FELIX PELTZER

MALOJA WIND

Sax


Ex Libris
From the Gliding Library of
Wally Kahn

MALOJA WIND

MALOJA WIND

by

FELIX PELTZER

A Novel
of Wind, of Weather
and of Flight

TRANSLATED BY LOUIS HAGEN

LONDON
HAMMOND, HAMMOND & COMPANY

First published in Great Britain 1953

to Brigitte v. K.

Printed in Great Britain by
Latimer, Trend & Co., Ltd., Plymouth
for Hammond, Hammond & Co., Ltd.
87 Gower Street, W.C.1
853

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

A LETTER

Zürich, 1 July.

Dear Dad,

Many thanks for your birthday wishes. I had a very good time—in spite of its being the first birthday I'd celebrated without you! Aunt Gertrude decorated the breakfast table with flowers and baked a cake with seventeen candles. She gave me a lovely woollen scarf, Turli some sun-glasses, and even Bimpi added his bit to the festivities by reciting a little poem. Uncle Kurt only gets back from Lisbon tonight. He's flying that route now, and although he always tries to make out that it's terribly boring, I think it's terrific. Four engines, and a panel that makes one dizzy to look at. Turli and I are going to fetch him from Kloten later on—but I must first tell you more about my birthday.

The really exciting thing about the whole day was that I passed my 'C' certificate at Birrfield—the glider airfield between Baden and Brugg. Did you ever go there when you were in Switzerland before the war? Well, we drove out there in the little Fiat. Holdinger (that's the flying instructor I told you about)—asked me if I was in 'good shape'—and when I told him it was my birthday and that I felt on top of the world he said I could have a shot.

The weather was perfect—a 10 m.p.h. wind—and broken cumulus. The 'Baby' was already outside the hangar and Leutzinger was on his way with the tug—an old surplus Piper left behind by the Americans. We towed the 'Baby' to the take-off point. Turli fastened the Sutton Harness, and Holdinger hooked up the tow-rope. Then he walked to the

right wing-tip, lifted it, and with his little red flag gave the signal that all was set.

Things are a bit different now from your flying days before the war. No more catapult take-offs or training in single seaters. Winch, tug and dual-control is the way it is to-day. My flying orders were clear. To be towed approximately 1,500 feet over the slopes a few miles from the school, unhook and soar! It was a slow and pretty bumpy ascent (as are all tows by powered aircraft) and I was thrown about a good deal and had to keep a careful look-out to make sure I wasn't too high, too low, too far to starboard or too far to port.

Just before we were over the slopes I dropped the tow. Leutzinger banked steeply to get away. I soared on alone straight upwind, just as I had practised with Holdinger time and time again. I needn't tell *you*, Dad, how thrilled I was to be on my own in the air for the first time. You've described the feeling to me so often—I sometimes thought you exaggerated a bit just to impress me—but no words could ever do justice to that first breathless excitement, could they? The wonderful sensation of being entirely one's own master —the knowledge that one can't be criticized—can't be told what to do. I sang with happiness, silly little tunes to odd nonsensical sentences like 'what fun this is, I can do everything, I can do everything, anything, everything'—or more often than not just 'la, la la' . . . until a small air-pocket reminded me that I had a glider to look after. It all seemed incredibly easy. I only corrected slightly with the rudder when once or twice her nose drifted a little way from my line of flight. On the whole she followed her course steadily, and when I turned it was as if the 'stick' were standing in soft butter, she responded so easily to the slightest touch. Beyond her nose I saw woods, meadows, and the whole

lovely landscape revolving slowly before my eyes like a kaleidoscopic mosaic of green glass. I could see Holdinger and Turli looking like dots on the airfield. Holdinger was leaning on a huge white flag which he suddenly began to wave frantically, I realized with a pang that I had already overflown my time. They wanted me to come down. Reluctantly I turned away from the slopes and judged my landing approach —which was first class. I lowered the air brakes and swooped like a hawk to earth. She came to a standstill and everything was suddenly quiet. In that silent moment which I wanted to prolong—I thought of you, Dad, and how you have made all this possible.

Holdinger and Turli were soon congratulating me, but telling me at the same time not to get too conceited as I had had an ideal wind, and slope-soaring was child's play anyway. I could only nod my head. Turli loosened my harness and I got out—my legs feeling oddly detached from my body as they touched the ground. At home Aunt Gertrude brought out a bottle of Neuenberger which we drank with my birthday cake—what a good thing it is to have relations in Switzerland!

Turli has promised to take me to Samedan to the meeting of the Young Glider Pilots of Europe. He is quite an experienced mountain pilot and has been chosen to represent Switzerland. I shall probably be a member of his ground staff. It's time to fetch Uncle Kurt from Kloten so I must stop. A kiss to Mum, tell her not to worry about me any more than she did about *you* when you were still flying. My love also to Mareichen and the 'sweet' Amelie. They shouldn't make such a fuss. They'll get here one day just as I did. My love to you and many thanks. All the very best.

Your Jürgen

P.S. By the way, Holdinger said that now we can really start flying.

Of course I want to get my 'Silver C' as soon as possible, so keep your fingers crossed until I leave for Samedan—I can fly as much as I like at Birrfeld, weather permitting.

