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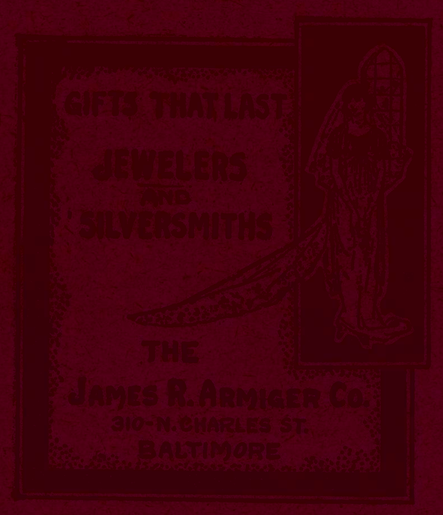

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HOW IT FEELS TO CRUISE IN THE AIR RELATED BY AIRPLANE PILOT.

(Continued from Page 3)

scend. The ground crew have had a wireless from us and are waiting at the field. Ballast is thrown off, or gas blown out as necessary, and we gradually get lower and lower. Drag ropes, five hundred feet long are dropped as we near the ground and seized by those below. The operation of walking the ship into the shed is similar in every detail to the process of taking her out.

This in brief is the way we live, eat, sleep and work aboard the Shenandoah. You will observe the similarity between our life and life on a well-run ship, especially a large vessel like the Leviathan. We have our duties, our jobs to be done, our work ahead. We have no time to think about the distance between the thin plank we are standing on and the ground, or that a half-inch rung of a ladder holds us up from dropping a couple of miles into space. We think no more about these things than a sailor at sea thinks of the fact that he is two thousand miles from shore.

These are our sensations at present, and in the not too distant future these will be the sensations of the traveler by rigid airships. I visualize in twenty years or less huge lighter-than-air craft running all over the world on well-established routes. There will be an express service between New York and Chicago, with connections for San Francisco. These mammoths will have large cars slung underneath their bodies, with sleeping, eating and lounging compartments. Such compartments will run three-quarters of the length of the hull and apart from the engine, so that no noise will be heard. Even now the Shenandoah makes less noise than the average express train.

As to cost. We manage to get a mile in the Shenandoah on nine-tenths of a gallon of gasoline. Undoubtedly we shall do better than this. The airship of the future will not need a large crew to maintain her, either. Masts, such as we are now experimenting with, will anchor the ship securely, and passengers will be carried up the frame-work of the mast in elevators, entering the ship at one end. All this is coming. Our sensations—or lack of them—when we go up in the Shenandoah today will be duplicated by thousands of our countrymen in the near future. We are so used to the ship that a flight in her is second nature to us. In twenty years a journey in a rigid airship will be about as daring as a trip to Europe is today on an average ocean liner.

Shenandoah means, in Indian, Daughter of the Stars. With a cruising capacity of over five thousand feet, with a ceiling of seven thousand feet, there is nothing exaggerated in the name. In the future we shall see vessels of this sort making trips to the North Pole and the Equator with ease. The possibilities of the rigid airship are limitless.

It is planned to send the Shenandoah to the North Pole in the course of the coming summer. The recent destruction of a similar dirigible, the German-French Dixmude, it is said, has furnished lessons and morals that will have a bearing on the project.

FLIVVERS AND BANDITS ON THE ROAD TO MEKKA.

Between Bagdad, city of Oriental romance and home, not so long since, of the magnificent Haroun Al Raschild, a road, of a sort, winds away to Mekka, shrine and cynosure of the Mohammedan universe. Since the dawn of Mohammedanism, not long after the birth of Christ, the feet of pilgrims innumerable, and of donkeys almost innumerable, have followed the road down to the Holy Places, beside the Red Sea. Bandits, who flourish wherever there are pilgrims, lurked beside the trails. Nowadays, there are probably as many pilgrims and bandits as ever, for a pilgrimage to Mekka, is included in the religious aspirations of every Mohammedan, but feet,, human or otherwise, are not so frequent on the road. The American flivver has upset the routine of centuries. Stella Marshal Bogart, wife of a member of the recent American Financial Mission to Persia ,took the trip last summer and she tells the story of one of these queer pilgrimages, brought up to date. A certain Hussein Ali was the Arab organizer of the convoy, "the biggest and the queerest that ever left Bagdad," she reports in the New York times, and—

With a shrewdness to match any Occidental stock manipulator, he had achieved, unaided, a corner in transportation.

For the week past, the Euphrates, influenced, no doubt, by the bad example earlier in the year of the Tigris, had been overflowing its banks and acting in a way unheard of in history. The bridge at Feluji had gone the way of the Maude at Bagdad. The flooded district included many miles between Bagdad and Aleppo, blocking the usual four-day automobile route between tho two places.

When the spirit of Mohammed moves, it moves regardless of flood and tides. Upon this watery scene there had gathered, unwarned, large numbers of Persian and Arab pilgrims on their way to Mekka, fretting to leave Bagdad and begin the second lap of their journey. With typical Arab patience Hussein Ali waited until their number had swelled to 100 strong. Meantime he collected Fords, good and bad, as many as twenty-six.

