

Frenchmen at Last View the Long Expected Flight of the Aeroplane

WILBUR WRIGHT has proved to the satisfaction of hundreds of persons in France that the Wright brothers that they had an aeroplane capable of flying were founded on fact, but for a long time they were under suspicion. They merely kept on saying that their airplane had solved the flying problem, but they never showed the machine and they never discussed its make-up or plans. This reticence had the effect naturally of making the French and others say, "That's just a bluff."

The Wright, Wilbur and Orville, always have been very secretive about their invention. As is most generally known they took up the flying machine about eight years ago. As in the case with many folks all sorts of explanations, foolish and otherwise, were made of the way in which they happened to become interested. From the start, however, these Dayton bicycle manufacturers were keen for aeroplanes. They believed that the soaring and flying of birds could best be imitated by aeroplanes.

The manner in which birds kept on mile after mile after vessels at sea, merely moving their wings now and again, interested these brothers, as it has interested thousands of persons who are not wrapped up in aeroplanes. The brothers knew or learned that the birds occasionally flapped their wings in the midst of soaring because they had to mount another or different air current.

Air resistance is a harder thing to tackle than water resistance. There are more quirks and twists to the stream of air than there are in the Mississippi water. All these things made dirigible balloons flying hard, and it had killed absolutely aeroplanes. It was not until the time the Wright brothers began. The earlier aeroplanists had not been able to work out a scheme whereby the air resistance could be accommodated so that it would help the flying machine instead of dashing it to the ground.

The Wrights, too, believed that a man could make a much better wing than nature has done. The resistance of feathers would not be present in a wing made of silk. Furthermore, because a bird sometimes has to alight, nature has fixed the wings so that they may be folded. With an aeroplane that has nothing to do but fly there need be no device for collapsing the wings. They may stay extended all the time.

The earlier attempts at aeroplanes, Lillenthal's, Picher's, Langley's and Chanute's all lent something to the idea of the Wrights. They studied aeroplanes for years before they evolved the idea. It was in 1903 that after fraughting the machine of parallel box kites they got the idea of putting in a gasoline engine to run the machine and to force those changes of plane that would be inevitable in unfavorable windage.

They had a machine then that was merely a glider. It was picked up at either extremity by two men who ran with it for a distance until finally it caught the air and started off on its gliding. It was about this time that reports came east that there were two men in Ohio who had a flying machine that would fly. The Wright aeroplane had glided for a distance over ground, how great no one knew but the brothers and certain chosen friends.

That started the controversy over them, a controversy that never was even partly settled until last month, when the public flights began in France. The brothers made it a point that no unfriendly persons should see the aeroplanes, and many successful models were destroyed because the brothers didn't want to risk having any one steal their ideas.

They started off to France, which has been and is the foremost in aviation, and tried there to enlist funds for their enterprise. They apparently wanted the French government to take their aeroplanes mostly on trust, as a Frenchman remarked long afterward: "It was a good idea, for I miss every one would have been willing to subscribe. But this turns out to be an



WILBUR WRIGHT AS HE MANAGES THE MACHINE WHEN IN FLIGHT.

honest enterprise, so, of course, there was no eagerness to possess it for France."

It was their manner of conversation that aroused the antagonism of the Frenchmen who came in contact. Not all, but some, of the aviators frankly did not believe the Wrights and thought it all a huge scheme to get money for nothing. The Wrights kept close mouthed and let the discussion run on. They started experiments last year down in a spot in North Carolina, near a town called Kittyhawk. From this place day after day came reports of flights, accidents, successes and the like, all dictated by the Wright brothers to the reporters whose duties took them there. One result was a statement that the aeroplane had covered 24 1/2 miles in 28 minutes, in all ways a record for flights in that type of machine. That was in the early part of last summer.

Wilbur Wright went in June of last year to France and spent the rest of the time for more than a year in assembling his aeroplane and getting ready for trial flights. It was not until August 8 of this year that he really gave a public exhibition of his machine. On that occasion he went up into the air at Le Mans and cut a figure eight with his aeroplane to show its tractability and dirigibility. From then on he made all sorts of tests at Le Mans, from covering half a mile in 1 minute and 45 seconds on the first day of his tests to coming down on August 21 with the announcement that he had covered a section of his flight at the rate of fifty miles an hour. The

French have been convinced that Wright's device is the one that they have been seeking. It is understood that Wright wants \$50,000 for the idea and the French government may be unwilling to pay so much for it.

