

THE AMERICAN GIRL WHO IS QUEEN of the AIR



Miss Katherine Wright, sister to the famous Wright Brothers.

How Much the Wright Brothers Owe to Their Sister Katherine

PRESIDENT TAFT, in the East Room of the White House, is soon to present to the Wright brothers the New York Aero Club medals for their distinguished services to the newly born science of flight.

If, among the notable assemblage of diplomats and representatives of the army and navy, the quiet, steady gaze of a girl whose features resemble those of Wilbur and Orville Wright be there to note the proceedings with an equanimity greater than that of any of the men present, no one there will have any difficulty in identifying her as Katherine Wright, the American girl who is the queen of the air, as her brothers are its kings, and the sister whose unswerving devotion has greatly aided them in making their amazing triumphs possible.

She is typical of the American womanhood that, with its combination of courage, intelligence and loyalty, inspires and supports in their commanding position the men of the nation which has so splendidly led the world in its progress.

Modestly as she has taken the fame which has so suddenly been thrust upon her, she stands today as the embodiment of the American woman who has aided in the achievement of all the greater deeds and has ever been content to find her reward in the advancement of those she loves and serves.

"Why," exclaimed one of the party that welcomed her and her brothers on their return to the United States, "they say you thought more of Orville and Wilbur, and treated them with more deference than you showed the kings and queens of Europe."

"Why shouldn't I?" demanded straight-forward Katherine Wright. "Doesn't a girl think more of her brothers than she does of kings and queens?"

Or, she might have added, hasn't this girl shown she cares more for her brothers than she does for herself?

SOME time in the future—maybe a couple of months or so, if grim death should reap one of them as it did beautiful Lady Curzon—such celebrities as a duchess of Marlborough, a princess de Sagan or a Countess Szechenyi will amount to not even a memory in the world that has been a-flutter with their international fame.

But if some one of the countless fatal accidents which this untitled girl from Dayton, Ohio, has so often braved were to befall her now, long ages yet to come would still honor her unpretentious name, for already it is so linked with the achievements of her brothers that hers is the glory which cannot die.

Science and the arts, whether or not they bring wealth to their devotees, have always had a way of conferring fame immortal upon some fortunate aspirants. In such a fame Katherine Wright now shares.

Not because she is already known throughout Europe and America by any such sobriquet as "queen of the air," although she has earned it fairly; nor yet because the rulers of so vast a domain as Great Britain's or of so proud a nation as Spain or Italy have accorded to her attentions which the utmost riches and distinction cannot rival.

Her abiding glory must ever be the whole world regarded its two unacknowledged sons of genius with suspicion and disdain, was faithful to them and gave to them not only her savings to carry on their indefatigable battle with nature for its last, jealously guarded secret, but that she supplied largely the firm and steady spirit that impelled them to the efforts which conquered poverty and found their renewal in disaster.

It is now generally known that when Orville

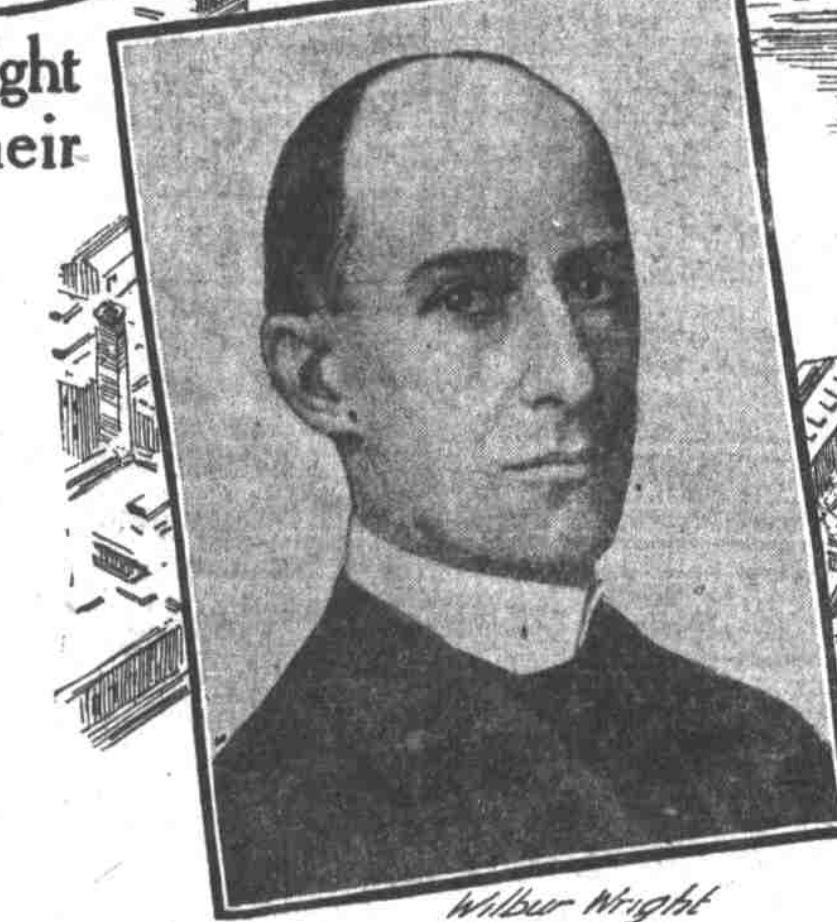
Wright sustained the fearful fall at Fort Myer, near Washington, which broke his leg and killed Lieutenant Selfridge, his passenger, the first wish of the injured aeronaut upon recovering consciousness was for his sister, Katherine.

