

NEW-YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 26, 1912.

Kate Carew Flashes—in Mind—Through Air with Harriet Quimby

It Sounds Quite Easy and Simple—This Flying Over Sea and Land—as the Noted Aviator Describes It, and Fear Is a Stranger to Her When She's Navigating the Atmosphere.

American Woman Who Increased Her Fame the Other Day by Winging Her Way Across the English Channel Tells of Her Experience—Flying Is Only a Side Issue with Her.

IT WAS a great comfort to me to hear from Miss Harriet Quimby, who was the second woman aviatress to receive a pilot's license in the world, that there is no immediate danger of the air traffic becoming so congested as it is at 34th, 42d and 59th streets and other busy centres of the city.

I have been worrying about that. Every one seems to be up in the air these days, even our Presidential candidates, so collisions would be the natural order of things.

I was glad to know, too, that the rules of the air are strictly enforced; that a machine must keep at least 150 feet away from the next one, and that it is not considered good form to try and fly over or under an approaching aeroplane, no matter how great a hurry you may be. There are no matinee, bargain counter or surface parade amendments to this.

Seems to make one feel, oh, so much safer, somehow or other.

With motor cars running over you at every corner, with bicycles hitting you while you try to get out of the way of the surface cars, with holes in the street for you to fall into while you try to avoid being trampled on by automobile scared horses, it is a great relief for a timid person like your Aunt Kate to feel that she can take her morning exercise in the ether if she wants to and may avoid even the semblance of an accident, if she employs just one horsepower sense.

Miss Harriet Quimby told me all this very confidentially, shortly after her return from the other side, where she mochaunted the English Channel in a "10" Blériot monoplane with a Gnome engine.

In the words of the small boy, who placed his dirty hands on his bare knees, and cheered her flight:

"It's going some."

"Women," says the chaperon, "are divided into the get aways and die aways."

Miss Quimby certainly belongs to the former class.

A DRAMATIC CRITIC ON LAND.

When I discovered her she had recently alighted—from an elevator—and was sitting at her desk in the publication offices of "Leslie's Weekly," where, when she is not flying, she exercises the profession of dramatic critic—two professions not so widely dissimilar as you might think from a first, feeling glance. In both the occasional any flight is not only permitted, but actually demanded.

I had expected to see a prizefighting sort of person, with moonlike face, bulging muscles and an aviating costume of wide checks or stripes. It is a striking combination which makes a very good picture, you know.

But no. I faced a feminine young person—really young, not merely so in stage parlance—seated before a desk where a little mug of blue field violets and a great disorder of papers were evident. She was attacking this chaotic mass with as much fervor as if she had been recently appointed to her position, and before she saw me I gained the impression of a very competent business woman. Sometime during the interview, I remember she said:

"I have no desire to fly for exhibition purposes; that would be to take myself altogether too seriously. It would mean staying away from my work, which I really love. I couldn't do that."

There is a good deal of the schoolgirl about Miss Quimby still. She is just too awfully enthusiastic about things and then, yes, she doesn't talk, she actually gabbles. The first you know its b-r-r-r-r and away. I couldn't for the life of me remember all she said, for as soon as I'd catch up to one topic, she was attacking another; but I did get a word now and then, and managed to ask a few questions.

It is very natural that a young woman who has ridden broncos and bicycles and confesses that she lives the aeroplane because it affords so much easier methods of escaping the "speed millions" than she can use in her runabout should find it difficult to restrain her speech to the strictly legitimate.

In fact the interview flew along at such a pace that I could only take impressionistic notes of her appearance, and gathered, in these, that she is rather blonde, with sunburned complexion, slim and not above medium height. She has a brilliant, fre-

quent smile, good teeth and fine, keen eyes.

Her gown was of a material that looked like the old-fashioned grosgrain silk, very modish, with the new shirred trimming about the alders. A blue feather boa and a reseda felt hat with an aviating perk for line and some cord and balls for trimming completed her costume. The worsted balls kept getting in her eyes, and when she wasn't doing anything else she pushed them away. It was a great relief to learn that this was her Sunday best bonnet and not her aviating one, for she might steer an aeroplane and keep those balls out of her eyes, but she could never do both at one and the same time.

MATCHING SCARABS.

She wore a schoolgirl's outfit of bangles, rings and earrings, most of these adorned with real scarabs. Her short sleeves displayed a bangle for every year, and over her lace collar and jabot a perfect flock of these esoteric bugs wandered at will whenever her hands sought to arrange these finishing touches.

We match scarabs for a second, read the biographies written on their backs, deplore the number of false bugs on the market and congratulate ourselves on having simple pure Egyptian hieroglyphed, blue book variety.

By this time we seem to have known each other all ways.

