

MY AEROPLANE ADVENTURES

By J. ARMSTRONG DREXEL

VI.—When a Man Takes to Flying

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WHEN a man takes to flying he enters upon a career which is the most troublesome and yet the most fascinating that has ever been opened up for human beings. He invades a realm for which nature never intended him. All of his instincts teach him that to ascend high above the earth is to court death and that to trust himself to so flimsy and so breakable a thing as an aeroplane is to go to the utter extreme of recklessness and daring. My admiration is unbounded for those first men who actually rose off the ground in their crude heavier than air machines and defied nature with their new found toy. Each of us who has followed has had to prove his nerve and his skill, but we know when we start to learn that the machines we trust ourselves to are right, that they will fly if properly handled and that there is no very great secret about it all because it has been done before

a circle to the left, and almost before I knew it I was back at my starting place and had stopped the engine.

Then Grahame-White explained to me that a Bleriot always has a tendency to steer to the left when it is running along the ground. This is due to the downward thrust of the propeller and the greater effect of the air pressure on one side than another. After being instructed to steer with my foot lever until I got going at full speed I started off again. This time at the first sign of a pull toward the left I thrust out my right foot and headed her the other way. Once more I had to do this, and then I attained full speed and was able to keep on in a straight line down the course.

Feeling with the utmost confidence that the tying of the wheel would make it impossible for me to rise from the ground, I had not the slightest nervousness as to the outcome of my journey, and I thoroughly enjoyed my dash down that mile of level earth at a rate of about thirty or thirty-five miles an hour. But again I was destined to a great surprise—a surprise

had been expected to do to come down, and a few moments thereafter I landed as lightly as a bird, feeling that my first flight had indeed been a triumph unshared in any way and entirely disproving the discouraging things I had heard about the difficulties of learning to fly.

I landed with the wind and going at a speed well up between fifty and sixty miles an hour, and not twenty feet from where I touched the ground was a high wall. Into this I crashed at full speed and felt a sudden jar and heard the loud noises of splintering wood all about me—so loud indeed that I felt that the heavens were tumbling about my ears. Then I felt another jar as I fell to the earth, as when I had recovered my senses I silently to examine the wreck I found that there was not much left of the seat and me. For the seat I no very high regard, but I was mighty glad and grateful to find that I was able to get up and walk about with only a score or so of sore spots distributed over my body.

I must have been an awful sight to behold. From the very beginning of my flight, unaccustomed as I was to hurtling at such a rate through the air, the wind had lashed my eyes as though with whiplords, and my eyeballs had become sore and inflamed. The oil from the engine had been dashed back on to my face, and there it had mingled in grimy brotherhood with the water that streamed from my eyes under the lashing of the wind.

It took me a long while to get used to this pain caused in the eyes by the rushing air, and during the next few weeks when I began flying with the Gnome engine I got a double dose of lubricating oil in my hair, all over my face and down my neck.

I flew with the first Gnome engine ever put upon the market. It was a short time after I had taken my initial lessons from Grahame-White and when I was in the school run by Bleriot himself at Pau.

It was a vastly different matter to start a flight with this new motor. Instead of having an easy run along the ground and lifting at a speed of about thirty miles an hour, as I had done with Grahame-White's Anzani, I now found myself rushing along at nearly fifty miles an hour almost as soon as the mechanics let go of the machine. Here my poor eyes got a lashing which I shall never forget and which daily nearly blinded me until I became accustomed to flying at this tremendous speed.

I Go In For High Flying.

From the very first the one phase of aviation that held a really powerful fascination for me was altitude climbing. No sooner had I tried my fledgeling wings than I looked longingly into the upper air and wanted to climb as far as my engine would carry me.

On the third day of my practice at the Bleriot school with the Gnome motor I decided to take affairs into my own hands, and, disregarding all the advice that had been given me, I headed the machine upward and climbed close to a thousand feet, when suddenly, one after the other, three of my cylinders went bad, and I was forced to coast down to the ground again. It was the result of some minor defect in the new engine, and when it was repaired I took my equipment with me to my place at Beaulieu, in England, there to practice a bit and then try for my certificate, or aviator's license.

I became proficient in a remarkably short time. When I felt that I could pass inspection I had the officials of the English Aero club appoint a day when I should try for my certificate. An official came up to wish me good luck just before my mechanics started the propeller, and I asked:

"What is the English height record?"

"Paulhan has it," he replied. "It is 977 feet."

"Well," I said as I turned away, "I am going to try to beat that."

