

Saturday Evening  
June 21<sup>st</sup> 1919

161 Cromwell Road  
London SW 5

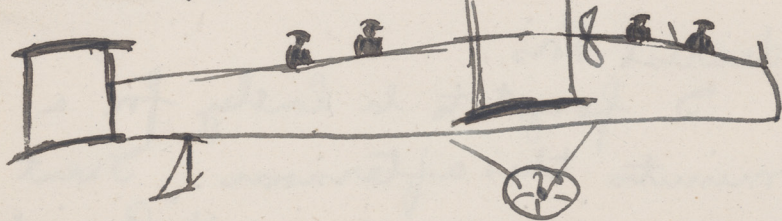
My dearest Lois

I forgot to be lonely for a few minutes this afternoon. I went out to ~~South~~ Hendon to see the "Aerial

Derby" and could not resist the temptation to try a flight. I enclose the receipt for my passage money which I would like you to put away for me as a souvenir.

I was up in a fine steady "Graham-White" biplane. The front of the machine projects eight or ten feet in front of the wings and I sat in the very front seat with the pilot behind me then the

propellers and wings and then four other passengers seated in pairs in the body of the machine. I don't know if I can draw it properly



I did not succeed in my sketch very well. The top drawing on the enclosed sheet gives the best idea. The cockpit in which I sat down was just a generous width for one person. It would be about four feet long so that when I sat down on a low seat four or five inches from the floor there would have been room for my feet stretched out straight. The rim of the cockpit was upholstered in brown leather and projected inwards

so that I could stretch my knees  
 out sideways and draw my heels  
 up near me so as to get my  
 knees firmly locked under the  
 rim. Then with my hands and elbows  
 on the rim my principal impulse  
 was to hold on in order to prevent  
 the beast from dropping away from  
 beneath me. I looked back and  
 saw the pilot looking rather weary  
 after a long afternoon's flying and the  
 other passengers, two men and their  
 wives - just taking their seats; and  
 I wondered if they were getting ready  
 to hold on just as tight as I was.

Meanwhile the engines were running  
 along slowly like a motor standing  
 at the curb. The step ladders were  
 removed and we were ready to start.

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As the propellers increased their speed we trundled along the ground on big heavy wide tired wheels. Then the right hand propeller was speeded up a little extra and we began turning towards the starting point. Varying the speed of the two propellers is the manner by which the machine is steered on the ground.

Then both propellers began to roar, the machine increased its speed, the ground seemed a bit rough, then the tail elevated to an angle where the planes offered little resistance to the rush of wind, the tail appeared to drop and the nose to rise and we were in the air. The rush of wind became tremendous and I could only keep one eye open.

I was rather sorry I had refused a helmet and glasses. My hair was dragging at my head and I felt what fine treatment it was for my threatened bald spot. I had heard that people were sometimes sick on their first flight and so I kept my jaw set like I do my first day at sea. As I anticipated there were occasional bumps as if someone were thumping the bottom of <sup>the</sup> fuselage with a bag full of clothes for the laundry. Then after each bump a little drop that made me want to hold on tighter.

I began watching the cows and horses in the fields below. As we turned to the left I could see the Thames a mile or two away. In stooping to see


the river through the glass front window of the machine, I discovered that I could get practically out of the wind behind the <sup>little</sup> glass wind shield if I just leaned forward low enough. After that I felt pretty secure. I looked down and saw people playing tennis, family parties picnicing and many couples roaming about and lying about on the ground as is the custom here. Still keeping around to the left we came above the river with a man below rowing a skiff, then approaching the starting point again ~~and~~ the engines began to slow down and we pointed down at a gentle slope — a momentary thrill as we skimmed rather low over some of the aerodrome

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buildings then the feeling of great speed as we drew nearer the ground, then to my surprise some very gentle touches as we skimmed along the surface until finally the buoyancy left the wings and we were running on the ground; — a little extra speed of the right propeller and we turned towards the men with the ladders and finally we came to a stop and climbed down to just the same spot from which we had started.

It was the longest and pleasantest thrill I have ever experienced. There was nothing nerve racking; ones heart stayed where it belonged and did not try to jump in ones mouth. But it was so new and fresh and clean and the

wind was so strong that it could not help being keenly interesting and exhilarating. (Total time 15 or 20 minutes)

At the grounds I saw the most wonderful "Ford". It cost £600! It was wide and roomy with most beautiful upholstery. It was a touring car with light coloured top, blue leather cushions and painted deep blue with highly polished brass headlights and numerous other <sup>brass</sup> fittings. Both front and rear seats were quite low. The gasoline tank being placed in front under the hood and the tool box slung behind in an imitation gas tank like you see on some big cars. The sides of the body were bulged or rounded not flat and it was really a perfect gem. There are  so many small cars here that a Ford is quite a medium sized car. Yours affec<sup>tly</sup> Edward.



June 21/19



Mrs E. S. Winslow  
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Canada

1919  
6/21