Miss Quimby does not look a bit Oriental in spite of her scarabs; in fact, she has a very piquant, French appearance, and I asked:

"You don't seem quite like an American girl, are you?"

"Oh, yes; I wouldn't be anything else. My mother came from New York, but both she and my father are of New England stock. I was born in San Francisco."

The genealogical datum, intimate as it is, does not explain the Southern hue to her complexion. I inquired:

"Do you get sunburned aviating?"

She twisted a wandering flock of scarabs on her fingers and pushed the worsted balls out of her eyes.

"One doesn't stay up long enough at a time to have any effect of that sort. I think I must have inherited my complexion."

"Do you inherit your courage, too?"

I thought if Quimby were was one of the famous Forty-niners that might explain daughter's adventurous spirit.

"Not from father. Daddy is very scared about my flying. He doesn't like it at all, and I couldn't persuade him to go up with me, but my mother is awfully keen on the subject. She wants to fly with me."

"Do you think that women will ever have the courage to become aviators?"

EXPECTS WOMEN TO BE AVIATORS.

"Certainly I do. Really, it does not require so much courage. I have never met a woman who did not want to fly. I don't know whether they lack caution, whether they are more reckless and don't care what becomes of them, but they are certainly keen about the fascinating air game."

"Then, why haven't more of them attempted it?"

"I suppose one reason is the expense. At the present moment it is a sport outside the possibilities of the many."

Being a journalistic person myself and not having been able out of my abundant salary to save enough for many aeroplanes, my questioning glance toward the pile of manuscripts was a sufficient interrogatory.

"Oh, I was lucky. I am a great believer in luck, aren't you? I just thought along those lines—that is, that I wanted to fly—and the first I knew there I was flying. The opportunity came and I took it. I have backing, you know."

Miss Quimby does not explain whether her aviating is done under public or private enterprise.

"Did you meet many women aviators on the other side?"

Miss Quimby's smile resembles that of one of her scarabs. I read in it that in Europe the feminine flyers are taken less seriously than here.

It has been, apparently, a very busy homecoming for Miss Quimby. Many telephone and other interruptions have punctuated our hurried talk. Now a clerk announces that Collector Loeb is on the

phone. Miss Quimby catches her breath—and explains: "It does take such a lot of tape to get my machine through the Custom House."

Just before she hangs up the receiver she invites the Collector of the Port to test the machine himself.

"I'll bring you up from Seagate. Yes?"

Whatever the response it lends color to her next statement.

"Isn't it amazing! Men always make excuses. I don't know whether they don't trust women as pilots or whether they are really afraid, but they won't go up. I had a very competent mechanic whom I really wanted to take up with me. I believe he knew I intended to ask him and for a long time he avoided giving me the opportunity. One day he said: 'Miss Quimby, I hope you won't ever ask me to go up with you.'"

"Why?" said I, rather provoked.

"I am afraid of falling under the fascination."

Your Aunt Kate interrupted here to say, "I don't blame him a bit."

"Falling under the fascination of flying," continues Miss Quimby, unperturbed by my interpolated compliment.

Looks as though aviating invitations were going to tax men's imaginations more than 5 o'clock teas, picnics and afternoon bridge parties do.

"What excuses do they make?" I ask curiously.

"Usually wife is afraid to have him fly. Sometimes he accepts, oh, so eagerly, but before the time some important business matter comes up and to his great regret, etc."

"And women are really eager?"

"Awfully so, not a bit afraid. Personally I have never felt a symptom of uneasiness of that kind."

"Not even when you take out a new machine? Aren't you afraid that it may develop a strange kind of trick?"

"Of course, no two machines are alike and you have to be cautious when you handle a new one, but the same rule applies to a horse, a motor, a cycle. One can be very, very cautious without being in the least bit afraid. For instance, the machine I used to cross the Channel was hauled badly when I got up a way I should not attempt to make the crossing, but it was as easy as sitting in an arm chair. In thirty seconds I had climbed 1,500 feet."

Miss Quimby has the perfect poise and self confidence which I have been told is the state of mind of all aviators who have never met any serious setbacks. Wondering about this, I inquired:

"Have you ever had any accidents?"

"None to speak of. Once at Garden City my running gear was wrenched off the forks and one of the wings were broken, but I wasn't scared. If I had been I suppose there would have been a serious mishap. I kept my seat and turned off the power. Mr. Thomas Sipworth, the English aviator, had a similar accident. In both cases the machines were badly damaged."

"Can you mend your own machine?"

"Oh, I can make little repairs; tinker with it a bit. I am not much of a mechanic. I have had some preliminary experience running a typewriter, a bicycle and a runabout, but I don't think I could exactly qualify."

