



Darius Green  
and his  
Flying Machine

*BY*

John T. Trowbridge

Illustrated by  
Wallace Goldsmith



Grandma  
from  
The children.

Christmas.  
1910.

## John T. Crowbridge

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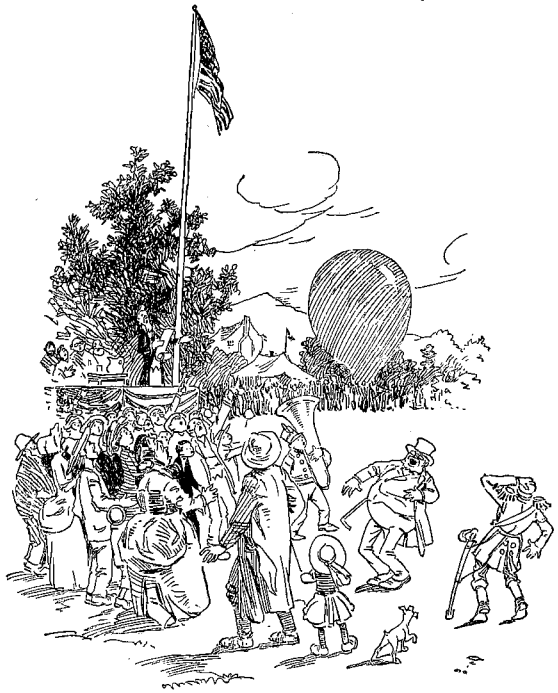
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DARIUS GREEN AND  
HIS FLYING-MACHINE

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DARIUS GREEN  
AND HIS  
FLYING-MACHINE

By J. T. TROWBRIDGE

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY  
WALLACE GOLDSMITH



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## FOREWORD

This poem, written more than forty years ago, is now published for the first time in book form, with illustrations by Wallace Goldsmith.

The present intense and widespread interest in aviation promises a ready audience among the new generation for Mr. Trowbridge's very amusing account of the first American flying-machine. This poem immediately attained popularity on its first appearance and has been recited and read in public from one end of the country to the other. Its hero was a youth born ahead of his time.

“Darius was clearly of the opinion,  
That the air is also man's dominion,  
And that, with paddle or fin or pinion,  
We soon or late  
Shall navigate  
The azure as now we sail the sea.”

## FOREWORD

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When Mr. Trowbridge wrote the poem he little dreamed that he himself would ever see men fly successfully. Yet from his description of this flying-machine and in Mr. Goldsmith's clever drawings we see an embryonic monoplane, which is not unlike Mr. Grahame-White's Bleriot. The greatest difference is in the result, for with Darius

“Wal, I like flyin' well enough,”

He said; “but the' ain't sich a thunderin' sight  
O' fun in't when ye come to light.”

R. L. S.

DARIUS GREEN AND  
HIS FLYING-MACHINE

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DARIUS GREEN AND HIS  
FLYING-MACHINE

IF ever there lived a Yankee lad,  
Wise or otherwise, good or bad,  
Who, seeing the birds fly, did n't jump  
With flapping arms from stake or stump,  
Or, spreading the tail  
Of his coat for a sail,  
Take a soaring leap from post or rail,  
And wonder why  
*He* could n't fly,

DARIUS GREEN AND

---

And flap and flutter and wish and try,—  
If ever you knew a country dunce  
Who did n't try that as often as once,  
All I can say is, that 's a sign  
He never would do for a hero of mine.

An aspiring genius was D. Green :  
The son of a farmer, — age fourteen ;  
His body was long and lank and lean, —  
Just right for flying, as will be seen ;  
He had two eyes, each bright as a bean,



211.





## HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

And a freckled nose that grew between,  
A little awry, — for I must mention  
That he had riveted his attention  
Upon his wonderful invention,  
Twisting his tongue as he twisted the  
strings,  
Working his face as he worked the wings,  
And with every turn of gimlet and  
screw  
Turning and screwing his mouth round  
too,

Till his nose seemed bent  
To catch the scent,  
Around some corner, of new-baked pies,  
And his wrinkled cheeks and his squinting  
eyes  
Grew puckered into a queer grimace,  
That made him look very droll in the face,  
And also very wise.