Always your 'J'.

EN ROUTE FOR SWITZERLAND

THE four-engined Swiss air-liner had changed passengers in Paris. Only a few of the people embarking at Lisbon flew straight through to Zürich—most of the passengers were Swiss. The aircraft kept steadily to her course, and the crew sat almost inactive in the cockpit. Kurt Obstalden, her captain—a pilot of twenty-five years' experience—was one of the most popular men on the Swissair Line—imbuing his passengers with a feeling of complete confidence. The business-men and artists, the 'regulars' on his route who rushed from place to place and from country to country, all knew and respected him. He was not only a 'bus driver', to use his own expression, of his own four-engined passenger air-liner, but he was also a stunt flyer and a keen glider pilot, loved and admired by the younger Swiss fliers for his pioneering activities, for his friendship, and for his advice.

He no longer had time for competition flying, but he handled every aircraft with the beautiful precision of the expert. The air had become his element in which he was an absolute master. He flew with the regularity of clockwork. 'Like a robot,' said some. 'As if he was born with wings,' said others. He flew with Groenhof near the Jungfraujoch, in competitions in Africa and South America, and his sensational flights had won for him international fame and a reputation which was renowned throughout his own country of Switzerland. Just then he sat in the cockpit with his hands in his pockets, letting the automatic pilot—or 'George' as it was affectionately called—work for him. The innumerable instruments told him that all was in order, altitude 5,000

feet above sea level, speed 280 m.p.h. Over France the weather improved—a light west-north-westerly wind aided the steady progress of the machine. Looking down at the fields and towns beneath him, Obstalden thought of how relatively small a country like France appeared. Only three hours' flight from one end to the other, in less than twenty-five minutes they would be landing at Kloten.

He got up and opened the small door to the cabin. The stewardess was serving tea, with sandwiches. The passengers were occupying themselves in various ways: some idly watching the countryside unfolding beneath them, others reading, one even busily typing on a small portable. Obstalden noticed a slim boy with animated sun-tanned features who was looking straight over the wing-tip apparently concentrating on nothing but the passing clouds—but, by an occasional abrupt movement of his hands, Obstalden felt that his mind was filled with other and perhaps more disturbing thoughts. He was sure he had seen the face before, and the quick movements of the long-fingered hands made him suspect him to be a young flier. The boy looked up quickly—a happy smile of recognition on his face as Obstalden moved towards him. 'Captain Obstalden?' he asked.

'Yes,' answered Obstalden. 'You know me?'

'Who doesn't know Captain Obstalden?' the boy replied in French.

'I have seen you before, too,' Obstalden said.

'In the "Inter Avia", perhaps? My picture was in it.'

Obstalden thought quickly—'Pilot? No, too young. Glider pilot? Of course.' It all came back to him. No. 10 Inter Avia, 1949. The young Glider Pilots' International Rally in Kauhava. 'Frenchman breaks altitude record.' 'Coquelle—Gaston Coquelle?' he asked.

The boy nodded 'Precisely'. The slight pomposity of his tone amused Obstalden, who replied with a touch of mockery, 'I am honoured, sir'.

Coquelle bowed elegantly. 'The pleasure is entirely mine.'

'And may I enquire where you are going?'

'To Samedan.'

'Already? But the rally doesn't start for eight days.'

Obstalden was surprised at the boy's serious tone as he said, 'One has to get used to the climate. One has to study the terrain; mountain flying is not so easy. You see I have been sent by France.' There was pride in his voice—but it was the pride of youth, and Obstalden felt that it somehow suited his personality.

'It's a gliding competition for young people from all over Europe, I believe,' Obstalden said.

Coquelle sat up very straight. 'I know, but somebody has got to arrive first, and France has that honour.'

'Will you stay in Zürich for the night?' asked Obstalden.

'No, I am going to Chur. My organization is already waiting for me there. But I had several matters to arrange in Paris first.'

'Will any of the others have arrived?'

Coquelle shrugged his shoulders. 'Huxton possibly, perhaps Ciriello, but you know the Italians!'—he smiled a little contemptuously. 'They like to pretend it's all child's play. Had the Germans been allowed to enter, they would have been there for the last four weeks. I know very little about the others. Sweden is supposed to be sending a girl—a name something like Lindquist or Linström—Holland has only Van der Meulen.'

'If you *had* been going to spend the night in Zürich,' Ob-

stalden interrupted, 'we could have put you up. My son Turli would have enjoyed it.'

'Thank you, but I have a room booked at the Steinboch Hotel in Chur, and to-morrow I must leave early for Samedan.'

'And what are you flying?' Obstalden felt a little curious about this eager young Frenchman.

'An "Air 100". That was the aircraft in which I won the altitude record.'

Obstalden shook him by the hand. They were approaching Kloten and he had to get back to his cockpit. Arriving there, he slipped on earphones and took over the controls. His mind wandered to Turli and Jürgen waiting for him. Would Jürgen have passed his 'C'? It would delight his brother-in-law, Jürgen's father —never a particularly good pilot but an unbounded enthusiast—if he had done so.

