

# EDISON'S CONQUEST OF MARS

BY GARRETT P. SERVISS  
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It had been prearranged that the first discharge from the flagship should be a signal for the concentration of the fire of all the other ships upon the same spot.

A little hesitation, however, occurred and half a minute had elapsed before the disintegrators from the other members of the squadron were got into play.

Then suddenly we saw an immense commotion in the cloud beneath us. It seemed to be beaten and hurled in every direction and punctured like a sieve with nearly 100 great, circular holes. Through these gaps we could see clearly a large region of the planet's surface, with many airships floating above it and the blaze of innumerable electric lights illuminating it. The Martians had created an artificial day under the curtain.

This time there was no question that the blow had been effective. Four or five of the airships, partially destroyed, tumbled headlong toward the ground, while even from our great distance there was unmistakable evidence that fearful execution had been done among the crowded structures along the shore of the lake.

As each of our ships possessed but one of the new disintegrators, and since a minute or so was required to adjust them for a fresh discharge, we remained for a little while inactive after delivering the blow. Meanwhile the cloud curtain, though rent to shreds by the concentrated discharge of the disintegrators, quickly became a uniform black sheet again, hiding everything.

We had just had time to congratulate ourselves on the successful opening of our bombardment, and the disintegrator of the flagship was poised for another discharge, when suddenly out of the black expanse beneath quivered immense electric beams, clear out and straight as bars of steel, but dazzling our eyes with unendurable brilliance.

It was the reply of the Martians to our attack.

Three or four of the electrical ships were seriously damaged, and one, close beside the flagship, changed color, withered and collapsed with the same sickening phenomena that had made our hearts shudder when the first disaster of this kind occurred during our brief battle over the asteroid.

Another score of our comrades were gone, and yet we had hardly begun the fight.

Glancing at the other ships which had been injured, I saw that the damage to them was not so serious, although they were evidently hors de combat for the present.

Our fighting blood was now boiling, and we did not stop long to count our losses.

"Into the smoke!" was the signal, and the 90 and more electric ships which still remained in condition for action immediately shot downward.

It was a wild plunge. We kept off the decks while rushing through the blinding smoke, but the instant we emerged below, where we found ourselves still a mile above the ground, we were out again, ready to strike.

I have simply a confused recollection of flashing lights beneath and a great, dark arch of clouds above, out of which our ships seemed dropping on all sides, and then the fray burst upon and around us, and no man could see or notice anything except by half comprehended glances.

Almost in an instant, it seemed, a swarm of airships surrounded us, while from what for lack of a more descriptive name I shall call the forts about the Lake of the Sun leaped tongues of electric fire, before which some of our ships were driven like bits of flaming paper in a high wind, gleaming for a moment, then curling up and gone forever.

It was an awful sight, but the battle fever was raging in us, and we, on our part, were not idle.

Every man carried a disintegrator, and these hand instruments, together with those of heavier caliber on the ships, poured their resistless vibrations in every direction through the quivering air.

The airships of the Martians were destroyed by the score, but yet they flocked upon us thicker and faster.

We dropped lower and our blows fell upon the forts and upon the widespread city bordering the Lake of the Sun. We almost entirely silenced the fire of one of the forts, but there were 40 more in full action within reach of our eyes.

Some of the metallic buildings were nearly unroofed by the disintegrators

and some had their walls riddled and fell with thundering crashes, whose sound rose to our ears above the hellish din of battle. I caught glimpses of giant forms struggling in the ruins and rushing wildly through the streets, but there was no time to see anything clearly.

Our flagship seemed charmed. A crowd of airships hung upon it like a swarm of angry bees, and at times one could not see for the lightning strokes, yet we escaped destruction, while ourselves dealing death on every hand.

It was a glorious fight, but it was not war; no, it was not war. We really had no more chance of ultimate success amid that multitude of enemies than a prisoner running the gantlet in a crowd of savages has of escape.

A conviction of the hopelessness of the contest finally forced itself upon our minds, and the shattered squadron, which had kept well together amid the storm of death, was signaled to retreat.

Shaking off their pursuers as a hunted bear shakes off the dogs, 60 of the electrical ships rose up through the clouds where more than 90 had gone down!

Madly we rushed upward through the vast curtain and continued our flight to a great elevation, far beyond the reach of the awful artillery of the enemy.

Looking back, it seemed the very mouth of hell that we had escaped from.

The Martians did not for an instant cease their fire even when we were far beyond their reach. With furious persistence they blazed away through the cloud curtains, and the vivid spikes of lightning shuddered so swiftly on one another's track that they were like a flaming halo of electric lances around the frowning helmet of the war planet.

But after awhile they stopped their terrific sparring, and once more the immense globe assumed the appearance of a vast ball of black smoke, still wildly agitated by the recent disturbance, but exhibiting no opening through which we could discern what was going on beneath.

Evidently the Martians believed they had finished us.

At no time since the beginning of our adventure had it appeared to me quite so hopeless, reckless and mad as it seemed at present.

We had suffered fearful losses, and yet what had we accomplished? We had won two fights on the asteroid, it is true, but then we had overwhelming numbers on our side.

