

Aeroplanes as Life Savers

They Have Preserved Armies in War Times and Rescued Many by Land and Sea—A Peep Into the Future Shows Wonderful Work Ahead for Them.

Hugh Robinson in Curtiss hydro-aeroplane as he went to rescue of Ross Simon. Robinson was flying over the lake when Simon dropped; he quickly alighted.

SAVING lives by aeroplanes may sound strikingly surprising to most people, and it is amazing, if the short career of the aeroplane is considered.

to find that it has saved thousands of lives in war and a number of lives in peace time, and that it promises to be the most efficient life savor the world has ever had.

The aeroplane's career as a savior of lives in large number began as early as 1911, in the very war in which it first demonstrated its potentiality as an instrument of war, and the result shows that its potentiality was greater as an instrument of peace—a life savor.

Those who followed the development of the Italian-Turkish war will remember how at the very start of the campaign, before the first engagement took place, the newly landed Italians were saved from an unpleasant surprise by the aerial scouts, Captain Moiso, with his Bleriot, and Captain Moiso, on his Nieuport, who observed three advancing columns of Turks and Arabs of about six thousand men. The Italians, after receiving this information, could successfully calculate distances and arrange for their defence.

On the following day, October 24, the battle of Beira-Salat took place, resulting in the loss to the Turkish army of 3,000 men. During the battle two aeroplanes, Lieutenant Gavotti, with his Bleriot, and Captain Piazza, were circling the air. The flights took place above the line of fire, so as to be able to direct the firing of the big guns from the battle ship Carlo Alberto and also of the mountain artillery. The aeroplanes were often shot at by the guns of the enemy, but with no results. The finding of the enemy was an influential event. The situation at the time was such that without that discovery the Italians would have met with a defeat which might have affected the whole campaign. Thus two men and two old, half worn aeroplanes saved a defeat which might have involved the loss of thousands of lives—as was the case in the Eritrea campaign—at a cost of possibly only a few dollars, the price of gasoline and oil.

Later in the campaign the aeroplane became a veritable advance agent of peace, being used by the Italian officers to drop manifestoes over the encampment telling the natives of the Italian intentions. This is a very important mission because, as shown by France's loss of Algeria and Morocco, most of the trouble in colonies is due to the natives misunderstanding the purposes of the invaders, who never have a chance to explain their intentions. The Arabs in Tripoli were urged to war by the Turks, who represented the Italians as cruel and wanting to subject the natives to fierce treatment. The Italians could never have got near enough to explain their case had they not thought of sending the aeroplanes to drop manifestoes in the Arab camps. These manifestoes were printed in Arabic, and the following translation was made from the French translation and given for publication by the Consul-General for the Turkish Embassy in Washington, Ruff Bay. The very first manifestoes told of the Italian victories and moralized as follows:

"All this indicates that God is the protector of the Italians. As for the Turks, they have the habit of lying and they will tell you that these things are not true. But we swear that all these things are true. O Arabs, do not expose your lives to danger! O Arabs, hasten, come to us, for the end of the war is near!"

In another letter appears this: "It is certain that the ever victorious Italians will always use great severity against the Turks. Therefore, they will proceed with kindness toward the Arabs, whom they consider as their own children. O Arabs, before the aeroplanes begin to throw their bombs which descend from on high like the thunder of heaven on your heads, tranquillizing you and your domestic animals, burning your homes and your crops, destroying your wells and your vineyards, devastating your fields and your gardens, hasten, O Arabs, and take refuge with us and you will be treated with kindness."

Again in the Balkan War the aeroplane was a messenger of peace. Perhaps the greatest surprise of the

Balkan War was that Adrianople, the Gibraltar of the Balkans, which the Turks were supposed to defend to the last breath of life, was captured with little loss of life by a comparatively small force. The aeroplane—even the old type clumsy machines, manned by untrained pilots, used by the Bulgarians—deserves the greatest credit for the saving of life and money. The Bulgarian air scouts, though untrained in military matters and poorly equipped mechanically, went out over the besieged city and brought to their commanders information which enabled them to attack the weakest spots. Then other messengers of peace, whom humanity should recognize now that they have saved thousands of lives in both the Tripolitanian and Balkan wars—soared over the city and dropped messages to the besieged, which if not of peace, made for peace. One of these proclamations, urging the besieged to surrender, reads:

"This war is not against the Mussulmans but against the cruel, atrocious and dull witted government officials. Be it known that we also do not desire the shedding of blood. Our desire is to bring into the Balkan peace, security and good government. The neighboring Balkan States have invaded your country from all sides. The Bulgarian soldiers are only a few hours' march from Constantinople. Outside Adrianople there is a ring of 1,000 Bulgarian guns. If Adrianople does not surrender it will be ruined and burned."

