

# The Wright Brothers in France

**A** CURIOUS change of feeling is noticeable in France with regard to the Wright Brothers. Their first experiments in artificial flight, carried out in the United States in 1903-1905, were received with almost universal doubt, writes a correspondent of the London Times. In the absence of any known result, the sceptics could not admit that a result so astonishing, as a flight of 38,956 metres in 38 min. 3 sec. had really been achieved on October 5, 1905. They expressed surprise that the aerial revolutions had not been photographed, and they pointed out that Springfield, the scene of the experiments, is quite close to a town of 48,000 inhabitants, who would seem to have been strangely indifferent to what was going on in their vicinity. On the other hand, it was urged by the few supporters of the Wrights that they had nothing to gain by imposing a scientific fraud on the world. Up to 1903 they had looked upon aviation as a sport, but since that time they had been desirous of getting some profits from it. Naturally, therefore, they kept the details of their machine secret until the time when it should be sold; for, as a combination of earlier inventions, it might not be easily patented, and they were justified in fearing that a brief inspection would enable it to be copied by an experienced aeronaut. Further, it was argued that the Wrights have a scientific past. They have been at work on the problem of flying since 1900, and no one doubts their gliding experiments. Their measurements of speed and of duration of flight were made with instruments of precision, by methods which their memoirs show were thoroughly scientific. If precise details are lacking, the blame must be laid on the practical nature of the American character, which exhibits little enthusiasm or curiosity in matters which cannot really be turned to business account. To the objection, Why did not they bring their invention before the Government? the reply was that a Government could not be expected to buy a machine which was incapable of being patented and of which it would be impossible to keep a monopoly. Finally, attention was directed to the testimony of the farmers of Springfield, to the inquiry carried out by the Scientific American, and to the statements of Mr. Octave Chanute, who pledged himself that his distinguished pupils are honorable men.

The discussion would still have been going on, if Mr. Wilbur Wright had not arrived in France on May 31 last, in order to carry out the programme arranged by M. Lazare Weiller. In consequence, the army of sceptics, with the exception of a few doubting Thomases, went over to the camp of the believers. Mr. Wright went on working on his aeroplane, with which he is experimenting in the course of this month in the presence of the Weiller committee. It can already be said that in a sense he has authenticated his results of 1905, by signing a contract which stipulates that he shall receive 500,000 francs for his patents, if in the course of one week he makes two mechanical flights of 50 kilometres each, returning to the point from which he started, the aeroplane to have two persons on board, though for one of them there may be substituted, at his discretion, a bag of sand of equal weight. These flights will be attempted over the racecourse at Mans. The ground there, so far from being flat and open, is of an undulating character, and is planted with trees, and it measures only 800 metres in length by 335 in breadth. Mr. Wright, however, is quite satisfied with it. His machine, he is confident, can fly in winds of 18 miles an hour when carrying two persons, and the apparatus is a good subject for valid patent, especially in regard to the maintenance of equilibrium, and if they are attacked they will know how to defend themselves. Mr. Wright has been represented as regarding the performances of French flying machines as mere child's play, but this, he says, is not the case, and he has followed with admiration the experiments of his French friends who manage to fly despite their rudimentary arrangements for securing stability.

The Wright Brothers believe that they have solved the problem of preserving equilibrium, which is the crux of the question of aviation. Their chief invention—the device which permits the wings of their machine to be inclined—gives them transverse stability and in addition facilitates the action of the vertical rudder by which they change their course. Their machine consists of two superposed surfaces. The motor is placed between these two surfaces, a little to the right of the central line, and drives, by chain transmission, two wooden propellers at the stern. The driver and passenger sit beside the motor, counterbalancing its weight. The rudders which alter the elevation are placed in front, and the steering rudder is at the back, all being manipulated by means of levers. The motor, which has four cylinders, does not differ materially from those commonly used for motor-cars, and weighs 75 kilograms. It develops 25 horse-power, and has a bore of 108 mm., with a stroke of 100 mm. It has no carburettor, and the petrol is introduced directly into the cylinder by a pump. In starting against the wind the aeroplane slides on rollers along rails 40m. long, and rises after a run of about 25m. In calm weather it is started by a sort of catapult arrangement.