The Wright aeroplane is started into flight by a simple device. The machine is mounted on a monorail, a rope leading



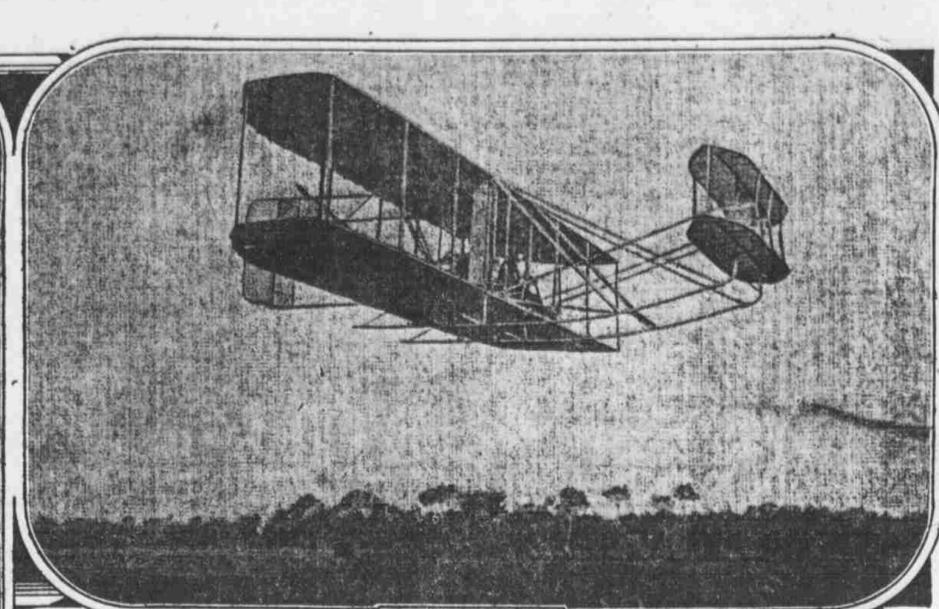
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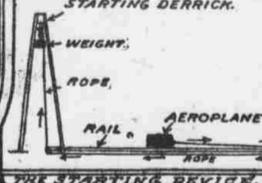
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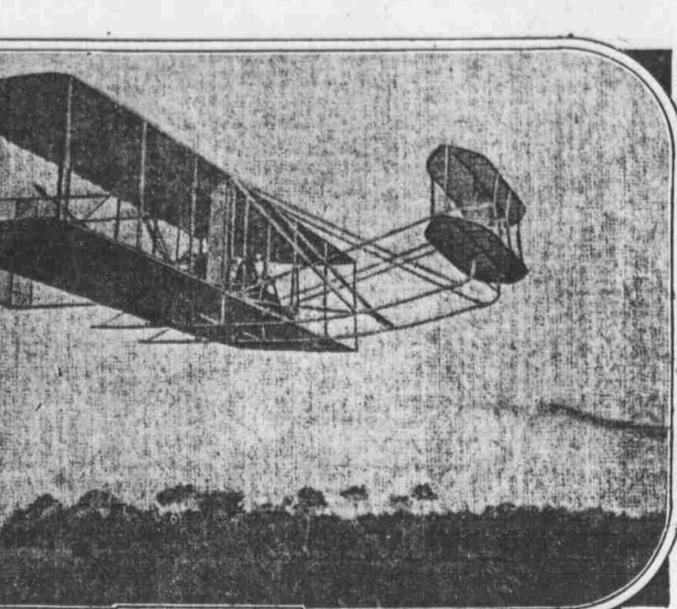
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A FLIGHT OF WRIGHT'S AEROPLANE.



WRIGHT'S AEROPLANE.



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entire attention would be taken up in managing the machine, it would be of little use as a war engine. In reply to this contention an earlier statement of the Wrights may be used.

They said they had counted on all that, but as children did not come naturally by walking, but had to be taught, they figured that the teaching an aeroplane had to get before he could manage his machine was no more unnatural. At any event, they were not through with their flying machine yet, and they purpose to make it more and more simple, until eventually they get it into the line of useful flying devices, with a commercial value outside that of war if possible.

While Wilbur Wright has been over in France trying to convince the government that his machine is the best Orville Wright has been trying at Fort Myer, Va., for the United States government prize of \$5,000 for certain speeds attained by a dirigible flying device. Just how this thing is to be worked out does not appear. The Wrights seemingly are determined to have their machine adopted by one of three governments. If report is true the Germans do not want it. However, there is a mild sort of competition between France and the United States.