As he brought his aircraft into a perfect landing at Kloten his thoughts were still with these boys, Jürgen, Turli and the proud young Coquelle. It was for them, and thousands like them that gliding, he felt, was such an excellent sport, developing their characters and their self-confidence.

The steps were now being pushed up and the passengers were alighting, Obstalden watched them walking towards the customs' shed, just as if they were leaving a train. One of them walked underneath the cockpit and called up his thanks to Obstalden. He answered somewhat absent-mindedly, his eyes following Coquelle striding happily towards Turli who was waiting with Jürgen near the entrance. He noticed how Jürgen's blond hair fell over his forehead as he greeted the French boy. After a moment or two Coquelle walked on and disappeared from view. Turli's eyes followed him for a second and then he turned back and waved to his

father. Obstalden—leaving Künzli, his second-in-command, to park the aircraft—got down from the cockpit and joined the two boys. 'Got your "C"?' he asked Jürgen as he shook them both by the hand. Jürgen only nodded.

'Well done! What was it like?'

'Wonderful!'

'Is that the truth?' Obstalden turned to his son.

'He flew beautifully!' Turli confirmed; then nudging his father he asked, 'Have you see Coquelle? He is off to Chur to-day. His organization is waiting for him! *His* organization! Since he won the altitude record he's got his own organization, travels by Swissair, and *kindly* allows Captain Obstalden to pilot him!'

Obstalden laughed. 'He's certainly taking the whole business extremely seriously. He's going to try and cut you out!'

Turli smiled. 'It's the flying that's important, not whether you can cut somebody out or not.'

Obstalden looked at him in surprise. 'What do you think?' he asked, turning to his nephew.

'I agree with Turli, but after all, someone's got to win.'

Walking towards the car Turli observed, 'I want to fly better than the others, that's all.'

'But that is exactly the same as wanting to cut someone out,' argued Jürgen.

'Oh no! There is a big difference! But here we are. You sit in the back, Father, next to Jürgen. You haven't wished him many happy returns of the day yet.' Turli started the little Fiat off with such suddenness that Obstalden was nearly flung on top of his nephew.

'Well,' he asked, 'what is more important, your birthday or the "C"?'

'The "C" of course!'

Jürgen felt supremely happy sitting there beside his famous uncle, as Turli speeded towards Zürich. He wound his way somewhat recklessly through the crowded Bahnhofstrasse and was soon climbing the 'Züriberg' to the Sonnenbühlstrasse where the Obstaldens lived.

PREPARATIONS

THE funicular was crawling up the Muottas Muraigl. A young man stood by one of the windows throwing out tiny bits of paper at regular intervals—he watched them dance and flutter about, momentarily undecided until they got caught up by a strong current of air and were swept upwards—up, up, up, into the dark blue sky, until they lost themselves altogether. It was only then that Archibald Huxton seemed satisfied and paid attention to the world around him: a world that was not new to him. As a boy he had been there with his parents. It pleased him to think that not even a war could move mountains. They were still there, all of them—these Pizen whose names were so unpronounceable.

As the little train climbed higher, the Bernina rose slowly above the foothills, her gleaming peak dividing the Engadine from Italy. There was the Palü, the Bellavista, the Piz Bernina, the ice-covered Rosegg—those names Huxton could pronounce, but Morteratsch, Chrast-a-Güzza, Tschierva, Chapuchin, Chalchagn, Corvatsch—to him those were just a series of letters strung together.

His eye fell appreciatively on the Julier chain. That was where the Maloja wind would blow—the wind for which the young gliders had come from all parts of Europe. It would come rushing over the Maloja Pass into the valley, storming up the slopes of the Muottas Muraigl, surging into one powerful upwind, capable of lifting a glider 2,000 feet above the mountains.

The little train crawled into the dark terminus, pulled up,

and panted. Huxton ran up the steps of the Berghotel. He looked round but could not find what he was searching for. He made his way among various guests who were standing about admiring the view: reached the mountain saddle which stretched between the Muottas and the Schafberg, and came to an abrupt halt. There was what he was looking for. A small box with an aerial waving in the wind. In front of the box were several kneeling figures—one of them, a man wearing earphones, was busily telephoning. Huxton walked towards the group, 'Walkie-talkie?' he asked.

'Yes—Radio Link: We are on to Samedan, testing for the Youth Rally.'

Huxton sat down with them: he might pick up something interesting. He pulled out his note-book and awaited events. The passages were full of figures: figures procured with a thoroughness learnt from his father, General Huxton, who was one of the planning staff for the Normandy landings.

The results of the Samedan contest of 1947-8 were all carefully noted. Also, the names and heights of all the Pizen, although he knew them by heart. A glance at one of the pages would have shown something like this:

OBSTALDEN, Arthur. Swiss. 18 years. Type: Moswey, Golden 'C'. Long distance flight: Birrfield-Grenoble. Duration, 8 hours.

COQUELLE, Gaston. French. 17½ years. Type: Air 100. Silver 'C'. Youth altitude record. Kauhava-Finland (20,250 ft).

CIRIELLO, Toto. Italian. 16¾ years. Type: Weihe. Silver 'C'. Without special experience.

LINDQUIST, Svea. Swedish. 18¾ years. (Woman!) Type: Weihe. Silver 'C'. Endurance flight 7½ hours.

