AIRMEN AT WAR: By Lt.Col. L.A.Strange, D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C.

AIR STORIES

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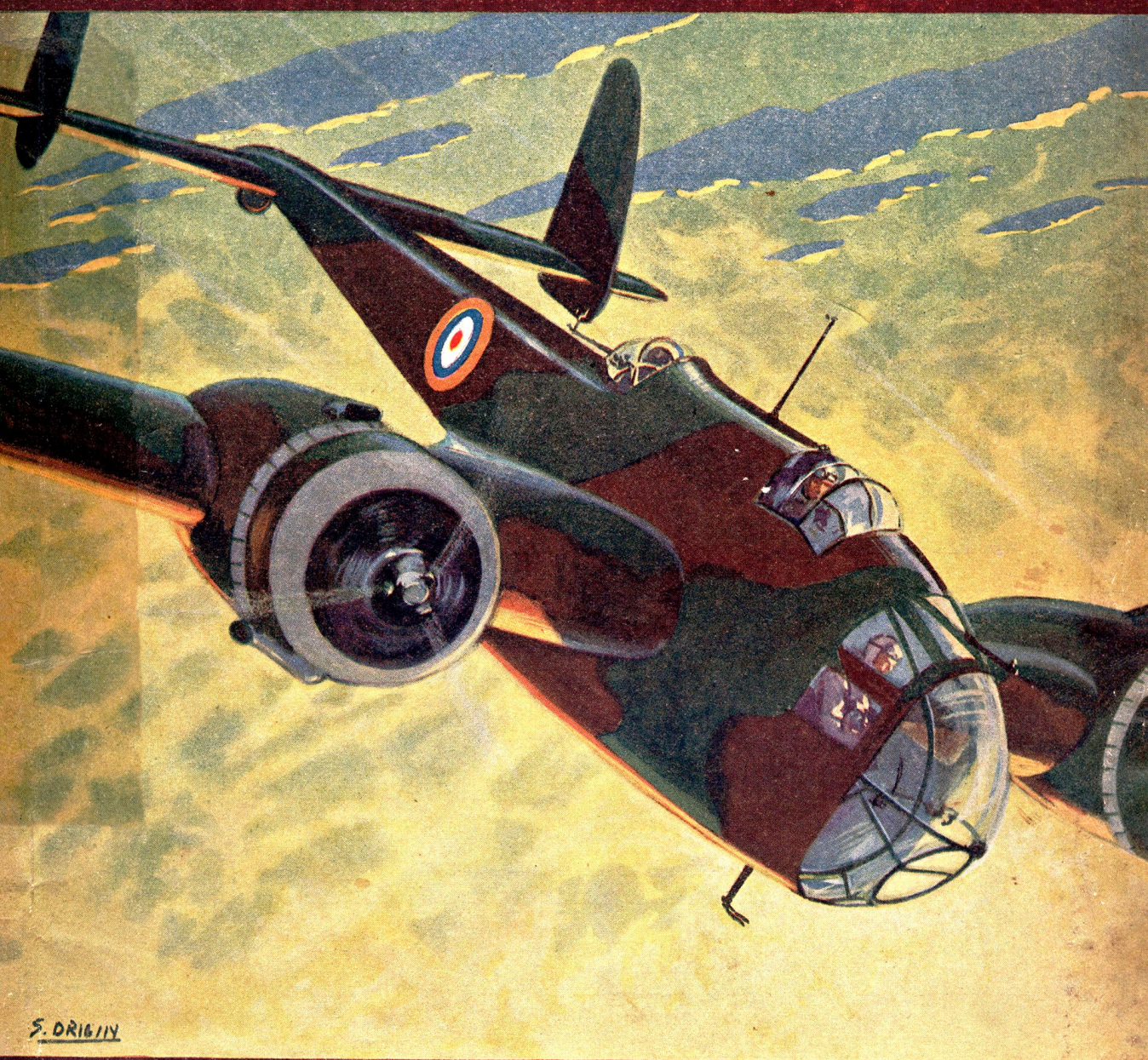

SQUADRON OF THE HIGH-BORN

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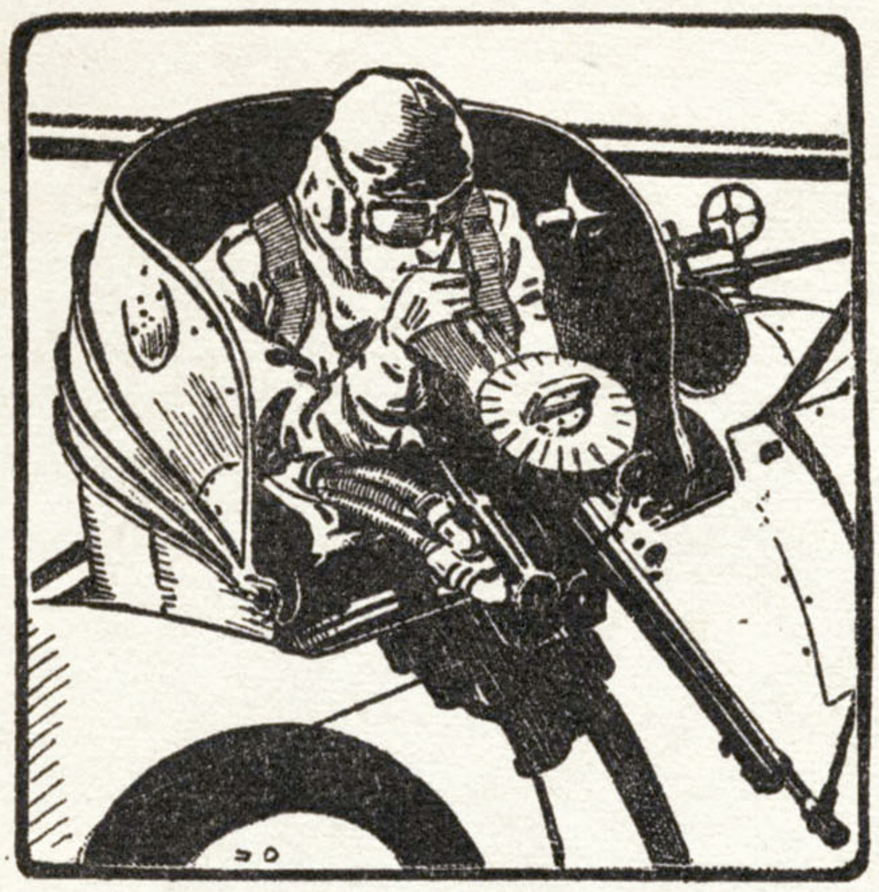

AIR STORIES

AERIAL ADVENTURE IN FACT AND FICTION

FEBRUARY 1939. 9d. per copy
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Cover Painting by S. R. Drigin (see page 124)

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Sweeping down from the sky came a formation of six British Camels . . .

SQUADRON OF THE HIGH-BORN

A Dramatic Story of War-time Adventure with a Crack Fighter Squadron of the German Air Force

It was a Strange Instrument of Revenge that a One-eyed Uhlan chose with which to Square Accounts with that Pride of the Imperial Air Service and Flower of Prussian Nobility—the Far-famed Squadron of the High-born Horsemen

By WILFRID TREMELLEN

CHAPTER I

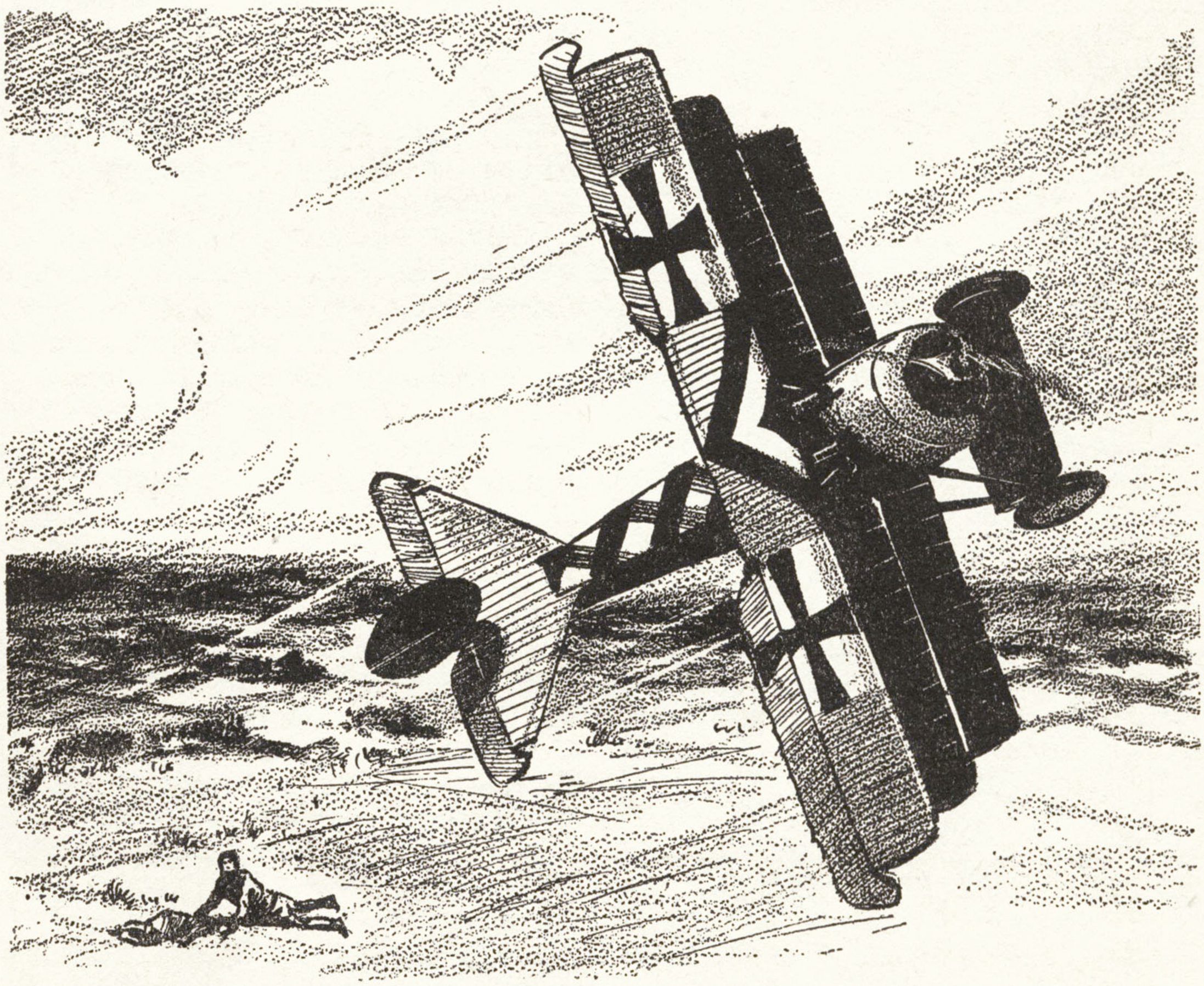
The Training of Emanuel Berg

AT the end of the course of instruction at the School of Theoretical Aeronautics at Deschdorf in Prussia there was an examination and the candidate whose name appeared at the top of the list was the little Jew, Emanuel Berg. The impertinence of it ! Never was there a finer opportunity for a demonstration of *Judenhass*.* His fellow pupils kicked him severally as individuals and then, as a body, instituted a court-martial, judged him, and formally thrashed him. That was in January, 1918.

Six weeks later, at the end-of-course *Examen* in Engines, Rigging and Map-reading at the *Luftschule* at Arensteich the little Jew, Emanuel Berg, again won first place. Just as before his class-mates kicked him informally and formally thrashed him—only this time a great deal more severely.

His next school of instruction was the *Zweite Flugschule* at Dudenbach, where young German privates destined to be N.C.O. pilots in the Imperial Air Service were taught to fly. Here there was less

* *Judenhass* : " Jew-hatred."



. . . even as the pilot of the lone Fokker slammed open the throttle and went screaming upwards

Judenhass to be endured—nothing beyond the amount that was considered necessary to make him keep well in front of his mind the fact that he was a Jew—for after his experiences at Deschdorf and Arensteich, Emanuel Berg had acquired a certain amount of wisdom.

This wisdom consisted in hiding his light behind a bushel. For instance, when he was flying a school machine on a practice flight, the turns that he did over the aerodrome always looked more or less ham-fisted. He took care to put on too much bank, causing inward slip, or too little bank, causing outward slip. Similarly the loops that he did were always a little crooked when seen from the aerodrome.

Only when he was well away from home did he put in his real practice. Then his manœuvres were perfect ; his loops straight and tight, his rolls skilfully executed with the touch of a master hand, and when he banked his machine he could feel the wind blowing neither against his right cheek nor his left—which showed that his turns were just right and that the *Herr Oberfluglehrer* himself could do them no better.

When he got on to the aerial gunnery stage and began practising markmanship with the single fixed Spandau he adopted the same tactics. Arriving at a thousand feet above the target, which took the form of the bare outline of an aeroplane as seen from above with the Allied concentric circles prominently displayed on its wings, he would send his machine hurtling down on it, but instead of attempting to send his burst of bullets through the pilot's cockpit like all the other pupils, he more often than not made the left-hand or the right-hand half of the tail-plane his target, and was thus able to judge the accuracy of his firing without calling attention to his undoubted skill.

So that, throughout the weeks he passed at Dudenbach, neither his instructors nor his fellow-pupils were aware that the little hook-nosed Jew whom they so much despised had any more ability than appeared on the surface. Actually *der gemeine Soldat*, Emanuel Berg, was that rare combination, a good pilot and a good marksman.

ALONE in the barrack-room, Emanuel Berg gave a sigh of relief. The course of instruction at the *Zweite Flugschule* had come to an end that afternoon. He collected his few belongings and began packing them for departure on the next day. He had just been over to the notice-board and had been relieved to find that in the list of successful candidates taking the theoretical part of the passing-out examination his own name was a great deal nearer the bottom than the top.

That meant, he told himself, with optimism which proved to be quite unjustified, that this time there would be no bullying—no excuse for an exhibition of *Judenhass*. To-morrow, like his fellow pupils, who were nearly all "*Gemeine*," or private soldiers (prospective officers were trained at other schools) he would be given the rank of *Korporal* and sent off to join some Staffel at the Front.

His packing finished, he sat down on his bed and drawing a cheap writing-pad on to his knee, he began what was to be a long letter to the little old mother in far-off Lübeck. The "*kleine alte Mutter*" was a widow and kept a small tobacconist's shop in the Hochkönigsmarkstrasse which was lined with sycamore trees.

In his letters home Emanuel Berg never made any mention of the persecution to which he was subjected ; he merely wrote that some of his fellow-pupils were "not very friendly so far." To-day he was optimistic even about this matter : "Have no fear, *kleines Mütterchen*, because this must surely cease when they send me to the Front. For I feel it strongly in my heart that thy son is by no means the clumsiest of pilots, nor the worst of marksmen. Patient I must be. When I am famous as a killer of Englishmen and of Frenchmen, then all the *Kamaraden* will be pleased to call themselves my friend."

Hardly had his pen ceased scratching the last word than the door of the barrack-room crashed open and the whole body

of the "*Kamaraden*" came crowding in, with set teeth and furious faces. The little Jew looked up in alarm and, seeing the menacing crowd bearing down on him, realised that in hoping to be able to leave Dudenbach with an unbruised body, he had been woefully optimistic. What had they against him? They seemed not only angry, but indignant as well. What had he done?

"Here he is, the dirty little Jew!" shouted he who had kicked open the door.

"Stand up, *Jude!*"

"Going to be an officer while the rest of us go to the Front as corporals, is he!" snarled another. "*Himmel!* We'll teach him!"

Not understanding, walled round by hate-filled faces, the little Jew strove not to show his terror. He capped his cheap fountain-pen, laid aside his writing-block, and rose shakily to his feet.

Then the fury broke over him. His fountain-pen was snatched from him and snapped in two; his writing-block was torn across; every fist within reach strove to pummel his face to a pulp as he was hurled back on to his bed. Writhing he managed to wriggle over the side and, for a short moment, to take refuge beneath it. But a score of hands lifted it bodily and handed it away over the heads of the crowd. This left the way clear for the kicking feet. "Pogrom!" was the cry. "Pogrom in the fine old German style!" And what the clenched fists had failed to bruise was bruised black and blue by the kicking feet. "Pogrom!"

IT was not until two days later—at a time when he was still in hospital—that Emanuel Berg learnt the reason for this particularly violent exhibition of *Judenhass*. He blinked when he heard it, and at first would not believe what he was told.

The reason was this: of all the flying pupils of the *Zweite Flugschule*—and there were between fifty and sixty young privates and corporals taking the course—one, and one only, had been selected for the honour of receiving the Emperor's Commission as second lieutenant, of going to the Front as an officer; *and that one pupil was the little Jew Emanuel Berg.*

"*Lieber Gott!*" whispered in awed astonishment the newly created Jewish *Unterleutnant* as he painfully sat up on one elbow. "To be an officer! Me alone—out of all of us! *Himmel!* The wonder is that the others did not kill me! To fly at the Front as an officer! Me!"

Then doubt crept in again. "Some mistake there must be," he told himself. "Certainly it must be a mistake." He lay back against the pillow and fell to thinking of the little old mother who lived in Lübeck.

But there was no mistake. The extraordinary news was true.

Which demands some explanation. Not only demands it, but simply shouts for it.

And for this we must leave the year 1918 for a little and go back to the year 1902.

CHAPTER II

The Death's Head Hussars

GRAUWITZ lies under the snow. Grauwitz is a small frontier town on the German side of the border between the domains of William II, Emperor of Germany, and the lands of Nicholas II, Czar of all the Russias. Grauwitz is Polish through and through, but Grauwitz which lies under the snow, lies also under the Teuton heel. For it is nearly one hundred and eight years since Kosciusko, the Polish hero, dragged wounded and a prisoner from the stricken field of Mariejowice, uttered the cry of anguish that has echoed down the years: "*Finis Poloniæ!*"

And for Poland it was indeed the end. As a result of that lost battle the ancient kingdom disappeared completely from the map of Europe, unscrupulously divided between the greedy warlords of Russia, Prussia and Austria. Henceforward the valiant Poles were to be slaves—brutally conscripted into the armies of their enemies.*

* This was the famous "Partition of Poland" (1795), after which Poland ceased to be a sovereign state until 1919.

In 1902 Grauwitz itself was a frontier garrison in which two regiments of German cavalry were stationed—firstly in order to keep an eye on the Russian Bear across the border, and secondly in order to knock a little German discipline into the unwilling Polish conscripts.

One December night, in the only "possible" restaurant in Grauwitz, five subalterns of the Württemberger Uhlans were dining at a table near the door. The senior officer among them was the Herr Leutnant Hugo von Bodenteich-Wismar. They had finished the fish stage of their meal, when from outside came the sound of sleigh-bells and the muffled tumping of horses' hoofs on the hard-packed snow. There was a pause while bearskin rugs were thrown off, and then, preceded by a swirl of snow, there entered the restaurant four subalterns of the other cavalry regiment, the Death's Head Hussars.

Waiters dashed forward and, relieved of their cloaks, the four Prussians stood resplendent in the uniform that the Emperor himself had designed, the most magnificent in Europe. It was as though the illumination of that dingy restaurant had been suddenly doubled.

Among the Polish diners there was an awed hush, but the five Württemberger Uhlans unconcernedly continued their meal.

The four Prussians screwed their monocles into their eyes and stared haughtily round the room, ignoring the civilians but looking their womenfolk appraisingly up and down. Then their eyes fell on the five Württemberger Uhlans at their table near the door. At once all four caught up their sabres, ceremoniously clicked their heels, and bowed as one man.

With equal ceremony, the Uhlans rose to their feet and returned the compliment. Whereupon the Hussar party moved on with clinking spurs to the inner room that they had ordered for themselves.

The social hierarchy at Grauwitz was once described—significantly, but somewhat blasphemously—by a subaltern of the garrison (whose regiment it is not difficult to guess) as follows :

"First of all comes an officer of the Death's Head Hussars. Then there's nothing, nothing, and again nothing. For a long time there's nothing, and then comes an officer of the Württemberger Uhlans. Then there's nothing, nothing, nothing. Then comes *Herr Gott*, after Whom there is nothing, nothing. Next comes a horse of the Death's Head Hussars, followed by nothing, nothing, and again nothing. A horse of the Württemberger Uhlans comes next, and after that there is nothing, nothing. Then comes an infantry officer, and then, far, far away, almost out of sight, come the local Polish gentry. Beyond that—mud only."

THREE hours passed, during which the brandy bottle knew no rest and both Prussians and Württembergers in their separate rooms strove to forget in the worship of Bacchus the soul-deadening dullness of garrison life in Grauwitz.

At both tables the conversation of the subalterns was much the same ; they deplored the lack of sanitation in that miserable town, they deplored the fact that the nearest bear-shooting was a full day's sleigh-journey away, they deplored the fact that the local wenches never considered it necessary to wash more than once a day, and most of all they deplored the mulish obstinacy of the Polish conscripts—in testimony of which they showed each other the bruised knuckles of their otherwise immaculate hands.

The Prussians were the first to make a move. Led by their senior subaltern, the Herr Leutnant Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach, they came out of their inner room staggering slightly and ineffectually trying to deal with monocles that obstinately refused to stay in place. All eyes watched and conversation ceased as they made their way slowly down the aisle between the tables, with sabres trailing.

Possibly they had forgotten the existence of the Württemberger Uhlans ; possibly the slight was intended. In any case they reached the door without making recognition of their presence.

The Polish diners nudged each other, mischievously joyful. The Uhlans froze in their seats. Then the senior officer among them—it was the Freiherr Hugo von Bodenteich-Wismar—leapt to his feet, strode across the room, and placed himself squarely in front of the Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach.

"Herr Leutnant," he snapped, "you omitted to bow!"

The Graf Joachim shut one eye and screwed his monocle into the other, the better to look him up and down.

"Herr Leutnant, so we did," he agreed. Then, swaying slightly, he spoke over his shoulder to his companions. "*Meine Herren*, I ask your opinion: is it necessary for the Death's Head Hussars to recognise more than once a day the existence of—of——" He swayed forward, adjusted his monocle, and pretended to examine the other's badges. "—of——of the Württemberger Uhlans?"

Before any answer could be framed by the grinning Hussars there was the sound of a terrific smack. It rang right through the restaurant, bringing all diners to their feet, soldiers and civilians alike, and Graf Joachim staggered back, the left side of his face marked with five staring red bars.

In the tense silence that followed the Polish civilians first gasped, and then hugged each other in sheer delight. *Okrzyki!* Oh Joy! If there was anyone they hated and feared more than a Württemberger Uhlan, it was surely a Prussian Hussar. *Rozkosz! Zachwycenie!* God be thanked that they had chosen this night and no other for their weekly dinner out! Not for worlds would they have missed such a scene as this. They strained forward, mouths open, eyes shining. *Chrystus!* What would happen now?

The Graf Joachim recovered himself, slowly drew a leather case from his pocket, and selected a cigar to replace the one that was now burning a hole in the carpet.

"Dead man," he began softly, "tomorrow my seconds will wait on thee at—(here he paused to accept flame for his cigar from one of his juniors)—will wait on thee at the *kennels* of the Württemberger Uhlans. Let thine own men see that arrangements are made for carting away thine infecting corpse."

At the word "kennels" the Prussian Hussars grinned each of them a wide-mouthed grin. Which did not pass unnoticed by the Württemberger Uhlans.

The next senior of the Uhlans at once stepped forward and addressed himself to the next senior of the Hussars. "Herr Leutnant, to-morrow my seconds will call on thee at the *kennels* of the Death's Head Hussars."

The third and fourth senior Uhlans also stepped forward and in turn bowed to the third and fourth senior officers of the Hussars. "Herr Unterleutant, to-morrow my seconds will call on thee at the kennels of the Death's Head Hussars."

The fifth Uhlan, for whom there was no opponent, twiddled his moustache and looked bored.

Then with bows and heel-clickings straight from the ice-box, the two parties separated, the Prussians to be helped into their cloaks, the Württembergers to return to their table. The Polish diners sighed in their disappointment; if the timing had been only a little different, they would have had the joy of seeing the *Teutonski* quarrel again over the question as to which party should pass first through the door.

IN actual practice, the Court of Honour allowed only one of the four duels—that between the Freiherr Hugo von Bodenteich-Wismar and the Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach. The combat took place two days after the incident in the restaurant.

In the interval the Graf Joachim, who knew himself—and rightly—to be immeasurably the better swordsman, had changed his mind about taking the life of the Freiherr Hugo. Instead he proposed to himself the amiable plan of flicking out the two eyes of his opponent and then running him through the stomach. He had exercised a considerable amount of thought before coming

to this decision. He explained the advantages of the plan to his friend, the Landgrave of Tress.

"Dead, the dog Hugo would be a lesson, but a lesson soon forgotten, to these Württemberger swine," he explained. "Alive, but blinded and mutilated, he would stand to them as a perpetual reminder that the honour of the Death's Head Hussars is not to be trifled with.

"*Ich habe recht?*"

The Herr Landgraf nodded approvingly. "Always one must think first of the Regiment," he moralised.

But the good-natured plan of Graf Joachim was easier to think of than to put into execution. At duels there are such people as seconds, one of whose duties is to knock up the weapons of the antagonists the moment that blood has been drawn. And so it came about that no sooner had Graf Joachim flicked out the right eye of the Freiherr Hugo than the seconds darted in with their blades and rendered innocuous all further attack.

"—*und*—!" swore the Graf Joachim above a futile clashing of steel.

"Too bad!" murmured his friend, the Landgrave of Tress.

SIXTEEN more years bring us to the year 1918. By this time the Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach has transferred from the Death's Head Hussars to the Imperial Air Service. Already he has made a name for himself as a fighting pilot and a leader of fighting pilots. By July, 1918, he is a *Staffelskommandant*—and not just an ordinary squadron commander, but the commander of the "Squadron of the High-Born Horsemen." Who more suitable than he could have been chosen? Is he not "*von und zu*"? Was he not a Death's Head Hussar? Has he not the sixth longest rent-roll in East Prussia?

Yet, as a matter of fact, setting aside his ability as a leader of fighting pilots, the claims of Graf Joachim to the appointment were by no means overwhelming. For the Squadron of the High-born Horsemen rejoiced to number among its officers the son of an archduke, two sons of dukes, two minor princes, an altgraf and a landgraf; while the remainder of the complement of pilots was made up by assorted barons, freiherrs and grafs. Additional lustre was added to the squadron by the fact that each of its officers had transferred from a crack cavalry regiment.

Such was the Squadron of the *Hochgeborene Reiter* whose destinies were ruled by Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach.

MEANWHILE, in the course of the same sixteen years, 1902–18, the Graf Joachim's erstwhile enemy, Freiherr Hugo von Bodenteich-Wismar, had, in spite of the loss of his eye, grown into the tubbiest, rosiest-faced and most jovial of freiherrs—a very Santa Claus of a freiherr in fact, with a partiality for red wine, apple-cheeked peasant girls, and jokes both coarse and practical.

In the early War years he had served the Fatherland in several useful, but necessarily non-combatant capacities, and now Fate beckoned him to the *Hauptquartier* of the Imperial Air Service, gave him the rank of general, and sat him down at the desk of the Director of Personnel and Postings.

On the very first morning after he had taken up the appointment a young staff-officer entered his room, clicked his heels, and placed some papers before him.

"*Herr General*, the Staffel 313 commanded by the Herr Oberst Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach is requiring a replacement," he stated. "And the Herr Graf has requested that, as usual, he should be sent an officer who is a nobleman—preferably one who has served in a good cavalry regiment."

"So?" Memory stirred in the mind of the Freiherr Hugo. "Von Grünstrom, *hein?*" Suddenly he grinned and began to rub his hands. "A replacement for the squadron of the Herr Graf. *Gut!* We will certainly send him one—a pilot specially selected!"

He picked up a paper and ran his single eye down the list of pilots who had just passed out from the training schools. With his pencil he ticked off three names: Schmidt, Berg, and Guggenheim.

The young staff-officer looked distressed.

"What is known of these men?" asked the *Herr Direktor*.

The young staff-officer coughed. "None of them is noble—as the *Herr General* must see," he pointed out. "Likewise, not one of them is from the cavalry." He consulted a paper in his hand and added: "Also, one of them is a Jew."

The Freiherr Hugo bounced in his seat. "A *Jew!*" he exclaimed delightedly. "Which one?"

"Berg. Emanuel Berg, *Herr General*, —but—but——"

"*Himmel!*" roared the Freiherr Hugo. "Then he is the very man who shall be sent to von Grünstrom!"

"But—but, *Herr General!* This man is not an officer. He is a corporal!"

"No matter!" shouted back the Herr General in transports of delight. "From this moment he becomes an officer! Bring me the necessary forms. *Schnell!* And then inform von Grünstrom that the Unterleutnant Isaak Isaakstein—no, what was it?—Emanuel Berg—will report himself for duty at the earliest opportunity. Magnificent!" He clapped his two hands together with a sound like a pistol shot. "Magnificent!"

For a moment the young staff-officer stared at the new *Direktor* as though he were a madman. Then the habits of discipline took control. He clicked his heels, bowed and left the room.

No sooner had the door closed than the Freiherr Hugo sat back in his chair and held his ribs while the gusts of laughter shook him.

"Ho, ho, ho! A Jew in the Squadron of the High-born! A Jew among the *Hochgeborene Reiter!* Could I only see the face of Graf Joachim, I would give a year's pay. *A Jew!* A year's revenue from my estates I would give only to see his face! A Jew! Ho, ho, ho!"

After which the one-eyed Freiherr Hugo passes out of our story—to his red wine, his apple-cheeked peasant girls, and his jokes both coarse and practical.

CHAPTER III

The Honour of the Squadron

"THIS," asserted the Herr Oberst Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach, "this brings shame on us."

The Graf Joachim, commander of the Squadron of the High-born, was talking with his second-in-command. The second-in-command was also a former Death's Head Hussar—the same Hussar who had been his close friend sixteen years before when the regiment was garrisoned at Grauwitz, in Poland.

"A Jew in the Squadron of the *Hochgeborene Reiter* is unthinkable!" continued the Graf Joachim. "It is our duty to safeguard its honour."

"*Naturlich.* Always one must think first of the squadron," agreed his friend, the Landgrave of Tress.

"The question is: how do we get rid of him?" pursued the Staffel-commander. "Almost I am decided to send a petition to the *Allerhöchste* himself."

For a moment the Landgrave's dark eyes studied the ash of his cigar. Then he stroked his sallow face thoughtfully with a well-kept hand. In a world of fresh-complexioned Teutons he sometimes found that sallow, suspiciously Semitic countenance of his difficult to explain away. Generally he attributed it to a grandmother—who was sometimes a Spaniard and sometimes an Italian, according to the inspiration of the moment.

"There is one factor," he began slowly. "which often provides a solution in problems of this nature, that is often forgotten. Dost thou know the story of the monk who was flung into a dungeon by one of the Popes of the Middle Ages? *Nein?* Well, to get himself out of prison this fellow obtained an interview with His Holiness and undertook within the space of two years to teach the Pope's mule to talk. If he failed he begged that his throat might be cut. To this the Holy Father agreed and the monk was given comfortable quarters near the Papal stables. A friend asked him in perplexity why he had set himself such an impossible task as teaching

a quadruped to talk like a human being.

"'Because, my dear friend,'" answered the released prisoner, "'within the space of two years many things may happen ; the Pope may die, I may die, or the mule may die.'"

The Graf Joachim looked at his friend sharply.

"Thou art suggesting——?"

The Landgrave was slowly pressing out his cigar-butt in an ash-tray. His dark eyes were shrouded beneath their long lashes. "I am suggesting that death may provide a solution in this case also," he answered. "It is not unheard of that a pilot fails to return from his first trip over the lines," he elucidated, and added softly : "and the more dangerous the task that he is given to perform, the less is the likelihood of his returning."

The squadron-commander grunted.

"Then again," went on the resourceful Landgrave, "another way is to make life in this Staffel so—so unenjoyable for the Jew that he either blows his brains out, or conveniently threads himself on some Englishman's stream of fire. But to carry out that plan we should need a little—a little co-operation."

"From the junior members of the Staffel?"

The Landgrave nodded.

"Personally I am inclined to favour this second plan. It is more artistic in conception, and should provide more—more amusement."

The Graf slapped his hands down on his thighs.

"Both plans we will try—both at the same time. And soon death or suicide shall relieve us of this Jew. It is settled that——"

Suddenly he interrupted himself and frowned as a new thought came into his head. "But there is another possibility : supposing that the little *Schweinhund* fears to take his own life and takes it into his head to desert to the enemy. What then, *hein?*"

The Landgrave smiled deprecatingly.

"That, my dear Joachim, is only possible in the rare case of an individual having no relations resident in Germany. But with this young Jew any relation at all will be sufficient to bind him to us with security. The Jews are a clannish people ; not one of them would risk reprisals being taken on a relative. Enlarge on the amenities of life in a concentration camp, my dear Joachim. That should be enough."

AT the moment when this conversation was taking place the little Jew, Emanuel Berg, was sitting at table in the mess-room, doubtfully eyeing a plate of food that had been placed in front of him. The mess-room was empty except for him ; all the other officers of the Staffel had already lunched.

There was a reason for this. One of the first decisions arrived at by the indignation-meeting of subalterns which was summoned on the morning of the Jew's reporting for duty had been that under no circumstances should he be allowed to take his meals with the *Hochgeborene*. It was intimated to him that he could either go without, or apply to the mess-orderlies for nourishment after the other officers of the squadron had left the room.

In fact, the Graf Joachim and his friend the Landgrave of Tress had no need whatever to drop hints to the subalterns that life should not be made too pleasant for the intruder ; those gentlemen had already decided amongst themselves that his existence should be made a hell for him. Incidentally, the same decision had been arrived at by other, less high-born, members of the Staffel.

Miserably, the little Jew picked up a fork, carefully removed the three pieces of roast meat in front of him on to another plate, and placed it at a distance. He sighed as he did so, knowing from bitter experience that those same pieces of roast meat would be heated up again that night and served to him for his dinner. This was his third day at the squadron, and it was the sixth time that he had placed those three pieces of meat on to another plate and set them aside.

He began to eat the two small potatoes that remained. They and a slice of bread

would constitute his entire meal. It was not that he lacked hunger ; on the contrary he was ravenous after an exacting morning of practice formation-flying. But there were other considerations than bodily hunger.

For this idea of the ever-reappearing plate of roast meat, the mess orderly had been originally responsible. It was a perfectly appetising plate of meat, as he pointed out—or had been on its first appearance three days ago. The fact was that the mess orderly was a *Judenhasser*, or Jew-hater. He had once had a silver watch and, during a period of temporary financial embarrassment he had placed that watch in pledge with a Hebrew pawnbroker. As often happens, he had never been able to collect the necessary money to redeem it, so that the watch still remained in the possession of the Jew.

Therefore, on hearing of the arrival of the *Unterleutnant* Emanuel Berg, he had gone into close consultation with the mess cook, and had found that worthy on all points in complete accord with him—in fact he was even more violent in his opinions than the mess orderly.

Both mess servants then, were uncompromising advocates of the principles and practice of *Judenhass*. Therefore, when consulted by the mess orderly, the mess cook thoughtfully scratched his head. Suddenly he winked and placed his forefinger against the side of his nose. He had a plan.

The first meal served to the new *Unterleutnant* was a plate of roast pork—a food which his religion forbade him to touch. There were three slices of it. He had set them aside—and had gone on setting them aside ever since. By this time the story of the three slices of pork was known and chuckled over by every mechanic in the Staffel.

ONLY three days before the arrival of Emanuel Berg at the Squadron of the High-born Horsemen there had arrived a tall blond aristocratic youth whose modest and shy but friendly bearing was something of a novelty to the *Hochgeborene Reiter*. This was the Herr Unterleutnant Graf Franz von Summerhof und von Niederthal, a subject of the King of Saxony, who had transferred to the Imperial Air Service from the Saxon Dragoons.

Unlike most of his fellow Junkers, he was shy almost to the point of being inarticulate, so that nothing much was expected of him in the business of air fighting. " A fighting pilot without the spirit of aggression " said the know-alls, shaking their heads, " is like a bullock in the bull-ring." The know-alls were to receive a shock ; the tall shy young Saxon was destined to be the conqueror of fifteen Englishmen—and this during weeks when the Allied fighting pilots were superior to the German both in numbers and morale.

From the first, the sympathetic blue eyes of Graf Franz had observed that the patient-faced little Jew, Emanuel Berg, was treated in a manner quite different from the other officers of the Staffel. He noted that, while the Fokker triplanes flown by his brother aristocrats were fantastically tricked out in the most brilliant colours their owners could think of, the little Jew was made to fly a machine painted a drab grey—grey, because nobody could think of a duller colour.

He noted, too, that he was compelled to take his meals apart. He noted that mechanics were insolent to him without fear of check from officers or N.C.O.'s. He noted also that not only did none of his fellow-officers ever speak to him ; they treated him as though he were invisible, not hesitating to walk through the space that he was occupying, so that unless the little man was quick in moving aside, he was liable to be knocked over.

But what most roused the indignation of the good-hearted Franz was the matter of the censorship of letters. Normally the letters of the officers of the Staffel were sent up to the *Fliegerhauptquartier* to be censored, where they were dealt with by a staff not personally known to the writers. In the case of the little Jew, however, an exception was made, and his letters—like those of the *Unteroffizieren* and the men—were handed over for

censorship to the squadron officer-of-the-day.

It was because of this practice that there came to light the famous "little cakes" story—a story which provided the Staffel with a veritable feast of merriment. It was von Klenkgau to whom they were indebted for it.

ONE day when the Herr Leutnant Freiherr Kurt von Klenkgau was sitting yawning at a table in the *Staffelsbureau* with a pile of letters to be censored in front of him, he chanced to pick out a letter which was addressed to the town of Lübeck, and began "*Liebstes Mütterchen*" (Dearest little Mother), ending with "*Deinliebender Sohn*, Emanuel."

Idly curious, von Klenkgau set down his cigar and turned over the closely written pages. Suddenly he began to grin hugely, and, after reading through a certain paragraph a second time, he detached the page on which it was written and slipped it into his pocket.

With shouts of laughter that passage was handed round and read in turn by nearly every member of the squadron. It ran :

". . . *But*, kleine Mutter, *the little cakes which thou hast so kindly baked for the Herr Kommandant I have deemed it inadvisable to give to him. Forgive me*, meine Liebste, *but we soldiers do not treat each other so. Also it is possible that the Graf Joachim would not be aware that thou didst serve his mother as lady's maid before her marriage. Therefore I shared out the* Kuchen *amongst some children in the French village who jumped for joy.*"

The mental picture of the hard-boiled Graf Joachim sampling a box of *Kuchen* presented to him by the Jew, Emanuel Berg, rendered helpless with laughter each reader in turn.

It was after being offered a look at this page unscrupulously detached from a private letter that the young Saxon pilot, Franz von Summerhof, very red in the face, began to stammer out what was in his mind. Unlike most of his fellow Junkers, who had been brutalised from the age of twelve in various military academies, he had been sent by his father to an ordinary civilian *Gymnasium* and from there to an agricultural college so that he might learn to manage the family estates on a scientific basis.

As a consequence, he had grown up with the conviction that a field of golden corn is a fairer sight than a bloody field of battle. And because his outlook was so different from that of his fellow-aristocrats, he took the courageous course of championing the little Jewish *Unterleutnant*. But he went further than that ; he said an unforgivable thing. The fact that it was true made no difference whatever.

"*Meine Herren*," he stammered in conclusion, "you may not know this, but I know it for certain : the great von Richthofen himself had Jewish blood in his veins.* Why then should we persecute this brother officer of ours because he happens to be a Jew ? The showing round of this letter—for myself I find it a joke most . . . most unworthy."

As he paused, crimson-faced and trembling with the consciousness that he had spoken that which was, from the *Junker* viewpoint, utterly unpardonable, a deathly silence descended on the room. Monocles were screwed into eyes. Faces were aghast.

"*Um Gottes willen !*" ejaculated someone in a scandalised voice.

The Herr Leutnant Baron Kaspar von Tiefenthal was the senior officer present.

"I think," said Baron Kaspar softly, "that this is a case for a subalterns' court-martial." The crowd dispersed.

The solemnly carried-out brutalities inflicted on the tall young Saxon Graf by his brother subalterns, being, many of them unprintable, are best passed over in silence. Among the lesser—and less physically painful—of the decrees promulgated by the court was that he should on every guest-night eat his dinner under the table for the period of a month.

This was the only one of the subaltern's punitive measures which was not carried out to the full. It was abrogated in fact.

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* My authority is William E. Dodd, recent United States Ambassador to Germany, who revealed the fact in an article in "The Nation" (U.S.A.) issue of August 20th, 1938.

For within a fortnight of joining the Squadron of the High-born the blond young Saxon Dragoon had shot down no less than seven British aircraft.

But that is running ahead.

CHAPTER IV
Decoy of Death

AND now to fight the English ! His first trip over the lines ! The little Jewish *Unterleutnant* was trembling with such eagerness and excitement that his fingers could scarcely fasten his chin-strap.

It was a cold October morning and on the frost-powdered grass in front of the hangars eleven Fokker triplanes, tricked out—all except one of them—in every colour of the rainbow, stood ready for the take-off. The air was filled with the drone of their throttled-back engines.

Laughing and talking, the *Hochgeborene Reiter* were waiting for their leader, Graf Joachim. Occasionally, hands thrust deep into the pockets of his flying coat and, stamping his feet on the hard-frozen earth to induce circulation, one of them would nudge a companion and with a movement of the head indicate the little Jew, who stood apart. Then both would wink at each other. " Trembling already, *hein?* "

Emanuel Berg was aware of those sly winks, but it mattered little to him that they should mistake eagerness for fear. His great hour was near at hand. Before this patrol was over the opinion of him held by his fellow-officers of the squadron would be completely changed. Wait till the time of action arrived ! Wait till they saw how he flung himself against the English ! Wait till they saw how deadly could be the bursts from his Spandaus ! Wait till they saw how little he recked of death ! He would show them ! And afterwards they would vie with each other to be the first to shake him by the hand—yes, even the *Herr Kommandant*, Graf Joachim himself !

His brain raced on, afire with these imaginings. *Kuchen*—little cakes ! Perhaps after the *Herr Kommandant* had smiled at him, had smitten him on the back and called him " *kleines Bergchen* " —perhaps then he would write to the little old mother explaining that he had been foolish, and would she bake another batch of *Kuchen?* Then with his parcel in his hand he would present himself at the *Staffelsbureau* and he would find the Graf Joachim in a gentle mood, and he would tell him how, many years ago, before either of them were born, his own mother had served the Herr Graf's mother, and would he accept from her this small gift ? And the cordial understanding between the Staffel commander and his Jewish under-lieutenant would be sealed with a gift of *Kuchen*.

At that moment the Graf Joachim came upon the scene in person. The riding crop, without which he was rarely seen, was under his arm. He paused to speak a few low words to one who was leaning negligently against the door of the hangar.

" That little Jewish rat—I think that our opportunity has now arrived, *hein?* "

Without turning his head, the other looked at him sideways beneath lowered eyelashes.

" I think so, too," murmured the Landgrave of Tress.

DISILLUSIONMENT first came to the *Unterleutnant* Emanuel Berg when the squadron commander, now arrayed in helmet and flying coat, but with his goggles raised and the monocle still in his eye, strode over to him and blew a mouthful of cigar smoke into his face.

"*Thy* function, Jew, in this patrol is to act as a decoy."

Perhaps on the usually well-controlled face of the little Jew there appeared a shadow of disappointment, because the Prussian saw fit to emphasise—harshly to emphasise. " A decoy, *verstehst du?* And nothing but a decoy."

" Perfectly, Herr Oberst," he replied.

Graf Joachim drew a map-board from under his arm. " Thy orders are to patrol tranquilly between this point and this—just as though thou wert in the act of taking photographs of the English lines. Patrol at a height of two thousand metres. I and the others of the Staffel will be flying above thee at four thousand

metres. The aim is to induce some English scout formation to attack thee. Therefore I forbid thee to alter course until the last moment, so that I and those with me will have time to dive down on the tails of the enemy and send them to earth. *Verstehst du alles?*"

The *Unterleutnant* clicked his heels and bowed.