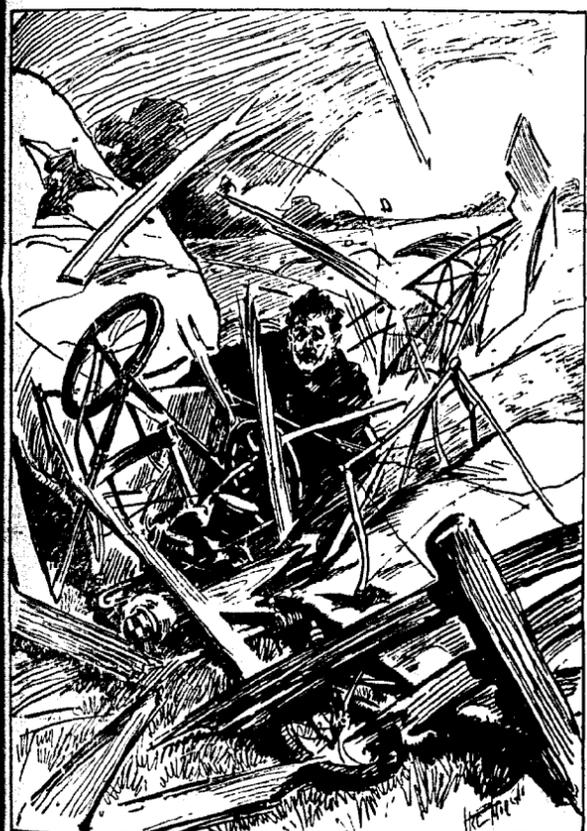
I started off in wide circles, and the first two times I passed over the heads of the officials I saw one of them wave a red flag, the signal for a naval officer with a sextant to take my height. Higher and higher I went, but I was surprised not to see the flag wave after that, and I came to earth again.

"How much did I do?" I asked the navy officer.

"Ten hundred and forty feet," he replied. "You have broken the English altitude record, and I believe you went twice as high as that, but unfortunately the man who was to signal me with the flag got mixed up somehow, and I only took your height on your first and second circles."

This love of altitude work has been my constant passion ever since. Merely to get into an aeroplane and fly no longer has any fascination for me. I want to climb. I want to keep going up until I am sure that I am higher than any man has ever been before in a heavier than air machine, and, though not long ago I almost determined to give up aeroplane work, I now feel the desire growing stronger upon me, and it would not surprise me if I tried for another record soon.

Eternal practice and unflinching patience are necessary when the average man takes to flying. Day after day he must go out "grass cutting" as they say at Mineola when the novices roll along the ground or take only short, low jumps into the air. This is not exciting and it will seem to the would-be pilot that he is making slow progress, but, as a matter of fact, he is training his mind and his muscles to work in unison and by instinct, and the faculty alone is worth all the trouble it takes to acquire it once it is called into play in a bad spot high above the earth. It may not be needed very often, but like a gun in Texas, when it is needed it is needed badly.



I FELT THAT THE HEAVENS WERE TUMBLING ABOUT MY EARS.

and we need merely do as our predecessors did. But those first men dashed absolutely into the unknown.

Not long ago Captain Thomas S. Baldwin, the veteran balloonist and aviator, investigated the subject and as a result he declared that every beginner in aviation smashes up \$2,000 worth of property before he can get a certificate of competence, and one can easily imagine the risk to life and limb that is constantly run while these fledgeling flights are being made. In my own case when the mechanics let go of my machine for my first flight, it looked as though I were going to disprove this statement, but it was not many seconds thereafter before I showed that, if anything, Captain Baldwin's estimate of cost was altogether too low.

My First Lesson in Flying.

My first lesson was taken from Grahame-White at Pau. His Bleriot was equipped with an Anzani motor, for it was before the Gnome had been placed on the market, and it was probably fortunate for me that my machine did not have the greater horsepower developed by the later type of engine.

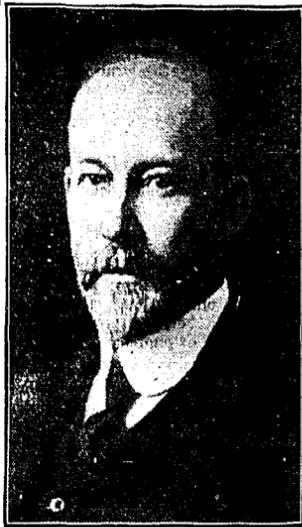
I learned as did most of the men who have made a success of the work. The controls were explained to me, and I made a thorough study of the theory which the machine operates. I knew what to do to make the machine go up or down or steer to right or left, and I knew how to warp the wings to preserve my balance—that is, when they were in theory, though I had, of course, never tried them in practice. "Now," said Grahame-White, "you are to take a run along the ground and see if you can steer the machine. The wheel is tied so that you cannot slip into the air, and all you are to do is to keep going straight and shut your engine when you come to the end of the field."

My engine was started, and when the propeller got going at a fair speed I gave the signal to the mechanics who were holding the machine to let me go, and I felt myself dash forward smoothly over the ground. I believed that all I had to do was to leave the machine pretty well alone and it would go in a straight line until I stopped the engine, but in this I was mistaken. Instead of going straight

An Unexpected Disaster. As I approached my starting place I

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES AT THE PRIMARIES

COUNTY AND LOCAL NOMINEES



CARLTON B. PIERCE
Candidate for Senator.