These messages were read by the besieged, who learned that the besieger, instead of being a cruel, arbitrary enemy, was, in theory at least, a friend. The moral effect produced by these messages weakened the defence and, no doubt, made the capture of Adrianople possible a month sooner than it otherwise would have occurred, and the defenders did not sacrifice themselves in number in an attempt to defend the stronghold.

An admirable feat in saving the lives of five hundred French soldiers is credited to a single aeroplane of the French Morocco squadron. In December, 1912, a column of five hundred French troops had been surrounded by rebels to the south of Mogador and for five days some assistance was felt for their safety. Then Lieutenant Du-Hu, in his Bleriot monoplane, was able to convey information to the commander that reinforcements were close at hand and, encouraged, they renewed their defence, while the rebels, seeing ominous signs in the arrival of the aeroplane, retreated.

A similar case was recorded in November, 1915, when an aeroplane connected with the Spanish forces in Morocco, piloted by the Infante Alfonso, saved a detachment of cavalry that was attacked by a large force of natives near Ceuta. The cavalry was getting the worst of it when the Infante Alfonso chanced to arrive overhead in his aeroplane, accompanied by other members of the aerial squadron. The Moors were so terrified that they fled and allowed the survivors

of the battle to escape with their wounded.

Life saving in time of peace, while it has not attained more than a fraction of the number of lives saved in war, is perhaps, more interesting to most people than the latter, being closer to daily needs and experiences of the general public. It is, therefore, gratifying to find that the water aeroplane, the hydro-aeroplane and the flying boat seem destined to save life.

The hydro-aeroplane began its career as a lifesaver in 1911, while still in the experimental period. It was during the famous Chicago meet an aviator lost control while flying over Lake Michigan and fell into the water. Three-quarters of a mile away there was a hydro-aeroplane, the early Curtiss model—the prototype of the flying boat—striding around and occasionally settling on the surface of the water like a big seagull. The pilot of this craft, seeing the aviator's fall, went to the rescue. Flying at a mile a minute speed he reached the spot, landed on the water by the submerged aeroplane and offered to take the aviator to land—all in less than one minute!

Some months later, on March 6, 1912, two aviators fell in San Diego Bay while flying and their machine capsized. An aviator on the shore saw the accident, jumped on his hydro with his mechanic and flew to the rescue, landing a minute later by the "shipwrecked" two.

The first demonstration of actually rescuing a person not connected with aviation was given on October 10, 1912, by Charles Wald, instructor in the Wright school of water flying, at the Glenwood Country Club. A man named Walter Strobbach fell into the harbor from a rowboat in which he was seeking diversion with a friend. The rowboat was half a mile off the shore at Sea Cliff and fully a mile from the Glenwood Country Club when, miscalculating his position, Mr. Strobbach attempted to sit further on the stern of the boat, with the result that he fell overboard. Although his friend tried to reach his companion, a strong current carried them apart. Shouts along shore told of the plight of the young man, who was exhausted in the chilly water. Mr. Charles Wald, learning of the occurrence while at the hangar preparing to make a flight, jumped into his

machine and flew to the man in the water, who could be seen from the club station.

Alighting in the hydro-aeroplane on the water near Strobbach, the aviator first threw a life preserver to the young man, who was scarcely able to keep afloat, then, bringing the machine alongside, managed to get him aboard one of the floats of the biplane and brought him safely to the Wright station.

Boats leaving the shore did not reach the scene of the accident until the hydro-aeroplane was well on its way to shore with the rescued.

Mr. Glenn H. Curtiss, the dean of water flyers and creator of both the hydro-aeroplane and flying boat, was the hero of a life saving act last June, rescuing two occupants of a broken down motor boat with the big four passenger flying boat of Mr. Harold F. McCormick. Mr. Curtiss and Mr. C. C. Witmer were flying over Lake Keuka in the boat to test it and were running for home ahead of a coming thunder shower when, a mile from shore, they noticed a motor boat in which two men were waving wildly.

Curtiss brought the flying boat to the water and stopped near the motor boat. The men said their motor was broken and they wanted some one sent out to row them ashore. Mr. Witmer crawled out on the tail of the flying boat and took a rope from the motor boat, which he held while Curtiss drove the flying boat a mile to the shore.