Now we were facing millions on their own ground, and our very first assault had resulted in a disastrous repulse, with the loss of at least 30 electric ships and 600 men!

Evidently we could not endure this sort of thing. We must find some other means of assailing Mars, or else give up the attempt.

But the latter was not to be thought of. It was no mere question of self pride, however, and no consideration of the tremendous interests at stake, which would compel us to continue our apparently vain attempt.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

## The Northwest Indian and His Ways.

The Indian of the plains is a far more picturesque individual than his brother or cousin of the coast. He does not erect totem poles and has no timber for the purpose if so inclined, but he is sufficiently spectacular himself without resorting to grotesque carvings and painted wood. His saddle, with its leather hangings and wooden stirrups, is in itself a remarkable aggregation, and when set off with his goods and chattels tied in bags, rags, strings and straps, the effect is remarkable. He wears the cast off garments of his white brother in such original combinations that he looks like the personification of a secondhand store. Sometimes the adoption of a pair of guernseys as an external covering gives him quite an athletic appearance. He wears his hair in Gertrude braids, and prefers earrings about the size of half dollar coins. A mosquito net or handkerchief is his favorite head covering, and if he assumes a hat it is as an additional and purely ornamental appendage.—Detroit Free Press.

## Love In Early Days.

"Yes," said Adam to Eve as the twilight drew about the aged couple, softening their lineaments to a semblance of youth, "how well I remember the day we met! You wore a diffident air!"

That was all.—Indianapolis Journal.

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DATED Sept. 12th, 1898.	No. 28, Daily.		No. 38, Daily.		No. 108, Daily ex. Sunday.		No. 41, Daily.		No. 46, Daily.	
	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.
Leave Weldon...	11 50	9 43	12 56	10 38						
Ar. Rocky Mt. ...										
Leave Tarboro...	12 21				6 00					
Lv. Rocky Mt. ...	1 00	10 36	6 45	5 40	12 52					
Leave Wilson ...	1 58	11 13	7 19	6 23	2 20					
Leave Selma ...	2 55	11 58								
Lv. Fayetteville...	4 25	1 07								
Ar. Florence ...	7 25	3 15								
	P. M. A. M.		P. M. A. M.		P. M. A. M.		P. M. A. M.		P. M. A. M.	
Ar. Goldsboro...					8 00					
Lv. Goldsboro...						7 01			3 06	
Lv. Magnolia...						8 05			4 12	
Ar. Wilmington.						9 30			5 40	

### TRAINS GOING NORTH.

DATED Sept. 12th, 1898.	No. 78, Daily.		No. 108, Daily ex. Sunday.		No. 38, Daily.		No. 46, Daily.		No. 41, Daily.	
	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.
Lv. Florence ...	8 45			8 35						
Lv. Fayetteville...	11 10			10 35						
Leave Selma ...	12 25			11 44						
Arrive Wilson...	1 17			12 19						
	A. M.		P. M.		A. M.		P. M.		A. M.	
Lv. Wilmington.						7 15			9 25	
Lv. Magnolia...						8 55			11 01	
Lv. Goldsboro...						10 10			12 03	
	P. M.		A. M.		P. M.		A. M.		P. M.	
Leave Wilson ...	1 17	5 38	12 19	11 15	12 49					
Ar. Rocky Mt. ...	2 12	6 15	12 57	11 57	1 30					
Arrive Tarboro...			6 45							
Leave Tarboro...			12 21							
Lv. Rocky Mt. ...	3 12		1 57							
Ar. Weldon ...	3 25		1 45							

Train on the Kinston Branch Road leaves Weldon 4:15 p. m., Halifax 4:30 p. m., arrives Scotland Neck at 5:30 p. m., Greenville 6:37 p. m., Kinston 7:55 p. m. Returning leaves Kinston 7:50 a. m., Greenville 8:55 a. m., arriving Halifax at 11:18 a. m., Weldon 11:33 a. m., daily except Sunday.  
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TIME TABLE No. 6.

Eastbound.			Westbound.		
Mixed F. & P.	Mixed F. & P.	Passenger.	Passenger.	Mixed F. & P.	Mixed F. & P.
A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.
7 10	7 10	8 40	11 05	8 13	8 53
7 43	7 43	4 00	10 43	7 33	12 13
8 06	8 06	4 09	10 22	7 03	1 43
8 29	8 29	4 20	10 12	6 33	1 13
8 52	8 52	4 32	10 02	6 03	12 53
9 14	9 14	4 42	9 52	5 33	11 58
9 38	9 38	4 51	9 42	5 03	11 40
10 45	10 45	5 00	9 32	4 33	10 40
10 40	10 40	5 02	9 22	4 03	10 40
11 15	11 15	5 14	9 12	3 33	10 18
11 31	11 31	5 20	9 02	3 03	10 00
12 05	1 30	5 45	8 52	2 33	9 30
...	...	...	...	...	...

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\*Monday, Wednesday and Friday.  
\*Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.  
\*Monday, Wednesday and Friday.  
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