VAN DER MEULEN, Joop. Dutch. 18 years. Type: Olympia Meise. Without special experience.

LOS PASSOS, Hermanos. Spanish. 18 years, Arada 17 years. Type:
Kranich. Silver 'C'. Experienced in soaring.

PYRRHONEN, Haino. Finnish. 17½ years. Type: Olympia Meise. Silver 'C'.

HUXTON, Archibald (myself). British. 17 years. Type: Gull IV. Silver 'C'. Experience—nothing remarkable.

But there was no mention of his startling winter flight over a distance of almost 100 miles, which had won him a cash prize and a right to compete in the Samedan Youth Rally.

Huxton cleared his throat, and asked in careful German the names of the people in charge of the competition. Given the answers, he scribbled down:

Chief: Guggenberger.
Met.: Dr. Parpan.
Flight Control: Schübiger.
Training: Paterlini.
Maps and barographs: Meyer, Affoltern.
Judges: Rupp, Goffard, Salis.
Winches: Güttinger.
Admin.: Egli.

He did not list the names of the radio operators or the Jeep drivers.

'Is Obstalden already up here?' he asked, and was told that he would not be arriving for two days. He told them in his turn that he had spoken to Coquelle, but had not yet seen Ciriello, the Italian competitor. 'And this "Lindquist", the Swedish girl—has she arrived yet?'

'She is supposed to be here already.'

'Have you seen her?'

'No. She's staying in Celerina.'

'Really! Why are women always so exclusive?' Then to

cover a moment of embarrassment, he asked when the training would begin, although he knew that it would start in two days' time. He himself felt confident. He had towed his 'Gull' in a trailer hitched to a Jeep right over the Julier pass. In spite of pins and needles in his long legs, it had been a good journey. His crew, Galloway and Crutton, had driven with him and helped him to assemble his 'Gull' on arrival As far as he was concerned, things could start at any time.

He got up and said good-bye, and walked to the hotel terrace, where he lit his pipe and ordered a lemon squash. His eye wandered toward the pass where the Engadine fell steeply into the Bergell. He sat there and thought once more of the Maloja wind and of the fame which it had been given by thousands of glider pilots.

Meanwhile Coquelle, having had a look round the field, wandered off toward the little Church of Saint Gian, which stood in a copse of larch trees on a small hill between Samedan and Pontresina. Secluded and peaceful, looking as it must have looked hundreds of years ago, Coquelle felt that it was an ideal spot for the time of quiet reflection which he indulged in everyday. He reached the steps of the church and found that he was not alone. A girl was sitting there, her elbows on her knees, and her chin resting in her cupped hands. She was staring into the distance, and even when the boy stopped in front of her, she continued to stare straight through him. Coquelle was so surprised that he abandoned his plan, changed his direction and wandered round the church to the little graveyard. During this involuntary walk he asked himself why he had not just sat down next to the girl. He was not usually overcome with shyness, but somehow her quiet disinterested manner had seemed to drive him away.

'Coquelle!' he said to himself, 'You're slipping!' The girl was sitting in exactly the same position when he returned from his tour of the churchyard. He stopped for a moment, scrutinized the building carefully like an archaeologist, turned, and strolled back the way he had come. He had an uncomfortable feeling that a pair of eyes were boring into the back of his head, but he resolutely refused to look round. Somehow he *could* not get his arms to synchronize with his legs. What was she like? She had black hair, and that seemed to be all that he could remember.

When he got back to the field, Svea Lindquist's van was just arriving. The Swedish flag—a yellow cross on a blue background—was boldly painted on one side. He visualized its owner as being a typical Nordic type with the conventional blue eyes and fair hair.

He walked over to his own glider, and with the help of his two assistants, Ranondel and Parraud, checked her over from top to bottom. All was in perfect order. Huxton's 'Gull' lay next to his 'Air 100'. In spite of the fact that the Englishman obviously knew what he was doing, Coquelle felt him to be stiff, and rather stand-offish. In his opinion, flying required imagination, and he was sure that Huxton, like so many of his race, lacked that essential quality. He suddenly looked over his shoulder. Nobody was there, but he had a strange feeling that the black eyes of the girl he had seen at St. Gian were resting on him.

A LETTER FROM SVEA LINDQUIST TO PER NORDSTROM

Samedan, 4 July.

Dear Per,

I have arrived. My God! How these mountains depress me. The whole country is covered with Pizen. Indescribable numbers of Pizen! (Only the round ones are called Muottas.) Gliding above this sea of mountains is not easy; in fact, I found it very difficult to find my way back to the valley. It's tough going for an unprotected girl like myself, whose Per is so many miles away. It will be entirely your fault if Sweden makes a fool of herself at this rally. What was the idea in the back of your mind, when you agreed to my entering this competition? Was it because one fine day the wind carried me for seven hours on its patient back, or was it because you wanted to get rid of me? 'Young Girl Crashes on the North Wall of the Piz Bernina!' I believe you'd be pleased to hear that! Every other country has sent a boy. I am staying here in Celerina, incognito, so that I can keep clear of them all. My black hair is an excellent disguise—they are all looking for a blonde. Those I have seen so far seem incredibly pompous, as if they were already swollen with pride at what they *may* accomplish! Perhaps I'm being unkind! I suppose they aren't really so bad. That's one of the advantages of gliding: one only meets decent boys. I hear you clearing your throat! Have you got a cold? I had to laugh at the French boy they call Coquelle. There is a little church here called St. Gian. I had strolled there, and was sitting on the steps, trying to learn the names of the Pizen by heart,

