

and Bourchier. I give them, however, as I heard them related.

On one occasion Mr. Martin Harvey, when on tour, paid a visit to a travelling waxwork show which happened at that time to be in the same town. In giving a description of the various exhibits, the proprietor of the show pointed to a very lean, attenuated figure with an order on its breast, and said:—

"Is Majesty King George the Fourth?" "Who?" inquired Mr. Harvey, in surprise. "Why, I thought George the Fourth was a fat man."

"Did yer, then?" sneered the showman. "Well, yer wouldn't be very fat if you'd been without wittles as long as him."

Waxworks also figure in the story told by Mr. Bourchier, who, though of French Huguenot extraction, pronounces his name "Boucher." On one occasion he happened to be passing a group of labourers who were examining a playbill whereon his name loomed large.

"Wor be the use o' bringing these furin hacter blokes up 'ere, if yanter know?"

"E heint a furiner. I heard at the ayter they call him 'Boucher'."

"Then wat do 'e want to spell it wrong on the bill fur? I reckon 'e be all a ketch-penny biz, so I'll spend my sixpence to see the new talkin' donkey at the waxworks; there be no flies on 'im, anyhow."

Aeroplanes Improved.

THE MONOPLANE BEST FOR SPEED.

The race round London, though there were so few starters, presented a fine opportunity for taking stock of the progress made in flying machine construction during the past year, and the gradual elimination of the Element of Chance. In regard to monoplanes or machines, nearly all are now fitted with a type of hurricane deck, forming part of either a streamline or boat-shaped body section, that enables pilot, passenger, petrol tank, and so forth to be shielded from the wind caused by the passage of the plane through the air. To some there are also fitted inspection glasses, which enable the pilot to see without exposure of his head. Now that the age of cross-country aeroplaning has arrived, flyers steer by compass specially designed so as not to be affected by electricity or vibration, and by special aviators' maps, wherein all the distinctive features to be seen below in passage are indicated in pictorial fashion, so that the pilot can check the accuracy of his compass or correct his course by prominent landmarks.

The exhibition demonstrated once again that for more speed work the monoplane is still leading. One of the most interesting of the machines competing was the Caudron monoplane, which has the back end of the wing shaped something like the ripple of waves, instead of being in a straight line, as regards the front edge, and for some distance backwards, but the rear half of each wing is left quite plain, instead of being rigid. This is the result of experiments, carrying out much of the principle of a bird's wing. It has been held for some time that the flexibility of a bird's feather tips contributes in large measure to its stability when flying, and certainly the Caudron monoplane flies remarkably steadily.

The aeroplane performances were another tribute to the present day ascendancy of the Gnome engine, but at the same time it is becoming quite clear that unless the Gnome is very much improved it will not long retain its pride of place. The Caudron plane, with its 45-h.p. Anzani motor, proved only the merest shade slower than Sopwith's Gnome Bleriot up to the time its pilot had to descend, owing to petrol shortage, and the Maurice Farman biplane, with its 70-h.p. Renault engine, gave a remarkable display of quick-rising with a passenger.

Apart from power, a good deal has been done to render machines more manageable when the engines are switched off. Most of the devices for maintaining lateral balance are still in the experimental stage, but already machines have been evolved which, in spite of their greatly enhanced speed, do not require a tithe of the physical effort to control them that was required in the days when "aimen" were pleased to be able to flutter a few hundred yards, forty or fifty feet above Mother Earth. Much more, of course, has to be accomplished in this direction, and the avoidance of mishap still depends to a very considerable extent on the pilot's sense of balance and close attention to his machine, but it is an incontestable fact that the strain on pilots has been greatly diminished of late.

Politics in the Playhouse.

The Portuguese seem to take their politics with them everywhere, even to the playhouse. The other night, at Braga, for instance, in the Theatre Vicente, a slight political discussion arose between a Republican officer of the army and a Monarchist Councillor, which led to the officer boxing the Councillor's ears and the Councillor breaking his walking-stick over the officer's head. Thereupon the officer's friends took up the argument, opposed by the Councillor's, swords were freely used, and "bullets flew in all directions." The fire-hose was then brought into play for an hour, and when everyone was drenched and the wounded were removed, the theatre, we presume, was emptied and closed for the evening. The "Daily News" correspondent, who records the scene, says nothing of the play. Were the actors, too, joining in the fray? We trust none of them was among the "twenty-two wounded, nine seriously."

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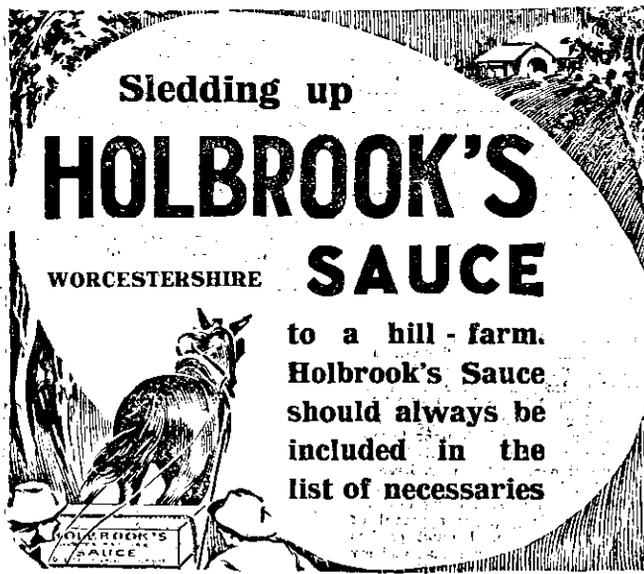
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