

[Seite 3]

I

WRIGHT BROTHERS' MOTOR FLYER

BY O. CHANUTE

THE flights of their first motor machine were made by Wright Brothers December 17, 1903, on their practice ground near Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. In 1904, having built a new machine, with such modifications as had been suggested by the practice of the previous year, they resumed their experiments near their home at Dayton, Ohio, in order to be close to their machine-shop and to repair promptly the breakages which they expected. They arranged with the local press not to notice them in any way.

That year they made 105 landings, each of which taught something, and some of which resulted in breakages. It was September before they succeeded in changing the course from one dead against the wind to curved path, where cross currents must be encountered. A number of circular flights were then made, the two longest being nearly three miles each in about five minutes. Ballast was carried in these, first of fifty pounds and then of seventy pounds of iron bars, and the season's work was brought to a close in December.

[Seite 4]

NAVIGATING THE AIR

4

In 1905 again was a new machine built to embody the changes which experience had dictated, and to test a new method of control. The experiments were resumed near Dayton about eight miles from the city. That year forty-nine flights were made, seven of which resulted in breakages of the machine without any personal accidents. September had come, however, before flights of more than ten miles had been accomplished. Then followed in rapid succession flights of eleven miles, twelve miles, fifteen miles, twenty-one miles and twenty-four miles. The last consisted of thirty sweeps over the course, and it was brought to a close by the exhaustion of the fuel of which but a small quantity had been carried.

By this time public gossip became irrepressible, spectators began coming to the scene of action, and the Wright Brother, in order to preserve their secrets, abruptly

terminated their flights and eventually dismantled their machine.

During the year 1906, they made no flights, as they were negotiating with intending purchasers, who enjoined secrecy. It is understood that they are prepared to give convincing demonstrations, as soon as their terms and conditions are accepted.

The fame of their achievements naturally spurred flying machines inventors all over the world to emulate their success. During the year 1906 more than a score of flying machines have been built and given preliminary tests, some in public, some in private. The greatest activity has been in France. M. Archdeacon. Captain Ferber, M. Vuia, M. Blériot, M. Voisin, M.

[Seite 5]

## NAVIGATING THE AIR

5

Esnault-Pelterie, M. Delagarde and Cornu & Son are known to have tested full-sized machines, and M. Tatin as well as Barlatier and Blanc, M. Soliréne, M. Bazin, and M. Kapferer, have begun work on such apparatus; also M. Schelies, in Germany, and M. Ellehammer, in Denmark. They have all been distanced by M. Santos-Dumont who succeeded on November 12, 1906, in flying 220 metres in the presence of a large assemblage, thus improving his previous achievement of October 23, when he flew a distance of 60 metres against the wind. He has not yet swept a circle and this he must do to win the Archdeacon and Deutsch prize of 50,000 francs which requires a closed circuit of one kilometer in length. He is now hardly as far advanced as the Wright Brother were at the close of 1903, and it is to be hoped that in his future experiments he will enjoy the same immunity from accident that they did.