or perhaps just feeling a little homesick, thinking of you, and of Sweden's rolling countryside. Well, soon this chap Coquelle arrived, obviously wanted to sit next to me, so I put on my 'lost-in-thought-and-far-away' expression and stared straight through him. He was most disconcerted, ran round the little church, looked very intently at the gravestones, appeared once more, inspected the stone works like an archaeologist, and walked sedately away. I fixed my eyes on the back of his head, and felt that I somehow managed to spoil his dignified departure. He obviously had no idea who I was. What a shock the poor boy will get when I move into Samedan to-morrow.

Dr. Parpan the meteorologist—a nice fellow, by the way—told me in confidence that already everyone has been asking for me. Even the Englishman Huxton, who is a redhead, and very proper. But I mustn't go on describing these boys for ever; you'll be hearing enough about them considering that I shall be coping with them for at least eight days. It won't be easy in the air, or on land: but I suppose it's useless trying to make you understand the difficulties involved in being a girl as well as a pilot.

The competition is to be opened with all due ceremony. They keep on impressing on us that we are flying for the glory of Europe. But Sweden is lovely all the same, and at least it doesn't have the Pizen mountains, and there you are, sitting in the middle of it, and you certainly won't be able to find me amongst all these peaks.

Yours Svea

THE OPENING DAY

DR. HURTIGER-FONVALLE who was giving the opening speech, looked kind and informal. There was no sign of a bowler hat and a cut-away coat about him. He was dressed in a tweed jacket and flannel trousers, and his bright woollen tie fluttered in the breeze. The wire stays of the windsock beating a constant tattoo against the iron pole sounded like a distant band accompanying the festivities.

The wonderful Maloja wind was blowing small cumuli across the steel-blue sky: the rugged mountains were silhouetted against the horizon. Samedan lay white and luminous in front of the Padella just the other side of the airfield where the gliders were lined up before their hangars. Their right wings rested on the ground, their left stretched greedily into the air. Their fins bore the insignia of the different nations, and their wings the roundel of Europe. The pilots sat in their cockpits or stood around with their assistants. Rasch, the manager of the airfield, leant out of the window of his little control-room, and looked down at the committee which was lined up beneath him as if balancing on a tight-rope. Had he wanted to, he could have spat on their heads, but he felt that he had not got to know them well enough for that. Guggenberger, the chief, might possibly have laughed. But Dr. Parpan? It was always dangerous to joke with scientists: especially with meteorologists. They were always a little touchy because people were constantly trying to pick their brains.

Dr. Hurtiger-Fonvalle talked in French. In spite of the happy and carefree occasion, he could not command com-

plete attention. The eyes of his listeners wandered away from him frequently, looking at one another, or at the Muottas Muraigl.

Jürgen, however, looked intently at Dr. Hurtiger. Even though he understood little of what was being said, he thought it was the right thing to listen to speeches. The word 'Europe' was frequently mentioned, and he believed that Dr. Hurtiger was talking about some sort of organization which the old European nations were trying to form. But in his mind Jürgen was reliving the flight over the mountains with his Uncle Kurt. What a wonderful little plane that had been: red-lacquered on the outside, and luxuriously upholstered inside in light grey cord. The panel reminded him of the dashboard in his father's beautiful pre-war car. How comfortable it had been, and how exciting to look through the window on to the sea of mountains, into the deep valley, or through the whirling disc of the propeller to the boundless horizon. Uncle Kurt had been at the controls, telling him the names of the mountains, and the places which unfolded beneath him, and he had also given him some very useful hints on flying. Would he ever be able to relax like that at the controls? His uncle had had to take off again almost immediately, as he was returning to Lisbon that same day.

Turli sat near him in his Moswey—his hand on the stick, his feet on the rudder. Dr. Hurtiger's words hardly reached him. All that was perfectly all right for Europe, but at the moment Turli was itching to fly, and nothing else could hold his interest. The wind was ideal, but who knew how long it would last! Yesterday after training in the Pontresina valley, he had caught the upwind of the Muottas and the Schafberg, which had led him into another upwind over the Piz Lan-

guard. He had only landed two and a half hours later, because he had not wanted to let the others know about that particularly lucky region.

