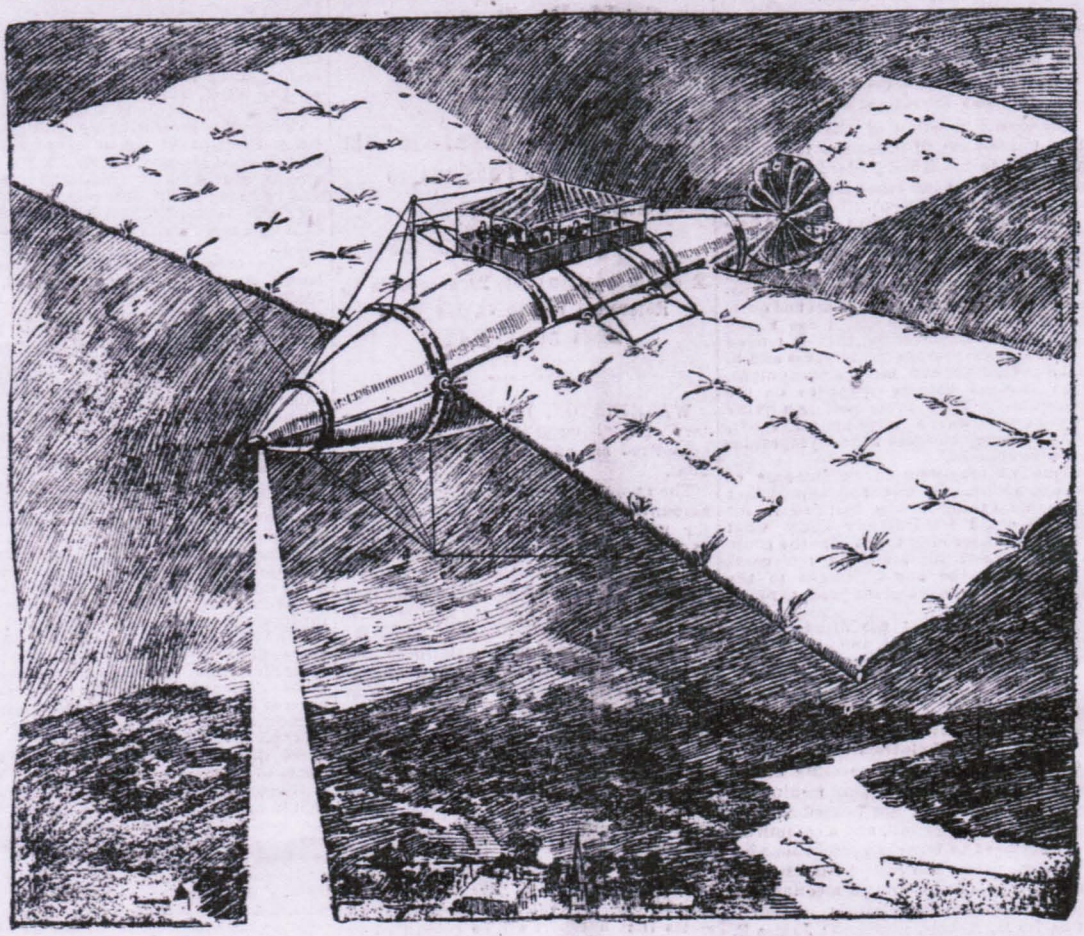
The San Francisco Call

SAN FRANCISCO, SATURDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 5, 1896.



The Great California Airship, as Shown in an Illustration in the New York "Morning Journal" of Sunday, November 28. The Article Which Accompanies the Illustration Says That the Witnesses of the Phenomenon Are All Credible.

HEARST AND HIS TWO FACES

Editor Hearst Has One Opinion East and Another Here.

The "Journal" Describes the Invention and Credits the Phenomenon.

News of the Aerial Visitor as the Wires Flash It From Neighboring Localities.

The many Jekyll-Hyde features of "Little Willie's" journalistic character are beautifully exemplified in the two views of the phenomenon that has recently appeared in the heavens hereabouts which have from time to time appeared in the Examiner here and in the New York Journal of New York City—both Mr. Hearst's newspapers.