Mozart Festival at Munich as Heard by Critics Kelly and Henderson

MUNICH, Aug. 19.—When you go to heaven arrange to go by way of Munich, for there is the "spirit" of music and harmony more prevalent than any place I know of. Somehow or other you seem to belong to the human family here; you are not a stranger. In the real life of the place there is a "one-of-ourselves" feeling which you can feel but cannot define. I love Munich and its people. But I must not begin to write about Munich and its people, for I would find difficulty in ending the epistle. Its beer and its thirst are famous the world over and each deservedly so, I am told on the very best and most credible authority. But Munich has other attractions than those which appeal to the physical well-being, such as its kitchen and cellar talents; it has well-dressed, well-developed men and women; it has an atmosphere which radiates from every street and avenue; it has a beauty infection which breaks out in bloom and blossom verdure and velvet, and in its places makes one think of the Garden of Eden materialized. Fountains, from which waters burst forth in glee and jubilation for sheer joy that they are alive, and living in Munich, are to be seen in many beautiful squares or plazas. Buildings which delight the eye stand erect with pride, having been built by the good and great architects who had reached Walthalla and sent down the best plans they knew. Everywhere you see books, paintings, pictures, music; whole libraries of works in English and French and German. Music shops and picture shops, each vying with the other in its abundance of treasures. Great galleries.

But it is of the opera I should speak. Never was a more fitting place dreamed of for the presentation of the works of his serene highness, the gracious Mozart. The Royal Residence theater is a beautiful little gem of an opera house, with only 215 seats on the ground floor, and four balconies, going completely round the house, each one containing eighty-five seats, and divided (each balcony) into boxes or "loges" containing five or six seats each. It is like a beautiful "play" house. The Mozart operas were given exquisitely with scenic effects which were alluring and entrancing. The conductor was Felix Mottl, and all in all, the opera was a masterpiece of the recitation on an old-fashioned harpsichord or spinet, were charming in their touch of "atmosphere." In the "Figaro's Hochzeit" (Marriage of Figaro) we heard for the first time Feinhalten in the part of the Count or Graf Almaviva; he is a good singer and a fine artist; we heard him also as Don Giovanni, and his work was wonderful in its every phase. In the part of Susanna we were captivated with the translucent voice and finished singing of Frau Rosetti. Frau Preussner-Masencorner chanted our souls with her lovely warm mezzo-soprano voice, round and full, rich and smooth, and utterly devoid of the dark and heavy quality to which most mezzo and contraltos are addicted. In "Don Giovanni" again Rosetti's beautiful voice ap-

pealed to us in the part of Zerlina; this production was a truly elaborate one and the ensemble was well balanced and artistically just. The singing of Frau Burckhardt and Fraulein Fassbender was good enough, but it had a fault which is very prevalent on all stages, namely the starting of the tone a little below its actual pitch, and then quickly getting up thereto. Some day teachers will arise who will make their students "listen" and "hear," instead of making them "place" and "put" tones; then we will have more singers like the charming Rosetti and the adorable Hempel. For it remained for a Berlin singer, Fraulein Hempel, who was "suspending" here, to completely destroy any possible lingering doubt as to the high beautiful art attainable by the German singers. It was in the lesser known opera "Cosi Fan Tutte," or the "School for Lovers." That title does not mean "the school for lovers," but "so do they all," or as we would say, "They're all alike." It is a beautiful little grand opera, 19 years old. This listening to these old and wondrously delicate operas is like looking through old chests in ancient castles and finding the lace and silks and brocades and satins and velvets with their sweet aroma of lavender and sandalwood. Why, one wonders, is not "Cosi Fan Tutte" produced in the United States? There are so many opportunities for good singing, for comedy and for scenic effect that it would surely strike favorably the American people. Miss Hempel was the leading soprano; she looked radiant in the opera also and is doing still better work this week at the larger house, where the great wizard of Bayreuth, Richard Wagner, is being worshipped and revered. I cannot speak temperately of the Mozart operas because they appealed to me in such an absolutely unexpected manner, due probably to the appropriate home or place of production, as well as to the fact that everyone was a true-lover of Mozart on the stage and in the audience.