Actually Coquelle would have been very much interested in Dr. Hurtiger's speech. After all, it was in his own language. But he was probably paying less attention than anyone. Instead, he was casting surreptitious glances at Svea, who was leaning against the wing of her Weihe, and appeared to be entirely absorbed by the doctor's words. There was a slightly sarcastic expression on her gay mouth, and Coquelle imagined that although she was not actually moving her head she was giving him an occasional glance. But suddenly she turned to Toto Ciriello, who gave her a quick encouraging wink. Having only arrived the previous day, he had assembled his glider in a hurry, and proceeded to terrify Guggenberger with a demonstration of rolls and loops, ending with a landing that had made Coquelle feel sick. However, he had merely climbed out, laughing uproariously, patted the furious Guggenberger on the shoulder, and shouted, 'That's the way to do it'. He claimed to know every language, and Coquelle felt unreasonably irritated by his calm, rather insolent manner, and by the quick intimate little looks which passed between him and Svea. He was still feeling sore, and inwardly embarrassed at the thought of his behaviour in the churchyard. He had made a fool of himself, and Svea must have looked on him as a half-wit. To add to his confusion, during training yesterday she had come towards him, with outstretched hand, saying, 'Ah . . . Coquelle . . . we have met before!' He could have kicked himself for his childishness when he found himself saying, 'Have we? . . . I can't think where.' Her French, when she replied: 'I thought one usually remembered churchyards,' had not been

at all bad. Well . . . now he was getting what he deserved, and Toto with his idiotic behaviour would step in where he had failed. She couldn't possibly know what an ardent admirer she was turning down, but he was going to fly, he was going to fly so that not only Svea, but all the others would admire him. Perhaps he could at least show that his 'Air 100' was superior to her Weihe, and that France did not let herself be beaten easily.

Chief Guggenberger let his eyes wander like a jealous hen over its brood. He had watched them during their training, and there was good material there. The two Spaniards, for instance, had not done at all badly with their heavy 'Kranich' It was a pity that they stood so little chance. The Finn, Pyrrhonen, showed great promise; he had flown with cool confidence on to the slopes of the Muottas and then attached himself to Coquelle like his shadow. The one that really gave him cause for anxiety was Van der Meulen. His log-book showed some good long flights, and he had got the time and distance for his Silver 'C'. But the height was still lacking. Yes, what he had seen yesterday had disturbed him. In spite of the wonderful wind, which would even have pushed up a powered aircraft, he had hovered about far below the others, always keeping a good distance between himself and the mountains, as if he were frightened of them. After barely half an hour in the air he had come down again. His landing had been clean. Guggenberger joined him in the hangar where he found the Dutch boy, with his assistants, hard at work on the machine. 'Is there anything wrong?' the chief asked him. Van der Meulen merely shrugged his shoulders and fidgeted with the control-stick. Guggenberger left him, but when he returned half an hour later the hangar was empty. There didn't seem to be anything wrong with

the glider, it was in perfect order. Guggenberger looked at him, sitting there in his 'Meise', a tall boy with a long face and a slightly open mouth. He was staring at the Muottas Muraigl as if they were an enemy. After the flat countryside of Holland he probably found the mountains depressing. In case of accident, the Chief decided to try and find some reason for suspending the 'Meise'. If Van derMeulen did not show any objection, it would prove that his suspicions were correct—otherwise he supposed he would have to let him enter.

He looked with approval at the red-haired Archie Huxton. In spite of the fact that his 'Gull' was not particularly efficient, he flew it astonishingly well. The Englishman flew with his head rather than with his emotions. There was a world of difference between the technique and the elegance of Coquelle, the skill of Obstalden, the impudence of Toto Ciriello, and the intuitive flying of the attractive Svea. He felt a great liking for the girl. However, everyone respected Archie Huxton, and he seemed to be the only one of the whole lot who was really listening to Dr. Hurtiger's speech. Clad in his overalls, he stood in front of his 'Gull', writing slowly in his note-book, looking intently at Dr. Hurtiger between sentences, as if he were trying to drag the words out of the doctor's mouth. That was hardly an exaggeration, because Huxton was using the speech as a French exercise. He tried as well as he could to translate the words directly into English. If there were to be a United Europe, he felt that it was essential to know the various languages, and with a characteristic thoroughness he tackled the problem. He headed his translation '*European Gymnastics*', and wrote: 'High go again the flags. They will flutter around those of Europe. But if we (not understood: to send away? to depart?) meet

with the glider pilots of other countries. This you must think of: (stupid construction!) when you measure your strength—(does this make sense?)—and this shall be the leading spirit which moves your heart. (Very pompous).'

Then it actually happened. Suddenly all the various multi-coloured flags rose to the top of their white poles and fluttered round the flag of the European League. They had been caught by the Maloja wind, and tore at their ropes as if they longed to escape with the billowing wind-sock on its long iron pole.

Huxton put his note-book back in his pocket, Coquelle stopped looking at Svea, Toto gave up making faces, Obstalden forgot to think about the Piz Languard, and Van der Meulen turned his eyes away from those disturbing Muottas. Everyone looked towards his own particular flag, and saluted it. Only Jürgen stared thoughtfully at the League flag, and said to himself: 'That could be a reality.'

Then Svea walked over to Archie Huxton, and asked: 'What are you writing?'

'Nothing of importance,' he answered coldly.

THE ALTITUDE FLIGHT

THE pilots were being briefed in the barracks at the entrance to the field. Chief Guggenberger and Schübiger, who was in control of flying, sat behind tables that were covered with maps and schedules. The Chief banged with a small wooden hammer to recall their wandering attention. 'The preparations are often more important than the actual flying,' he said. 'Those who start off unprepared will never be successful Or if they are it is just luck!' He looked meaningly at Toto.