She was a teacher in the Dayton High School, and her work there had for years meant to her a livelihood as well as a provision for her future. But the dispatches had only time to reach Orville's home when the sister was on her way to Washington, where

instant upon her taking charge of his difficult and very dangerous case, he began to mend.

But it has not been known that the call of the injured man for his sister, made as a hurt child makes its call for a mother, was merely illustrative of the tie that has bound this previously unknown Egeria of science to the two men who have made flight a reality.

Back of the now-familiar story of the struggles against imminent poverty in their little bicycle repair



Wilbur Wright



Orville Wright

shop at Dayton, back of all the slow mounting of vicissitudes which have marked the strange rise of the family of poor Bishop Wright to what is now comparative opulence, has long been the slender, staunch, inspiring figure of the quiet school teacher. It was not the first time that Katherine had taken charge of her ailing brothers. Her role of nurse goes back to the days when Wilbur and Orville first had their dreams of flight, and it was she who gave to those dreams their beginnings and their stimulation.

When the boys—for they were just boys then—fell sick or were wholly tired with their labors, it was Katherine who read to them books on aerial navigation until they wondered whether they might not essay experiments, as the famous Lillenthal and others were doing.

"Why shouldn't you?" Katherine demanded, with the sublime confidence which women have in their menfolk.

So they did; and she was with them in their studies and their councils, digging up recondite in-

formation, advising and, when the financial crisis came, backing up their inventions and experiments with the little hoard of cash she had accumulated out of her teacher's salary against the time when she should be able to teach no more—the safeguard against that dreadful "old-age hunger" which women forever fear.

Behind the "mystery" which so long shrouded their innumerable experiments—a mystery born of popular resentment against what was ordinary shyness, discretion and business judgment—the years during which the Wrights perfected their aeroplanes and their skill in navigation were crowded with financial mirages, with hopes and disappointments, through all of which their sister Katherine remained their rock of refuge.

When Octave Chanute, the most profound reasoner upon the principles of human flight, gave them the benefit of his knowledge, they designed an aeroplane in which they flew so effectively that a French syndicate opened negotiations with them for the perfected machines.

The offer meant the beginnings of the fortune of which they had dreamed. But to perfect their invention money was needed; and the brothers, always spending to attain closer to their goal, were practically penniless.

As usual, they took their troubles to Katherine; and she, without hesitation, drew from the bank her little savings and turned them over to the budding aeronauts. Then, on the eve of success, the publicity they had all along dreaded overtook their invention.

CRUDE PICTURES COPIED

Crude pictures of their craft appeared. The Delagranges and the Farman abroad were enabled to make cruder copies, which, nevertheless, flew. The French syndicate, discerning no monopoly obtainable, abandoned them. The only true inventors of a flying machine seemed ruined; and their sister, the woman who had given her all that they might win, was penniless save for her wages.

It was that woman who, in the midst of the despair that followed, urged them to go on.

"What?" she cried. "Quit because ignorant imitators can copy your invention and stay in the air a few seconds? This is only the start. The brains that invented the flying machine are the only brains that can carry it forward."

Her judgment proved correct. The imitators could not advance beyond the limit of the resources which the Wright experiments put at their command. The hope of aviation still lay in the little shop at Dayton.