At the Prinz Regenten theater we have been listening with great joy to the Wagner music dramas. We met Dr. Frank Crane at the first one. Dr. Crane lives and sings like Worcester, Mass. He read me a letter which he was sending home regarding his impression of Wagner and I persuaded him to let me copy it, so here it is:

"I have seen my first Wagner opera at the Prinz Regenten theater, 'The Mastersingers of Nuremberg,' and still live. How can I convey to you any notion of my experience? Only in general terms, I fear. Any detail would need to be overloaded with the immense overtones to make them seem striking to you. I have bathed in music. My spirit has been seized and carried away by tides of harmony, rivers and brooks and cataracts of melody, white

capped waves of sweet tones, that all bore me whither I know not—only into some strange seas I had never sailed before, where basted mountains boomed in purple glory, and love and nobleness and unearthly beauty combined to break my heart. It was not the story of the drama, exquisite as upon glass, and the streaming, insistent passion of the violins that tempted and tore one's soul like stens, and the occasional ripe round note of a wood horn rising like a moon upon the hushed orchestra, or the full loud blare of the brass, brave and bully as stamping horses and unafraid as the elephants of the maharajah, and the superb chorus, not ten or twenty, but 500—all with banners waving and all dressed in the strong medieval colors of their time and all singing, singing until it seemed like the 'sound of many waters' that John heard in heaven, a great white and gold cloud of song that wreathed and soared upward, while underneath one heard the breathless orchestra, the racing palpitating strings, the glad fanfare of trumpets and the thundering kettle-drums and flutes and piccolo whistling like flying birds before the brow of a storm cloud, and above all, O, sweet enough to a soul from purgatory, sounding clear and limpid above the whole ocean thunder of the chorus and instruments, the voice of Walter as he sang his prize song, and at last I knew what the Greeks sought to express when they made their myth of Orpheus, who with his lute made trees, and the mountain tops that freeze, bow their heads and then lay by.

"One usually associates weeping with some intellectual process, bad news, or dark anticipations; we cry over slain heroes or disappointed love, but he is not a master who can crush your intellect aside and address to you the essence straight to your soul, squeeze it like an orange and make you sob from very excess of beauty? So did Wagner to me. I pray forgiveness for what I've ever said or thought against him. I hope he knows in Heaven of his triumph. If I know anything of the sentiment of a genius, there are few things as a soul from purgatory, and the pang of both sickness and hope deferred. It is not simple; it is wonderfully complex and involved. And so is life. Its mystery and labyrinthine dimness is borne in on us with the years. And Wagner speaks of life, vague, striving, tangled, woven of light and darkness, and yet

somehow, to the sense of God, and of genius, unutterably sweet.

"And then the quintette at the close of the first part of the third act. Oh, so un-speakably appealing. It is as if Della Robbia's boys had found voice; as if the gods of Greece had awakened from their dust of years and come back singing through the summer night; as if five truant cherubs had escaped their golden house in heaven, and had flown smiling through a dream to show the manner of angel's songs when they hymn in Paradise.

"All this is vague and high-flown doubtless, but I am not ashamed, rather glad, that I can entertain such young extravagance of emotion.

"And the setting was perfect. Munich is the home of good taste. The Prinz-Regenten theater is the tastiest of all—one rising floor of seats, each as good as the other, and boxes only behind all the seats, walls gray and gold, no gaudiness, only tempered, most chastest. Orchestra concealed, no gesticulating leader to distract you. No coming in during an act; if you don't get there on time you don't get in—that's all.

"The echo of the thing is with me today. I could cry at the least suggestion. I have had a musical debauch."

When I had read this I felt that there were many people in Omaha who would like to enjoy the pleasure it gave me and so I begged for it to copy over night. Dr. Crane was very good about it, adding locally, "Don't tell them that you wrote it yourself." Since leaving Omaha some years ago he has practically mastered three languages. His knowledge of German astonishes me daily. We have been studying the text and music of the "Ring of the Nibelungen" every day and attending all performances. But I must stop now and give you some impressions of the works we have heard in another epistle. Anything that I should write after Dr. Crane's rhyme would be flat. THOMAS J. KELLY.

MUNICH'S MOZART FESTIVAL

The Operas Staged Better Than They Were Seen.

SALZBURG, Aug. 12.—Austrians do not hesitate to say that Salzburg is the most beautiful city in the world. If you are willing to admit that it is a city at all you probably will be quite ready to agree with the Austrians. Of course you will have heard in another epistle. Anything that I should write after Dr. Crane's rhyme would be flat. THOMAS J. KELLY.

The Donna Elvira was even worse than the other mournful woman, and the Leporello (Kempter, the Munich Beckmesser in "Die Meistersinger") was quite tame and dry. The one bright spot in the cast was the Don Giovanni of Feinhalten, who is engaged for the Metropolitan. He sang much better than when the Sun's correspondent heard him as Hans Sachs and as Wotan

three years ago, and his acting had grace, distinction and variety of touch. A little heavy at times and a little vociferous, he was nevertheless a Don Giovanni whom even epicurean New York would have liked.

