

Carter, J.L.J. (1910) *Peggy the Aeronaut*

**Compton Irving Carter (1910)  
*Peggy the Aeronaut.***



*Carter's story, Peggy the Aeronaut, was dedicated to Colonel H. S. Massy, founder and first president of the Aerial League of the British Empire, and introduced by Major B. S. Baden Powell, another propagandist for the air weapon. Powell claimed that, as today's fiction is tomorrow's fact, the British public must be 'goaded on to realise what they have to face in the near future'. Hence his endorsement of this predictive novel. The story concerns Peggy — a female aviator — and her friend Justin, inventor of an advanced fighting aeroplane armed with quick-firing guns. As the inventor says, 'With this aircraft, dirigibles and dreadnoughts are out of date. Government inaction has allowed Germany to draw ahead in the air race, and now Britain is at risk: 'As long ago as 1909, the Secretary for War assured the Country that dirigibles and aeroplanes were to be purchased ... Yet nothing was done .... That lightly given assurance was the Government's answer to the steady activities of France, Germany and Russia. ' Unwisely, according to the author, air matters in Britain had been left to the military and the Navy, neither of whom understood the new weapon; nor had sufficient funds for experimentation been provided (like many Aerial League members, the author believed that aeronautics warranted its own independent service). Consequently, when a German air fleet hovers over London and demands that the British surrender, the government, having overspent on obsolete battleships, are dependent upon private enterprise to save the nation. However, Peggy and Justin bomb the enemy airships, destroying some and forcing the others back across the North Sea. The author's final recommendation is that Britain must invest in an aerial fleet for defence: but aeroplanes, not dirigibles, which he believed would be too vulnerable in time of war. [Michael Paris (1992) *Winged Warfare*]*

**Other posts of possible interest:**

Le Queux, W. (1916) *The Zeppelin Destroyer*

Wells, H.G. (1908) *The War in the Air*

Le Queux, W. (1920) *The Terror of the Air*

Kipling, A.W. (1910) *The Shadow of Glory*