And wise he must have been, to do more  
Than ever a genius did before,

## HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

Excepting Dædalus of yore  
And his son Icarus, who wore  
    Upon their backs  
    Those wings of wax  
He had read of in the old almanacs.  
Darius was clearly of the opinion,  
That the air is also man's dominion,  
And that, with paddle or fin or pinion,  
    We soon or late  
    Shall navigate  
The azure as now we sail the sea.

DARIUS GREEN AND

---

The thing looks simple enough to me;

And if you doubt it,

Hear how Darius reasoned about it.

“Birds can fly,

An’ why can’t I?

Must we give in,”

Says he with a grin,

“’T the bluebird an’ phœbe

Are smarter’n we be?

Jest fold our hands an’ see the swaller,





HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

An' blackbird an' catbird beat us holler?  
Doos the leetle chatterin', sassy wren,  
No bigger'n my thumb, know more than  
men?

Jest show me that!

Er prove 't the bat

Hez got more brains than 's in my hat,  
An' I'll back down, an' not till then!"

He argued further: "Ner I can't see  
What's th' use o' wings to a bumble-bee,

Fer to git a livin' with, more'n to me ;—

Ain't my business

Important 's his'n is?

“ That Icarus

Was a silly cuss, —

Him an' his daddy Dædalus.

They might 'a' knowed wings made o' wax

Would n't stan' sun-heat an' hard whacks.

I'll make mine o' luther,

Er suthin' er other.”



## HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

And he said to himself, as he tinkered and  
planned :

“ But I ain’t goin’ to show my hand  
To nummies that never can under-  
stand

The fust idee that’s big an’ grand.

They’d ’a’ laft an’ made fun  
O’ Creation itself afore’t was done!”

So he kept his secret from all the rest,

Safely buttoned within his vest;

And in the loft above the shed

Himself he locks with thimble and  
thread

And wax and hammer and buckles and  
screws,

And all such things as geniuses use; —

Two bats for patterns, curious fellows!

A charcoal-pot and a pair of bellows;

An old hoop-skirt or two, as well as

Some wire, and several old umbrellas;

A carriage-cover, for tail and wings;

A piece of harness; and straps and strings;





## HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

And a big strong box,

In which he locks

These and a hundred other things.

His grinning brothers, Reuben and Burke

And Nathan and Jotham and Solomon, lurk

Around the corner to see him work,—

Sitting cross-leggéd, like a Turk,

Drawing the waxed end through with a jerk,

And boring the holes with a comical quirk

Of his wise old head, and a knowing smirk.

But vainly they mounted each other's backs,  
And poked through knot-holes and pried  
through cracks ;

With wood from the pile and straw from  
the stacks

He plugged the knot-holes and calked the  
cracks ;

And a bucket of water, which one would  
think

He had brought up into the loft to drink  
When he chanced to be dry,

HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

Stood always nigh,

For Darius was sly!

And whenever at work he happened to  
spy

At chink or crevice a blinking eye,

He let a dipper of water fly.

“ Take that! an’ ef ever ye git a peep,

Guess ye ’ll ketch a weasel asleep!”

And he sings as he locks

His big strong box: —

DARIUS GREEN AND

---

SONG

“ The weasel’s head is small an’ trim,  
An’ he is leetle an’ long an’ slim,  
An’ quick of motion an’ nimble of limb,  
An’ ef yeou ’ll be  
Advised by me,  
Keep wide awake when ye ’re ketchin’  
him!”

So day after day  
He stitched and tinkered and hammered  
away,



## HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

Till at last 't was done, —

The greatest invention under the sun!

“An' now,” says Darius, “hooray fer some  
fun!”

'T was the Fourth of July,

And the weather was dry,

And not a cloud was on all the sky,

Save a few light fleeces, which here and there,

Half mist, half air,

Like foam on the ocean went floating by:

Just as lovely a morning as ever was seen  
For a nice little trip in a flying-machine.

