

ZEPPELIN CRAFT BADLY WRECKED

**Prow Smashed and 100 Feet of
the Envelope and Frame De-
stroyed in Hitting Tree.**

CAME DOWN FOR BENZINE

**Sudden Gust Blew It Around—
Bow Rests on Ground with
Stern 65 Feet in Air.**

MADE 850 MILES IN 37 HOURS

**Wilbur Wright Predicts Airship
Flights Across the Atlantic, Per-
haps Within a Year.**

GOEPPINGEN, Germany, May 31.—After covering a distance of about 850 miles in thirty-seven hours, Count Zeppelin's new airship on its return trip from Bitterfeld to Friedrichshafen came to grief in an open field here to-day. In manoeuvring for a landing the airship came in contact with a tree, and its position to-night is very dangerous.

When the accident occurred Count Zeppelin was landing for the purpose of replenishing his supply of benzine, which was nearly exhausted. The motors had already stopped and the airship was nearing the ground on a meadow when a strong puff of wind drove the prow out of its course against a pear tree.

It struck with a great crash, smashing the prow almost up to the front of the gondola and crushing the aluminium stays into a shapeless mass, which became inextricably enmeshed in the branches. Nearly a hundred feet of the envelope and frame were destroyed.

Count Zeppelin immediately came to Göppingen in an automobile and telegraphed to Ulm for pioneers and to Friedrichshafen for workmen to make repairs. After resting for several hours at a hotel he returned in the evening to the scene of the accident, proceeding from there by automobile to Friedrichshafen. He will return here to-morrow morning.

Repairs are now being made, but these are of a temporary nature, merely that the airship may proceed to Friedrichshafen. Permanent repairs probably will require six weeks. A new prow, much shorter than the original one, will be constructed without the vertical steering planes.

No one was injured in the accident, but Count Zeppelin has been much depressed by its occurrence.

The position of the craft is extremely unfavorable, the ground being very hilly. The bow rests on the ground, while the stern is about sixty-five feet in the air. A strong breeze sprang up toward evening, causing no little anxiety for the safety of the airship, which, it was feared, would be wrecked should a storm come up during the night.

After considerable labor, and with the assistance of some of those who had gathered at the scene of the accident, Count Zeppelin was able to shift the position of his airship a little, and thus give better protection from the wind.

That the collision was a heavy one is indicated by the broken and bent strips of aluminium lying about the ground and the half-split branches dangling from the tree trunk.

Enormous crowds soon assembled, and it became almost impossible for vehicles to pass along the public highways.

The airship left the floating shed on Lake Constance a little after 9 o'clock Saturday night. The objective was Berlin, where Emperor William awaited the arrival of the Count yesterday. But the dirigible got only as far as Bitterfeld, some 400 miles from the starting place, and there it was decided to return.

The Count explained here this morning that he did not continue on to Berlin because the airship had lost some gas and he thought it wiser to start on the return trip to Friedrichshafen, particularly as the homeward journey would require from fifteen to twenty hours.

The balloon left Bitterfeld on the return journey at 7:20 Sunday evening and was not reported during the night, but at 3:30 this morning, as it began to grow light, it was seen over Schwelmfurt, and at 5 o'clock over Wutzburg, flying low in a southerly direction. The early workers in the fields were astonished at the sudden appearance of the vessel, and turned from their labors to watch it disappear in the direction of Friedrichshafen.

It was sighted near Heilbronn at 8:10 o'clock, passed Esslinger at 9:45, Pluchingen at 10 o'clock, and Kirchheim, below Teck, at 10:15.

Later it descended in a meadow near Unter Türkheim. The landing was most successful. The airship came down lightly, but immediately rose again and continued its journey towards Friedrichshafen.