"*Ja, Herr Oberst.*"

"Go then to thy machine and proceed at once to the patrol beat. Shouldst thou be attacked before the Staffel is in place above thee, hold the enemy until we arrive. On no account must thou flee."

The squadron commander turned on his heel.

"That was better!" the little Jew told himself. There was to be a chance of fighting after all! And of fighting alone beneath the critical eyes of the whole Staffel! He had changed his mind about this decoy assignment. The fool he had been! This was just the chance he had been wanting! Now he would show them!

He climbed into his grey Fokker triplane, taxied her to the leeward end of the aerodrome, turned into wind and pushed open the throttle. Racing across the frost-powdered turf with engine thundering all out, he held down his nose until the maximum speed had been obtained and then, almost brushing the ground with his left wing-tip, went screaming upwards in a spectacular corkscrew climb. That would show them!

By the time the drab-coloured Fokker triplane piloted by Emanuel Berg had crossed the lines, all the little Jew's strong emotion had left him. It had been replaced by a cold and serene calmness. He felt himself to be at the peak of his self-confidence and ability, ready for anything. Arriving over the landmark which was to be the southern limit of his patrol, he banked right and throttled back to cruising speed.

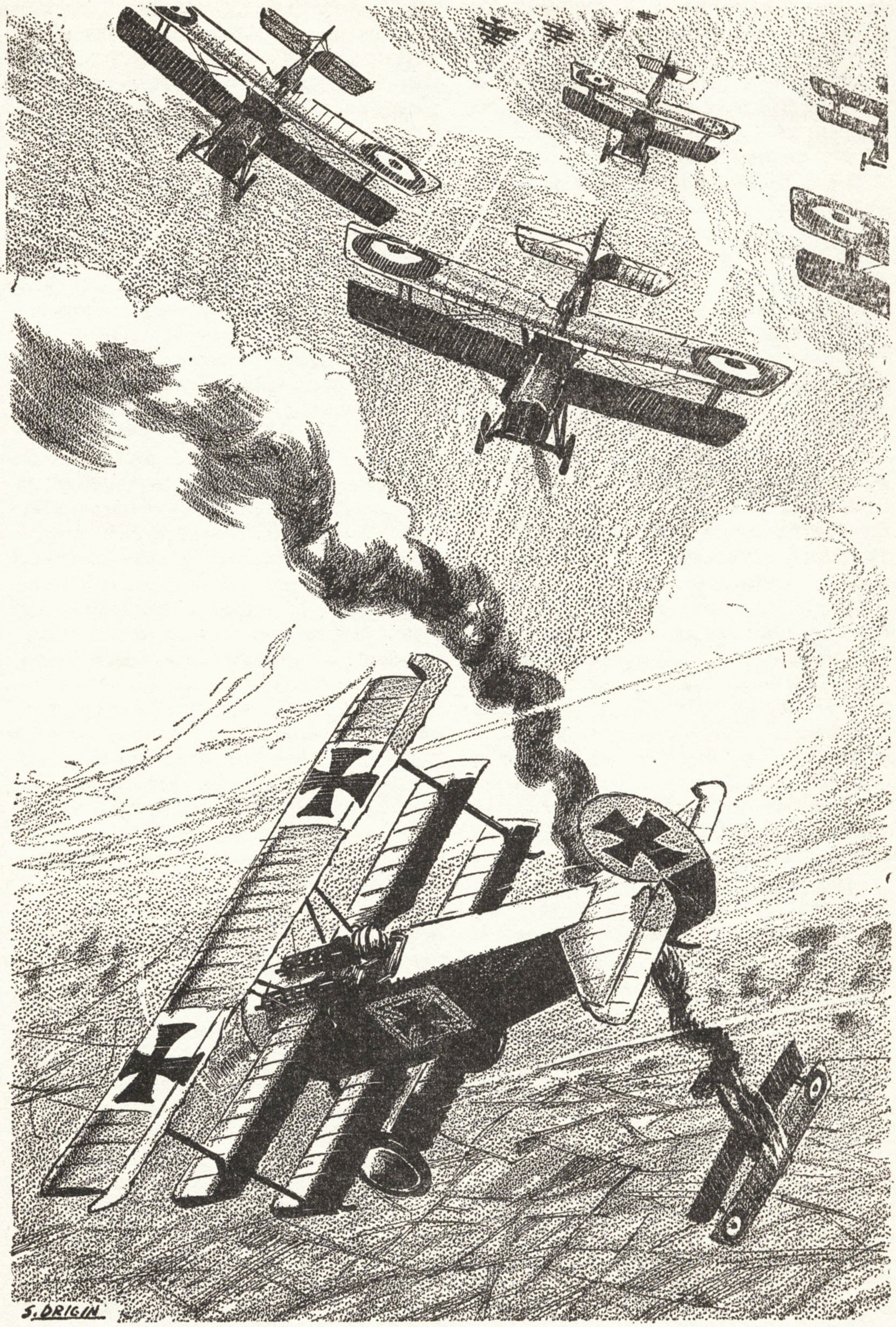
He was pleased with himself, pleased with the way the unconscious part of his mind was co-operating with the conscious. All the little precautionary details he had taught himself to pay heed to in his dozens of imaginary trips over the English lines, he now found himself attending to as a matter of course, like a veteran. His keen eyes searched the sky to the right, to the left, above and below, behind and in front. In those daydreams of his he had taught himself to carry out this business of sky-searching methodically, so that no area of the sky was left unscrutinised and no enemy aircraft could take him unawares.

IT happened that long before Graf Joachim and the main body of the Staffel had climbed to the appointed height of four thousand metres, an Englishman flying a silver-nosed Camel had spotted the drab-coloured Fokker flown by Emanuel Berg and was now racing to do battle. He was approaching the German machine from a blind spot—straight in front, where he was hidden from the Fokker pilot's view by his instrument board—and hoped to send a burst of armour-piercing bullets through the Oberursel engine before the other was aware of his presence.

But that blind spot straight ahead was taken account of by the little Jew's methodical system of look-out; at regular intervals it was his practice to alter course slightly in order to see ahead. In this instance he had spotted the Camel when it was no more than a speck in the sky, and he was ready for it.

But he held on to his course just as though he were unaware of the Englishman's existence. His quick-working brain foresaw what would probably happen. The Camel pilot, thinking that it was with an unsuspecting enemy that he had to deal, would come as close as possible, delaying his fire until long after he had come within effective range in order to make absolutely certain of his kill. But before that——

The little Jew's eye was glued to his gun-sight. Gradually the silver-nosed Camel grew bigger in the lens. The two machines were racing towards each other at a united speed of 220 m.p.h. His fingers trembled over the firing lever. Wait! Wait! Wait!—Now!



. . . a formation of six S.E.5's, their guns jetting flame, was sweeping down on him

Tacca-tacca-tacca-tacca ! stuttered the Spandaus, and a moment later Emanuel Berg was wrenching over the stick to avoid collision. He looked back and saw that the Englishman's propeller was shot to matchwood and that his Camel was racing earthwards with a long streamer of black smoke issuing from the gravity tank. And the unfortunate had never fired a shot.

"*Sieg heil !*" shouted the little Jew.

"*Sieg hei—— !*"

Tacca-tacca-tacca ! Tacca-tacca-tacca !

His joyful exclamations were interrupted by a sudden hail of machine-gun fire from some other quarter and, whipping round his head, he saw to his alarm that he had been taken unawares and that a formation of six S.E.5's was sweeping down on him. He threw his machine into a steep bank to avoid the first bursts of their onslaught, and, as he did so, saw something of which the S.E.5's themselves were blissfully ignorant. Sweeping down on their tails from behind came ten other machines—Fokker triplanes. He gave an exclamation of delight. The Englishmen, too, were about to be taken by surprise. The Squadron of the High-born Horsemen was arriving in all the glory of its rainbow colours. Now there would be fighting !

His orders were clear : hold the enemy until the arrival of the Staffel. That should not be difficult. Oblivious of the streams of lead that were ripping through his fabric and the darting points of tracer that accompanied them, he jockied his machine through the *mélée* and clamped himself on to the tail of one of his antagonists.

The strong wine of his first victory had gone to his head ; he felt himself invincible, a very eagle of the skies. *Tacca-tacca-tacca !* Tracer darted from his guns as the Englishman's back grew big in his sights. *Tacca-tacca-tacca !* And now the S.E.5 was hurtling down out of the fight with a dead pilot at the controls. *Allmachtiger Gott !* Two victories already—on his first flight over the lines ! *Vorwarts !* Now on to the tail of this Englander with the streamers of a formation leader. *Tacca-tacca-tacca !* He bursts into flame as bullets from the Spandaus go smashing through his petrol tank. *Sieg heil !* Glory be to the God of Abraham, Isaak and Jakob—together with the grateful thanks of the Under-lieutenant Emanuel Berg ! Three victories !

Tacca-tacca-tacca ! Tacca-tacca-tacca-tacca ! And now a very inferno of machine-gun fire begins as the Squadron of the *Hochgeborene Reiter* sweeps down ten machines strong, to eat up the remaining Englishmen. *Tacca-tacca-tacca !*

BACK again at the aerodrome ! Back once more with every wish fulfilled ! The return of a conqueror !

With a joyful heart the little Jew, Emanuel Berg, completed his last circle and then nosed down to land. Now at last the days of his misery were at an end. Now at last he would be a recognised character in the squadron. "He may be a Jew" (he could almost hear them saying it), "but he is also a killer of Englishmen, is our *Bergchen.*" He wondered who would be the first to come forward to shake him by the hand, to slap him on the back, to congratulate him on his achievement.

He sideslipped stylishly down over the armoury hut, put down his triplane on the aerodrome with a faultless three-point landing, and taxied with joyous bursts of engine-power up to the hangars. The return of a conqueror ! Not otherwise did David, the son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, return to camp after the slaying of the Philistines. It was true that there would be no Israelitish maidens running out to meet him with timbrels and dances, as in the Sacred History, but doubtless some good fellow would raise a cheer for him. Three victories on his first trip over the lines ! Was it a record ?

But no cheer was raised. He had come in to land last of all (perhaps a little with an eye to stage effect), and many of the officers who had taken part in the patrol had already left the hangars and hurried off to the mess. Others were divesting themselves of their flying-coats in preparation for doing the same. They did not even look at him. That was curious.

No one came forward to shake him by the hand. No one slapped him on the back. No one called him "Bergchen." Not one of them. They took no more notice of him than they had done before. Gradually his heart was sinking, but taking his courage in both hands, he walked into the hangar and hung up his flying-coat on the peg next to the one on which the Baron Kaspar von Tiefenthal was hanging his.

"A splendid fight, *nicht wahr*, Herr Baron?" he remarked in a cheerful voice to the Prussian's broad back.

Baron Kaspar did indeed turn his head, but all that he vouchsafed by way of answer was an icy stare. The little Jew flushed crimson. And yet he had just destroyed three enemy aircraft on his first trip over the lines! This was—incredible! An overwhelming desolation crept into his heart.

Then he caught sight of the staffel commander, the Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach. The familiar riding-crop already back again under his arm, he was talking with the young von Ustarsee of the Pomeranian Light Horse. He was the person to make contact with, the little Jew decided. In his capacity as commander of the squadron, he could hardly fail to say a few words in official recognition of the new pilot's victories. Of course he would!

As though on the way to his hut, Berg walked past him. But, if Graf Joachim noticed him at all, he made no sign of having done so. So, after a decent interval the little Jew turned and, pretending that he had left something in the hangar, walked back past his commanding officer.

But this time the Graf was engaged in conversation with Kurt von Klenkgau of the Bavarian Uhlans, and again he failed to notice his newly blooded pilot. Back in the hangar, Berg felt for an imaginary handkerchief in the pocket of his flying coat and, as soon as he saw von Klenkgau take his leave, he walked past again.

But he was too late. This time it was the young Württemberger Dragoon, Raimund von Meissendamm, who was claiming the attention of the Graf. Back to the hangar went the little Jew, this time at the double, and again began feeling for imaginary handkerchiefs in the pocket of his flying coat. He loitered there until he saw that his commander was disengaged, and then tried again.

This time the Herr Kommandant was alone. He approached him, drew level.

The Graf Joachim may, or may not, have noticed him passing; perhaps his mind was still dealing with the matters that were the subject of his recent conversations. But the fact remained that he removed the butt end of his cigar from his mouth just at that moment, and, to get rid of it, batted it away from him with his riding-crop. Then he began walking quickly over to the mess.

The smouldering cigar-end hit Emanuel Berg full on the cheek.

CHAPTER V

Fate of a Spy

MISERABLY the little Jew sat down on a petrol tin. It was not yet time to go in for his lunch; the other officers had not yet had theirs. He was in despair. The hope that had buoyed him up through all the wretchedness of his life at the squadron—the hope that in the end he would win decent treatment for himself by virtue of his skill as an air fighter—had now vanished. He was dirt beneath their feet, and they intended that he should remain so.

Then a thought brightened him. At least his three victories would be recorded in the Staffel combat-book. They would be set down there in black and white and nobody could take them away from him. Seven more victories like that—only a little more than twice as many—and he would be officially nominated an ace. That was in the regulations and they could not get away from it.

Then, perhaps, later on some high officer going through the records would want to know more about him, would get some inkling of his plight perhaps, and then have him transferred to a Staffel not so exclusively *hochgeboren*. Which reminded him. Later on he must

think about getting confirmation of those three victories. No difficulty about that, of course. Everybody in the formation had witnessed them—everybody.

Three-quarters of an hour later he went in to get his lunch. Smaller, because they were now considerably shrivelled, the three slices of pork were placed in front of him. Patiently he forked them aside.

* * *

Sitting at lunch, the Graf Joachim had leaned sideways to his friend who sat on his right. "Our plan," he said in a low voice, "did not prove noticeably successful this morning."

"Try him then with a special mission," advised the other. "Send him over the other side to drop a spy or land a basket of pigeons. Often they don't come back from a job like that," he added optimistically. "But first, as a precaution, I should give him that little lecture I suggested."

"On—on——?" queried the Graf.

"On the pleasant life led by elderly Jews and Jewesses in concentration camps," murmured his friend the Landgrave of Tress.

THE afternoon patrol provided no worthy incident. At the end of it Emanuel Berg set about the business of collecting confirmations of his victories. He approached first the young Altgraf of Ustarsee.

"Excuse me, but did the noble Altgraf perchance see this morning the fall of an English S.E.5 bearing the streamers of a leader?"

The Pomeranian screwed his monocle into his eye and looked at him coldly.

"Jew, I saw nothing," he said.

Emanuel Berg went up to Prince Blasius of Weisskirch-Stehna-Reissgau of the Imperial *Kürassiere*.

"Excuse me, but did the illustrious Prince perchance see the fall of an English——?"

The princely Cuirassier gave him an icy stare.

"*Jude, ich habe nichts gesehen.*"

He went next to Kurt von Klenkgau.

"Excuse me, but did the *gnädiger Herr* perchance see the fall——?"

The Bavarian grinned at him confidentially.

"Jew, I must be becoming blind, for I saw no such thing." He lighted a cigar and added: "And, if I mistake not, thou wilt find the rest of the Staffel afflicted with the same infirmity. Yet ask them by all means."

In desperation the little Jew went then up to the Graf Franz von Summerhof.

"Herr Graf, I seek confirmation——"

The tall young Saxon Dragoon smiled at him as at a friend.

"I am—most happy to confirm all three of thy victories," he said. "May I also—congratulate thee?" And awkwardly he stretched forth a large hand.

The little Jew flushed with pleasure. It was the first time since the military system had swallowed him that a German in uniform had ever said a kind word to him.

But his pleasure was shortlived. Within the hour the blond young Saxon was standing in front of him again, more awkward even than before. He seemed to have difficulty in getting out what he had to say.

"Berg—Ah, Berg——"

"Herr Graf?" quietly encouraged the little Jew. Already he knew in his heart what was coming.

"I—I—It is that—that they have refused to accept my testimony of thy victories," he stated woodenly.

The quick intuition of the little Jew at once sensed the sympathy which lay behind the bald statement.

"Then let not the Herr Graf be distressed," he said gently. "*Es macht nichts*, and in any case I should never have found a second person to confirm. Think of it no more."

The young Saxon's lips trembled.

"I regret—thou must know that I regret."

The little Jew smiled to ease the awkwardness of the apology.

"*Es macht nichts*," he said again, "it is of no matter."

There was an awkward pause. The young Dragoon seemed unable to say more, and yet unable to take his leave. At last:

"It is—it is an unjust world," he said haltingly.

The little Jew smiled. Actually he was less distressed than the disillusioned young idealist before him.

"*Jawohl*," he agreed gently. "There are times when the world is unjust."

The tall young aristocrat turned away then, and his heart was heavy. But the little Jew was smiling, almost happily. For the first time in his life he had met a German officer who was a gentleman.

IT was at about this time that the French Secret Service on the other side of the lines were successful in tracking down and capturing a certain German spy, a native of Ricquewihr in Alsace.

The court martial found him guilty with no difficulty at all and imposed the death penalty. At the same time it was hinted that any useful piece of military information he had to impart might well earn him the commutation of the death sentence to one of imprisonment for ten years. They gave him three days to think it over.

On the third day, finding him still obstinate and silent, they shook their heads and led him out into the cold courtyard, stepping carefully because of the ice. They stood him against a wall in the crannies of which snow had found lodging, and an officer stepped forward to bind his eyes.

And then, facing the muzzles, he was not so brave. He remembered Ricquewihr in the sunshine and the storks that come back year after year to nest in her sixteenth-century chimneys. His eyes filled with tears. He made a sign to the officer.

"There is a certain field," he muttered. "There is a certain field in which some time this week or the next a German will land in an aeroplane. He will bring with him another basket of pigeons for my use,* which he will hide in a hedge bordering that field. The map reference is such and such.—And may God have mercy on my traitorous soul."

Those words having been spoken, there came a sharp order from the officer. It was followed by a clicking of bolts as rifles were unloaded, and the men of the dismissed firing-squad crowded back into the guard-room, laughing and blowing on their fingers.

* Spies ("agents") working in enemy country frequently sent communications across the line by carrier pigeon. Fresh supplies of these messengers were delivered to them from time to time by aeroplanes that landed secretly by night at some pre-arranged spot.

CHAPTER VI

Special Mission

IT was again the turn of the Lieutenant Kurt von Klenkgau to act as officer-of-the-day, and sitting at a table in the *Staffelsbureau* with a pile of letters to be censored in front of him and an indelible pencil in his hand, Lieutenant Kurt was thoroughly enjoying himself. That indelible pencil made a mark of a wonderful deep violet colour and slipped over the paper with delightful smoothness.

The first score or so of letters had provided no fun at all; they were letters written by mechanics and, as they contained no censorable phrases, no use could be made of that fascinating pencil. And then he picked up a letter addressed to the town of Lübeck which comprised four closely-written pages. "*Ach!*" At last he could bring the lovely violet pencil into play! A grin of delight spread over the face of the Lieutenant Kurt. He seized a ruler.

"*Meine liebste Mutter*," ran the first line of the letter. He left that, but, beginning with the second line, industriously started work with pencil and ruler.

Five minutes went by, and then he surveyed his finished handiwork. Beautifully straight thick lines of a lovely purple hue now adorned both sides of the four sheets of the letter. No writing whatever remained decipherable with the exception of the greeting at the beginning and the signature at the end.

The humorous Kurt sat back rubbing his hands. *Himmel!* Here was a joke to tell round the Staffel! *Was für ein Scherz! Was für ein—— !*

Suddenly the joker looked up with a

start and sprang to his feet. Unnoticed by him, the *Herr Kommandant* had come up behind him and was now looking over his shoulder.

"And this?" rumbled Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach.

"It is a letter of the Jew, *Herr Oberst.*"

"And thou hast found it necessary to obliterate all—all this?" demanded the Prussian screwing his monocle into his eye.

"I deemed it—advisable, *Herr Oberst*," was the answer, and with his tongue in his cheek the censor added: "When there is a possibility of a code being used, one cannot be too careful."

The senior officer grunted his approval. "*Du hast recht gethan.*"

And so it came about that when the little old mother by her fireside in far-off Lübeck put on her spectacles and with trembling hands slit open the longed-for letter from "my son who is in the thick of it," she found nothing to read.

But von Klenkgau's sense of humour had a more far-reaching consequence than that.

SITTING at his desk next morning in a temper fouler than usual, the *Herr Kommandant* pressed a vicious thumb on the bell-push, and to a heel-clicking orderly-room clerk who had arrived at the double, said curtly: "Send me that—send me the *Unterleutnant* Berg." Then he went on writing.

Emanuel Berg was standing before him as quickly as if he had been standing outside the door. He *had* been standing outside the door. After agonised deliberation he had at last mustered up his courage to request the highest authority in the Staffel that the three victories which were his by right should be officially credited to him. But one look at the face of his commanding officer warned him that this was not the right moment. He saluted smartly, at the same time making the stiff little half bow.

"The *Herr Oberst* has done me the honour of sending for me," he said formally.

The Graf Joachim threw down his pen and screwed his monocle into his eye. Then he extended a thick finger.

"*Du, Jude!*" he rumbled: "It has graciously pleased our *allerhöchster* Kaiser in the Fatherland's hour of need to invest no less than two thousand members of thine accursed race with the rank of commissioned officer.* Two thousand snakes in the grass for us good Germans to keep an eye on, *hein?* And for my sins I myself have been plagued with one of them." He paused, sat back, and glowered at the expressionless face of his subaltern.

"Now, Jew," he went on. "While I was here in the *Staffelsbureau* yesterday evening, I noticed that the Leutnant Freiherr von Klenkgau had before him a letter of thine which was so full of military information that practically every line—*every line*—had to be deleted. What hast thou to answer to that, *hein?*"

The little Jew flushed.

"Only that there was no military information of any kind in that letter, *Herr Oberst*," he replied.

"Then why was it considered necessary to delete practically the whole of it?"

The chest of the little *Unterleutnant* heaved. He was picturing the dismay of the *kleine alte Mutter* on receiving such a letter. But his face remained expressionless. "*Das kann ich nicht sagen*—I can give no reason, *Herr Oberst.*"

"To whom was the letter written?"

"To my mother in Lübeck."

Graf Joachim gave a glance at the *Herr Adjutant* seated at his table nearby. Then he asked: "To whom else art thou in the habit of writing these—informative letters?"

"I write only to my mother. She is my only relation."

For a moment the commanding officer drummed with his thick fingers on the desk in front of him. Then he began: "Now listen carefully to me, Jew. It has been pointed out to me more than

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* It was only towards the end of the Great War—and greatly in the face of Junker tradition—that Jews were allowed to hold commissions. Of the half million Jews in Germany, 100,000 fought in the War, 35,000 were decorated for bravery, and 2,000 won commissions. (According to the authority previously quoted.)

once that no person on the whole Western front is in a more favourable position for communicating with the enemy—or deserting to the enemy—than the pilot of a single-seater." He leaned forward and leered into the face of his subaltern. "So I want to warn thee particularly, Jew Berg, that shouldst thou ever play with the idea of deserting to the enemy, the first person to suffer will be—will be——"

The *Herr Adjutant* whipped open a heavy tome fitted with a clasp.

"Rachel Sarah Berg, Jewess, carrying on the business of tobacconist at Hochkönigsmarkstrasse 141, Lübeck," he called out smartly and closed his book with a bang.

"*Gut!* Dost thou know what a concentration camp is like, Jew Berg! Dost thou think that prisoners in those camps are well fed or well treated, Jew Berg? Wouldst thou be happy if thy mother were confined in one, Jew Berg? The answer is 'no,' *hein?* Then take care, Jew Berg—take great care, that whenever thou dost cross the lines thou dost always come back! And when thou art killed—as sooner or later, it is to be hoped, thou wilt be killed—take care that thou art killed in the view of one of thy fellow-pilots. Otherwise, Jew Berg, one might imagine that thou hadst deserted, and what would happen then, *hein?* Why, the Secret Police would immediately call round at—at—at——"

"Hochkönigsmarkstrasse 141, Lübeck," supplied the Adjutant smartly.

"And take into custody the person of—of—of——"

"Rachel-Sarah-Berg, Jewess, carrying on-the-business-of-tobacconist," rattled out the Adjutant.

"And throw her straight into a——"

"Concentration camp!" finished the Adjutant, forgetting himself in his enthusiasm.

THAT same night, while Emanuel Berg was reading in his hut, a mechanic entered with a message. He was to go over to the hangars at once in full flying kit, taking with him his maps and a flashlight. There he was to report to the second-in-command, Captain the Landgrave of Tress.

"A special mission!" the little Jew whispered to himself, when the man had gone. "That is what it will be. For the sake of the little old mother, God send that I return!" He collected his kit and hurriedly left the hut. A bright moon was shining.

As he approached the hangars he heard the ticking-over of an unfamiliar engine and a moment later made out the dark form of a Rumpler two-seater.

The Herr Landgraf stood waiting for him, and beside him a mechanic was stooping over a basket, sprinkling into it grains of maize with the aid of an electric torch. Through the wickerwork the bobbing heads of pigeons could be seen. He clicked his heels to the Landgrave and stood to attention.

"Thou canst fly a Rumpler, I believe?" came the soft voice of the second-in-command.

"*Ja, Herr Hauptmann.*"

"Good. Thou wilt take the one which is waiting ready and fly it across the English lines. At a pinpoint which is written on this paper—it represents a field nineteen miles behind the trenches—thou wilt land and leave in a place of concealment this basket of pigeons. They are for the use of one of our agents at present operating in the English back areas. *Verstehst du alles?*"

"*Alles, Herr Hauptmann.*"

"Go then as soon as thou hast studied thy map," ordered the Landgrave. He was turning away when he thought of something else. "One thing more, *Jude*," he added softly. "Need I mention that thy failure to return from this mission would entail considerable hardship for any relation thou mayest have living in Germany—or shall I be more precise and say 'in the town of Lübeck'?"

The look of mingled anxiety and contempt on the face of Emanuel Berg was concealed by the darkness. He moved into the hangar to study his route. With a pencil he drew the line from "A" to "B," and then carefully studied the landmarks that would pro-

bably be visible on either side. For night-flying on such a night as this, rivers, lakes and railway lines that reflected the moonlight would be excellent landmarks. With relief he noted that the pinpointed field in which he was to leave the pigeon-basket was situated in a sharp bend of the river and would therefore be easy to find. Confidence, and a sense of adventure, came surging in to take the place of anxiety.

* * *

At the moment when the little Jew, Emanuel Berg, was studying his map, a certain captured German spy imprisoned in a French fortress was lying sleepless in his cell. And sometimes, as he stared up through the darkness above his head, he thought of his home at Ricquewihr in Alsace ; and sometimes his tortured brain turned to wondering what manner of man he would be—that unknown fellow-countryman whom he had betrayed to save his own life.

Perhaps to-night he would come gliding down from the dark skies with his basket of pigeons ; perhaps to-morrow ; perhaps he had already fallen into the trap. He did not know ; nor would he ever know.

CEASELESSLY circling above the aerodrome, Emanuel Berg climbed up and up towards the smoky blue vault of the heavens. Not until the illuminated altimeter on his instrument board indicated a height of twenty thousand feet did he turn towards the line.

Before crossing it he throttled back his engine and began to glide. He had been in the air long enough for the roar of the 260 h.p. Mercedes to have become a normal background of sound, and now, with the engine just ticking over, the near-silence gave him an eerie feeling that emphasised more than ever his loneliness. He looked over the side of the cockpit to get his bearings. The earth was a dark blur beneath him on which nothing was visible except the silver ribbons of the rivers, the thin double threads of the railway lines, the momentary flashes of the guns, and the lazy parabolas described by the Very lights that occasionally rose from the trenches.

His entry into enemy territory had been so carefully thought out and executed that so far not a single one of the wandering fingers of the searchlights had found him, and after gliding for less than twenty minutes he was pleased to find himself directly over the sharp bend in the river in which his appointed landing field was situated. He banked round and searched the moonlit countryside below. Yes, that must be the field : " a rectangle with one rounded corner." He was certain of it. Already he felt that his task was accomplished. He switched off the ignition, and now there was no sound except the gentle sighing of the wind through his wires. He circled down.

It was only the second night-landing that he had ever made, but the moon was so bright that he felt that this one offered no difficulty at all. While still well away from the leeward border of the field he banked sharply inwards and glided in, clearing the hedge by a good ten feet. Why, this mission of his was simplicity itself !

Now the ground beneath him ceased to be a moonlit blur and became hurrying grass. He eased back the stick—back—back—further still. And then, suddenly : *Cr-r-rash !* For a split second his world was a whirling universe of splintering wood, and then the upper part of his body shot forward so that his head came into violent contact with the instrument board and he lost consciousness.

When he came to a few moments later, his head was aching badly and had a strange " tight " feeling. He wondered where he was and began feeling about in the darkness with his hands. His arms had a curious feeling of having no weight ; they seemed to rise of their own accord above his head. He let them do so, and suddenly felt between his fingers —grass !

Then his brain bridged the gap to reality and he realised that he was hanging upside down suspended by his safety-belt in the crashed Rumpler. *Lieber Gott !* Then he was down on the English side of the line ! And he would never be able to get back again ! And

the *kleines Mütterchen* would be thrown into a concentration camp ! *O Weh !*

When he had finally succeeded in extricating himself from the inverted cockpit, he got on to his feet and stared about him. The moon was still shining. And he was still alone. He moved about the Rumpler trying to understand the cause of his crash. In doing so he tripped suddenly and fell headlong. Then in a flash he realised everything. The English had wired the field.

BY the time the sun's red rim rose above the misty eastern horizon Emanuel Berg had put a good seven miles between himself and the scene of his crash. In the darkness the going had not been too easy, for he was not unencumbered. Besides his maps, he carried in the crook of one arm two live pigeons, their wings bound with strips of fabric torn from the Rumpler ; while from the belt of his flying coat dangled two dead ones, which he intended for food during the period of waiting. The other eight he had liberated.

In the twilight of dawn he had found what he wanted : a broad flat field with no buildings in sight, and now he sat down on a fallen log and carefully pin-pointed its position on his map.

Then, after taking from his pocket the thin paper, the indelible pencil and other accessories he had found in the pigeon basket, he wrote out a message to his Staffel commander, stating his predicament, giving the pinpoint of the new landing field, and requesting to be fetched. The thin paper was rolled and carefully slid into its aluminium cylinder, and a moment later one of his captive messengers was fluttering up through the bare branches of his hiding-place. Then Emanuel Berg settled down to wait.

He waited one day, and then one day more. Without his flying coat and muffler he would have frozen.

CHAPTER VII

Saga of a Saxon

IN the *Staffelsbureau* of the *Hochgeborene Reiter* two men were alone.

Downward in his two hands one of them was holding a scrap of thin paper. It was the appeal for help that had just arrived from beyond the English lines. From under his veiled eyes he watched the face of his Staffel commander, a thin smile on his lips. His whole attitude was a question.

To this question the Graf Joachim von Grünstrom zu Lauterbach nodded without hesitation an affirmative, supporting it with the one word "*Ja.*"

At once the two hands of the other tore the scrap of paper across, and, after crumpling it into a ball, thrust it into the stove.

" We are well rid of him," grunted the Staffel-commander.

" Always one must think first of the Squadron," murmured his friend, the Landgrave of Tress.

At the dawn of his third day in enemy territory the spirits of Emanuel Berg were at their lowest ebb. As a last desperate resource he wrote out another message and attached it to his only remaining pigeon. Then, with a prayer on his lips, he watched the bird fluttering upwards through the branches. Its wing-beats were feeble ; like its master, it was under-nourished.

But even if it reached its destination, the little Jew had no great hope that the message it bore would reach the person intended—for the reason that it was not addressed to the Staffel-commander. Still, it was his last chance—and the last chance of the *kleines Mütterchen.*

AT the sound of the slow rumbling of cart wheels, a small figure in a brown flying-coat that had been despondently sitting on the bank, head clasped in hands, rose wearily and moved out of sight behind a hedge. Something was coming down the lane.

The fugitive waited for the farm-cart to pass, and, when he saw that it was loaded with swedes and that the blue-smocked French peasant was trudging head down a little ahead of his horse, he stepped noiselessly from cover, appropriated three of the plumpest roots from the tailboard, and slipped back into hiding.

The old horse plodded on, its breath clearly visible in the frosty air, the cart behind it rumbling and creaking as its wheels crunched the ice that had formed in the ruts.

On the face of the fugitive there was now five days' growth of beard. For five days Emanuel Berg had been living this hand-to-mouth existence—living on what he could steal. Sometimes at dead of night he broke into a farmhouse (he had acquired a saucepan that way) ; sometimes he raided a hen-house ; sometimes he milked a cow in its byre. But his depredations never took him far from the landing-field.

He had eaten his mid-day meal of boiled swedes at the little camp he had made beside a partially frozen brook, and was just preparing for an hour's sleep, when overhead he heard the drone of an aeroplane engine that seemed suddenly familiar to him. Eagerly he ran out into the open and looked up. Surely it was an Oberursel ! *Gott in Himmel*, yes ! A Fokker triplane flying at a height of no more than a thousand feet was approaching.

Leaving his precious saucepan and the remaining swede to look after themselves he raced out into the middle of his chosen landing-field. Here he whipped off his flying-coat and, conspicuous in the uniform of a German officer, began waving the coat like a shipwrecked mariner.

He gave a shout of delight as the pilot banked round for a closer inspection of the ground below him. Then the engine was shut off completely and the Fokker began gliding towards the leeward end of the field.

It was then, just as its wings tilted for the last turn, that the little Jew recognised the gorgeous colour pattern with which the triplane was decorated, and a sudden shout of joy and thankfulness broke over him, for the pilot of that Fokker was neither von Klenkgau, nor von Tiefenthal, nor von Ustarsee, but a friend. *Gott sei Dank !* Now everything was all right. *Ach ! Gott sei Dank !*"

He ran to the leeward end of the field, to the place where he estimated that the triplane would roll to a halt, and then turned to wait.

Now she was nosing down to land, gliding swiftly towards him. In a moment her wheels would kiss the ground ; in a moment her tail would sink ; in a moment she would be trundling to a halt ; in a moment——

Ach ! Himmel ! With a shriek of horror the little Jew suddenly broke into a run and went racing forward towards the fast gliding triplane, waving his arms and pointing, frantically urging the Fokker pilot to look behind him.

And well he might.

Yowhoo-oo-ool ! Tacca-tacca-tacca ! Tacca-tacca-tacca-tacca !

Sweeping down almost vertically from the sky to mop up the lone Fokker came a formation of six British Camels, their engines thundering all-out, their guns jetting flame. *Tacca-tacca-tacca !*

The little Jew flung himself flat to avoid being cut in two by the triplane's right wing-tip. Only just in time, for with a swift movement the German pilot had slammed forward the throttle-lever. With a sudden bellow of engine power the slow-flickering propeller was whirled in a trice to invisibility, and the Fokker went racing forward for a few seconds on a level keel. Then she rose to clear the hedge and went screaming upwards.

HAVING zoomed after their dive, the Camels had scattered. Now they looked round for their victim. But, instead of seeing a Fokker triplane racing helter-skelter for the line, they had the disconcerting experience of seeing one of their number falling to the ground in flames.

The dauntless German had screamed round in a vertical bank and poured a deadly burst into him while still only a hundred feet from the ground. Now he was nosing upwards and heading away from them, but it was evident that he had no intention of fleeing ; he merely wished to improve his strategic position. For no sooner did two of the Camels go streaking after him than he came whirling round again with that same disconcert-

ingly vertical bank and with a shattering burst of fire from his Spandaus sent one of them down severely disabled.

"God!" muttered one of the Englishmen in unwilling admiration. "There's flying for you! He's a demon, this fellow."

A minute later he himself was called upon to defend his life, and failed to do so. After a swift bout of tail-chasing the redoubtable Fokker pilot found his unprotected back with a grouping of bullets that silenced him for ever.

"*Drei!*" shrieked the little Jew, Emanuel Berg, executing a wild dance in the ecstasy of his delight. "Three! Three of them! *Wunderbar!*"

IT now seemed evident that the German pilot considered that the period of surprises was at an end. At a height of six hundred feet he was circling the field, but climbing at the optimum angle the whole time. Up and up the Fokker roared, the three Camels in pursuit. ("He fears to go far lest he lose me," whispered the little Jew gratefully.)

Up at three thousand feet the Camels began to overhaul him, and when machine-gun fire began to break from them again he whirled round to face them, and dog-fighting was resumed. *Tacca-tacca-tacca!* The four machines went milling round like gnats on a summer's evening. Watching enthralled, the little fugitive saw that not one of the Englishmen was a match for his countryman.

But in the end all three of them together proved more than a match. Suddenly, after a prolonged rattle of machine-gun fire from one of the Camels which had managed to straddle the Fokker's tail, the German machine suddenly heeled over in a spin and came tumbling out of the sky like a stricken bird.

"*Lieber Gott!*" With a cry of anguish the little Jew saw that a dark plume of smoke was smirching the sky in its wake. Fire!

Down, down, down came the Fokker triplane, hurtling down like a blazing comet through three thousand feet of screaming void. "*Allmächtiger Gott,*" wailed the little Jew, "why, of all these *Hochgeborene*, must it be just this one? Show forth Thy mercy on this, the most worthy of all the *Goyim.*"

For a moment it appeared that his prayer was going to be answered. Still blazing fiercely, the Fokker steadied out of its spin, just when she seemed about to bury her engine six feet in the ground. Her pilot pulled back the stick, flung his machine into a sideslip to keep the flames from his body, and crashed into some bushes three fields away. With a hideous splintering, his left wings folded up into a ball.

Ashen-faced, the little Jew started forward. Would he be in time to extricate the pilot before the tank exploded? He pushed his way frantically through a hedge, raced through a small meadow, hurled himself over a stile.

The cockpit of the Fokker was lying on its side. Already the flames were licking round it. He threw himself on his knees and, choking with smoke, felt for the safety belt and unlatched it. The long body of Franz von Summerhof sprawled on the ground.

At any moment the tank might explode. Ruthlessly the little Jew forced him to his feet and supported him. Together they tottered a distance of two hundred feet and then the young Graf collapsed.

Emanuel Berg looked down at himself then, and saw that his sleeves were dark and that his hands were crimson and sticky. He realised that, though he had cheated the flames of their victim, he had failed to save the valiant pilot's life. The young Dragoon had taken a grouping of bullets through the back and his minutes were numbered. Already his soul was sliding down the dark tides of death.

"Berg—Berg——"

"Herr Graf?" The little Jew was on his knees.

The dying Saxon signed to him to bend closer, and then through blackened lips whispered an inadequate phrase that he had uttered once before.

"I regret—thou must know—that I regret."

And Emanuel Berg, blinking back the tears, understood to what he was referring and pressed his hand. "*Das macht nichts ;* it is because of thee that I am sorry."

Then, hand clasped in hand, the Jew and the Gentile waited for the end. Until Franz, Graf von Summerhof und von Niederthal, vanquisher of fifteen Englishmen, at the last himself done to death while fighting against overwhelming odds, passed on his last dark journey ; and doubtless all the trumpets sounded for him on the Other Side.

CHAPTER VIII
At the Eleventh Hour

THERE was now no longer any point in Emanuel Berg's remaining in the vicinity of the landing-field he had chosen ; no one would ever come to fetch him now. The little Jew became a wanderer. Almost every night as he lay in some French farmer's barn or outhouse, he dreamed of the little old mother enduring the horrors of a concentration camp, and each morning he woke up more determined than ever to get back to the German side of the line.

There was only one way of doing that. He had thought it all out. The only possible way was to find an English aerodrome and lie up in hiding beside it until an opportunity arose for stealing an aeroplane. If he could achieve that, the rest would be simple.

He wandered for days and days, living just above starvation level, and whenever he saw an aeroplane in the sky he would climb the nearest eminence and watch it till it was a mere speck, hoping to see its landing-place. But no aeroplane that he ever saw circled down to land within his limited horizon. In despair he trudged on, keeping to the lanes as much as possible and slipping behind a hedge whenever he sighted another human being.

Once he was almost caught.

It was nearly nine o'clock on a cold morning, and, while he was picking his way through a forest his eye was suddenly caught by the glint of steel. At once he halted in his tracks and then sank down on all fours. Peering ahead of him between the stems of a briar bush, he made out the sky-blue uniform of a French *poilu* standing on sentry duty.

Without curiosity he turned and crept silently back the way he had come.

In a way this was a pity. Because, had he not turned back at the sight of that fixed bayonet, the little Jew, Emanuel Berg, might have seen something well worth seeing.

For beyond the sentry was a clearing in the forest (it was the Forêt de Compiègne), and through that clearing ran two railway tracks, on each of which stood a stationary train. Both trains were largely composed of saloon carriages. The whole atmosphere of the clearing was charged with expectancy, so that the cordon of sentries found it difficult not to look back ; while the two engine-drivers were constantly poking their heads out of their cabs and furtively glancing down their respective trains. Beyond that there was no life.

Then, at the precise moment when the clocks of all the churches and cathedrals of France and Germany began crashing out nine strokes, five men with bowed shoulders and haggard faces stepped down from one of the trains and climbed up into the other. Shepherded by a French staff-officer, they filed into the principal saloon carriage, dejection in every step.

Here, very stern and solemn, two men rose to their feet. One was a dapper little French general, by name, Ferdinand Foch ; the other wore the blue and gold of the British Navy. This was Sir Roger Wemyss. They represented respectively the land forces and the sea forces of the armed might of the civilised world.

After unsmiling introductions had been effected, the five dejected men from the other train were asked to be seated, and the dapper little Frenchman spoke.

"*Messieurs*, what do you want of me ? What is the purpose of your visit ? "

The five visitors looked disconcerted—as though they had expected some other kind of reception. Then one of their number haltingly mumbled an answer.

"We seek to know the conditions under which the Allied and Associated Powers will grant an armistice."

This answer, it seemed, was expected, for without replying, the dapper little Frenchman pressed a bell-push, and immediately a staff-officer appeared and began to read the contents of a long manuscript.

During this recitation the faces of the visitors became more and more despondent, and from time to time they looked almost pleadingly at the British Admiral, now playing with his monocle. But the hour was the hour of France, and the dominant personality of the assembly was the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in the Field. With him the Englishman was in complete agreement. The despondent ones cast their pleading looks at him in vain. He had seen what a little drowned hospital nurse looks like when she is lifted into a boat five days after her ship has been torpedoed. Therefore, he hardened his heart, and played with his monocle.

The morning ended with the departure of the five visitors. They would consult their Government. The day was November 8th.

BUT Emanuel Berg, the little Jew serving in the Imperial Air Service, was unaware of all this—though he was turning his back on what was perhaps the most momentous historical event since a certain Friday one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five years before, when, at the nod of his centurion, a Roman soldier in the Province of Judæa knelt to hammer in three nails.

He trudged on his way. And another day dawned, and another day after that, and each night in his fitful sleep he dreamed of the little old mother in a concentration camp. Always it was the same dream.

It was on the thirteenth day of his exile that he saw the Rumpler biplane approaching. It passed close over his head at a height of only two hundred feet, and when he saw that it was his own machine, his heart gave a great bound. The English must have repaired it, and now one of their officers was trying it out. Quickly he climbed a bank to watch the direction that it took, and saw that it nosed down to land a matter of fifteen kilometres away. At long last his luck had turned !

After tramping all day, he arrived in the late afternoon at an aerodrome, and lying on his stomach behind a hedge, he examined the lie of the land. Again luck was with him ; the hangars were so packed with British machines that there was no room for the grey Rumpler, which stood out in the open. He settled down to wait for his opportunity.

And as he waited and watched he became more and more astonished. Never had he imagined that the English were so lazy and undisciplined. The mechanics were laughing and playing like schoolboys. Here a group was playing leap-frog ; further off another group of men were kicking a football at each other ; while those in a third group, for no reason at all, were just laughing and pushing each other about. And they did not stop pushing each other about even when an officer came along. In fact nobody seemed to take any notice of him. Which was strange.

And then one of the footballers, a big corporal whom the others addressed as "Solly," and whom Emanuel Berg easily recognised as one of his own race, kicked the ball hard to a comrade, who failed to trap it. The ball ran after the officer and bounced up against the seat of his trousers. The little Jew caught his breath, expecting an explosion of wrath. But all that happened was that Corporal Solomon Cohen called out, "Sorry, sir !" and the British officer, instead of calling him to him and knocking him unconscious, just laughed and kicked the ball back to him.

