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Turgenev Wallace Fonatne Sydon Freud Schlegel  
Twain Walther von der Vogelweide Fouqué Friedrich II. von Preußen  
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# **The Aeroplane Boys Flight A Hydroplane Roundup**

John Luther Langworthy

# Imprint

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**THE AEROPLANE BOYS FLIGHT**

**Or A Hydroplane Roundup**

By  
**JOHN LUTHER LANGWORTHY**

**1914**



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# THE AEROPLANE BOYS FLIGHT

## Or A Hydroplane Roundup

### CHAPTER I

#### THE BOY FLIERS

"It was my mistake, Frank!"

"How do you make that out, Andy?"

"Simply because I was using the little patent Bird monkey-wrench last in our shop, and should have put it back in the toolbox belonging to the aeroplane. The fact that it isn't here shows that I mislaid it. Give me a bad mark, Frank."

"Well, I must say it's a queer stunt for you to forget anything, Andy Bird. But with dark coming along, and home some miles away, it's plain that we'll have to let the mending of that wing go till morning."

"But do you think, Frank, it's just safe to leave our pet hydroplane over night in this field on the Quackenboss farm?"

"Why not, Andy? Sky as clear as a bell; little or no wind promised; and then we can hire the farm hand, Felix Boggs, to keep an eye on it. Looks as easy as falling off a log."

"And all because I didn't put that little wrench where it belonged! Kick me, won't you, please, cousin; I deserve it."

"Well, I guess not. Didn't I make just as bad a break last week? I guess now, no boy's perfect. And I don't mind the walk home a bit. Fact is, it ought to do us both good, because we don't stretch our legs enough, as it is."

"You're the boss chum, Frank!"

"Then you're another. See what you get for calling me names. But when you've fastened down that plane so it can't get into trouble, if the wind should rise in the night, perhaps we'd better be hunting up this Felix Boggs, and then start for home.

"Well, I'm glad we'll get there in the night-time, Frank, even if the moon does happen to be nearly full."

"What makes you say that, Andy?"

"Because, when an aviator leaves his wounded machine in a field, and walks home, it makes him feel like a dog with his tail between his legs, sneaking along back of the fences."

Frank Bird laughed merrily at the picture drawn by his cousin and then stooping again, with a few deft turns of a heavy cord, helped Andy secure the broken plane so it would not get into trouble during the coming night.

After which the two boys headed toward the barns belonging to the farm, which just showed their tops above the adjacent rise.

While they are walking there it may be a good time for us to introduce the pair of young aviators to such readers as have not had the good fortune to meet them in previous volumes of this series of stories.

The cousins lived in the town of Bloomsbury, a thriving place situated on the southern shore of Sunrise Lake, which was a magnificent body of water, said to be nearly seventeen miles long by three wide, in places.

This lake having hilly shores that were heavily wooded in spots, and with numerous fine coves, afforded grand sport to the young people of Bloomsbury, both winter and summer.

The railroad skirted one shore and then passed through the town. Some miles off arose a lofty peak known as Old Thundertop, which had a road running part way up its side. The summit was believed to be utterly inaccessible to mortal man until one day the Bird boys managed to accomplish the wonderful feat by the aid of their aeroplane.

They had been spending all their spare time, when not in school, working upon the line that seemed to have a strange fascination for

them. Frank's father was one of the best known doctors in town, a man of considerable means, and with a firm faith in his boys, so that he was easily convinced whenever Frank wished to do anything.

Andy had been living with his guardian for some time, until the return of his own father, Professor Bird, who had been lost while attempting a difficult balloon trip in Central America, and found in a most miraculous way by the two boys as told in a previous story.

Andy had inherited the passion which his father, a noted professor, had always had for navigating the air. It was a favorite expression of his "A bird by any other name would fly as high," and his cousin would retort: "A Bird takes to the air just as naturally as a duck does to water."

They had been doing some fine "stunts" during the last year or two; and it may be supposed that the people of Bloomsbury were more than a little proud of seeing the name of their town mentioned so favorably in the papers in connection with the doings of the Bird boys.

Of course, as is always the case, there was a rival in the field, who had been the cause of much trouble in the past, and still watched their work with an envious eye. This was a boy by the name of Percy Shelley Carberry, rather a bold fellow too, and as smart as they make them, only unscrupulous as to the means he employed by which to gain his ends.

Percy was the only son of a rich widow, who could never refuse him anything he demanded; and with unlimited cash at his disposal he had been able to do quite a few feats himself that might have gained him more or less fame, only that they were eclipsed by the accomplishments of Frank and Andy; and that was where the shoe pinched with Percy.

His temper was one of his weak spots, also a liking for fast life, which, of course included tippling; and the aviator who indulges to the slightest degree in strong drink is next door to a fool; for as he takes his life in his hands every time he leaves the ground, the necessity for a clear brain is apparent.