The brothers gave more time and their natural hustle to the shop and to automobile repairs. They raised the income to the point where it left them a surplus for fresh experiments in flight.

But, after a time, the certainty which developed in the minds of those who were following the subject of aviation that the Wrights alone had the key to the secret of the birds brought them other offers of aid.

Finally, it is said, they accepted the unlimited means placed at their disposal by a banker. He gave them the needful funds on a strictly business basis and has reaped relatively enormous returns already from his investment, for they have won nearly a quarter of a million in prizes alone and are now filling orders for sixty aeroplanes at \$1500 apiece—nearly half a million dollars more.

Alas, where so recently they won their first need of fame's recompense, the fates that sometimes so richly reward those favored by the muse of science brought three kings from the East to do them homage—Edward of Great Britain, Alfonso of Spain and Victor Emmanuel of Italy, with a queen or so and scores of highly titled nobilities to swell the chorus of adulation.

FRIEND OF ROYALTIES

Katherine Wright, joining them in their triumph as she had been loyal in their disappointment and chagrin, found herself suddenly elevated to the position of princess regent in the court of nobility and royalty that now danced attendance on her brothers.

For her the most attentive politenesses of King Edward; for her the most gallant deference of young Alfonso, whom she considers a very excellent and worthy young man; for her the unassuming friendliness of Victor Emmanuel and the most solicitous honors on the part of Queen Regina when the fetes of aviation were presided over by that gracious Italian sovereign.

Yet none of these compliments could equal in her eyes—or in the eyes of the throng who so passionately besought her brothers to take them as passengers for a single flight—the distinction conferred upon her by Wilbur and Orville in permitting her to become the first of the most experienced woman pilot the world thus far knows.

Stared at by thousands of envious eyes, she was borne aloft repeatedly at her brother Wilbur's side, until at length her own ambition has been touched with the Promethean fire and she has declared her intention of learning how to navigate an aeroplane on her own account.

Indeed, she has already done that very thing. It was during the last flight, made privately in Rome, that she was given control of the machine, and she carried the journey forward to a most successful landing.

This is the "queen of the air" whom the steamer brought back to the United States a few weeks ago to receive her unsought portion of the ovation thrust upon her brothers. What she did immediately afterward was characteristic.

She hurried home to Dayton. "Well," with her usual simplicity of answer, "my father is sick, and I ought to take care of him."

Recalling Cupid to Make Business Better

ALL Paris was highly amused recently by the announcement of the impending remarriage of Mme. Gabrielle Rejane, its popular, volatile and emotional actress, and her divorced husband, M. Porel, theatrical manager.

Not so much amused by the idea of the reunion as by the frank acknowledgment of the motive that prompted it.

The rekindling of the spark of love? Oh, no! Merely a matter of business.

Since their divorce both have met business reverses. Because of lack of success M. Porel has been compelled to give up the management of the Vaudeville Theater, while Mme. Rejane has been fighting a losing battle at the theater bearing her name.

When working together they were successful financially. Then why not resume the old business relations? That done, why not resume the old marital relations?

Excellent idea. And not a bad advertisement. So Rejane and Porel decided to remarry—to make business better.

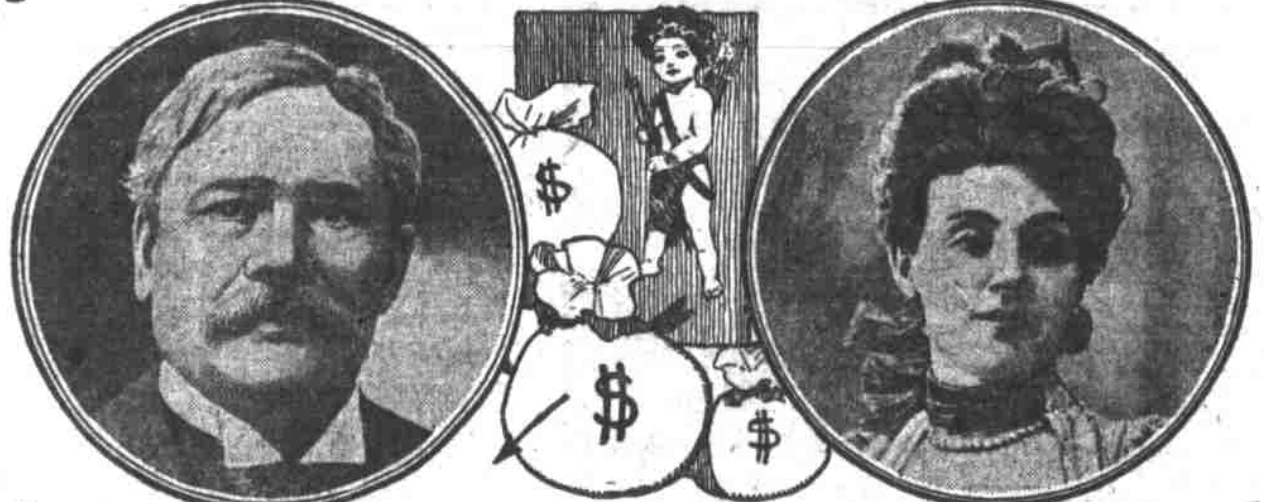
"There is nothing like a run of bad business" to bring two people together," explained M. Porel. Will this new idea find lodgment in the minds of American divorcees?

