

protect a balloon or airship. The wind even in its milder moods makes little of human strength, as is abundantly proved by the case of the French airship "La Patrie" and of several huge airships of Count Zeppelin, when the united efforts of hundreds of soldiers were utterly powerless to prevent their breaking away.

When M. Clément graciously offered his airship some eighteen months ago to the British Government for military purposes, and when the *Daily Mail* offered £5,000 toward the erection of a shed for the garage of the airship, I immediately wrote to the *Daily Mail* pointing out the uselessness for such a purpose of sheds, however strongly constructed, even when reinforced by heavy steel cables sunk in a cement ground. In the event of even half a gale springing up, how is it possible that a huge airship can be so handled that while the top, the bottom, and the sides of the balloon are wobbling in every direction, it can safely and without risk be steered into the shed?

I suggested to the *Daily Mail*, as well as to the War Office, that instead of erecting sheds, would it not be far better to employ two or three hundred engineering soldiers to excavate pits exactly fitted to the size of the balloon (in war time every 15 or 20 miles).

Into these pits the airship could be guided without the smallest difficulty, or danger of the wind, and once inside the pit, a sliding roof would place the airship in a position of absolute safety, protected alike from the danger of the wind and the danger of projectiles in time of war.

I have no interest whatever in the matter beyond serving of the country which has become my home of adoption; as you will gather by my name, I am a native of Hungary.

Kensington.

PHILIP HORVATH.

PATENTS.

[942] Every now and then your correspondents are suggesting various improvements and alterations in aeroplanes, &c., and whenever I visit the Patent Office I see a lot of useless ideas being patented.

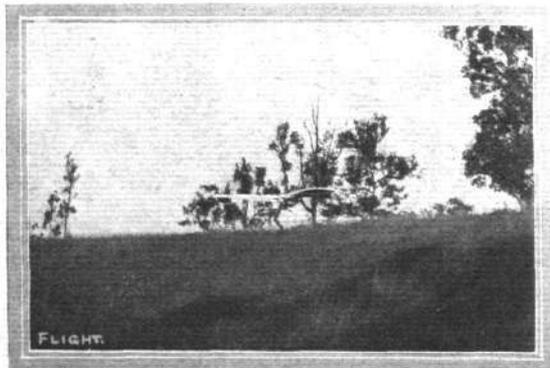
I recently received a souvenir of the Pneumatic Tyre Majority Celebration which was held last year, and was very interested to read the remarks of Mr. A. J. Walter, K.C., on this subject of inventions. He says: "Many and many a time have I been asked what I think of an invention; and the question I always ask is, 'Who is at the back of it?' It is not so much whether the invention is a good one, but whether the people who are going to run it are capable of running it."

That is a point which most inventors seem to ignore, and so waste much time and many pounds protecting their ideas. Mr. Walter goes on to mention that it was the good fortune of Mr. Dunlop to attract early the attention of Mr. Du Cros.

"THE OTHER MAN."

GLIDING IN QUEENSLAND.

[943] Although "gliding" must be rather tame nowadays as far as your paper *FLIGHT* is concerned, I send you a snapshot of the first gliding experiments carried on in Queensland. These



Mr. Thomas Macleod gliding in Brisbane, Queensland.

experiments were made under the supervision of the Aerial League of Australia. As you will see, the machine used was a bat's-wing monoplane glider. The skids can be seen just striking the ground. The wind was blowing 23 m.p.h., with gusts of 28 m.p.h., and the

photo was taken by Mr. J. Lawson-Smith, a member of the council of the League. I am operating the glider, and I carried out experiments that day (October 11th, 1910) all the afternoon. I am a barrister.

 Brisbane,
Queensland.

 THOMAS MACLEOD, Vice-President,
Aerial League of Australia.

GULLS' TAILS.

[944] Seeing in *FLIGHT* a letter (835) from Mr. Burrell regarding gulls' tails, I beg to forward you the results of my own observations, which differ considerably from his. I am fortunate in being able to watch the action of gulls' tails at closer quarters than the majority of people, viz., from the bridge of a large steamer, at a height of 75 ft. above the water, where the gulls pass so close as to almost touch one with their wings.

I have come to the conclusion that gulls not only expand their tails when alighting, as stated by Mr. Burrell, but also when rising from the water, when turning in the air, and frequently during flight. Their tails are extremely mobile, each corner having a separate vertical movement as well as the horizontal expanding movement, and it appears as if the tail were expanded during flight solely for the purpose of obtaining the greatest possible power in control, for which purpose I believe them to be used to a very great extent, and that during long straight flights the tails were closed in order to reduce resistance.

I intend experimenting in this direction with paper models, and shall be pleased to let you have results.

Liverpool.

S. P. ELLIOTT, Lieut. R.N.R.

[945] With reference to the recent letter from your correspondent, Mr. C. Ian Birrell, who writes that he has constructed a glider with gull's tail and crescent-shaped wings, may I suggest that he try the following glider, which is based on the principles of the Dunne biplane.

Cut a piece of paper to the shape shown in the sketch, bending the wings as indicated by the dotted lines and weighting the tip with sealing-wax. I think Mr. Birrell will be, as I was, both surprised and delighted with the result. I think the accompanying sketch conveys the idea of the necessary camber to anyone who was not fortunate enough to read your article on the construction of the Dunne machine. It must be clearly borne in mind, however, that the camber is confined strictly to the unshaded portion of the sketch. I have made many of these gliders of every conceivable size and I can imagine nothing more perfect than the behaviour of one and all of them as gliders.

Wandsworth Common, S.W.

"GLIDER."

CYCLOPLANES.

[946] I recently read in *FLIGHT* that Mr. Tivertonian and D. Barton (No. 857) were asking for experiences of readers with cycloplanes. Probably the following will interest them:—

Over three years ago I started experiments with models of various kinds. My chief aim was to get a low-powered machine, and not having the means to buy an engine I tried to use a bicycle. The first machine we made far too heavy, and made no attempt to fly it, but with the knowledge gained we started to build No. 2. This was much lighter, but was wrecked by the wind during erection. We decided then to get the thing more compact, and we started on No. 3, with which we had better luck.

When complete we took this machine to the field. It rose quite easily when several men pulled it by ropes. After a long tow my brother offered to get in, but being anxious for his safety we kept close to the planes. The word was given to go, and she rose quite easily to about 6 ft. and travelled about 100 yards. We then realised that, in the excitement of starting, we had only left one man to do the pulling.

We gave up the cycloplane because although we could get clear of the ground we lost our balance. We had not the slightest difficulty in getting the front to lift in all our cycloplanes with about 144 ft. of plane at a speed of about 5 to 6 miles an hour. We have a model now with 20 sq. ft. of sail, weighing 15 lbs., that will travel 150 ft. after a push off by hand. We tried its stability in side and head-winds, and it seemed impossible to turn it over; this model is just the bare main plane, without tail, elevator or balancing devices.

J. W. COLE.

[947] I am much interested in this type of machine and should be obliged if any reader of *FLIGHT* could tell me whether, if a tractor screw were fixed on the leading plane and geared highly from the driving wheel of the bicycle, the machine would prove a success.

Willenhall.

F. LAW.