In most of his tricky work young Carberry had for a boon companion one "Sandy" Hollingshead, a sinewy chap, whose most

prominent trait was his faculty for disappearing suddenly in a pinch. He was considerable of a boaster, but could always invent a most remarkable excuse for going before the storm broke. But Percy, no coward himself, knew how to make use of his sly crony; and despite their numerous quarrels, that often ended in actual fights, the pair of precious tricksters still kept company together.

Sandy was freckled had pale eyes and very blonde hair, that gave him a queer look. Those eyes never could look any one straight in the face, but shifted uneasily; and other boys said that Sandy, the cigarette smoker, was always on the watch for a quick "getaway."

The Bird boys, of course, had many friends among the lads of Bloomsbury; but only two who were close enough to be admitted freely to the workshop on the grounds of Frank's father's place, where the young inventors worked out many of their lofty ideas.

These were Larry Geohegan, and a small runt who had been called "Elephant" by his companions in a spirit of sport, and could not shake the name. His full name was Fenimore Cooper Small, and as a rule he had always been rather timid. But Elephant was always having queer ideas in which he believed fully himself; but which were nearly always jeered at by more practical Larry.

The two Bird boys had been out on this afternoon, trying some new arrangement in connection with their hydroplane, when they met with an accident when attempting to land on the Quackenboss farm, to make some changes they saw were needed, to improve the working of the machine.

Neither of them had been even scratched, but a certain amount of damage had befallen one of the planes, which might have been remedied on the spot in time to allow them to get back home easily, only for the unfortunate fact that just when they needed a monkey wrench the worst kind, it was discovered to be missing; perhaps the only occasion when such a thing had happened with the boys.

"I just saw somebody go into the barn there," remarked Frank, as they approached the large outbuildings connected with the successful farm of Josiah Quackenboss.

"Yes, and it was the farmer himself," added Andy. "I know him pretty well; and I guess you do too, because your father brought his

little boy around when everybody thought he didn't have a single chance to get well. I don't believe we'll have any trouble getting Felix Boggs to look after our machine tonight, Frank."

They quickly reached the door of the barn and could hear the steady fall of the streams of milk passing into the buckets as the farmer and his hired hand pursued the regular business of the evening.

As the two boys entered, the half grown boy started up with an exclamation of alarm, for of course both Andy and Frank looked rather queer. Each of them had on a white woolen hood that fitted close to head and shoulders, for the air in the upper currents was very cold these days, and secured to this were goggles to protect the eyes, so that they would not water and dim the vision of the aviator at just a critical instant when they needed clear sight. Then they also wore warm colored mackinaw jackets, so that altogether Felix had reason to be startled when two such "sights" suddenly entered the barn. Why, even the gentle cows showed evidence of nervousness, and came near upsetting the milk buckets.

"Hello, Mr. Quackenboss!" called out Andy, cheerfully; "we're the Bird boys, and we've dropped in on you without an invitation. The fact is, we had a little trouble with our aeroplane, and landed in your field. How much rent will you charge us, Mr. Quackenboss; to let our machine lie there over night? It needs a little fixing which we can't do until morning."

Of course Andy was joking when he said this, and the farmer knew it as well as anything. He laughed as he came around out of the stall and offered his rough hand to each of the boys.

"How are you, Andy and Frank Bird?" he said, hearty. "Say, you did give us a little start when we first saw you. D'ye know what I thought boys? Why, I was just reading in the county paper about how the bank up at Jasper was robbed by two men last week. It told how they had their faces hid back of red handkerchiefs, just like they always do out West, you know. And first thing I sighted you two, my heart nigh about jumped up in my mought, because I thought them yeggs had dropped around to see if I'd collected my monthly milk accounts in town. And about leavin' your aeroplane in my field, why, there's little that I wouldn't do for the son of the

man who saved my Billie, when everybody said he'd never get well again."

"We thought you might let us show Felix here where the aeroplane lies, and that we could arrange with him to kind of keep an eye on it tonight. Of course, there isn't one chance in a thousand that anything'd happen to injure it; but then that machine represents a heap of hard work, and considerable money besides, so we don't care to take chances with it.

"Sure he can, just as well as not, eh, Felix? Suppose you go out right now, and I'll finish the milking. In the morning I want to take a look at that contraption myself. I've seen you boys sailing around more'n a little, but never got close up to examine the aeroplane. Well, I guess all the money going couldn't tempt me to go with one of you. Skip along, Felix, now."

And the farm hand, a heavy-set boy, eagerly fell in behind Frank and Andy, as, after thanking Mr. Quackenboss heartily for his kindness they passed out of the barn. Felix considered this an event in the tame routine of farm life; and would be only too glad to stay up all night, if necessary, in order to guard the precious aeroplane.