It was that incident that decided the little Jew that everyone on the aerodrome was mad. And when, after their dinner, all the officers came tumbling out of the mess with signal pistols in their hands and began shooting coloured lights up into the darkness as fast as they could reload, he was convinced of it. Surely there must be straw in the hair of such

a Staffel-commander ! *Himmel !* What waste of war material !

He waited till all was quiet again and then, his heart beating very fast, strolled negligently towards the Rumpler. As though out of idle curiosity, he peered into the moon-lit cockpit. *Gott sei Dank !* The tank was more than half full. He placed one foot in the mounting-step and was just cocking the other over the side of the fuselage, when to his horror it was firmly gripped from behind, and he was forced to drop back on to the ground.

"Not so fast !" said the voice of Corporal Solomon Cohen.

TEN minutes later two people, a big man and a small one, were sitting on the moonlit aerodrome conversing in fluent Yiddish. Emanuel Berg was sitting down because he was so mentally overwhelmed that in his weak state he was unable to stand on his legs. The other was sitting to keep him company.

"Little brother, thou dost astound me !" repeated Corporal Solly for the third time, looking compassionately on his fellow-Jew.

Berg, who for nearly a fortnight had not spoken to a single human being with the exception of the dying von Summerhof, had been acquainted with many bewildering facts ; while the new-found friend had been taken completely into his confidence and had heard all about the little old mother.

"Didst thou then guess nothing from the fireworks of joy which we sent up to-night, little brother ? It was at eleven o'clock this morning that the guns ceased fire, and now the war is over. The German armies are falling back beyond the Rhine ; the Kaiser had fled to Holland ; and everywhere the *Hochgeborene* are discredited and in flight. Only the old lion, Hindenburg, stays at his post to supervise the retreat." He threw a long arm round the shoulders of the little fugitive. "As for thy mother, all will be well with her. Fear not. German militarism is dead for ever. Little brother, the world is free !"

THE STORY BEHIND THE COVER :

A FORMIDABLE NEW HIGH-SPEED BOMBER

Large Numbers of the Handley Page Hampden are now being built for the Re-Equipment of the Royal Air Force

CLAIMED to be one of the fastest and most formidable bombers of its type in the world to-day, the Handley Page Hampden is strikingly portrayed in this month's notable cover painting by S. R. Drigin.

A mid-wing monoplane of unusual appearance, the Hampden, or H.P. Type 52, is now being produced in quantity for the Royal Air Force, and a number have already been supplied to Service squadrons. The aeroplane is built entirely of metal and carries its military load and crew of four in the forepart of the fuselage, which is deep and narrow, while the rear section serves simply as a boom to carry the tail unit.

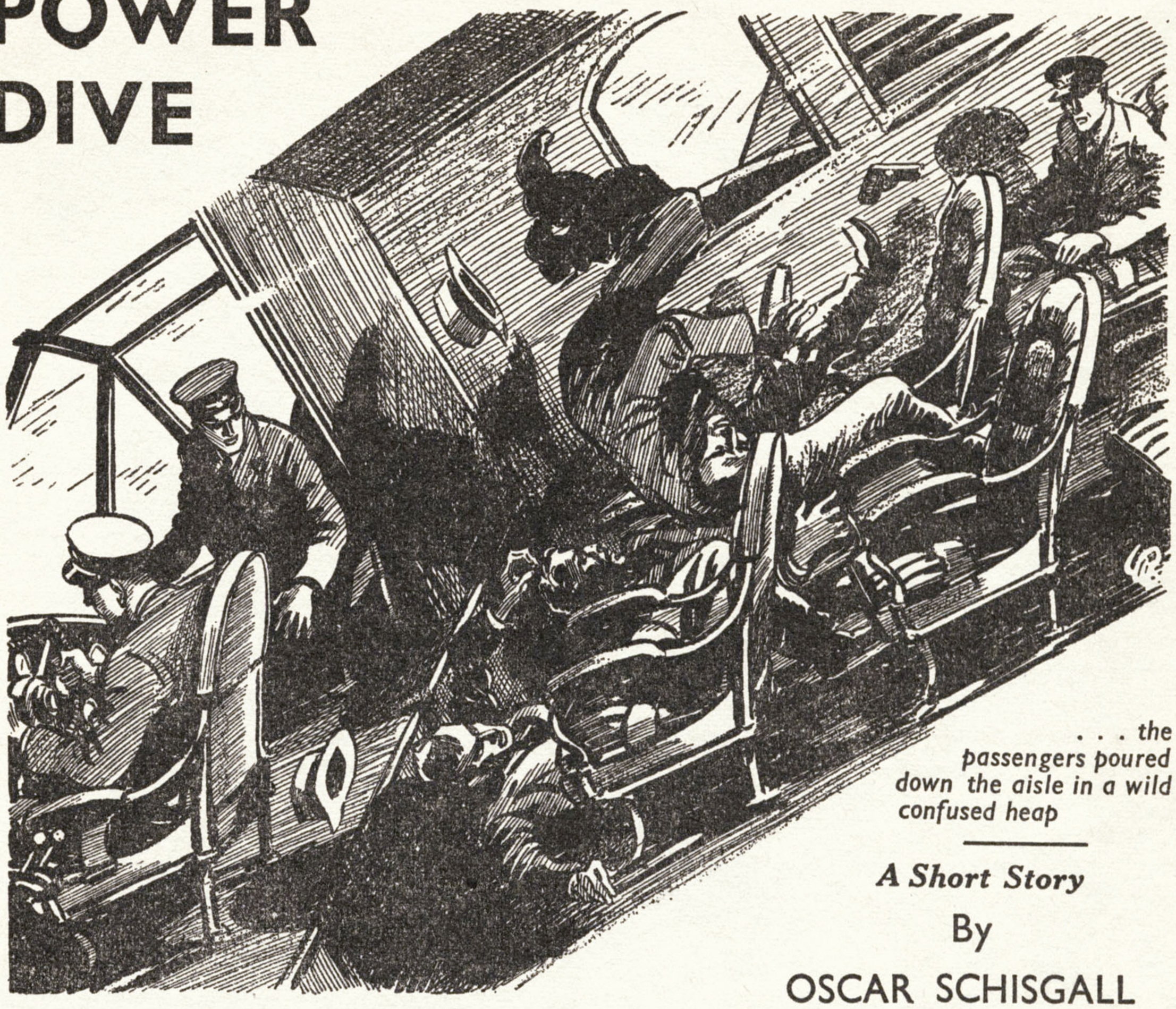
Construction is of the "stressed skin" type, in which the metal outer covering of wings and fuselage bears a great part of the loads and stresses sustained in flight. Flush riveting makes the "skin" perfectly smooth, and, together with the excellent streamline form of the fuselage, careful engine cowling and fully retractile undercarriage reduces head resistance in flight to an exceptionally low figure. Wide speed range, implying slow flying under full control and ability to operate from small fields is ensured by the extensive equipment of Handley Page wing slots and flaps. The power-plant consists of two Bristol Pegasus XVIII engines with a maximum combined output of 1,960 h.p.

London to Stockholm in 5 hours

DETAILS of the Hampden's performance may not yet be published, but three of these aircraft recently sold to the Swedish Government were flown non-stop from London to Stockholm, a distance of approximately 1,100 miles, in five hours' flying time. Further, Sir Kingsley Wood, Secretary of State for Air, has publicly revealed that the Hampden, though smaller than its immediate predecessor in the Service, the 200 m.p.h. Harrow, can carry a heavier load over a longer distance and at a much higher speed.

A modified version of the Hampden, called the Hereford, is also under construction, its chief point of difference being its power-plant, which consists of two Napier Dagger 1,000 h.p. H-shaped air-cooled engines.

POWER DIVE



. . . the passengers poured down the aisle in a wild confused heap

A Short Story

By

OSCAR SCHISGALL

WE took-off from Barranquilla with only three passengers. A party of five more had made reservations, filling the seaplane, but they hadn't arrived at the airport. And so, operating on schedule, we had to leave without them.

It was my first flight as co-pilot with Bill Hornay. I didn't know much about him, except the rumour that he'd broken with a rich and shocked family to take this job as a sky chauffeur. He looked all right—big of body, strong of face, with a competent set to his lips. And he seemed to know his way along the edge of these Andes. But also—and this puzzled me from the outset—he seemed always to have some secret worry.

We flew in silence, save for the periodical radio reports, until Hornay nodded jerkily to the mountains at our left. "That's where my father's copper mines lie," he said. "Every time I fly near them I get homesick."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

He laughed, but there wasn't much humour in the sound.

"Copper concessions have to be protected," he said. "I was meant to be the family's private ambassador down here. Attending official dinners and dances and doing a lot of entertaining to keep the Hornay name in the good graces of the local government."

"Sounds like a nice job," I said.

"Not for me. I wanted to be on my own. I wanted to fly. So I got this berth. That was five years ago, and—and my father hasn't talked to me since. He couldn't understand my wanting to travel my own road instead of being his—ambassador."

A queer yearning had come into his voice, and I guessed suddenly how Bill Hornay ached for a chance to return to

his family—without giving up his own life.

"Five years," I said slowly, "must have changed your father's feelings a little."

Again he laughed in that brief, mirthless way. "Nothing can change his feelings. Nothing but my quitting this job. And I won't do that."

IT was then that the panel in the door behind us slid open, and I turned to see the steward's face, white and terrified. The three passengers—Latins with oily black hair and chocolate complexions—were standing behind him. Two of them, I saw, gripped automatics, and my heart zoomed like a skyrocket into my throat.

"These men——" the steward began, choking on the words.

He was shoved aside. A muscular face glowered in at us. The man was about fifty. He spoke fairly good English and he emphasised his words with the muzzle of the automatic.

"*Amigos*," he said, "if you do what I tell you there will be no trouble. If not—these two men are pilots. I can put bullets into your heads right now, and my friends will take the 'plane where we want to go. Is it understood?"

I sat paralysed. Bill Hornay, his face losing colour, said choppily. "What do you want?"

"Instead of flying to Bogota, you will turn east and land us on Lake Antilla. I will direct you. And you will not communicate with anyone by radio."

Bill looked at the automatic. His face became rocky. Then he nodded and said to the steward, "We don't seem to have much choice, Bert. Go back and strap yourself into a seat, where you'll be out of these gentlemen's way."

The man with the heavy countenance snapped, "You will do as I tell you?"

"Sure," said Bill. "Think I want a bullet in my head?"

I SAW the steward sway back along the aisle. He collapsed in a seat. The three passengers remained standing behind us. As we banked and headed east my heart banged.

"They must have pulled the old stunt," Bill said to me. "Those other five reservations were fakes, just so these three mugs could have the 'plane to themselves."

"Any idea who they are?" I asked, and my voice wasn't very steady.

"No. They probably robbed a bank or something at Barranquilla, and they're using us for the getaway. Chances are that when we land and they don't need us any more they'll pump bullets into our heads—so we can't fly back and report where we dropped them. Nice going, hey, kid?"

I must have looked as scared as I felt. "Yeah nice," I said huskily. "What—what'll we do?"

He didn't reply for fully five minutes. We droned on over the mountains. Then he grated, "Watch this, kid. Hang on to your seat and watch."

Before I realised what he had in mind he lifted the seaplane's nose towards the clouds. It was so sudden a change of direction that it almost broke my neck; so steep and crazy a climb that I fell back and yelled.

Behind me there were shrieks. A gun cracked and something clanged on metal over my head. I looked around to see the three passengers tumbling down the aisle as if they were diving into a well. And beside me Bill sat grinning savagely.

"Steward all right?" he asked.

"Strapped in his seat!"

"Good. Hold your hat on, kid. Here we go again."

The seaplane abruptly nosed over and went down in a roaring power dive that was almost vertical. Still gaping back, I saw the three passengers poured down the length of the aisle. They crashed behind us in a wild, confused heap. They'd lost their automatics. All you saw were waving arms and legs.

Before they could ever begin to rise, Bill Hornay repeated the performance. He did it again and again, the seaplane rising up and plunging down like a porpoise. Within two minutes the men lay bruised and unconscious, one bleeding pretty freely.

"Holy smoke!" I gasped, regaining my breath. "What the——"

"That's that," Bill said, levelling off. He pointed the seaplane's nose back to our normal route for Bogota. "Take her, kid. I'll go back and tie up those mugs with safety belts."

WHEN we landed at Bogota for a twenty-minute stop we discovered the three men weren't bank robbers or anything of the kind. The airport officials recognised them at once—with a great deal of excited, wild-eyed yammering.

They were, we learned, the leaders of the Maracca revolutionary party. Emilio Maracca himself, who wanted to be Dictator, was among them—the muscular one who had given us orders to head for Lake Antilla. And by delivering them to the authorities we had, it seemed, cut the heart out of an insurrection that was to have begun in two days.

"Boy," I said to Bill Hornay when we flew on for Guayaquil, "you'll get a medal or something for this!"

But all he got was a cablegram. It was waiting for him when we returned to Barranquilla. Bill stood staring at it with stunned eyes. He must have read it half a dozen times before he finally passed it on to me. He didn't talk. Maybe he couldn't just then. I took the paper and read:

"Great work Stop Please come home so we can shake hands and end feud before you return to your flying Stop Did you know Maracca had threatened to revoke all foreign concessions and drive us out of country if he came to power Stop Always knew I needed a son to represent our interests down there Stop Love Dad."

WÜSTHOFF'S LAST COMBAT

A Participant's Account of a Memorable Dogfight

SIR,—In view of the interest recently shown in your correspondence columns concerning the defeat of the German "ace," Kurt Wüsthoff, you may like to have the following account of as much of the engagement as I saw. This particular encounter stands out very vividly in my memory, and I have checked the date and time of the engagement with my "Pilot's Flying Log Book" (Army Book 425).

At 11 a.m. on June 17th, 1918, thirteen of 24 Squadron's machines took-off from Conteville aerodrome on an Offensive Patrol. I was flying S.E.5a No. D.279 on the left of Captain I. D. R. MacDonald, who was leading "A" Flight.

We climbed steadily until we had reached 12,000 ft., and then turned east over Villers Bretonneau. In no time I appeared to be in a mass of whirling S.E.'s and D.7's. I had, as usual, not expected any trouble on our side of the line, and did not see the D.7's until they were among us. Below me I saw a D.7 on MacDonald's tail, but even as I looked he was shaken off and turned east.

Glancing up I saw one of our new pilots flying dead straight to the east of the mêlée—about 500 ft. above me—as if there were no war on, while two D.7's were diving on him.

I immediately zoomed up and made for the foremost D.7. As I got within range and to his level, he flattened out dead on the tail of the S.E., only 50 yards behind him. I was approaching from the west, while the D.7 flew dead across my nose from north to south. There was no time to lose. Although still about 100-150 yards from the D.7, I took careful aim, allowing maximum deflection, and pressed both gun-trips. He immediately kicked over in a half-roll, and continued going down in a series of half-rolls, apparently without engine. I did not follow him down as he was going straight into the dog-fight below us, but followed the second D.7 which had made off as soon as his companion had gone down. I chased him some distance over the lines, but, as he had the height of me to begin with, failed to overtake him, and found myself alone in the air.

On landing at Conteville my left wheel struck a hole and came off. I saw it roll ahead of my S.E. and waited for the crash. The left wing struck the ground, the machine went over on to its back, and No. D.279 was a complete write-off. This undignified landing occurred at 1.15 p.m.

When I had sorted myself out and reached the Squadron Office, all combat reports had been made out. Three pilots had claimed a share in a D.7 down in our side of the line, and had been credited with it, as they had followed it down and forced it to land.

In my report I stated that I had shot a D.7 off the tail of one of our S.E.'s and that he had gone down in a series of half-rolls. I had not been able to watch him for long, so did not claim him, as there were already three claimants.

When Wüsthoff was visited in hospital he stated that the first S.E. to attack him had got him. The first burst from the S.E. had stopped his engine and wounded him. I understood that two bullets had struck him in the legs.

When his machine was brought to Conteville, there was a row of bullet holes on the right side, along the engine and as far as the cockpit.

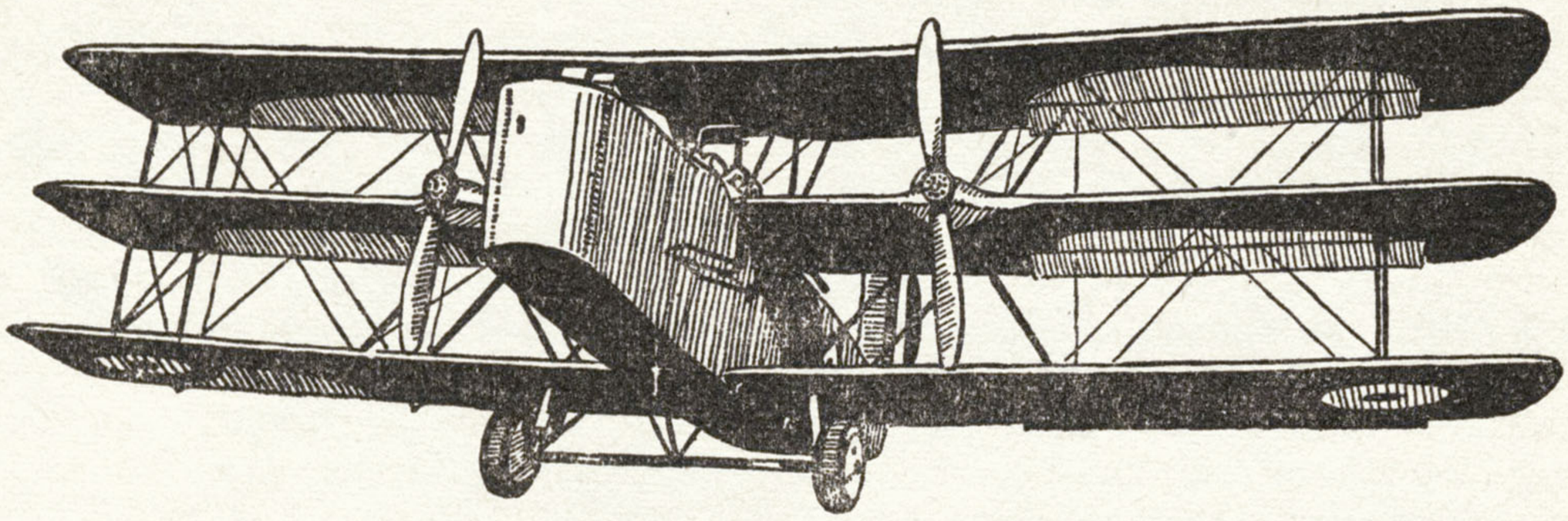
He was officially credited to Captain I. D. R. MacDonald, Captain G. O. Johnson and Lieutenant (afterwards Captain) H. D. Barton.

If they had not forced him down he may have been able to glide back to his own lines, and may have done yet more damage to the Allied cause a month or two later.—Yours etc.

J. H. SOUTHEY.

Colesberg, C.P.,
South Africa.

BRITAIN'S WARPLANES OF THE PAST—



THE PARNALL POSSUM

BUILT to the order of the Air Ministry, the Parnall Possum was an experimental design for testing the merits of a centrally placed engine unit. A single 450 h.p. Napier Lion engine was installed in the fuselage and drove the airscrews out on the wings through bevel boxes and driving shafts which were neatly concealed within the leading edge of the middle wing.

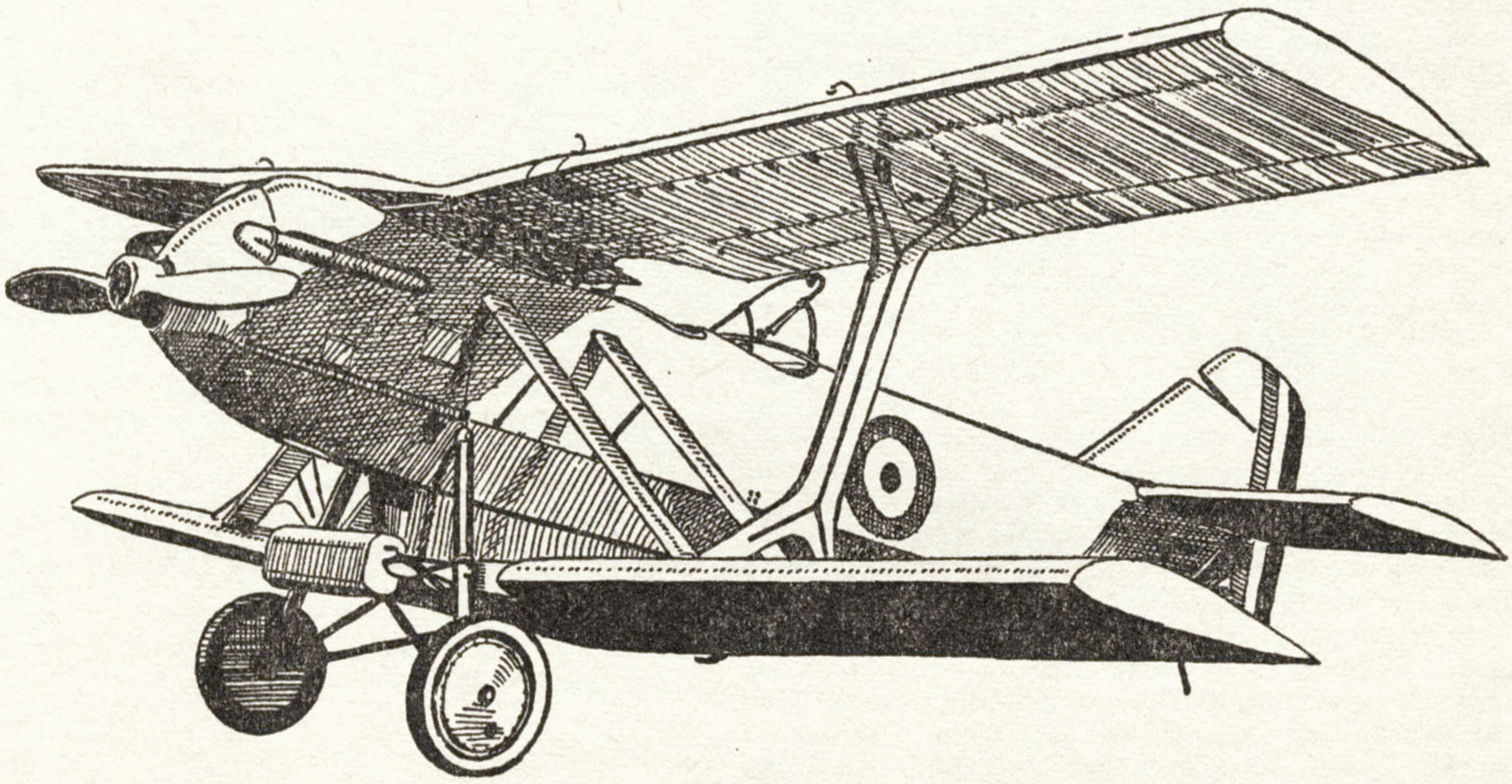
Advantages, it was claimed, were that pilot and observer had as good a forward and downward view as in a normal single-engined machine and that manœuvrability was enhanced by the absence of any slipstream over the fuselage. The machine gave very promising results on trial, but, since the experiment was not developed, the advantages were presumably not great enough to outweigh the increase in weight caused by the geared drives.

The Possum carried a crew of three, with an engineer situated in a rear cockpit behind the engine. Twin radiators were hinged to the sides of the fuselage and could be wound out to increase cooling. Span was 46 ft., length 39 ft., and height 13 ft. 9 in.

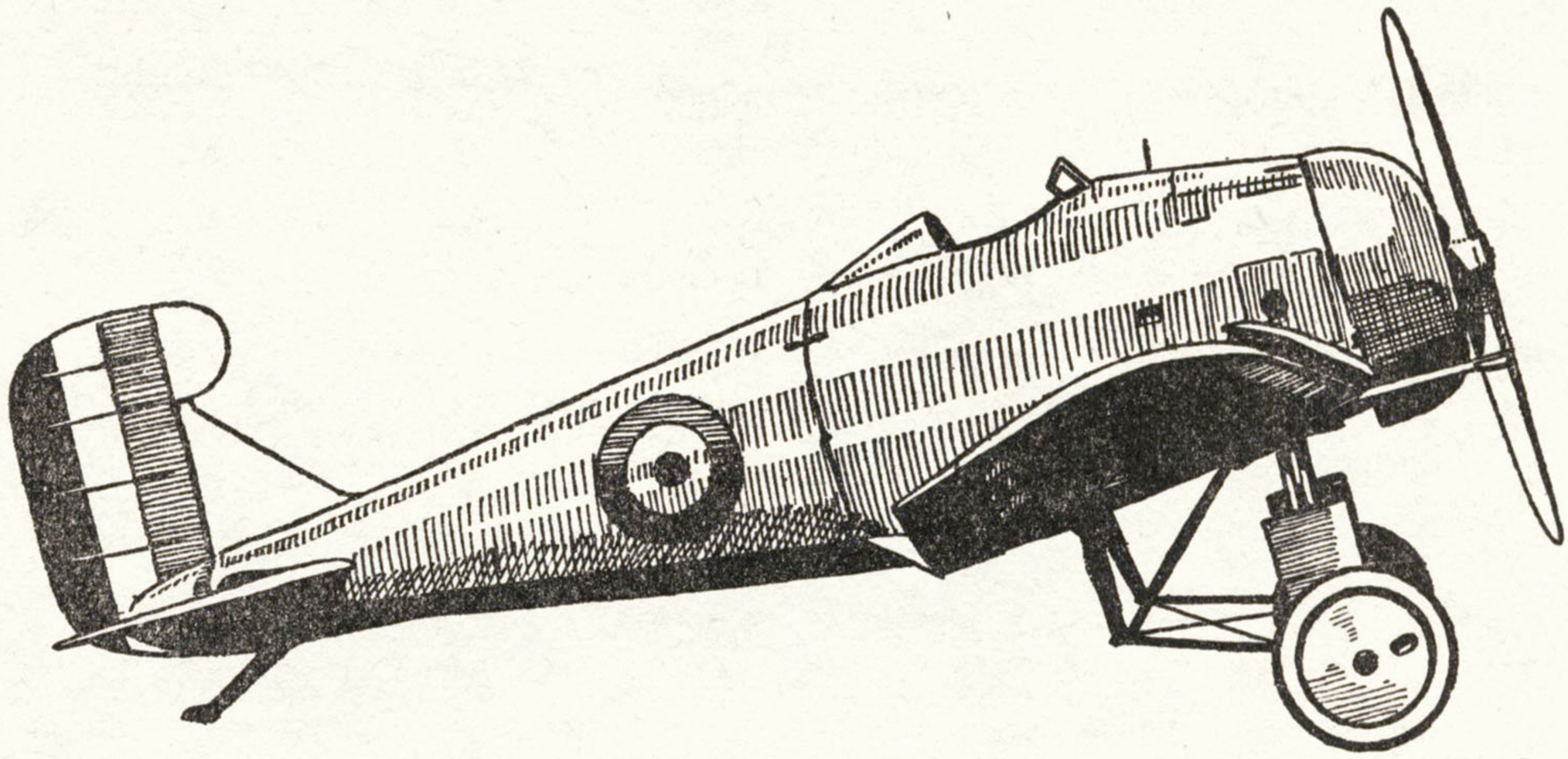
THE BEARDMORE XXVI FIGHTER

THIS robust-looking two-seater fighter was designed by an Australian, Mr. W. S. Shackleton, and built in 1925 by the Aviation Department of Wm. Beardmore & Co. to the order of the Latvian Government. Of mixed timber and metal construction, the machine was fitted with a 360 h.p. Rolls-Royce Eagle engine, and was notable for its high performance and, particularly, for the remarkable efficiency of its controls at, and below, stalling speed.

The pilot and rear gunner were seated very close to one another for ease of communication, and armament consisted of two fixed guns of the Beardmore-Farquhar type, with Constantinesco interrupter gear, controlled by the pilot and a third gun of the same type mounted on a Scarff ring in the rear cockpit. Complete dual control was fitted and a Lamblin strut-type radiator was mounted below the fuselage. Fully loaded, the fighter weighed nearly 4,000 lb., had a top speed of 145 m.p.h., and could reach a height of 15,000 ft. in twenty minutes.



—Seven Years after the Great War, in 1925, these Aircraft were among Britain's Newest Warplane Designs



THE HANDLEY PAGE SCOUT

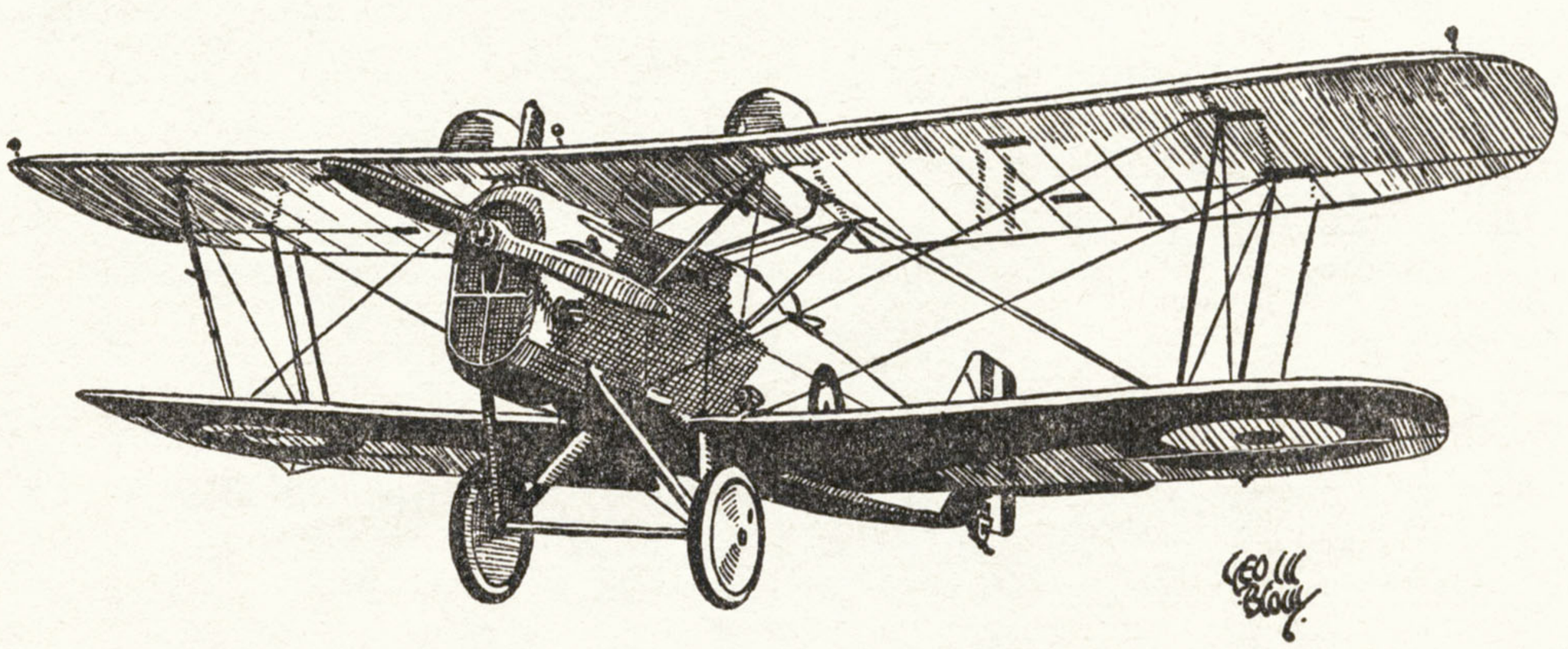
THE only single-seater fighter ever built by the Handley Page Company—best known as the builders of a long and famous line of multi-engined bombers—this little cantilever monoplane was produced in 1925. It was designed to meet the need for a single-seater scout sufficiently small to be housed on board a warship, and could be fitted with either a land or a twin-float chassis.

A feature of the machine was its low landing speed of 44 m.p.h., made possible by the fitting of the now famous Handley Page slots—then in their experimental stage—to both leading and trailing edges of the wing. The engine was a 230 h.p. B.R.2 and, fully loaded to 2,030 lb., the Scout had a top speed of 146 m.p.h., an initial rate of climb of 1,800 ft. per minute and a service ceiling of 21,000 feet. The pilot, who had an excellent all-round view for fighting, was armed with twin fixed machine-guns. Overall dimensions were: span, 29 ft. 3 in.; length, 24 ft.; height, 8 ft.

THE VICKERS VIXEN

THIS pugnacious-looking two-seater Fighter biplane was a 1925 development of an earlier design which, both in landplane and seaplane form, had been adopted by several foreign air services. In the form depicted it was known as the Vixen V and was fitted with a 450 h.p. Napier Lion engine which gave it a top speed of 136 m.p.h. Landing speed was 51 m.p.h., and a height of 10,000 ft. could be reached in sixteen minutes. Fully loaded, the machine weighed 5,550 lb., of which 2,153 lb. represented military load.

Though nominally a two-seater fighter, the Vickers Vixen was equally well adapted to bombing, reconnaissance and photographic duties. Armament comprised one fixed Vickers gun, firing along a trough on the port side of the engine cowling, and a Lewis gun on a movable mounting in the rear cockpit. With an overall length of 32 ft. 11 in., and a height of 11 ft. 8 in., the Vixen had a wing span of 45 ft. 1 in.



The R.F.C's. Baptism of Fire—the Retreat from Mons

. . . harassing the thickest hordes of the enemy with petrol bombs and hand grenades

A Vivid Account of Air Fighting's Earliest Days written by an R.F.C. Pilot of 1914

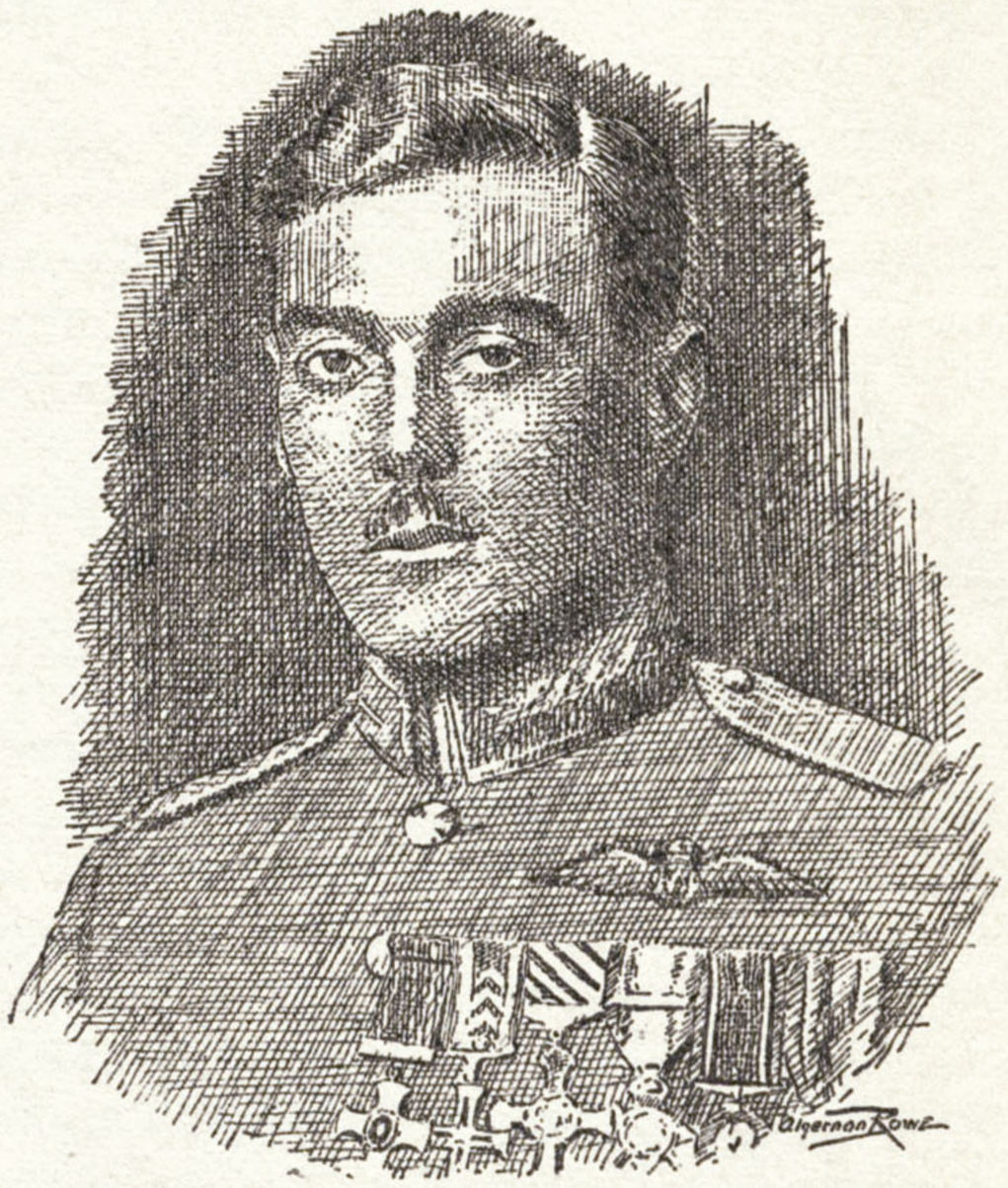
AIRMEN AT WAR

Starting an Enthralling Personal Narrative of the War in the Air from First to Last—a Faithful Record of Four Eventful Years which saw the R.F.C. Grow from a small Band of Ill-armed Airmen to the Greatest Aerial Fighting Force the World has Ever Known

By

Lt. Col. L. A. STRANGE

D.S.O., M.C., A.F.C.



The Author—a sketch from a recent photograph

THE first rumours of the War are still fresh in my memory. I was at Upavon at the time ; the Sixth Course of Instruction at the Central Flying School was drawing to its close, and we were all getting duly worried about our forthcoming examinations. Suddenly all flying was stopped, and although we asked each other why, I fancy everyone realised that the veto had some connection with the rumours of war which were flying about.

Our surmises soon proved correct, for we ascertained that all machines were to be overhauled and made fit for active service. All instructional machines were to undergo this conversion on account of the shortage of aircraft in the R.F.C.*

Matters began to assume more definite shape when our Commandant, Captain Godfrey Paine, assembled us all in the lecture room and discoursed on the probability of war with Germany. He added that all who were considered sufficiently advanced in flying were to be posted to active service squadrons forthwith.

There was much excitement. The lucky ones were wildly elated, while their less proficient brethren were duly depressed. To my great joy I was considered fit ; with others who had been chosen I hurriedly packed my kit and went off to report myself at the R.F.C. headquarters at Farnborough. I did not stay long there, for I was promptly despatched to join No. 5 Squadron at Gosport.

I do not think I have ever worked so hard in my life as during those first few days with the squadron. It was one continual bustle to get our stores listed according to schedule, sort them and pack them on their different lorries. There were a hundred and one other things to be done, in view of the probability of our squadron going overseas as a complete unit.

There was glorious weather during those first weeks of August, 1914. In the warm evenings we used to sit up on the top of Fort Grange, where we had our quarters alongside the aerodrome, and listen to the transports going down the Solent from Southampton in an endless stream. It was the British Expeditionary Force on its way to France at a time when the military critics in the Press were debating whether our share

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* Aircraft strength of the R.F.C. in August, 1914 was approximately 179 machines : total personnel comprised 2,073 officers and men.

—EDITOR'S NOTE.

in the war would be a purely naval one or whether there was any possibility of our sending a small force to the Continent during its latter stages.

Everything was ready. Machines, lorries, mechanics, and pilots only waited the word to move, but for three whole days we were kept mad with impatience while we waited for it to come. At last our marching orders arrived ; an hour later the squadron's transport vehicles rolled out of Fort Grange on their way to Southampton, accompanied by the cheers of those they had left behind them.

It was a miscellaneous and unsoldierly collection of vehicles, most of which had been requisitioned from various commercial organisations. The headquarters stores lorry was a huge, covered, red van, with "Bovril" painted in black letters all over it ; we may have laughed when we saw it go off, but later we blessed it because it was so easy to spot from the air on the frequent occasions when we lost our transport. Our bomb lorry was originally destined for the peaceful pursuit of propagating the sale of Lazenby's Sauce ("The World's Appetizer"), while Peek Frean's Biscuits, Stephens' Blue-Black Ink, and the ubiquitous Carter Paterson were also represented.

A Ticklish Journey

FOR us pilots there was still much work to do before we crossed the Channel in our own fashion. For instance, I had to fly an unwanted 50 h.p. Gnôme-Avro back to the C.F.S. and return to Gosport with a Henri Farman which we did want.

It was a ticklish journey, because the blue skies of those early August days were now covered with low-lying clouds from which the rain poured down. I had no less than three forced landings ; at one of them, which occurred close to the village of Over Wallop, I went into a cottage for a cup of tea and found an old woman crying because she had received a postcard from her son, stating that he was just off to the wars. I did my best to cheer her up, but she persisted that she would never see him again.

We were due to start off the following morning at daybreak. Owing to the fact that one of the lorry drivers was in Portsmouth when the order came for our transport to proceed to Southampton and could not be found in time, my mechanic went in his place, while I was detailed to take the driver in my machine's second seat, although he had never been in the air before.

We started off all right, but I soon saw that my machine would require careful handling if we were to avoid coming to grief, because my passenger weighed thirteen stone, while in addition to my own luggage, I had to carry his kit and rifle. As the machine had a Lewis gun mounted in front for my future observer to use, my load was far too heavy for safety, but having had experience with 35 h.p. Bleriots, I knew how to manage a machine that would only just fly.

We struggled on to Shoreham, where we landed to fill up with petrol. Most of the other machines had been woefully overloaded, and, if I remember rightly, there were several accidents *en route*. To add to our troubles, there was a strong head wind against us. As crows are supposed to fly, it is about seventy odd miles to Dover, but it took me two and a half hours to get there, while at one time I had hard work to avoid being battered down on to the Sussex Downs.

At Dover I found that the aerodrome lay on high ground at the edge of the cliffs above the Castle. There were a number of red flags, which told me of ditches to be avoided, but whether the supply of flags had run short or whether some careless fellow had left a ditch unmarked through negligence, I cannot tell ; the main thing was that after landing safely, I ran into an unmarked ditch and broke a longeron.

Before I could see what I was going to do about it, I had to attend to the troubles of my passenger, who had contrived to smuggle a bottle of whisky with him. Having emptied its contents *en route*, he threw it overboard when we reached Dover, but the combined effects of the alcohol and his first flight were such

that I found it necessary to place him under arrest.

After seeing him shipped off to the guard tent, I had some tea at the Castle. I then set off for Farnborough in a Rolls-Royce to get a new longeron. I reached Dover again at 2 a.m., and worked till 6 a.m., removing the broken longeron and replacing it by the new one. I was very thankful for the thorough course of instruction in rigging I had received at the C.F.S., as without it I should have been very much later in getting through with the job.

I now thought I was ready to start. Having got some breakfast at the Castle, I returned to the aerodrome, where I found that the transport driver had escaped from the guard tent and could not be found. We started to hunt for him, but it was not until 10.30 that the police rounded him up somewhere in Dover, where he was still very much the worse for drink.

The Great Adventure

THE official history of the Royal Air Force says that No. 5 Squadron (Major J. F. A. Higgins, D.S.O.*) went off to Amiens on August 15th. It naturally says nothing about the fact that one insignificant unit of the aforesaid squadron, consisting of one Henri Farman, mounted with Lewis gun, one mechanical transport driver very much the worse for wear and liquor, and one harassed pilot in the shape of myself, did not leave the white cliffs of Old England until the disgracefully late hour of 12 noon on Sunday, August 16th.

At any rate, I was off on the great adventure at last, with Amiens as my immediate destination, and a strong N.E. wind across the Channel. The sea below me was rough, and my crossing to Gris Nez took a long forty-five minutes.

I had some worried moments over the water. As the visibility was not more than about half a mile and no shipping was to be seen, I began to wonder whether I was not running up alongside the coast of Belgium. Suddenly the visibility became even worse, and when I eventually sighted the grey cliffs of Gris Nez they were only a few hundred yards away. But a sharp right-hand bank took me clear of the cliffs, and then I hugged the coastline down to Boulogne, where I ran into better weather. Although I encountered a couple of hard rainstorms later, I was able to make Amiens comfortably in about two and a half hours' flying time.

