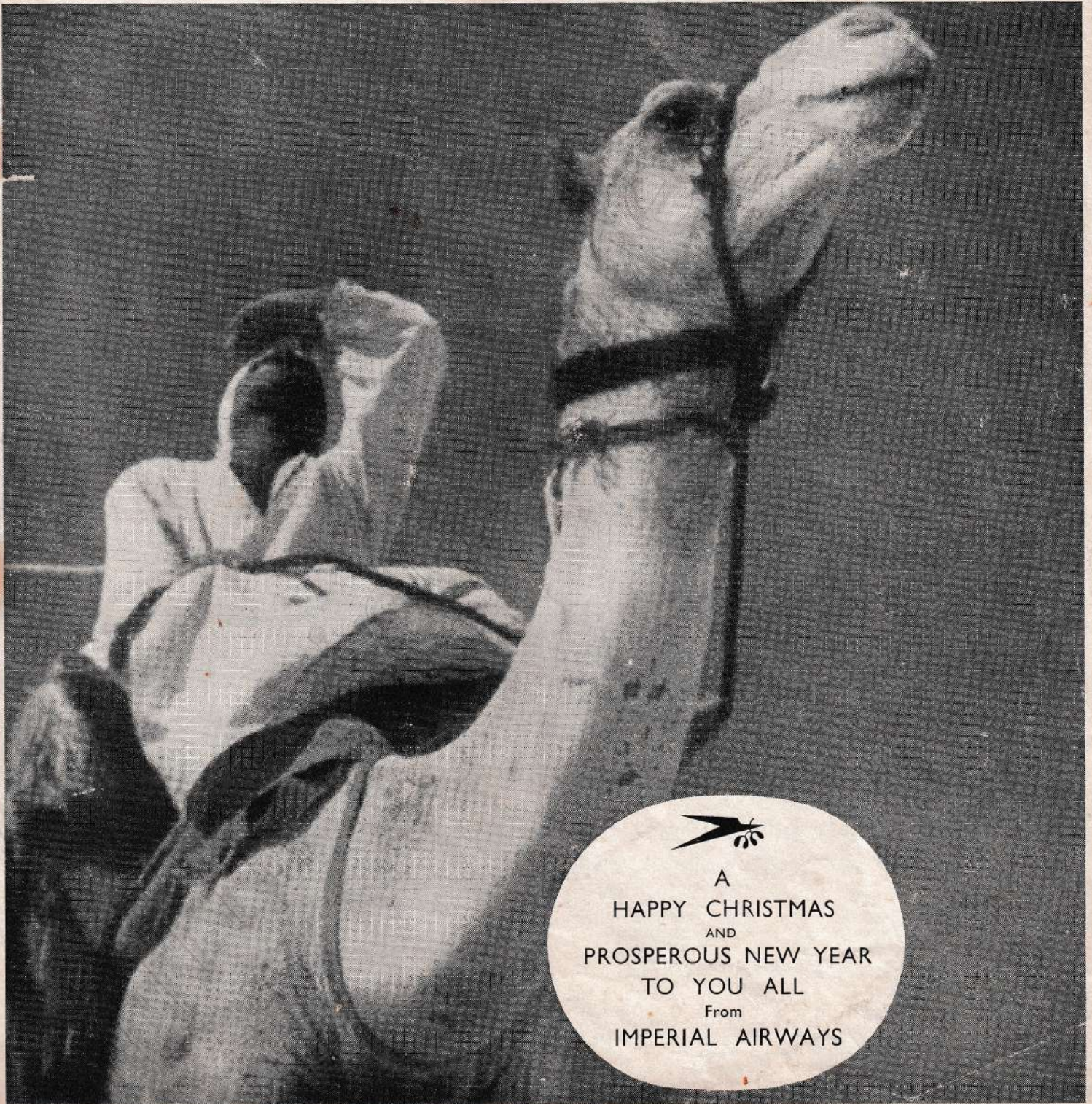


IMPERIAL AIRWAYS GAZETTE

DECEMBER, 1934

NUMBER 12, VOL. 6



A
HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
TO YOU ALL
From
IMPERIAL AIRWAYS

IMPERIAL AIRWAYS TENTH GENERAL MEETING

On Monday, 5 November, the Tenth Ordinary General Meeting of Imperial Airways was held; the Chairman of the Company, The Right Hon. Sir Eric Geddes, G.C.B., G.B.E., K.C.B., presided

We print below some extracts from the speech delivered by the Chairman

'During the year under review, the traffic carried on the European services has not only been maintained but improved

'The traffic on the Indian and Malayan route shows a gratifying and steady growth

'The traffic on the whole of the Africa route increased by more than 40 per cent. over the previous year

'We are quite convinced that our services are by far the quietest and most comfortable in the world. . . . Our standard of efficiency, service, and discipline are also, we believe, second to none in the world

'The line from England to South Africa, at least as far as Johannesburg, is to be doubled in frequency almost immediately, so that there will be two services each way a week between London and Johannesburg

'We also have under immediate consideration the question of increasing the frequency of our Eastern service to twice weekly

'The extension from Singapore to Australia will commence just before Christmas

'We decided some months ago to order two flying-boats and two land-planes as prototypes on which experimental work could be conducted. . . . These aircraft will be much larger than anything at present in our Company's service . . . and they will, of course, be faster than the existing fleet

'When our present fleet is replaced, the public may expect a substantial increase in speed as well as frequency

'No amount of written matter can ever equal the visit of a director, a salesman or an inspector. I hold the view that "Trade follows the passenger" far more than that "Trade follows the mail." . . . To separate the mail and passenger services would merely mean that instead of both classes of traffic getting the benefit of increased frequency, neither of them would, and we believe that the passenger services are as important as mail services'

Any reader of *Imperial Airways Gazette* who would like to have a copy of the Chairman's Speech may have one on application to Imperial Airways Ltd., Victoria Station, S.W.1

