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2,000 FEET UP, AND 100 MILES AN HOUR.

BY THE FIRST WESTERN SCOT TO FLY.

I've been asked what was the most astonishing feature of one's first flight.

Well, perhaps the fact that I personally was not *more* astonished. I quite expected that it would have made a tremendous impression on me; that I should have experienced new sensations. I'm rather disappointed to find that I have accepted it in such a matter-of-fact way; because it has left *no* outstanding memory. After all thousands of flights are made every week in Europe nowadays, and this was only one of the thousands.

Then again I was really surprised to find that I never was a little bit scared.

I went up with a very experienced pilot and on a very powerful twelve-cylinder biplane, having a machine gun mounted in the observer's "cubby hole." I liked the look of the pilot and I liked the look of the machine.

I thought to myself, "Well, if you do begin and feel nervous, for the Lord's sake don't show it—you've got 'Canada' on your shoulder badges!"

Before starting I remarked that I thought a glengarry would stick on in any wind, but was told "Not in the wind you're going to get into." So I borrowed a leather coat, gloves and a flying-man's leather skull cap—and I'm glad I did, for it was *very* cold up there.

The speedometer in front of me registered, most of the time, between 90 and 100 miles per hour. This speed, together with the draft made by the propellor blades, directly in front of one, must have made a good 150-mile breeze. No, even a hardened old salt couldn't call it a "breeze"—tornado rather. Put your head round the corner of the little celluloid screen and you were nearly choked by the wind pressure. I've never experienced anything on earth like it. The roar of the wind and the roar of the engine obliterated a good many other sensations. There was no question of talking. This fact may have something to do with the feeling of isolation—detachment—one has when up. One is not of the world at all! You feel a contempt for poor mortals who have to walk. You are up above them, thousands of feet above them, and the higher you go the more superior you feel.

Have you ever ridden a thoroughbred at a hard gallop, against a strong wind, on the prairie, with nothing at all in sight—nothing to stop you, no horses, no people, no fences? You want to stand on the stirrups and shout! That's a little bit like it. Detachment, isolation, speed, safety. Oh, yes, I felt quite safe.

Another feature—and I've read this in other people's accounts—is that one does not seem to be going up or down when climbing or vol-planing, but simply that the earth falls or else comes up and meets one. The machine seems absolutely stable all the time; it's the world that moves.

Cruising along one meets a pocket of still air every now and then, though this is more noticeable near the earth than when well up. For a moment the aeroplane seems to have lost her *grip* of the air; there is a slight pause and

a perceptible drop—not at all pleasant—and then the next moment the planes *bite* once more. At the lower altitudes, too, there is a certain amount of rocking.

I can't say I like the banking on a sharp turn—that is probably the least pleasant feeling of all. You start to come round and the wings tilt and tilt and tilt—till you think she is bound to side-slip, and then you heave a big sigh of relief when the pilot brings her to an even keel once more. The machine seems to be turning over slowly, because when you look at the lower wing it is at an alarming angle and the foreshortening makes it appear half its former size.

From 2,000 feet up the landscape looks just like the photos one sees of it (it would do that, wouldn't it?). All the roads and railways in their lines; the fields in nice orderly squares and triangles; houses with red roofs stand out prominently. Individual human beings are mere specks.

Motor cars become diminutive little beetles crawling slowly along a patch of yellow tape. There are no hills or hollows; everything seems to be in the same plane. One looks around one and for fifty miles in all directions is the chess board of England, spread out like a painted saucer. Green fades to mauve and purple in the distance.

A marvellous "made" country—curry-combed, groomed, and polished for hundreds of years past.

And the vol-plané coming down! *That's* worth while! It's the best part of the whole show

The ground seems to rush up and meet one, till just at the last moment when the pilot straightens her out, and one runs parallel to it, then a slight bump and a rebound, a smaller bump and a lesser rebound, and so on till at last one finds oneself running along the ground, to be brought to rest at the very same spot one started at.

All of which probably sound very stupid to a flying man, but are the impressions of a tyro.

C. S.

WHEN I KICK IN.

When I kick in—
(God knows how it may come)
There in the muck of some shell-shattered plain,
After long hours of misery in the rain.
There'll be no tuck and roll of muffled drum
When I kick in.

When I kick in—
Just think the best of me.
Think of the good things I had hoped to do,
Forgetting those I'd done were all too few.
Some part lives on. Just *plant* the rest of me
When I kick in.

When I kick in
Just send along a line
To tell *Her* and *The Boy* I needed them—
That all my love my heart conceded them,
And I am waiting where the Great Suns shine
When I kick in.

C. I. A.