I shall never forget taxying up to the other machines that Sunday afternoon. The thousands of Frenchmen congregated round the aerodrome at Amiens put me in mind of a Hendon pageant, but the illusion vanished when the machine came to a standstill, because, much to my astonishment, my passenger stood up and answered the cheers of the crowd with much gusto and saluted the Entente Cordiale by waving aloft another empty bottle of whisky. At that moment my eye caught sight of Major Higgins, my commanding officer.

I thought that the fifty-six days No. 1 Field Punishment subsequently meted out to my passenger rather hard luck under the circumstances, which did much to excuse both his alcoholic excesses and his emotional fervour. All the same I had good reason to curse him heartily, because his behaviour was the cause of my own welcome to France being, to say the least of it, a mixed one.

On the other hand, I was a good deal luckier than Lieutenant Vaughan, of our No. 5 Squadron, who left England three days after me. He had a forced landing near Boulogne, where some French villagers made up their minds that he was a German airman, and as nothing he could say convinced them to the contrary, they clapped him in the local gaol, where he had to kick his heels for three days before he was released.

Meanwhile the R.F.C. had sustained its first losses. Lieutenant Skene and Air Mechanic Barlow, of No. 3 Squadron, crashed shortly after taking-off for Netheravon *en route* for France, while on August 17th, Lieutenant Copland Perry and Air Mechanic Parfitt crashed in a B.E.8.

* Now Air-Marshal Sir John Higgins, K.C.B., K.B.E., D.S.O., A.F.C., R.A.F. (ret.).

They were, I suppose, the first casualties that the R.F.C. sustained in France, and I attended their funerals during my three days' stay at Amiens.

Air Warfare Begins

OUR next move was to a very good aerodrome at Maubeuge. The weather was perfect, if a bit too hot ; but as I and several others had to be inoculated against typhoid, we did not take things very strenuously for a couple of days. We spent our evenings sitting up on the top of an old fort and chatting to French reservists. In the distance we heard rumblings which might have been thunder, although several of us thought it was gunfire, and subsequent news proved us right, for what we heard was the German artillery bombarding the Liège forts.

Our excitement rose to fever pitch when a Bleriot of No. 3 Squadron came back with twelve bullet-holes in her, while her observer, Sergeant-Major Jillings, was wounded in the leg. He was the first British soldier to receive a wound from the enemy in aerial warfare.

As a matter of fact, however, it was extremely difficult for aeroplanes on opposite sides to do each other much damage in the war at that time, but there were not a few cases of "save me from my friends," because the French and our own artillery had a nasty habit of firing at every aeroplane they saw, without giving themselves any trouble to ascertain its nationality.

Other machines had been out and reported great activity, while the main roads in a westerly direction were crowded with troops and transport proceeding towards the front, which was now not so far distant.

Just as we were beginning to wonder what we were doing all by ourselves in Maubeuge, the first British troops arrived, and for the whole of that day we watched them march past our aerodrome *en route* for Mons. I have never before or since felt quite so thrilled as when those grand regiments of the old British army swung along to the marching tunes of their regimental bands.

The sight of them made me think that it would not matter if every soldier in the German army was bearing down on us, although our impressions from the air were somewhat different, because the bird's-eye views we gained of the opposing forces made us realise the tremendous odds that the British Expeditionary Force was called upon to tackle.

Events, however, showed that we had the finest fighting force that ever took the field in modern warfare. It lived up to the expectations we had formed when we saw it march past, and remained undefeated, even though it was to be nearly annihilated a few days later at Le Cateau, where only magnificent staff work and inspired leadership saved it from destruction by the sheer weight of the opposing hosts.

Out-climbed by the Enemy

ON August 22nd there was wild excitement when the first German aeroplane flew over our aerodrome. Two B.E.2's immediately went up to do their best with hand grenades and bombs, while I set off in my Henri Farman, with Lieutenant Penn Gaskell to work the Lewis gun. I forget whether the enemy machine was a Taube or an Albatros, but at any rate it managed to reach a height of five thousand feet, while three thousand five hundred feet was the best we could accomplish.

The enemy machine made off while we were still climbing up over our aerodrome, and I imagine its occupants must have enjoyed a good laugh at our futile efforts. But my disappointment was increased when I landed, because our C.O. came to the conclusion that I should have a better chance of coming to grips with any further aerial invaders if I lightened my machine by dispensing with my Lewis gun. He therefore promptly ordered me to unship it and the mounting I had been at some pains to devise for it, telling my observer he would have to manage with a rifle in future.

I may say here that mine was at that time the only machine to carry a Lewis gun. No one had any solid ideas as to

what would happen if opposing airmen tried to fight one another aloft, so that the armament of the machines was more or less left to the discretion of the pilots and their C.O.'s.

The Lewis gun was an idea of my own, and I was bitterly disappointed at having to leave it behind, but I was ready to back my opinion to any money that before long all the aircraft on both sides would carry machine-guns. Subsequent events were soon to prove me right.

That day No. 5 Squadron suffered its first casualties, as Lieutenants Bayley and Waterfall, in an 80 h.p. Gnôme-Avro, failed to return, and in due course we learnt that their machine had been shot down by the Germans. It is quite possible that their capture was the first authentic information to the Germans that British forces were in the field.

On August 24th, German shells fell quite close to our aerodrome. The battle of Mons was drawing to its close and the famous retreat had begun ; but we were not in the least downhearted. Our transport had to bustle off in a hurry before daybreak, but it was well towards the middle of the morning before we flew off to Le Cateau, where an emergency aerodrome had been prepared. I remember that one Henri Farman developed engine trouble at the last moment and had to be left behind ; the smoke arising when it was burnt to prevent it falling into the enemy's hands was our last sight of Maubeuge aerodrome.

There were no quarters for us ; we slept in our valises near the machines. The next day we soon realised that great events were taking place. We were under fire ; shells were bursting in unexpected places and we constantly saw troops on the move. We made a number of reconnaissances, and when I dropped low, it came as a shock to me to sight the grey-green uniforms of German forces in localities which had been held by our own men the day before. The Germans blazed away whenever they saw me, but my machine was undamaged. Up in the air, I constantly saw fierce fights going on in isolated places when I looked down on one side, while a mile away on the other were transport, troops, and guns, all mixed up in the commencement of the historic retreat.

Petrol Bombs and Arrows

WHEN I returned from my dawn reconnaissance to the field that was our aerodrome at Le Cateau, I could see no signs of machines or transport. A great battle was in progress ; the only thing to do was to fly on southward and look for signs of our squadron. Our eyes searched the roads until at last No. 5's dear old red Bovril lorry hove into sight ; I then landed my Henri Farman by the roadside and waited until the transport came along. When it did, I received orders to do another reconnaissance and report to an aerodrome near St. Quentin.

This new job took me in the direction of Valenciennes and Maubeuge. While flying over the latter place, I was surprised to find heavy firing going on round the old forts, as I had imagined them to be in German hands by then. When I finally returned to St. Quentin, I discovered our new aerodrome to be a cornfield that had only just been cut. A big "L," fashioned of wheatsheaves, told us where to land.

We were lucky enough to get a really good dinner in St. Quentin that night, but beds were unattainable luxuries, and so we were once more compelled to sleep in our valises on the aerodrome. We stacked up sheaves round the machines and used others for bedding.

August 27th was a day of great anxiety for our forces, as fresh masses of Germans were reported to be working round to westward in order to turn our left flank. Smith Dorrien's cavalry won much distinction in the rearguard action, as they charged into the advancing foemen time after time in the dashing way that was so characteristic of their leader.

From aloft, I could see horse artillery galloping back, while often enough guns were fired at point-blank range. Meanwhile, our few feeble aeroplanes did their best to keep Headquarters informed of all that went on, while every now and

then we found a chance to lend a hand to the ground forces in some hard-fought skirmish or to harass the thickest hordes of the enemy by dropping petrol-bombs, hand-grenades and the steel arrows that were known as *flechettes*.

After a hard and busy day's work, we settled down to another night on our cornfield. The fine weather had broken ; thunderstorms were succeeded by a steady drizzle, which did not promise a comfortable night. But before we had time to think of supper, shells began to make our wheatsheaves fly about, and all machines beat a hasty retreat to La Fère.

No aerodrome had been arranged there, with the result that our machines landed just where they could in fields on the outskirts of the town. As No. 5 Squadron had no chance of reuniting, I spent the night helping a staff officer to direct stragglers to collecting stations. We stood at the junction of four cross-roads, sending the men of various divisions to their proper rallying points.

Retreat from Mons

WE heard many stories that night—grim tales of whole regiments wiped out, and it was a terrible sight to watch the return of those splendid troops who had marched up to Mons so recently. Some were minus weapons, tunics and boots, with their puttees wrapped round their feet. All were utterly worn out with ceaseless marching and fighting, but if they were not exactly what one might term orderly, at least they were obedient and glad to listen to the voice of authority.

The memory of that night is still fresh in my mind, there were so many alarms and the situation still remained so uncertain ; but I see from my diary that August 28th was more hopeful. The entry I have is as follows :—

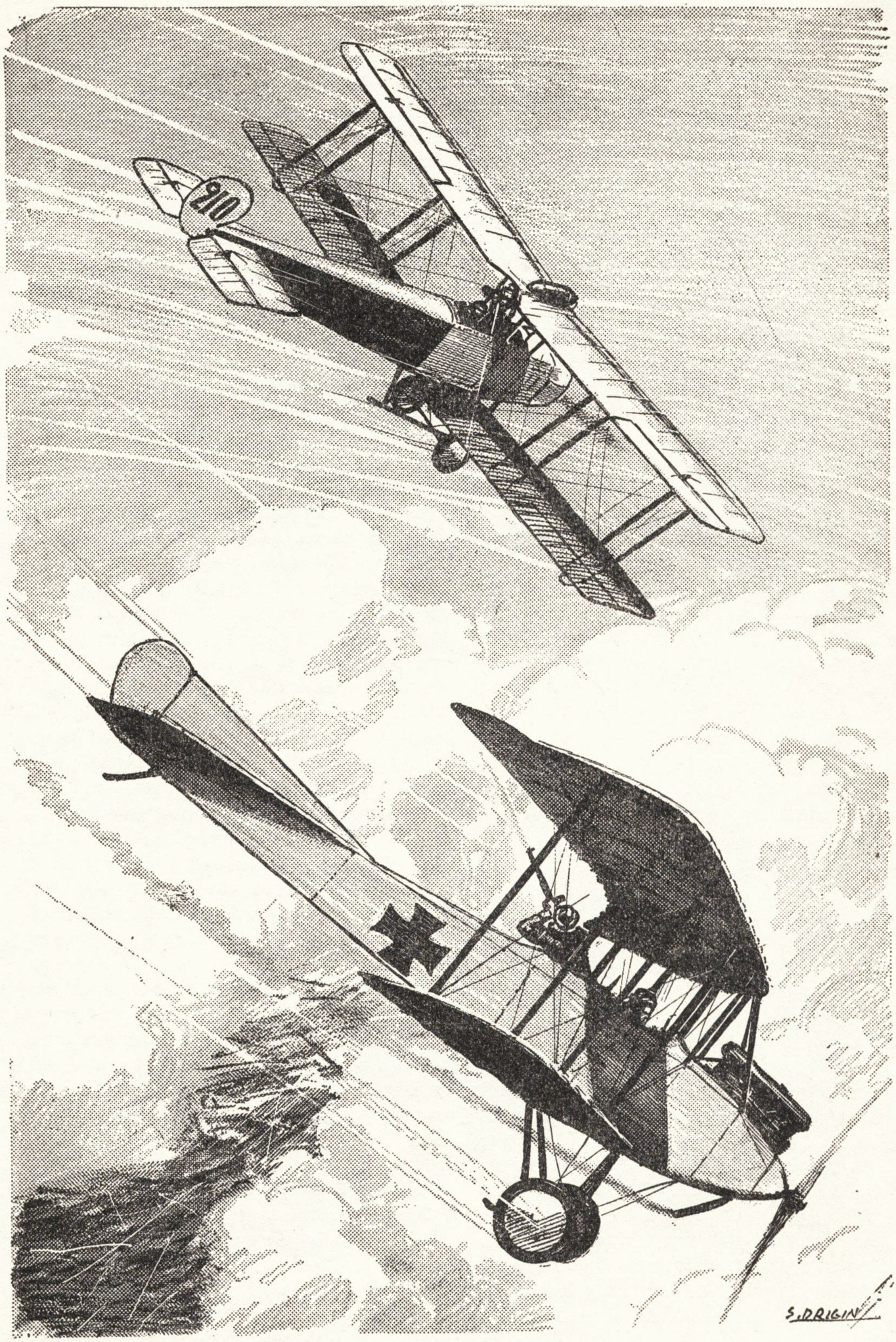
"*August 28th.*—Messenger for the day. Flew all day from La Fère with messages. Weather bad, heavy thunderstorms, machine waterlogged, cannot climb at all well. Hasty but orderly retreat ; many stragglers and some confusion along the line of retirement, but perfect discipline and order extending back to the fighting line, which is very difficult to define, as so many little separate battles are going on in isolated spots, some so forlorn that they are obviously only desperate last stands far out of reach and without any hope of retirement. Saw a British cavalry regiment ride down two squadrons of Uhlans, whom they caught unawares and completely cut up. Meals anyhow and any time. No letters from home yet."

That night I could only manage a meagre dinner of bread and chocolate, but I had a wonderful bed at the *maire's* house. There was no rest for the weary, however, and about 2 a.m. rifle fire in the street outside woke me up. I got out by the back garden and went off to my machine, where I stood by till dawn, when Captain Bonham Carter turned up and we went off for an early morning reconnaissance, feeling much safer as soon as we were in the air. That night we landed on the racecourse at Compiègne, which was a treat after the fields which had been our aerodromes.

I spent the morning of August 28th fixing up a new type of petrol bomb to my Henri Farman, and in the afternoon Penn Gaskell and I went to try it out. We dropped two bombs on either side of the road north of St. Quentin, where we found a lot of German transport. Returning ten minutes later to have another go at the same lot, we found them moving south, so we dropped down to a low height and flew along over the road, where we managed to plant our third bomb right on to a lorry, which took fire and ran into a ditch. The lorry behind it caught fire as well, and both were well ablaze when we left. It was not a serious loss to the German Army, but it sent us home very well pleased with ourselves.

That same evening a German machine dropped three bombs on our aerodrome, and one fell fairly close to our transport, but luckily it did not burst. We all made a rush to the spot to grab bits of the bombs as souvenirs and found that they were full of shrapnel bullets.

I cannot remember whether this machine was the Albatros that Spratt brought down. He flew a Sopwith Tabloid and forced the enemy to land by circling round above him and making pretence to attack him. As a matter of fact, he had run out of ammunition, but the bluff succeeded and the occupants



My observer fired over seventy rounds but the Aviatik dived away to safety through the clouds

of the German machine were taken prisoners.

The R.F.C. Moves South

ON August 30th we took another step backward, landing at Senlis, where we ran up against a blacksmith who was a real picture of the "Village Blacksmith" type. The old fellow was boiling over with righteous indignation, and we tried to dissuade him from carrying out his threats of what he would do if the Huns came to Senlis. Alas for him, the following day I saw his smithy in flames, along with many other houses in Senlis.

We did not stop long in Senlis, but moved on that same night to Juilly, where we had an exciting time that no old member of the R.F.C. will ever forget. We were kept up all night, making an improvised stockade around the field in which the machines were parked on account of the rumours of a large force of Uhlans in the neighbouring woods. It was even suggested that we should fly our machines away in the dark, which at that time would have been somewhat of a feat if we had managed it successfully, as night flying was still a great adventure. However, with the aid of a squadron of the Irish Light Horse we kept watch all night. There were a number of false alarms, but the only invaders of our aerodrome were a number of refugees trekking back from the battle area.

We left before dawn and flew to landing grounds farther south, some of our machines going to Serris, a little place not far from Paris, while others made for Pezarches. As a matter of fact, we departed none too soon; a Henri Farman of No. 3 Squadron that had developed engine trouble had to be left behind and burnt, but the mechanics were told to salve the engine. They got it on to a tender and just got away in time, with the bullets of the advancing Germans whizzing round their ears.

As usual, the German airmen spotted our new aerodrome at Serris and paid us a visit. They had an uncanny knack of finding out where we were located almost as soon as we arrived, so that we were not at all surprised to see them there. Norman Spratt went up to have a go at one of these disturbers of our peace and managed to fire thirty rounds at him from his revolver at close range, but the enemy remained apparently undamaged. Spratt landed in desperation and tied a hand grenade on to the end of a long piece of control cable; he had the bright idea of flying over the Hun and hitting his propeller with the grenade, but I felt very sceptical about his chances of bagging a victim that way, and I do not think he ever did.

Gordon Bell, on his Bristol Scout, was another pilot who distinguished himself during the retreat. Like Spratt, he flew a machine that was very light about the undercarriage, and I always admired the way these two pilots landed and took off from small rough fields without damaging their machines.

Bell was wounded soon afterwards and had to return to England. He got a shot in his engine which forced him to come down where he could, with the result that he landed in a tree but was thrown out of the machine and escaped with a few bruises. When he picked himself up, however, he discovered that he had been wounded slightly in the knee, and from subsequent investigations it seems likely that he was fired on by our own or French troops. Some infantrymen could never resist the temptation to take a pot shot at an aeroplane without bothering to ascertain its nationality, and more than one airman got his baptism of fire from his own side.

Gordon Bell had a great sense of humour and a bad stutter when angry. On this occasion a staff officer galloped up and asked if he had crashed. Bell explained, with much stuttering and profanity, that he always landed like that.

At the Gates of Paris

THE Germans pushed on towards Paris at a very fast rate. On September 4th, we received orders to move to Melun, and beat a most undignified retreat, as we had to clear out in a great hurry. The Germans were at that time

within twenty miles of the French capital.

Our first day at Melun proved most exciting, however, as from the first reconnaissance we were able to see Von Kluck's army streaming east instead of south, while the British troops were moving in a southerly direction instead of the northerly one in which we expected to find them. It took many confirmatory reports to convince the High Command that this was so, because the sudden break-off of the German advance seemed almost a miracle, while I fear that there were still a number of old-fashioned officers who did not yet quite trust the efficiency of aeroplanes, and so credited us with no powers of observation.

During the night we heard the guns booming away to the north of us, and wondered what was happening. As it was a very warm evening, and for once in a way the whole of our transport had turned up, we did not bother to go and look for billets, but just rolled into our valises. Later in the night we had cause to regret this, as a fierce thunderstorm burst upon us. Some of us decided to stick it out and remained in the open, hoping that the rain would not penetrate our valises ; while others packed themselves into the overcrowded, stifling transport lorries. The result was that we were all either drenched or suffocated.

Battle of the Marne

THE next day, however, we quickly forgot these discomforts in our joy at learning the definite news that the British Army was advancing for the first time since the battle of Mons. The retreat was over ; our spirits rose again, and all traces of weariness disappeared in the excitement and anticipation of at last getting back a bit of our own.

As a matter of fact, the battle of the Marne had begun. Since those days many critics and historians have given their opinions about that famous engagement, but, looking back, I feel certain that far greater results might have been obtained from our victory if a day had been spent in resting the tired troops instead of forcing them to continue a retreat, which seemed so unnecessary to us pilots and our observers, as from aloft we saw plainly that the German forward movement had come to a standstill.

My Henri Farman—No. 341, as she was officially termed—had survived the retreat with forty-three flying hours to her credit, and I remember working out the mileage as just over 2,000 miles for the twenty days we had spent in France. This may not seem much to modern airmen, but the experience gained in those few weeks made even the most seasoned pilot among us feel that he had never really known what flying meant before.

For the first two months of the War my Henri Farman was never under cover by day or night, her engine was never changed, while all repairs had to be carried out in the open. One of these I remember particularly, as a whole lot of transport came along the dusty road just as we were getting busy, with the result that we had to cover up everything as long as the dust was blowing across the aerodrome.

Unfortunately, I missed seeing the battle of the Marne, because I was sent back to Étampes with my machine to have the engine overhauled by French mechanics. After leaving it in their hands, I went on to Paris to fly 80 h.p. Gnôme-Bleriot monoplanes from Buc aerodrome to squadrons that were below strength in the number of their machines.

I spent the next few days in flying French machines out to the R.F.C., while my nights were taken up by the arduous job of getting back to Paris by car. Eventually my job was done and I proceeded to Étampes to pick up my own Henri Farman, with which I rejoined No. 5 Squadron at Coulommiers.

I remember that when I got back everyone was worried about the disappearance of our "C" Flight sergeant, along with three mechanics and a tender of spares. It subsequently transpired that they had left Étampes, but had gone right through the whole British Expeditionary Force in their efforts to discover the whereabouts of No. 5 Squadron. They ran into the Germans and were promptly made prisoners, although we

did not learn this until some time afterwards.

Encounter with Zouaves

GENERAL JOFFRE had now taken the offensive ; the Anglo-French forces were advancing. Instead of moving back day by day, there was every prospect that we might soon be occupying aerodromes we had been forced to abandon. The sudden changes involved by the movements of the armies in the field seemed as likely to prove embarrassing to us when our men were advancing as when they were retreating.

On September 11th, for instance, I made six flights with Lieutenant Rabagliati as my passenger, after which I landed to report to the Corps Headquarters. Unfortunately, this had been shifted from the locality where I had received overnight instructions to make my report. Before I realised what the trouble was, we found ourselves surrounded at a respectable distance by a regiment of Zouaves.

The next five minutes might have been amusing to an onlooker, but I cannot say I found them so. I was not at all sure of the nationality of these troops, and evidently they had decided to take no risks about mine. Half-a-dozen rifle bullets whizzed round our ears.

Then a little old French officer on a white pony galloped up to our field and stopped the shooting. I had not put my engine off, but kept it going with the switches, and every time I switched on to keep it running, rifles all round the field went up to the "present." The French officer remained about two hundred yards away from us, where he did his best to keep his restive pony quiet ; whenever the animal give him a moment's leisure, he waved a white handkerchief frantically up and down.

Whether this was a token of surrender or an incitement to us to give ourselves up quietly, or merely the anticipation of a fond farewell, I could not gather, but we thought it best to humour him by returning the compliment. I had, however, decided that I could not afford to waste the time involved in giving him a satisfactory explanation of our identity. I, therefore, opened up the engine and headed the machine in the direction of the ancient sportsman, thinking that if the soldiers started to shoot at me again while I was taking off, the nearer to their officer I was the fewer risks I should run.

The pony took fright at what it very naturally thought to be an uncouth monster. It bolted, and the officer fell off. The foremost Zouaves rushed forward to pick up and save their officer ; those behind them thought discretion the better part of valour and rushed away to save themselves. Consequently, my Henri Farman took-off between the flustered old gentleman on the ground and his bolting pony. Amid much excitement and a few odd rifle shots we waved a last farewell and dived behind a convenient wood, where we flew low until we were out of range before circling up to watch the party disperse from a safer height.

Night of the Storm

NEXT day I had to take my orders direct from the G.S.O.1 of the Sixth Division, my duties being rather to ascertain the positions of our own troops than to locate the enemy. On this work I made nine landings in odd fields up and down the line and finished the day by taking Captain Furse on a reconnaissance. Late that evening we dropped five bombs on a large German bivouac north of Soissons, which attention the Huns reciprocated by shooting away a king-post.

I noticed a few bullet-holes in the planes, but did not think my Henri Farman had sustained any serious damage. We judged that we should just have time to land at Army Headquarters at Villemontoire with the reconnaissance report. We landed all right—at least, as far as we ourselves were concerned—but the king-post collapsed and let down the extension on the top plane. That meant a night away from the other machines, which had meanwhile moved up to Fère-en-Tardenois.

And what a night it was ! As there was a strong wind blowing, I got No. 341 close up on the lee side of some ricks,

but she had not been there long before a shell landed bang on top of the end-most rick to our right and set it on fire. There was a fine blaze, but the wind blew the flames away from the other ricks ; unfortunately the one that was on fire gave the Hun gunners a nice target for further shooting practice.

An old French farmer came out from an adjacent farmhouse and began to talk volubly. From what I could gather he seemed to be as much excited about the war of 1870 as the present one. His farm had been in German occupation a few days previously ; neither his wife nor his daughter had been molested by the soldiers, but he was very much concerned for his ricks, as well as for the safety of his two sons, who were fighting somewhere in the Vosges. His greatest trouble, however, was that the Germans had commandeered his best farm horses and driven them somewhere across the Aisne, but he informed me that he hoped to fetch them back in a day or two. I thought him somewhat of an optimist, but dreamed as little as he did that the " day or two " would lengthen out into a period of over four years.

The old fellow took me back to his farm, where he showed me with great pride about a hundred sacks of flour that he had annexed from some lorries abandoned by the roadside close by. After giving me some hot coffee and bread and butter, he offered me a bed for the night, but I suspected that I might find it full of unpleasant bedfellows and so declined on the excuse that I would have to camp out by my machine.

It was well I did so, for the wind developed into a gale, with the result that I spent the night devising all sorts of schemes to prevent No. 341 being blown over. First I discovered a long ladder leaning against one of the ricks and laid it across my machine's skids ; when I found this insufficient, I spent the best part of an hour carrying large paving stones from the main road about a quarter of a mile away and laying them on the ladder to weight it down. As the wind still increased in force, I plaited ropes from the straw in the ricks and tied the struts down to the ends of the ladder. This seemed to do the trick, and as the storm abated in the small hours of the morning, I climbed up on a rick, burrowed out a cosy hole, and went to sleep.

A Farmer's Capture

I WAS roused by the sound of voices and awoke to find a fierce argument going on between the farmer (who emphasised the points of his remarks with a long single-bore sporting gun), and what at first sight appeared to my sleepy eyes to be two sailors. They had leather top boots, with trousers tucked inside them, and woollen sweaters, and so I did not realise for the moment that they were Germans.

The old farmer explained to me that he had caught them prowling round his farm—probably in search of food—and apologised to me for not having shot them at once, but he had no cartridges for his gun. The Germans naturally did not know that his weapon was harmless, and therefore sought the protection they hoped to obtain by surrendering to any soldiers they might find in the vicinity of the aeroplane.

My appearance was a great relief to all parties, because the Germans thought they were going to be shot, while the farmer imagined they would make off in my aeroplane. I am afraid I disappointed the old chap by not shooting them, and even raised doubts in his mind about my own nationality when I offered them cigarettes. Eventually I handed them over to some British troops that happened to pass along the road.

Soon afterwards a tender arrived with a new king-post for No. 341. From its driver I learnt of the havoc wrought on our precious machines by the great gale in that night of September 13th, 1914. Aeroplanes had been hurled across the aerodrome like bits of paper, while one Henri Farman was caught by a gust of wind which lifted it forty feet into the air and then smashed it down bang on top of another. When I flew back to Fère-en-Tardenois, I found the aero-drome strewn with smashed machines

that had been wrecked by the storm that night, and I believe that barely ten were fit to fly the following morning.

Shot down by the French

FÈRE-EN-TARDENOIS was the first aerodrome where the R.F.C. spent more than two or three successive nights ; I think we stayed about three weeks there while the battle of the Aisne was being fought. Looking up the diary I kept at the time, I see that its entries for that period stress the monotony of continually flying over the same ground, but, of course, we had then no conception of the trench warfare that was to stabilise the positions of the opposing armies for so many years.

I did a lot of artillery observation work in those days, my observer generally being Captain Furse, who always used to do two shoots a day with his own battery. One day I came to the conclusion that anti-aircraft gunfire was getting hotter and hotter, but was pleased when I found that General Pulteney, commanding the Third Corps, was also aware of the fact, for he sent us a nice little message, expressing his admiration of the way we stuck it.

We felt very heroic, of course, but imagine my disgust one day when I landed among some French troops and was informed by their anti-aircraft gunners that my observer and I were their prisoners, whom they had shot down after firing seventy-seven rounds. I think it was only equalled by theirs when they discovered the mistake they had made, and as both sides expressed their feelings in forceful language, the incident came near to starting a private war between the Allies.

My rough diary kept between September 14th and October 9th, indicates that we were far from idle during the battle of the Aisne :—

"*September 14th.*—Fitted new king-post and flew back to La Fère to the base. Bad weather.

"*September 15th.*—Flew back to V—— at 11 a.m. 2 p.m., flew over Soissons and German lines, observing our artillery fire for an hour. Landed just behind our guns and gave our information to the gunners. Great enthusiasm ! Big German shells bursting within a hundred yards of the machine and all round the gunners ! Got back to base just after dark and landed by flares.

"*September 16th.*—A grand view over the battle at 5 a.m. Flew again to V——, as detailed for observation work again. 9 a.m., made a fine reconnaissance flight at 5,000 feet, which took me over the battlefield again. Saw all the German reserves—infantry, cavalry, guns. Heard that our report of the previous evening yielded very good results as our guns were able to silence the battery we located. I am writing this sitting quite close to a big 60 lb. gun, while waiting for orders for another flight, and the noise is deafening. The Germans have a great number of units of all arms about seven miles north of Soissons ; these must be their reserves, as all other troops are now in the firing-line. 5.30 p.m., just back from another hour and a half's flight over the battlefield. Dropped one large melanite bomb, one large petrol bomb, and five smaller ones (that brings my total for the day up to thirteen) on German bivouacs, aeroplane hangars, etc. The flashes of big and small guns and rifles present an extraordinary sight when viewed from above. 6 p.m., flew back to camp, very tired.

"*September 20th.*—8 a.m., reconnaissance for two hours ten minutes round country north of Soissons ; found all required information. Above clouds for over an hour at 5,000 feet.

"Steady rain most nights, and machine is getting worse every day ; it is a great struggle to get over 5,000 feet in this sort of weather, and you are not safe at any lower height. The German anti-aircraft guns are beasts, and can burst shells accurately up to 7,000 feet. My machine is the only Henri Farman left in No. 5 Squadron, and there is only one other in the camp now. I have done over forty hours in her this month, and she has been out in all weathers.

"*September 24th.*—Made thirty-five minutes flight with Lieutenant Thomson. Dropped bombs on German anti-aircraft guns. Lovely day.

"*October 2nd.*—Fixed a safety strap to leading edge of top plane so as to enable passenger to stand up and fire rifle all round over top of plane and behind. Obtained permission from Major Higgins to try this out. Took Lieutenant R—— as my passenger on trial trip ; great success ! Increases range of fire greatly, and I hear that these belts are to be fitted to all machines.

On the Belgian Frontier

IT was not long before we were on the march again. Without any warning we received orders to move into Abbeville ; no one in the Squadron knew where we were going from there, and there was much speculation as to our ultimate destination. We spent one night in Abbeville, with orders to be ready to depart the following day, but with the morning there came a thick fog which prevented us leaving. We then learnt that we were due to take up our abode at St. Omer, not far from the Belgian frontier.

I remember that we found the atten-

tions of the natives somewhat of a nuisance during these moves. Lieutenant Borton * therefore hit upon the amusing scheme of teaching each of "C" Flight's pilots and observers a different French phrase. At a given signal, all rushed together and yelled their French sentences at the top of their voices, so as to attract the attention of any inquisitve Frenchmen who were making a nuisance of themselves in Borton's opinion. "C" Flight then twined its arms round as many of the intruders as it could lay hold of and dragged them down to form a good old rugger scrum. We enjoyed it immensely, but I do not think the French participants quite understood or appreciated the humours of the game.

Only a few isolated air fights were recorded in those early days. The R.F.C. won some victories over German airmen, but reconnaissance work was all-important, and I remember that one day I was very much on the mat for having left my reconnaissance course to chase away an Albatros.

At that time I made further alterations in my good old Henri Farman, changing the controls from the back seat to the front one, and fixing a safety-belt to the top plane which enabled my observer to stand up in his seat and fire his rifle in any direction. The noise he made when shooting over my head was something terrific.

But October 15th was a red-letter day for me, for I was given a brand new 80 h.p. Gnôme-Avro that could put up a much better performance than the Henri Farman. I was naturally sorry to give up my old Henri Farman No. 341, having formed a sentimental attachment to her, as she was now the only original machine still flying that had left Gosport when we crossed over two months previously. But I was delighted with the prospect of owning one of the best mounts in the R.F.C. Moreover, this new machine was all British made, except for the engine, whereas the Henri Farman was entirely French.

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* Now Air Vice-Marshal Borton, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., A.F.C., R.A.F. (ret.), and a Director of D. Napier & S

Lost at Sea

MY first big experience with the Avro was not exactly a pleasant one. I was naturally eager to test her out, and my chance came on the following day, when an Aviatik passed high above us. Lieutenant Rabagliati and I were in such a hurry to be up and doing that we jumped in without helmets, coats or maps, and climbed up in pursuit.

An hour's climbing due east got us within range of our quarry, but although my observer in the front seat fired over seventy rounds (standing up and shooting over my head) the Aviatik dived away to safety through some clouds that had rolled up in the meantime and now covered the whole landscape.

We turned westwards and flew back above the clouds in a clear, glittering sky. The sun ahead of us was about to sink into the cloudbank. We had been flying for about three-quarters of an hour, and as we could not get a single glimpse of the ground, I decided to go through those clouds and find where we were. I was rather worried at finding my altimeter show only two thousand feet when we touched the top of the cloud layer, but we sank down into the clouds and continued to drop until we registered five hundred feet. Then I suddenly remembered that in the hustle and bustle of our start I had forgotten to set the instrument at zero.

I knew that the aerodrome at St. Omer was four hundred feet above sea level. Matters were decidedly serious, because I had anticipated no difficulty in gliding down through the clouds, but now it looked as if there was fog on the ground. Resolving to go up again and have another look round, I opened up the engine, but as I was not practised in cloud flying, I found great difficulty in keeping the compass from swinging and the pitot tube from jumping about. I throttled down again and decided to descend until I could see the ground, meanwhile keeping my machine in as stalled an attitude as possible in case I had to make a sudden jump up.

The state of my nerves can be imagined when I saw my altimeter record three

hundred feet, two hundred feet, one hundred feet, fifty feet, and then zero, and still found myself in the midst of a dense, impenetrable fog. It was so thick that I could not even see the interplane struts, and as the darkness of evening was coming on apace, I found it difficult to read my instrument correctly.

Down I went, cursing myself for a fool for not having set the altimeter correctly before starting my flight. If I had done so, however, I should have probably been even more frightened than I was, for suddenly the mist cleared and I nearly stalled the machine in my astonishment when I looked down and saw below me a nasty, green, choppy sea !

I was thankful I had not hit the ground, but I was nowhere near solving the next problem—where were we ? I speculated whether I had been drifted off the Belgian coast by a high, southerly wind when flying between six thousand and seven thousand feet or overshot the aerodrome at St. Omer and been carried back over the Channel by an east wind. As there had been no wind at all when I left St. Omer, I had no indication as to which alternative was the more likely.

At any rate I decided that I must be over the North Sea and therefore set my compass course due south. The visibility was about half a mile, and after I had flown twenty minutes, I began to get worried about the possibility of my petrol running out, as there was no sign of land—and no sign even of a ship that could fish us out if we were forced to come down on the sea.

Calculating that I had about another twenty minutes' supply left, I held on due south for ten of them, and then decided to turn due east because of the impression made on me by the frosty look of the clear blue sky above the clouds and the biting cold. They seemed to indicate that I had made a mistake in assuming a south wind, as only an east one could be so chilly. I headed east for another ten minutes and realised that I could not have petrol enough for more than another five. The visibility was now about a mile, but not even a fishing boat could I see, and there was absolutely nothing to show me whether I was over the North Sea or the English Channel.

I did not think about what was going to happen when the engine stopped, but I felt very bitter about getting caught in this way when I had made only one flight in my beautiful new Avro. However, just when I was beginning to doubt whether I had as much as another pint left, I suddenly got a glimpse of a light ahead.

Obviously a ship, I thought, thanking my lucky stars, and began to wonder how far off it was. For what seemed an age we never appeared to get any nearer it, and then, all at once, I saw a lot more lights. It must be a big ship, I thought.

Then my astonished eyes beheld a dim outline of land ahead, and at last I made out the surf of a light sea breaking on the shore. The engine spluttered, and then went on again quite well ; when we were about five hundred yards from the shore it stopped completely, and I thought we were done. But it spluttered, picked up once more, and kept on going until I thought we were near enough in to glide in on to the sands, which we did.

When I got out of the machine, I ascertained that the lights I had seen belonged to Le Touquet, somewhere about forty miles from St. Omer.

Armament Extraordinary

AFTER seeing my observer firing those seventy rounds at the Aviatik previously mentioned, from a distance of less than a hundred yards, and seeing the observer in the enemy machine fire back at us with a weapon that sounded like a small automatic rifle, I realised the utter futility of this kind of aerial combat. As I felt that my eighty miles per hour gave me the speed of most German machines, I decided that my Avro could easily manage a Lewis gun, provided that she was not required to climb to greater heights than seven thousand feet. Having duly obtained permission from my commanding officer, I affixed the gun satisfactorily to my Avro biplane, with the help of Captain Penn Gaskell.

The mounting consisted of a metal

tube, which I carefully selected from the tail-boom of a wrecked Henri Farman. The gun lay on the top of the fuselage decking, while a piece of rope, lashed around its centre of balance, was passed up over the metal tube and fixed to the cross member of the front seat tank bearer, for it must be remembered that in those days the front seat was on top of the petrol tank. A pulley on the rope enabled the observer to sling the gun up into mid-air and fire it all round as well as back over the pilot's head, with the aid of a stock from the shoulder.

It cost us some trouble to get the gun mounted ; when the job was finished, of course the weather broke, with the result that we had to fight our way day after day through clouds and rain and soon began to realise how much our work was likely to be handicapped by the prevailing westerly winds. Under these conditions there was little chance of our finding a German machine on which to try our gun.

The First "Ground Strafers"

AFTER moving up to an advanced landing-ground at Hazebrouck, No. 5 Squadron settled down at Bailleul aerodrome on October 21st, from which I one day managed to get near an Albatros when I was up with Lieutenant Abercrombie as passenger. Unfortunately the gun jammed after a few rounds, and those who knew the two men out there (how many of them are left, I wonder !) can easily imagine the lecture delivered to Abercrombie by Penn-Gaskell, who was our Lewis gun expert. So on Abercrombie's advice I took Penn-Gaskell up to use "his bally old gun himself" the very next day.

There being no Huns about, Penn-Gaskell assumed command. He turned round and yelled himself hoarse in his efforts to make me understand I was only the driver of the Lewis gun's carriage, i.e., the Avro, while he was the battery commander, and as such he intended to bring the gun into action against a train and troops down below at Perenchies siding. As he was senior to me, I had to obey orders and go down, with the result that we did quite a nice little bit of what was probably the first "ground-strafing."

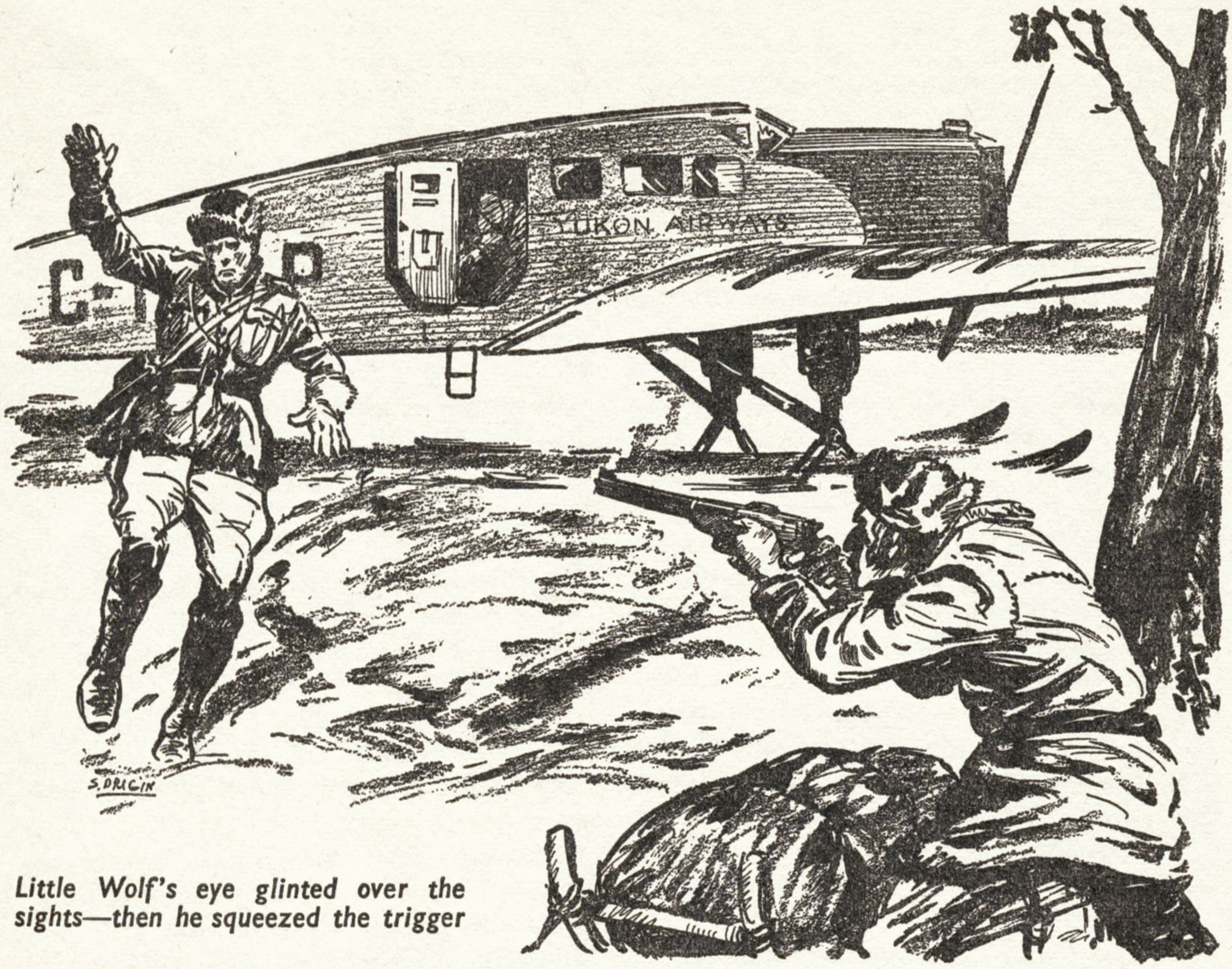
This was an easy game at the time, because there was no danger of interference from above. I cannot understand why it was not done more extensively, as it was our only way of helping the hard-pressed troops who were then fighting the first battle of Ypres. Later on, it was not so popular when German machines became more aggressive ; consequently it died out and was reintroduced later as a supposed innovation. But for a while we had a monopoly of it.

The Lewis gun we carried made my observer's seat a popular one in the squadron. On October 30th, when Lieutenant Thompson was my observer, we were within an inch of forcing a German machine to land, but at the critical moment an inlet valve broke, and we had great difficulty in getting home again.

Another time, while I was out with Lieutenant Rabagliati, we were diving on a German machine when we saw a kite balloon on the ground and shot it up. I also remember an occasion when Captain Cartwright and I hung about over a German aerodrome at Thielt for nearly an hour in the hope of seeing a machine come up. At length we grew tired of waiting and dived down to see what damage we could do to the aerodrome. We got peppered so badly that we returned home with twenty-three bullet holes in our machine. The seat tank was shot through, and Cartwright had a bullet-hole in his coat, but I think we were lucky to get off without further damage.

This little excursion gave my old Avro her sixtieth bullet-hole. I thought she had received quite her fair share of punctures, but, of course, being unable to read the future, I had no knowledge of a certain day ahead when she was to stagger home with her pilot and observer slightly wounded and more than sixty holes put in her in one flight.

—Another Long Instalment of "Airmen at War" appears Next Month—



Little Wolf's eye glinted over the sights—then he squeezed the trigger

THE COME-BACK TRAIL

A Dramatic Story of Canadian Skies and of a Warbird who Fell from the Ladder of Fame to Rise Again on New-won Wings as a Pilot of the North

By EDWARD GREEN

CHAPTER I

Fall of a Warbird

YOU wouldn't think it possible for a man to climb steadily up the ladder of fame, stand for a time on its dizzy pinnacle and then step across to an equal fame only to plunge into the utter depths of degradation and then fight back to win a more substantial niche in this bewildering scheme of things.