DUPLICATION OF AFRICA SERVICE

As announced by the Chairman of Imperial Airways at the Annual General Meeting of the Company on 5 November, Imperial Airways' service from England to South Africa is to be doubled in frequency as far south as Johannesburg

Arrangements have now been made for this duplication of service to come into effect as from Sunday, 30 December

At the present time the weekly service from London to Cape Town leaves London every Wednesday, arriving at Johannesburg eight days later on the following Thursday week, but as from 30 December there will be two services a week, leaving London every Wednesday and Sunday and arriving in Johannesburg on Thursday and Monday the following week

In the opposite direction the first duplicated service will leave Johannesburg on Saturday, 5 January, thus affording, with the present service which leaves Johannesburg every Wednesday, two services a week right through to London, which is reached on Thursday and Sunday respectively

The timings and schedules will be the same for these extra services and will not differ from those now in operation except that in Egypt all night stops will be made at Alexandria

AUSTRALIAN AIR MAIL RATES

The Postmaster General has announced that the Air Mail rates from Great Britain to Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand have been fixed at 1s. 3d. per $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. for letters and 6d. each for postcards

The use of the Air Mail service, the first of which leaves London on 8 December, will afford a saving over surface transport of from thirteen to twenty days, according to the ultimate destination in Australia

CHEAPER AIR MAIL RATES

The Postmaster-General announced recently a reduction in air mail rates on the Empire routes. A new flat rate to all the places reached by the existing services of Imperial Airways has been instituted and it is now possible to send a $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz. air mail letter for 6d. to all destinations where the previous charges equalled or exceeded that amount and for 3d. where it was lower than 6d.

This means that letters can now be sent for 6d. and postcards

for 3d. to Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Nyasaland, Northern and Southern Rhodesia, South Africa and Mauritius on the African route and to Bahrein, India, Ceylon, Straits Settlements and Malay States, North Borneo, Brunei, Hong Kong via Singapore and to Sarawak on the India and Eastern route. Half-ounce letters for 3d. and postcards for 2d. may be sent to Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Transjordan, Iraq, Persia and the Sudan

The benefits of the new rates naturally vary, but the greatest advantage will apply to Malaya and South Africa, where rates of 1s. and 10d. respectively are reduced to 6d.

We hope that our readers and Agents will take advantage of these new reductions and flat rates in air mail, for they will find it so quick and easy for transacting business or writing to friends. Full particulars may be obtained from any Post Office or from the Air Mail Department of Imperial Airways

'FLYING TO FRANCE'

This is one of a series of sketches which appeared recently in *The Vancouver Sun*, to which acknowledgment is made. It was written by their Chief Editorial Writer, Mr. H. L. Weir, as 'the casual result of Mr. Weir's casual trip to Britain and France'

'It was Dumas, I think, who gave me my first interest in France

'It was in the tumultuous pages of this amazing mulatto man that I found the imagery and colour that has represented all through my life my own particular picture of the Republic. One and Indivisible

'But I never thought, in my wildest flight of youthful fancy, that I should first set eyes upon the "fairest kingdom in Christendom" a mile in the air above the English Channel with my mouth full of New Zealand lamb and Sussex mint

'However, so it was

'The Imperial Airways flight (five times every day) from Croydon to Le Bourget is growing steadily in popularity for four reasons:—

'1. Because it is nearly three times as fast as any other mode of communication between France and England

'2. Because it is incredibly safe

'3. Because it is unbelievably comfortable and interesting

'4. Because Channel steamers, being of very shallow draught and very fast, have the habit of delivering their passengers in a very shaken and bedraggled condition indeed

'So we flew to France. And we flew back. And I wouldn't have missed it for a thousand pounds

'It is an experience that no Canadian traveller to Europe should even think of missing

'We left Victoria Station in the Airways bus at a quarter-to-twelve after being weighed, insured, questioned and queried, and reached Croydon forty-five minutes later

'There was considerable fuss at the airport over passports. So careful are these people that all passengers should have the right of entry to France that passports are examined three separate times before one actually lands from the plane

'I had flown before, of course. Nevertheless there was a little uneasy qualm inside me when the flying field doors were thrown open and the passengers began to file out towards the plane. I fancy the condemned man has it rather acutely when he leaves his cell for the gallows

'But one had only to set eyes upon the great silver-winged monster, with lazily chuckling engines, to lose all fear or uneasiness

'The landing wheels were as big as a banquet table. The two cabins were commodious and luxurious. Indeed, they were so comfortable that both going and coming a good half of the passengers stretched out, even though it was midday, and slept the sleep of the just

'But there was no sleep for me. I wished devoutly that I had had eight eyes instead of two

'The pilot took this monstrous bird off the ground as lightly as a swallow leaves a tree branch. And then, with surprising suddenness, London was below us

'Sprawled out unevenly almost as far as the eye could see, its slate roofs glittered in the sun and the red-tiled tops of houses made exhilarating patches of colour. Like a bright grey ribbon, the Thames meandered through it all

'But there was little time to look, for we had swooped off eastward and already we were over rural Kent

'There is nothing quite so richly lovely as England from the air

'Take a jigsaw puzzle of varied patterns and throw it lightly on the ground. Let the deep green moss grow up between the interstices and over the pieces and then look at it from above

'That velvety patterned loveliness is England

'Occasional rivers wandered here and there. We caught passing glimpses of little lakes and ponds winking in the sunshine

'In the meadows were infinitesimal cattle, from that height like groups of lice domesticated and become respectable

'Lunch was served long before we reached the Channel, a decent lunch too—with all the trimmings which the Englishman considers necessary for his well-being, either on land or in the air

' We began to cross the Channel just below Hastings. It gave us a queer feeling to think that here in this present year of grace we were dashing through the air at more than one hundred miles an hour just over the spot where William the Conqueror scrambled ashore and changed the course of English history centuries ago

' The water below was like a vast field of iridescent pebbled leather, aswarm with shipping that looked like waterbugs floating in a pond

