

THE FOURTH WILBUR WRIGHT MEMORIAL LECTURE.

In view of the present conditions it was not thought desirable to adhere to the usual scientific character of the Wilbur Wright Memorial Lecture, as publication of the results of new research would be unwise, but for all that the paper read by Mr. Griffith Brewer on the 6th inst. before members of the Aeronautical Society of Great Britain at the Royal Society of Arts, John Street, Adelphi, Strand, was no less interesting, having for its subject the life and work of Wilbur Wright. So great has become the importance of the Flying Services that it was most appropriate that this year's lecture should deal with the work of the great pioneer in whose honour the Memorial Fund was created, and the collection into one volume of facts and various articles bearing upon the life-work of the Wright brothers must have been a pleasant labour of love for the author.

Lord Montagu presided at the meeting, and among the other speakers were Lord Northcliffe, who seconded the vote of thanks to Mr. Griffith Brewer, Major-General R. M. Ruck, who proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, and Brigadier-General F. G. Stone, who seconded it.

Much of the contents of Mr. Griffith Brewer's paper is known to our readers, having appeared from time to time in various forms in our journal, but several facts emerge, some of which are not generally known, whilst others have never previously been published. For instance, it was not generally known that Wilbur Wright in his early days did a considerable amount of journalistic work, showing a talent which would, as the lecturer put it, "have taken him far with his pen had not the air claimed him for greater work." It has been said on occasions that the Wright brothers were not scientists, whereas as a matter of fact they did do, as early as 1901, an immense amount of scientific research work, building a wind tunnel 16 ins. square, in which were tested more than two hundred model wing sections, the lift and drift of which were ascertained in this way. So thorough a grasp did the brothers have of their subject that their wind tunnel, although possibly not being so accurate as more recent ones, embodied all the characteristics of tunnels in use at modern laboratories.

Regarding the gliding experiments that preceded the

flights on a power-driven machine little need be said here, as the history of these is well known.

In conclusion, the lecturer pointed out that one should not allot any portion of the great discovery to one or other of the brothers. "It required," he said, "two brains working in unison, two lives, one to be risked while the other watched, two purposes placed before all thoughts of gain or pleasure, to accomplish that which those brothers did for posterity. We therefore honour Wilbur, knowing that he will hand half of that honour to 'Brother Orv.'"

In some appendices further light is thrown on the personalities of the great pioneer. The first contains an article written by Wilbur, and published in the Wrights' paper *Snap Shots*, in which he defends, with the wit and sarcasm familiar to those of us who knew Wilbur Wright in France, a critic who had ventured to criticise the action of four members of a local authority, who were bringing four actions for libel against the local critic of their public work. A second appendix contains a lecture given by Mr. Wilbur Wright to the Western Society of Engineers. This lecture is already well known. A third appendix consists of a letter written by Mr. Harvey M. Weaver to Mr. Lahm, in Paris, giving an excellent account of the performances of the "Wright flyer" at the end of 1905. Another appendix is a reprint of an article written jointly by Orville and Wilbur and published in the *Century Magazine*, September, 1908, giving a popular account of their experiments. A fine tribute to Mouillard, written by Wilbur Wright and published in *The Aero Club of America Bulletin*, April, 1912, forms yet another appendix, while following this is one in which Wilbur Wright refutes the claim made that Ader was the first man to fly. This is of historical value, as it is a not uncommon occurrence to find writers of aviation books, who are not too careful as to facts, still quoting Ader as being first.

The last appendix is, perhaps, the most interesting of all, giving, as it does, the evidence of Wilbur Wright in the patent action in America, in which he describes in his own clear concise manner how he and his brother Orville succeeded in producing the first aeroplane to fly. This description has not been published before.



A German reconnaissance biplane brought down practically uninjured at Salonica.