The motor boat was left there, and taking the men aboard, Mr. Curtiss flew back to Hammondsport.

With all the navies working to develop means for launching aeroplanes from battleships and receiving them back, it is safe to say that the problems connected therewith will be solved very soon. Then liners will carry aeroplanes to use for carrying despatches and for general pilot duties.

Just as the water aeroplane is a wonderful auxiliary of the navy, it is a wonderful auxiliary for ocean liners, promising to afford to passenger carrying ships services of the highest kind. To those who are acquainted with marine travel the services which the airboat or hydro-aeroplane can render become at once apparent. Nothing can surpass the aeroplane in efficiency for this use. It can carry from two hundred to five hundred pounds of mail matter. The water aeroplane is destined to perform a wonderful mission as a life savor and averter of disasters as an auxiliary of ocean liners.

The water aeroplane is wonderfully adapted for preventing disasters of the kind which overcame the steamship Titanic, and, in case such disasters take place, minimize the loss of life. A flying boat on a steamer can rise to investigate unseen dangers ahead. It can do so at night as well by using the ship's searchlights as the aeroplane's searchlights. In case of the vessel becoming disabled the aeroplane can fly to notify other vessels, stilling the wireless apparatus, with which every flying boat is being equipped in the foreign navy, to notify the other steamships of the need or of its approach.

The most appalling thing in the Titanic disaster was that there were a number of steamships within call distance—some not as much as forty miles away—which the wireless telegraph did not reach in some cases because it became disabled as the ship sank. A flying boat could have covered the forty miles in less than an hour, while the wireless plant would have notified the other vessels as it proceeded onward. The wireless apparatus with which the British naval aeroplanes are equipped have a range of sixty miles.

A flying boat on the vessels that came to the rescue after the Titanic had sunk could have searched the surface of the sea for survivors, its altitude giv-

ing it a range of vision of miles, and could have found the survivors where the vessels did not see them. It would thus practically have superintended the work of life saving.

Each year there is a long list of people who are drowned from falling overboard from large vessels and who cannot be rescued in time to save their lives, the boat sent to save them reaching them too late to be of avail. A flying boat can be launched and can search for the person that has fallen overboard and can drop a safety belt or land by and pick him up much faster than the fastest life saving boat.

