

## MY PARIS FLIGHT.

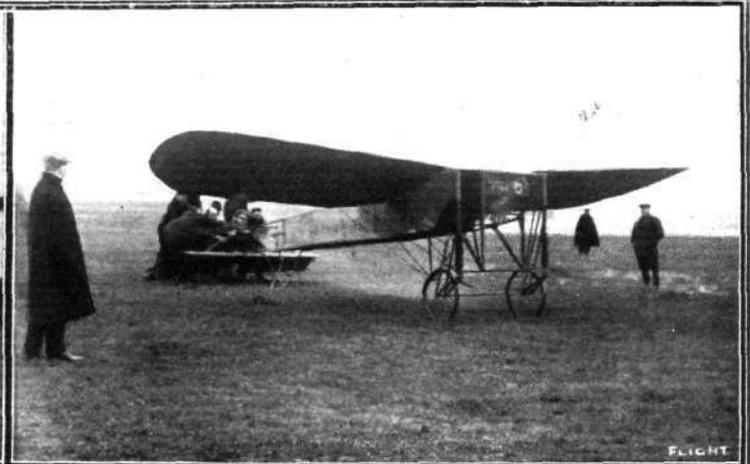
By HENRI SALMET, Chief Instructor of the Blériot School, Hendon.

FOR some time past I have wanted to fly to Paris and back in one day, and also, as I should like to see M. Blériot in Paris about business matters. I think, it being fine, on Thursday the 7th, I will go. The night before I paint on the wings of my Blériot some varnish that keep the fabric tight and make it waterproof, and later I telegraph to the coastguard at Eastbourne to telephone me in the morning if the weather is good. Next morning early the message arrive. The coastguard say the Channel is clear of fog, so I get ready. The fuselage of my Blériot had already been covered in with fabric and waterproofed so as to make a float and keep me up if my engine fail and I go in the water. Round me I put an inner tyre from one of the school machines which I blow up. I run my engine and it go very well, so I wave my hand and I am away.

When I left here it was exactly 7.45, with little wind behind me. The wind increased, and after about a quarter of an hour the wind was much more stronger, and my speed was about half as much again. At Eastbourne I was 1,200 metres high and about 2 miles over the sea, but the wind was too gusty. I came back, and I took 3,000 ft. more high, and that took me 13 mins. After that, I started again on my way to Paris, and I flew for 1 hr. 40 mins. without seeing anything other than the clouds. The sight at that height was most marvellous—I think absolutely the best something I have seen in my life. At that height the clouds were more like big snowy mountains, and flying through them was the most curious experience that could happen to anyone. A glance behind showed my wake in a swirl of fog disturbed by the propeller and the passage of the machine. So cold was it in the clouds, that I had

I should have been thrown out several times. Issy was absolutely deserted because I arrived before my telegram. On landing I took from my machine the little can of paraffin I always carry, and washed over the engine—my good engine, which had brought me all the way from London without any trouble. All the more pleasure because I myself look after the engine, no one else touch it. Then I go to find someone, and I find a guardian of the aerodrome with a mechanic from the Astra Company, and I asked him "Where are the Blériot hangars?" and he say "Opposite there." As I turned to go to the sheds he say to me "Can you tell me any news of the English aviator who should fly from London to Paris?" and I say "The English aviator is me." Then we shake hands. Then he say "If you are the English aviator you speak French very well indeed. What is your name?" and I said "Henri Salmet of the Blériot School in England." Then I go to the Blériot sheds and get the mechanics to fetch my machine and put it safe in the hangar. I ask for M. Blériot's telephone number to ring him up and tell him I arrived. I telephone and he speak himself, and he say "Why do you not send a telegram?" At that moment the telegraph boy must have come into his office, for he say "the telegram has just arrived now." I say "When can I see you M. Blériot?" and he say "I see you about three or four" but I reply "I shall be far off by then." He say "Why?" I say "Because I want to get back to London to-day." Then he came down to Issy in a car with M. Leblanc, and some reporters.

M. Blériot seem very please. He say "*Bon jour, Salmet. Toutes mes relicitations! Par où avez vous passé.*" I say that I had



SALMET'S PARIS FLIGHT.—On the left his Blériot monoplane pegged down for the night at Berck Plage, near Dieppe. Note the cut-away wings, the covered-in fuselage forming a float, and the *Entente Cordiale* emblem on the rudder. On the right is seen the moment of his start from Berck Plage the following morning.

constantly to increase my high so that I could get above them. This brought me to a height of between 6,000 and 7,000 ft., and as I could not see the sea, steering had to be entirely done by compass. This was hard to do, for the wind, although fairly steady, set the monoplane rolling slowly, and the compass needle kept swinging continually about ten degrees each side of the true line. This had to be accounted for. From points that I had recognised over English soil, I calculated that my speed was something over 130 kiloms. an hour, and from the time I got my last glimpse of the earth, I flew for 1 hr. 40 mins., and then from my speed calculated just about where I ought to find myself. Here I thought I ought to descend, as I wanted to make sure that my compass was guiding me correctly, and that I was on my right way.

For a long time I see nothing but the wings of my machine. I came down to 200 metres in order to distinguish points that I wanted to find. Then I flew round in big circles for 17 minutes, at last recognising a castle that I had marked on my map. Picking up the adjacent railway line, I reached Gisors. Here it was clearer, and I gradually elevated to 2,000 metres. Although it was possible to distinguish land marks, I did not look down once as I was so occupied in fighting the gusty wind that I did not trouble to do so, knowing full well my compass was steering me correctly. I saw the Eiffel Tower after a long struggle, and the sight gave me very big pleasure because it is the first cross-country flight I have make. I see Issy from 1,500 metres, and commenced my *vol plané*.

To battle against the *remous* caused by the big houses, I have to descend very steep to keep up my speed. Gusts rapidly struck me from below, and had I not gripped the *cabane* with all my might

come by the way I had chosen, and that I had tell him some time before. He is very happy that I do cross the channel at the wide part, from Eastbourne to Dieppe—thing that had not been done since aviation existed. In his great joy he grasp my both hands, and squeeze so hard that he hurt much. And M. Leblanc also. Then we have lunch at the *Café Syndicat des Aviateurs*. They say to me, there is too much wind, and you cannot return. But I did not pay attention to that, as no matter what the struggle I had big confidence in my Blériot, my Gnome, and my wonderful Levasseur propeller, which give so much pull and runs so smoothly. It is the best I have try. With my three faithful friends, my machine, my motor, my propeller, the wind have no fear for me. So at 2.15 with the *anemometre* at 34 kilometres. to the hour, I start once more. The start is not alone, because the ground is used by the soldiers, but I go to ask at the Commandant to let me start. He say "Yes, with pleasure," and he took his soldiers in a good place to give me plenty of room, and I go. I start straight on my line, but the ground is not much large and when I am over the houses I am very low, and the wind put me sometime in very bad situation. I am very long to take my high, because sometime I am 200 metres up, and then I come down again with the wind.

After I have crossed the Seine I have less *remous*, and I go more high. Since this time the wind is much more regular, but so strong that I take nearly four hours to make 220 kiloms. I am very cross against the weather, because I am obliged to land at Berck Plage with my petrol tank nearly empty.

As soon after my landing I start to find petrol. That take me too