With admirable elasticity of mind the pilgrims had shifted their allegiance from the faithful donkey of the East and their fathers' fathers to the trusty flivver—mute (?) symbols, shall we say, of the old and the new civilization? As I looked, I forgave them this sop to modernity, for it was the one weakness in an otherwise perfect whole. Pilgrims fat and pilgrims thin, pilgrims old and bearded, red or black, all were bent upon sharing Paradise with the good Mohammed in the next world. Many were already mollahs (priests), with white turbans around their heads. The direct descendants of Mohammed were bright green turbans or sashes. Flowing abbahs (kimono-shaped cloaks), Persian caps (skull effect), and Arab headdresses completed the most Oriental of pictures. Always in the background of their thoughts was the hope that they were about to attain the holy state of hadj, a state granted to every true believer who makes a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet at Mekka. To this end the purposes and savings of a life-time were being devoted.

Concentration on the next world had not prevented care for the comforts of this one, however, records Mrs. Bogart, and they had piled their cars with mountains of luggage until their feet were on a level with their noses—

Huge bedding-rolls of pillows and coverings were in evidence, together with cooking utensils and food, samovars for making tea. Each pilgrim had his Koran to read and his prayer-rug on which to kneel and—

My curiosity was suddenly transferred to Mahmoud, our Arab driver, making frantic signs for us to get placed in our own car. The most noteworthy thing about Mahmoud was his square shoulders. There was something suggestive, too, of will power in the tall, soldierly frame, deep set eyes and strong jaw, as he stood proudly like a captain beside his ship ready for the race. These trips from Bagdad to Aleppo were his Marathon. A little shiver of presentiment went over me as I saw those shoulders and heard some one whisper that here was the master driver of Bagdad before whom all others bowed.

We were the only Europeans in the party, and the only Christians, with the exception of two Armenian families, who joined the party later. The "we" included "Sahib," myself, and daughter of seventeen and son of nine. Oh, yes, there were three other women (Mohammedans), and, although they kept their faces closely veiled, their feminine garments were always a comfort. "Sahib," as Mahmoud always called him, was our chance traveling companion, both French and English, having a French father and an English mother. Take your choice! We learned to be grateful for both, especially for the French father, whose spirit lent gaiety and vivacity to the journey and surely inspired the whistling when things went wrong. The best thing about Sahib was his Browning, and the fact that after many years in the trenches he knew how to use it, lent more comfort even than the veiled women. The pilgrims were unarmed, but the Arab leaders wore daggers and carried long, awkward-looking guns. The roads beyond Feluji were very bad. It was a case of unselfishness being the best policy, for if you did not get out and help the other fellow's car, there would be no one to help you when your turn came. Sahib was always willing to lend a hand, but Mahmoud's one idea was to show his skill in driving. As he knew little about the engine, he swiftly learned, through necessity, that quickest of teachers, the convoy idea of sticking together both through thick and thin.

Within two hours of leaving Feluji, thanks to the guiding of the police officers, the convoy lost its way in a wheat-field. When the Arab leaders realized what had happened, an angry conference was held, and it was decided to go back and try our luck on the main road. Many small bridges were broken down along this route, but we made some progress. Five o'clock came and with it the knowledge that Ramadi could not be reached that night. There were too many brigands lying in wait behind the hills! It was necessary to camp on the banks of the Euphrates.

An open spot at the base of some low mountains was selected. The banks were formed of a clinging clay-like substance, and it was a work of art to extricate your foot if you made a misstep. The Pilgrims were willing to take the chance and, removing their ghivas (a Persian sandal), bathed feet and hands in the river before kneeling in prayer. It was a wise prophet who insisted upon cleanliness before godliness!

We pitched, not the tents that we should have had with us, but our army cots near our favorite group. We were not altogether disinterested in our friendship. "Our favorites" not only chanted their prayers the most fervently, but they made the most elaborate preparations for their meals. We enjoyed the fragrant odors from the cooking, and then there was always the hope that, like Dives of old, they might

(Continued on Page 3)

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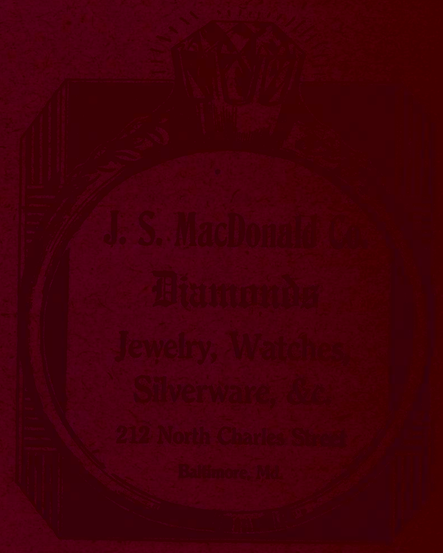

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