Thought cunning Darius: "Now I sha n't  
go

Along 'ith the fellers to see the show.

I'll say I've got sich a terrible cough!

An' then, when the folks 'ave all gone off,

I'll hev full swing

Fer to try the thing

An' practyse a leetle on the wing."

HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

“Ain’t goin’ to see the celebration?”

Says Brother Nate. “No; botheration!

I’ve got sich a cold — a toothache — I —

My gracious! — feel ’s though I should fly!”

Said Jotham, “’Sho!

Guess ye better go.”

But Darius said, “No!

Should n’t wonder’f yeou might see me,

though,

’Long ’bout noon, ef I git red

O' this jumpin', thumpin' pain 'n my head!"

For all the while to himself he said: —

“ I tell ye what!

I'll fly a few times around the lot,

To see how 't seems, then soon 's I've got

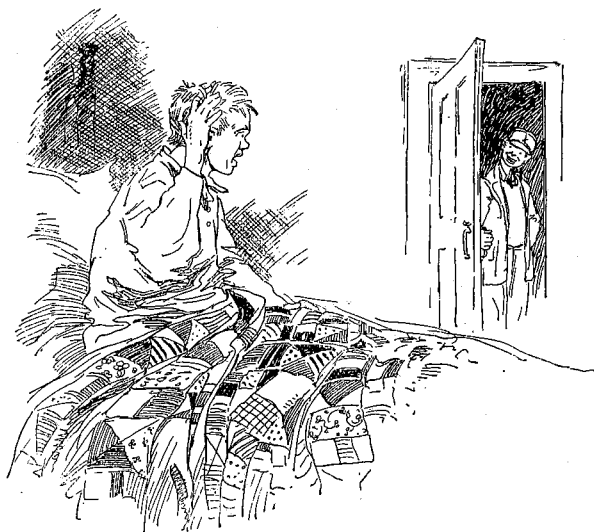
The hang o' the thing, ez likely 's not,

I'll astonish the nation,

An' all creation,

By flyin' over the celebration!

Over their heads I'll sail like an eagle;





HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

I'll balance myself on my wings like a sea-gull;

I'll dance on the chimbleys; I'll stan' on

the steeple;

I'll flop up to winders an' scare the people!

I'll light on the libbe'ty-pole, an' crow;

An' I'll say to the gawpin' fools below,

‘What world's this 'ere

That I've come near?’

Fer I'll make 'em b'lieve I'm a chap f'm

the moon!

An' I'll try a race 'ith their ol' bulloon.”

He crept from his bed;  
And, seeing the others were gone, he said,  
“ I ’m a gittin’ over the cold ’n my head.”  
And away he sped,  
To open the wonderful box in the shed.

His brothers had walked but a little way  
When Jotham to Nathan chanced to say,  
“ What on airth is he up to, hey? ”  
“ Don’o’, — the’ ’s suthin’ er other to pay,  
Er he would n’t ’a’ stayed to hum to-day.”



HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

Says Burke, "His toothache's all in his  
eye!

*He* never 'd miss a Fo'th-o'-July,

Ef he hed n't got some machine to try."

Then Sol, the little one, spoke: "By darn!

Le's hurry back an' hide 'n the barn,

An' pay him fer tellin' us that yarn!"

"Agreed!" Through the orchard they creep  
back,

Along by the fences, behind the stack,

And one by one, through a hole in the wall,

In under the dusty barn they crawl,  
Dressed in their Sunday garments all ;  
And a very astonishing sight was that,  
When each in his cobwebbed coat and hat  
Came up through the floor like an ancient rat.