In spite of the testimony of many reputable witnesses that strange moving lights have been seen in the sky the Examiner has continually referred to these phenomena as the result of "red eye" and midnight walks near breweries.

The following parallel columns concerning the airship, taken from Mr. Hearst's two papers, give a fair idea of how little one may depend upon anything seen in either paper:

AN AIRSHIP SEEN.
(N. Y. Journal, Nov. 28)

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 27.—The biggest problem of the age has been solved. Man has won what seemed to be his hardest battle with nature. A successful airship has been built. Scientists all over the world are tremendously interested by the stories which have been telegraphed from here; nearly everybody on the Pacific Coast is widely excited over the matter.

The story sounds like one of the romances of Jules Verne, but its truth is testified to by so many reputable citizens that there seems to be no reason whatever to question its accuracy.

PROBABLY DUE TO LIQUOR.
(S.F.Examiner, Nov. 23)

There are men who see queer things when they don't have a gun, and others who encounter wonders of an early morn or even at dewy eve when it has been more dewy than the law allows.

EVIDENCE FIRST CLASS.
(N. Y. Journal, Nov. 28)

A WORKING AIRSHIP SEEN ON THE PACIFIC COAST—UNDER PERFECT CONTROL—IT CARRIES FIFTEEN MEN AND A SEARCHLIGHT.

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.

THE RESULT OF BEER
(S.F.Examiner, Nov. 23)

At Sacramento a man wandering in the immediate vicinity of a brewery saw a great light and a dark mass moving up and down the sky.

IT WAS A REALITY.
(N. Y. Journal, Nov. 28)

It swiftly drew near the city, sailing evenly to the southwest.

Then it dropped nearer the earth, but suddenly shot up into the air again, as if the force that whirled it through space were sensible to the danger of collision with objects on the earth.

That much hundreds of prominent residents of Sacramento saw, and it caused consternation in all parts of the city, where groups gathered at the corners until far into the night listening to the tale of those that had seen it.

IT COULD NOT BE.
(Examiner, Nov. 23.)

What this thing is nobody knows. That it is an airship capable of carrying human freight seems impossible of belief, in view of the record of failure in the past. If some joker has turned loose a fire balloon to perplex and mystify that might account for the airship on an intelligible basis.

ONLY A DELUSION.
S. F. Examiner, Nov. 24.

The man who has not an airship in his back yard in these days is poor indeed. The man who has not seen a fleet of airships maneuvering in the skies has left California ashamed of himself. He is like the man who fell out of the balloon. He is not in it. They come not in single ships, but in battalions. The county or town in the State which cannot produce a machinery bird or two is hiding its head in shame.

SURELY AN AIRSHIP.
N. Y. Journal, Nov. 28.

For purposes of self-protection during the pendency of his application for letters patent, the inventor has not disclosed all the details of his contrivance. Enough, however, has been discovered to show that he has found the true principle of aerial navigation. The excitement here has assumed the form of a tremendous sensation. It is the one topic of conversation in every village, town and city in the State. In California the prevailing question to-day is: "Have you seen the airship?" That there is reason for that question the following facts strongly demonstrate:

The strange thing about the positions of the two papers is the fact that the descriptions that appeared in the Eastern paper were probably written in the Examiner office. They doubtless represent the San Francisco editor's real views, while the light vein pursued here has doubtless been because the paper poohpoohed the real news the first day and was driven to give it later, after the chagrin of being beaten by THE CALL the first day.

AIRSHIP AT LIVERMORE.

Editor Ellis of the "Herald" Gives His Views of the Machine.

The following article will appear in the Livermore Herald to-day, giving the views of Editor Ellis:

The Herald may be a little late in coming to the front with an airship story, but nevertheless it has one, and as for its authenticity no man in Alameda County can doubt. The parties who witnessed this remarkable phenomenon are none other than the Rev. John Kirby of Oakland, presiding elder of the Oakland district, and Rev. Hugh Copeland.

Rev. Mr. Kirby was in Livermore Wednesday of this week and in the presence of Rev. Mr. Alexander, pastor of the Methodist Church, and Madison Beck of the firm of Beck & Co., made this statement:

"On the evening of November 22 Rev. Hugh Copeland and myself were riding in a buggy in the vicinity of Knights Ferry in Stanislaus County. We were just crossing a bridge when our attention was riveted to an object about a quarter of a mile ahead of us. It appeared at first like a huge ball of fire that rose from the earth.