Yet that is the story of Tony Chester, and it started rolling when Clay Brooks, one-time C.O. of 284 Squadron, R.F.C., nicknamed "The Ratcatchers," sauntered into a beer-parlour in a Saskatchewan city, stiffened suddenly and then walked slowly to a table where a befuddled customer sat peering through the amber fluid in his glass as he held it up to the light.

For two full minutes the tall, athletic man gazed at the other. Something like horror and pity filled his eyes. Then he dropped into a chair opposite the drinker and uttered one word :

"Tony."

A pair of haunted, drink-bleared eyes were slowly raised ; seemed to peer through a mist, then fastened on the speaker.

"Clay ! By heck, it's Clay ! "

He spoke in a queer, strained voice, as though glad, yet unwilling to believe his

sight.

"Yes, I'm Clay. Tony, you're very drunk."

"Drunk, hey? Tha's news. Why, I've been drunk for—lemme see, aw hell, a year anyway. I'm never going to be sober again. Not worth it."

Clay was amazed. Was it possible that this wreck of humanity had once been Captain Chester, D.S.O., A.F.C., M.C., and a half a dozen foreign ribbons as well? Was this the man who had bathed in the spotlight of War fame and had later entered medicine to become a surgeon of world-wide renown? What the devil could have happened to him?

Clay's big hand closed gently over Tony's emaciated wrist.

"Tony, old man," he said gently, "What's the trouble? What happened?"

Tony Chester blinked owlishly. His once fine lips twisted in a sneer.

"Nothing, nothing at all. I never welsh. Bad blood, tha's all—bad blood."

"Bad blood?"

"Yep, tha's all. To hell with 'em all, Clay. Tha's the way to be."

Clay glanced at his wrist-watch. Wilton would be leaving with the north-bound mail shortly. He looked at Tony again.

"The Terrier told me you were here," he said. "Someone who knew you saw you here. He told the Terrier and he told me. You remember the Terrier, don't you?"

"Oh, sure, sure; goo' old Flippy Martin," Chester grunted.

"Well, he's flying for me on the Yukon Airways," Clay told him. "It's my outfit. I've got a fleet of twelve machines. How'd you like to come down to the lake and watch the northbound mail leave? She's a new Beechcraft."

"Don't want to see anything. Can't leave here. Gotta stay drunk," Chester returned stubbornly. He signalled the waiter to bring him another drink, but Clay nodded a vigorous negative to the waiter, who walked away.

"Well, Tony, I'm sorry," Clay said firmly, "but you're too damned good to break up like this. You're starting a come-back right now. Understand? You're on the come-back trail."

Before Chester had a chance to reply, Clay rose, reached out with his powerful arms and half dragged his companion to his feet. Pushing him before him, he loaded him into a car that stood at the door.

"Where we goin'?" Chester demanded with a drunken man's belligerence.

"You'll find out," was all Clay would tell him as the car gathered speed and threaded through the city traffic for the open country.

A TRIM Beechcraft seaplane bobbed at the float down on the lake. Clay, supporting Chester, lifted him into a seat and nodded to Ben Wilton, the pilot.

"There's brandy in the medicine chest, Ben. Taper this lad off and take him to Whitewater Joe's. Tell Joe I want him kept there until he's well, you know. He's one of the old gang; used to be a useful Camel pusher. None better. Keep an eye on him for me, Ben."

"Sure," Ben grinned knowingly, checking his mail-bags aboard. "I'll tell Joe to take care of him."

Clay shook Chester, who had slumped into an alcoholic doze.

"Where did you live, Tony?" he asked kindly.

"Didn't live anywhere," came the surly reply. "Spent all my money. Just got a few dollars left. Old lady threw me out."

"From where, Tony?"

Chester mumbled a street address. Clay glanced at his watch. Ben checked with him.

"Time to go, Chief," the pilot announced.

"Okay, Ben. Push off now. Look after Tony, won't you?"

"You bet," Ben grinned, and swung up into his seat.

A few seconds later the Beechcraft was moving out on to the water for the take-off.

THE angular Amazon in charge of the boarding-house greeted Clay's inquiry with a storm of abuse.

"Do I know that drunken bum, Chester? I'll say I know him. He owes me thirty dollars for board. I kept his things, and I'll keep 'em until he pays me, the no-good rascal."

Calmly Clay peeled off three ten-dollar bills from an impressive roll.

"Your money, madam," he said coolly, "and in future I'd control my tongue, if I were you. If not, you may find yourself in serious trouble one of these days. And now kindly bring Mr. Chester's things down here. At once."

Clay's voice carried the ring of authority, and the woman, clutching her money, hurried away, muttering under her breath, "How was I to know he was a somebody."

There were quite a lot of things belonging to Tony Chester, including a surprisingly large number of cases of medical instruments and equipment. Clay loaded them all into his car and set out for his office.

"I'll send all this stuff out to him on the next 'plane," he decided, and then wondered why he should bother. After all, the War was over and Tony Chester meant nothing to him.

But five minutes' reflection convinced Clay that Tony Chester still meant a very great deal. He'd belonged to 284 Squadron, was one of the old gang. He'd fought; risked his life, and probably on more than one occasion had saved the lives of many of the men on 284's roster. In brief, Clay was not the first man to discover that you can't put in eighteen months of front-line flying with a man and then say he means nothing to you in after years.

"Well, he's taken the first step on the come-back trail," Clay told himself. "He's in the North now and it'll either make him or kill him. And, somehow, I don't think it'll kill him."

CHAPTER II

A Man of the North

A MONTH passed before Clay saw Tony Chester again. Wilton was on holiday and Clay, following his usual practice of himself deputising for the absent pilot, in due course put the Beechcraft down at Whitewater Joe's snug cabin up on the Sturgeon River. He had hoped the change would do Chester some good, but he could hardly believe his eyes when he tied up at the dock and saw a lithe, bronzed figure step lightly from the log-cabin and swing down the river bank with an elastic stride. It was a new Tony Chester, his lungs filled and expanded by the sweet scent of the pines and the pallid skin of his face whipped brown by the sting of the north wind.

"Hello, Tony, old man! Gosh, it's great to see you looking fit again," Clay beamed in enthusiasm.

Chester extended a hand and grasped Clay's in a firm grasp.

"Thanks, old man," he said quietly, but with a world of meaning. "And thanks for sending my things out. I don't know how I'm going to repay you."

"You're damned right, you're going to repay me," Clay laughed. "And I'll tell you how. You're going to come back good and strong and give me a good laugh at those Jonahs who got you down. Can you still fly?"

"I don't know," Chester smiled, gratefully.

"Well, we'll see. I've got to run over to Elk Point, so you might as well come along and try your hand at it. This isn't a Camel, you know. It's an aeroplane."

And when, half an hour later, the Beechcraft's air-speed indicator needle was flicking round the two hundred miles an hour mark, Tony Chester turned solemnly to Clay and said:

"Damned if you aren't right. It *is* an aeroplane."

He took over the controls and porpoised along for a while under Clay's instructions. Then the old knack asserted itself and came back strong.

"A little inclined to over-control, Tony," Clay counselled. "Remember, she's light."

Twenty minutes later, Clay was sitting back easily while Tony Chester handled

the 'plane like a veteran. Just to have Chester near him did something to Clay. He could almost smell the fresh dope and burning castor oil of the Camels. He peered ahead, his eyes half-closed. He seemed to be looking down on the shell-lashed stench of No-Man's-Land. Chester's familiar presence was sufficient to turn the clock back twenty years.

Their strange re-union had the same effect on Tony Chester. The tense lines around his mouth and eyes were easing out and his face was once more assuming the reckless grin of the War years. His fine, strong hands—hands that had tripped guns and guided scapels—rested on the wheel with an assurance that would not be denied.

"Seems good to be together again, Tony. You know, if you stay with us I'll have five of the old 284 gang here. I wish they were all here, but——" Clay's voice trailed away.

"Sure, I understand, Clay," Chester nodded, and he, too, was thinking of those War-time comrades who were now in Valhalla.

CLAY made no immediate effort to discover the cause of Chester's downfall. He sent him further north with "Flipper" Martin for more instruction on Junkers and Fairchilds and, three months later, he had the pleasure of sending him his transport pilot's licence. Tony Chester was now a full-fledged northern pilot.

By this time the bitter winter cold of the north country had clamped down hard on all things in the wild. Animals turned their tails to the icy blasts and huddled in their dens. Frost ate into the waters of the lakes and transformed their surfaces into sheet armour six and eight feet in thickness. It found its way into the hearts of giant trees and split them asunder with the booming sound of gunfire. And it crept into the sleek, vital parts of aeroplanes and the virile bodies of the keen-eyed men who flew them.

But Tony Chester was happy despite the cold. He was flying a regular run along the coastline of the Arctic Ocean and his medical skill had stood him in good stead on more than one occasion. His eyes were clear and his hand steady; his body pulsing with vibrant health and a stout heart.

But his mind was troubled, and during the long winter nights he would sit by a roaring red-hot stove and think of the past. At times, so bitter were memories, he would become morose and irritable, and it was during one of these moods that Clay happened in on him.

Clay didn't mention it until after the evening meal, when pipes were going and both men were seated in moosehide chairs.

"Tony, something's troubling you," he said. "I want to know just what it is."

Chester tamped the tobacco down into his pipe and blew a cloud of smoke towards the ceiling. He remained silent for a moment, then he spoke.

"Oh, I guess I'm just nuts," he said. "I know it's crazy to worry about what's gone before, but sometimes you just can't help it, can you?"

"A girl, Tony?" Clay asked.

"No, I never had much time for them. Phillip's the real reason. You've heard of him?"

Who hadn't heard of Phillip Chester, a graceless scamp for ever in trouble? Chester, Clay recalled, had been making excuses for him for so long that it almost looked as though he had something in common with his worthless relative.

"There was a mess," Chester went on, "and when I stepped in to try and clear it up, Doctor Chisholm, head of the Consulting Board and Chairman of the Medical Council, hinted that it would be better if I sought other fields. He said bad blood was bound to tell."

"Bad blood, eh?" Clay grinned. "Funny that it doesn't work the other way around, good blood transmitted to bad. Aw hell! Forget about it. By the way, where's old Chisholm's son? Wasn't he a corporal in the Mounties, or something?"

Chester gave a wry smile.

"Yes, and still is. He's up at North Harbour. I flew him in when he took

over the new post. Oh well, there's more important things to talk about. The Eskimos at Cape Bond are suffering from disease and starvation. Little Wolf, that renegade Indian, is on the warpath again. I flew Constable Laurie in a few days ago to get on his trail."

The talk drifted to more material matters, to the work in hand and jobs still to be done, and watching his companion's animated face as he spoke, Clay marvelled at the change which the North had wrought.

CHAPTER III

Man Hunt

A WEEK of bustling activity followed, which left Tony Chester tired and worn. He was in the air every daylight hour and a good many night ones, stopping only long enough to refuel and snatch a hasty bite. Medical supplies and food had to be flown in to the Eskimos. In addition, food had to be cooked for them, as many were too weak to stir from their cold stone bunks. Cheerfully Chester carried on : flying, cooking and giving medical attention, and as the cycle of life could not be denied he sometimes found himself in ill-lighted, evil-smelling *igloos* helping suffering women to bring little ones into the world. His soft voice and skilful attention made him loved and respected by these simple people to whom he ministered.

It was in the midst of all this activity that an Indian runner brought him word from a radio station that Constable Laurie wanted him at once. He was at Mawkwat Lake, hard on the heels of the notorious Little Wolf, whose latest exploit had been to shoot a policeman. The Mounty, the runner said, was in a serious condition.

On his way to Mawkwat Lake, the nine powerful cylinders of his big engine thumping out a song of power, Tony Chester mused on the strange contradictions of his life in the North. One moment he had been busy saving life at Cape Bond, and now he was preparing to destroy it if Little Wolf decided to try and shoot it out.

Laurie was waiting for him at a sheltered point on Mawkwat Lake's wooded shoreline. He was tossing cornmeal and fat balls to his jaded dogs.

"Denman's over there," Laurie told him, nodding towards a spruce lean-to where a fire was burning brightly. "I'm feeding these damned Malemutes. They're all-in. They've been on the trail for five days now without much rest. It's hell on dogs."

"They're not the only things this country's hell on," Chester grinned. "Is Denman badly hurt ? "

"Dunno, bleeding bad, but he's comfortable. Listen, you fix him up and get him away. I'm going on after Little Wolf as soon as these beggars are fed. When you get him away and fixed up, come back, and you'll find me somewhere along the lake or up the Crazyway River. That's where Little Wolf's heading for."

Chester nodded and made his way to the spruce lean-to, a windbreak made from spruce boughs propped against a frame. He saw the white face of the injured man there and a moment later he was kneeling at his side. Expert fingers felt for the wound.

"Hurt much, old man ? " Chester asked kindly.

"Little ; went right through my side. Felt like the kick of a mule."

"Sure, it would," Clay laughed, his swift, expert fingers searching the wound. He turned to his kit. In quick, practised motions he filled a hypodermic syringe and gave the wounded man a quarter grain of morphine.

"There, that'll help you to forget it for a bit while I draw the edges together. Nothing like doing the job right away. Did you ever hear the story of the travelling salesman who stopped at a farmhouse and the farmer's daughter——"

He launched off into a humorous story which helped to keep the mind of the wounded man off his pain. Tony Chester was no longer the efficient pilot of the north country ; he was a medico, aiding humanity, alleviating pain in a pain-filled land.

The wound dressed, he carried the man gently to the 'plane and laid him on a sleeping-bag on the floor. After tucking him into blankets he took-off, and an hour later had him safely in bed at a mission hospital. The Sister-in-charge glanced at the dressings, then sharply up at the pilot.

"You have studied, or practised, medicine ?" she challenged.

"Just a bit," Chester mumbled.

The Sister peered hard at him for a moment.

"I am sorry," she said simply. "I do not wish to pry into your affairs, but remember, out here we are not interested in what a man was ; it is what he is that we judge him by."

Chester left the hospital and turned the nose of his Junkers towards Mawkwat Lake. So it didn't matter what he had been, eh ? It was what he was now that counted. He wished the stiff-necked old doctor back at Montreal could have heard that statement. It would have been an education to him.

CHESTER found Laurie plodding along the windlashed ice at the eastern end of Mawkwat. The Mounty was staggering along on his webs, barely able to lift one foot after the other. When Chester taxied up beside him he smiled bravely.

"Dogs petered out. Poor devils, couldn't keep it up. We can't be far from Little Wolf now ; look, his trail isn't filled in."

Chester glanced down in the snow at a trail which was just beginning to fill with the sifting snow. He signalled Laurie to climb aboard.

"We'll hunt him from the air, then land and pick him up when we find him."

Once more the Junkers took to the sky, and flying low, his sharp eyes scanning the twisting trail on the lake snow, Chester followed Little Wolf's track. In less than fifteen minutes he saw a tiny figure lashing his struggling dogs up the mouth of Crazyway River. He nudged Laurie in the ribs and pointed down. The Mounty, half-dozing with fatigue, came to instant life.

"All right. Land and I'll get him."

As Chester came in for a landing, Laurie checked his carbine for ammunition, but before the Junkers' skis had scraped to a halt, Little Wolf, with a derisive yell, had headed for the bush along the shore.

Chester left the engine turning slowly on a closed throttle and lifted his own carbine from its slings. He saw Laurie swing down, fit his webs to his feet, and make for the bush. Just then a rifle cracked and a spurt of snow flew up at Laurie's feet. The Mounty gripped his weapon and marched straight for the bush.

A twig flicked and a rifle cracked again. A bullet whined overhead, and still Laurie marched on. Chester was fascinated by the Mounty's iron nerve. He saw the Corporal raise his weapon and fire a single shot at the bush. Another report answered him and a bullet whistled perilously close.

The Mounty stopped, peered hard into the bush and then moved forward again. A hail of lead whipped out of the woods and Chester saw Laurie stop suddenly, weave uncertainly, then fall. Blood was spouting from him like water from a tap. Chester leaped from the 'plane and ran towards the fallen Mounty.

A rifle cracked again and a high-velocity bullet squealed past Chester's head. His lips thinned and his eyes went bleak. He stopped, returned to the cabin, reached for his carbine and medical kit, and then went forward again.

A bullet plucked at his sleeve. He glanced at the ragged gash and then at the woods. There was no sign of the murderous Indian. Chester cursed himself for having let Laurie go alone, though he knew the Mounty would have forbidden him to leave the 'plane. Hurriedly he dropped on one knee beside the wounded man. Laurie's eyes were open, but his face was twisted with pain.

"Shoulder, I think," the Mounty breathed, watching the blood spouting out.

Chester did not answer. With quick motions he stripped the clothing from

the wound and laid it bare. Reaching into his kit, he drew out a pair of rubber gloves and was about to draw them on when a rifle cracked again and another bullet smashed into the snow close at his heels. He flung a hasty glance at the bush.

" You'd better leave me, pal," Laurie gasped. " That devil'll get you next."

" Shut up ! " Chester snapped, turning the man over. " It's gone right through. Broke some bones and cut an artery. but we'll soon fix that up. I once knew an Irishman who was shot in the same place and when I got him home his wife said——"

"*Spang-whee-zing.*"

Another soft-nose slug splashed on to the ice and cannoned off with a shrill scream. Out of the corner of his eye, Chester saw a slight movement in a small clump of bush a few yards away. Little Wolf's malignant face appeared for an instant, then he turned and raced for the tall timbers. Chester watched him go.

" Well, Laurie, he's away again," he said softly. " Let him go. We'll pick him up yet."

" You'll have to get Chisholm. He's the nearest man," the Mounty breathed.

Chester's skilled fingers, clad in rubber gloves, probed the wound, and soon the flow of blood had ceased. With one hand he stopped the gushing, while with the other he groped through his kit and brought out a small instrument of shiny steel. Probing carefully with its gleaming nose, he snapped it in place on the wound.

" Hemostat," he said quietly. " It nips the veins shut. I'll leave it there until I get you to hospital."

With the blood-flow stopped, Chester quickly swabbed the wound with anti-septic, and made two gauze pads to cover the holes. He strapped them in place with adhesive tape which he had to warm over an alcohol lamp. When the wound was bandaged, he gave Laurie a shot of morphine and carried him aboard the 'plane.

The Sister at the mission hospital said nothing when she saw the hemostats in the Mounty's wounds. Her kindly eyes studied Chester's lined face carefully, then, with a shake of her hooded head she assured him she would do everything possible to make Laurie comfortable. She asked neither advice nor orders. Nor did Chester offer either. He smiled enigmatically at her questioning glance and went to the radio station, where he sent a message telling Corporal Chisholm that he was needed at once. He then made arrangements to get some rest before going over to pick the corporal up.

IT seemed only a few minutes later to the exhausted pilot that Garves, the radio operator, was shaking him by the shoulder.

" Sorry to wake you, Tony," the radio man was apologising, " but Chisholm's ready to go, and he's madder than hell about Little Wolf. Said he didn't think the devil would shoot. He still doesn't believe it."

" Then he'll live and learn, or maybe he won't live if he doesn't learn." Chester smiled wearily, then added, " Okay, stick the torch under her."

" I told Greg to do that before I woke you," Garves told him. " She'll be ready in a few minutes. Here's Greg now."

A grizzled air engineer appeared.

" She's ready as soon as you are, Tony. I'll dump the oil in when you say the word."

Chester sat up to drink hot coffee and munch black toast. Then he nodded to Greg.

" Turn her over. I'll be right out."

The sky, which had been fairly clear, was overcast when Chester took-off for Corporal Chisholm's post. Radio weather reports said something about a blow to the north. Chester grinned. The elements weren't making things any easier for them. This had been the hardest winter the north had known for some years.

Eighty miles out he found himself facing the full fury of a gale. He glanced below for a possible landing-place in the event of trouble. Snow swirled around the cockpit windscreen making visibility

difficult, and almost impossible at times. Chester set his jaw and eased the throttle wider.

The short-bodied Junkers pitched and tossed in the wind. The gale tugged and whipped at control surfaces until they boomed and rumbled like a giant drum. Far ahead through the blinding murk, Chester saw the Mounted Police Post. He slanted down for a fast landing and found Chisholm waiting for him, eager to go.

CHAPTER IV

On the Trail of the Wolf

IT was not difficult to pick up Little Wolf's trail in Crazyway River. Chisholm, stern and dogged, watched the irregular tracks of the webs in the snow below. Finally he jabbed a gloved finger at a struggling dot ahead. Chester nodded and put the Junkers down on the river surface in a smother of snow.

Chisholm was out of the cabin before the 'plane had stopped sliding. He was a scant ten yards from Little Wolf, who crouched behind his sleigh, rifle ready. Chester saw the blazing fury in the Indian's eyes and reached for his own service carbine, slung in the cabin.

The instant the Mounty stepped clear of the 'plane Little Wolf screamed. Chisholm stopped.

"Put that gun down, Little Wolf!" he warned, making no move towards his revolver.

Little Wolf's reply was quick, and unmistakable. His beady eye glinted over the sights of his rifle and he squeezed the trigger. Chisholm stiffened, weaved uncertainly and plunged face down to the ice. Little Wolf screamed again and swung his rifle towards the 'plane. A bullet smashed through the windscreen.

Carbine in hand, Chester dropped to the floor of the cabin. Another bullet whined through the metal. Edging towards the door, he found himself at a disadvantage. Little Wolf, cunning as a fox, had run towards the open door and his rifle muzzle was almost in Chester's face.

The pilot jerked suddenly sideways. He felt the searing heat of a powder burn. He jabbed out with his carbine, and the muzzle caught Little Wolf in the throat. The Indian staggered back, and Chester twisted his weapon round just as Little Wolf fired again. The two reports blended into one.

But Chester's aim had been the straighter. The heavy ·30–·30 bullet hit Little Wolf full in the face and he was hurled backwards, dead in the instant he hit the ice.

Leaping from the cabin, Chester raced towards Chisholm. A single glance and he knew the Corporal would not be long for this world unless quick action were taken. The bullet had cut through chest arteries dangerously close to the heart and he was bleeding to death.

Chester dropped to his knees beside the wounded man. It was impossible to stop the flow of blood completely, but with quick snaps of forceps he shut off a few of the larger veins.

It was now a race against time. Chisholm's only hope was to be rushed to a hospital at once. Chester bundled him aboard the Junkers and took-off, leaving the Indian's body on the ice.

AS the Junkers came to rest on the clearing beside the hospital, Chester became once more the trained and expert surgeon. One glance at the wan face of his unconscious patient and he realised that the only means of saving Chisholm's life was by a blood transfusion. Yet there would be no one at the hospital capable of such an operation and he doubted even if a blood donor could be found whose blood group matched that of Chisholm.

With a wry smile, Chester made his decision and a few moments later had announced it to the astonished Sister at the mission hospital.

"But such a thing is unheard of, Mr.—Chester," she protested.

"Maybe, but it's our only hope," Chester said sharply. "I intend to give the corporal my own blood. Will you please make ready for the operation? Hurry, take a sample so that we can see if our blood matches. Mine is Group B."

Impressed by his determination, the Sister hurried away to carry out his orders. Attendants made the bed ready and set equipment at its side. In the tiny, ill-equipped laboratory, Chester made a swift test.

"It's all right, Sister," he announced. "We're the same blood group."

Corporal Chisholm was hardly breathing when Chester returned to the ward, cast a swift and expert glance over the equipment, then snapped brisk orders to the white-faced Sister.

"Here, give me the needle."

He took the heavy needle from her hand and thrust it into an artery in Chisholm's arm. With sure, rapid movements he tapped his own veins.

"Now," he said as he saw his own blood pulsing into a glass bulb, "shut off that one and press that rubber bulb. That's right. He's getting it."

Unable to judge accurately the correct amount, Chester watched measure after measure of his own blood leave his veins and enter those of the Mounty. He felt himself weakening, but his keen eyes noted that colour was returning to the corporal's pallid cheeks and that his breathing was becoming stronger. Two more bulbs filled and emptied and then Chester signed them to stop.

"Whisky, Sister ; half a tumbler full, please."

The Sister hurried away, to return with a tumbler almost filled with raw spirit. Chester tossed it down in one gulp.

"And now a tin of condensed milk, Sister, and I'll be all right."

After drinking the thick, viscous fluid he rose from the bed and seated himself in a chair. His sensitive fingers felt Chisholm's pulse. It was strengthening with every minute.

"He'll be all right now, Sister," he announced. "As soon as I feel a little stronger we'll close off those veins and then all he'll need will be rest and care."

TWO hours later Corporal Chisholm awoke. The Sister was bending over him. In a few soft words she told him what had happened.

"Chester ! Not Tony Chester !" he exclaimed. "I don't know him by sight, but I've heard plenty about him. He was one of the best surgeons on this continent."

"He still is," the Sister replied evenly.

"But someone must know about this," Chisholm insisted. "We'll have to tell the world what he's been doing. Why, that chap's saved hundreds of lives up here, quite apart from mine."

"The world does know now," the Sister smiled. "I sent the news out over the radio."

And the world did know ; knew how a nothern pilot had performed a blood transfusion under his own direction, giving his own blood. And when Clay heard the story he slammed the Beechcraft into the air and headed for Natook with Corporal Chisholm's father aboard.

They burst in just as Chester was polishing off a huge cariboo steak.

"Tony, you old devil !" Clay exclaimed, "I knew you could do it."

He turned to Dr. Chisholm.

"There he is. Now what have you got to say about it ?"

The old man stroked his beard.

"Nothing," he returned precisely. "I have nothing whatever to say—except to ask when Dr. Chester is returning to the city to take up practice. I suppose you are ready—Doctor ?" he ended quietly, pausing to let the word sink in.

But Tony Chester shook his head.

"No, I'm finished with the city," he replied. "I'm grateful to you for returning my certificate, but I've found my place here, and here I'll stay. Besides," and Chester gave the old doctor a wry smile, "You've forgotten my bad blood."

"'Bad blood,' eh !" retorted the old man indignantly. "Don't you talk about bad blood to me, sir. It's in *my* family now—and I only wish we had a lot more like it."

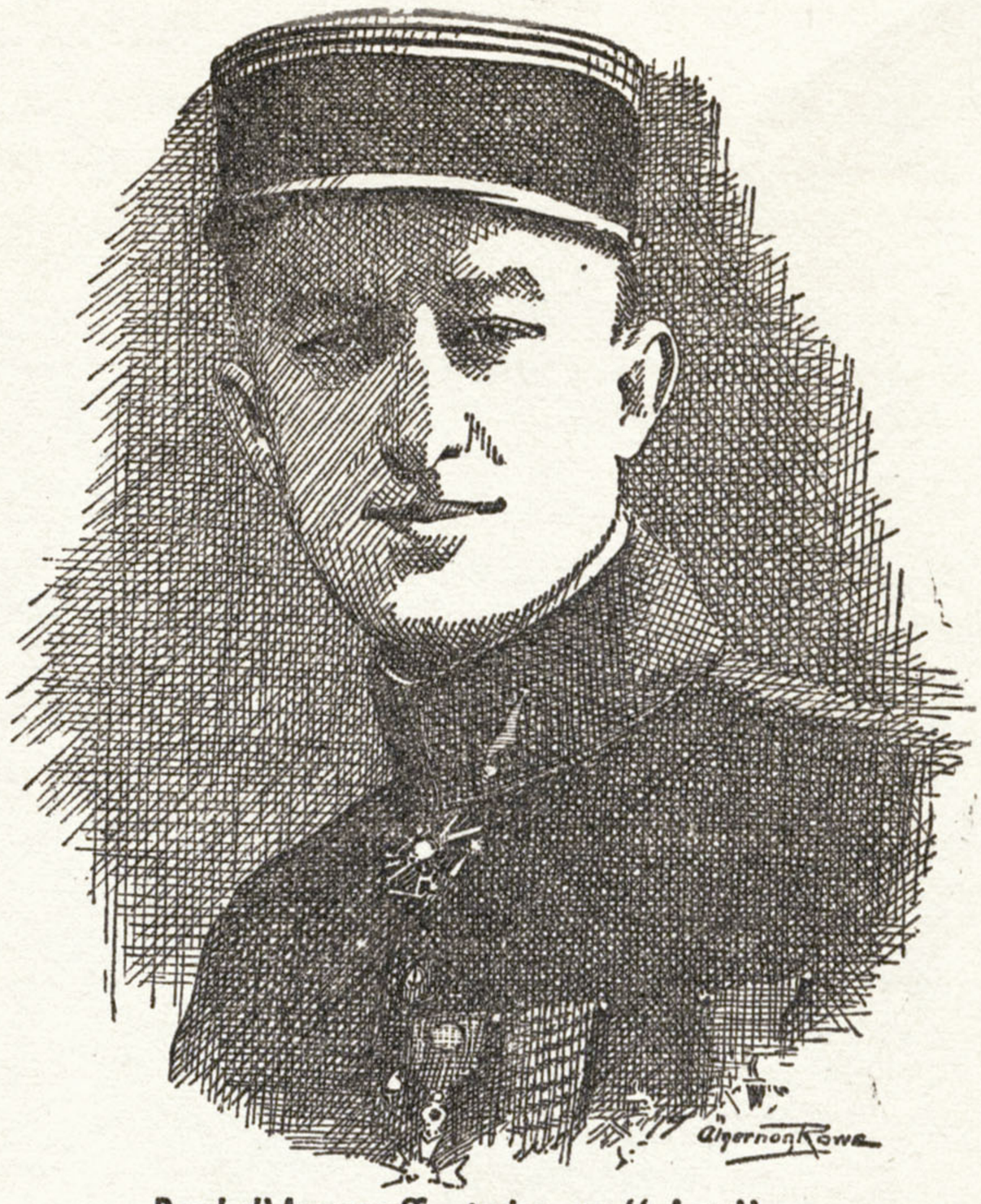
Chester grinned happily and glanced at Clay. On the medical roll he was once again Doctor Anthony Chester, but on the roll of the Yukon Airways he was Pilot Chester, and there he determined his name should stay.

An Ace under Two Flags

Honoured and Decorated by Two Nations and an "Ace" in Both the French and Russian Air Services, Paul d'Argueeff Scored Fifteen Victories—and then Vanished into the Mists of Post-War Oblivion

By

A. H. PRITCHARD



Paul d'Argueeff—twice an "Ace"

SO little has been written concerning the exploits of the air fighters who served in the Imperial Russian Air Service that students of the War in the Air should be doubly interested in this brief biography of Captain Paul d'Argueeff, for he served under two flags, those of Russia and France.

Born at Yalta, in the Crimea, on March 1st, 1887, Paul d'Argueeff was an officer in the Imperial Army of the Czar when Germany marched across Belgium, and had the honour of being one of the youngest lieutenant-colonels in the service. Despite his rank, however, he left Russia early in October, 1914, and travelled to France, where he enlisted in the 131st Regiment of Infantry. This unit took part in the fierce fighting of early 1915, and d'Argueeff won the Croix de Guerre for gallantry, but was so seriously wounded a few weeks later that he was invalided home as unfit for further service.

Recovering from his wounds, he applied for active duty in the Russian Army, but was rejected on the grounds of ill-health. Eventually, he bothered the authorities so much that he was found a staff post well behind the lines, and here he passed out of the records for nearly two years.

D'Argueeff, however, was far from idle, for he was stationed near what passed for an aerodrome in War-time Russia, and on several occasions managed to "scrounge" a free flight. These stolen fruits whetted his appetite for more, and early 1917 saw him transfer to the Air Service, although how he persuaded the medicos to pass his bullet-torn body will never be known.

Posted to the Scouts

THEN followed a course of training at Sebastopol, where d'Argueeff won considerable fame for his ability to spin a Morane of 1914 vintage, and in order to prevent him breaking his neck, and destroying a valuable machine, he was ordered to present himself to the *Istrebitelny Otriad* 4 (Scout Squadron 4) at Riga.

This squadron was equipped with an assorted collection of cast-off French machines, including several Nieuports, a Morane, and an old Voisin. D'Argueeff was extremely lucky not to have finished his career only three days after his arrival at the Front, for on February 18th, 1917, he was ordered to take up the Voisin. At the last moment his orders were changed and another pilot took up the

old "pusher." It had only been up a few moments when it was attacked by a pair of Albatros Scouts and shot down in flames, the wreckage falling only a mile from the aerodrome.

On February 27th there was considerable activity over Riga, and the town was bombed three times during the morning. During the last of these raids d'Argueeff attacked an Albatros two-seater with incendiary bullets, and the machine dived for the Russian lines with its left wing ablaze, the observer being killed and the pilot, a *feldwebel*, being taken prisoner, having escaped with a broken leg.

Incidentally, the use of incendiary ammunition seems to have been pretty general in the Russian Air Service from 1916 onwards, for nearly every official report mentions the fact that "as the enemy pilots are using explosive bullets, our own pilots are using incendiary ammunition."

Early in March, d'Argueeff was himself wounded in the thigh by a splinter from an explosive bullet, and was put out of action until April 1st. A week later he was flying over Mitau when he was attacked by three Fokkers, presumably D.3's, and his Nieuport was hit near the base of the left "V" strut. Despite the fact that his left wing threatened to collapse at any moment, he turned on his attackers and managed to shoot one down between the lines, where the pilot was hauled to safety by German infantrymen. D'Argueeff's damaged machine was patched up before evening, and shortly before dusk he had obtained another victim, this time a two-seater which fell in flames behind the Russian lines. For this feat, d'Argueeff was awarded the Order of St. George, 4th Class, with the additional honour of the Golden Sabre, and at the same time was cited for the St. Vladimir Cross.

On May 30th, d'Argueeff was flying over the enemy lines near Jakobstadt, with Captain Kourilkoff, when they ran into a terrific barrage of anti-aircraft fire, Kourilkoff being killed by a direct hit. D'Argueeff then dived on the guns, which were mounted on lorries, and his fire appears to have had good effect, for one lorry got out of control, crashed into a house and was completely wrecked. He then found an Albatros two-seater just taking off from a small field on the outskirts of the village, and this he shot down in flames.

Although d'Argueeff scored two more official victories while in the Russian Air Service, available records give no details of them, and it appears that he left Russia shortly after the Armistice of November, 1917, to once more throw in his lot with the French.

On the French Front

D'ARGUEEFF was accepted for L'Aviation Militaire on his Russian record, but was not sent to the Front immediately. Instead, he was sent off to a school to learn to fly a Breguet by some misguided staff officer, who refused to believe that he was a scout pilot. D'Argueeff did not stay long, however, and on his first flight added ten years to the field commandant's life by using the clumsy old bomber as a scout and rounding off a mad display of aerobatics by flying between two hangars. Next day he left the Breguet for Spads, and soon gave ample proof of his ability, for he was posted to an Escadrille towards the end of May, 1918.

On the 27th the enemy opened an offensive against the French and there was terrific air activity over the Marne, with the German Air Service holding a decided supremacy. Five machines from d'Argueeff's Escadrille were lost on this day, and his own machine was wrecked through a forced landing in the second line trenches. On the following morning the enemy machines kept up a constant strafe on the main bridge near Chateau-Thierry, and so serious was the damage that, for a time, the French light field batteries were without ammunition. It was during one of these bridge-head raids that d'Argueeff scored his first victory while flying in the service of France.

He was a member of a mixed patrol of about twenty Spads and Nieuports that engaged a similar enemy formation

consisting of Albatros and Pfalz Scouts, and L.V.G. bombers. The Spad flying on d'Argueeff's right suddenly dived to attack a two-seater, and the German observer shot the Frenchman down in flames. In aerial warfare it is fatal to relax one's diligence, and this German observer, it seems, had forgotten to read his training school notes. At all events, he leaned over the side to watch his burning victim, and a burst from d'Argueeff's guns almost cut him in two. Another burst shattered the L.V.G.'s petrol tank and the machine dived earthwards, trailing a long tongue of fire, and with the dead observer still hanging over the side of the cockpit.

A little later in this flight d'Argueeff was slightly wounded in the arm, but the wound was only a long burn, and he was in the air to score another victory on the 31st. Once again his victim was a bomber, this time a Rumpler, and one of his bullets must have found a bomb, for the German machine suddenly exploded and a few particles of burning fabric were all that was left to mark its passing.

Next day, d'Argueeff went out with six companions to attack a German aerodrome, but shortly after crossing the lines he was struck in the groin by a splinter from an anti-aircraft shell and forced to turn for home. No sooner were his companions out of sight than he was attacked by a pair of Pfalz Scouts and received two bullets through his left foot. His Spad crashed between the lines and he lay in the wreckage for nearly three hours before being dragged to safety by a party of French infantrymen. This time d'Argueeff's wounds were so serious that he was offered his discharge, but he refused, and by mid-August he was back again at the Front.

Balloon "Bait"

ON September 1st he shot down a Fokker D.7, but on returning from the patrol was so weak that he had to be lifted from his cockpit. Two weeks' leave, however, worked wonders, and he finished the month in a blaze of glory. A balloon which he attacked on the 26th was hauled down before he could fire it, and while he was trying to destroy it as it was being deflated, new enemies appeared in the shape of five Fokkers, who, having shot two of his companions down in the German lines, now made a concerted attack on the lone Russian.

D'Argueeff remembered the old story of "a Fokker cannot hold a prolonged dive," and began to hedge-hop homewards. One particularly pugnacious Fokker pilot had no use for French instruction manuals, however, for he came down at a terrific speed, and began to spray the Spad's tail assembly. Another Fokker then tried to follow suit, but came down too sharply and almost collided with the first one, which immediately zoomed and passed over the Spad. D'Argueeff then made a climbing turn and the bomber became the hunted. Even as the German began to make another turn the Spad's guns chattered briefly and the Fokker made a five-hundred-foot dive into the unyielding earth.

The following day, shortly after noon, d'Argueeff found a two-seater flying under a low bank of clouds, and fired at it from long range. As if drawn by invisible wires, a party of Pfalz and Fokkers dropped from their hiding-place in the clouds, and d'Argueeff found himself attacked from all sides. Certain that his last moment had come, the Russian flew straight for the two-seater, which broke up in the air. Strangely enough, bullets suddenly ceased to pound into the Spad and d'Argueeff began to wonder why the enemy were prolonging the agony. Turning his head he discovered the reason : a patrol of Nieuport 28's had arrived and the Germans had their hands full.

A Fokker dived out of the general *mêlée*, and d'Argueeff turned to cut off its retreat. From a range of only a few yards it was impossible to miss, and within the space of an eye-blink the Fokker's wings folded back, the fuselage turned a complete somersault, then went tearing earthwards with its engine still roaring all out—number twelve on d'Argueeff's list of victories.

D'Argueeff's Last Victory

OCTOBER saw the enemy infantry on the run, but the German Air Service stayed to fight, and despite the constant drizzle, were in the air from dawn till dusk, making a valiant but vain attempt to halt the French advance by ground "strafing." On one misty day d'Argueeff almost rammed a Fokker which appeared suddenly out of the rain, but he was the first to recover from the shock, and the Fokker crashed a mile behind the French lines.

An A.E.G. two-seater was d'Argueeff's next victim, and for his very fine work during September he was made a Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur on October 28th, the citation also bringing him a ninth bar to add to his Croix de Guerre. On November 3rd a Fokker became his fifteenth and last victim, for eight days later the last bugles blew and the roar of guns ceased.

On that day, too, the Great War record of Captain Paul d'Argueeff, hero under two flags, came to its end. Honoured and decorated by two countries, the close of the War saw d'Argueeff disappear from the ken of air historians. For all that is known to-day he may have passed into Valhalla, or he may still be waging war under yet another flag. Wherever he may be, his record is outstanding and must ever rank high in the gallant history of the War in the Air.

HERE'S THE ANSWER

Readers' Questions are invited and should be addressed to AIR STORIES, Tower House, Southampton Street, London, W.C.2. A stamped, addressed envelope must accompany ALL enquiries and no letter should contain more than three separate questions

NO. 56 SQUADRON (C. E. Griggs, Upper Deal, Kent). The equipment of No. 56 Squadron, from the date of its inception, has comprised the following fighter types: S.E.5, Sopwith Snipe, Gloster Grebe, Armstrong Whitworth Siskin, Bristol Bulldog and Gloster Gauntlet. The Squadron is at present equipped with Hawker Hurricanes.

DECORATIONS (W. A. Jordan, Manor Park, E.12). (1) Captain Albert Ball scored forty-four victories and held the following decorations: V.C., D.S.O. (two bars), M.C., Croix de Chevalier Legion d'Honneur, Russian Order of St. George. Lieut.-Colonel W. A. Bishop gained seventy-two victories and held the V.C., D.S.O. and bar, M.C. and D.F.C. (2) Many famous airmen flew the Bristol Fighter, including Captain Leefe-Robinson, V.C., who led the first Brisfit Squadron into action, and Major A. E. McKeever, M.C., D S.O., who scored thirty victories from the front seat of a Bristol Fighter.

AIRCRAFT SPEEDS (R. Gilbert, Edinburgh, 10). The Miles Magister attains its maximum speed of 145 m.p.h. at a height of 1,000 feet. Best operational height of the Fairey Seafox is 5,860 feet, where it can do 124 m.p.h. Performance figures of the twin-engined Vickers Wellesley bomber are still secret.

PARNALL 'PLANES (O. R. Maddock, Sutton, Surrey). Parnall Aircraft Ltd., of Bristol, was formed in 1935 to take over the aircraft business of George Parnall & Co., which was founded during the War. Among the aircraft produced by this company have been the Panther, Puffin, Possom, Plover, Pixie, Elf, Peto and Pipit types, and, more recently, an experimental parasol monoplane.

VICKERS G.P. (E. A. Cunningham, Bristol). The machine depicted in your snapshot is the Vickers General Purpose Type G.4/31 biplane. This aircraft was built to the same general specification as the Vickers Wellesley and has a similar geodetically-constructed fuselage. It has not been adopted by the R.A.F.

HENSCHEL FIGHTER (D. A. S. McKay, Brockley, S.E.4). The German Henschel 123 is a single-seater fighter and dive bomber sesquiplane. Fitted with a B.M.W. 9-cylinder radial it has a top speed of 220 m.p.h. Loaded weight is 4,884 lb., span is 34 feet 5 inches, and length 28 feet 2 inches.

D.H.10 (R. Southby, London, S.E. 13). (1) It is possible, though improbable, that Richthofen ever flew a Fokker D.7 as the first D.7 did not reach the Front until May, 1918, a month after Richthofen met his death. (2) Sorry, but we have completely failed, so far, to trace any squadron that went into action equipped with the D.H.10.

EMPIRE BOAT (M. D. Mugford, Dover, Kent). The name of the Empire flying-boat whose registration letters are VH-ABF is the "Cooee." It is owned by the Quantas Empire Airways who run the Australia-Singapore section of the Empire air service between England and Australia.

AIR GIANTS (R. Hallam, Purley, Surrey). (1) Yes, the Armstrong-Whitworth Ensign is Britain's largest landplane at present. It weighs 21 tons loaded, and when on European service has accommodation for forty passengers. A longer range version for use on the Empire routes carries only twenty-seven passengers. Top speed with four 880-h.p. Tiger engines is 205 m.p.h. (2) The De Havilland Albatross carries twenty-two passengers, weighs 25,000 lb. loaded, and, with four 525-h.p. Gipsy Twelve engines, has a top speed in the region of 250 m.p.h.

HALF-DAY EXCURSION

Alone in a Storm-filled World, attempting a Crazy Task whose End could be only Death or Disaster, Tony Cranford, Man of a Machine Age, Flew as he always knew he could—by the Seat of his Pants

By BUCKLEY ROBERTS

ON Wednesday the wind, which had been a breeze from the south, veered a few points west and freshened.

Bud, who was checking over his twin-engined transport 'plane, glanced at the purple clouds massing in the south-west, and grimaced.

"Trouble upstairs to-day," he prophesied. "Hope no urgent calls come in."

Tony grunted. He had had a trying week as Bud's 'prentice pilot and was not bursting with camaraderie.

