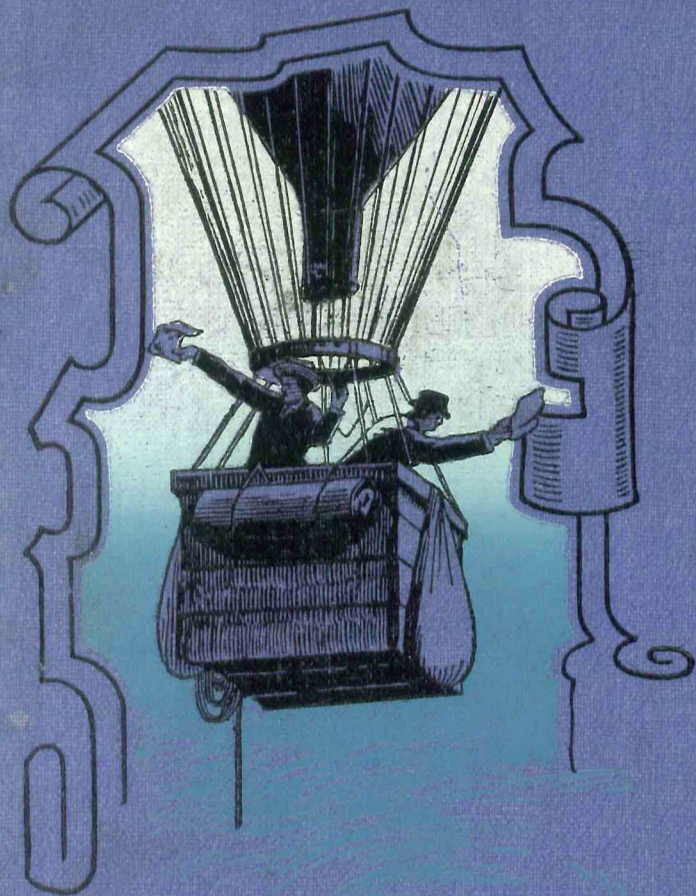
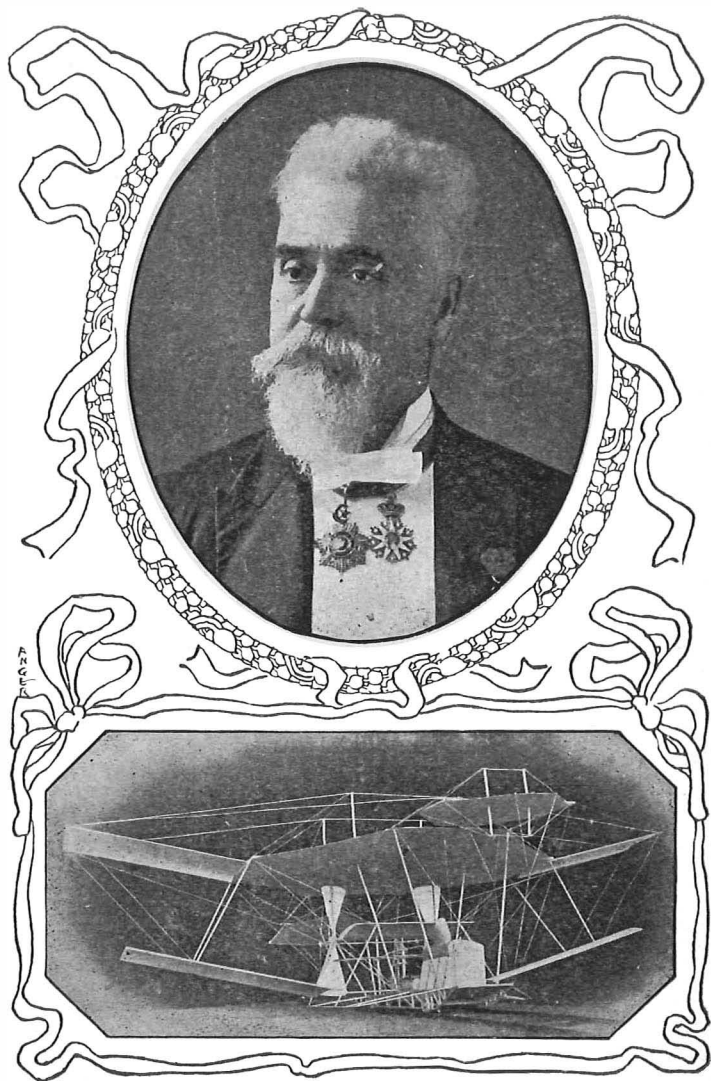


THE Conquest of the Air



PREFACE BY
SIR HIRAM S. MAXIM.



SIR HIRAM S. MAXIM AND HIS MACHINE.

THE
CONQUEST OF THE AIR

The Romance
OF
AERIAL NAVIGATION

BY
JOHN ALEXANDER

WITH PREFACE BY
SIR HIRAM S. MAXIM

FULLY ILLUSTRATED

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P R E F A C E.

DURING the last ten years, I have received innumerable letters relating to aerial navigation from all parts of the world. These letters for the most part have been written by people totally unacquainted with the first principles of the question involved. Still each and every one of them has his own particular plan, which to his mind is sure to succeed ; but unhappily the majority of these gentlemen are quite unprovided with the necessary means to exploit their inventions, and in the kindness of their hearts, they appeal to me, expressing themselves as not only willing to give me the controlling interest, but even in some cases the greater part of the glory, providing that I will furnish the necessary cash to develop their inventions.


Fully half of these inventors seem to have thought out a plan of performing mechanical flight by means of flying machines worked by man-power. They admit that their apparatus with a man to work it will weigh at least three hundred pounds, but they never appear to appreciate that in order to lift three hundred pounds directly into the air by mechanical effort, it would be necessary to expend at least three horse-power, or about thirty times as much power as a man is able to exert continuously for a single hour. The greater number of them seem to imagine that the power can be increased almost *ad infinitum*, providing that it is transmitted through a sufficient number of levers, and other mechanical movements.

Next in number to the hand flying-machine inventors come those who would navigate the air by cigar-shaped balloons, and although none of them have anything new to offer, they all write as though they were the first to conceive of this particular form of balloon.

Then we have a number of crank inventors who imagine that they have discovered a way of causing gravity to pull in the other direction, and a still less number who claim to have discovered how flying machines may be worked without any motive power at all, except by a system of springs, levers, and pistons, which to their mind gives a kind of an unbalanced pressure which will push the machine either upward or forward as may be desired.

All these gentlemen expect courteous replies to their epistles, and I have thought that it would be a good plan to publish a cheap, short, and concise treatise on flying machines and balloons, and then recommend each to purchase and read the work before writing to me a second time.

By a perusal of Mr. Alexander's work, I am happy to find the exact treatise that I had in my mind. In this little publication, we have in one hundred and sixty pages the whole history of the subject; in fact everything that is worth knowing, which although written in a short and concise manner is still very attractive, in a word the exact book that is required at the present moment; and I can recommend its careful perusal to everyone who is studying this much-discussed question.

Harriet S. Maxem


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