"We were traveling in a southwesterly direction at the time and stopped our buggy to gaze in wonderment upon this startling and unexpected scene. It sailed along above the surface of the ground for probably 100 yards, then gradually raised higher and higher. Had it continued its course when we first saw it, it would have passed almost directly above us, but instead made a half circle to the west and north and was about the same distance when it reached a point opposite to us as it was when we first noticed it. Before it passed us we could plainly see two lights in front and at right angles of the flying machine, and as it was going by we saw a light, that was not visible before, attached to and at the rear of the object. We watched it for some time before continuing our journey. It could not have been a meteor because it did not go to the earth, but skimmed along rapidly.

"Had I been alone I might have believed that my eyes deceived me, but there was Mr. Copeland, who witnessed the same scene, and there is no possibility of our being mistaken. I had believed that the successful navigation of an airship was beyond the reach of mortal skill, but I look at it in a different light now. I do not claim, mind you, that what we saw that night was a genuine airship, but the natural question that arises is, if it was not an airship, what was it? I saw enough to convince me that the papers have no grounds to picture this phenomenon in the light of a burlesque. When we reached Stockton the following day the papers were full of descriptive accounts of an airship in Yuba County that pictured exactly what we had seen on November 22."

OAKLAND, CAL., Dec. 3.—The Rev. John Kirby, presiding elder of the Oakland district for the past two years, and pastor of the Park-street M. E. Church of Alameda six years previous to that, was interviewed at his home on Park street, Alameda, to-night. He repeated and confirmed the story as told above and added: "After reading the accounts of the airship in THE CALL I clipped them and forwarded them to Mr. Copeland at Oakdale. To-day I received a reply in which he says: 'If there is an airship we shall share in the glory. People in Oakdale saw it on the same night.'"

STRANDED NEAR FRESNO.

The Great Airship Caught in a Current and Sent Southward.

FRESNO, CAL., Dec. 4.—The skepticism of the people of this city regarding the existence of the airship has been removed largely by a strange statement of George Jennings, one of the proprietors of the bar in the Grand Central Hotel. He is a thoroughly reliable man and there is good ground to give credence to his story. He avers that he is practicing no deception. Mr. Jennings asserts that there is no question that an airship exists and that it has been sailing through the skies as reported. He talked with the inventor and the craft is now somewhere in Fresno County, not far from this city.

Mr. Jennings was interviewed by a CALL correspondent this evening and made the following statement: "Yesterday shortly before noon a man appeared at my place of business and inquired for me. The stranger was covered with dust and travel-stained. I recognized him as an old friend, whose name I cannot possibly give at present. It is true the airship is in Fresno County, just where I do not myself know. This man who was in here is one of the inventors. He told me that the trip to this county was involuntary upon the part of the men in the airship. In other words the machine came itself and they couldn't stop it.

"His statement was that they were flying, as usual, around Contra Costa County hills and rose to a height of about 1000 feet. Suddenly the airship struck a current of air and refused to answer its steering gear. It was borne rapidly southward against all efforts to change its course until suddenly the current of air seemed to lessen and the machine once more became manageable. The men aboard at once descended and flew about looking for a hiding place, which they at length found.

"My friend told me that the airship was made principally of aluminum, and that the rising and falling was accomplished by improved aeroplanes, while the motive power was electricity. He says the machine is perfect, except for the fact that at times it refuses to be steered in a given direction, and that it will not stand still in the air. He has gone to San Francisco and will return with some material and men probably to-night. He said if the news from Washington was satisfactory, he would bring his airship over to Fresno where every one could see it.

"I know the man well," concluded Mr. Jennings. "He had no reason to tell me such a story if it was not true. He had no business here, knows no one but myself and left without asking any favors. More

OVER SELMA.

Reputable Citizens View a Strange Aerial Traveler.