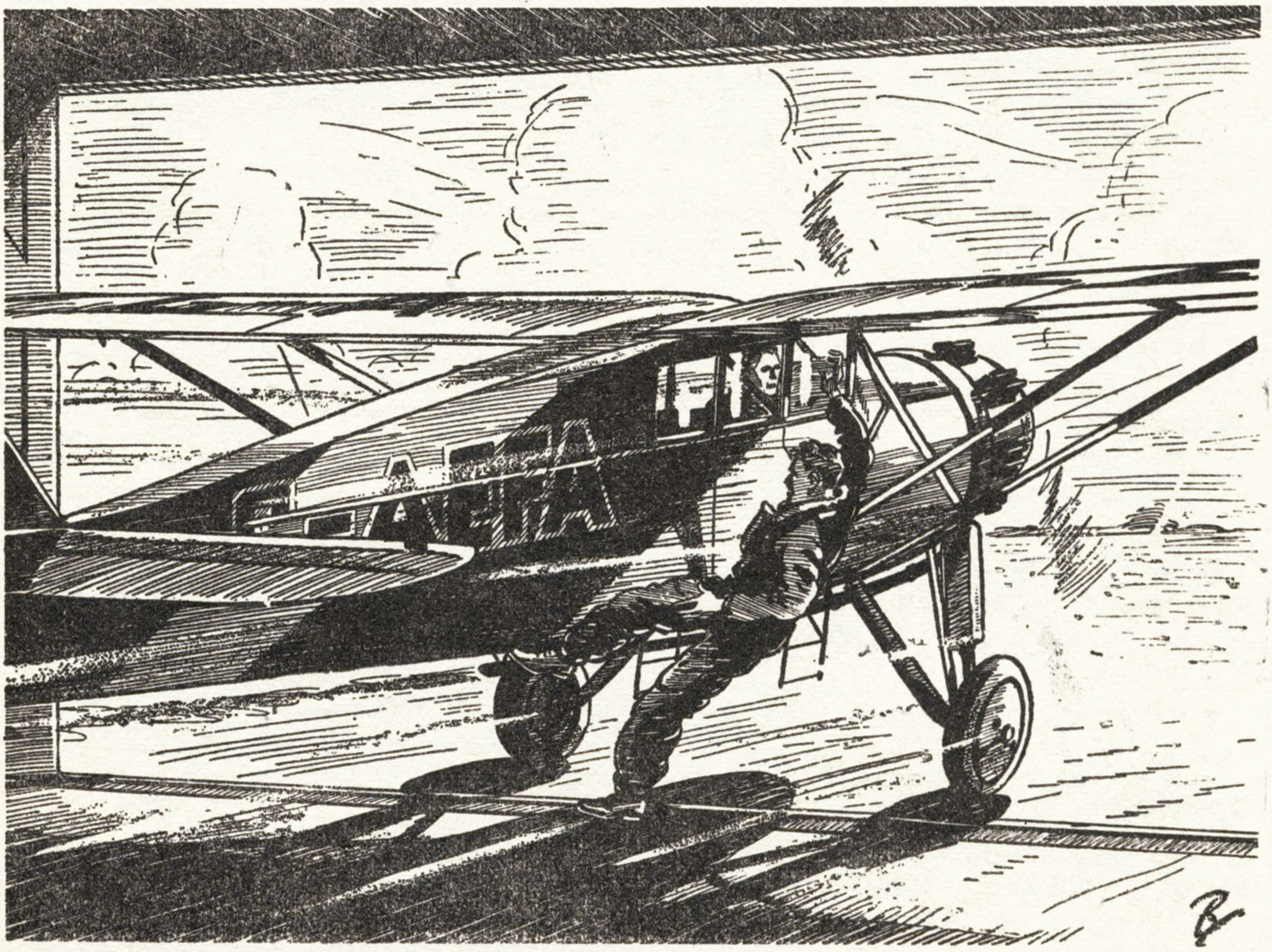
"You've got enough gadgets on this thing to fly it under water," he said.

"Yes—and enough experience of flying under water to hate it. Well, let's try those engines."

Webster, the ground engineer, came out with the wheel-chocks and Bud climbed into the cabin and started the engines. He ran them up, separately at first, and then together. As the revolutions mounted there was apparent to the sensitive ear a sudden roughness in the roar of the starboard engine. Bud's hand leaped to the switch, but even as he snapped it off there came a sharp metallic crack, and with a horrible grinding noise the engines stopped.

Bud clambered down, swearing softly.

"If that wasn't an expensive noise



Bud missed his jump and was blown sideways as the D.H. shot out into the open

I've never heard one," he told Webster.

The engineer nodded gloomily.

"Sounds as though a valve's dropped on to a piston, sir," he said.

The other sighed. "Well, you'd better have a look. I'll go and report. Coming?" he asked Tony.

"Presently. I'll stay and see what it is."

The chief pilot nodded and turned away towards the aerodrome offices.

Tedworth, the aerodrome manager of the Hatfield depôt of Air Freights Ltd., pursed his lips at the news.

"That's awkward," he mused. "I've no other machines in. Oh well, if a job comes in you'll have to take the old D.H."

The other grunted. "Have to turn the mice out of the cylinders first—and the moths out of the mag. I'll get Webster to look her over."

"How's that boy shaping?" asked his chief.

"Who, Tony? Oh, not bad. A bit sulky, but he can fly."

"He ought to. He's got all the licences, diplomas, and certificates there are. Blind flying, too."

"Everything bar experience, eh?"

"Well, I don't know. You don't get a 'B' Licence for paper work."

"Oh, I suppose he's done his hours. But passing a test is one thing, and doing a job is several."

BEFORE Tedworth could reply the telephone pealed. The manager lifted the receiver.

"Air Freights. Yes—speaking. . . ." He listened expressionlessly.

"Very well," he said at last. "We'll do it. Yes, by five o'clock. Without fail. But we want it here by two at the latest. You'll guarantee that? Right. G'bye."

He hung up and looked at Bud.

"Sorry. It's a job."

"It *would* be. Timbuctoo?"

"Practically. Isle of Man."

The other whistled. "Over the Irish Sea in the old D.H.—with half a gale off the Atlantic! A perfect little half-day excursion!"

Tedworth leaned back. "Of course, it's up to you," he said. "I'll get the weather reports, but if you think it can't be done—well, it can't."

"You've promised."

"Oh well, I can borrow a Dragon from Airways if necessary."

Bud sniffed expressively. "I'll do it. What is it?"

There was a tap on the door, and Tony Cranford appeared.

"Webster says it's all he feared, sir," he told Tedworth. "Er—under the circumstances I suppose there's no objection to my taking the day off?"

Bud laughed unpleasantly.

"You'll get a day off! Go and tell Webster to get the mildew out of the old D.H. and have her ready. You'd better take off your gent's Spring suiting and lend a hand. We'll want maps, too—and a prayer-book from the look of things!"

Tony positively goggled.

"We're not taking the D.H. out in *this* weather, surely?"

"Why not? Doesn't your mother like you flying in the rain?"

The boy flushed. "I was thinking of the 'plane," he said. "Where are we going?"

Tedworth intervened. "I've had an urgent call from the Isle of Man," he told them. "It seems that the International motor-cycle T.T. is to be run on Friday and a Belgian firm sent over two machines. They both struck serious trouble in practice; they managed to prepare another at the works, but the boat was delayed, and here's their big hope stranded. The machine must be in the Island in time to qualify—and to-morrow's the last chance. They want it in the Island by five this evening."

"But—but there's no radio on the D.H.," protested Tony, "and not even an artificial horizon!"

"There's no library, either," said Bud gravely. "And the ash-trays want emptying."

Tedworth frowned. "Shut up," he said, then turned to Tony.

"Now look here, Cranford. This Company is proving that aerial freight

in the British Isles is a practical proposition. There's a big future in it. We can't afford to turn jobs down. I know my 'planes and my men, and I don't give either of them impossible jobs. We *overcome* difficulties here. This is a job that requires responsibility, skill, and *guts*—and I'm paying you the compliment of asking you to help. Do you think you can'? ''

"Yes, sir," said the boy. He glanced at Bud, and the sight of that individual's cynical grin infuriated him.

"I could fly that damned barge on my head," he added hotly.

"The right way up will do," his chief told him drily.

The other hesitated, opened his mouth to speak, and thought better of it. He turned and went out quietly. Bud sighed and walked over to the huge aerial map which occupied most of the far wall. Tedworth drew the telephone towards him.

"Go easy on that boy," he advised. "There's nothing much wrong with him. I expect you were as hot-headed yourself, once."

The other grunted, and continued to pore over the map.

BY twelve o'clock the sky was an unbroken roof of grey cloud driven steadily before a pressing wind, and at twelve-thirty it began to rain. In the small hangar, Webster and his staff were busy on the D.H. Although "Daisy," officially a De Havilland Hawk Moth, was nothing like as ancient as Bud's libellous remarks suggested, she had not been used for serious work since the twin-engined Dragons had been put into service. Her cabin was small, and the single Lynx engine, although reliable, was unspectacular.

By one-thirty, when a lorry containing the crated motor-cycle drove on to the 'drome, "Daisy" was ready. The crate was run up rollers into the freight hold, and Bud and Tony climbed into the cabin. The rain was not violent, but it had settled down into a steady drizzle, while the wind was gusty and fitful. Tedworth came out to see them off.

"Put in at Speke before you cross," he shouted above the engine. "They'll give you the sea report. Good luck."

The engine bellowed as Bud opened up and sent the 'plane lumbering over the field. He took all the run he could before lifting, and then climbed with the port plane held down against the stiff south-west wind.

To Tedworth, watching, it seemed that the machine had hardly left the ground before it was swallowed in the clouds, vanishing into the streaming grey vapour like a car into a Dartmoor mist.

When they had quite gone, and the drone of their engine had faded, he sighed and turned back to his office. It *would* have to be such a day as this, he thought savagely, when Bud's own 'bus packed up. He hated sending them out on a sea crossing in an old machine. Not that there was any real danger ; Bud was a pilot in a thousand—still, without radio or adequate blind-flying instruments, the safety margin *was* small.

He looked at the map and pictured the D.H. plodding steadily through the clouds, then traced their probable route with his finger. Hm—fair country, plenty of aerodromes, good emergency landing-grounds—he turned away irritably. Was he getting old, he wondered, to worry over a hop like this ? How far ? Two hundred and fifty miles at the outside. Two—three hours, easily. In two hours he'd ring Speke aerodrome, Liverpool. They should be there by then.

He went to lunch.

At three-thirty he put through a trunk call to Speke airport, and a quarter of an hour later he was speaking to the control. Yes, the D.H. had taken off nearly ten minutes ago for Ronaldsway—everything was O.K. They'd had a damp trip but no trouble. They had been advised to hold up at Speke, since the wind had whipped up almost to a gale over the Irish Sea and conditions were generally bad, but the pilot had growled something about backing his pants against a gale, and had carried on. Yes, he *had* seemed rather bad tempered. He appeared to be quarrelling with his co-pilot. . . .

Tedworth, although relieved, was

frowning as he replaced the receiver. Why couldn't Bud let up a bit on Tony? It seemed as though he had a grudge against him for some reason. Childish, really, for a man like Bud. The news about the crossing was not worrying the chief, for he knew his man. There was nothing reckless or hot-headed about Bud; if he'd decided to carry on, then he must have been satisfied with the conditions.

IF Tedworth could have heard his chief pilot's language as he climbed out of the cabin and dropped on to the sodden field at Ronaldsway, Isle of Man, he might have been less certain of Bud's satisfaction. Tony jumped down beside the other, and listened to the picturesque description of their sea crossing.

"Well," remarked the boy, as they turned towards the aerodrome buildings, "as a companion you're lousy, but you've certainly nothing to learn about flying."

Bud stopped and glared at him.

"That's very kind of you," he said, with heavy sarcasm. "I suppose even *you* couldn't do it better—on your head?"

"What the devil's the matter with you?" asked the other. "You've been snapping and snarling ever since we left Hatfield."

"You'd make an angel snarl, what with your blasted patronage and your perishing questions. If you'd done a few more hours flying and taken a few less diplomas you might 've learned something. 'How d'ye do this—and how d'ye do that!' If you'd learned flying in Canada, where I was trained, before all your doodahs were invented, you'd have known all right!"

"Known what?"

"How to fly by the seat of your pants, instead of by instruments. I'd like to see some of you dashboard guys take a tri-motor over the Prairie run in a blizzard—it'd frighten the guts out of you!"

Tony's hot retort was interrupted by the arrival of half a dozen eager men who had been hurrying to meet them. Had the airmen just completed a world flight their reception could not have been more effusive. A light float was run on to the field, and while Bud went off to report and to 'phone Hatfield, Tony superintended the transferring of the crate to the lorry.

At last, when the precious machine had been rushed away, the papers signed, and the D.H. run into a hangar for refuelling and checking, the boy was free to go in search of Bud. He found him in the bar, talking to another pilot. As he entered the conversation ceased suddenly and he saw Bud wink rapidly at his companion. He felt the blood rush to his face, but he held his temper in control and ordered a drink and a sandwich.

"What time do we start back?" he asked, with an attempt at a friendly tone.

"We don't," Bud replied. "I've had enough of flying in this weather. I'm not using my return half on this excursion."

Tony stared, dismayed. "But—but I thought——. Look here, I *want* to get back to-night."

The other shrugged. "Well, I'm not stopping you. Chance for you to learn how to use your pants!"

The boy gulped at his drink, trying not to smash his fist into the grinning face. For a week now he had borne the taunts of the other, and his temper, never very dormant, was in rags.

"I suppose I'm as capable of learning as you were," he retorted.

Bud laughed unpleasantly. "I'm not doubting your *capability*," he said significantly.

Tony's last shred of control snapped. With one swift movement he rose and flung the remainder of his drink straight into the other's face. Then without pausing, he strode for the door, banged it violently behind him and set off across the field to the hangar. The wind, ripping into his face, almost took his breath away, but he flung savagely on, all his reason and sanity lost in a boiling rage.

At the hangar a mechanic was about to close the great doors.

"Leave those alone," panted Tony. "I'm going off."

"But—surely, sir——"

Tony ignored him and climbed determinedly into the cabin.

As he wound the starter there was a rush of feet at the doors, and Bud, his face flaming, tore in, followed by his companion of the bar.

"Come out of that 'plane," he roared. "Come out of it, you. . . ."

The motor whined, Tony snapped over the ignition key and Bud's voice was drowned by the deafening roar of the engine. As they ran to the machine he opened the throttle. The ground seemed to vibrate with the din in the confined shed, and the D.H. moved forward. Bud, shouting, tried to leap for the cabin door but, catching the full force of the slipstream, he missed his jump and was blown sideways like a straw while the D.H. shot out into the open and skimmed away over the field.

TONY felt nothing but savage exaltation as he lifted "Daisy" into the air, fighting the stick and rudder to hold her steady in the rushing wind. For a week he had sat idly and endured the taunts of the elder pilot, a week of accumulating rebellion, and now, in one glorious outburst, he had flung aside restraint and prudence. He was free—alone and free, flying in a storm-filled world that matched his own savage exuberance.

He welcomed the buffeting wind that flung the rain horizontally on the streaming windows, the shrouding clouds through which the green and brown of the earth appeared only in momentary, racing glimpses. *He* was master now, this was *his* battle. It was his privilege to prove that the machine age, the robot-breeding age that had produced and trained him, had not stifled his initiative and courage. If others could fly by the seat of their pants, so could he!

He became conscious that his arm was straining unduly on the stick, and it occurred to him that he was flying without freight or passengers, that the machine had been trimmed for such a load and that it was nose-heavy without it. He adjusted the tail-loading to trim the 'plane, and the action brought his mind back to the practical realities of the situation.

First of all, where was he? Cautiously he edged down through the driving mist, keeping a wary eye on the altimeter. As the mist thinned and cleared and he emerged below the clouds, he perceived with a shock that already he was over the coast.

He eased "Daisy" round, downwind, and the sudden acceleration as he turned brought home to him the force of the gale. Flying as low as he dared, he pressed on, peering anxiously through the screen for a sight of Douglas, so that he might set his course.

Out of the murk appeared scattered houses—streets—a town—a sea front. The sweep of the harbour reassured him—it was Douglas. He swung right again, out over the sea, and glanced at his map. Liverpool lay S.W., but this gale would drift him at a terrific rate. He made his course almost due south and opened the throttle wide. If his calculations were correct he should cross the English coast between the Dee and the Mersey, south of Birkenhead. Allowing for drift, his speed should be about eighty-five m.p.h. That meant something under an hour to England. . . .

He settled into his seat and faced the sea. Already the land was lost in the rain behind, and he was alone in a windy immensity with only the beat of the engine to uphold him. Now that his rage and his exaltation alike had faded he began to realise the gravity of his position. He was a junior pilot. He had assaulted his senior, taken off against orders, and set himself a task which even that senior, experienced and capable, had hesitated to attempt. If he succeeded he could expect nothing but dismissal and the end of a career which had hardly begun. If he failed—well, then his career was even more certainly ended.

Staring out into the grey distance he laughed bitterly. Well, this was just another scrape of the many into which his hot head had landed him in the past.

And if it should prove to be the last, well, somebody would be saved some future trouble.

The greyness suddenly thickened, became impenetrable. He was in the clouds. Switching on the dashboard lights he peered at his altimeter. Two hundred feet ! The ceiling was lowering.

He nosed down and came out again. The water looked very near and forbidding. The Irish Sea was living up to its evil reputation ; the mountainous waves, lashed by the gale, seemed to reach hungrily up at him as he roared on. The rain and spray slashed angrily at the cabin windows and streamed from the glistening wings like ragged fringes, while the visibility shrank to barely a hundred yards.

Fortunately he was too busy to think of what might happen if that steady roar should cease. The physical strain of holding the 'plane on to its course, the constant checking of map and compass, altimeter and air-speed indicator, rev-counter and pressure gauge, kept his mind fully occupied.

THIRTY minutes from Douglas Tony sighted a ship to starboard, one of the Isle of Man packets. It was heeling along through the roaring sea, pitching and rolling like a foam-tossed cork. The sight suddenly made Tony feel sick and dizzy. When the sea had been empty there had been little sense of motion, for he had become adjusted to the lift and sway of his 'plane, but the ship provided an object of comparison and it seemed to the boy as though the ship was stationary and he was plunging and dipping in the sky like a wounded bird. He was glad when the glimpse passed and he was alone again in a streaming world of wind and water.

It seemed hours since he had left Douglas. Suppose he had over-estimated his drift and was flying too far south ! The thought shot a pang of fear through him and he consulted the compass for the thousandth time. But it was nonsense ; in this gale you *couldn't* overestimate drift ! Fifty-five minutes. Two hundred feet. Ceiling right on his head. Visibility virtually gone.

And suddenly, like a transformation scene, the sea was gone ! Beneath him, dangerously close, were docked ships, buildings, cranes. In a spasm of panic he hauled back on the stick and sent the machine lifting up into the clouds. Everything vanished in a grey-white haze. But Tony was thrilling now to another emotion than fear—triumph.

He'd made Liverpool ! As true as an arrow, as certainly as though on lines he'd hit his mark—by the seat of his pants ! Bud himself could have done no better.

And now what ? Should he find Speke and land, 'phone Hatfield, and tell Tedworth what he'd done, and why ? But Bud would have 'phoned by now and told *his* story. Tony set his lips tightly. No, he'd started, and he'd see it through. Either he'd put "Daisy" down on her home field and prove himself a pilot or he'd . . . fail.

Cautiously he edged down again to get his bearings. He came out of the clouds to find himself over a network of docks and railways clustered beside a wide river. This must be the Mersey. The wind seemed less powerful here, as though, baulked of its prey over the ocean, it was sulking, discouraged. His optimism returned. Surely the rest was easy—and if he *should* lose himself, at least he was over solid earth, and could get down.

But he mustn't *come* down. He had to show Bud something about navigation and flying. He consulted the map for his course. No use flying low now, it was too dangerous over towns. He must adopt the tactics which Bud had used on the outward trip. He shaped his course a point or two S. of S.W. and began to climb.

The clouds closed about him, impenetrable masses of dirty grey, but he kept steadily on. Now nothing was visible save his gleaming dashboard. He glued his eyes on the instruments, and especially on that insignificant looking little bubble that danced and swayed in its curved prison and was his only assurance that he was holding an even keel. Oh, for an

artificial horizon !

At a thousand feet he broke out into an open space, and got his first sight of the storm-filled sky. Here the air was comparatively clear. Below him all round the horizon lay an unbroken floor of blue-grey cloud, uneven and billowing as it drove with the wind. Above and to the left hung a massive ceiling of sullen grey, lowering upon him like a threatening dragon. But although the air was still misty it was a thinner mist, tinged with a hint of light from the covered sun.

It was very lonely out here. He wondered what Bud was doing back in the Island. He hoped Tedworth wasn't too worried—decent sort, Tedworth. Now, there was Stafford first, and then Birmingham. According to the map, "Brum" would be about eighty miles from Liverpool as the crow flies. But what if the crow had a fifty m.p.h. wind trying to blow it on its back? Well, he'd fly on this course for thirty minutes and then nose down and take a look.

AT the end of that thirty minutes Tony faced the realisation that he was lost. Forced down to one hundred and fifty feet to get below the clouds, wrapped in a swirling blanket of rain, he swung frantically from side to side of his course in an endeavour to find some landmark which he could recognise on the map. Now he began to understand what Bud had meant when, on the outward trip, he had said :

"You've got to know your country and fly by feel. If you know your hills, and woods, and valleys, you can *feel* 'em. You can. It's a sort of instinct."

Tony didn't know the country—not like that, and for a time he gave way to sheer panic, that kind of panic which can be seen in a lost dog when it darts wildly up and down, seeking some familiar sight or sound. By sheer will-power at last he conquered his panic, forcing himself to climb over the clouds again and to fly doggedly on his S.W. course, not daring to speculate how far from the true line his wild searching had taken him.

And always the wind flurried the starboard windows with endless rain, hurled horizontal streaks of water from struts and planes. He was unutterably tired, his arm and legs ached from the strain of stick and rudder. Fuel was getting low, soon he would be *driven* down.

He could not have told how long he had been forcing himself on when he saw the gap, but it seemed years. The rift in the clouds appeared suddenly, away to his left front, a huge slanting funnel through which the earth showed suddenly green. He dived for it, shot through the funnel into clear air. It *was* clear. The rain seemed to have stopped and visibility was at least a mile. With new hope he pressed on and in five minutes he saw something that he had thought never to see again—a wind-sock ! It streamed stiffly out over the edge of a field, and beyond it stood a small group of buildings. An aerodrome !

SOMEHOW, Tony got down. He was so tired that he could hardly hold the big machine in the ground gusts, and he swayed dangerously as he touched down, but he held on grimly and bumped at last to a standstill thirty yards from a hut-like building which seemed to be a clubhouse. The silence, as he cut off the roar that had been in his ears for nearly three hours, was painful, pressing on his ear drums like a weight. As he dragged himself stiffly from the cabin, a man in shirtsleeves, smoking a pipe, appeared at the door of the hut. He regarded Tony curiously.

"Lord," he observed, "you look pretty sold out. Don't wonder, either, if you've been shoving that crate about in this weather. Lost yourself ? "

He stood aside and waved the other into the hut. It evidently was a club room. Easy chairs and small tables, littered with magazines and ash-trays, stood everywhere. Tony sank gratefully into a big chair.

"I've come from Ronaldsway, Isle of Man. Trying to find Hatfield. Hell of a trip. What place is this ? "

"Grendon, near Bicester. This is the Bucks and District Aero Club—I'm the instructor ; Alwynne's my name. Well,

you're not far out. Hatfield's only about forty miles east of here."

As he spoke he was busy with a decanter, and presently he set a stiff whisky and soda before the tired Tony.

"Knock that back—buck you up no end. Then you can 'phone your show and park the crate here. I'll fix you up for to-night."

Tony set the empty glass down, and shook his head.

"Thanks very much, but as I'm so near I'll finish the trip. I must have allowed too much for drift. I'm a hell of a lot too far south."

Despite Alwynne's protestations, Tony was insistent on continuing. Inwardly he felt that to conclude his flight anywhere but at Hatfield was an admission of failure.

Half an hour later, with an extra ten gallons of petrol in his 'plane, and another whisky inside himself, he climbed back into "Daisy" and waved farewell to his new friend. The rain had ceased and the wind was less violent. Visibility was much better, and the ceiling, too, had lifted. Altogether it was a much more cheerful Tony who lifted the machine over the low trees at the end of the field and headed east.

Flying low over the Chilterns he began to recognise landmarks, and when the ridge of Dunstable Downs appeared out of the approaching dusk he felt that his ordeal was over.

Half an hour after leaving Grendon he circled in over his home field and shut off to land. Against the big hangars he could see a small blue monoplane, but there were no signs of life, and as he came in over the sock he could see that the offices were unlit.

He taxied over to the hangars and switched off. As he climbed from the cabin a figure detached itself from the shadow of the monoplane and strolled towards him.

The boy stared, stupefied. It was Bud !

Bud, with his hands in his pockets, looking as cynical as ever.

"Nice trip ?" he queried.

Tony stared from the monoplane to Bud and back again, beginning to understand. The other followed his thought.

"Yes, I got Charlie to bring me over. I didn't want you trotting into Tedworth with a yarn about me being afraid to come back."

Tony held on to his temper. "I suppose you've given him a pretty good story ?" he asked.

"He'd gone home. I went up to his house and reported that we'd come back to-night after all—together."

The boy stared. "But why ?"

"I told you. *I'm* the senior pilot here—I'm not having anybody think otherwise." But he carefully avoided Tony's eyes.

"You took a risk. Suppose I hadn't got back ?"

Bud examined his boots and began to whistle softly. Suddenly he looked up and grinned.

"When I bet, I bet on thoroughbreds," he said simply, and held out his hand.

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

An Outstanding War-Story by a Popular Author

TEST PILOTS ARE TOUGH

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In the March

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AIR STORIES

Price Ninepence

AIR BOOKS

Reviews of the Latest Books of Aviation Interest

A LINDBERGH LOG

" Listen ! The Wind " : By Anne Morrow Lindbergh : Chatto and Windus : 7s. 6d.

THE appearance of a new book by the talented author of " North to the Orient," that memorable account of a seaplane flight over the Arctic route, is an event indeed. For Mrs. Lindbergh has a style and charm of writing all her own, which, allied to her exceptional flying experience, make her records of air journeys notable additions to the not over-rich literature of aviation.

Her new book records the last days of a six months' air tour which she and her famous husband made in 1933 with the object of studying the possible air routes between America and Europe. Their machine was the same Lockheed Sirius 2-seater seaplane which had carried them so well on their previous flight to the Arctic, but now fitted with a more powerful engine (a 710 h.p. Wright Cyclone), a controllable-pitch propeller and re-christened the " Tingmissartoq " (in Eskimo : " the one who flies like a big bird ").

The survey flight began from New York, in July, and on the outward journey followed the difficult northern route to Europe via Greenland. The return flight was made by way of the Azores and the Cape Verde Islands and included a 1,800 miles ocean crossing from Gambia to Brazil, a non-stop " hop " which the Lockheed completed in sixteen hours.

It is with the last ten days of the flight, from the arrival at Santiago, a small island in the Verde group, to the successful completion of the South Atlantic crossing, that Mrs. Lindbergh's narrative is chiefly concerned. A series of vividly-conveyed impressions of scenery and of people lead up to the dramatic climax of the transatlantic crossing, agonisingly delayed for day after day while they listen in vain for the wind that alone can give their overloaded seaplane a chance to rise.

At last it comes and they taxy out on to the moonlit waters of the bay and swing into wind :

" Here we go. Hold on. The roar, the spray over the wings. Look at your watch. Won't be more than two minutes. Then you'll know. You can stand two minutes. Look at your watch. That's your job. Listen—listen—the spray has stopped. We are spanking along. We are up on the step—faster, faster, oh, much faster than before. Sparks from the exhaust. We're going to get off ! But how long it takes. Spank—spank—we're off. Not yet—spank—almost. Splutter, choke—the engine ? My God—it's coming then ! He's going on just the same. We're off—no more spanks. Splutter—splutter. What's wrong ? Will he turn ? Will he land ? The wobble pump ? Gas ? Mixture ? Never mind, your job, the watch. Just two, Greenwich."

Then, far out in the Atlantic, this vivid picture of the small cockpit :—

" This inside world, this little cockpit of mine, became extraordinarily pleasing to me, as much so as a furnished study at home. Every corner, every crack, had significance. Every object meant something. Not only the tools I was working with, the transmitter and receiver, the key and the antenna reel ; but even the small irrelevant objects on the side of the fuselage, the little black-hooded light, its face now turned away from me, the shining arm and knob of the second throttle, the bright switches and handles, the coloured wires and copper pipes ; all gave me, in a strange sense, as much pleasure as my familiar books and pictures might at home."

There were no hairsbreadth escapes on this successful pioneer flight, and a great deal more hard work than excitement, yet such is the charm of the narrative that it will be remembered when more dramatic stories of the air have been forgotten.

A PAGEANT OF PETROL

" Power and Speed " : Edited by Frederick E. Dean : Temple Press : 8s. 6d.

IN the Foreword to this book it is claimed that " no one has ever before attempted to concentrate in one volume such a mass of authoritative and interesting information about that modern development—the Internal Combustion Engine."

The claim is well founded, for " Power and Speed " is a fascinating and comprehensive survey of the achievements of the internal combustion engine in its many spheres of use on land, on the water and in the air. Primarily intended for the more knowledgeable sections of the younger generation, the scope of the book includes motor-cars and motor-cycles, aeroplanes, mechanical military vehicles, motor-boats, motor-ships, Diesel locomotives and trains.

Each form of transport is the subject of an authoritative explanatory chapter, supplemented in several cases by special articles written by men who have become famous for their feats in connection with that particular class of vehicle. Thus H.R.H. Prince Chula of Siam, better known to fame as " B. Bira," contributes an exciting account of high-speed car racing under the title of " International 1,500 c.c. Racing," John Cobb writes on " The Romance of Record Breaking," and Sir Malcolm Campbell describes the trials and thrills of " The Water Speed Record."

Of special interest to readers of AIR STORIES will be the aeronautical section of the book consisting of six chapters, " Wheels and Wings," by Flight Lieutenant C. S. Staniland, Chief Test Pilot of the Fairey Aviation Co. ; " The Aeroplane and its Motor " ; " Air Routes of Empire " ; " Air Transport " ; " The Aeroplane Height Record " ; and—of outstanding interest—the long R.A.F. section which deals with the organisation and employment of the Royal Air Force and describes the present-day equipment of the Service. Not the least interesting page in this section is one which tabulates the leading dimensions, weights and performance figures of some seventy-four current types and prototypes of R.A.F. aircraft.

The illustrations are truly superb. There are over 450 photographs and diagrammatic drawings splendidly reproduced on the art paper on which the book is printed throughout.

For absorbing interest of subject allied to attractive presentation, " Power and Speed " is an outstanding, if not a unique book for boys of all ages.

MURDER IN A SHADOW FACTORY

"Death Flies Low": By Neal Shepherd: Constable & Co.: 7s. 6d.

AN aeroplane "shadow" factory is the new and topical setting of this air "thriller" by an author who combines a dry humour with an intimate knowledge of the aircraft industry.

A key-man in the factory dies suddenly and brutally, and because Whitehall, not without reason, suspects sabotage, Chief-Inspector "Napper" Tandy and Detective-Sergeant Bill Holland are specially detailed to investigate the case.

The Inspector, who is also a doctor and scientist, is very far from being the traditional "dumb bell" of crime stories and, though he may at times be inclined to labour the obvious when explaining his steps to his hero-worshipping assistant, he fairly solves a most ingenious mystery without the aid of any of those fortuitous co-incidences which, in fiction, so often aid the detective and annoy the reader. In brief, an air-minded detective story of unusually high merit.

A SAGA OF THE P.B.O.

"Hell in the Heavens": By A. G. J. Whitehouse: W. & R. Chambers: 6s.

THIS is a book which will need little recommendation to readers of AIR STORIES, other than the statement that it is the War-time autobiography of "Arch" Whitehouse, author of the famous "Coffin Crew" series of War-flying adventures.

Sub-titled "The Adventures of an Aerial Gunner in the Royal Flying Corps," it is the narrative of the author's experiences as a member of No. 22 Squadron, R.F.C., and those who may have thought that some of his "Coffin Crew" adventures were stretching fiction a long way should read this breath-taking collection of facts—and think again.

"All I have written here actually happened," the author states; "Make no mistake about that!" and with this assurance one is carried away in a whirl of racy narrative in which high-speed action is interspersed with occasional breathing-spaces for sidelights on air-war history.

Only a quotation can do justice to the Whitehouse style of bringing a dog-fight to life :—

"I nailed a two-seater cold after about ten minutes' of insane scrapping, and saw it go down in flames. I saw Captain Clement once and he waved to me, and I just caught an Albatros Scout that was getting on his tail. . . . We hung on and then I realised we were attempting to cover some S.E.5's that were doing a balloon show. I could see them smashing away at two sausages below us. My pilot, giddy chap that he was, went down, too, and barked at me to have a slam at them.

"I reached for the front gun, as I had been up on top pounding away over the top plane, and tried to get a balloon. I saw my bullets making the old depression along the top, but nothing happened. My pilot frowned as though I could help it, and I swore and lashed out again at the other as we shot across it

"An S.E. raced at us and curled over to head for the balloon as I fired. His guns flashed . . . the balloon burst with a terrible bellow, flames leaped up and I never saw the S.E. again. We zoomed up through the heat of the fire and I covered my face with my arms. At least I tried to cover my face, but one arm had gone numb. . . . I remembered something hard hitting me a short time before. . . ."

Fortunately, the wound is not very serious and, a chapter later, we are back in the thick of it again to find the "Fees" discarded and the Squadron now fully equipped with Bristol Fighters.

"For two weeks then we went mad and cleaned up everything that showed its nose . . . we devised a wicked system that trapped the enemy pilots by the dozen, and when I say dozens, I mean dozens."

Great stuff this Whitehouse! and, still gasping for breath, we can only echo the title under which this autobiography was serialised in America and breathe with awe, "Poor Bloody Observers."

AERONAUTICS SIMPLY EXPLAINED

"Flight Handbook—A Guide to Aeronautics": By W. O. Manning, F.R.Ae.S.: Flight Publishing Co.: 3s. 6d.

FOR the ordinary individual who wishes to obtain a working knowledge of the principles of flight—without which an intelligent understanding of the progress of aviation is impossible—this practical handbook will come as a godsend.

Hitherto, this information has been largely confined to expensive text-books written in such highly technical language as to be beyond the grasp of the average reader. Now, written in simple language and calling for no specialised knowledge on the part of the reader, comes this Guide to Aeronautics prepared by Mr. W. O. Manning, and the Technical Staff of "Flight." Its 142 pages and numerous illustrations together afford a sound general idea of the theory of aeronautics and clearly show how such theory is applied in the various designs and methods of construction employed in modern aircraft manufacture.

The function of every part of an aeroplane is explained and the instruments on which the pilot relies for controlling and navigating his machine are described, and their working principles illustrated. Separate sections are devoted to gliders and sailplanes, airships and balloons, and to the various types of airscrews.

Of special interest among the many excellent photographic and line illustrations are three double-page diagrammatic drawings showing sectionalised interior views of the Bristol Blenheim, the Fairey Battle and the new De Havilland Albatross transport monoplane.

BOOKS RECEIVED

"Skies Unknown": By Capt. J. E. Doyle, D.F.C.: Wright and Brown: 3s. 6d.

"Joysticks and Fiddlesticks": By F. S. Briggs and S. H. Harris: Hutchinson: 8s. 6d.

"The Unending Conquest": Edited by R. de la Bere: J. M. Dent: 1s. 4d.

"Conquest of the Skies": By Peter Merin: The Bodley Head: 12s. 6d.

PHANTOM of the PARACHUTE

Out of the Gathering Mist above a Scottish Moorland swept a Wraithlike Shape, the Fleeting Clue to a Mystery Men called the Banshee of Arbrithie

By

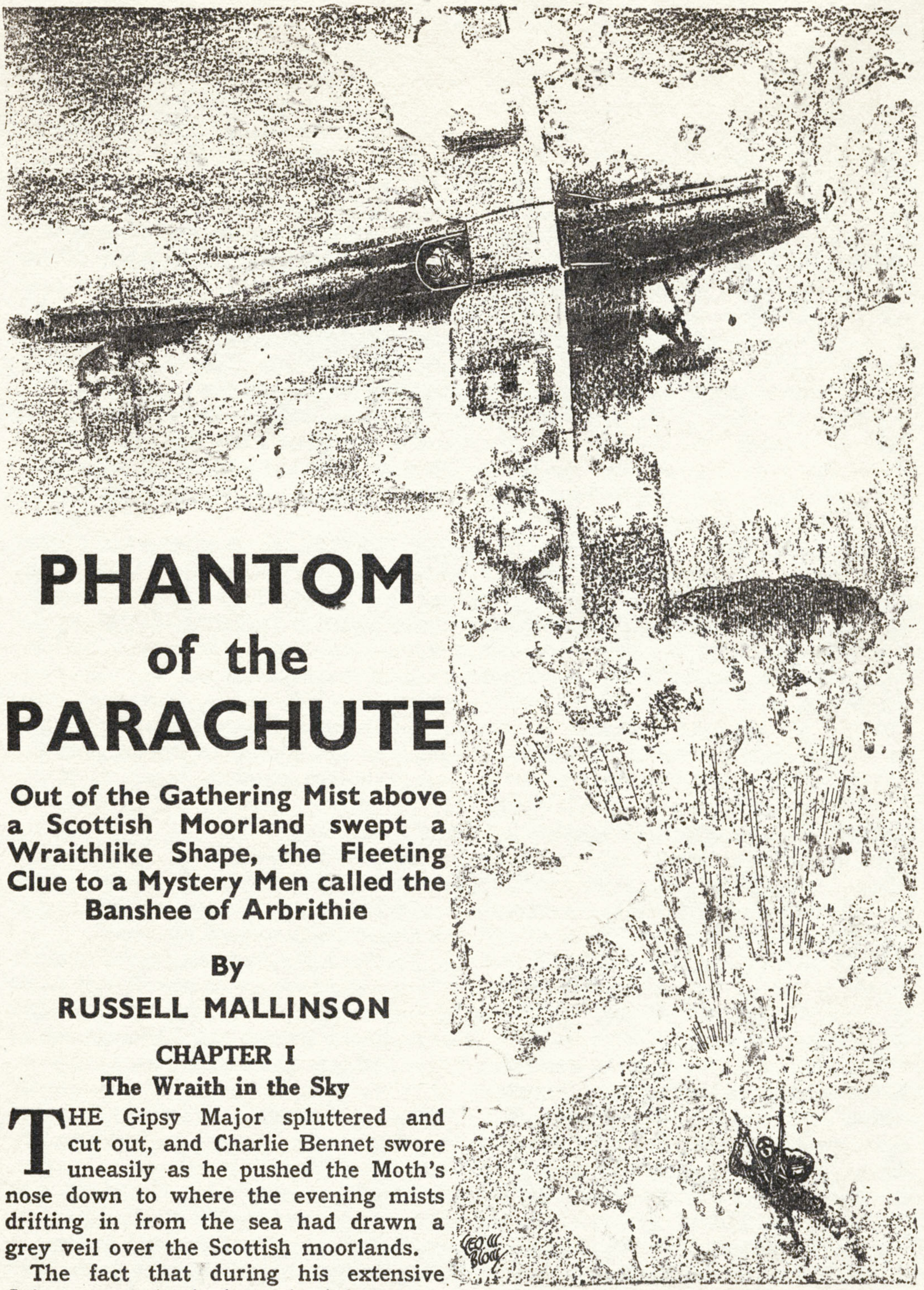
RUSSELL MALLINSON

CHAPTER I

The Wraith in the Sky

THE Gipsy Major spluttered and cut out, and Charlie Bennet swore uneasily as he pushed the Moth's nose down to where the evening mists drifting in from the sea had drawn a grey veil over the Scottish moorlands.

The fact that during his extensive flying career he had survived fogs considerably more formidable than this peculiar variety of Scotch mist, which the locals called "sea fret," did not diminish Bennet's anxiety. There was



Bennet threw his weight on the rudder-bar and slammed over the stick. The vertical bank saved him from disaster—the starboard wings missed the parachute by inches

always a disturbing quality of "x" in forced landings in fog.

Thrusting his goggles back, he leant out of the cockpit and surveyed the bleak vista. Not even a friendly tree or haystack poked its way through the mist to warn him when he was likely to hit the deck. His hand moving restlessly on the stick, he flattened the gliding angle, although the Moth's controls were already showing signs of sogginess.

Then suddenly he tensed in the cockpit, as he glimpsed a queer wraithlike shape drifting across his bows, a moving shadow which swiftly materialised into danger.

Bennet threw his weight on the rudder-bar and slammed over the stick. That vertical bank saved him from disaster as the starboard wing missed by inches a silken parachute drifting earthwards with a man swinging in the harness.

Then the confusing world of vapour closed round it and the parachute was gone. Charlie Bennet straightened out unsteadily.

"Gad, a nice night to qualify for the Caterpillar Club!" he muttered. "Wonder who the devil it was?"

There was no time to speculate on the identity of the mysterious parachutist. Instead, Bennet concentrated on a tricky landing, easing the stick back smoothly when instinct warned him that the deepening shadow looming through the mist was likely to be the ground. A few moments later the reassuring rumble of undercarriage wheels told him that he had touched earth.

The Moth bumped to a standstill and Bennet clambered down from the cockpit with a sigh of relief. For a moment or two he stood looking around him, grey vapour swirling against his face. Only the distant rumble of the sea beyond the cliff broke the stillness. Then he hollowed his hands and let out a resounding hail. The echoes of his voice died away, but no answering cry came out of the mists.

"Ought to do something about that parachutist fellow," Bennet muttered to himself. "May have hurt himself."

As he hesitated, he caught sight of a distant light, and with sudden decision he began to walk towards it. If he could obtain assistance, he decided, a search party would be more likely to locate the parachutist than his own blunderings through the fog.

He lit a cigarette and noticed that his hand was a trifle unsteady. That strange encounter in the mists had shaken him. There had been something oddly lifeless about the crumpled figure of the man swaying from the parachute cords. He had had a fleeting vision of a white face beneath a flying helmet, of queerly dilated eyes and a twisted mouth.

"Fellow might have fainted, of course," he told himself, and quickened his pace with the thought that the strange airman might be in urgent need of aid.

HURRYING on towards the distant light, Charlie Bennet reminded himself that he would have to do something about pegging the Moth down for the night. He hoped there was nothing seriously wrong with the engine. Altogether he had had a depressing trip, although he had been optimistic enough when he had started on his flight northwards to the Scottish mansion of Sir Hugh Hardy, patron saint of needy aviators.

He had been confident then that he could interest the air-minded coal-magnate in a new attempt on the London to Cape Town and back air record.

But Sir Hugh had not proved helpful, though not because of any doubts as to Bennet's ability as a long-distance pilot. For Charlie Bennet had knocked several hours off the record the previous summer, only to lose it when Flying Officer Clouston had raced into the newspaper headlines with his record-breaking De Havilland Comet.

With depressing logic, Sir Hugh had pointed out that with the rearmament programme monopolising the output of the principal aircraft factories, there were difficulties in the way of obtaining a new machine of sufficient power and technical efficiency to stand a chance of breaking the Cape record.

"You see, old man, if I backed your

proposition to the extent of commissioning a specially designed racing machine with long-distance tanks, I could not count on delivery for months,'' Sir Hugh had explained. '' Leave it over for the time being, Charlie, and come and see me again in about six months' time.''

Fortifying himself with another glass of Sir Hugh's excellent port, Bennet had groaned inwardly at his host's decision. Airmen must live. How, now, was he going to raise the wind during the next six months ? These were dog days for record-breaking aviators with faster and more efficient machines closing up the world. And now the slowing up of civil aircraft construction owing to the demands of the R.A.F. was making matters worse.

Charlie Bennet sighed for the comparatively affluent days when he had earned a regular salary plus flying pay as a commercial pilot. His ambition to break into the record-breaking game had brought him fleeting rewards at the most, and now his assets were reduced to an overdraft at the bank, a series of cigarette pictures of famous aeroplanes which he was collecting for a young nephew, and a second-hand Moth.

Sir Hugh had dined and wined him well, which to some degree accounted for the late hour at which he had at last taken-off from the coal-magnate's private golf course and circled his Elizabethan chimneys on his homeward journey. He had set his course southwards, only to run into the widespread fog belt which had obliterated all landmarks and forced him to earth before the Moth had crossed the Border.