Mr. Wright maintains that for an aeroplane to fly there is no need of an extraordinary light motor or of great motive power, and he is quite content with a motor of 25 horse-power, weighing three kilograms per horse-power. He and his brother no longer lie down on their machine, but have definitely adopted a sitting

position. In May last they tried their new arrangements at Kill Devil, in North Carolina, near Kitty Hawk, where they made their gliding experiments in 1900-3. These last trials were misrepresented by the American press, which all through has spread the most absurd tales about their doings, and Mr. Wright de-

Mr. Orville Wright, his younger brother, has not left the United States, where, in September, he is to bring before the official delegates of the American Government another machine, for which they will be paid £5,000, if it satisfies the conditions laid down. Its trials, which will be held at Fort Myers, in Virginia,

deduced, and if it does less than 36 miles it will be rejected altogether. If its motive power proves inadequate, the caution money of 10 per cent, or £500, that has been deposited, will not be returned. If, on the other hand, its speed is in excess of that required, the price is to be increased on a scale such that it will be

what the Wright Brothers can do. The conditions of their contracts are stiff, and yet they have been obliged to accept them. Why? Because the attitude they have adopted since 1903 has been unnecessarily mysterious. They have deceived themselves as to the intrinsic value of their invention, and, having made the great mistake of believing themselves considerably ahead of French experimenters, they declined some very advantageous offers. Further, they would have nothing to do with journalists and financiers, whence the Press has been unfavorable to them. They only thought of getting into relations with different Governments, to which they wrote, "Here is a machine that can fly 50 kilometres; it is yours for a million francs, payable after a decisive trial." But Governments distrust patents which it is easy to get round. They did not share the confidence of the Wright Brothers, and lent them only a moderate amount of attention, which was exchanged for neglect from the date of the memorable experiment of Santos Dumont on November 12, 1906. From that day the Wright flying machine lost in value. After Santos Dumont came Farman, Delagrange, Bleriot, Esnault-Pelterie, and others, who demonstrated over and over again, in full daylight, before enthusiastic crowds, that artificial flight is a realized fact.

It is thus the march of events that has obliged the Wright Brothers to abate their claims. But it is only fair to recognize that their activity stimulated the zeal of the French inventors, and attracted public attention to aviation. If their mistake has been prejudicial to themselves, to many it has brought good luck, notably to M. Louis Bleriot, who, on the 6th of this month, won the first moral victory over them by manoeuvring, at an elevation of 20 metres, in a monoplane flying machine perfectly balanced.

## THE CHURCH AND THE PRESS

"We do not hesitate to say that the duty of the Church to the Press has hitherto either been misunderstood altogether or flagrantly neglected," says the Guardian.

"It must be understood that when we use the word 'Church' in this connection we indicate those persons and organizations that are in the habit of going to the Press, and especially the Church Press, for assistance and publicity. The view which these ladies and gentlemen take of the relations between the two is precisely on all fours with Mr. Kipling's overture version of the relations between the British public and the private soldier in time of peace and in time of war."

"It's 'Tommy this' and 'Tommy that,' an' 'Tommy, fall be ind'; But it's 'Please to walk in front, sir!' when there's trouble in the wind."

"When Churchpeople or Church organizations want to obtain anything from the Church Press (and that is by every post), their communications are 'frequent and free'; when the Church Press desires any courtesy in return, it is far too often treated with neglect, and occasionally, we are sorry to say, with something worse than neglect. Every week we ourselves receive dozens of requests to print appeals for money, yet the same persons, or the same class of persons, who make these appeals, do not hesitate to accuse us of printing too many of those advertisements without which it would be impossible to conduct any newspaper."

