SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

James Adams, West Point graduate, is in Paris at the opening of the French-German war. In a balloon reconnoissance for the French he is almost captured by the Germans. The balloon is wrecked at the Chateau Lagunay. Rescued, Adams falls in love with Aimee, daughter of the Count Lagunay. The Germans invade France. A German Colonel, Griesman, insults Aimee and is attacked by Adams, who is in turn overpowered by the Kaiser. He joins the German army under a friend, Lowenberg; engages in an ambush of a French column, and returning to camp learns that Griesman has charged Aimee with treason and has imprisoned her. Adams pursues Griesman in an automobile, kills him in single combat, and takes Aimee to a cousin at Bethel. In the terrific land battle two days later Lowenberg is killed in the capture of Montpelier. The French drive the Germans back with glycolite, a terrible explosive sprinkled from airships. One of the ships is blown in the night to Montpelier, where Adams is camped. Its crew is thrown out. Adams blunders into it and is swept away in the gale.

CHAPTER VII.

I was awakened early the next morning by the sun. My clothes were damp with cloud moisture. I did not learn until then that there was an aluminum roof to the air car, which was pocketed in the basket-work sides, and that there were four electric radiators to provide heat. Thereafter I was more comfortable.

The ship floated steadily high in the clouds. I could see nothing but vapor being rapidly dissipated by the sun, which occasionally shot clear rays into my eyes. The barometer indicated an altitude of two miles, and the speed gauge registered, for the past twelve hours, an average of twenty miles an hour.

After a brief breakfast I examined the ship more at leisure. I found it a little ahead of anything I had ever seen. It steered perfectly, and could be sent up or down by the elevation or depression of broad aluminum blades fore and aft. A small motor, run by a powerful chemical battery, operated the propellers; though it was often possible to travel rapidly with the wind alone as motive power. There was also a Faure condenser for extracting hydrogen from the air, which operated automatically, keeping the bag always fully inflated. A wireless telephone outfit, various scientific instruments, the electric lighting and heating apparatus and the tank for condensing water from the gas-bag were novelties in their way. I found also a second hamper of food and drinkable, and, to my great delight, a box of fine Key West cigars, which I opened immediately. The car was eight feet wide and about sixteen feet long, and there was ample room for a party. I longed for Fleischmann, or poor Lowenberg.

When I had started the motor and set the fans to descend I took a telescope from the rack and waited eagerly for a sight of something that would indicate my whereabouts. By the compass I was going due west, and if that direction had been maintained all night I was far out on the Atlantic.

At last the clouds around me thinned and vanished, and I came into clear air. Below me, stretching away in all directions to the horizon, lay the sea, its tossing waves breaking white under the stiff wind and flashing back the rays of the morning sun. Eagerly I swept the whole range of visible ocean. Here and there appeared the black smudge of a distant liner and to the northeast I made out a low, dark line that might be either haze or land. But this was not all. Directly beneath me I perceived a series of dark objects, all spouting black smoke. They were of various sizes, and by the formation I could conclude only one thing—that they were the ships of a fleet, a naval squadron. Then I recalled the words of the Kaiser that moonlight night at the Chateau Lagunay:

"There will be two great battles. One, on the land, is before us; the other, on the sea, will occur within a fortnight."

I confess to a feeling of elation that I was here, in the air, in position to witness the greatest naval battle of years, although I regretted the necessity for this test of arms. I observed that the fleet was headed northeast, and desiring a closer view I ran ahead a mile or more and descended, until I had a fair sight. The ships were French, by their flags. Beautiful and stately were the great vessels; grimly beautiful, too, when one took note of their enormous turret guns—twenty-inch, without doubt, capable of hurling a ton or more of metal every five minutes. I counted ten battleships, five or six torpedo-boat destroyers (recognized by their quadruplicate funnels) and several cruisers. Two huge coal barges were being towed several miles to the rear. This much was visible to the naked eye. Looking through my glass I could see a swarm of torpedo boats, only their conning towers showing above the water, hovering around the flanks and leading the advance.