Now he felt the hard surface of a road beneath his feet and a few more minutes' walking showed him that the light he had followed had led him to an inn standing at a cross-roads. He paused to read the name of the village on the local 'bus time-table fixed to a granite wall.

It told him that he had landed on the outskirts of an East Coast fishing village called Arbrithie, but the name conveyed little to him. He was more concerned at the moment with the inviting prospect of warmth and a drink in the cosy bar he glimpsed beyond the lighted window of the inn.

He walked along the path leading beneath a dingy sign creaking on rusted hinges as it swung in the freshening wind.

He was about to lay his hand on the door latch when he hesitated, conscious of a vague uneasiness he could not have explained.

Afterwards, when Charlie Bennet looked back on the strange events of that autumn night, he realised that some premonition had warned him of what awaited him beyond that inn door.

CHAPTER II

The Banshee of Arbrithie

BENNET pushed open the door. A gust of raw damp air flowed past him into the bar, stirring the lamp hanging from a black beam and casting flickering shadows on the faces of a group of men drinking round a long table in front of a fire.

The occupants of the bar stared curiously at the youthful figure in flying kit. They were a rugged crowd of seafaring men with weather-beaten faces, but their glances were not unfriendly.

Bennet closed the door and walked to where a raw-boned, red-headed Scot stood behind the bar polishing a glass.

'' Good evening, gentlemen,'' he greeted them.

'' Guid evening to you, sorr.'' The landlord gave a final polish to the glass and held it reflectively to the light for inspection. '' I thought mebbe yu'd be droppin' in when I heard yon machine over the moor. It's a raw necht for flying. . . .''

'' It's all that,'' Bennet agreed feelingly, ordering a double whisky. '' I was lucky to get down without breaking my neck. But there's another fellow who may not have come off so fortunately. He must have had trouble with his machine and jumped. I nearly rammed his parachute when I was gliding down to land. He drifted away

in the fog and I lost sight of him. It's more than possible he landed heavily in the mist and is hurt. I'm planning to look for him, and if you fellows will help me . . .''

He turned and looked at the interested audience gathered round the fire. But the only response to his request was an uneasy murmuring followed by sundry gulping sounds as tankards were drained, almost as though the contents were intended to dispel some disquietening effect his words had created.

The landlord rested his elbows on the bar and regarded Bennet from beneath a pair of bushy eyebrows.

"Yu're quite sure, sorr . . . that it wair a parachute ye saw ?''

"Of course.'' Bennet laughed. "Don't I know a parachute when I see one ?''

The old Scot shook his head.

"Mebbe it was a speerit . . . a ghost o' the dead.''

"Not a chance !'' Bennet laughed. "I know you used to burn witches in Scotland, but I've never heard of spooks floating about on parachutes. Shades of Bobby Bruce. Is this what the whisky is doing for Scotland ?''

"No offence, mon, no offence,'' the old Scot growled. "Yu're a stranger to Arbrithie, I reckon ?''

"I am,'' Bennet agreed.

"Weel, I'm tellin ye. There's been talk of ghosts and banshees haunting Arbrithie moor for mony a long year. Lads walking home late across the moor swear they've heard voices wailing like lost souls, though I'm admittin' some of them had had their gill of whisky. Mind ye, I'm not believing all I hear. . . .'' He paused and the bar-room with the firelight flickering on the black beams grew suddenly still. "Listen, mon. . . .''

BENNET stiffened and his gaze went to the window. From somewhere out in the darkness a strange moaning sound drifted, rising to a shrill crescendo and then dwindling again into silence.

"Good Lord, what's that ?'' he asked unsteadily.

"The banshees, mebbe.'' The Scot shrugged his shoulder. "Lads working on the new aerodrome over at Arbroath tell me it's like the sound of wires screaming when an aeroplane's falling.''

"Queer . . . it did sound just like that.'' Bennet nodded. "It's nonsense, of course, and I still swear I saw a parachute, for all your ghosts and banshees.''

"Mebbe,'' the Scot grunted. "But there's mony who've hee'rd that wailing out on the moor since the night back in the War when a German airman broke his neck over yon cliffs.''

"A German ?'' Bennet echoed. "I've never heard that any German raider flew as far north as this.''

"Aye, 'tis true enough,'' the landlord persisted. "They found part of his machine, wings wi' black crosses on. But the rest of the 'plane and the puir mon's body were never discovered. They do say as he fell down the funnel.''

"The funnel ?'' Bennet queried.

"Aye, the funnel. That's a queer freak of nature out on yon cliffs, a wide hole in the moor which drops down into the sea caves under the cliffs. There's no reaching those caves even at low tide. They do say smugglers used the funnel in the old days to haul up their contraband from the sea.''

The old Scot opened the bar-flap and moved towards the door. "But I'm wasting your time, sorr, if you're bent on searching for that parachutist. I ken weel that yu're thinkin' we're tellin' ye old wives' tales. I'll send a message along to Sergeant McTavish at the station.—Harken ! There's a car coming up the hill—mebbe the driver will take a message. Not that McTavish will be by way of thankin' me for the task. There's many a useless search McTavish and his men have had on the moor with folks' queer stories. . . .''

He broke off as he opened the door and waved his glass-cloth to attract the attention of the driver of a car that was now breasting the crest of the hill.

The grey touring car stopped with a screech of brakes, and a man in a heavy ulster overcoat and a tweed cap drawn low over his lean face leant out of the car.

FOLLOWING the innkeeper out to the road, Bennet became aware of a pair of not very friendly eyes regarding him intently from the car.

"Guid evening, Mister Garth," the innkeeper began. "There's a gentleman here who'd be obliged if yu'd take a message to Sergeant McTavish at the station, should ye be driving that way."

"I don't know that I am," came the gruff reply.

Bennet moved forward and looked into the car.

"Sorry to trouble you," he apologised, "but the matter's rather urgent. I saw a man coming down by parachute when I had a forced landing out on the moor just now. I'm afraid the fellow's in trouble and a search party ought to be sent out. If you'll be good enough to give me a lift to the station, I'll explain."

The man did not reply for some moments, and Bennet noticed a peculiar expression flicker in his restless eyes.

Then he smiled pleasantly and opened the car door.

"Of course," he said. "Jump in and I'll run you along to the station."

BENNET quickly climbed into the seat beside the driver and at once the car started forward through the mist.

"I'm a pilot myself in a modest way," Garth explained as he drove. "There may be a time when I shall be in trouble and grateful for a helping hand. The camaraderie of the air, you know. . . ."

"Er . . . yes, of course," Bennet echoed politely, but was none the less aware of a vague, undefined hostility underlying his host's friendly words. And as the journey proceeded he more than once noticed Garth's gaze resting on his face with anything but a friendly expression.

"You've no idea where the fellow landed?" Garth enquired, after a while.

"Not the foggiest notion," Bennet replied. "It's possible, of course, that the wind drifted him out to sea."

"Ah! Then that will be the end of the poor devil. The tides are at their worst at this time of the year, and strange things happen here in rough weather."

"Seems a strange place altogether," Bennet remarked with a smile. "Why, back at the inn there the locals were even trying to tell me that I hadn't seen a parachute at all, but a banshee who, it appears, floats over the moor at night like a witch on a broomstick."

Garth shrugged his shoulders.

"Living in these parts one hears strange yarns which, I admit, common sense rejects. Yet they are difficult to explain."

Bennet's rather puzzled gaze rested on his companion.

"You're an inhabitant of Arbrithie?" he enquired.

Garth nodded.

"Yes, I've a but and ben up on the hill. It's lonely at times, but I don't dislike solitude, within reason. I've a Miles Hawk which I've had fitted with amphibian gear, and it soon takes me back to civilisation when I'm in the mood." He paused, and again his restless eyes scrutinised Charlie. "Have we met before? Somehow your face seems familiar."

"I don't think so. My name's Bennet. Charlie Bennet."

"Ah, of course. I remember now. I've seen your photograph in the papers. Are you planning any new records at the moment?"

Bennet smiled glumly.

"I want to have another shot at the Cape record," he said, "but backers are scarce. The record-breaking game isn't all beer and skittles nowadays."

Garth lapsed into silence as he negotiated a sharp bend in the moorland road. When he spoke again he said, unexpectedly:

"Perhaps I can help you on the financial side. We must have a talk. What about letting me put you up for a night or two? I would be delighted to have you as my guest. It's seldom that I have the opportunity of talking flying with a pilot of your experience."

"That's very good of you. But I don't want to trespass on your generosity."

"We'll consider that settled then," Garth insisted. "When I've left a message at the station we'll see about

pegging your machine down for the night. Then I'll drive you back to my house."

The car pulled up, and through the swirling mist Bennet glimpsed the dim blue light of the police station.

"I'll ask McTavish to send out a search party," Garth said as he stepped out. "I doubt if there is much else we can do to-night to help your friend. But if you like we'll fly my Hawk along the cliffs early to-morrow and we may spot the machine the fellow jumped from. If he was the sole occupant his 'bus must have crashed somewhere near here."

Garth turned away towards the station and in a few moments his tall lean figure faded into the mists.

Waiting until the sound of the man's footsteps had died away, Bennet bent forward and, inserting his hand in the cubby-hole on the dash, drew out a crumpled piece of torn parachute silk from which a short length of severed parachute cord dangled. It was thrust behind a leather map-case and Bennet had only noticed it by chance.

He stared thoughtfully down at the fragment of silk, and he saw now that it was damp and muddy, as though it had recently been in contact with wet earth.

"Queer!" he muttered, and then replaced the morsel of silk in the cubby-hole and pushed the map-case back into place.

Drawing out his case he lit a cigarette thoughtfully.

What with flying banshees and now an intriguing stranger who apparently indulged in the ghoulish practice of collecting souvenirs from torn parachutes, the evening promised to be more entertaining then he had anticipated.

CHAPTER III
Dead Man's Gold

FOR all his distrust of Phillip Garth, Bennet had to admit that he was behaving as an admirable host. With the aid of a few tent pegs and ropes borrowed from the Scottish constabulary, Garth helped him peg down the Moth for the night, and then the grey tourer carried them on their way along the moorland road to the hill.

The "but and ben" to which Garth had modestly referred proved to be a substantial grey stone house standing in spacious, high-walled grounds.

Bennet was regaled with an excellent dinner, and later, when he sat with a cigar and liqueur in the flickering glow of the pine-log fire in the wide fireplace of the panelled dining-room, his mood mellowed.

Even Garth became more communicative.

"There's a curious story concerning this house which will interest you as an airman, Bennet," he began.

"More banshees?" Bennet grinned.

"No, this story happens to be true. It was told me by a Mrs. Esser, an Englishwoman who married a German. They lived in this house before the War and ran a farm here quite successfully. Esser was by way of being a pioneer of scientific farming methods in these parts."

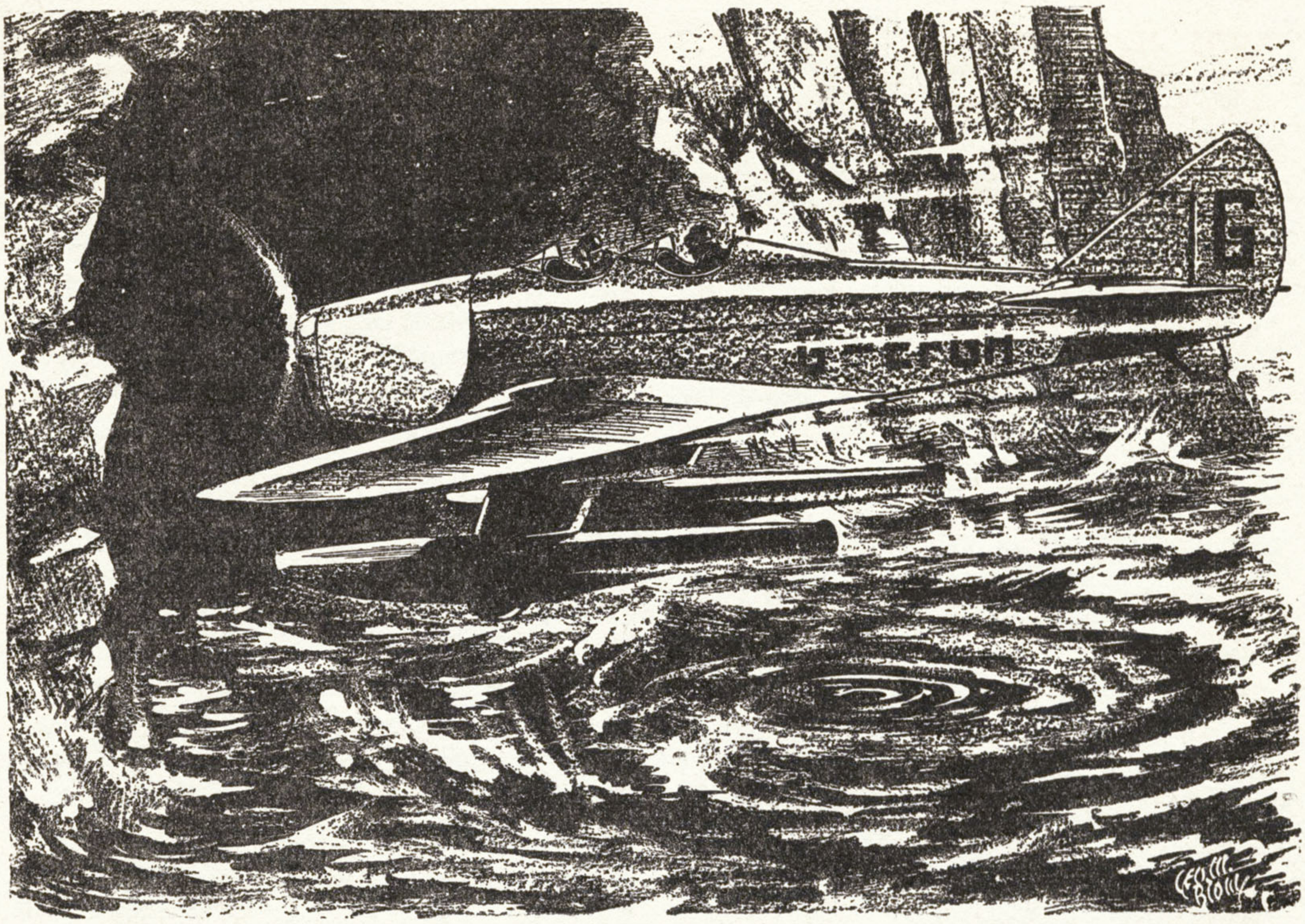
Garth paused and sipped his brandy.

"It happened that Esser was in Berlin when War was declared. His father was dying and he had been sent for hurriedly. The old man died on the eve of the outbreak of hostilities, leaving Esser a considerable fortune. But, still being a German citizen, Esser was unable to leave Germany and was forced to fight for the Fatherland. You can imagine his feelings, with all his interests centred here. At all events, those influences soon proved stronger than his patriotism, and he planned to escape from Germany. His first step was to apply for a transfer from an infantry regiment to the German Flying Corps."

"But how could that help him to escape the War?" Bennet broke in.

Garth smiled.

"Esser was no fool," he said. "He had worked out an ingenious and yet comparatively simple method of getting back to England. His plan was assisted when he was attached to a long-distance bombing staffel formed by the German High Command to bomb English towns. Esser's chance came the night he was



. . . the Hawk skimmed the waters of the whirlpool and plunged into the dark chasm

sent with a flight of single-seaters fitted with long-range petrol tanks to bomb the Hartlepools. Over the North Sea Esser broke away from the formation and set a compass-course for Arbrithie. His plan was simple. He knew there was a flat expanse of moorland near his home where he could land with comparative safety in the darkness. Then he intended to taxi the machine close to the edge of the cliff and, after opening the throttle, to jump clear and let the 'plane crash over the cliffs into the sea.''

Bennet nodded.

'' Nice work,'' he commented. '' And everyone would think he had been washed out of the cockpit of the crashed machine and drowned.''

'' Quite,'' Garth agreed, '' but, unfortunately, fog similar to that which caught you on the moor to-night defeated Esser's plan. He stalled the 'plane when he was attempting a landing in the mist and he crashed. The machine fell into the funnel, which is a notorious landmark on the moor, tore off its wings and the fuselage plunged into the caves several hundred feet beneath the surface of the cliffs, carrying Esser with it.''

'' I heard part of that story in the inn to-night,'' Bennet interposed. '' So it's Esser's ghost which is supposed to haunt the moor, is it ? ''

The night wind flung a flurry of rain against the window, and Bennet saw Garth start suddenly, his hand tightening convulsively on the arm of his chair.

'' If one can believe such things ''— Garth laughed unsteadily—'' Mrs. Esser believed the spirit of her husband haunted this house. Her health broke down. It was when I took over the house from her that she told me the story I have just recounted. The real interest is in the sequel. It was not until after the War, when Esser's brother visited her, that she learnt she had lost not only her husband on that November night but also a fortune.''

'' A fortune ? '' echoed Bennet, his interest aroused.

'' Yes, as I've said, Esser was no fool. He did not fancy his chances as an enemy alien hiding in this country

without money to help him. So before he started on what was destined to be his last flight he collected all the valuables he could lay hands on in the shape of money and jewellery from his late father's estate. When he flew across the North Sea that night there was a fortune of several thousand pounds in his cockpit."

Bennet whistled.

"And it all went down the funnel with Esser when he crashed?"

"Exactly," Garth agreed. "And it was impossible to salve the money and jewels, for the caves are inaccessible from the sea and a fall of rock has since blocked up the funnel at its lower extremity." He bent forward and continued in low, insistent tones. "Yet I believe there is a way to recover that fortune, and you are the very man who could help my plan."

Bennet's eyes lit up.

"Treasure trove, eh?" he said. "That sounds exciting. What's the scheme?"

Garth rose, and as he bent over the ash-tray to extinguish the stump of his cigar the light of triumph in his eyes was hidden from Bennet.

"You're tired. I've kept you up too long," was Garth's amiable reply. "But, to-morrow, if you are still interested, we will discuss my plan. What it involves you will appreciate more clearly when we make our early morning flip in the Hawk."

"Sounds rather like aerial beachcombing," Bennet smiled.

"Something like that," Garth agreed. "And, if you dream of a fortune to-night, Bennet—well sometimes dreams come true."

THE Miles Hawk plunged in the updraught from the rock wall as Phillip Garth flew low over the cliffs where they swept precipitously down to the sea at the headland.

The slipstream battering against his face, Bennet hung out of the front cockpit. Garth was pointing downwards as he turned in a slow bank, with the Hawk's tilting floats throwing spidery shadows on the grey face of the cliff.

Fifty feet below them, Bennet saw the reef over which the waters broke in a spume of spray. Nearby lay the entrance to a great cleft in the cliff, a cleft so deep that it looked as if some giant axe had split the headland in twain.

And between the reef and the entrance to this natural causeway, a whirlpool bubbled like a witch's cauldron.

Garth throttled back and shouted.

"There's the entrance to the caves beneath the funnel. You can see that the reef and the whirlpool make it impossible for a boat to enter. But watch. . . ."

Garth dropped lower. Now the shadow of the headland shrouded the gliding machine. It flew so close to the causeway that Bennet could peer into the cleft. Beyond the whirlpool, he saw that through a trick of the tides, the surf subsided into an expanse of still water which, as far as the eye could see, stretched away into a widening channel that cut deeply into the base of the cliff.

Garth pulled round in a sharp bank and glided back across the entrance to the channel.

"Do you think you could put the Hawk down on that stretch of water?" he called.

Bennet studied the approach. It would be a tricky business, but the space between the rock walls was considerably wider than the Hawk's wing span. If he skimmed the whirlpool, alighting on the straight stretch of water beyond would be a matter of careful judgment.

"It shouldn't be any more difficult than landing on a ship's deck," he called back at last across the oil-flecked cowling. "But don't blame me if I pile her up."

Garth laughed confidently.

"You'll make it all right, Bennet. But I don't mind admitting I've neither the nerve nor the skill for the job."

He opened out the engine, while Bennet relaxed in the cockpit, his eyes thoughtful, as the 'plane swung back towards the Manse.

It was an intriguing adventure in

which Phillip Garth had involved him. The prospect of financial gain held out by the treasure trove had an almost irresistible appeal. But was there a catch somewhere? Bennet's vague mistrust of Garth persisted, although his host's behaviour during his stay in his house had to a large extent dispersed those doubts.

The failure of their aerial search of the countryside that morning to reveal any trace of the mysterious parachutist or the wreck of the machine from which, presumably, the man had jumped, could hardly be attributed to Garth, although the mystery of the piece of torn parachute silk still remained unsolved. Still, as Garth was himself an owner-pilot, the piece of parachute might have some quite innocent explanation.

The Miles Hawk skimmed the trees and glided down to make a smooth landing on the grassy expanse of the grounds.

Garth climbed down from the cockpit and lit a cigarette.

"Well, what's the verdict?" he asked.

"I'd like to try out the machine before deciding," Bennet hedged. "If she isn't pretty sensitive on controls there's nothing doing. I'll have to fly very nearly to inches."

"You couldn't have a better bus for the job," Garth assured him. "Try her out by all means."

Bennet climbed into the pilot's cockpit and eased himself into position.

"Do you mind if we get down to brass tacks, Garth," he said quietly. "Before I risk my neck, you'll appreciate that I'd like to know exactly what the proposition is."

"Of course." Garth met Bennet's interrogating stare with unwavering eyes. "I suggest that we go fifty-fifty on the proceeds of our search. Is that O.K.?"

Bennet hesitated.

"But, surely, if we find those valuables you say are in that mouldering cockpit under the cliff, the relatives of the late lamented Karl Esser will have first claim on them."

"Naturally," Garth agreed at once. "But Mrs. Esser died some time ago, and I do not know if it will be possible to trace any other relatives. In any case, we are legally entitled to a generous lien on what we recover. That's the law of salvage."

Bennet's last scruples faded. He was desperately hard up and ready money would be more than useful. Also, the result of the adventure was likely to prove sufficiently spectacular to ensure front-page stories in the press. And Charlie Bennet had long ago learnt that in the record-breaking game publicity was the one thing a pilot needed more than money.

Buckling his safety-belt, Bennet's hand reached for the throttle.

CHAPTER IV

The Funnel of Death

IT was nearly four o'clock in the afternoon when the Miles Hawk climbed steadily away from the grounds of the old Manse with Bennet at the controls, and headed for the cliffs.

Phillip Garth moved restlessly in the passenger cockpit. The strained expression on his face might have been attributable to excitement or to the fact that his limbs were uncomfortably cramped by the gear dumped on the floor, which included a stout coil of rope, a couple of hefty axes and electric torches.

The wind had dropped with the approaching dusk, and, as Bennet had anticipated, there was a minimum of air eddies to interfere with the accurate flying necessitated by the risky adventure ahead.

He circled the headland and flew some distance out to sea before swinging the Hawk's nose back towards the chasm. Leaning out of the cockpit he gauged his distance carefully. Then, throttling back, he went down in a slow glide. The dark face of the cliff swept towards him with the cleft seeming to narrow alarmingly before his straining eyes.

Suddenly he opened up the throttle, banked steeply against the face of the cliff and turned to fly back over the sea.

"What's wrong?" Garth shouted nervily.

"Came in too high," Bennet told him. "I've got to get in just on stalling point. We don't know how far that water canal penetrates, and if we're going to hit something, the slower the better. Thank Heavens you've got slots on this 'bus."

A few moments later the cleft was again looming before his narrowed eyes. Throttling back, he held the Hawk in a flat glide, almost stalling as he endeavoured to cut his forward speed to a minimum. He glanced anxiously at the airspeed indicator. The needle was flickering ominously as the 'plane skimmed the surging waters of the whirlpool, angry white crests of foam reaching up at the floats like grasping hands.

He felt the nose drop as the Hawk plunged into the dark chasm, and he eased back on the stick. Soggily, the elevators responded, and with Bennet's head swivelling to watch the rock walls, the floats hit the canal waters with a splash. The Hawk yawed wildly and a rock wall seemed to leap towards the starboard wing. Instantly Bennet kicked the rudder-bar and the machine straightened. More by luck than judgment, he had averted disaster.

The Hawk slid forward along the chasm whose dank roof blotted out the sky, and came to rest in the cavern.

BENNET relaxed and switched off with a breath of relief. He had taken a blind risk in alighting on that subterranean stretch of water whose length and depth had been a matter of speculation.

"Good show, Bennet," said Garth huskily.

Bennet stood up in the cockpit and peered through the gloom.

"We only just pulled it off," he muttered. "Another few yards and we'd have hit that rock barrier."

He was staring curiously at the natural platform of rock which terminated the shaft, puzzled by a strange translucent light which illuminated the rugged surface.

"That's the light filtering down the funnel," Garth explained. "It'll help our search."

There was a queer husky note in the man's voice which Bennet attributed to excitement. And he, too, was conscious of his quickening heartbeats as he surveyed the rock-bound cavern of hidden secrets that reef and angry tides had guarded against human invasion, possibly for centuries.

"We'd better turn the 'plane round," Garth said. "One never knows. It might be necessary to get away quickly."

Bennet nodded in agreement as he gauged the length of the Hawk and the turning space available between the cavern walls.

Clambering on to a ridge of rock beside the canal, he succeeded, after several fruitless attempts, in hitching a rope round the tail. Then, laboriously, two heavily-breathing men manœuvred the Hawk round until the nose pointed to where a faint distant glimmer of light filtered through the opening in the cliff wall.

Collecting the axes from the cockpit, the explorers then scrambled along the rough ridge to the expanse of rock where, had Bennet but known, the stage was set for a grim drama which was to develop with startling unexpectedness.

It was very still in the cavern save for the eerie echoes of their footsteps in the silence. Bennet, moving across the rough plateau, suddenly tensed. He stood staring at a huddled mass lying on the rock. As his eyes became more accustomed to the gloom he saw that it was the shattered remains of an aeroplane fuselage, now a grim coffin of rotted fabric and rust-eaten wires.

Bennet moved closer. And now he saw the skeleton lying in the cockpit, one bleached arm flung across what had been the face of Leutnant Karl Esser of the German Imperial Air Force.

He was conscious of a sense of revulsion. It was a ghoulish business in which he had thoughtlessly allowed the persuasive Phillip Garth to involve him. He wasn't sure that he would go on with it.

He tensed suddenly, his heart leaping. He could have sworn a moan had drifted from the heap of debris, an unmistakable human sound!

"WHAT the devil was that . . . ?" Bennet cried, a trifle shrilly.

He turned his head, to discover that Garth was no longer beside him. Suppressing the first faint stirrings of panic, Bennet switched on the electric torch. Its questing beam traversed the rock, hesitated, and then concentrated on a bulbous white mass partially hidden by the wrecked fuselage of the German biplane.

The ray revealed Phillip Garth's stooping figure as he fumbled amongst the silken folds of what Bennet now recognised as a parachute. It looked new and white, and obviously had not lain in that rock-walled tomb for twenty-odd years.

He heard Garth's quick breathing as he straightened up, a black leather case gripped in his hand.

Bennet had a momentary impression of gazing at a stranger. It was as though a mask had been stripped from Garth's face as he stood rigidly in the shadows, his eyes gleaming with something akin to madness, his mouth working.

"What the devil's the matter?" Bennet jerked.

His voice ended in a gasp as he saw Garth jerk a revolver from his pocket. In the beam of the torch, a blue-grey barrel was levelled at Bennet's breast.

"Don't move or I'll shoot," Garth threatened.

The prospect of being marooned in that subterranean prison goaded Bennet into swift activity. He flung himself forward in a flying tackle, his arms outstretched for Garth's legs.

There was a flash of flame and the strident clamour of an exploding cartridge echoed against the rock walls. Bennet felt the bullet sear his shoulder as he fell heavily on the rock and lay there, half-stunned.

Yet he was conscious that Garth stood looking down at him, the smoking revolver in his hand. He groaned realistically, foxing to convince his assailant that he was hurt. Then, to his relief, he heard the man's footsteps receding into the distance as he made his way towards the ridge.

Cautiously Bennet began to crawl across the rock in pursuit.

He was slithering past the crumpled parachute when suddenly he went rigid, his scalp tingling. Something had touched his face. He looked down with startled eyes and saw a human hand groping from beneath the silken folds.

IT was then, for the first time, that Bennet saw a man lying half-hidden beneath the parachute, the harness still buckled about his shoulders.

Rising on his knees, Bennet bent over him, and found himself staring down at a slightly-built middle-aged man whose sunken eyes looked up at him in mute appeal. A livid wound on his temple stood out against the drawn pallor of his face.

The man's grey lips moved and Bennet crouched closer. An almost inaudible voice came to his ears.

"Listen," came the husky, urgent tones, "there is much that I must tell you . . . and there is little time. Phillip Garth is responsible for this. He's my partner. . . . Lindheim and Garth . . . diamond merchants. Garth is my cutter, one of the finest craftsmen in the trade. But he is mad. . . ."

A spasm of pain twisted the man's lips and he raised a shaking hand to beckon Bennet to bend still closer.

"Yesterday we collected from Antwerp the biggest order we have ever secured . . . fifty thousand pounds' worth of uncut stones. We brought them over the Channel by air. It was Garth's idea that we should use a 'plane for our journeys. It was quicker and safer—so Garth said."

His ears straining for the ominous sound of the Hawk's engine, Bennet interposed:

"Don't worry about all this now. I'll go and get help. You need a doctor."

"Thank you for your thought," the man breathed with pitiful courtesy. "But it is too late. You must listen, for I want you to regain the jewels. The insurance assessors will pay a great reward to anyone who recovers them. . . ."

He paused and brushed his hand across his forehead, as if he found it difficult to concentrate his thoughts.

"Ah, yes . . . I remember," he continued. "We were flying from Antwerp, and when Garth reached the English coast he turned northwards. I know now that he never intended to land at Croydon. I grew suspicious when he evaded my questions as to why he was deviating from our course. He became violent, and I knew that what I had suspected for some time had become a reality. Garth's brain had become unhinged. I was at the mercy of a criminal lunatic who would stop at nothing to convert the fortune in stones we carried to his own use. . . . I realised that my chance of survival would be remote when we landed in the grounds of Garth's house on these deserted cliffs. . . ."

Lindheim's voice grew weaker.

'I saw that my only chance was to jump from the 'plane with the case containing the diamonds, and trust to my parachute. I can't remember clearly what happened after I pulled the rip cord. The ground rushed up to meet me, and then I seemed to be falling into an abyss of darkness. I heard the parachute ripping . . . then something struck my head, and I remembered nothing until I drifted back to consciousness to find myself lying here. Garth was bending over me, wrenching the case from my hand." He flung out his arms in a convulsive gesture as if to ward off some unseen menace. "Don't let him come near me . . . he's mad, I tell you . . . mad. . . ."

Lindheim's voice died in a choking gasp. His head fell back and he lay still.

For a long moment Bennet stared down at the man's grey face. Then, reverently, he covered the still form with its silken shroud.

CHAPTER V

A Ghost is Laid

CHARLIE BENNET straightened, his face grim. In those moments of shocked enlightenment he had awakened to the truth.

Phillip Garth had used him cleverly as a pawn in his unscrupulous gamble to regain the case of diamonds which had slipped through his hands the previous night.

His imagination sketched in the missing details. Garth had ingeniously superimposed the story of Karl Esser on the facts he had been anxious to hide. He had enlisted his aid, not to salve the valuables he had pretended were in the cockpit of the German bomber, for they had probably never existed beyond Garth's imagination, but to help him lay hands on the case of jewels the unfortunate Lindheim had lost his life in endeavouring to protect.

Even the piece of torn parachute silk he had seen in Garth's car now fitted into the plot. Obviously, Garth had found it on the ridge of the funnel while searching for Lindheim the previous night, and had known then that his partner had crashed down into the caves. . . .

Bennet's gaze jerked towards the tunnel as he heard the engine of the Miles Hawk splutter in warning that Garth was beginning his escape.

Throwing caution to the winds, Bennet raced across the jumbled rock surface of the plateau. He might yet be in time to deal with the ruthless adventurer who had tricked him into risking his neck on a fool's errand, and then tried to murder him for his pains.

Heedless of torn hands and bruised limbs, he scrambled along the rock ridge, his anxious eyes watching the rocking 'plane already moving forward along the channel with gathering speed.

Bennet poised on the ridge for an instant, measuring his distance. Then he flung himself forwards and downwards, his outstretched hands reaching for the moving fuselage below.

His hands slithered over the doped fabric as he landed on the vibrating fuselage with a crash that jarred every bone in his body. He hung on grimly, the propeller slipstream lashing his body, and wriggled forward until at last his hands got a grip on the padded rim of the rear cockpit.

He saw Garth's face, contorted with anger, looking back from the front cockpit, then gained a momentary respite

when the pilot was forced to concentrate on lifting the hurtling machine over the whirlpool and the reef beyond the channel entrance.

The tail-heavy Hawk yawed dangerously. The rock wall seemed to leap towards a tilting wing and Bennet had a vision of an almighty crash. Frantically Garth straightened out and, skimming the foam-flecked waters of the cataract, the Hawk hurtled through the rock-walled gateway and soared in the up-draught of the cliff.

The immediate danger past, Garth transferred the control-column to his left hand and, whipping out a revolver, directed the barrel over his left shoulder.

Bennet flattened himself against the tilting fuselage and a bullet whined perilously close to his head and went screaming away astern.

Then, as he waited helplessly for the second shot, tensed for the stabbing, searing blow that would spell his doom, there came a sudden shrill cry from the darkness beneath, rising high and clear above the clamour of the engine.

PERHAPS it was a moment of superstitious fear at that unnerving scream of the wind wailing upwards through the funnel from the subterranean channel below that caused Garth's sudden, spasmodic grip on the control-column. Or, possibly, it was the up-draught from the sunken shaft that caused the Hawk to plunge at that critical moment to avert Phillip Garth's murderous purpose.

Bennet snatched at his chance of reprieve. A last convulsive heave along the canting fuselage and he slithered down into the rear cockpit. Then, straightening up, he hit out mercilessly, conscious of a fierce joy as he smashed his bunched knuckles against Garth's jaw. With a muffled cry the man crumpled in his cockpit.

Grunting with relief, Bennet wriggled down into the bucket seat and, clamping his feet on the rudder-bar, grabbed the stick, thanking his lucky stars that the Hawk was fitted with dual control. Steadying the plunging 'plane, he throttled back and pushed down the nose in a glide. A few moments later he had landed bumpily on the moor with the unconscious Garth's head jolting grotesquely against the rim of the cockpit.

Bennet stood up, and was shakily lighting a cigarette when, suddenly, again that strange unnerving cry swept across the moor, rose to a wailing crescendo and then faded into stillness. For a moment Bennet tensed, the match dwindling between his fingers; then, relaxing suddenly, he laughed—a laugh which for all his scepticism concerning the stories he had heard at the inn, held a certain relief.

His gaze had gone to the heather-covered ridge with its protective wire fence, which marked the opening of the funnel, and he realised now that what the more credulous amongst the Arbrithie natives had attributed to the supernatural was but a trick of the wind surging up the rock chimney from the subterranean passage piercing the cliff headland. Like some giant siren, the funnel amplified the scream of the wind sweeping in from the sea.

He climbed down from the cockpit and surveyed the unconscious Garth. Reflectively, his gaze went beyond the sagging figure to where a stained leather case lay on the cockpit floor.

"Maybe I'll collect a few bawbees for this job after all," he grunted as he retrieved the case. "The insurance assessors ought to be pretty glad to see this little lot back again."

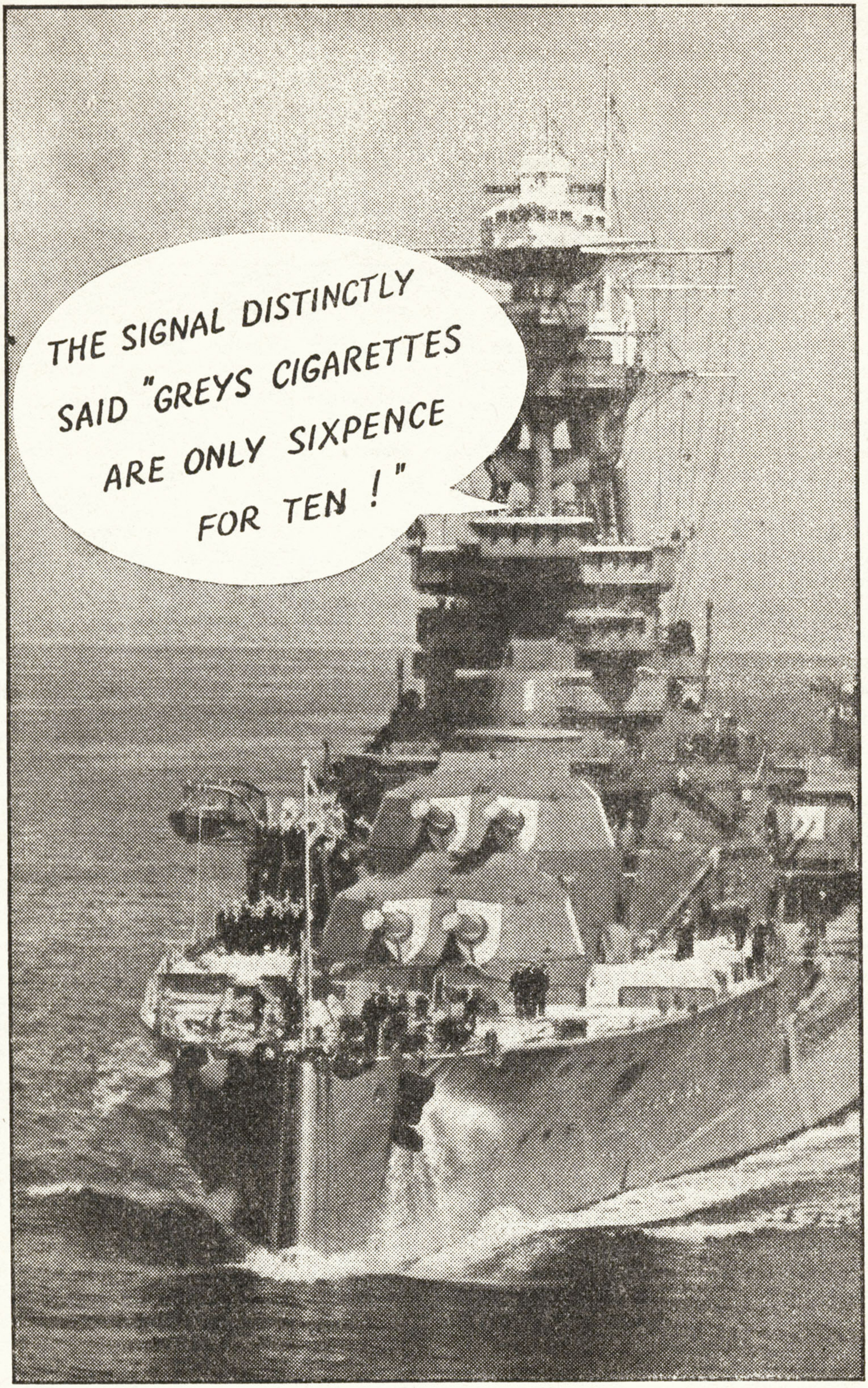
Beyond the moor, the blue light of the Arbrithie police station shone across the road, and a few moments later Charlie Bennet was pushing open the station door.

Across his littered desk Sergeant McTavish stared at the airman's dishevelled figure.

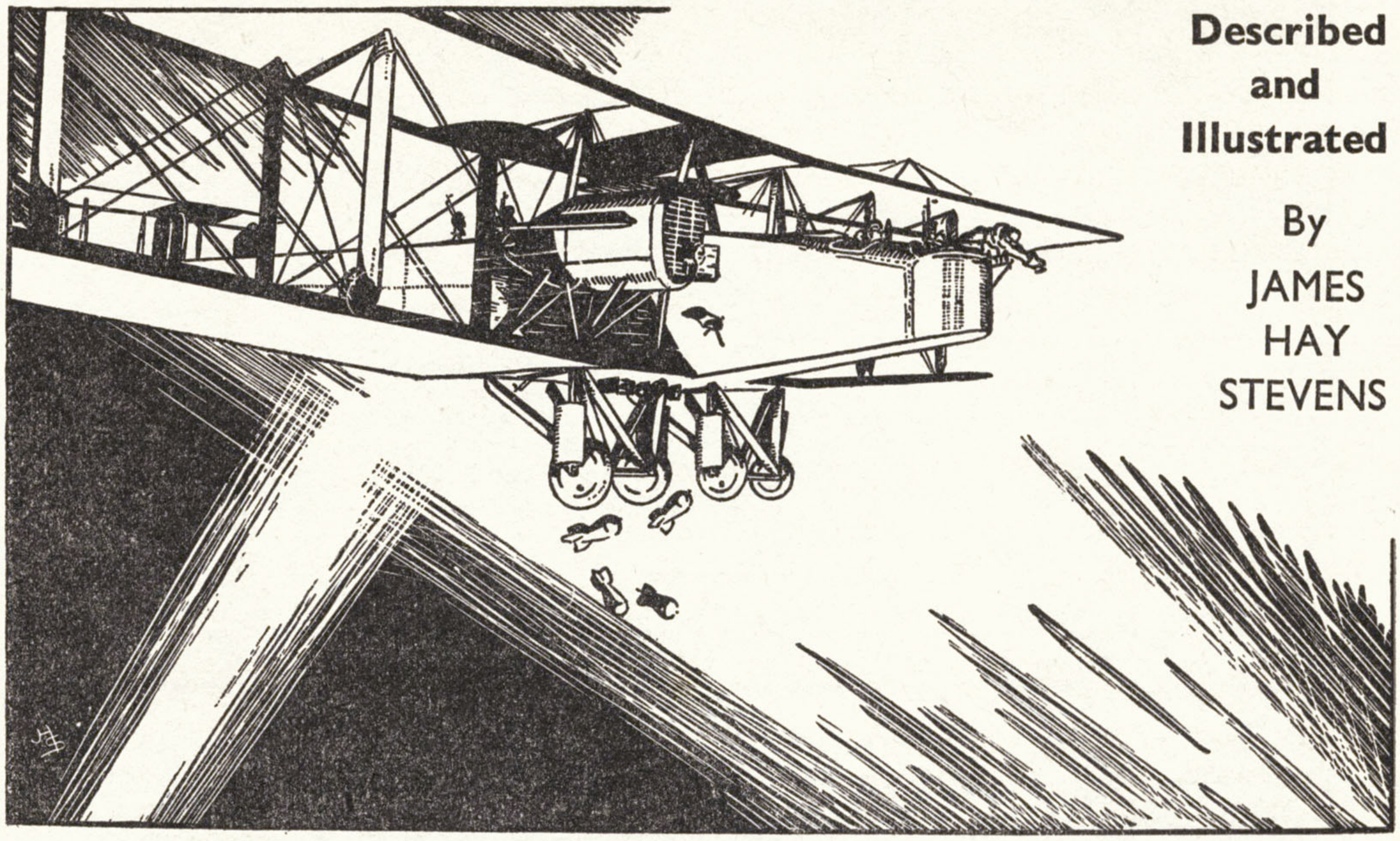
"Why, mon!" he ejaculated. "It's queer that yu're looking."

Charlie Bennet laughed a little grimly.

"It's queer that I've been feeling, Sergeant," he replied. "Come along and be introduced to the Arbrithie banshee—and you'll be needing a pair of handcuffs."


THE SIGNAL DISTINCTLY
SAID "GREYS CIGARETTES
ARE ONLY SIXPENCE
FOR TEN !"

A Famous British Bomber



Described and Illustrated

By JAMES HAY STEVENS

A Description of The Handley Page 0.400 Night Bomber, with Full Instructions for Building a Solid Scale Model

IT is not generally known that the original Admiralty Specification to which the Handley Page bomber was designed was issued on December 28th, 1914. The machine was to have had two 150 h.p. Sunbeam engines and a speed of 65 m.p.h., or, alternatively, two 200 h.p. engines and a speed of 75 m.p.h. Folding wings were specified and the load had to include six 100-lb. bombs, wireless and armour-plating for engines and crew.

