



THE WRIGHT BROTHERS.

"Dear Glenn, I hear you are going to France to fly with the human flyers of the earth for a great prize. I pinch myself to be sure that I am not dreaming. Have we really got that far? Has the world's old joke of the flying machine all of a sudden become one of the world's stirring realities? It looks to your wings, it's high, light easy and that way, so here's to success! Speed may be the Hammondport bird win!"

This was the opening paragraph of a letter handed to Glenn H. Curtiss before his departure for France, where he will represent the Aero Club of America in the contest for the International aviation prize at Rheims, August 28.

The letter was from an old boyhood friend, and while it was only one of a score expressing warmest interest in the contest, it seemed especially to impress Mr. Curtiss and his friends with the real significance of his journey to France.

"That tells the whole story," said Mr. Curtiss, reflectively. "An old joke has become a new reality, and the offering of this prize to the aviators of the world seems to put a sort of official stamp on the world's great enterprises. The next question is, 'Who's going to fly away with the cup?'" he asked, laughingly.

While all American aeronauts hope Mr. Curtiss will bring back the trophy they feel that it does not matter materially who gets it, because the great benefit that is to come from the international contest is not so much in the triumph of any single aviator, but to be given to aerial navigation in every country of the world.

For the first time the events at Rheims will bring together the most skilful aeronauts of all countries, and what they shall achieve, there will stand as official marks from which to measure during the next year. With representatives from nearly every nation in the arena these contests will be closely watched and a new and substantial interest everywhere will be aroused in aviation.

BIPLANE OR MONOPLANE.

To the world generally one of the most interesting features of the Rheims contest will be the battle for supremacy between the biplane and the monoplane. Biplanes will outnumber the monoplanes probably six to one, but the recent performances of M. Louis Bleriot and M. Hubert Latham have caused no little nervousness among either aviators.

In the contest for the international trophy, the principal event depends upon speed. There are prizes for height, duration, the carriage of passengers and other performances, but the aviator who flies twice around the ten kilometre course in the shortest time will carry away the international cup and with it the title of champion aviator of the world.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the contest for the international trophy has been so keenly followed by the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that the contest for the international trophy has been so keenly followed by the world.

When the programme for the Rheims carnival was formulated by the Aero Club of France, less than one year ago, no one supposed that the biplane type would stand a show of winning the big prize. At that time the monoplane was regarded as a doubtful experiment. M. Bleriot, it was known, had been at work on several models for about two years. He had made a few short flights and taken several tumblers, but the monoplane was not looked upon as a formidable rival of the biplane.

Then the only machines which had made conspicuous progress were the Wright aeroplane and those of the Voisin type, several of which had made very good flights in France. In fact, so little was expected from any other type of machine that the design of the international trophy was a then the development of heavier than air machines has been so rapid that it seems quite possible that the trophy may be won by a type of flyer practically unknown and unrecognized at the time the Rheims contests were organized.

It is the uncertainty as to the possible speed which the single plane machines are capable of making under pressure that is worrying all of the pilots of the double plane machines. Before leaving for France last week Glenn H. Curtiss declared that he had perfect confidence in his ability to defeat any of the Wright or Voisin competitors, but he was not so sure about the monoplane.

WILBUR WRIGHT'S RECORD.

With the exception of the government trials at Fort Myer recently when Orville Wright made forty-two and one-half miles an hour, there is no official record of flights on record. Unofficially it is known that Wilbur Wright and other pilots

abroad have attained speeds of from thirty-five to forty-five miles an hour.

Since Messrs. Bleriot and Latham flew to the front of the stage, less than one month ago, reports of their own speed have startled the biplanists. It was said that the monoplanes, with motor power, no greater than biplanes, have made fifty, fifty-five and in some instances nearly sixty miles an hour under ordinary conditions. If these reports are true, and if Messrs. Bleriot and Latham duplicate these performances at the contest of August 28, Mr. Curtiss and all other pilots of biplanes will realize that winning the international cup is likely to be a very difficult task.

Mr. Curtiss, however, believes that he will be better equipped for the contest than any other biplanist in the race. While the machine he will use will be assembled and tried for the first time after he reaches France, he expressed every confidence in its good behavior. It is an almost exact duplicate of the aeroplane with which he made recent flights at Mineola, but it will be equipped with an eight cylinder Curtiss motor, which he expects will give it a speed considerably better than fifty miles an hour. With a four cylinder motor the machine used at Mineola showed a capacity for at least forty-five miles an hour, so that with the eight cylinder motor he expects to be able to make a speed much greater than he believes they are capable of attaining.

That M. Bleriot, and his wonderful machine, which made the first flight across the English Channel, will attract a great deal of attention at the Rheims tournament there is little doubt, but it will be to give much assistance to the project if it shall be decided to undertake it.

Mr. A. Holland Forbes, acting president of the club, is one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the idea, and he has no doubt that the publicity which will be given to the project will be a big factor in the success of the contest. "It is my belief," said Mr. Forbes, "that once the project is started it will receive the enthusiastic support of all patriotic Americans in all parts of our country. There are several reasons why this seems to be the best project for such a carnival, and the United States place to hold it. In the first place, we have the money, the enterprise and the energy. We are in the front rank of invention, and a big contest of this sort on American soil would be a great help to the progress of the aeronautic world. We are in the front rank of invention, and a big contest of this sort on American soil would be a great help to the progress of the aeronautic world.

ALL AIR CRAFT ELIGIBLE.

"Where would you have the flying contest," he was asked, "and would you plan to include dirigible balloons in the carnival?"

"Of course, all types of aerial craft would be included," he said. "The heavier than air machines are bound to be developed together and the rivalry between the two types would be one of the interesting features of the great contest. So far as the flying machines are concerned, the Aero Club now has the ideal grounds in America, right out here on Long Island. We have a great contest with plenty of room also for buildings, such as club house, machine shops, and grand stands and residences from the city and easily reached. The dirigible balloons, contests could be started from there and proceed in any direction desired. If spherical balloons were included in the tournament they could start from there, under favorable conditions, or if necessary they could even be transferred to Pittsburg, North Adams, or some of the other New England balloon fields, or possibly from St. Louis or some western city. In order to get a longer race."

"But how would you arrange the financial end of the show?" he was asked.

"With aerial navigation progressing at its present rate," he replied, "it does not appear much difficulty in procuring ample financial support for such an undertaking. If it were organized in the right way, you see human flight is no longer an element of the fancy. Men who think about things seriously and men with large capital are becoming very keenly interested. They realize that navigation of the air is something to be reckoned with very soon.

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A. HOLLAND FORBES.

GLENN H. CURTISS.

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