The fleet was proceeding very slowly in a great curve to the north, evidently not desiring to advance nearer the coast. By late afternoon it had turned and was heading west at the same pace.

As the sun drew near the horizon and the wind freshened I turned the nose of my airship to the east and prepared to spend the night aloft. I had been sailing leisurely back and forth over an area of perhaps fifty miles, in hope of seeing the German fleet. Except for the many passenger steamers coming and going there was nothing to be seen.

I was leaning over the edge of my basket smoking idly. I had just christened my ship "L'Aimee," and was wishing I had the original with me, when a voice came down upon me from the clouds.

"Who are you," it called, in French.

I looked up in astonishment, and there floated the strangest airship I had ever seen. It was merely an aeroplane, supported by great saucer-like metal contrivances, with a small basket-car hung by slender cables. It swept by, some hundred feet above me, and I had a glimpse of a white face looking down upon me. I sped up the motor, and rising as I advanced soon drew up alongside my fellow traveler. Then ensued a brief conversation.

"Where are you going?" I shouted. He was not more than a hundred yards away.

"I don't know. My steering fans won't work, and I cannot turn. I suppose I shall have to consider myself bound for America."

"Can you descend?"

"Yes."

"Drop to the sea, then, and I will pick you up. My ship steers perfectly." We were now far beyond the fleet. I descended by degrees. The other tipped his planes slightly and started down on a long slant, like a boy coasting down a hill. When within twenty feet or less of the water he tipped the planes sharply in the other direction, and his ship stopped with a shudder, hovered for a time like a brooding gull, and settled slowly into the sea. I was close behind him with a small rope-ladder, and a minute later, dripping wet, but cheerful, he clambered into my car. Then we rose again to the two-thousand-foot level and with just enough headway on to overcome the wind, lay as in a calm.

I found that my guest was none other than Emil LeFevre, son of the great inventor of submarines and explosives. When he had disrobed and hung his wet clothes to dry in front of the radiators, swathing himself in a rug meanwhile, he gave me a brief account of his journey. The world was ringing with the news of the great battle on the Catalunian Plain; how the French had been all but whipped when their fleet of airships, belated by some mismanagement, came upon the scene with the new explosive, glycolite, and sent the Germans back upon their camp, killing and maiming thousands. There had been no movement on land since that. All eyes were now turned toward the sea, where the fleets were watching for an opening. LeFevre had been so confident of his ability to manage his aeroplane that he had set out in spite of the heavy wind that kept back all the less venturesome aeronauts. He was determined to witness the battle. Just before he saw me he had attempted to turn and found the steering gears jammed. Had I not rescued him he would have probably found a watery grave.

It was now dark. The air was damp and cold, so I drew the roof over part of my car. LeFevre's light clothing was dry enough to put on, and we sat down to eat supper, followed by a cigar. I learned then many things about the impending battle, LeFevre being familiar with the explosives and apparatus in use on both sides.

The Germans were depending largely upon their late invention, the Calnite aerial bomb. This projectile was to be fired by compressed air from a mortar-like gun, and being fitted with a gyroscope would maintain its elevation for a distance of eight miles. The bomb was two feet in diameter and about three feet long, and moved so slowly as to be visible during its whole course. It contained a charge of two hundred pounds of Calnite, a new explosive whose force operated always downward. The bomb contained also a magnet and circuit-breaker so tuned as to be responsive to electrical vibrations set up in a powerful electrical instrument on the discharging ship. By the use of a unique range finding apparatus the bomb was kept in sight during its whole flight, and upon reaching the desired point it was exploded by the mere pressure of a button on the ship from which it had been fired. Tests with this bomb had shown wonderful accuracy and most deadly effects.

Another offensive device was an aerial illuminator—a small, balloon-like affair, arranged to float at a considerable elevation, and carrying a powerful chemical light, backed by strong reflectors. A shoal of these illuminators would be sent toward the enemy's fleet, lighting up the sea and the vessels and making easy targets for the German guns.