The first machine, known as the Type 0.100, made its maiden flight on December 17th, 1915. After modification, it reached a speed of 80 m.p.h. when fitted with two 250 h.p. Rolls-Royce engines. This machine had an enclosed cabin for the pilot in the extreme nose. Trouble was experienced with tail flutter on this and two other experimental machines. Eventually a cure was effected and a great deal of flying was done by the 0.100 type during 1917—including the rebuilt prototype machine, No. 1,455.

The 0.400, except for certain structural details and more compact engine nacelles, was identical with the 0.100 type. The machine was designed with folding wings to enable squadrons to stow their aeroplanes in comparatively small canvas field hangars.

The general lay-out of the machine is apparent from the drawings and sketches, and it is sufficient to mention one or two points of construction. Wings, fuselage and tail were wooden structures of struts and spars covered with fabric. The engines were mounted in fairly well streamlined nacelles. A novel feature for those days was the way in which the four wheels were independently sprung.

Armed with Davis Guns

THERE were a number of modifications and variations of equipment on the 0.400, and of these the most common are given. The crew consisted of the pilot and either two or three gunner-observers. The pilot sat to the left of

the cockpit with a spare seat for a navigator, should one be required, on his right. The bomb-aimer occupied the nose cockpit and had to operate one or two stripped Lewis guns on a Scarff mounting as well as his sights—one sight was fitted externally to the nose of the machine and another under the pilot's seat. The rear gunner either had one stripped Lewis gun on a "rocking-post" mounting, or two on individual brackets, one at each side of the cockpit. Another gun was fitted to fire through an opening in the floor.

Bombs were carried inside the fuselage suspended by their noses. It is not generally known that experiments on active service were made with six- and two-pounder Davis guns which, however, were not found to be very effective. Towards the end of the War, directional wireless was fitted experimentally.

The standard engines were two Rolls-Royce Eagle VIII.'s of 360 h.p. each, giving the following performances and weights :—

Weight empty	8,502 lb.
Usual bomb load	16–112 lb. or 8–250 lb.
Weight loaded	13,360 lb.
Speed, ground level (loaded)	97.5 m.p.h.
Speed, 6,500 feet (loaded)	84.5 m.p.h.
Speed, 10,000 feet (loaded)	80 m.p.h.
Landing speed	50 m.p.h.
Climb to 1,000 feet (loaded)	2 min. 45 sec.
Climb to 6,500 feet (loaded)	27 min. 15 sec.
Climb to 10,000 feet (loaded)	45 min.
Service ceiling (loaded)	8,500 ft.
Ceiling (loaded)	10,000 ft.

HOW TO BUILD THE SCALE MODEL

Details of Materials, Tools and Constructional Methods

THE materials necessary for a solid $\frac{1}{72}$nd scale model of the 0.400 are as follows :—

Fuselage : a block of whitewood 10½ × 1¼ × ⅞ in.

Main planes : a sheet of fretwood (not ply) 17 × 4 × $\frac{3}{16}$ in.

Tail unit : a sheet of fibre or fretwood 4 × 3 × $\frac{1}{12}$ in.

Engine nacelles : a block of whitewood 3½ × ¾ × ½ in.

Struts : about 18 in. of 20-gauge brass wire and a piece of fibre 2 × 6 × $\frac{1}{20}$ in.

Airscrew and wheels : either cast models bought from a toy shop or carved from scrap wood.

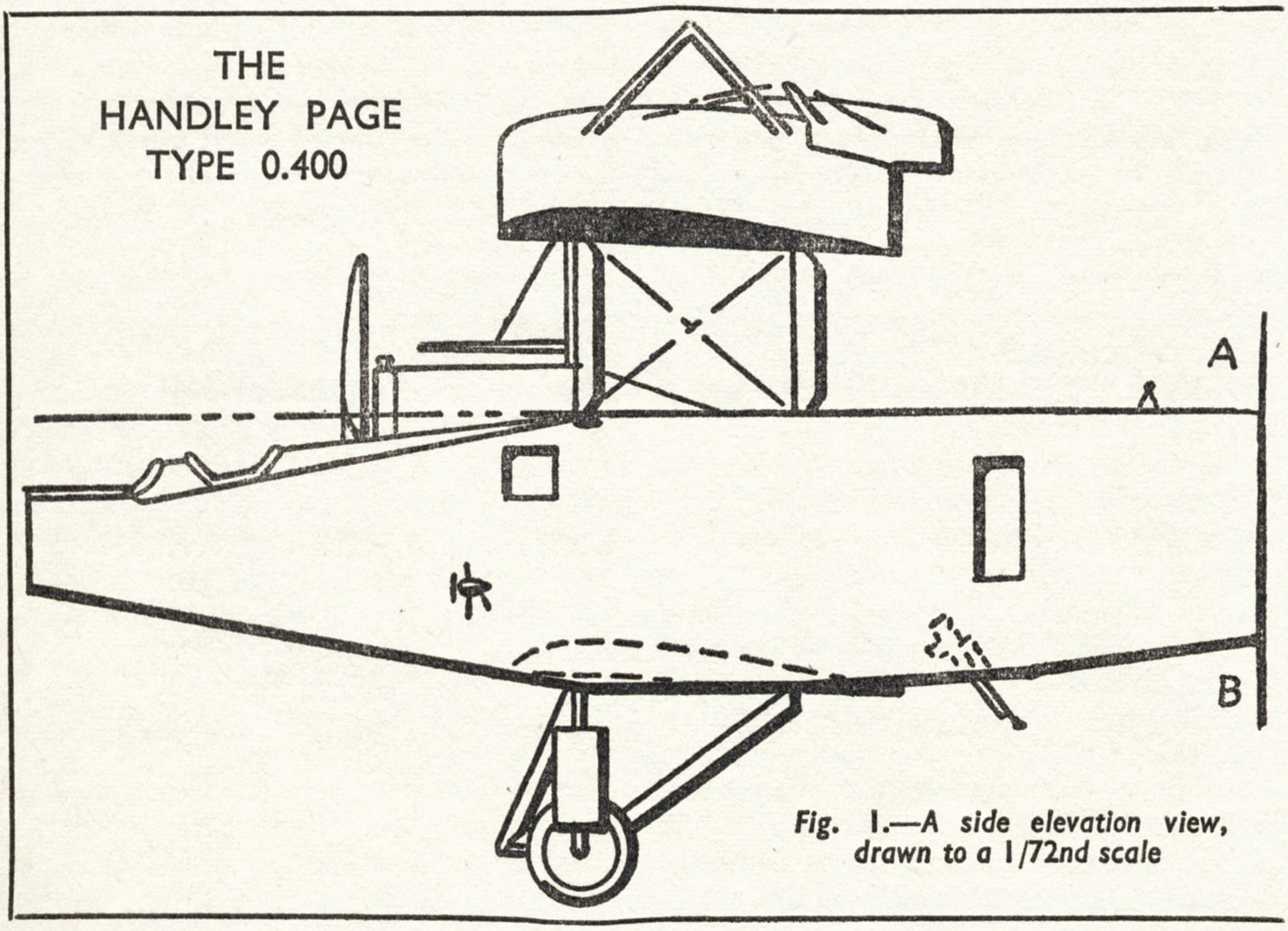


Fig. 1.—A side elevation view, drawn to a 1/72nd scale

The essential tools are : $\frac{1}{4}$ in. chisel ; small plane ; penknife ; oilstone (for sharpening the foregoing) ; fretsaw ; half-round file ; $\frac{1}{16}$th in. bradawl ; archimedean drill ; small long-nosed pliers ; tube of cellulose glue and a penny ruler measuring in $\frac{1}{10}$ths, $\frac{1}{12}$ths and $\frac{1}{16}$ths of an inch.

Method of Construction

IF it is decided to use the $\frac{1}{72}$nd scale, obtain a sheet of tracing paper about a foot long and on it draw a line at least eleven inches in length and, at its middle point, draw a line at right angles. Lay the paper alternatively upon Figs. 1 and 2, registering the pencil lines with the datum line and the line A–B on the drawings and carefully trace the fuselage details allowing for the cut-outs shown in Fig. 3. Lay the tracing on the fuselage block, pin-prick the outline and line in with a pencil. Cut away the surplus wood with chisel and plane.

Draw a centre-line down the top and bottom surfaces of the fuselage and, on the top surface, draw out the plan. Again cut away the surplus wood. Mark the positions of the three cockpits and the fuselage windows. Hollow the cockpits with carpenters' drills, if they are available, or with chisel and penknife. Drill the corners of the windows transversely through the fuselage and cut them out with a fretsaw. Round the top decking from the nose gunner's

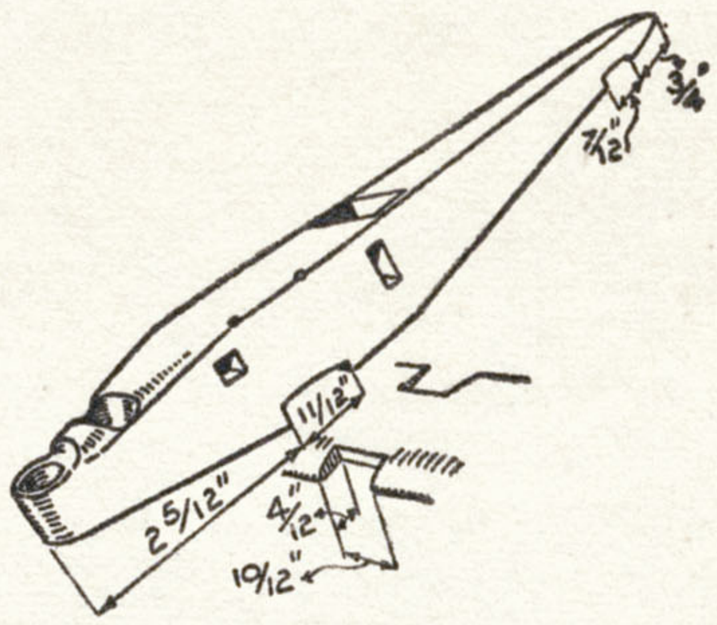


Fig. 3.—Finished fuselage block, showing lower main and tail plane cut-outs

cockpit aft to the front centre-section struts (see Fig. 3). Paint the insides of the cockpit and window openings black—unless seats, etc., are to be fitted—and cover the windows with panes of cellophane.

Draw out the main planes from the G.A. Drawing on p. 187. When scaling off dimensions it is useful to remember that each of the 6-ft. divisions on the drawing represents 1 in. on $\frac{1}{72}$nd scale. The undersides of the main plane of the 0.400 were practically flat, and only the top surfaces of the model need be cambered to the section shown in Fig. 1. The cambering is done with a plane and finished off with glasspaper.

The pieces of the tail unit are drawn, cut out and cambered to the rather flat bi-convex sections shown in the drawings with a file and glasspaper. The planes are drilled for their various struts and the outlines of the control surfaces

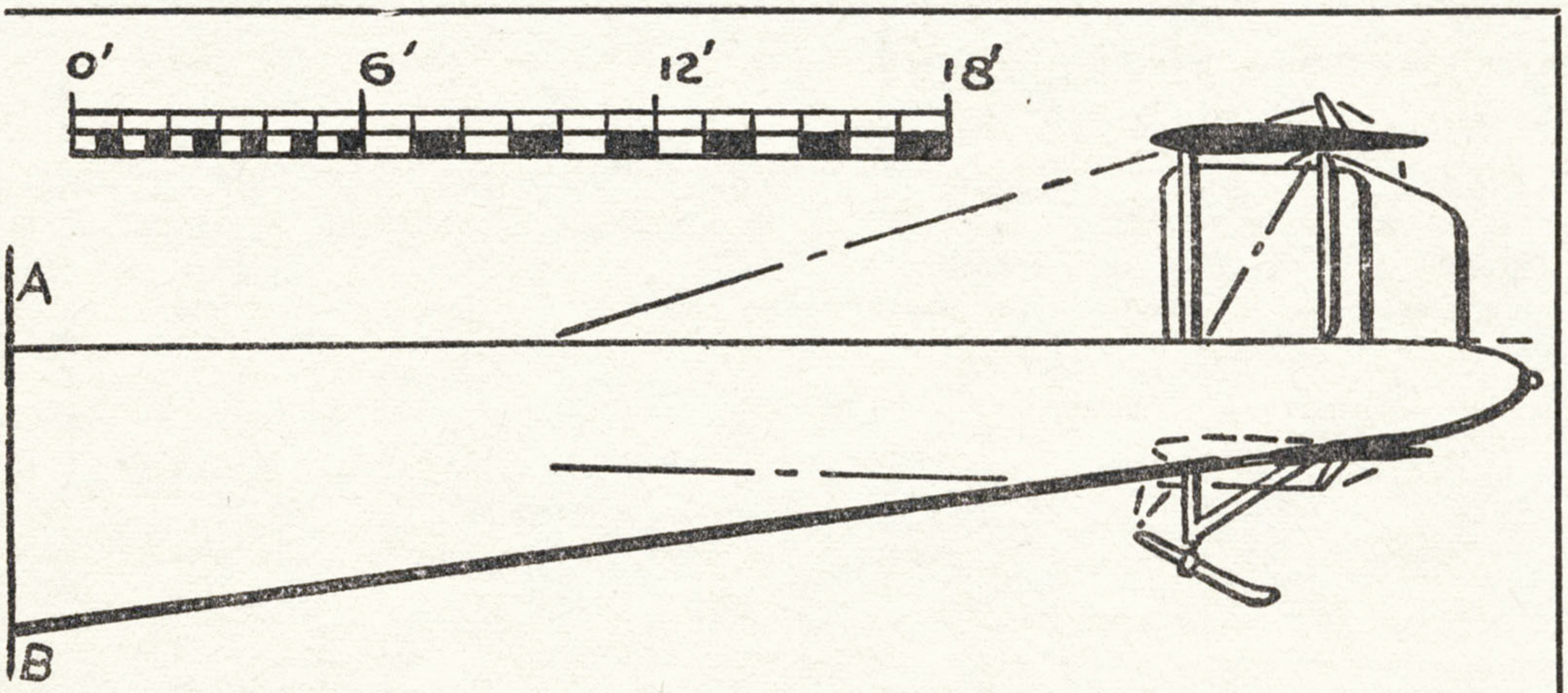


Fig. 2.—1/72nd scale side elevation of rear half of the 0.400

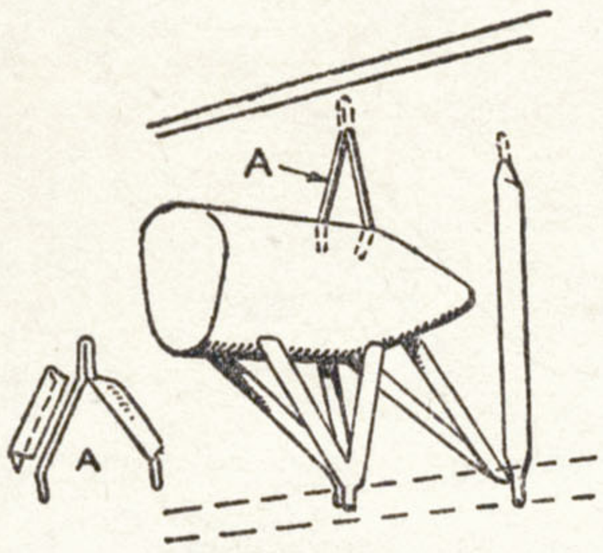


Fig. 4.—Undercarriage details of the 0.400, showing wire and fibre components

marked with a ruler and a bradawl—used pencil fashion. The dihedral angle of the main planes is achieved by heating each centre-section in the steam from a kettle and carefully bending between fingers and thumbs. Note how the dihedral starts at the line of the engines, *not* at the fuselage sides.

The engine nacelles are next carved from the smaller block of wood in a manner similar to that used for the fuselage. Drill the holes for the supporting struts, the airscrews and the exhaust pipes.

The many struts that hold the main planes together are made in two ways according to their kind. The straight interplane struts and the lower engine nacelle struts are made from fibre cut out with a fretsaw and sandpapered to a streamline section. The pairs of lower front engine struts are each made as one-piece "vees" (Fig. 4). The centre-section struts (which have to be fairly stout, because they position and support the top plane) are made from inverted "vees" of brass wire—the streamlined section is obtained by making folded paper fairings for them.

Method of Assembly

GLUE the lower main plane into the cut-out in the bottom of the fuselage. When the glue has set, start the trickiest part of the model, the undercarriage units shown in Fig. 5.

Pieces of fibre $\frac{1}{20}$ in. thick are cut to the shapes A and B and the parts streamlined with file and glasspaper. The combined axle and compression leg wire is next bent to the shape shown at C—the wheels being first threaded on. The under-surface of the rear of the triangular-shaped B is grooved as deeply as possible to take the axle section of the wire, which should be firmly glued to it. Glue the ends of the wire into the correct holes in the lower plane.

Next, when the compression legs are firm, glue the fibre N-struts (which are only dummies) into their correct positions. The bulging shock-absorbers are each made from two grooved and streamlined pieces of fibre (Fig. 5D)—they should have been prepared *before* assembling the undercarriage, but are most conveniently fitted last. This undercarriage, when neatly made, is about the neatest and strongest that can be made without recourse to soldering.

The model is now stood on its own "feet," the fibre interplane and wire centre-section struts are fitted without glue and adjusted to give the planes their correct gap and alignment. When satisfactory, fix paper fairings to the centre-section struts and refit all the struts with glue.

After the top plane has had time to set firmly, the engine nacelles can be put in place (Fig. 4). Fit the two fibre V-struts (front) and two plain struts (rear) for one engine into their holes in the lower plane, then put the nacelle on to the upper ends of the struts and carefully fit the upper wire inverted V-strut. Adjust them for length and, with a file, scratch the wire of each where its paper fairing has to come. Remove the struts, fix the paper fairings and refit with glue.

The lower tail plane is glued to the fuselage and allowed to set. The struts, centre fin and rudders are fitted to it and the upper tail plane put in place. Any

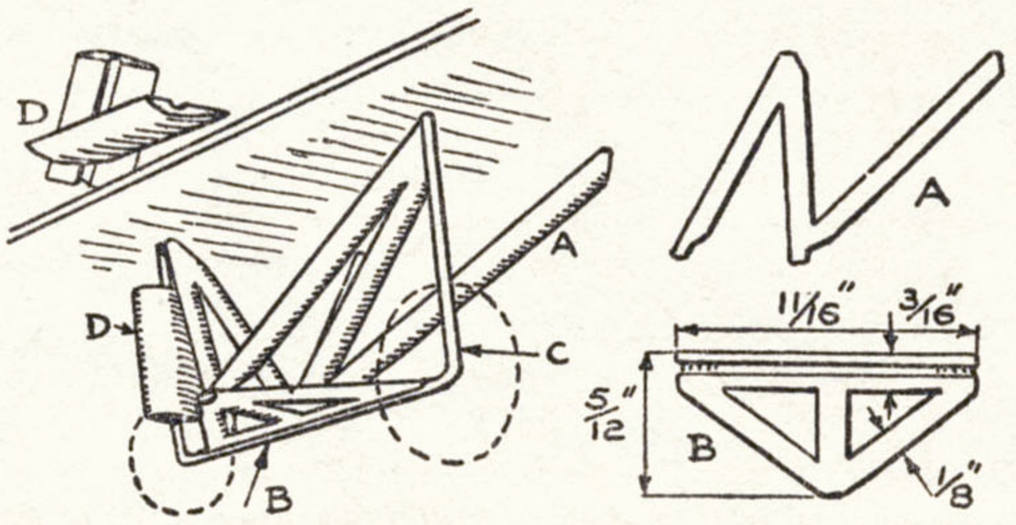
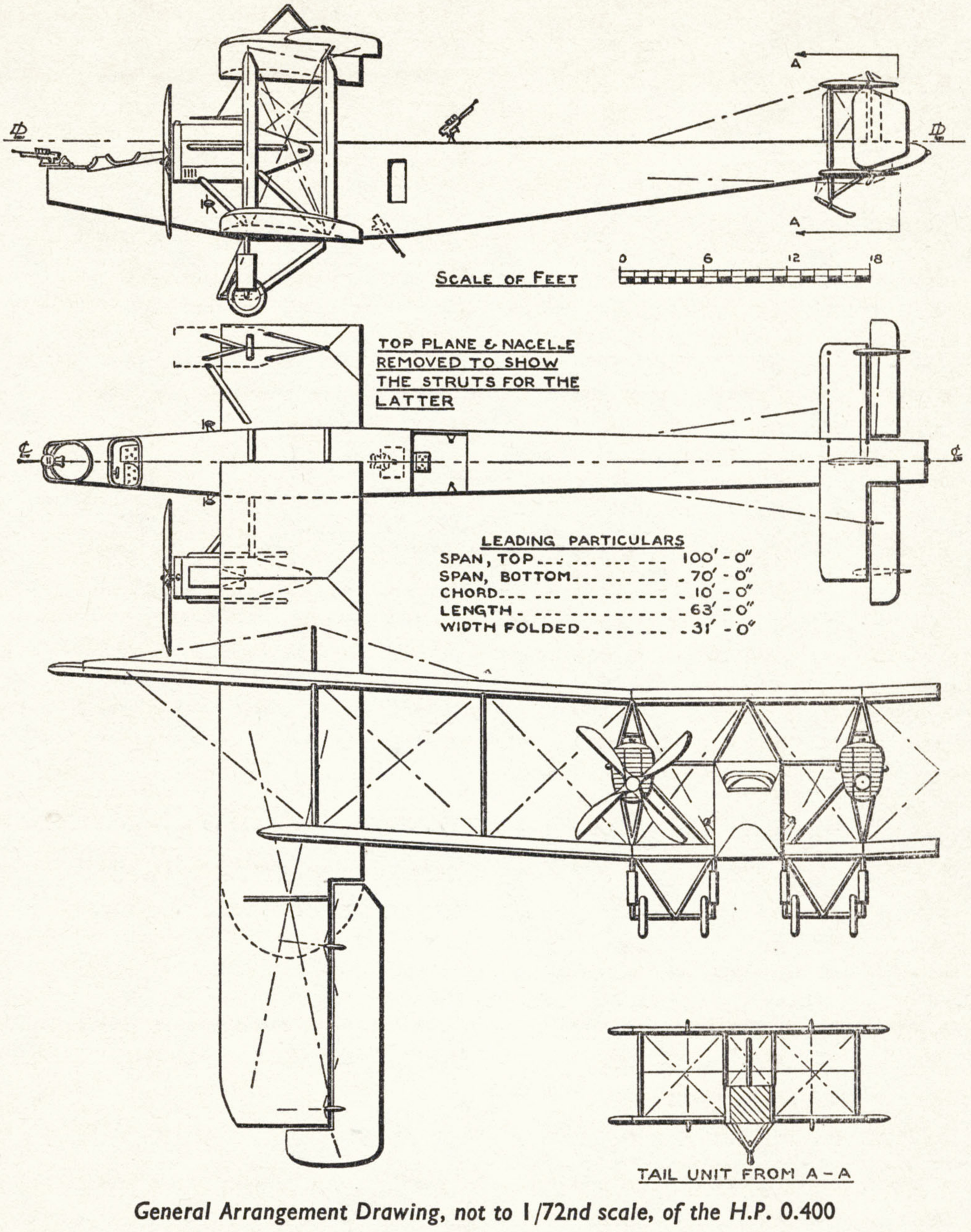


Fig. 5.—Engine nacelle details, showing paper-faired inverted "vee" struts and fibre struts

THE HANDLEY PAGE 0.400 NIGHT BOMBER



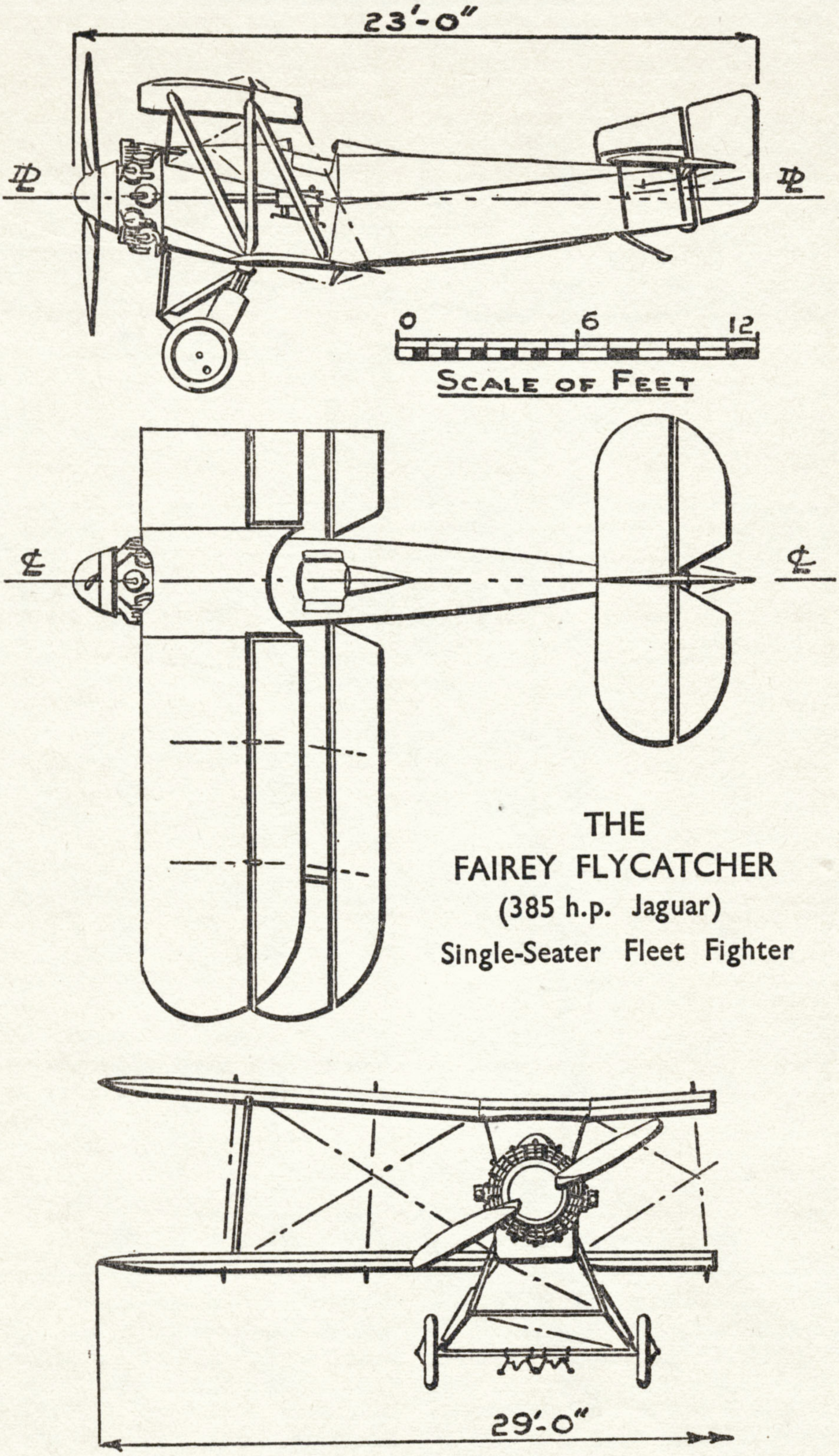
General Arrangement Drawing, not to 1/72nd scale, of the H.P. 0.400

necessary adjustments are made and the whole is finally glued together.

The details of the tail-skid structure are shown in the drawing, and all that need be said is that it is a built-up wire pyramid with a wire skid.

Final details are now added. The inverted " vee " kingposts over the outer interplane struts are made from wire without paper fairings. The operating posts for the ailerons are made from thin pins pushed through the top plane with their heads and points cut off. Airscrews, Lewis guns and mountings (the construction of which has been

(*Continued on page* 189)



THE FAIREY FLYCATCHER

(385 h.p. Jaguar)

Single-Seater Fleet Fighter

These plans, drawn to a 1/72nd scale, provide all essential data for building an accurate scale model

dealt with in previous articles) are fitted, and the model is ready for painting. After painting, the bracing and control wires—roughly sixty if there are not too many omissions—are cut to length from florists' wire and neatly glued in place.

Colour Scheme

THE Type 0.400 was usually painted dark green all over. Cockades were carried on upper and lower surfaces of the *top plane only* and on the sides of the fuselage. The rudders were sometimes painted in their entirety with red, white and blue stripes, but more commonly carried a small square ($\frac{3}{8} \times \frac{3}{8}$ in. on the model) painted on the outboard surfaces, the rest being green. The machine number was usually painted in white on the rudder and/or on the extreme rear of the fuselage aft of the tail plane. The airscrew blades were usually grey and the bosses mahogany coloured. The tyres should be painted a greyish colour.

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THE FAIREY FLYCATCHER

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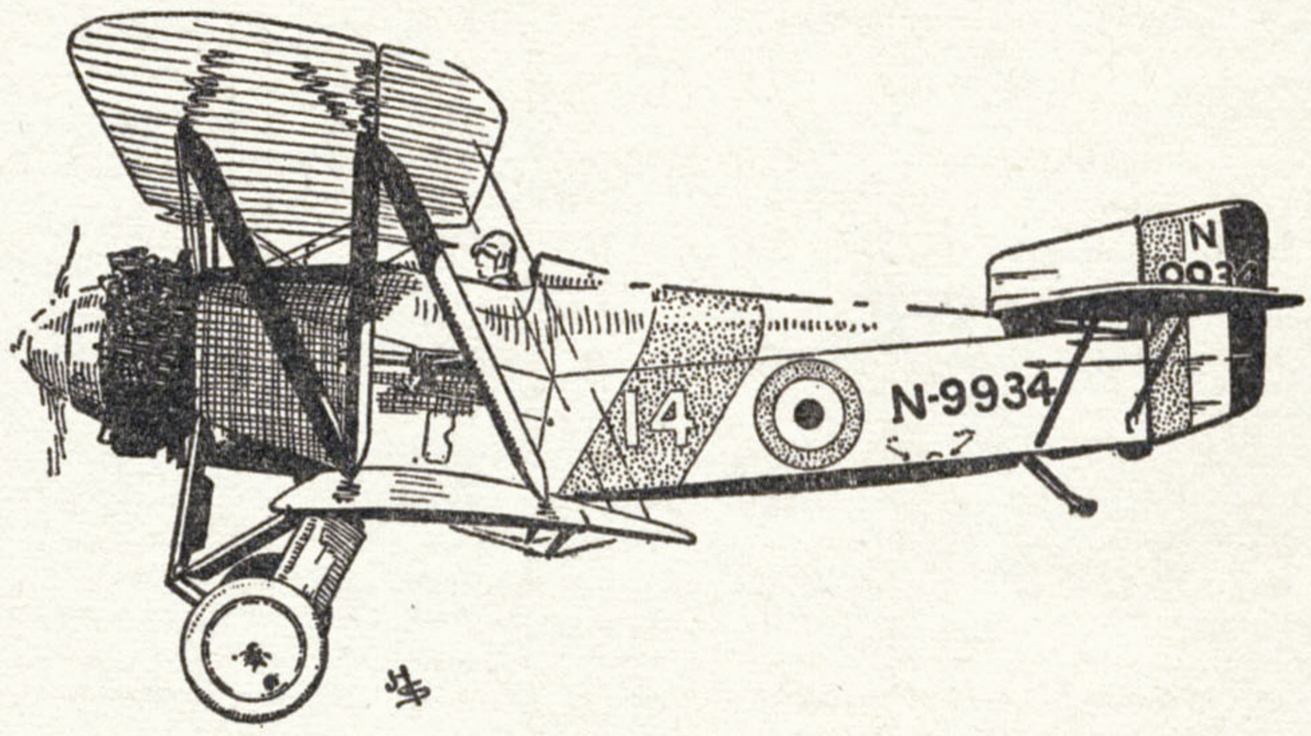

A Fairey Flycatcher with F.A.A. markings

BEFORE the advent of the Nimrod, the Fairey Flycatcher was the standard single-seater fighter of the Fleet Air Arm. It was noted for its extreme strength and manœuvrability, being considered a very pleasant aeroplane for aerobatics.

The Flycatcher was built in units which could be dismantled and stowed in the limited space on board an aircraft carrier. The main planes were fitted with trailing-edge flaps—these extended along the whole span of both planes and served the dual purposes of landing flaps and ailerons. An alternative amphibian float undercarriage was available. The armament consisted of two Vickers' guns carried in mountings on each side of the fuselage.

In the F.A.A., the Flycatcher was fitted with the 385 h.p. Armstrong Siddeley Jaguar engine. Alternatively, the Bristol Jupiter could be installed. The performance figures with the Jaguar were :—

Loaded weight . . .	3,028 lb.
Max. speed, sea level . .	134.5 m.p.h.
Max. speed, 10,000 feet . .	131.5 m.p.h.
Landing speed . . .	55 m.p.h.
Climb to 10,000 feet . .	8 min. 38 sec.
Ceiling	22,000 feet.

The Flycatcher was painted all silver with black engine and struts. Cockades were carried on planes and fuselage with stripes on the rudder. The machine number was painted on the sides of the fuselage and the rudder. A diagonal, coloured band indicated the carrier to which the machine belonged, *e.g.*, light blue for H.M.S. *Courageous*, and on this was painted the machine's F.A.A. number in white. This number was also painted in black beneath the lower planes. The coloured band and number shown in the accompanying sketch are of a machine from No. 405 Fleet Fighter Flight.

(NEXT MONTH : The Supermarine Walrus and the Westland Wagtail)

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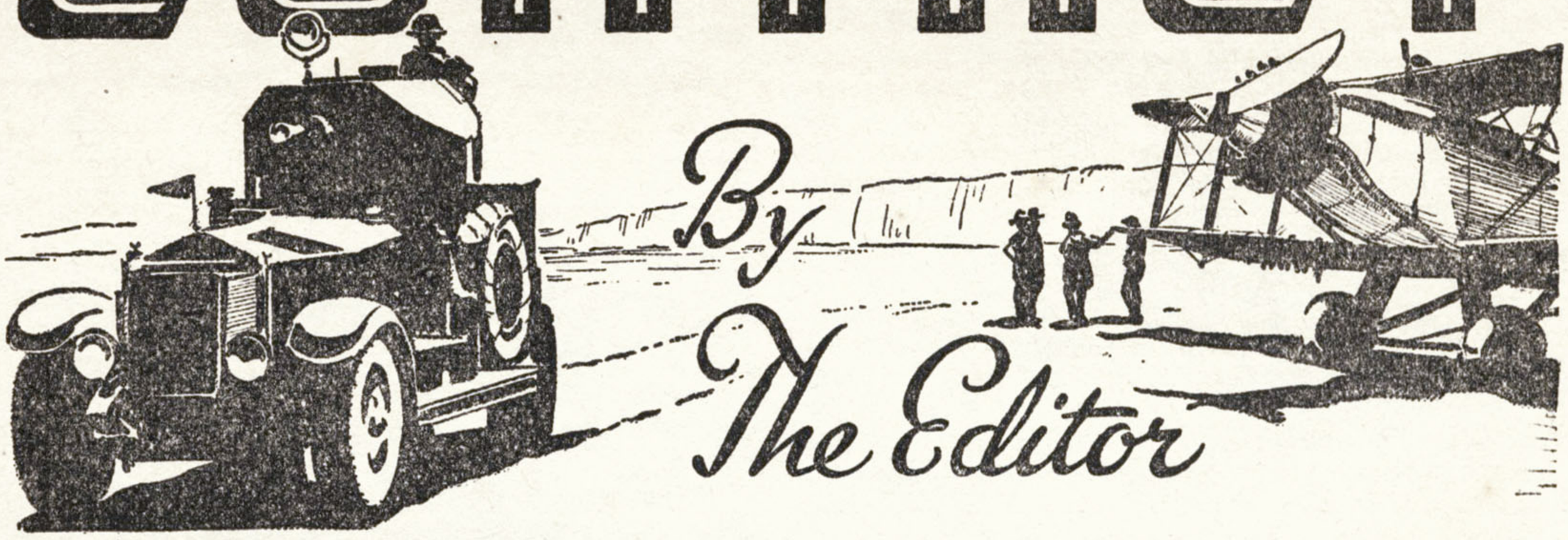

By The Editor

Editorial Offices : Tower House, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2

BALLOON-BARRAGES have been the subject of many questions addressed to our Information Department during the past weeks, and a surprisingly large number of enquirers seem to be unaware of the true purpose of these important units of our air defence system.

Typical of this misunderstanding is the following extract from a letter from Mr. A. J. Keynon, of Hampstead, N.W.8, who writes :

"I have seen it stated that the greatest height attainable by a modern balloon-barrage is under 20,000 feet. If this is true, what is the use of wasting money and time on all these gasbags when a present-day bomber, even when carrying a full load of bombs, has a ceiling of 30,000 feet and so can easily dodge the trap ?"

The answer, of course, is that the main object of a balloon-barrage is not to bring down the raiders by collision with the balloon cables but simply to force them to fly high. Without a balloon-barrage, raiders would be able to approach a city at any height between ground-level and their maximum ceiling, and the defenders, in order to intercept them, would be faced with the impossible task of searching a zone some 30,000 feet deep.

But by raising a balloon-barrage to a height of, say, 20,000 feet, this search zone is at once reduced to a depth of only about 10,000 feet—the distance between the top of the balloon-barrage and the bombers' ceiling—making the task of the patrolling fighters, as well as the work of the A.A. guns and searchlights, infinitely easier. Low-flying machine-gun attacks on civilian populations are also made impossible by balloon-barrages, and the higher the raiders can be forced to fly the less accurate will be their standard of bombing.

"Bagging" raiders through collision with the balloon cables is, therefore, only a secondary purpose of the barrage—though a high-speed bomber which did happen to fly into a cable would be a pretty certain write-off—particularly if there is any truth in the report that our scientists have devised a secret method of making a balloon cable as lethal on impact as a floating mine !

As to the ceiling of our present balloon-barrages, this is an official secret, but 25,000 feet is generally understood to be about the height at which we are aiming.

British and American Warplanes

A SALUTARY reminder of the difficulty of direct comparison between the military aircraft of different nations is contained in the following interesting letter from an American reader, Mr. Douglas H. Gilmour, of Brooklyn, New York :—

"In your November issue, under 'Contact,'" write Mr. Gilmour, "there appeared a letter from a reader making certain comparisons of British war 'planes with those of other nations. In reference to this I would like to point out that in only

a very few cases can fair comparisons be made, due to the different requirements that nature has forced each country to adopt.

"As an example, the Hawker Hurricane and the Seversky P.35 can be compared. The published top speeds are 327 and 300 respectively, while the rumoured top speeds are near 360 and 340 respectively. The Hurricane mounts eight guns, while the P.35 mounts only two. The difference lies in the range of the two craft, the Hurricane's is 800 miles while the P.35's is 3,000. This comparison may be followed up with any other types of similar service use.

"I have noticed that some British writers claim that the Boeing B.17's are worthless as a military type, which may be so in England but not here. The United States needs machines of this type for long range reconnaissance and bombing as well as a machine that can be flown non-stop to Panama or Hawaii in case of emergency. I do not mean to look down on British aircraft, in fact I admire a number of them, but rather I think comparisons should be made with more than just one factor in mind.

"I have been enjoying your magazine for over a year now, and have noticed several times that readers have asked for more War-time or more modern stories with a reduction in the number of the opposite type. I think that the present ratio of War-time to modern is ideal. Your special articles are also interesting, especially the recent one on the history of British fighters.

"There is one request I would like to make, that is the inclusion of War-time songs about which much is heard but to those of us who have grown up since the War mean nothing. In particular, I am interested in the words of this song, 'The Best Man has Gone before Us.'"

We would gladly print more War-time squadron songs—where printable—if we could only discover them, but they are becoming increasingly difficult to trace. We should welcome copies of any that may be known to our readers, and if anyone can help Reader Gilmour in his particular quest we should be pleased to forward letters to him.

A "Ground Strafer" of 1916

STARTLING news which, at the time, must have caused our Intelligence Service some sleepless nights, is contained in a page from the "Daily Mirror" of May 20th, 1916, recently sent to us by Mr. L. A. Lee of Southsea. Under the date line of "Paris, Friday," it is stated :

"On the Riga front there has been noted a German armoured aeroplane of a new type, of considerable size, painted entirely black, which can make a speed of 112 miles an hour.

"Its stability must be good, since it appears to disregard dangerous air currents and makes its appearance at various points on the front, no matter what the weather and wind may be. The new machine appears never to fly at a lower altitude than between 10,000 and 11,000 ft."

Ten thousand feet seems pretty high for an alleged "ground strafer"—even allowing for the layman's proverbial inability to judge the height of an aeroplane—and it would be interesting to know what this machine really was. Perhaps some of our air-war "experts" may be able to make something of the slender clues available.

Two other news paragraphs on the same page announce :

"Lieutenant Boehlke (*sic*) brought down his sixteenth enemy aeroplane south of Ripont," and

"Sub-Lieutenant Navarre brought down his tenth German aeroplane. The enemy machine fell and was smashed to pieces near Bolante, in the Argonne."

Navarre, then the uncontested aerial champion of France, was destined to score only one more victory before being shot down badly wounded and, thereafter, to meet a mysterious end. Boelcke's star, too, was soon to set, for five months later, with his score increased to 40, he met his death in a collision with one of his own staffelmates.

Full Marks for Accuracy

RUMOURED increase in the sales of a recent issue of AIR STORIES, as reported by Mr. J. Mawby, of Clacton-on-Sea :—

"I showed the story 'The Farm at B.J. 507,' which appeared in your December issue, to a Territorial Gunnery officer, who confirmed that all the 'signals' given in it were absolutely 'true to life'—he translated them all to me. He seemed so pleased to see his very job in a story that I believe he went off and bought a copy of AIR STORIES himself!"

Most readers write to us only when they find a mistake in AIR STORIES. The process in reverse makes much more pleasant reading.

News of Next Month

THE best story that G. M. Bowman has ever written appears in next month's issue. Called "Test Pilots are Tough," it is a war-flying adventure of unusual interest and well-sustained excitement. "Fighting Fare" makes a sensational reappearance in "Bristols for Two," by O. P. F. Landers, and another outstanding feature of the issue will be Hugh Standish's dramatic air story of Ireland during the time of "The Trouble."

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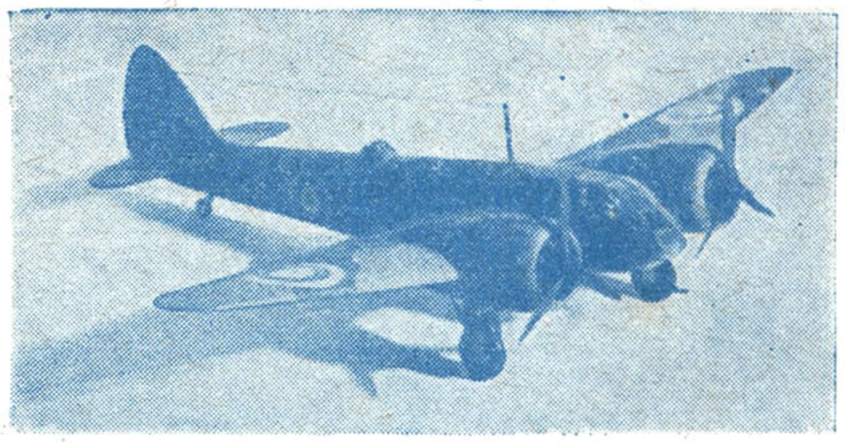

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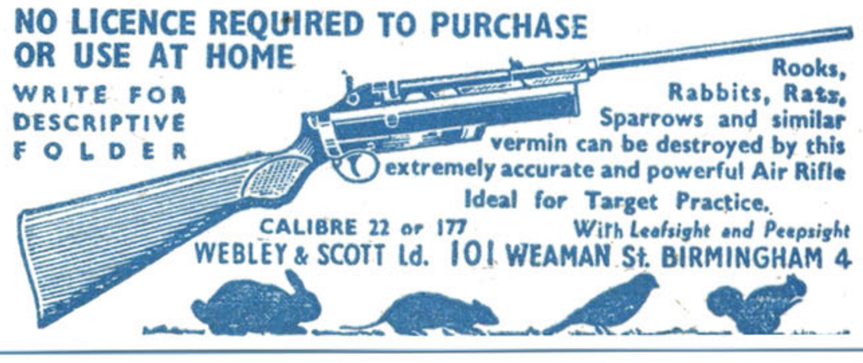

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