Once in the field, the boys explained to Felix what they wanted him to do, and he promised not to meddle with anything connected with the engine or the aeroplane itself.

They were passing back again toward the barns, having left their prized possession in good shape, when Andy uttered a sudden exclamation that told of both surprise and disgust.

"What's the matter now?" asked Frank, who had been talking with Felix, and was hence not so wide awake as his chum.

"Just take a look over there, and see what's stopped on the road," remarked Andy.

"Seems to be a car, and I can see two heads raised above the top rail of the fence, as if the people in it had sighted our aeroplane sprawled out there in the field, and were wondering what sort of giant insect it could be," Frank went on.

"Look closer, Frank," the other boy went on to say, while his disgust deepened; "and you'll discover that the two fellows in that car

happen to be Percy Carberry and his shadow, Sandy Hollingshead. Did you ever hear of such tough luck? Of all the boys in Bloomsbury they are the last we'd want to know that we'd left our new hydroplane out, unguarded, all night, in an open field. Guess I won't go home tonight, Frank. I'd rather camp out here with Felix. You let my folks know, and turn up in the morning with a new piece for that plane. That's settled and you can't change it."

## CHAPTER II

### ON GUARD

"Perhaps I'd better stay with you, Andy," the other Bird boy remarked.

"No need of it," replied Andy, resolutely. "Besides, you know one of us ought to get busy in the shop, making that new piece we really need so that our job won't have to be done over again. You go, Frank. Perhaps Mr. Quackenboss would let you have a horse; or if you cared to, you give Percy a hail, and he'd take you back to town, I reckon. Goodness knows he owes you a heap, after the way you saved his life the time he was wrecked up on Old Thundertop."

What Andy referred to was a very exciting event which had occurred not so very long before, and which was fully treated in the volume preceding this.

Frank shook his head in the negative.

"I never want to ask any favor of Percy Carberry," he said, resolutely. "And if Mr. Quackenboss can't let me have a horse to ride, why, the walking is good, and I can make it in less than an hour. So don't mention that again please, Andy."

"It's too late now, anyhow," remarked the other, drily, "because there they go, spinning down the road like wildfire. Percy never does anything except in a whirl. He's as bold as they make them, and the only wonder to me is that he hasn't met with a terrible accident before now. But somehow he seems to escape, even when he smashes his flier to kindling wood. His luck beats the Dutch; he believes in it himself, you know."

"But some day it's going to fail, and then he'll never what happened to him," declared Frank. "Of all the professions in the world, that of a flying machine man is the one where a cool head and quick judgment are the things most needed. And the fellow who takes great chances, depending on his good luck, is bound to meet up with trouble. But if you are bound to stay, Andy, I'd better be off."

Upon entering the barn they found that the farmer had finished his task, and was pitching some new sweet hay to the cows.

Frank suggested hiring a horse from him, but Mr. Quackenboss scoffed at the idea.

"You're as welcome to the use of my saddle hoss as the sunlight is after a spell of rain," he said, heartily. "Here, Felix, get Bob out; and you'll find my new saddle hanging on that peg back of the harness room door. And as for Andy, who's going to stay over with us, we'll find a chair for him at the supper table, and only hope hell tell us some of the many things you two have gone through with, both around this region, and away down in South America, that time you found the lost Professor."

Inside of five minutes Frank was in the saddle, and waving his hand to his chum and cousin, of whom he was more fond than if Andy had been his own brother.

"He'd be back tonight with the part we need, and we could make home in the moonlight," said Andy, as, with the farmer he headed for the house; "only both of us have promised our folks not to travel at night-time when it can be helped. Even if the moon is bright there's always a risk about landing, because it's a tricky light at the best, and even a little mistake may wreck things. And so Frank will work in the shop tonight, and be along in the morning."

Once in the farmhouse Andy was given a chance to wash up, and then met the housewife, as well as little Billie, the small chap whose life good Doctor Bird had saved. Mrs. Quackenboss proved to be a very warm-hearted woman, and any one who answered to the name of Bird could have the very best that the place afforded. There was never a night that she did not call down the blessings of heaven upon the physician who had been instrumental in preventing her darling Billie from being taken away.

The table was fairly groaning under the weight of good things to eat, for when company comes the average farmer's wife never knows when to stop bringing out the most appetizing things to eat ever seen.

"Perhaps I'm the luckiest fellow going to be able to stay overnight with you, Mrs. Quackenboss," laughed Andy, as he sat down to the generous spread.

"Well, you know, we never like anybody to get up from our table hungry," she explained.

"The chances are that I won't be able to get up at all, for if I try to taste half I see here, I'll be foundered, as sure as anything," Andy went on to say.