Against these devices the French had prepared an aerial bomb to discharge a heavy and deadly gas, and to sprinkle acids or explosives upon the ships of the enemy. They were also provided with aluminum armor, so thick and tough that an ordinary projectile would merely become imbedded therein and held fast without being able to pass through. Around their ships and under water they hung large electro-magnets, exerting, by peculiar wiring, a repelling influence on approaching torpedoes at a distance of a hundred yards, invariably turning them aside. Their mainstay, however, was a new centrifugal submarine torpedo-boat, which needed not to come to the surface, remaining down for days at a time, yet observing operations on the surface, and doing its work with deadly accuracy. LeFevre could not give me the details of this strange machine. Its terrible effectiveness, however, was apparent the next day.

I had no apprehension whatever as to the stability of L'Aimee, and we lay down and went to sleep that night without the least apprehension. Stanch and true was she, even as my own sweet betrothed. It was still dark, when I was awakened with a start by the sound of heavy detonations below us. I leaped to my feet and looked over the side of the car. LeFevre joined me the next moment.

The Germans had evidently planned a night attack by the use of their illuminators. Below us the sea was alight in great spots, and dimly we could make out the vessels over which shone the strong, blue-white lights. Far off in the darkness we could see the occasional flash of a gun. The Germans were sending home great shells loaded with explosives. Their aerial bombs could not be followed at night. The French were replying, but their fire was more or less blind. The roar of the guns came up to us plainly. It shook the heavens. Suddenly there was a flash that lit up the whole sky, and a terrific explosion sounded from below. A German shell had found its mark. One of the French battleships had gone to her long home.

During the rest of the night there was no intermission in the heavy firing. Fearful explosions sounded now and then, and we could but guess the destruction that was being wrought. I had no wish to see either side win at the expense of the other.

At dawn we were able to note the situation clearly. Six or eight miles away to the northeast lay the German fleet. Almost beneath us the French were gathered in loose order. Both were plying their great guns. On both sides burning ships were drifting away, others were careening, half-filled with water. And now, with the coming of daylight, the combatants resorted to their deadliest appliances. As we watched one of the French battleships there was a dull explosion. The great hull opened, split in twain like a canteloupe, and went skiddering to the bottom. We could see it deep in the clear water, its hundreds of seaman swarming around like so many ants in a bowl.

It was remarkable to note the submarines moving here and there under water. From our height we could see clear to the bottom, and every boat was visible by a bright streak as it swept through the water. Suddenly LeFevre clutched my arm and pointed. "The Centrifugal," he said, in a whisper. I watched it on its way, advancing in a bright whirl of bubbles. It was making its way toward the German fleet, and thither we followed.

But whatever work awaited this terror must be done quickly. The Germans were wonderfully accurate with their Calnite aerial bombs. Ship after ship quivered, split open and sank like a broken teacup. The force of the calnite was so great that it operated for a distance of a hundred yards on every side, more than once sinking several of the smaller ships at one explosion. LeFevre groaned as, looking back, he saw one of the largest battleships collapse, fairly smashed into fragments. He shook his fist at the Centrifugal. "On, on!" he shouted. "Do thy work, laggard!"