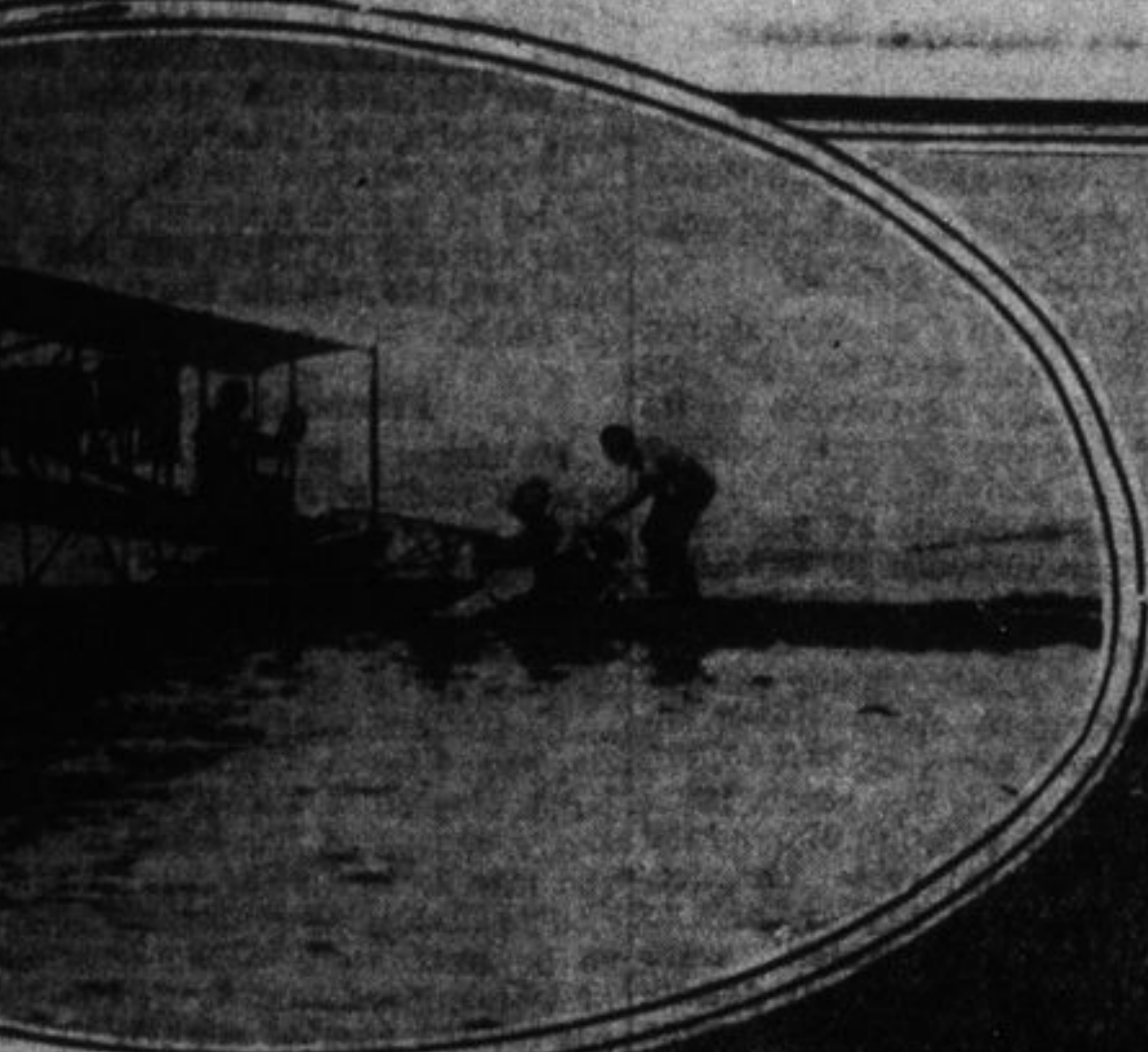
The sea is an unknown quantity in many respects, and the biggest of steamships is very much at its mercy, and assistance of the kind which the flying boat affords is a necessity. A vessel at sea often meets signs of wrecks or it is signalled by craft in distress. At the present time there is no way to investigate such things without involving a great delay or putting the craft itself in danger through taking it out of its marked route, which is the safety zone. A flying boat can do all these things for the vessel. It can be launched with two men, one of whom searches the surface of the sea with powerful glasses. The vessel can proceed on its course; the flying boat will overtake it after having discharged its mission.

As even a special machine and the equipment cannot cost more than \$10,000, it is evident that it is an absurdly cheap factor of efficiency which every craft can afford and should have.