And there they hid ;

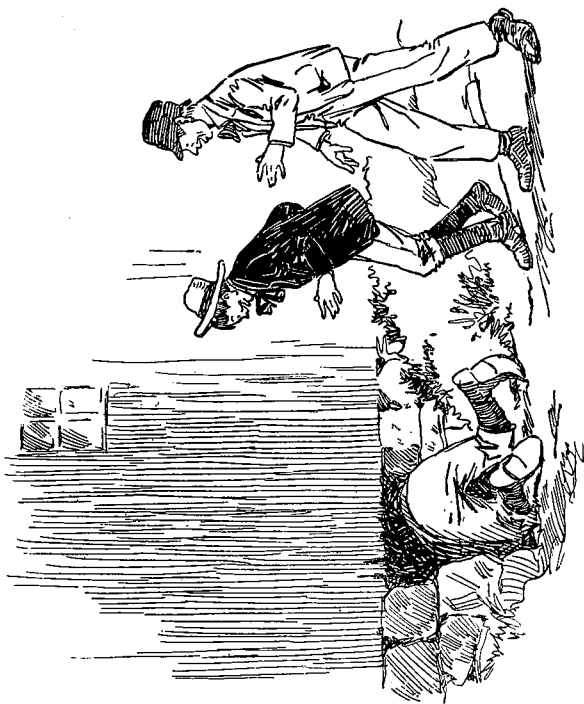
And Reuben slid

The fastenings back, and the door undid.

“ Keep dark ! ” said he,

“ While I squint an’ see what the’ is to see.”

As knights of old put on their mail, —





HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

From head to foot  
An iron suit,  
Iron jacket and iron boot,  
Iron breeches, and on the head  
No hat, but an iron pot instead,  
And under the chin the bail, —  
I believe they called the thing a helm;  
And the lid they carried they called a  
shield;  
And, thus accoutred, they took the field,  
Sallying forth to overwhelm

The dragons and pagans that plagued the  
realm:—

So this modern knight

Prepared for flight,

Put on his wings and strapped them tight;

Jointed and jaunty, strong and light;

Buckled them fast to shoulder and hip,—

Ten feet they measured from tip to tip!

And a helm had he, but that he wore,

Not on his head like those of yore,

But more like the helm of a ship.

HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

“Hush!” Reuben said,

“He’s up in the shed!

He’s opened the winder, — I see his head!

He stretches it out,

An’ pokes it about,

Lookin’ to see ’f the coast is clear,

An’ nobody near; —

Guess he don’o’ who’s hid in here!

He’s riggin’ a spring-board over the sill!

Stop laffin’, Solomon! Burke, keep still!

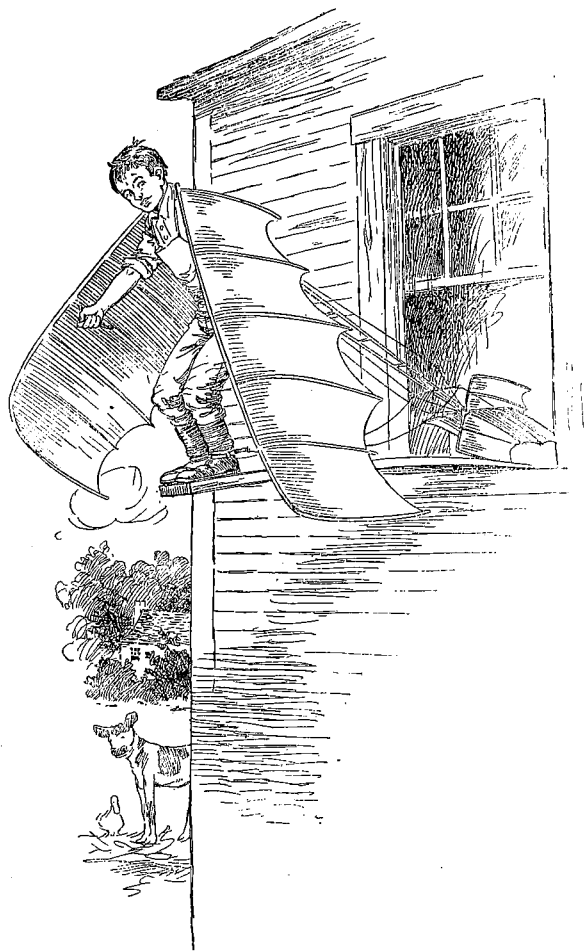
He’s a climbin’ out now — Of all the things!