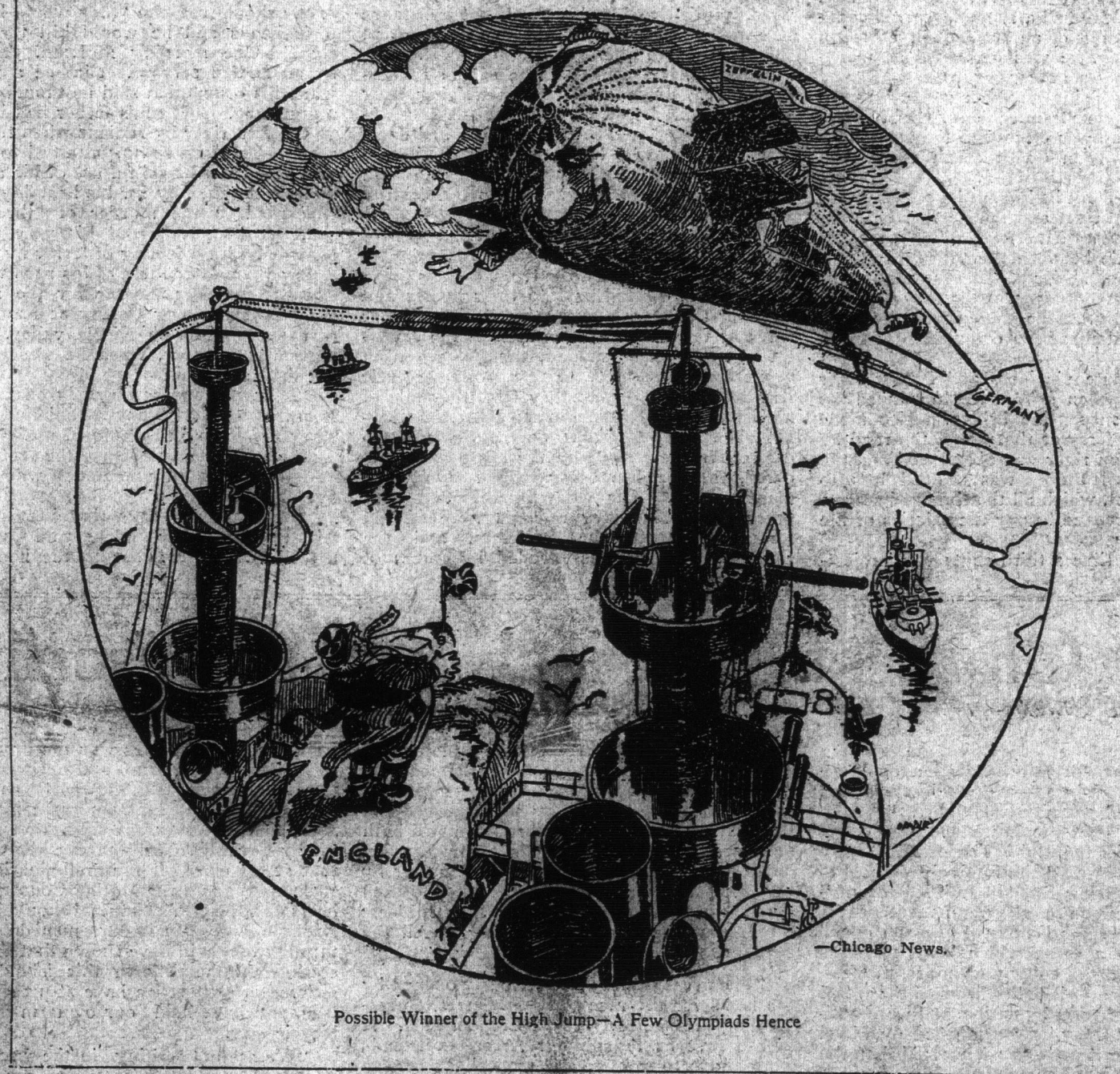
"We are moved to make these remarks by many recent instances of ineptitude in the treatment of Church newspapers by those responsible for the business arrangements of great organizations more or less directly connected with Anglicanism. Even the Pan-Anglican Congress, which, generally speaking, was managed skillfully and without friction, was not well served by its Press Department. We fear, it must be said, quite frankly, that where Church matters generally are concerned newspapers are not well treated. It is the general experience that information, tickets, and other necessities for the efficient reporting of news have to be extracted from the responsible persons at the point of the bayonet. The last minute is often too early for attending to these important details."

"It will perhaps hardly be believed that the official figures of the Thankoffering have not been communicated to the Guardian. We had to take them on trust from the daily newspapers."

"We may mention as another case in point that our representative's card of invitation to the opening service of the Winchester Pageant in Winchester Cathedral reached us two and a half hours before the moment at which, by a happy stroke of humor, he was begged to be in his place in the choir. For the pageant itself no cards whatever were sent. We regret, therefore, that beyond this reference no mention of the Winchester Pageant can appear in the Guardian. We mention these examples, not as the most flagrant, but as involving smaller blame to individuals than others much more remarkable."