In "Cosi fan tutte" matters were much better. Rosetti's Zerlina, absurdly farcical in the two disguise scenes, was much better in its musical and dramatic conception than her Zerlina. The two women, Fioridigli and Dorabella, were in safe hands. Indeed the former had an exceptionally good interpretation by Frieda Hempel of Berlin, who sang the first flower maiden in "Parsifal" at Bayreuth.

In New York a director could hardly afford to cast a Sembraich for the flower maiden, yet Fioridigli is a Sembraich part. Miss Hempel is not a Sembraich, but she is the light soprano of the Berlin opera, and a real artist, who sings with good technique, with intelligence and with taste. Her delivery of Fioridigli's difficult air in the second act, full of troublesome traps in the intervals, was most praiseworthy. She may go to New York some day, and she should be welcome there. She is one of the very few real singers now on the German stage—not a great singer, but an honest trained one.

The men, with the exception of Bauberger, as Alfonso, were mediocre. Bauberger sang also Masetto in "Don Giovanni," and made of him what he ought to be, a country bumpkin but not a cackling idiot, as he almost invariably is in the hands of an Italian buffo. These comments on the performances of the principal singers ought to serve to convince any New Yorker that he can hear Mozart better sung at home. He need not spend his money in travelling to Munich. And the incompetency of the singers in the matter of voice is not the sum of the whole matter. The employment of the German text in a work "Don Giovanni" written originally in the glib Italian does great injury. Some of the singers have indeed acquired remarkable fluency of utterance, but at an utter sacrifice of intelligibility.

German singers who sat behind the arkwardness of the German phrases quite apologetic Mozart's fluency of style, as when Don Giovanni exclaims "Ach, wie traurig! Ach, wie traurig!" instead of "Poverina, poverina!"

When Leporello in his "Madamina" says "Aber in Espagna, aber in Espagna," instead of "Ma in Espagna," he not only upsets Mozart's musical prosody but makes impossible a deliciously humorous effect on the initial M, which every Italian singer used to good purpose. And when he struggles to settle off the rapidly repeated "Und die kleine, und die kleine," instead of the rippling "La piccola, la piccola," he attempts the impossible.

But certain features of these Mozart performances in Munich are admirable. In

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the first place the old Residenz theater, in which they are given, is an ideal place for them. It is a gem of a house, smaller than any of the New York theaters and in a mellow, old fashioned style of decoration quite in keeping with the rich and high-blooded character of Mozart's music. It has proscenium boxes, circle boxes three tiers high and a royal box in the center. Prince Ludwig Ferdinand preferred a proscenium box. He was accompanied by his wife, a sister of the king of Spain, and the lounge of the gallant young Alfonso.

Mottl had an orchestra of about thirty-eight men and a most excellent orchestra it was. It played with exquisite precision, with clarity of tone and with a ravishingly dainty enunciation of the string passages. The wood wind phrasing was capital, but not better than that which New York heard under both Campanini and Mahler. Mottl, himself accompanied upon a harpsichord the recitatives, and his performance was something to be remembered. It could not have been heard in the big Metropolitan, but in the tiny Residenz theater it was just the daintiest of musical lace work.

The mounting of the operas would have been a revelation to New York. The Residenz has a revolving stage with which it is possible to make every scene a full set. There is no hauling up of drops. There are no "front" scenes. Three sets can occupy this stage at the same time, one facing the audience and two behind. When a scene is ended the lights are turned down, the stage revolves and one scene changes to another in full view of the audience. The effect is excellent. No one runs on with a table or a chair. Everything is in its place. There is no noise. The setting of the scenes is done in perfect silence. The action of a work like "Don Giovanni" moves with perfect steadiness and smoothness.

So again we find that with Mozart in Munich as with Wagner in Bayreuth the present resources of German lyric art are sufficient only for the orchestral, choral and scenic presentation of the works. The musical results of the "Cosi fan tutte" were, indeed, far better than those in "Lohen-grin" at Bayreuth; but they were chiefly brought about by the capability of two or three singers, together with the splendidly intelligent conducting of Mottl, the playing of the orchestra, and the scenic pictures. In "Don Giovanni" the solo singing, as already noted, was inadequate. What is this mighty work without it? The tenor did not even attempt "Dalla sua pace." Those who heard him sing "Il mio tesoro" thanked him for the omission.

Perhaps in the fulness of time Mozart's operas will be transferred from the Metropolitan to the New Theater, and Helasco be induced to devise their pictorial attire. In the meantime the best we can hope for is that Oscar Hammerstein will invent a removable, revolving stage for the Manhattan to be used for Mozart and put in the closet while Puccini is on exhibition in West Thirty-fourth street.

W. J. HENDERSON.