

TORPEDO AIRSHIP CONTROLLED BY WIRELESS IS THE LATEST INVENTION

THE torpedo airship is the latest. An Englishman, Thomas Raymond Phillips, is its inventor. He claims to be able, sitting at a transmitter in London, to send a dirigible balloon through the air at any height and almost any distance. He can load his balloon with dynamite bombs, he claims, and without leaving his office can send it over a city and wipe the city out.

"I can," says Mr. Phillips, "sit in an armchair in London and make my airship drop a bunch of flowers into a friend's garden in Manchester or Paris or Berlin."

But it is not for the dropping of flowers that he intends his invention. It is for the dropping of dynamite bombs. He has offered it to the British Government, which is about to investigate it.

The Phillips airship would really be a torpedo, but differing from the torpedo of the sea in that after being used it could be called back, reloaded, and used again as often as desired. It could be poised over a town or an army or a battleship. By the pressure of a lever miles away it could discharge its terrible cargo at the right spot and return home. At least such is the claim made for it by its inventor.

He exhibited it a few days ago at the London Hippodrome. Grahame White, deeply interested, was one of those who watched his demonstration.

Mr. Phillips is a Liverpool consulting engineer. He claims for his invention that by means of the wireless transmission of electric power, he can make it ascend or descend, turn to the right or left, and go forward or backward, fast or slow. He can make it stop dead over any selected spot, and, by simply touching a lever, can release the spring of a box carried on the frame, and drop explosives on whatever lies beneath.

He claims that his principle can be applied with as much success to man-lifting airships and aeroplanes as he applied it to a large model of a dirigible balloon, when he gave his demonstration in the London Hippodrome.

Grahame White was fascinated with the invention, and spent an hour and a half in conversation with the inventor, questioning, testing, and, finally, to his own obvious delight, manipulating the transmitter himself, and causing the balloon to manoeuvre to and fro in midair over the auditorium.

It was at this demonstration that Mr. Phillips made the remark about dropping a bunch of flowers in a garden in another city. As he made it he stood on the stage of the London Hippodrome, his fingers playing lightly over the keys of a complicated electrical apparatus that

stood on a table in front of him. The keys, save that they were blank, looked much like those of a typewriter. But every time he pressed one there was a whirring, crackling noise, and a jagged blue streak shot from each of two brass knobs toward a metal globe about the size of a tangerine orange that stood midway between them.

Suspended in midair over the body of the auditorium hung a twenty-foot model of a Zeppelin dirigible. In itself the thing looked harmless enough. As Mr. Phillips left the keyboard of the transmitter and turned to speak to some one standing near, it hung almost motionless until a faint eddy caught it and drifted it slowly sideways toward the wall of the upper circle. It looked like a toy balloon at the mercy of any gust of wind—purposeless, slow, and unwieldy.

And then, suddenly—Cr-r-rack! Mr. Raymond Phillips had touched a lever, and the airship sprang into life. Nothing had touched it—nothing, that is, that could be seen by the eye of any human being—and yet at that touch and at the sound of that compelling "Cr-r-rack!" the airship model awoke and became a purposeful thing.

"Crack, crack!" again and again. Running his fingers from one key to another he stopped it dead, turned it about, made it rise and fall, made it turn figures of eight in the air, and finally stopped it

Thomas R. Phillips, Who Made It, Claims to Control a Dirigible Balloon Loaded with Bombs Without Leaving His Office.

again, motionless in the air, forty feet above the orchestra stalls.

"Now," said he, "just imagine that row of seats is a row of houses, and that instead of a model, with paper toys in its hold, I am controlling a full-sized airship carrying a cargo of dynamite bombs. Watch!"

He pressed another key. There was a faint click from the framework of the airship, and the bottom of the box that hung amidships fell like a trapdoor, releasing, not bombs, but a flight of paper birds, that fluttered gracefully down on the seats beneath. "There!" said the inventor, with a note of finality, and he turned away to answer a shower of questions.

There was a buzz and murmur of conversation. Then, suddenly, silence. Down one of the empty gangways walked a tall, lean figure of a young man making his way toward the stage. Grahame White had come to see the wonderful invention in which a man might fly from London

to Manchester and back without lifting a finger to steer for himself.

In a moment the greatest English aviator was on the stage, and in another he was deep in conversation with the inventor. He was skeptical—one could see it at

a glance; and he asked a host of penetrating questions. How fast could the thing fly? How many motors would be needed to apply the principle to an aeroplane? Would they be petrol motors or electric ones? What was the steering

principle, and how could the operator be sure that it would work?

Mr. Phillips smiled, and went again to his keyboard. At his command the inert gasbag became once more a thing of life. It explored the auditorium—from stalls to gallery. It nosed its way into a private box and out again. It soared contemptuously over the orchestra, and then up toward the skylight.

"Turn it to the left," suggested Mr. White, deeply interested. At the crack of command the docile model turned abruptly lefthanded and explored the recesses of the upper circle.

"Now bring it nearer," he requested,

and in a moment it was standing with its round nose barely a yard from his chest.

"This—this is wonderful!" said the young aviator, and he begged to be allowed to manipulate the transmitter for himself. Mr. Phillips had no objection.

"The two propellers in front," he said, "are for steering and general control. I use no rudder. The steering propellers move on an arm pivoted at right angles to the frame. If I want the airship to turn to the right, I press the button connected with the motor of the right-hand propeller. The propeller revolves, the arm turns to the right, and the body of the airship follows. Of course, I can keep it on a straight course with both propellers revolving as long as I like.