The farmer was not going to allow much time to pass talking about common every-day topics. Those might do all very well when he had ordinary guests; but when fortune sent him one of the now famous Bird boys for company, he wanted to listen to some thrilling accounts of adventures that had come the way of the young and daring aviators, from the time they built their first aeroplane, after purchasing most of the parts, and found that they had an immediate rival in Percy Carberry.

Andy was willing to oblige, and kept those at the table, including the farm hand, Felix Boggs, thrilled with his stories. But the farmer could not help but notice how modest the boy was, giving most of the credit to his cousin Frank, when everybody about Bloomsbury knew that Andy deserved just as much credit, if not more, than the other Bird Boy.

After supper Andy and Felix prepared to go out to where the hydroplane lay. They meant to take blankets along, and make themselves as comfortable as possible for a night's vigil.

Andy would not have dreamed of doing this only for the fact that he knew Percy and his shadow, Sandy, were aware of the plight of the precious flier. And while Frank was inclined to partly believe that the Carberry boy might let up in his mischief-making ways for awhile at least, after all they had done for him up on Old Thunder-top, Andy could not bring himself to trust the other further than he could see him. He believed that the nature of Percy was so "rotten" as he called it, that, given a chance to injure his successful rivals, he would shut his eyes to all sense of gratitude, and just lie awake nights trying to get the better of them, by fair means or foul.

Andy also knew that the other was particularly chagrined, because he did not know what manner of a new flier the Bird boys had in hand now. He had resorted to various expedients in order to find out, but all without success.

On this account, if no other, then, Andy believed that the others would be apt to come out here during the night to examine the hydroplane with the aluminum pontoons under its body for floating on the water; and perhaps to slyly injure it in such a fashion that it would break down when next Frank and Andy mounted into the air.

It happened that they had alighted close to one corner of the big field, though in plain view from the pike. Andy had noted a clump of trees conveniently near, and already his mind was made up that he and Felix would camp there, to pass the night in alternately keeping watch and ward over the precious aeroplane that lay there like a wounded bird.

Felix was quivering with eagerness. This was like a picnic in the humdrum life of the farm hand. Except when the circus came to town, or there was a Harvest Home day, poor Felix knew little beyond the eternal grind of getting up before dawn, and working until long after sunset.

First of all, Andy walked around the stranded aeroplane, and took occasion to explain how it worked, using as simple language as he could find, because Felix was not at all up in professional terms, and would not have understood, had the other spoken as he might have done when talking with a fellow aviator.

Then they sought the trees, and spreading their heavy blankets so as to make as comfortable a seat as possible, started to talk in low tones.

The bright moon hung there in the sky, and it seemed as though every foot of the big meadow could be scrutinized just as well as in the daytime; but Andy knew from experience how deceptive moonlight can be, and how cautious one has to be when trying any difficult feat at such a time.

"I've heard people talk about reading by moonlight, and how they could tell a friend half a mile away," he remarked to Felix; "but let me say that it's all a humbug. There never was a brighter night than this, I reckon you'll agree with me, Felix; and yet look at that stump not a stone's throw away; you couldn't say now whether it was a

cow lying down, a horse, a rock, or a stump, which last I take the thing to be. Am I right about that."

"Why, sure's I live, that ere is a fact, Andy," replied the other; "but I never'd a thought it. Moonlight fools a feller the worst kind. I throwed a stone at a whippoor-will as was perched on the roof a-keepin' us all awake nights, and would yuh believe me, she went right through the winder of the attic, kersmash. Never was more surprised in my life. And you don't ketch me heavin' stones by moonlight agin."

From one subject they drifted to another. Andy even told more or less about how Percy Carberry had hated and envied them in the past, and how often he had tried to do them a serious injury.

"Frank seems to think he will give up that mean sort of play, because we really saved his life that time we had our race to the rock on the summit of Old Thundertop, and his aeroplane was smashed there; so one of us had to carry Percy and Sandy home, bruised as they were. But I don't, because I know it'd take more than that to change the spots of a fellow of his kind. And chances are, Felix, we'll find those two boys sneaking up here before the middle of the night."

"Wish't they would," chuckled the farm hand. "You're ready to give 'em a warm time of it, I guess, Andy. Be as good as any old circus to me, just to see how they jump when you open up. Let 'em come, says I. The sooner the better, too."

Long they lay there, and talked in low tones. Felix wanted to make the best of this glorious chance. A new world seemed to open up to the farm hand, as he heard of the wonderful things the Bird boys had seen, and taken part in. Perhaps ambition was beginning to awaken in the boy's soul, and he might not after this be so satisfied to plod along in the same old rut every day of the year. Perhaps the seed thus sown might take root, and bring him either great good or harm, as the tide of fortune chose.

"We heard as how a feller was up there to watch you boys fly not a great while ago, Andy," he went on to say; "an' he was so took by the way you managed things that he wanted to get you to go in