Miss Quimby has a delicate physique, her hands and arms certainly do not give the impression of great strength. Looking at them it seems hardly possible that they can guide one of the great air birds which, in the panzars, look as if only a Samson or an Amazon could successfully compete with their resistant force.

"You must be a lot stronger than you look," is my deduction.

"It does not take hardly any strength except in coming down. There is some pressure, then. Afterward I will be conscious of the feeling of strain on my fore-

arm, but I never notice it at the time."

"Are you very exhilarated when you get up to great heights and depressed when you come to earth?"

"I notice that a great many aviators have told in their interviews of the effect on the spirits of great altitudes. I have only been up 6,000 feet—that isn't very high—and my only sensation has been one of the keenest enjoyment. The sweeping up from the earth is the most tremendously exhilarating feeling. My, it is great. I never have any depression afterward. In fact, the sensation I get is very much like that you have in a motor car when you are skimming along absolutely regardless of speed law, only it is a thousand times more intense."

"I suppose you pity us poor worms when you get up there, the earth looks like a pin cushion, and nothing seems like anything."

The young aviatress has a very musical laugh. She runs up and down the gamut of the scale two or three times before she says:

"I am not the least bit romantic, and I am so busy watching my machine that I don't get time to have any of these tire-bursting thoughts. I don't believe I have any 'temperament.' I am content to enjoy the physical sensation of flying. Of course, I enjoy the success, too. Its fine to be successful. Its simply great, but its the soaring that really does it. Oh, that soaring up—up—up."

Miss Quimby looks ecstatic. I look disappointed.

"Not a little bit of a day dream about visiting other worlds, of losing yourself in space and never returning, of being in the clouds when you meet your soulmate?"

"Well, you are sure to be that, anyway, aren't you?" inquired Miss Quimby in the tone of one who doesn't need the information she asks. "As for day dreaming, you can't do much of that. If your oil runs out three minutes, if you lose sight of your

steering gear, you will come plunking down to earth with a dull, sickening thud. Day dreams don't seem worth while with such an awakening."

"I suppose all your senses get very sharpened?"

"Yes, particularly your hearing. I find that I can tell all about my machine better by the noise it makes than in any other way. Just as long as the regular thud, thud continues, you know everything is all right. The slightest vibratory change, and your attention is excited. What does that mean? You listen and wait, with every nerve on edge until you find out."

"Then you might as well be in the engine room of an apartment hotel watching the motor?" I inquired.

"Oh, not exactly. I am conscious all the time of the crowds and the spaces, the enthusiasm and the throbbing human life underneath, but it is a far away sensation—the other is the nearer."

"Does that knowledge of thousands of people watching make you want to do little circus tricks that amuse the people and endanger your life?"

"No. I don't believe in being reckless. Perhaps when I have some more flying I shall feel more confident."

I tried again vainly to trap Miss Quimby into admissions concerning her "double life"—that existence lived partly in the clouds, partly on the earth—but I could not. She refused to take any imaginary flights. She ignored the idea that to the true "sport" there could be anything involved but the love of the air game. She was absolutely blind to any psychological intent. She seemed so full of the joy of living, of the mere touch-and-go of existence, but to all else indifferent.

I made a tack to windward of the subject.

"As a journalist you must have written a lot. How can you do that unless your imagination is stimulated all the time?"

"Oh, yes. I have written screeds; some fiction, too."

I am quite sure that Miss Quimby hasn't felt her stories yet. She is too near the scene of action to get a perspective. I have heard men of action and of the pen say that you cannot live a story and write about it at the same time. Distance and time must act as solvents.

"Did you have a different sort of costume than your ordinary flying one to cross the Channel?"

"No, just the same."

"And that?"

MISS QUIMBY'S FLYING COSTUME.

"It is made of a sort of wool-backed satin—the men reporters called it 'satin packed in wool' in their dispatches. I selected it because it is pliable and warm. I wear a blouse, and the lower part is a sort of cross between bloomers and riding trousers. It is plum colored and has a hood attached. I put on two extra coats for the Channel crossing, and at the last moment I felt some one strapping a hot water bottle to my waist. Some one else put newspapers between the coats. I was mighty glad of those newspapers, not so much for the warmth, but because when I landed the first thing I did was to look about for some paper on which to write the Channel crossing, and my paper. I couldn't find any, and finally wrote on the margin of the newspapers."

"It is too bad your father and mother were not there to see your Channel crossing," I say sympathizingly.

"Yes, but perhaps it is just as well," says Miss Quimby in her most practical tone. "If they had been I don't believe they would have allowed me to go up."

"What is the distance you crossed?"