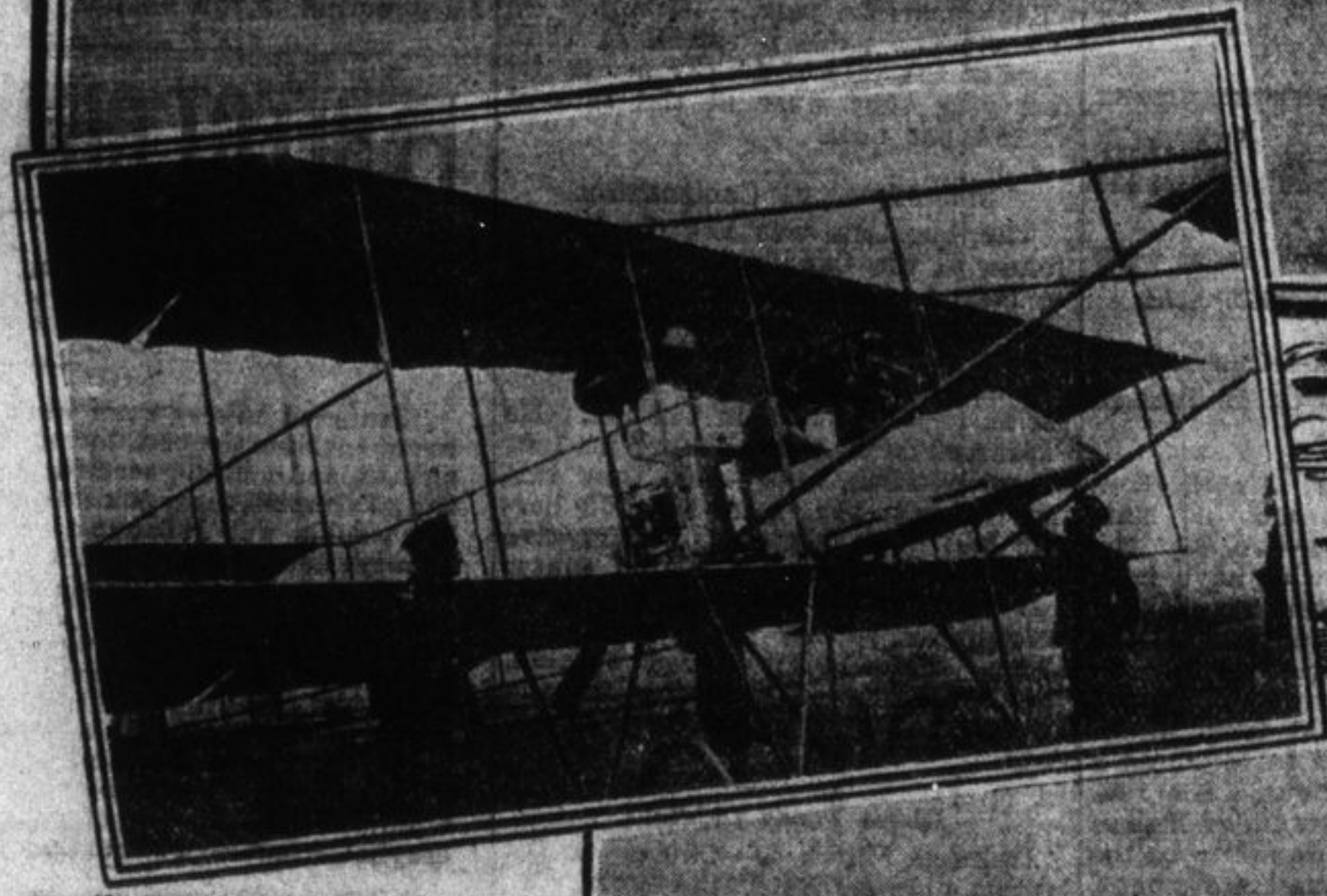
In the last year a movement has been on foot in France to use aeroplanes in the Red Cross work. Those familiar with warfare know that one of the horrors about it is that the wounded must stay hours on the field before they are found, and after they are found it usually requires hours again to relieve them and take them to the camp hospital, and the jolting of the means of conveyance used in a desolate spot, two days' march from a European settlement. The dying officer expressed a wish for religious consolation, and a brother officer aviator jumped on his aeroplane, flew to a settlement a hundred miles away and returned with the priest, and found that the dying man had probably lived two hours longer in hope of receiving the religious consolation.

same rate. Almost any of the standard aeroplanes of the biplane type can be modified so as to afford accommodation for two stretchers, which can be located under or above the lower plane, sliding into a boxlike arrangement, which will prevent the wounded from tossing while in flight.

The first experiment to demonstrate the possibilities in this respect was made during the French manoeuvres of 1912. Dr. Emile Raymond, Senator from the Loire, who is an aviator of three years' experience, was appointed Red Cross agent by