SELMA, CAL., Dec. 4.—The airship, or some other aerial traveler of like appearance, passed over Selma last night between 9 and 10 o'clock. It was seen by many reputable citizens. N. W. Stewart, grain merchant, went to the door of his residence about 9:30 o'clock and saw a light approaching from the west. It had the appearance of a locomotive headlight, and was apparently about 150 feet above the earth.

Mr. Stewart called to his family, and all saw the wonderful light pass over the town and disappear in an easterly direction. It was traveling at about the speed of a passenger-train.

G. S. Reichard, attorney-at-law, and many other persons also saw the remarkable light.

There is no question about an airship having passed over this part of Fresno County last night.

THE WOMAN IN IT.

Strange and Circumstantial Story of a Sailor Passenger.

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CAL., Dec. 4.—William Gordon reached this town this morning. He states that he is a native of South Carolina and a truthful person, a graduate of Berkeley, but recently a sailor and just from New York.

His story is that yesterday evening about 9 o'clock, he was at Indio, and responded to the inquiries of a stranger who was looking for some one able to splice a rope. Gordon, being a sailor, offered his services, which were accepted, and he followed the man who claimed to have a hay-baling outfit about a mile from town to a place where he found a cigar-shaped structure about 80 feet long and 25 feet in diameter. The structure was standing on projections, and had under it two propellers, five-bladed, say 15 feet across. There was a huge tail, which served as a rudder, of which the tiller-ropes had parted. Gordon spliced them.

The structure was of metal. There were a number of windows and two doors. The interior was divided into compartments and the motive power, which the captain stated was compressed air, seemed to operate machinery contained in a great case and controlled by levers.

Gordon was invited to come along and did so. He was given the rudder, operated by a wheel, and followed the courses given him as shown by compass. They rose in the air to a great height, probably 3000 feet, and took a northerly course and traveled at enormous speed. In a few hours they passed over Los Angeles, easily known by its great number of lights, and then sped over Ventura, Santa Barbara and other places, and about 3 o'clock this morning settled down in a place in the mountains about eight miles southeast of this city.

Here the manager of the airship announced his intention of stopping awhile and Gordon was sent for water, but after going a short distance he turned and discovered the strange vessel disappearing.

The airship man, Gordon says, was of swarthy appearance and spoke Spanish to the only companion he had, a woman.

A Fake of Showmen.

It developed yesterday that the cigar-shaped galvanized iron tank, constructed to resemble an airship, which was found late Thursday night in a gulch near the Almshouse, is a "fake" creation. It was carted to the point where found in order to provide some cheap advertising for a local place of amusement. Owing to the darkness and lateness of the hour the imposition escaped exposure, as there was neither opportunity nor time for a close or full investigation.

The San Francisco Call

SAN FRANCISCO, SUNDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 6, 1896—T TY PAGES.

The Sacramento Crowds Gazing at the Wonderful California Airship.

[Reproduced from the New York "Morning Journal" of November 29.]

HEARST'S AIRY CHAMELEON.

In the New York Journal It Is a Bona Fide Flying Machine,

IN THE SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER A FAKE.

Illustrations of the Sacramento Street Scene Were Sent From This City.

AN OSTRICH-LIKE ATTEMPT TO DELUDE THE PEOPLE.

Conflicting Stories Printed by the Siamese-Twin Faker Show the Unreliability of the Two Shameless Papers.

A further study of the New York Morning Journal's page indorsement of the San Francisco airship story confirms the opinion that it was written in the Examiner office of this City.

The illustrations of the street scene here during the passage of the aerial visitant appear to have been drawn in the Examiner office here.

THE CALL to-day reproduces in a diminutive form the picture that the Journal printed across an entire page, being a street scene in Sacramento during the night when some bright object passed over the City, attracting the attention of all who had eyes.

The incident illustrates as plainly as did the two views Mr. Hearst held on the gold question how the young millionaire toys with the truth and fakes here and there to cater to the strange mob that reads his papers.

Another illustration of the absolute unreliability of the Examiner—and like instances appears in the Journal—is seen in yesterday's issue. Great space is given to the account of a supposed airship that was discovered in a gully near Twin Peaks a few nights ago. The Examiner's misleading description and great illustration might lead the reader to believe a bona-fide airship had been found, whereas the most cursory examination shows that the tin rattle-trap discovered was a clumsy fake, probably projected by some advertising man who will seek to exhibit it later.