' But our four great engines drew us swiftly on and presently the shores of France loomed cloudily ahead

' In no respect does France resemble England. The vegetation is sparse, the colour light and thin. One feels as though one were looking down upon a green Wilton carpet that time has worn a little threadbare

' The roads stretch off straight and bare and white. Even the rivers have a uniformity. The fields are angular and plain

' If England looks like a mossy jigsaw puzzle, France looks like a great problem in geometry, as, of course, it has at times been

' The journey was so pleasant and so enthralling that it was almost with a shock that we realized we were over Paris, that a vast city was beneath us and that the little white letters on the plain below spelled out "Le Bourget"

' The engines were cut off and the huge Handley Page glided groundward

' We all swallowed a little to clear our ears—although the engine roar had been so minimized that conversation at ordinary tones was audible at all times—and stepped ashore

' We were herded into a little office. There was more courteous anxiety about passports

' A squat uniformed gentleman with fierce moustaches looked searchingly into my soul and inquired in broken accents if I had any English cigarettes with me

' I afterwards wished I had. And I believe if the customs officers had found any, he would have broken down and wept on my shoulder. (Or have you ever tasted French tobacco?)

' But he found none. He marked my bag grudgingly. A perpetually excited youth directed us to a bus

' And we had been admitted to La Belle France'

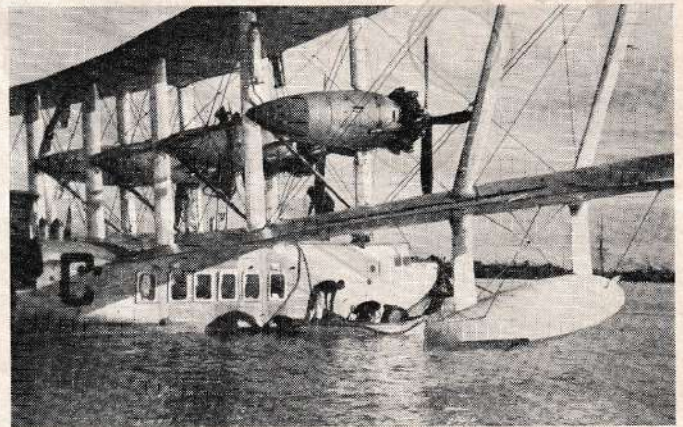
THE SCENES OF CLASSICAL ANTIQUITY

As all our readers know, on the trans-Mediterranean section of the Empire routes the *Scipio* flying-boats fly over the Grecian Archipelago, and Imperial Airways commissioned recently Mr. Adrian Stokes, the well-known author and classical scholar, to write a descriptive article on such a flight

We reprint this below and we believe our readers will derive pleasure from it:—

To fly high over the mountains, to scan the lineaments of Greece, was a pleasure and an ecstasy reserved for gods and goddesses—or so the Greeks felt. They themselves ever sought to conceive this huge god-like panorama stretching beneath our aeroplane on a fine day, stretching for hundreds of miles in that distinct Mediterranean light. The strength of their wish to embrace all those clear seas and lands in one sweeping glance is reflected in the sites of their temples. For often a Greek temple was built on some high place commanding the valleys and the brother hills and groves leading up from tessellated seas. The sites of the open-air theatres also, and even of places of public assembly, were chosen for the range they commanded. As Mr. F. L. Lucas has pointed out, when Demosthenes spoke in the Assembly on the Pnyx hill at Athens he was surrounded by the Attic mountains, on one side of him the marble pride of the Acropolis, on the other the far-off sea, that fickle foundation of Athenian greatness. When he called to witness the ghosts of Marathon, he had but to point before him to the far-off pass between Parnes and Pentelicus. On every side, as solid clear-seen land and sea, a memory lived. The vivid light revealed their history to those people and dictated the clean contours of their religion

The calm, untroubled clarity of Greek art and Greek life was instilled by outward contemplation of clear lands and clear seas as if close and seemingly arranged. Hellas, the ancient and the modern Greece, is only a little smaller than Scotland. Yet a few of the limestone peaks, such as Olympus and Parnassus, around which grew so many myths, were very widely visible. Homer tells us that at the fall of Troy the news was flashed from the Hellespont to Clytemnestra, Agamemnon's wife, at Argos, by a chain of eight beacons only, from many-fountained Ida to the peak of Lemnos, from Lemnos to Mount Athos, from Athos by Mount Macistus in Euboea and Mount Mesapius in Bocotia, by Cithaeron, home of the Muses, to Arachnaeum, and from there to Argos. As we pass above the eastern end of the Gulf of Corinth, the last four of these seven beacons should be within sight; we survey Hellas as no Greek could nor any of those gods who ruled, after all, from the heights, the heights of Olympus, of Hymettus, or from promontories such as Sunium



The 'Satyrus' anchored in the harbour at Alexandria

[The Times]

Let us adjust our thoughts to this more than god-like compass that our eyes enjoy: for we see the lands, we follow the whole course of that ancient history upon which our own civilization is founded. On the journey to Athens we pass, so to speak, from the fall of Athenian supremacy to Attica, its fount, as if Time were reversed. Our starting point is Corfu, the ancient Corcyra, a colony from Corinth. The intervention of Athens in the dispute between Corinth and Corcyra over Epidamnus, was the chief cause of the Peloponnesian war in the latter half of the fifth century, a war from which Athens never recovered. On the second part of our journey, from Athens to Alexandria, we pass in review, as it were, the very origins of Greek culture. Our shadow early on traverses the Cyclades and other islands, on which are found the oldest Mediterranean carved figures, dating back many thousands of years. We then cross over Crete with its thousands of years of Minoan civilization, which once embraced the whole Ægean and of which the Homeric culture was largely the offspring