WHEN Madame Rejane acted under the management of her husband she was a great success, and he made a reputation as a manager. Together they turned much money out of the theatrical grist mill.

For many years before their divorce the Porels did not get along amicably. There were disputes and altercations, and on more than one occasion, as the actress testified during the divorce trial, the swarthy manager inflicted physical violence upon her.

Rejane's failure to draw since her divorce is a mystery to many stage folk. First and foremost in the hearts of Frenchmen, the "divine Sarah" occupies an inviolate shrine; but in the hearts of the Parisians, who must not necessarily be Frenchmen, the incomparable Rejane reigns supreme.

She is so sprightly, so vivacious, so artful, so witty. She dances like a butterfly, her laughter is like sunbeams, her wit is as pliable as summer breezes! Why, then, her failure?



M. Porel, who is to be taken back to Rejane's heart, to manage her Theatre

Mme. Rejane, famous French actress, who needs a manager

Of all theatrical managers in Paris Porel has been considered one of the most efficient, most capable. Why, since the divorce, has he been unable to bring crowds to the Vaudeville Theater? When he managed Rejane they coined the blessed francs. The box office was always besieged.

But with the divorce in 1905 a change came in the fortunes of both.

Was it because the two, together, blended a sense of the artistic and the commercial; that, separated, the artistry of Rejane failed because it lacked the support of the business mind of Porel?

FIRST OF COMEDIENNES

Among the world's comediennes Madame Rejane stands in the topmost rank. That, under any circumstances, she should prove a failure is a mystery to those sage and almost clairvoyant minds behind the boxoffice who can figure, almost to a decimal, the receipts for a coming season.

Rejane was born, in a sense, on the stage. Her childhood was spent about the lobby of L'Ambigu, where her father took tickets and her mother took care of the buffet. As a child she longed to become an actress. She grew up with that overmastering ambition, and at an early age went on the stage. Her incomparable genius blazed the way for her.

Madame Rejane is well known as the original creator of "Zaza." She also made notable successes in "Germaine," "La Robe Rouge," "L'Hirondelle" and "Diane." Her great hit in London was in

"Madame Sans Gene." But whether in comedy or tragedy her genius carries her through to triumph, whether in "Ma Cousine" or "The Doll's House" of Ibsen.

Madame Rejane's home life, until the difficulties with her husband arose, was considered ideal. To her children she is devoted. In her household she is absolute mistress. She invariably dines with her children, and each morning walks with them.

When, some years ago, the serpent of discord reared its venomous head in the ideal home, people wondered. In 1909 the couple separated. Then followed the suit for divorce brought by Madame Rejane. M. Porel retaliated with a counter-suit. Before the judge madame stamped her tiny French foot and exclaimed:

"Peste! Zee brute! Zee monstaire!" And then, in a torrent of language, she declared that Porel had treated her badly, had beaten and mistreated her. That it was a shame, a scandal. That she would stand it no longer. Parbleu! not a meenute longer!

M. Porel was granted a divorce in 1905. Madame Rejane had been under contract with her husband to produce 100 performances. When she refused to play "La Montaner" he sued her for \$30,000. There was a great deal in the way of explosives, the air shaken in French and the floors of the court resounded with the stamping of madame's petite foot.

But now, of course, that they have made up, the future looks brighter, even if it was a business arrangement that brought them together again.