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The Attempt of C-5 to Cross the Atlantic.

After all, the crossing of the Atlantic is not a simple feat. In fact, it is far more difficult than had been anticipated. Four and a half years of forced aviation development due to the keen rivalry between warring powers, had led aviation men and the world at large to believe the trans-Atlantic flight well within the possibilities of present-day machines. One machine after another was featured as quite suitable for the long journey. Yet the efforts of the past few weeks have served to bring home to everyone the inherent weakness and uncertainty of the airplane and the dirigible, as developed in long-distance flights and in adverse weather. Indeed, there is no immediate danger of the steamship lines going out of business!

As our last issue went to press, we learned of the unfortunate disaster which put the U. S. Navy dirigible C-5 out of the contest. This small dirigible, measuring under 200 feet in length, had made the flight from Montauk Point, Long Island, to Newfoundland in good time and shape. Arrangements were completed for the start of the trans-Atlantic flight. Everything seemed in favor of the dirigible. As luck would have it, however, a storm came up and the dirigible was torn away from its moorings and blown out to sea. Since then no trace of the dirigible has been found.

From an authentic source we learn that the C-5 left Montauk Point with about 525 gallons of fuel. The passage to the "jumping-off" place at Newfoundland required but 200 gallons, and there still remained somewhat in excess of 300 gallons in the tanks. When the C-5 reached Newfoundland there was but a steady, favorable wind blowing in the right direction, and the crew were anxious to take advantage of it. But their orders were to land; and they landed and anchored their dirigible in the open. If the dirigible had pushed on across the Atlantic, it would very likely have made the crossing at an exceptional speed.

Everything performed to perfection in the C-5. The Union engines were at no time pushed to the utmost. An interesting feature of the Montauk-Newfoundland flight was the burning of surplus hydrogen in the engines. Instead of releasing the hydrogen into the atmosphere, it was introduced in the engines together with the re-

quired amount of air. This procedure resulted in considerable economy of fuel.

As for navigational difficulties, it is learned that the radio direction finder served to good stead. On more than one occasion the radio operator came to the rescue of the navigation officers and told them the position of the dirigible. But owing to the fact that the directional wireless only gives the line of a station sending signals by noting its position on that line, the C-5 was "lost" for a few hours toward the end of its flight. However, under regular conditions the directional wireless has proved of considerable aid in aerial navigation. The operator determines the position of the sending station by noting the intensity of the signals. After he determines the line of the signals, he has merely to note whether the signals grow louder or weaker to determine whether he is approaching or receding from the station.

As for the disaster which befell the C-5, it is said to have been absolutely unavoidable. The wind was blowing at a high velocity and most lustily. One after another of the heavy anchoring ropes and steel cables were snapped, as the strain came on one after another as a result of the changing winds. Finally, when it was evident that the big gas bag would be blown away, the rip cord was pulled by the last man aboard the dirigible. It broke just short of the part engaging with the gas-bag patch. And just as the bag started on its wild journey, carrying the dangling car below it, the last man aboard jumped some twenty feet to the ground.

A dirigible, unlike an airplane, is safer in the air than it is on the ground. For in the air it rides with the wind and is not subjected to great strains, whereas on the ground it is securely tied and under the blows of the wind is subjected to severe strains. Had there been a sled to receive the C-5, the accident would not have happened. Again, if the dirigible had been tied out to a mooring tower, as the British have done with their small dirigibles, the wind would have caused little if any damage. So all in all the disaster serves once more to indicate the vulnerability of the dirigible on the ground, and the necessity of mooring towers or housing facilities. —Scientific American.

A Notable Detective.

Not many days ago there died in Denver, Colorado, a man of whom the present generation never heard, but who was perhaps one of the most noted men living in the United States a half century ago. James McParlan was a young man in 1873 and a remarkably active member of the Pinkerton Detective Agency. About that time and for some years previous there had been a flourishing murder and loot society among the miners of Pennsylvania with the head centre at Pottsville. This combination of predatory gentlemen was known as the "Molly Maguires." They murdered objectionable foremen and managers, they caused the frequent disappearance of miners whom they disliked, they robbed paymasters, burned office buildings, are said even to have assassinated women, and kept the whole region in terror, so that no man dared to speak or raise hand against them. Young McParlan became obsessed with the determination to wipe out this abominable banditry and free the State from the disgrace of their presence. Possessed of a courage which nothing daunted and gifted with a keen mind, he set out for Pottsville one morning in October, 1873. His mission was known to just two people, Alan Pinkerton, head of the Detective Agency, and President Groves, of a coal company. No time was lost in cultivating the friendship of the leaders of the "Mollys," and at length he was accepted as a full member of the terrible organization, his assumed name being Jim McKenna. Winning the complete confidence of the leaders, he was let into every secret, every move, his advice being sought on all occasions. At the momentary risk of his life he managed to send code messages to the detective headquarters in Philadelphia every night. And so the net was woven. When all was ready something like two hundred men suddenly found themselves under arrest and were herded into the Pottsville Court House charged with every crime in the decalogue, among them being "Jim McKenna." After the opening proceedings Jas. McParlan was called to the stand. It is Jim McKenna, one of our crowd," exclaimed one of the prisoners. But it was James McParlan all right, and to the consternation of the "Mollys," he brought forth a mass of testimony which paralyzed all defence, the deeds of murder and other forms of violence proven being almost countless. Seventy of the culprits were found guilty and twelve suffered the supreme penalty. Since that time the coal mining regions of Pennsylvania have been

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