From our height we cannot envisage details: on the other hand, the broad, almost unaltered facts of geography, on which have been based a succession of civilizations, lie beneath us. It is as if we were gods reviewing the earth in the Quaternary age, soon after this sea had come into existence. 'Here,' we say as we contemplate the islanded Ægean, 'shall sea commerce be born and the civilizations dependent upon sea commerce. Here are shores enough to which the first daring sailors may cling; here they may traverse an entire sea without losing sight of land, for at no point is land at a greater distance than 40 miles; here are bays and bottle-necked narrows that shall become the ideal small centres of primitive commerce; for here the sea is tideless. And among these islands of marble, these noble limestone contours with their well-distributed streams and springs, small and independent communities shall flourish, facing on to their common sea like the rooms of their houses upon their courtyards: here the lucid semi-bareness between the blues of sea and sky, here the thin limestone soils that shall require so much labour for their shapely fruits and aromatic trees: here shall be grown the heavy wines which, stoppered in goat-skin, shall prove to be an emulsion harsher yet more bountiful than the sweet prosaic products of blacker, richer earths. And here, among these small communities, divided from one another by the limestone relief, yet enjoying world-wide intercourse from the sea, shall be conceived the faint yet immortal democratic idea . . .'

As we approach Alexandria, the city founded by the Macedonian whose father, Philip, conquered Hellas, we pass from the piazza of this ancient life, focus of our own civilization. While still some way out we may notice below us the brown waters of the Nile, as yet a river in the circumambient sea. These waters hold particles gathered in the depths of Africa. We take leave of Europe for the darker continents

HOSPITAL OVER LONDON

The *Heracles* air liner was recently transferred into a hospital, carrying doctors, nurses and 'patients,' together with a stretcher and sitting and walking cases, when the first demonstration meeting of the South Croydon Women's V.A.D. detachment took place at the Air Port of London (Croydon)

The idea was an experiment by the British Red Cross Society Flying Branch for transporting urgent cases from outlying districts to the central hospitals. Medical treatment was administered while the air liner was in flight over London. See illustration overleaf



One of the 'cases' going aboard the 'Flying Hospital'

THE SPEED-BIRD ON POSTAL VANS

The Egyptian Government has recently had painted on its postal vans the Speed-Bird design of Imperial Airways, with an exhortation to use air mail on one side in English and Arabic, and on the other side in French and Arabic.

The vans are medium-red colour, the writing in white and the Speed-Birds in two shades of green. All the postal vans in Cairo, approximately 20 in number, have been so painted, and we hope that this publicity will bring a large increase in Air Mail from Egypt.



CALCUTTA TO LONDON BY THE INDIA AND EASTERN SERVICE

We reprint below as a second instalment extracts of an article which deals with the journey from Calcutta to Croydon by the services of Imperial Airways, which appeared recently in the *Tisco Review*, to which acknowledgment is made.

ARRIVAL AT KARACHI

'Coming down on to the aerodrome at Karachi we see the mooring mast built for the R.101, and the tremendous hangar, but on landing we have little time for sight-seeing. Breakfast is served in the resthouse close at hand, after which we say "Good-bye" to the *Arethusa* and climb aboard the *Horsa*, four-engined like the *Arethusa*, but a biplane, with an engine to each wing. She has twice as much accommodation as the *Arethusa*, but is rather slower.

'We take on one new passenger at Karachi, climb slowly up over the town, and bump over the hot land towards the sea. Over the sea it is much more steady. We pass over fishing boats and can see their nets spreading out under the water; and look! when we pass over low clouds the sun makes a complete circular rainbow around the shadow of our plane on the cloud surface.

'Soon we pass out of sight of land, but later the high coast of Baluchistan swings south towards us, with white and pale-grey cliffs almost horizontally bedded, their tops flat and even for long distances. By noon we are near enough to see how barren it is; the sea itself is more attractive. We see a few sharks and scores of their near relatives, the Rays, floating near the surface.

'Gwadar, in Baluchistan, where we stop at 1 p.m. for petrol, after

Imperial Airways Gazette

The *Imperial Airways Gazette* is published every month for the information of the Agents of the Company and for others who are interested in air transport. A copy will be sent free of charge every month to any *bona fide* applicant from the Publicity Manager's Office, Imperial Airways, Ltd., Airway Terminus, London, S.W.1.

School children must make their application through their Schoolmaster or Schoolmistress.

Full information about the services of Imperial Airways may be obtained from the offices of the principal travel agents, or from Imperial Airways, Ltd., Airway Terminus, Victoria Station, S.W.1, or from Airways House, Charles Street, S.W.1. Telephone, VICTORIA 2211. Telegrams: 'Impairlim, London.' Airway Terminus is open day and night.

AS OTHERS SEE US

The following letter has been received from a passenger who travelled recently on our services between London and Paris:

'You asked me to let you know what I thought of my trip to Paris. I believe the flight across on Saturday is stated by those who know to have been a rough one. All I can say is that if it was a rough one I am quite satisfied to travel always by air. It was my first experience and I enjoyed the trip very much indeed. My thanks are due to your Company for the consideration extended to me. I appreciate this and you certainly have one more who will always be prepared to fly Imperial Airways routes. The most dangerous step of the journey seemed to be in Paris travelling by bus and taxi.'

Continued from previous column

putting back the clock 1½ hours, looks most desolate; three small buildings and a landing ground! But as there is a wireless operator in the neighbourhood we presume there is a village not too far away. The petrol is brought here by sea, and fierce-looking Baluchis work the handpumps to fill our tanks. On the shore near Gwadar is a mud volcano—an indication of oil. Later on, possibly, the engines will be refuelled from Gwadar's own local supplies of petrol.

'The engines seem reluctant to start after this halt, but we get away at 1.30, following the coastline westwards, standing a little way out to sea. Tiny moving specks on the shore develop into camel and donkey riders. For miles along this coast the beds are soft, barely consolidated sands or silts, with a few harder beds that look like limestones. One of these beds, about 300 ft. above sea-level, has protected the softer beds below it, and forms a plateau extending for many miles. Wherever it has been cut through the softer rocks below have rapidly weathered down to a level only a few feet above the sea, leaving here and there isolated towers and table-topped hillocks where the hard cap remains. The weathering of these alternating beds in an arid climate gives rise to vertical walls, deeply scored. A few minor hard beds stand out like mouldings, forming a natural "Cathedral rock" near Gwadar.

