays of a powerful searchlight, and the faint, clear notes of a cornet. After the strange vessel had disappeared in the distance, the farmer looked among the bits of glass on the ground, and found a slip of paper, on which was written: "On board the airship Icarus, Thursday afternoon, Dec. 24, 1896. The airship Icarus, Capt. James Dashiell, with Thomas Murphy as companion et al., left Salt Lake City 10 P. M. Tuesday, Dec. 8, bound for Cuba. Wind due east, blowing at the rate of sixty miles an hour. At an altitude of one mile we found a steady current. Machinery working to a charm. All well. Provisions sufficient for a week longer. Will land in the neighborhood of Jacksonville, Fla. Send word, collect, to Hatcher & Mills, bankers, 720 South Second Street, Salt Lake City, Utah."

1897 January 8 (Fri.) (Salt Lake City) Deseret Evening News, p. 5.

ASTRAL PHENOMENON. / Was It a Planet or a Sun Spot on Old Sol's Face? /

This morning Mr. Albert M. Merrill, an employe of the E.C.M.I., noticed a dark spot on the face of the sun, and communicated the fact to his fellow employes, Soon a large number of them were gazing at Old Sol through smoked glass, and noting the unlooked for spot on his face. It was first visible about 8:30, and seemed to pass slowly across the sun's disc, accompanying about two hours in the passage. Just what it was has not been explained, but it appeared like a planet, which some supposed it to be; but no such an eclipse of the sun is foretold by the almanac for this day.

A press dispatch from Butte, Montana, dated yesterday, describes a similar phenomenon: "None of the almanacs gave any predictions of the strange phenomenon visible on the face of the sun today. On account of the smelter smoke the naked eye could see on the surface of the sun a large irregular black spot. By using smoked glass one could see two more smaller spots, one above and to the right, the other below and to the left of the larger one. The larger spot was below the horizontal diameter of the sun in the forenoon, but moved up along the disc later in the day, by which time the relative positions of the three spots had also change perceptibly. The one above and to the left and the one below and to the left were on the opposite side (?). The smaller spots were revolving around the large one, the position changing noticeably every hour or so.

Jan. 11, p.3. Prof. Brooks at Geneva, NY, photographing giant sunspot.

1897 January 25 (Mon. eve.) Phoenix Daily Herald, p. 8.

Mayor Monihon this morning received a letter from A.E. Douglass, of the Lowe[11] observatory at Flagstaff, requesting information as to a phenomena witnessed at various points in the Territory on the evening of November 3 last in the shape of a curious irregular light streak in the sky. All the information possible on this subject is desired by Mr. Douglass and if any person in this city witnessed it, Mr. Monihon would be pleased to learn of the details so that he might inform Mr. Douglass.

1897 January 28 (Th. eve.) Phoenix (AZ) Daily Herald, p. 8.

WANDERING STARS. / The Peculiar Vagaries Recently Seen in Our Southern Sky. / FLORENCE,

ARIZ., Jan. 26, 1897.

EDITOR HERALD: I want to call your attention and that of the multitude of transient visitors from the north, now in our city, to a remarkable sight that cannot be seen in a northern latitude. It is that of a variable or "wandering star" to be seen in the south between 8:30 and 11 p.m. Last evening I was watching it and was astonished to see it move eastward zigzagging thousands of miles in less than two minutes. What specially surprised me was to see how long and how far it moved before it retraced its path backward. Just as it began its return, Mr. J. P. Willis came and I called his attention to it and he was as much surprised and confounded as I.

Moving west to a point near where it was first seen, it began an upward movement and eastward. Up, up, up it went, right and left a little, and onward, then down, down again in its gyrations, never for a moment stationary. It changed in brilliance from a star of the fourth to one of the second magnitude, its luster increasing and diminishing in brilliancy nearly every moment. Many of us watched it a year ago, but its movements last evening exceeded anything witnessed at that time. What is it? What is its name? How are its peculiarities accounted for? It reminds you of a lantern attached to a kite, and that is what I took it to be when I first discovered it, coming home from church one evening a year or more ago.

Here is what the Library of Universal Knowledge says of 'Algol' par. 279, vol. 1, "Algol a remarkable variable star in the constellation Perseus. It continues of the second magnitude for about sixty-four hours, then in three and a half hours it diminishes to the fourth magnitude, remains so for about twenty minutes and in three and a half hours more gradually returns to its greatest brilliancy, its variations being complete in about sixty-nine hours."

Again in vol. 13, par. 790, line 19, it says: "Of all the variable stars yet observed in Perseus Algol has the shortest period being sixty-eight, forty-nine minutes. It appears for about sixty hours a star of the second magnitude, after which it increases again for four hours."

Various explanations have been offered of these mysterious appearances; the stars are supposed to turn on their axes and to have their surfaces unequally luminous in different places; or a large dark body is assumed to be revolving about the luminous one, so as to intercept more or less of its light in different positions; or the stars are lens-shaped etc. There is nothing however inadmissible in the supposition that the intensity of the light itself may vary and if in other suns, why not in our own? Who can cast more light on this dark (?) subject? Its range is much lower than last year, not appearing above the horizon before 8 or 8:30 p.m. Who will throw the search-light of investigation on it and prove a benefactor to his race?

Had Jude vs. 13*, seen it and was it this, or one like it to which he referred?

Who can answer? "More light," who can shed it? I. T. W.

*Jude vs. 13: Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.

1897 February 2 (Tues.) Omaha Daily Bee (morn. ed.), p. 2.

See an Airship at Hastings. / Travels at Night at a High Speed and Carries a Bright Light.

Hastings, Feb. 1.—(Special.)—Some persons within ten miles west of Hastings are making an experiment with an air ship which from all appearances so far seems to be a great success. *It was first noticed some time last fall when it was seen floating in the air about 500 feet above ground, and after standing nearly still for about thirty minutes it began to circle about and then took a northerly direction for about two miles, after which it returned to its starting place and sunk into oblivion.* Since that time it has not been seen until last night, when it was observed standing nearly still a few miles west of Hastings and seemingly about 800 feet in the air. At first sight it has the appearance of an immense star....

Kansas City (MO) Weekly Journal and Agriculturalist, 2/18/97 p. 6. New Kind of Flying Machine. (San Francisco business men building an airship.)

1897 March 29 (Roseburg, OR) Plaindealer, p. 2. Kansas is said to have the "airship" now. Hundreds of people including the governor, saw a mysterious red light pass over the city of Topeka Saturday night.

1897 April 22 (Th.) Osage (IA) News, p. 1.

Orchard.

One of our citizens in speaking about the much talked of airship says that late last fall, one evening about 8 o'clock he saw in the north, not very high up, a bright light moving rather slowly in a southerly direction. We remember him speaking of it at the time. Who knows but it might have been the much talked of airship on its trial trip before going into winter quarters at Omaha.