A little more detailed study of the article that appeared in the Journal of November 28 shows how fully the paper gave credence to the story which the Examiner here ridiculed because THE CALL had the news first. Among other things, after quoting a number of people, the Journal said:

"Hundreds of similar interviews could be obtained. Many practical electricians saw the strange sight. All of them maintain that the searchlight was electrical in character. They say, too, that to produce a light of such power and brilliancy would require at least one horsepower, and that would mean a vessel capable of sustaining half a ton weight for the light alone. One thing all the witnesses of the phenomenon are positive of; that is that the searchlight was white, like that shed by an arc lamp.

"The inventor of the successful airship is Dr. E. H. Benjamin of San Francisco. It is, however, suspected that this is an assumed name to conceal the inventor's real identity. His attorney is C. W. Collins, a prominent lawyer with offices at rooms 21 and 22 Crocker building, San Francisco."

Describing the appearance of the phenomenon seen in Sacramento, the Journal said:

"On the evening of Tuesday, November 17, many citizens of Sacramento, California, were surprised by the sudden appearance, directly over the city, of a startling aerial craft. The peculiar night visitant made its appearance about 7 o'clock. People standing on the sidewalks saw coming through the sky, over the housetops, a huge and brilliant light, propelled swiftly by some mysterious force. So brilliant was the light that as it flashed past suburban residences the inmates went to their doors expecting to find a neighboring house in flames. Instead they saw a wonderful craft of the sky."

Throughout the Journal article the affirmation is made that what was seen was some craft in the sky, while every line that appeared in the Examiner poohpoohed the idea. The articles side by side show how unreliable the Examiner is in its handling of local news. Its real views appear in the Journal's account of the airship, while every line in the Examiner was written from the spirit of envy because it was originally beaten in the news.

As later evidence of the puerile, fantastic double-dealing of the Examiner of this City may be adduced the contradictory attitude of its local and editorial treatment of the "fake showmen's" airship, exposed in THE CALL. In the local columns this is treated as a solemn, incontrovertible fact, to be viewed by visitors to Twin Peaks. Turning over the page, an editorial says:

Two men in this city, apparently trying to turn the craze to financial account in the dime museum line, have just taken the trouble to build a forty-foot galvanized-iron "airship," and roll it down a hill, with the chance of flattening themselves under it.

Again, in the face of the straight newsgiving of THE CALL, and the warm championship of the airship by his New York Journal, Mr. Hearst in the Examiner of yesterday says, editorially:

"Fake journalism" has a good deal to answer for, but we do not recall a more discreditable exploit in that line than the persistent attempt to make the public believe that the air in this vicinity is populated with airships. It has been manifest for weeks that the whole airship story is a pure myth.

Shears and paste are cheap, and the Examiner, in its disgruntled envy caused by being outclassed in giving the news, might try to redeem itself by extracting some airship news from the columns of its Eastern supplement, the New York Journal.

Riverside Ca

Press and Horticulturist - Dec 12, 1896

THE AIRSHIP AGAIN.

Two Score People Saw It Sail Over Riverside Just Before Noon.

It will be difficult to convince a great many people in this city that they did not see the much-talked of airship a little before noon Thursday. Some of our most reputable and best known citizens are willing to take oath that they witnessed the unusual phenomenon and are ready to describe the aerial navigator in detail.

Singularly enough accounts differ as to the exact shape of the airship and the distance it was from the observers. This much all agree upon: The ship when first seen appeared to be over Market street, and was bearing away rapidly towards San Diego. It is variously described. One well-known gentleman declared the thing had immense wings and a propeller in its rear. It appeared to him to be about 10 miles off and was going at an incredible rate of speed. Another gentleman, who is prominent in business circles, asserted that the machine was an immense round affair, and was operated by some sort of mechanism in its interior anatomy. Smoke was seen issuing from a funnel in the top, and the ship appeared about two miles away. Officer Stanley thought it looked like a huge bird and was positive it was guided by "human intelligence."

Others saw it, and give accounts substantially like those reported.

Among those who witnessed the flight of the airship were the following: M. J. Twogood, Fred Worsley, Roy Strock, Dr. Brenneman, Officer Stanley and C. C. Birdsall.