LUNCH WHILE IN FLIGHT

'When we are up again we take lunch in the plane. The arrangement is very similar to that of a railway dining car, and the meal is excellent. Up to 4.30 p.m. we continue to pass the same horizontally bedded, vertical-walled cliffs with outstanding needles and towers, all capped with the same hard band. On the south side only the waters of the Gulf of Oman are visible.

'Far down below us a tremendous flock of white birds moves slowly in formation above the sea, near the desolate Persian coast. Following their leader's signal they all wheel to the right; the flecked white suddenly changes to vivid scarlet; another change of direction and each point in the pattern is motley, white and scarlet. By Jove, flamingoes!

'And now the coast is curving out towards Jask point, and the town of Jask, with its aerodrome, at which the Dutch planes call, on the barren sandy plain east of the town, brings us all to peer

we have breakfast. It is a scratch meal; our feet slowly thaw out by the fire, and we all agree that the flight from Basra has been most uncomfortable.

'We sit waiting for the start until 12.25, and then rise into a sunshine still much tempered by dust, and continue on our bumpy way. I have been looking forward to a night in Baghdad as one of the chief features of the trip. All I have seen of it is the dusty plain and the dust-covered roofs of the buildings around the aerodrome.

'We have not been above 1,000 ft. in height anywhere between Basra and Baghdad, but it was colder than anything we have yet experienced on the trip, and we shivered in spite of the thick wool blankets thoughtfully provided for us.

'At Bahrein we bought pearls, at Baghdad would have bought gloves if I could.

THE ARABIAN DESERT

'And here at last is the Arabian desert. Doughty, Gertrude Bell, Lawrence and the later fraternity of desert enthusiasts give one vivid mental pictures that are close enough to reality so far as landscape features are concerned, but one was not prepared for this intense cold.

'We reach Rutbah at 3.15 by our morning time, but as we are travelling westward we have gained somewhat, and it is really about an hour earlier, so we are up again at about three o'clock by the local time, after a hasty lunch. Rutbah has a fortified rest-house and a guard, on very similar lines to that of Shargah.

'From Rutbah onwards we are following well-marked car tracks and we are also on the route of the pipe line just being constructed to pump oil to the port of Haifa. The sky is clear; the desert, as far as the eye can reach, a level or undulating plain of sand. We pass several Bedawi encampments, their black tents throwing long shadows from the westerling sun. At intervals along the pipe line we pass pumping stations with oil tanks, and huts or tents. Tiny working figures seem to be busy over their infinitely small affairs on the line.

'4.20 p.m.—We have just left the sandy desert and crossed over on to the lava desert, black and burnt-looking, with patches of sand filling up its shallow hollows. From the plane the only difference is one of colour. On foot one would no doubt find it bouldery and rough. Near the border are large herds of camels. At 5.30 the black desert gives way to the fields and villages of Palestine. The railway running south from Amman crosses our track,—the railway that Lawrence so persistently haunted and whose bridges he blew up during his amazing campaign. And now our plateau breaks down by precipitous and rugged valleys to the Dead Sea, over the northern end of which we fly. The Jordan winds its tortuous way to its junction with the Dead Sea, where salt enclosures are being evaporated.

'On our right is Jericho, with the road to Jerusalem following the valley westward. One could imagine there are plenty of easy lurking places for thieves upon it.

'Jericho itself is a small clump of houses with many outlying farms. Jerusalem comes into view, whilst it is still light enough to see the colours of its roofs and make out its main buildings, and dusk enough for its lights to be lit,—one of the prettiest sights in the whole of our journey. We speculate as to which is the Wailing Wall. Car headlights wriggle up the main streets, and the steep grey hills to the east form a pleasant setting at this hour.

'Bethlehem is unlit, but is quite distinct a short distance away on our left. After passing Bethlehem, with Hebron merely a light in the distance, darkness closes over us.

'At 6.30 we are over the flares of the landing ground at Gaza and make a perfect landing. The buildings here are wooden huts of the old army pattern, with a tent, warmed by an oil stove, to serve as the dining-room. After a good dinner we are in our seats again by 7.45 and soon rise for the last lap to Cairo in the dark.

OVER THE SUEZ CANAL

'The Suez Canal is well worth watching from the deck of a steamer passing along it at night, but from the air, with four steamers visible at once, picking out the Canal with their searchlights, it is thrilling. Ismailia makes a brave show, too, with its square patterned streets outlined in lamps, but Cairo,—Cairo is marvellous! The lights of the city spread out in radiating stars and scattered clumps like a tangled trayful of lustrous jewels. Floodlights emphasize the main streets, and as we come lower cars and buses can be followed. The Air Port of Heliopolis swings towards us, bright with flares and floodlight. We are down, and have our luggage examined, whilst we drink a cup of tea with Commander Spafford, who has brought us from Karachi. Here we say good-bye to him, for he plies only between Cairo and Karachi at the moment.

'A big motorbus takes us and our luggage to Shepherds', where comfort awaits us. We reach our rooms at about 11 p.m. to find our cards ready with the information that we shall be called at 5 a.m. to-morrow.

LEAVING EGYPT

'Sunday, 25 February, 1934.—The claim of Imperial Airways that even tips are included in their fare is, on the whole, surprisingly true. No one turns up to receive tips at any of the calls. We leave Shepherds' in the motorbus at 6 a.m. after delicious rolls and coffee. Cairo is just waking up—and a party of late revellers drops in at Shepherds' for a last one before going home. They ask us to give their love to England as we leave for the river Air Port of Gezira. Here a motor boat takes us out to the flying boat on the River Nile.