What's he got on? I van, it's wings!  
An' t' other thing? I vum, it's a tail!  
An' there he sets like a hawk on a rail!  
Steppin' careful, he travels the length  
Of his spring-board, and teeters to try its  
strength.

Now he stretches his wings, like a monstrous  
bat;

Peeks over his shoulder, this way an' that,  
Fer to see 'f the 's any one passin' by;  
But the 's on'y a ca'f an' a goslin' nigh.







*They* turn up at him a wonderin' eye,  
To see — The dragon! he 's goin' to fly!  
Away he goes! Jimminy! what a jump!  
Flop — flop — an' plump  
To the ground with a thump!  
Flutt'rin' an' flound'rin', all 'n a lump!"

As a demon is hurled by an angel's spear,  
Heels over head, to his proper sphere, —  
Heels over head, and head over heels,  
Dizzily down the abyss he wheels, —

So fell Darius. Upon his crown,  
In the midst of the barnyard, he came  
down,

In a wonderful whirl of tangled strings,

Broken braces and broken springs,

Broken tail and broken wings,

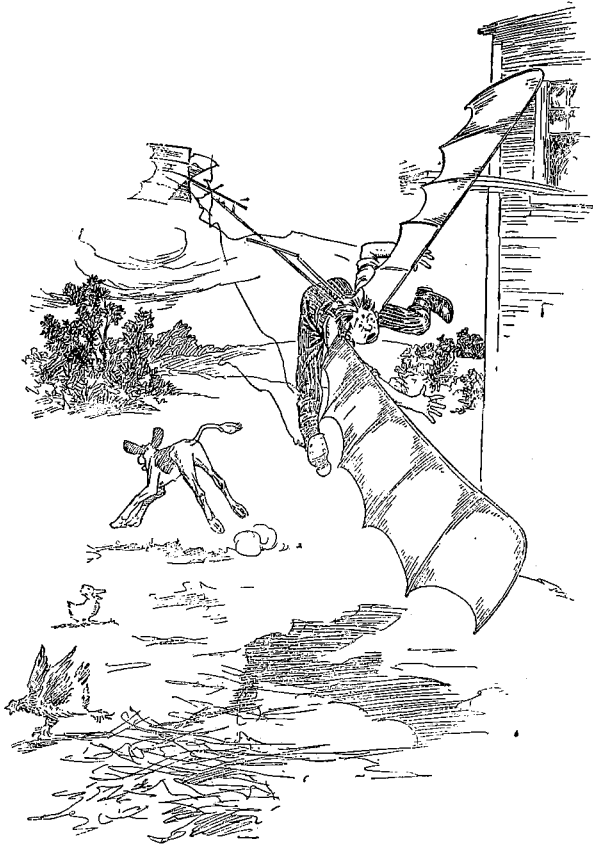
Shooting-stars, and various things!

Away with a bellow fled the calf,

And what was that? Did the gosling laugh?

'T is a merry roar

From the old barn-door,



*W. H. Hunt*



## HIS FLYING-MACHINE

---

And he hears the voice of Jotham crying,

“ Say, D’rius! how de yeou like flyin’?”

Slowly, ruefully, where he lay,

Darius just turned and looked that way,

As he stanchd his sorrowful nose with his

cuff.

“ Wal, I like flyin’ well enough,”

He said; “ but the’ ain’t sich a thunderin’

sight

O’ fun in ’t when ye come to light.”

DARIUS GREEN

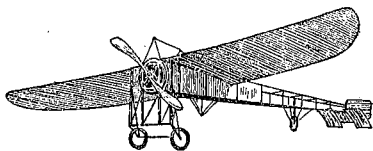
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MORAL

I just have room for the moral here :

And this is the moral, — Stick to your  
sphere.

Or if you insist, as you have the right,  
On spreading your wings for a loftier flight,  
The moral is, — Take care how you light.





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