"Unbusinesslike habits are indeed the bane of the Church of England in its external relations. If the Church were a corporate body we should be disposed to suggest that the traffic manager of one of the great railway companies or the administrator of some huge industrial concern should be tempted by the salary of a Lord Chancellor to become general manager of the temporal affairs of the Church of England. Failing such a possibility we would earnestly beg those who professionally or as volunteers are concerned in Church organizations to essay the much smaller task of setting their house in order so far as the Press is concerned."

## CARTOON OF THE WEEK



Possible Winner of the High Jump—A Few Olympiads Hence

plores the fanciful statements of the journalists of his native country, who have described him as manoeuvring at a height of 1,000 metres above sea-level. He declares emphatically that he has never covered a greater distance than 39 kilometres, nor risen to a greater height than 35 metres.

under the superintendence of the Signal Corps, include (1) a test of its average speed, five miles out and five miles home, and (2) a test of its power of continued flight for an hour at a speed of 40 miles an hour, two persons being carried. If it does less than 40 miles in the hour, the price paid will be re-

nearly doubled if the speed attains 60 miles an hour. The contract provides simply for the sale of the machine, and not for any licence under the patents or for any monopoly of manufacture.

It will soon be known—during the present month or in the opening days of August—

## Lord Rosebery's Memorable Soliloquy

**I**T is no disparagement of other able speeches made during the great debate in the House of Lords upon old-age pensions to say that Lord Rosebery's brief, but sombre and stately oration was an utterance fully worthy of the gravity of the occasion, writes the Telegraph. This address was of such a character that it might rather be called a memorable soliloquy, but it expressed the anxieties of every thinking man. We have never encouraged any illusions upon this subject.

Long ago we warned public opinion of what would happen if moderate men refused to rouse themselves in time and work as they had never worked before. When Mr. Asquith last year put aside a nest-egg for the policy of pensions, and laid down the principles upon which the scheme was to be framed—utterly ignoring the example of Germany, where the masses contribute the larger amount of the funds from which they benefit—it was clear that an epoch-making step had been taken, which nothing short of a violent agitation could reverse.

It was certain that the measure, as it left the Lower Chamber, with all its imperfections on its head, would be passed by the Peers. The reasons for the course were stated by Lord Rosebery with perfect lucidity. Constitutional usage, as strong as written law, has restricted the powers of the Peers upon matters of fi-

nance. They cannot amend the measure, and must take it or leave it as a whole. "A financial bill coming up with this practical unanimity from the House of Commons," said Lord Rosebery, "it may be within your lordship's prerogative to reject, but I am quite sure it is equally impolitic for you to do so." With no alternative scheme before the country, the Peers could not fling out the measure without appearing to reject the whole principle of old-age pensions, as well as a premature and hazardous method of carrying out that policy. The bill, for this reason, is as good as passed, and we are irrevocably committed to all the consequences it may involve.

From Lord Rosebery's impressive peroration, summing up the burden of his fears, we may well take two questions, which well express the doubts which have been revolved in every thoughtful and impartial mind. More searching, we had almost said solemn, inquiries were never addressed to a State. Are we not "dealing a blow at the Empire which may be almost mortal?" Are we not "embarrassing and encumbering our finances to a degree which no man living, however young he may be, will see the end or the limit of?" These are the questions. They cannot be too often considered, and we may think of them many times in after years.

Lord Rosebery points out that every policy of this kind plays a continuous part in all elec-

tioning, and progresses and swells upon the principal of the rolling snowball. Take the case of national pensions in the United States. They are granted, not for the maintenance of the aged in general, but as the special reward of military services. Yet they have risen to a colossal sum, and remain a permanent burden upon the American people.

Lord Rosebery mentioned the familiar case of the Australian Commonwealth. The other day the Federal Legislature of that continent extended its old-age pension system. The weekly amount was raised to ten shillings per head. The age limit was knocked down to sixty-five. And these sweeping changes were carried out in the course of twenty-four hours. If a similar process in this country should come to an equal result, the cost would be anything from fifty millions to sixty millions a year.

A beautiful young girl and her mother were discussing the eternal marriage question.

"Well, there's Charles Adams," murmured the mother, thoughtfully, after a long pause.

"Charles Adams?" sneered the girl. "He is old, he is ugly, he is mean, he is a coward, Charles Adams! Why, he has nothing in the world to recommend him except his wealth."

"You forget his heart disease," said the mother softly.—Sphere.

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