'We taxi steadily up the river. I want to take photographs, but the waves from our body and from the floats spray the window and then rise higher until we can see nothing else. We slow down, having reached our starting position. Half-a-dozen dahabeahs, with their characteristic tall triangular sails, slide by us. We pick up speed. The sun is just rising over citadel and mosque, and Cairo's eastern cliff-wall of limestone is black against the dawn. We are up, and Cairo is a map below us.

'Yes, we all turn in one direction. There they are; the three Pyramids with one side a pinky yellow in the dawn and the other visible side black in shadow. The desert has a pink haze over it. The clear-cut line between the desert and the town that we had noted on a previous visit from the Pyramids themselves, is much more clearly marked from the air. The sand dunes stretch away to the horizon, whilst we follow the winding river along its course through vivid green and brown cultivation to the sea and Alexandria. One or two small quarries are visible, where the rock shows through the sand near the border of the cultivated patch, with ribbons of tramline to feed them. A railway track shows up as a straight line across the sand, and away in the distance, approaching a little oasis station, is the white smoke of a slowly moving train. Purple shadows of clouds mottle the desert, whitening in the growing brightness of the day. A string of camels files by; we should not see them but for their long shadows. On our right the rich fields of the Delta spread wider and wider. On our left the desert prevails. We travel more smoothly than if we were in a train. A thoughtful steward comes with warm rugs, for it is still cold in Cairo and more so in the air.

'There are magazines provided in the cabin, but we are still too thrilled to read. Over the sea perhaps, but not here, where we can trace the broad streaks of a caravan route across the sands, and follow the course of an irrigation canal with its feeder lines, turning the desert to an emerald carpet with a scattered handful of dice for a village.

'We are 5,000 ft. up; a long black shadow trails over the sands, thrown by a bank of cloud; and cloud and shadow alike are below us. It seems incredibly soon when we glide down again, swallowing and yawning and blowing noses to cure the unpleasant buzzing and deafness that otherwise accompany the descent. Below us is the sea port and the air port of Alexandria, a little over one hour from Cairo.

ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN

'Alexandria.—We wait half an hour at Alexandria in a small wooden resthouse, where good tea and biscuits are provided for us. What strikes one about taking off in a flying boat is the tremendously long taxi before starting. It takes a much longer run before rising than does a land plane.

'We are up again at 8.50, and soon Alexandria is a dark streak beyond the sun's brilliant reflection on the water below us.

'We changed on to a new flying boat at Alexandria, but retained the same attentive steward, who now brings us little sealed packets of cotton wool for our ears. The *Sylvanus* flies at about 2,500 ft. for most of this trip.

'For over three hours we seen nothing but the sea and a few rare boats. About 12 noon we approach Crete, in whose harbour of Mirabella we are to alight for half an hour. Its hill crests are marked with patches of snow, and on its precipitous slopes terrace cultivation is visible. We fly straight over the narrow island and bump a good deal in the process.

'Mirabella provides a very pleasant interlude. We land in the harbour some distance from the little village clinging between the steeply towering hill and the sea, and a motor boat carries us from the flying boat to a small yacht at anchor. Half an hour for a smoke and a cup of coffee and then back again! Once more the wave from our start rises high and higher, blotting out all our view until we begin to rise. In a very few minutes the white-crested hills are fading away behind us, and lunch is served on the plane.

'Lunch! it is gargantuan and excellent in quality. Hot soup, prawn mayonnaise, chicken and salad, chocolate tipsy cake, cheese

we have breakfast. It is a scratch meal; our feet slowly thaw out by the fire, and we all agree that the flight from Basra has been most uncomfortable.

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'At Bahrein we bought pearls, at Baghdad would have bought gloves if I could.

THE ARABIAN DESERT

'And here at last is the Arabian desert. Doughty, Gertrude Bell, Lawrence and the later fraternity of desert enthusiasts give one vivid mental pictures that are close enough to reality so far as landscape features are concerned, but one was not prepared for this intense cold.

'We reach Rutbah at 3.15 by our morning time, but as we are travelling westward we have gained somewhat, and it is really about an hour earlier, so we are up again at about three o'clock by the local time, after a hasty lunch. Rutbah has a fortified rest-house and a guard, on very similar lines to that of Shargah.

'From Rutbah onwards we are following well-marked car tracks and we are also on the route of the pipe line just being constructed to pump oil to the port of Haifa. The sky is clear; the desert, as far as the eye can reach, a level or undulating plain of sand. We pass several Bedawi encampments, their black tents throwing long shadows from the westering sun. At intervals along the pipe line we pass pumping stations with oil tanks, and huts or tents. Tiny working figures seem to be busy over their infinitely small affairs on the line.

'4.20 p.m.—We have just left the sandy desert and crossed over on to the lava desert, black and burnt-looking, with patches of sand filling up its shallow hollows. From the plane the only difference is one of colour. On foot one would no doubt find it bouldery and rough. Near the border are large herds of camels. At 5.30 the black desert gives way to the fields and villages of Palestine. The railway running south from Amman crosses our track,—the railway that Lawrence so persistently haunted and whose bridges he blew up during his amazing campaign. And now our plateau breaks down by precipitous and rugged valleys to the Dead Sea, over the northern end of which we fly. The Jordan winds its tortuous way to its junction with the Dead Sea, where salt enclosures are being evaporated.

'On our right is Jericho, with the road to Jerusalem following the valley westward. One could imagine there are plenty of easy lurking places for thieves upon it.

'Jericho itself is a small clump of houses with many outlying farms. Jerusalem comes into view, whilst it is still light enough to see the colours of its roofs and make out its main buildings, and dusk enough for its lights to be lit,—one of the prettiest sights in the whole of our journey. We speculate as to which is the Wailing Wall. Car headlights wriggle up the main streets, and the steep grey hills to the east form a pleasant setting at this hour.

'Bethlehem is unlit, but is quite distinct a short distance away on our left. After passing Bethlehem, with Hebron merely a light in the distance, darkness closes over us.