The Centrifugal moved swiftly. At intervals it came up with a submarine, paused a moment to ascertain whether German or French, and acted accordingly. If French, it passed on; if German it darted at the victim, touched it, and as quickly darted away. What terrible power it exerted I could not understand, but at that fatal touch the enemy sank. There seemed to be no escape, no single chance. Presently this swift and silent messenger of death was in the thick of the German fleet. Looking back I saw that there were but two of the French ships left, both sadly disabled. The German squadron was in fine shape, but three of its battleships disabled. I sent L'Aimee lower to observe more closely. The Centrifugal heeded not the torpedo nets. It passed through obstructions as though it were spirit. We saw it under the bow of the Frederich Wilheim, the largest battleship of the fleet. For half a minute it lay there, surrounded as ever by that whirl of sparkling bubbles. Then it darted away toward another. So interested were we in watching the uncanny movements of the strange boat that we did not observe the confusion on board the Frederich, nor on the others that were successively visited. LeFevre noticed the great ships settling low in the water, and spoke of it to me. There was something terrible about this destroyer. Inside of fifteen minutes every vessel in that fleet had been stung, as it were, by this great hornet of the sea, and every one was sinking. The seamen were throwing themselves off; boats were putting out; rafts were flung into the sea. Presently the Centrifugal finished her work and we saw her whirling away, stopping here and there to smell a submarine and to kiss it or to sting it as it happened to be friend or foe. What a sight! Twenty-four German ships sinking, sinking, going down to eternal silence. One after another they vanished. The torpedo boats came to the surface, saw what had happened, and put out for home and neutral ports. The Centrifugal, the grim destroyer, vanished. The great battle was over. And neither side could be said to have won. It was practical annihilation for both. Two magnificent fleets of modern war vessels gone, absolutely gone; a quarter of a billion dollars in battleships and thousands of brave fellows dead, only to satisfy the bickerings of diplomats—sacrifices to foolish notions of honor.

To LeFevre the operations of the Centrifugal were a triumph for France, and he was enthusiastic in his delight. But I cared little one way or the other. I was tired of it all. Life had been too strenuous for me. I wanted quiet for a while, and naturally my thoughts turned to Aimee, my sweetheart. Was she safe?

LeFevre insisted that I come with him to his home, but I refused. Turning to the east we made our way rapidly to the French coast. Here we settled to earth in the open country, and after bidding LeFevre adieu I rose again and made my way east. I had but one thought, now that the battle was over, and that thought I was putting into action. My objective was Bethel, where I knew my love awaited me.

But had I known what else awaited me at Bethel I should perchance have gone in another direction.

(To be concluded next week.)

"SUDDENLY LE FEVRE CLUTCHED MY ARM."

Maxine Elliott.

Maxine Elliott, who has taken a house in London and will leave the stage for a time to enjoy social life, is famous as an actress and also for her beauty. Miss Elliott, who, upon the stage, retains her maiden name, under which she became famous, is the wife of Nat C. Goodwin, to whom she was married in 1898. She was born in Rockland, Me., and was but 16 when she first appeared on the stage. Her serious work, however, did not begin until 1890, when she became associated with E. S. Willard. Subsequently she became a member of Daly's stock company and rapidly won distinction, which has been enhanced by her performance in her husband's company. Dramatically and socially she is a great favorite in both the United States and England.

Copper in Water Kills Germs.

In looking to the purification of the water supply, either the local farm supply or the water for a great city, remarkable results are announced from the application of a new method of destroying micro-organisms in water, which was discovered about a year ago by Drs. Moore and Kellerman, of the Bureau of Plant Industry at Washington. It consists simply in dissolving a certain quantity of copper sulphate in the water to be purified. Fortunately the dilution can be made so large that no deleterious effects are produced upon the water intended for drinking purposes. One part of copper sulphate to eight million parts of water is the proportion generally used, and it is pointed out that, in order to obtain any effect of copper from such a mixture a man would have to drink forty gallons of the water.

During the latter part of 1904 more than fifty sources of water supply in the United States were treated by this method with gratifying success. Not only are dangerous bacteria thus destroyed but the green growths that frequently choke up small ponds are also eliminated. Most important of all is the promise that by this treatment the germs of typhoid fever may be entirely removed from any source of water supply.

In the case of a lake or pond the chemical is applied by suspending bags filled with copper sulphate over the side of a boat while the boat is rowed about. In two or three days the copper is entirely precipitated from the water, but the beneficial effects of the treatment last for weeks or months.

It has been suggested that this discovery may raise the question whether, after all, our mothers were not right—although they did not understand the scientific aspects of the matter—in preferring copper kettles for preparing many kinds of food.

A Chicago gamin stole a dollar and was sent to the workhouse for a year. On the same day an embezzler who had gotten away with $5,000 was also given a year. Truly, the law is no respecter of persons.

A Chilean poet has declared for war against the United States. Prepare for the bum bardment.

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