"To ascend or descend I set in motion the two propellers fixed horizontally on the framework. The complicated structure in the middle of the frame is the wireless receiver and controller, and at the end of the frame are the accumulators. The frame is fitted with tiny electric light bulbs. By pressing another key I can light the airship up."

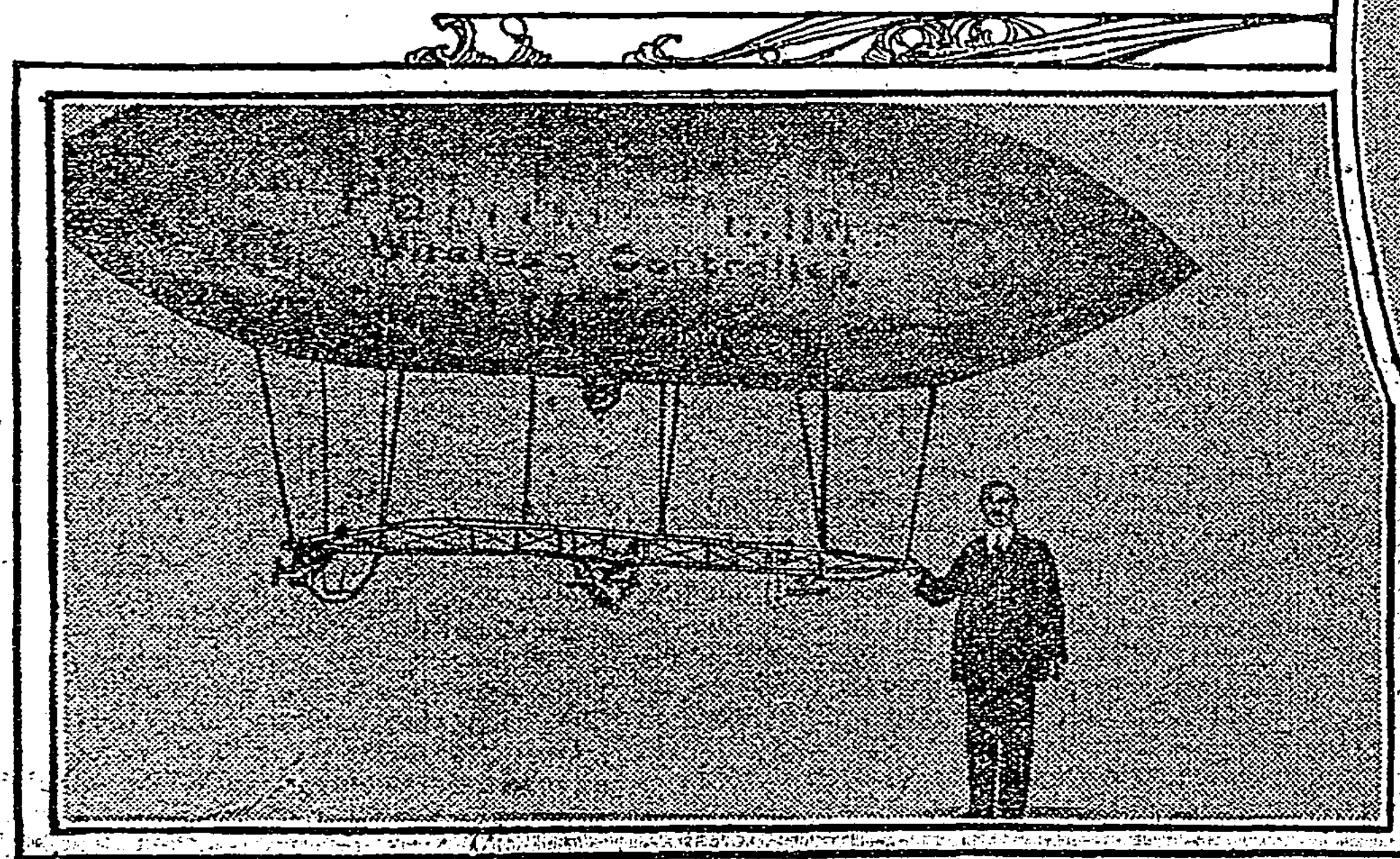
He suited the action to the word, and tiny points of light sprang out on the frame of the model sailing in the air eighty feet from the stage. By rapid manipulation of the keyboard he caused these lights to wink and vanish again and again, till one could fancy that the airship was manned by a crew of busy elves. "How can you tell when your airship is just over the town you purpose to destroy?" asked some one.

Mr. Phillips replied that he might work with a large scale map in front of him. Or possibly he might fit each airship with a telephotographic lens, which, being in rapport with a reflector placed before the operator, would show him the country over which the airship flew.

"Of course," he said, "my invention is primarily a warlike one. I think it will do away altogether with existing methods of warfare. Every time a big naval gun is fired £300 is spent. But for £300 I can make, equip, and dispatch to any distance three wirelessly controlled airships carrying huge quantities of explosives.

"Again, the discharge of a torpedo means the expenditure of £600. The torpedo may or may not hit its mark, but in either case it is usually gone beyond recovery, whereas I can bring back my aerial torpedoes as soon as they have done their work, load them with a fresh cargo of bombs, and send them out again.

"I offer my invention to the British Government, whose official representatives will inspect it in a day or two, because I want England to have command of the air just as she has command of the sea."



The Wireless-Controlled Airship.



Address Lighted by Wireless.



Thomas Raymond Phillips, the Inventor.