Carlton B. Pierce, the successful candidate at the primary, is a prominent lawyer and a resident of Cranford, has been a member of the State Legislature two terms, and is fully conversant with the wants of Union county. Mr. Pierce's platform stands for the abolition of grade crossings and equalization of taxes. Hon. Lloyd Thompson, the defeated candidate, is out for the election of Mr. Pierce, and expresses his views and bespeaks for him the votes of his constituents in another column.

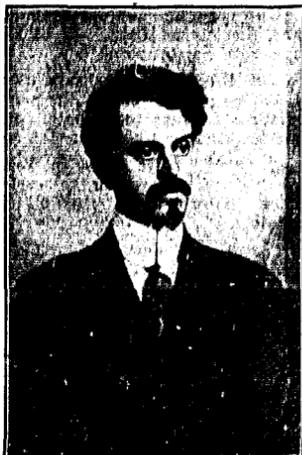


WILLIAM H. WRIGHT
Of Rahway, Republican Candidate for Sheriff.

Mr. Wright was born in Middletown, N. Y., in the year 1865, and removed to Rahway, N. J., when less than a year old, having resided there ever since. He has taken an active interest in politics ever since he was old enough to vote and has been connected with the Rahway postoffice for the past twenty-two years, having served as assistant postmaster for twelve years, previous to his acceptance of the position of under-Sheriff three years ago.

CHARLES M. AFFLECK
Candidate for Councilman in the First Ward.

He has been a life-long resident of this town and served a full term as Councilman for that ward. At the last election he was a candidate for Town Clerk on the Republican ticket, but was defeated by the present clerk. Mr. Affleck while on the Council served the town well as the chairman of the Road, Sewer and Water Committee, and gave a great deal of his time to study for the betterment of the town's roads. Mr. Affleck is a member of Pineside Council, R. A., and is an ardent worker in that organization.



E. S. F. RANDOLPH
Candidate for Councilman in the Second Ward on the Republican Ticket.

Mr. Randolph has been a resident of Westfield for the past four years, having moved here from Plainfield to become interested in the building business here and has been very successful in real estate operations. He has been instrumental in the erection of 25 houses since he first came here, to have always taken an interest in the town affairs. Mr. Randolph is a member of the Westfield Golf Club

and secretary of the Westfield Driving and Riding Club. He says that if elected he will do his best to serve the people of his ward and the town at large.



EMANUEL ECKEL
Candidate for Councilman on the Second Ward Democratic Ticket.

Mr. Eckel has been a resident of Westfield for the past twenty years, having moved here from Cranford, where he had lived for five years previous to his moving here. He was successful in the bakery business here and has now retired. Mr. Eckel stands for an economical administration with a motto of "Make Haste Slowly."

ARTHUR H. LACK
Candidate for Councilman from the Third Ward on the Republican Ticket.

Mr. Lack was born in Warren county, N. J., but had been a resident of Brookline before moving here, in 1906. He has always taken an interest in local politics and in 1908 was president of the Taft and Sherman Club of this town, and has served as a member of the local executive committee from his ward for a number of terms. Mr. Lack was for a number of years president of the Men's Club of the First Presbyterian church. He stands for an economic administration in conjunction with good judgment and fair treatment to all. Mr. Lack says if he is elected he will serve the people to the best of his ability.

WILLIAM J. TAYLOR
Civic League Candidate from the Third Ward.

Mr. Taylor was born in Westfield and has lived here all his life. He, therefore, needs no introduction to our citizens. He is a successful woolen merchant in New York, and we believe we have secured in him a man who, by reason of his experience and ability and the fact that his life and interests have been so long centered here, will appeal to your judgment and command your support in no uncertain way.—Civic League.

J. RAYMOND LAMBERT
Candidate for Councilman from the Third Ward on the Democratic Ticket.

J. Raymond Lambert, who will oppose A. H. Lack for councilman from the Third Ward, is prominent in the local Democratic affairs. He ran for Freeholder last year but was defeated by a small margin. Mr. Lambert will, if elected, do all he can to promote the interests of Westfield in an economical way.



JAMES G. CASEY
Candidate for Councilman from the Fourth Ward on the Republican Ticket.

Mr. Casey, who has been a member of the council for the past two years, is a successful druggist, coming here from Bayonne several years ago. He has been very faithful as a councilman, and his support at the recent primary election shows that his friends in the Fourth Ward want him for another term.

JOHN T. COX
Candidate for Councilman from the Fourth Ward on the Democratic Ticket.

Mr. Cox, who will oppose Mr. Casey for the membership of the Council from the Fourth Ward, has been a resident of this town for a number of years. He owns considerable property in that ward and stands for an economical administration.

T. T. HARKRADER
Civic League Candidate from the First Ward.

Mr. Harkrader has been a resident of Westfield for a number of years, is closely identified with the religious work of the town and was president of the Federation of Men's Clubs of the churches of Westfield last year. His early business associations were with the railroads in the middle west, and for more than a decade he has been connected with an important interest in New York. His entire training has naturally fitted him to take a quick and certain grasp of business affairs, and should along with sterling character and strong convictions, make him an efficient representative of the people's interests.

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