"Only thirty-five miles from shore to shore. I started from the Dover aerodrome at 5 o'clock in the morning. I set my course over Dover Castle. I struck some gusty little winds right away, and looked down for the tug that was to follow, intending to steer my course by its trail of smoke, but I was soon in a fog bank, and in spite of the warnings I had received—orders, I might call them—not to go very high, I just had to mount over it. I went up 6,000 feet, and simply could not believe my eyes when, in what seemed an awfully short time, I saw the French coast."

"Didn't you have any special sensation on that trip? It couldn't have been just a case of watching your machinery then?"

"I had a tremendously weird feeling when I was lost in the fog. I have no bump of locality, for the first time I used my compass."

Miss Quimby interrupts herself to show me a small, metal incased compass with the girlish remark: "Isn't that the cutest thing you ever saw?"

I allowed that it was. I didn't want to have any controversy on the subject. I wanted to get across the Channel, having started. "Then?" I said, quite impatiently, recalling her to her duty as aviator.

"Then?" she repeated, in a sort of dazed way. "Oh, yes, where was I, let me see, in the air over the French coast. Well, I remember, I finally landed in a fishing village called Egluhen, near Hardeiot. I didn't want to tear up the newly ploughed fields, so chose the beach. A lot of American people who were there met me and I had a rousing old welcome. They were terribly proud of me, as were the people in London."

Miss Quimby tells of her successes in a very modest way, not belittling nor over-emphasizing them. It seems to me to show a pretty good fibre of character to be able to come back to a business desk and take up the daily routine of work after an experience of that kind, and not have one's head turned.

"Did you take out any insurance?"

"An aviator cannot insure himself, but he can his machine. The rates are so tremendously high I trusted to my luck again and didn't bother."

In the early days of Miss Quimby's flights at the Moisant School, Garden City, where she was a crack pupil, her masculine rivals used to speak of her as "one of the grass cutting squad," the term of reproach levelled against those who were content to touch the top of the lawn, so I inquired:

"Did you meet with much incredulity when you announced your intention of crossing the Channel?"

SURPRISED THE SKEPTICS.

"Did I? I don't believe any one thought I intended to do anything but go up and circle a bit in the air. I can hear their laughing now as they said, 'Q, old girl, you can't fool us.' Up to the final moment when I started they didn't believe I was going."

"Are there any new inventions you believe will make a difference in aeroplaning in the near future?"

"I hope a good hydroplane attachment will be made soon. I believe that is the greatest aviating need. With one of these perfected it will be possible to start from the water just as easily as we do now from the land."

I spoke of an invention I had read of lately, by which it would be possible to leave the steering gear when the machine was going steadily.

"I don't know anything about that. It sounds all right."

"I think there should be air stations, but I suppose they will come in time. No doubt lots of improvements will be made as soon as the initial cost becomes less."

I inquired if she thought it would be a good real estate investment to buy up mountain tops, but she did not put herself on record in this matter.

"And its future?"

"I have no original ideas. I believe it will be used in war; that it will soon carry mail, passengers—there is practically no limit, I should say, to its possibilities. Miss Quimby is such a fine example of the woman engaged in the so-called masculine avocations of profession and sport, without having lost any of her feminine charm, that I ask concerning one of the mooted questions of the hour.

"Are you a suffragette?"

"I believe in the suffrage for women, naturally. Unfortunately I have happened to be in London two or three times during suffrage riots and I have actually felt apologetic."

"You think militant methods do more harm than good?"

DEPLORES MILITANT SUFFRAGISM.

"Yes, I saw one refined looking woman take up a huge stone and throw it through a plate glass window. I felt that stone did as much harm to the cause as to the glass. It does seem as if they might get the vote quietly, as the women of my state, California, did."

She interviews me on the subject:

"What is your opinion of the anti's? Do you believe their opposition is anything but a pose? What do they do for? They simply can't be satisfied, can they?"

"Possibly to please the men," I venture.

"It must be," says our only aviatress, oh, so sadly, deploring the means not the end.

Not to be in a moving picture exhibit argues the latter day celebrity unknown.

"I suppose you were kinemacolorized?"

"I saw the pictures before I left London. There is 650 feet of film. They will be shown here soon. The little tug that was going to pick me up spotted a lot of the photographs. Of course, it had to do something to earn the money, if it wasn't anything more than to have its picture taken."

"Your future plans?" I have to make ready to go for there are impatient applicants and Miss Quimby has reached her fourth breath.

"Oh, I may try a 'cross-country flight. I think that sort of aviating should be encouraged, but I have nothing definite in mind."

She gives me a propelling handshake and I glide away in the direction indicated.



Kate Carew's

"I HAVE ONLY BEEN UP 6,000 FEET," SAID MISS QUIMBY, APOLOGETICALLY.



"I DON'T BELIEVE IN BEING RECKLESS."



WE HAD A NICE, GIRLY TIME MATCHING SCARABS.