They were briefed in three languages—German, English, and French. Toto, who boasted that he knew them all, did not in fact listen to any. He was picturing himself looping the most beautiful loop, right under Svea's nose. He was really only happy in an unnatural position—anybody, he felt, could fly straight—and, whilst the others were trying to memorize the flight and landing instructions, Toto was thinking out a new way of using an up-current by flying on his back. Nobody had attempted that up to now.

When Guggenberger tried to explain the rules that he and the judges had made out for the competition, there was a certain amount of unrest and questioning. They all had various ideas on the fair way of assessing the points for the altitude flight. Turli's opinion was that the maximum height gained should obtain the greatest number of points. The Chief pointed out, however, that with a poor wind they would be unable to reach a good height. He was shouted down by loud cries of 'But the wind's wonderful to-day. . . .' 'It may die down,' Dr. Parpan reminded them gently. There was more loud arguing about the possibilities of the wind,

which was quelled once more by the hammer. 'Quiet!' thundered Guggenberger. 'Listen to me, all of you! We have worked out a day-to-day formula.' He was again interrupted, this time by Coquelle, who leapt to his feet: 'Day-to-day formula! Day-to-day formula!' he shouted. 'How is that going to work?' Guggenberger ignored him, and moved towards a large blackboard. 'Taking the averages of the three best flights, the formula of the altitude tests will look something like this.' He chalked up some complicated figures, which were greeted by cries of: '*Ya! Arriba España!* Hm! God, yes I see-e!' There were still one or two dissenting voices amongst them.

'How do you expect us to remember all this when we are flying? Leave your formulas out of it, we'll fly as well as we can!' Again the hammer crashed down.

'Silence! We have got to judge you somehow, and what is more, judge you fairly!'

'Well, then judge us fairly, but let us do the flying. We don't want all these formulas!'

Guggenberger was endeavouring to keep his temper. 'You are going to fly, and soon. But if we have no definite method of judging your performances, God protect us from your anger when you get back to the field! Now do you understand?'

Huxton was taking careful note of everything that was said. He was determined to find out all about those figures. One had got to know the reason for everything. The better the formula, the better the thing. Or was it the other way round?

During the above proceedings Svea had been whiling away the time by designing a charming afternoon dress on a piece of paper. Her dressmaker, Miss Zethräus, should make it up

for her when she returned to Sweden. Only the call: 'Come and get your weather charts and barographs' brought her back to her present surroundings. The starting numbers were then announced:

No. 1. Lindquist
No. 2. Obstalden
No. 3. Ciriello
No. 4. Coquelle
No. 5. Pyrrhonen
No. 6. Los Passos
No. 7. Huxton
No. 8. Van der Meulen

Once more the wooden hammer came down on the table. 'Wait one moment, please! Van der Meulen! The final check-up showed a certain weakness in the stabilizer of your Meise. I am sorry, but she has got to be grounded.'

With mixed feelings—in which relief was uppermost—Van der Meulen replaced his charts on the table.

'Can't he use Dr. Nauber's Meise?', Turli always ready to be helpful, called out. 'I'm sure he'd be only too glad to lend it under the circumstances!'

'I hardly think that Dr. Nauber would be prepared to do that,' was the Chief's rejoinder.

But Turli was not to be put off. 'I will ring him up,' he insisted. 'He is in Chur and he promised to come this Sunday. If I ask him nicely, I'm certain he'll help.'

'*I* am going to ring him up, Obstalden. In any case Van der Meulen will not be in time for the altitude flight.'

'He can do it later.'

'I am afraid that won't be possible. All the flights have got to be made under the same conditions. Who knows what sort of weather we may have, say the day after to-morrow?'


26
26
26

'But I thought that was the whole point of your day-to-day formula.' Tuli turned to Van der Meulen and put his hand on his shoulder. 'Poor old chap. We'll fix it somehow. You'll be able to take your altitude flight—don't worry.'

Van der Meulen smiled rather sadly at Turli's well-meaning words. If only there weren't any mountains. He shrugged his shoulders, and said, 'I shall quite understand if Dr. Nauber doesn't want to lend me his "Meise".'

Chief Guggenberger joined the two. 'I'll see to it that everything is properly arranged. Perhaps we could have a talk about it later.' He took Van der Meulen by the hand. 'I'm extremely sorry, but "Safety First", as the English say.'

Van der Meulen left the barracks. The others hurried to their machines, their charts under their arms and their parachutes slung carelessly over their shoulders. Very soon they were dragging their gliders over the long concrete runway and beyond to the edge of the meadow, where they lined up in their starting order.

Svea, the first starter, immediately pointed her 'Weihe' into the winch. The winch was ready half a mile down the field, and Tingren, her assistant, took the steel tow and hooked it into the socket of the glider. Svea tested the dropping switch over and over again: each time it worked perfectly. She got into the narrow cockpit and pulled her little white cap over her unruly hair. Toto and Coquelle leaped to her side.

'I fix—I fix——' Toto cried, as he tried to fasten her safety harness. She waved him away, and also refused Coquelle's assistance when he tried to do likewise.