Rupert Shaw almost saw it, and had he not tumbled over a small dog just as it disappeared over the Rowell hotel, (the ship, not the dog), his name would have been included in the above list.

With characteristic enterprise THE PRESS delegated 78 reporters to run the aerodome to earth and discover its inventor. They have been successful, and announce, notwithstanding protests on his part, that Dave Milan is the responsible party. The airship was a tissue paper balloon inflated with hot air. It was six feet in diameter, and rose to a height of 100 feet, and then sailed away towards Arlington Heights. That's all.

Press and Horticulturist - Dec 12, 1896

THE only well authenticated air ship that has been seen in San Francisco, outside the newspapers, came to grief on its trial voyage. The inventor and a companion carried it to one of the sand dunes out in the Mission section and essayed to fly from one hill to another. The machine started all right, but quickly took a tumble and landed in a ravine, between the two hills. The "ship" was greatly demoralized and the two navigators were thrown out and badly shaken up. This event has not been given great prominence in San Francisco papers or in the telegraphic reports sent out from that city, but it without doubt truthfully represents the present condition of aerial navigation in that section.

The San Francisco Call

SAN FRANCISCO, THURSDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 3, 1896.

THE AIRSHIP DESCRIBED BY FISHERMEN

Say That It Landed on the Beach Near Pacific Grove.

SEEN AT SHORT RANGE.

The Men Assert That They Conversed With the Three Aeronauts.

ABOUT SIXTY FEET IN LENGTH

The "Call" Correspondents Will Visit the Place To-Day for Corroborative Evidence.

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

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

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

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

NEAR PACIFIC GROVE.

Two Fishermen Say They Saw the Airship on the Ocean Beach.

PACIFIC GROVE, CAL., Dec. 2.—That the problem of navigating the air has at last been successfully solved there no longer remains a doubt.

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

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

During this time the persons who had so strangely appeared upon the scene were watching the actions of the fishermen, and upon the first signs of a successful landing one of the party advanced to meet them and warned them away from the spot where the ship was concealed. But Valinziano, who is a man of considerable intelligence, was not to be got rid of so easily, and engaged the aeronaut in conversation with the intention of learning as much as possible concerning the strange visitor. At first the man who had met them at the water's edge refused to answer any questions or allow the two fishermen to proceed further toward the spot where the ship was located, threatening to use force if necessary to prevent their doing so, but finally seeing that Valinziano and his companion were determined not to leave without obtaining at least a glimpse of the aerial traveler milder counsels prevailed.

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

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

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

While this conversation was being car-

Continued on Ninth Page.

AIRSHIP DESCRIBED BY FISHERMEN

[Continued from First Page.]

ried on his two companions were busily engaged in working about the ship, which the captain admitted was in need of repairs before they could continue on their journey.

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

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

Valinziano now thinks the purpose of the aeronauts was to detain him until it would be impossible for him to reach the city in time to give publicity to his discovery.

Wilson block, opposite the Nadeau, and had suddenly risen to a great height.

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

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

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

THEY SAW AN AIRSHIP.

Five Men Near Tulare Lake Witnessed Its Remarkable Flight.

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

San Francisco Call (Ca) Dec 4 1896

PRICE FIVE CENTS.

PLUNGED FROM A DIZZY HEIGHT

An Airship Lying Helpless on the Twin Peaks.

IT LANDED SUDDENLY IN A DITCH.

Two Men Come to Grief in a Forty-Foot Mystery.

IT IS RUN BY GAS AND ELECTRICITY.

Speculation as to Where It Came From—The Owners Very Reticent.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A STRANGE VISITOR.

Excitement Caused by the Landing of a Tin Ship Near the Almshouse.

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

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

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

In an interview Captain Reddy last night gave this narrative:

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

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

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

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

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

SAILED OVER LOS ANGELES

Three Strange Lights Seen Above the City of Angels.

BACK ON THEIR COURSE

Hart Tells Why His Client's Airship Takes to Great Altitudes.

S MUCH EASIER TO OPERATE

The Attorney Gives an Account of a Wonderful Electric Storage Battery.

