

BESSIE BUSYBODY AT THE SEAT OF WAR



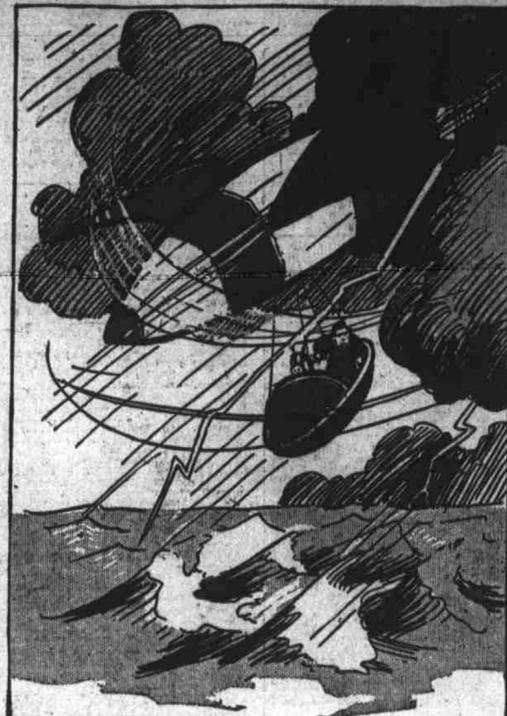
1—I GUESS I MUST BE a regular "Busybody" like my name says, for when I see anything curious I jes' can't help from trying my best to find out what it means. I saw a funny-looking Japanese man hurrying toward the woods to-day, carrying some heavy things like cannon balls. So, of course, I jes' followed him.



2—I LOST SIGHT OF HIM when he went among the trees, but a little later I ran smack up against him. He was just climbing into a funny little thing like a boat that was tied to a big balloon bag overhead. When he saw I had discovered his secret he acted up awful. Jes' pointed a revolver in my face and made me climb in with him.



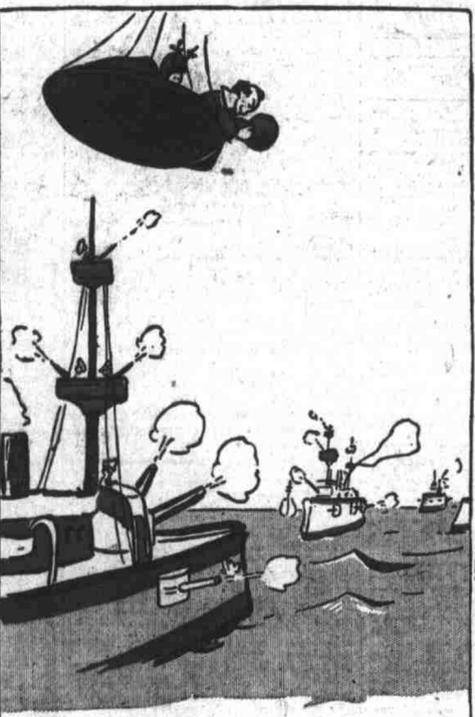
3—I WASN'T SORRY afterwards, for the balloon ship began to rise up in the air right away. The earth just dropped right out from under us, and then it began to turn slowly. That was because we were moving along over it so fast. I asked the Jap where we were going, and he said "Japan War!"



4—O, CHEE! GOING TO SEE a real war, and in an airship, too! Wasn't that scrumptious? But it wasn't so funny when we bumped into a whoppin' big thunder storm. I went in the cabin, and when the lightning flashed the Jap looked so frightened I thought he would drop dead. He sent the ship shooting up higher and higher until we got above the storm.



5—THEN I ASKED HIM why he was so skeered at the lightning. He stooped down and opened a trap door, and there was a whole lot of cannon balls and long things like fire crackers. "Dynamite!" he said, softly. "Lightning strike, we go 'boom!' All over! I drop dynamite on Russian Warship—him say 'boom!' all over." Aha, I saw the whole thing now.



6—WE HAD A DANDY SAIL over the Pacific Ocean, and in a very short time passed the Philippines. Soon after we sighted a fleet of warships with the Russian cross on their flag. This tickled the Jap, and he jes' couldn't wait until he was straight over the biggest one of them. Then that fleet went crazy. They tried to shoot at us, but couldn't aim their guns high enough.



7—THE JAP OPENED the magazine and got one of the bombs, held it over the edge a minute, and then it dropped through the air. A tiny splash in the water showed how far he missed. But he got his range and dropped another. There was a great mountain of water shot up almost to us. It was all sprinkled with fragments of the battleship. You ought to see the other ships skedaddle when we hoisted the Jap flag.



8—WELL, SIR, THAT JAPANESE jes' blew four or five of those ships to tiny bits. He had already lighted the fuse on another bomb when he saw the Japanese fleet coming on the scene. The Russians were skimming away as fast as they could go, and it was a great sight to see 'em skimming along. You bet they were more skeered of our Jap up in the air than of the whole fleet behind 'em.



9—WE LEANED 'WAY OVER the side to watch the chase, and I guess the Jap forgot all about the bomb in his hand, for I heard something heavy bang down in the bottom of the airship. In his joy at seeing the fleet of his own flag come on the scene he had forgotten it. He dropped the bomb in the bottom of the airship, right over the magazine. He just gave it one look, then shrieked: "Jump for your life!"



10—THEN HE DOVE headlong over the rail. There was a series of screams as he turned over and over, and I caught sight of him just before he splashed into the sea. Well, sir, he must have been a tough one, for in a minute or two his head appeared and he started to swim toward a Jap ship that was coming to his rescue. I heard something sputter inside the boat.



11—GREAT HEAVENS! It was the bomb! Like a flash I jumped down, snatched out the fuse and tossed the dangerous thing overboard. But there wasn't much fuse left, and we would have had a high old blow out up there in about seven seconds longer.



12—BUT WHAT WAS I to do now! I had seen how the Jap ran the airship, but he never let me try. I wanted to follow him and give him back his ship, but I didn't know how. I monkeyed with the levers and went plunging around through the air like a skyrocket. Well, I had a wazy time before I got it under control, and I may tell more about my adventures in it some other time.

—Bessie Busybody