'At 6.30 we are over the flares of the landing ground at Gaza and make a perfect landing. The buildings here are wooden huts of the old army pattern, with a tent, warmed by an oil stove, to serve as the dining-room. After a good dinner we are in our seats again by 7.45 and soon rise for the last lap to Cairo in the dark.

OVER THE SUEZ CANAL

'The Suez Canal is well worth watching from the deck of a steamer passing along it at night, but from the air, with four steamers visible at once, picking out the Canal with their searchlights, it is thrilling. Ismailia makes a brave show, too, with its square patterned streets outlined in lamps, but Cairo,—Cairo is marvellous! The lights of the city spread out in radiating stars and scattered clumps like a tangled trayful of lustrous jewels. Floodlights emphasize the main streets, and as we come lower cars and buses can be followed. The Air Port of Heliopolis swings towards us, bright with flares and floodlight. We are down, and have our luggage examined, whilst we drink a cup of tea with Commander Spafford, who has brought us from Karachi. Here we say good-bye to him, for he plies only between Cairo and Karachi at the moment.

'A big motorbus takes us and our luggage to Shepherds', where comfort awaits us. We reach our rooms at about 11 p.m. to find our cards ready with the information that we shall be called at 5 a.m. to-morrow.

LEAVING EGYPT

'Sunday, 25 February, 1934.—The claim of Imperial Airways that even tips are included in their fare is, on the whole, surprisingly true. No one turns up to receive tips at any of the calls. We leave Shepherds' in the motorbus at 6 a.m. after delicious rolls and coffee. Cairo is just waking up—and a party of late revellers drops in at Shepherds' for a last one before going home. They ask us to give their love to England as we leave for the river Air Port of Gezira. Here a motor boat takes us out to the flying boat on the River Nile.

'We taxi steadily up the river. I want to take photographs, but the waves from our body and from the floats spray the window and then rise higher until we can see nothing else. We slow down, having reached our starting position. Half-a-dozen dahabeahs, with their characteristic tall triangular sails, slide by us. We pick up speed. The sun is just rising over citadel and mosque, and Cairo's eastern cliff-wall of limestone is black against the dawn. We are up, and Cairo is a map below us.

'Yes, we all turn in one direction. There they are; the three Pyramids with one side a pinky yellow in the dawn and the other visible side black in shadow. The desert has a pink haze over it. The clear-cut line between the desert and the town that we had noted on a previous visit from the Pyramids themselves, is much more clearly marked from the air. The sand dunes stretch away to the horizon, whilst we follow the winding river along its course through vivid green and brown cultivation to the sea and Alexandria. One or two small quarries are visible, where the rock shows through the sand near the border of the cultivated patch, with ribbons of tramline to feed them. A railway track shows up as a straight line across the sand, and away in the distance, approaching a little oasis station, is the white smoke of a slowly moving train. Purple shadows of clouds mottle the desert, whitening in the growing brightness of the day. A string of camels files by; we should not see them but for their long shadows. On our right the rich fields of the Delta spread wider and wider. On our left the desert prevails. We travel more smoothly than if we were in a train. A thoughtful steward comes with warm rugs, for it is still cold in Cairo and more so in the air.

'There are magazines provided in the cabin, but we are still too thrilled to read. Over the sea perhaps, but not here, where we can trace the broad streaks of a caravan route across the sands, and follow the course of an irrigation canal with its feeder lines, turning the desert to an emerald carpet with a scattered handful of dice for a village.

'We are 5,000 ft. up; a long black shadow trails over the sands, thrown by a bank of cloud; and cloud and shadow alike are below us. It seems incredibly soon when we glide down again, swallowing and yawning and blowing noses to cure the unpleasant buzzing and deafness that otherwise accompany the descent. Below us is the sea port and the air port of Alexandria, a little over one hour from Cairo.

ACROSS THE MEDITERRANEAN

'Alexandria.—We wait half an hour at Alexandria in a small wooden resthouse, where good tea and biscuits are provided for us. What strikes one about taking off in a flying boat is the tremendously long taxi before starting. It takes a much longer run before rising than does a land plane.

'We are up again at 8.50, and soon Alexandria is a dark streak beyond the sun's brilliant reflection on the water below us.

'We changed on to a new flying boat at Alexandria, but retained the same attentive steward, who now brings us little sealed packets of cotton wool for our ears. The *Sylvanus* flies at about 2,500 ft. for most of this trip.

'For over three hours we seen nothing but the sea and a few rare boats. About 12 noon we approach Crete, in whose harbour of Mirabella we are to alight for half an hour. Its hill crests are marked with patches of snow, and on its precipitous slopes terrace cultivation is visible. We fly straight over the narrow island and bump a good deal in the process.

'Mirabella provides a very pleasant interlude. We land in the harbour some distance from the little village clinging between the steeply towering hill and the sea, and a motor boat carries us from the flying boat to a small yacht at anchor. Half an hour for a smoke and a cup of coffee and then back again! Once more the wave from our start rises high and higher, blotting out all our view until we begin to rise. In a very few minutes the white-crested hills are fading away behind us, and lunch is served on the plane.

'Lunch! it is gargantuan and excellent in quality. Hot soup, prawn mayonnaise, chicken and salad, chocolate tipsy cake, cheese

and a huge basket of fruit. Few of us last through it and most of us are comatose when we have finished. We pass a lot of the isles of Greece, notably Melos (Milo), but all we ask is to be left alone, and not to be bent

Athens is in sight at about four, with all of us alert to see the Acropolis and other landmarks from the air. Alighting in a flying boat is smoother than on land—if one comes down in an enclosed harbour as at Alexandria, but if the water has a little swell on setting may be rather bumpy, like motoring on a bad road

It is Race Day in Athens, and the course is near the Air Port. It is also Sunday, and all Athens is out for the Sunday afternoon parade. We hire a taxi and go up to the Acropolis; but this is a record of an air journey, and the sightseeing on land may be read from any guide book. One must mention the marvellous air of Athens, however, and the honey of Hymettus, the best in the world. The Hotel Grande Bretagne is supremely comfortable and luxurious; the service perfect. We dine well, sleep well, and rise refreshed at 6.30 for our last long flight on the journey,—Athens to Brindisi

