

A Large Sized "If."

Lieutenant J. K. Cree, U. S. A., has been exploiting in The North American Review his ideas on the use of the airship in war. Is the success of the airship possible? he asks. Then assuming that it is, and supposing that Mr. Hiram Maxim or Professor Langley or Mr. Otto Lilienthal of Berlin or some other man has really constructed a machine that will not only get up into the air, but go after it gets up and be steerable besides, he proceeds to picture the dreadful work such a device would make in case of war.

It could rise beyond the range of the enemy's guns, while its own would still be effective, then it could let loose upon a hostile camp such a fusillade of torpedoes or shell or shrapnel as would demolish the camp in a few minutes. The same is true of ships investing a harbor. No armor would be proof against a torpedo of dynamite dropped from a height. The ships could not run away or conceal themselves, so that the destruction of a whole fleet "would be a comparatively short matter." A great city, like New York or Chicago, could be blown into atoms in less than no time. The most terrible scenes would be witnessed, however, when two airships met in mid-heaven to destroy one another, by ramming or otherwise. Not a soul would survive of the vessel that should be beaten. The picture is one that realizes Tennyson's idea of airy navies grappling in the ether blue.

All this will be accomplished "if" inventors can make an airship that will go.

It will be an important question in