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

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

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

Ex-Attorney-General W. H. H. Hart, the attorney for the inventor, while discussing the power that could be or is used for airships, made public some very interesting information regarding the new Fargo storage battery in which he is interested. He stated that the whole apparatus of a twenty-horsepower storage battery weighs only about 125 or 130 pounds. The receiving jars proper have been reduced to such a small compass that they weigh less than three pounds, and that a jar of this size can be charged from an ordinary incandescent light wire. Under such circumstances the master of an airship would have but little trouble in taking in "fuel" that would enable him to travel a great many miles. He could have his ship secreted in the hills, walk into any town along the route on which he might chose to travel, hire a room in a hotel, tap a wire, fill his soda bottles with chain lightning and resume his voyage through the upper air for another hundred miles or more.

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

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

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

WHY HE SAILS HIGH.

Attorney Hart Tells Why the Airship Is Taken Far From the Earth.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MADERA, 11—29—'96.

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

I shall fear no hing and will go anywhere and do anything my superiors may command or desire. It does not matter to any one if I am killed, as I have no ties. I have no family, relatives or persons relying upon me, and for that reason alone I should be sent. I will take any obligation as to secrecy, faithfulness, etc., and willingly answer with my life for it. High altitudes do not affect me. Please let me hear from you at your earliest convenience. Most respectfully, ——.

"Will you engage him?"

"I will not. I will hand his letter over to the inventor, and he will do with the proposition as he sees fit. I have no doubt but what, as he is related to the electrician of Maceo's army, all the arrangements were made as to the crew and other details before he came to this part of the continent. As I have said before, he came here to test his airship in the high altitudes, the lower heavier strata of air and the fogs from the ocean. He wanted to test it under ocean conditions. In the East the wind blows from the land to the sea, but here it blows in from the sea, and in an expedition over Cuba he

wants to be thoroughly familiar with ocean atmosphere. The last time I saw the inventor his purpose was to operate his ship in the high, dry atmosphere over the southern part of the State, and from the telegraphic accounts in THE CALL he must be there now with one of his airships. We are told that his lights have been seen by hundreds in Los Angeles County, and I have no idea that they were jack-o'-lanterns or fakes."

SEEN OVER LOS ANGELES.

The City Excited Over Bright Lights Apparently Under Some One's Control.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

San Francisco Call (Ca) Dec 8 1896

country.

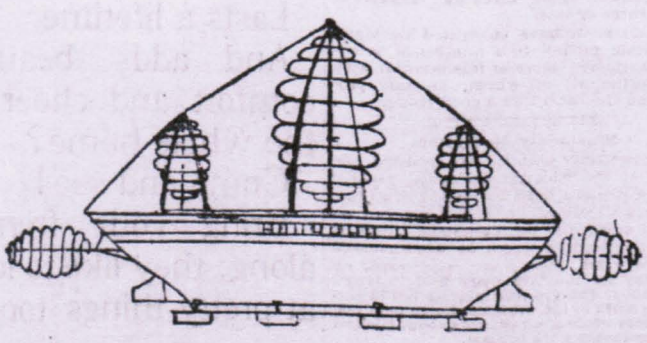
DESIGNED AN AIRSHIP.

Robert Nagler Dies Before His Plans Could Be Perfected.

Robert Nagler, a trussmaker at 410 Kearny street, died suddenly of apoplexy at 719 Market street last Sunday night, and the case was reported to the Coroner. Nagler was an inventor, and it was his hope to create an airship before his death. In fact, he had progressed so far in this direction as to have prepared plans and models of an airship on which he received letters patent from Washington. There was the element of originality in his ideas. His plans show a large ship-shaped vessel, operated by five large spiral propellers. Those on each end of his strange air craft were to give it its forwar flight.

On the deck he intended to have three tall masts, around which, from the top to the bottom, large light spiral propellers revolve. These were to assist the gas in the ship in lifting the structure. Rudders fore and aft were also designed.

Mr. Nagler also secured letters patent on the spiral propellers to be applied to ordinary ships, to take the place of the propellers now in use. He had worked on these ideas for several years. He was 75 years old and a native of Germany.



The Strange Air Craft Designed by Robert Nagle, Who Died Yesterday at an Advanced Age.