

From On the Phantom Air Ship Mystery

The Phantom Air Ship

One San Francisco dusk
One Miss Hegstrom saw
A glow in the sky

*

Brown
 mountainman
 morning hunting
Saw mistily
 an airship
 off the Ridge

*

In Sacramento hundreds
And the mayor's daughter
Saw a huge radiant oblong ovoid

With propellers or fan-wheels
And gondolas sweep the sky
And the city with searchlights

Riding into the wind
Rising and falling
Like a ship on high seas

*

...one of the greatest hoaxes ever sprung on any community...

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Strange Tale of Sacramento Men Not Addicted to Prevarication
Viewed an Aerial Courser as It Passed Over the City at Night
Declare They Heard Voices of Those Aboard Join in Merry Chorus

Don't fly too high or we'll be late!
San Francisco by midnight!
Lift her up quick we're making for the steeple!

Over Oakland then crossing the bay
An air ship with wings and propellers
Green and red lamps joined two others

Over Twin Peaks near Mission
Or so said deputies professors lawyers
Newspaper editors and prominent citizens

The Mysterious Flying Light That Hovered Over St Mary's College
Then Started for San Francisco is Exactly Like That Described
By Sacramentans and Similar to the Cut Published in *The Call*
From a Description Furnished by One Who Saw It

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A letter to *The Sacramento Bee* 24 November 1896

The Lord Commissioner of Mars has evidently sent one of this electric aircraft on an exploring expedition to the younger and larger worlds.

The airships are constructed of the lightest and strongest fabrics and the machinery is of the most perfect electrical work.

Aluminium and glass, hardened by the same chemical process that forms our diamonds, contribute the chief material of their most perfect airships.

When in use, these vessels, at a distance, have the appearance of a ball of fire, being operated wholly by the electric current generated on such vessels.

The speed of our Martian ships is very great, and can be regulated to the rapidity of a thousand miles a second.

In fact, with the Martian inventions, space is almost annihilated. These aerial craft can so adopt their courses that when they desire to, they anchor within certain degrees of latitude and wait for the revolution of the earth to bring any locality desired nearer without the necessity of navigation.

(signed) W. A.

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A hook from one
 caught an Iowa farmer
Carried him
 quite a ways too
Lucky for him his windmill caught
 and twisted the line
 leaving him hanging there

*

...Venus, now twenty-seven million miles away, has been taken by credulous correspondents for a fully equipped air ship, cruising about among the clouds. With more imagination than astronomy, they have telegraphed stories describing our nearest neighbor as an air ship, spying for fortifications. Friday night, one family sighted the strange craft by its brilliant headlight. Word passed from mouth to mouth, and , last evening, hundreds of citizens viewed the sky with awe, and the question on every lip was: "Have you seen the airship?" It disappeared before ten...

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High over Omaha and Denver
A bright light northwest cruised
About the stars