

MORE and more is it being realised that the creation of the Air Ministry in this country was the only solution. It has curious ways of cropping out, this independence of the Air Force. Take its application to Ireland alone, where, as we have recently had occasion to point out, recruiting for the R.A.F. is having quite a mild little "boom" all to itself. And why? Because those in charge of the campaign have diagnosed the inclinations of the Irish aright, and have been careful in the following manifesto to point out to the "bhoys" that the R.A.F. is very much also the I.A.F. It is in some respects quite remindful of the early recruiting stunts which had a vogue this side of the Irish Channel. Here's the "explanation":—

"ENLISTMENT IN THE AIR FORCE.  
A MISAPPREHENSION CORRECTED."

"Through a misapprehension a number of intending recruits for the Air Force were refused acceptance on the ground that being Grade 1 men they were fit for and should join some branch of the Army. This mistake was due to the fact that in Great Britain such a regulation is enforced. In Ireland, however, as long as the Recruiting Council are in control of operations, EVERY Irishman who wishes to join the Air Force will be accepted if he belongs to any of the three Grades 1, 2 or 3. If he fails to pass in any of these grades he will be given a certificate which will be a complete exemption from all future military requisition.

"The Air Force is not a branch of the Army or the Navy, but IS AN INDEPENDENT SERVICE. It is not subject to the control of the War Office, and NO RECRUIT FOR THE AIR FORCE CAN BE TRANSFERRED to the Army or Navy except at his own request.

"Intending recruits may apply to any of the Irish Recruiting Council's offices."

PRETTY cute and daring were the methods, as related in the *Daily Telegraph* from Milan by Mr. A. Beaumont, of some Austrian pilots in their endeavour to deposit a sitting of eggs on Italian towns with a minimum risk of retribution from the anti-aircraft defences. It appears, however, that this new war ruse was attended with but little luck. The idea was to follow, at dusk, an Italian Caproni squadron, which had thrown bombs on an Austrian aviation camp at Comina. Large machines of the Brandenburg type, under cover of darkness, closely followed the returning Italian squadron, and thus being momentarily immune from anti-aircraft guns, they managed to cross into Italian territory. Some of these machines were to have continued their flight, and to have thrown bombs on Padua, following a pre-arranged plan of bombarding the towns in the Venetian Plain. One of the machines succeeded in approaching Padua, but having missed its route, in returning was stopped by the barrage fire, and, being stuck by a shell, fell into the Lagoon of Chioggia, where the occupants were made prisoners.

"INFANTRY AIRMEN" is a coined phrase emanating from Berlin, for describing the pilots who have been supplying the German lines with ammunition and food under difficult conditions for both the suppliers and supplied.

It is gratifying to have the assurance of Lord Mayor Sir Charles Hanson, with the Italian poet d'Annunzio as his authority, that Venice has not suffered so much damage from enemy air-raids as might have been anticipated. Sir Charles states that the city is heavily camouflaged and protected, but, with the exception of a few buildings, it was gratifying to notice that no visible damage had been done.

It is no secret, of course, that many British officers are over in the United States instructing our Allies in bomb-dropping, and indeed every phase of modern warfare is learned from actual experience at the Front. The best of good feeling prevails between our men and the Americans, who are nothing if not hospitable; but the one thing which British training officers find a little difficult to endure is the all but universal attitude of the Americans towards the war, in so far that they are apt to speak of it as having only just begun because they are now in it.

On the other hand, the charming inconsequentiality of the native American and his lack of respect for caste distinctions may at times serve a useful purpose in the case of any British officer who may be inclined to preen himself overmuch on his rank or birth. Apparently any American considers himself entitled to address any stranger without introduction, and the said stranger, if new to the ways of the inhabitants, may find himself turning the cold shoulder to a really "big bug." In a letter to hand, for example, from a British

officer attached to a Texas training camp, he describes a rencontre with an American brigadier-general and a civilian in a Pullman car. The said British officer was duly polite to the general, but took no notice of the civilian. At length, however, the civilian chipped in with, "Say, officer, kin you tell me . . . ?" and so forth, and the Briton answered his questions in a somewhat parrying mood. Eventually both brigadier and civilian alighted at a roadside station, and then an American officer came up to the man from home and said: "Say, d'you know who that jink was? He's Elihu P. Schonk, the second biggest guy in the States, Governor of Ohio, and candidate for the Presidency of U.S.A." And our officer had taken him to be a commercial traveller!

THE same officer sends an amusing account of camp life out West. "Talking of American curiosity," he writes, "let me give you a simple conversation—one of hundreds daily in which I am the reluctant party. Enter a total stranger, who may be anything from a lumber king to a soda-fountain tender. Seizing me firmly by the top button of my tunic (or the second one if he cannot quite reach) he says: 'Say, guess you find it tol'able warm down here comin' from Canada, dontcher?' 'Yes, but I'm not a Canadian, you know.' 'Oh, aintcher?' 'No, I'm British.' 'Oh' (pause). 'You've not been to the battle, I reckon.' 'Oh, yes, I had two years in France.' 'Oh, is that so?' (incredulously). 'What's this for anyways?' 'That's just a whistle cord.' 'Oh, and this?' (And so on, through every detail of my uniform and badges.) Finally: 'Waal, I guess our boys have got a Kaiser beat. Glad t'ave metcher.' (Exit.) Quite a number of people have taken my service chevrons for a corporal's badges (they wear them upside down in the American army). On the other hand, three stars on the shoulder are the insignia of an American general."

THE Chicago packet is supposed to use "every part of the pig but the squeal," but the weirdest by-product that we have seen for some time is the pyjama suit used by an aircraft manufacturer, made out of aeroplane linen intended for the wings of the old Deperdussin machines. In order that an accidental tear should not spread, raised strengthening webs were woven on the linen, making a neat checked pattern with squares measufing about eight inches each way. This put the material out of court of use as shirts, but it does very well to sleep in, though the effect would be startling on an air-raid night, if the owner had to reveal himself?

THE cover of the musical score of a comedy now running in London portrays an aeroplane excelling in originality anything that we have seen up to the present. The left hand wing is of the clipped speed scout type, with one set of struts only, but the right-hand wing spreads magnificently out of the picture after manifesting two sets, and seems to have every intention of rivalling the span of a Handley-Page. As equipped the machine should show exceptional manoeuvrability. The happily unconscious pilot waves a handkerchief, airily oblivious of the fact that his axle has dropped off, and nothing is left for him to land upon except a couple of wheels, apparently gummed on to two diamond-shaped projections. The whirling propeller is indicated by one of those flourishes that recall the penmanship of the elderly gentleman who used to stand in the Farringdon Road selling gold nibs at ten-a-penny!

That aeroplane mail services in the United States are regarded seriously is apparent from the regulations recently issued by the Postmaster-General, Mr. A. S. Burleson. Every conceivable contingency has been provided for, and a concluding paragraph reads:—

"Railroads are requested to ask all employees to keep watch for aviators landing in isolated regions and to furnish assistance. All trains and steamships are required to take on stranded aviators, and also to stop at whatever point the aviator may desire for the purpose of leaving the train or boat."

It was Barrie's self-educated railway porter who came to the conclusion that womenfolk were strange creatures, and wondered that nobody had thought to write a book about them. We overheard a willowy damsel replying to her swain, who thought the low-altitude stunting of an aviator dangerous. "Yes, but don't you see, he's all right anyway. He's flying over the rhubarb field!"

We cannot quite make out whether she thought that the rhubarb stalks would break the fall, or whether it would be a handy medicament in case of a forced landing.