

THE GUNS OF EUROPE

John, you and I will try it. We'll either blow up that gun or die for France. Search the heavens with the glasses, and see if any of the German flyers are near."

"There are some dots far off toward the east, but I don't think they're near enough to interfere with us."

"Then we'll try for the gun at once. We've got to sink low to be sure of our aim, and for that reason, John, I'm going to ask you to drop the bombs, while I steer. But don't do it, until I say ready because I mean to go pretty close to the 'Busy Bertha.'"

"Good enough," said John, as Lannes passed him the bombs. His hand was perfectly steady and so was that of Lannes on the steering rudder, as they made a gentle curve toward the point, from which the mighty crash had come. John knew that the bombs would not make a destructive impression upon those vast tubes of steel, but he hoped to strike the caisson or ammunition supply behind, and blow up one or two of the shells themselves, involving everything in a common ruin. But to do so he knew that they must fly very low, exposing themselves to the danger of return fire from the Germans.

"I can see the gun now," said Lannes. "The gunners are all around it, and infantry with rifles are near, but I'm going to make a swoop within five hundred feet of it. Whenever we're directly over it drop two of the bombs. It may be, it's most likely in fact, that neither will hit, but I'll swoop down again and again, until we do, unless they get us first."