DAY OF SPECTACLES

Monday, 26 February, 1934.—We rise from harbour punctually 8 a.m. and again see Athens straggling over hills and valleys below us. It has good enclosed harbours, and with its background of snow-capped hills it smiles in the morning sunshine. Its invigorating air makes us wish our stay were longer, but we have no option. We wrap ourselves up well in the rugs provided in the flying boat, and approve of our cabin by comparison with the snow-clad crests that pass by on our level. We are 4,000 ft. up, passing over the southern coast of the mainland of Greece, with Mount Parnassus on our right

The route to-day is almost the most spectacular part of the whole journey. We pass a rugged mountain of marble, whose precipitous flanks are apparently just outside our windows, whilst down below shine fertile fields bordered by tall dark cypresses, with well-favoured red-roofed towns and villages at intervals. Flocks of sheep take on the semblance of a spread of maggots from our height, and harbours with neat fish traps and white-sailed fishing boats drift below us. Unfortunately our camera has been put away in a sealed bag for the journey to Italy, and we can take no photographs of this section

We leave Corfu on our right and then fly over a longish expanse of sea, with the Albanian hills to the north, shining with snow. In spite of their beauty we sleep, to awake only as we come down on the harbour of Brindisi. It is a choppy sea, but we make a gentle landing, and here we bid farewell to the *Sylvanus*

Brindisi is cold and dull. We lunch and get into the train for Milan, passing by miles and miles of alternating lines of olive and almond trees, the latter in bloom. After tea and dinner on the train, we sleep well in our wagon-lit compartments, arriving at Milan at 8.30 a.m. This train section is slow and unavoidable at present

Tuesday, 27 February, 1934.—We do not leave Milan until 5 p.m., so we have time for sight-seeing, of which we make good use. The Italian lakes glide by our train in the dark, but the rising full moon lights up snow-covered hills for us as we approach the Simplon tunnel, and Lake Geneva and Lausanne are silver wraiths in the night

PARIS TO LONDON

Wednesday, 28 February, 1934.—Paris gives us a cold welcome at 6.30 a.m. with a frosty air, and a taxi strike on. However, our autobus conveys us well enough to a good breakfast at the Ambassadors Hotel, and afterwards to the aerodrome at Le Bourget, where we find a fog that limits vision to about 800 ft. and where we are an hour late in starting, as we have to wait until three other machines have come down before we are allowed to rise. On this last lap the flight is steady enough; there is no wind or we should not have this fog. The ground is only visible in rare patches from our height of 1,500 feet and these fleeting glimpses show that the ploughed lands are snow-covered, but the green fields are free. The *Horatius* keeps just above the bank of clouds at 1,500 to 1,800 feet. The plane is warmed with hot air,—almost too warm. The fog thickens and thins out capriciously, and we see occasional roads, farm-houses and small villages. We are still over France, and there are no hedges around the fields. The sun gains strength and we see a smiling well-tilled countryside free of snow

And now we come over the sea, and it is again too misty to make out anything except the water just below us. It becomes dark and darker; white lines whiz by the windows. Gad, it's snowing! One can barely see the ends of our wings. The pilot must have satisfying news from the other end to carry on through this so calmly. Ah! it has finished, but only to be replaced by fog again, which thins as we approach the English coast, so that we see the crowded shipping on this side of the Channel

At last! A strip of sand, and then the green fields of Kent, with substantial farms, and oast-houses, winding streams and smooth roads, woods and hedges, dewponds and haystacks. How well watered, how thoroughly well supplied with roads this country is, one had not realised until one had it as a living map below one

Agitated white hens run about below, disturbed by our engines. We pass Rochester with its name marked boldly on its landing ground. What a strange sight it is to look straight down into a tall chimney stack from above!

Croydon approaches; spins and turns about us; we are rushing along the landing field and are astonished to see hares and pheasants scurrying away from our path . . .

'The journey is over'

DISPATCH OF FIRST FLAT RATE EMPIRE AIR MAIL

Brigadier-General Sir Frederic Williamson, K.C.B., C.B.E., the Director of Postal Services, on behalf of the Postmaster-General, dispatched the first Empire air mail under the new flat-rate scheme from the Air Port of London (Croydon) on 17 November

At the same time the new Post Office streamlined air mail car was brought into service and the photograph below shows Sir Frederic Williamson handing over the mail to the Captain of the *Horatius*



CHRISTMAS AIR SERVICES

We would ask our Agents and intending air travellers to note that there are certain alterations in the schedules in operation over the Christmas holidays

There will be a complete suspension of all services operated by Imperial Airways, the Belgian Air Lines (S.A.B.E.N.A.) and the German Airways (Deutsche Luft Hansa A.G.) on Christmas Day, 25 December. On Wednesday, 26 December, the 12.30 service from London to Paris and vice versa only will operate; the service from London to Brussels and Cologne will be operated in each direction by Imperial Airways, although there will be no connexion to and from Antwerp

The London—Berlin services operated by the German Airways (Deutsche Luft Hansa A.G.) will not run in either direction on 24, 25, 26 and 31 December or 1 January

'POST OFFICE 1934'

All readers of the *Gazette* are doubtless users of the Air Mail and thus are indirectly interested in the operation of Postal Services

The Postmaster General has just issued a most interesting book entitled 'The Post Office 1934' which can be bought from any large Post Office in the United Kingdom for the sum of 1/-

The book is most entrancing and is illustrated with very fine photographs and with line drawings by the distinguished artist, Mr. Barnett Freedman

We suggest that all readers of the *Gazette* would be well advised to buy a copy of this book, particularly as there is a most interesting chapter entitled 'Imperial and International Postal Services,' which gives information about Air Mail

UNTIL

FEB. 1

21 FEB. 1

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