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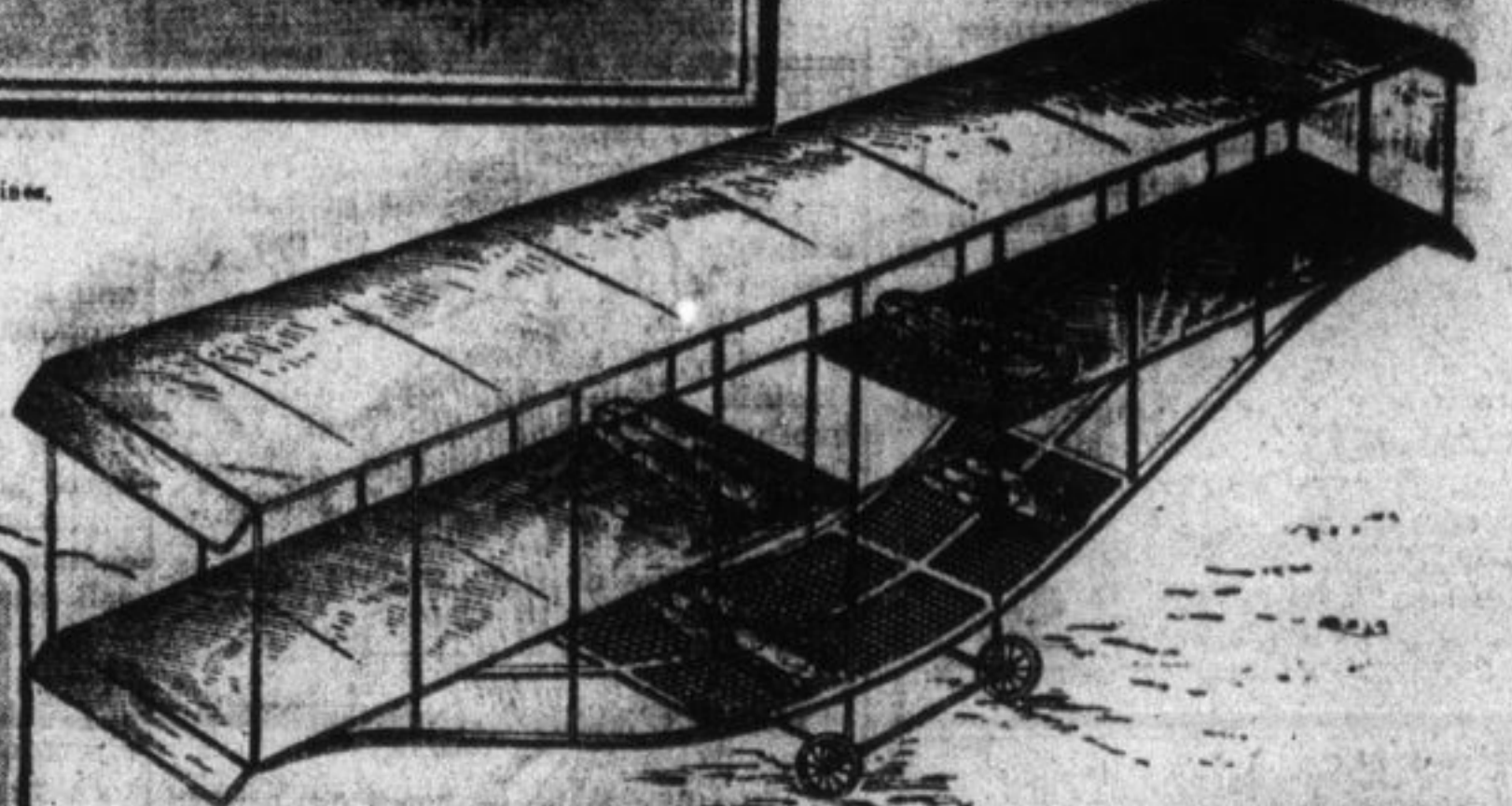
Starting Out to Drop the Message of Peace Over Adrianople.



Charles Wald in a Wright hydro-aeroplane rescuing a man who had dropped in the Sound from a boat.



The Air Scout of Tripoli—The First Aerial Life Saver.



Arrangement to carry four to a dozen wounded at one time in warfare.



Medical Inspector Troussaint, who charged him with the task of finding three hundred bodies of supposed wounded distributed on the battlefield. In a few hours he reported with a map of the field, showing the spots where two hundred of the "wounded" were lying and expressed regrets that somehow he did not seem to find the other hundred. To his surprise the inspector complimented him warmly and told him that they had not been able to distribute the other hundred "wounded."

It is contemplated in France to employ aeroplanes for carrying wounded from the field to the field hospital. The aeroplane intended for this use is a monoplane carrying a boxlike stretcher with mica windows under its fuselage or body. This method has greatly been improved upon by Dr. H. L. E. Johnson, of Washington, D. C., a member of the Aero Club of America, who has developed a biplane which can be equipped with four of the Stokes split stretchers, invented by Surgeon General Charles Francis Stokes, of the United States Navy.

The stretchers are secured to the planes by straps, snaphooks and ring eyes and are easily transported, attached or detached. By this method an aviator and assistant could carry from four to a dozen wounded—according to the size of the aeroplane—at each trip, and as any experienced aviator can land his aeroplane so lightly that one cannot feel the contact of the wheels as they touch the ground the wounded would be much more comfortable and would be carried to the hospital possibly fifty times swifter than they are by other methods.

A number of cases of carrying relief to wounded by aeroplanes are on record, including several of officers who were shot in the Italian-Turkish War, Balkan War and French and Spanish campaigns in Morocco, but the most impressive is perhaps the case of the taking of a priest across the Sahara Desert to bring religious consolation to a dying officer. This happened in October, 1912. According to reports, Commandant Larget, of the French Spahis, was mortally shot during a skirmish with Touaregs. They were in a desolate spot, two days' march from a European settlement. The dying officer expressed a wish for religious consolation, and a brother officer aviator jumped on his aeroplane, flew to a settlement a hundred miles away and returned with the priest, and found that the dying man had probably lived two hours longer in hope of receiving the religious consolation.