'Tingren,' she called. 'Tingren.' Toto and Coquelle jumped aside and stood eyeing each other with undisguised jealousy. Svea sat between them, her entire concentration

given to the take-off. Tingren, with practised hands, pulled the harness over her shoulders and attached it to the belt which she had already clipped round her waist. He then placed the perspex hood over Svea's head, and there she sat, looking out as if from a large jam-pot. The sounds from outside came to her ears muffled: the rustling of the wind-swept grass, the voices of the others, the whistle of the electric train from Samedan station. She was alone. Tingren lifted the wing, and with a small red flag gave the take-off signal to those on the winch.

Svea caught her breath sharply. She always found herself doing that at the last moment, when her feet were on the rudder, her hand on the stick, and when she was about to be jerked into the air. Each take-off had, to her, the unexpectedness of a new love affair, or of a fresh meeting with Per, when she felt so full of love for him, but not so certain of his response. A little jerk. The nose of her 'Weihe' dropped a fraction: the cable was taut. Svea glanced quickly to left and right. Toto and Coquelle waved to her. Toto with bravado, Coquelle with charming elegance. She smiled, but at the same time she looked straight in front of her.

Tingren waved his flag once more to confirm that he had understood the starting signal. Suddenly the glider jerked forward, relentlessly. In a matter of seconds, and with a strange thumping sound, the Weihe leapt into the air. Svea felt, as she had done on countless previous occasions, the wonderful sensation of being completely alone in the air. She pulled the stick right back towards her body and stormed like an angry dragon into the sky. For a moment she saw nothing but the blue infinity, felt nothing but the excitement of that first upward surge, gave herself entirely to the indescribable ecstasy of the moment. Soon, however, she

knew by the rolling movement of the glider and the sluggishness of the controls, that she had reached the stalling point. She corrected by pushing the stick forward to its natural position. She looked down at the winch, almost vertically below her, and with the index finger of her left hand she grasped the release ring, and pulled it slowly towards her body. With a metallic sound the cable freed itself from its position and sank in spirals to the ground, a small parachute breaking its fall.

Now that the first exhilarating rush was over, Svea found the silence to be almost uncanny. The 'Weihe' seemed to her to be standing still—as a hawk hovers almost motionless over its prey. The glider's nose lifted suddenly as if to sniff the air, but she again corrected with a touch on the stick.

Although Svea had experienced the sensation a hundred times, she always felt the same tension and breathless excitement at the almost explosive transition from the stormy tearing at the winch to the calm loneliness of free flight. With the wings of her machine stretched wide, she waited for the wind-stream to carry her away. The sky was hers, and only the faint sound of rushing air accompanied her flight. The altitude meter showed 1,000 feet above ground, and the speedometer 40 m.p.h., which she quickly increased to 60. In front of her lay the emerald lake of the Oberengadine, and beyond, St. Moritz with its palace-like hotels. Her left wing covered the little church of St. Gian like a canopy, and the remembrance of Coquelle's undignified behaviour in the graveyard made her smile. But she could not waste time sight-seeing. She had to work to get to the slopes of the Muottas, to achieve height, to achieve the greatest possible height. She swept into the valley of Pontresina and

allowed herself to drift closer to the mountains. Over Pontresina she curved away from the slope, and for a moment the Chalchagn loomed up in front, massive and threatening. The wind was ideal. She sheered again close to the Muottas, and felt the sharp up-current sweeping her high into the air; it was like going up in a rather bumpy lift. Below her lay the terminus of the funicular, and on the hotel terrace guests stared at her through binoculars and waved with large white handkerchiefs. Svea circled higher and higher in the inexhaustible up-wind, leaving those poor earth-bound people, that sea of upturned faces, those fluttering handkerchiefs, far, far, beneath her.

One by one the other competitors took off and joined her in the sky. Huxton, the last to leave, gained height quickly. Soon all of them were circling in the space between Chrast-a-mora, Muottas Muraigl, the Schafberg, the Albris, and Piz Languard. All were concentrating on one thing, and one thing only, to gain the greatest number of points by flying just that little bit higher than the next man.

The airfield returned to peace and quiet. The assistants strolled back along the tarmac towards the hangars, looking up now and then at their own particular gliders. They were joined by the men on the winch, and soon they all disappeared into the restaurant.

Schübiger was sitting by the telephone. He contacted the relay station on the Muottas Muraigl and requested them to call him at once should anything untoward occur.

Still holding his insignia of office, the mallet and the red flag, Chief Guggenberger sat comfortably on the bench in front of the flight office. Dr. Parpan came out sniffing the air and murmuring that the wind would not last very much longer. He sat down next to his chief? Dr. Hurtiger-Fonvalle

brought his deck-chair out, unfolded it and settled himself near by. 'I am curious to know what my Europeans are up to,' he remarked. He had done his part in the proceedings and now he merely awaited results. Frau Rasch, young and pretty, opened the restaurant window.

'Are all of them up?' she asked.

Guggenberger nodded.

'Thank goodness,' said her husband, who was leaning against the window of Flying Control. 'Now, we can count on a little peace!'

Jürgen and Tingren went into the bar to get an Ovamaltine, then stood with their glasses at a respectful distance from the all-powerful judges.

'There's plenty of room on the bench,' Dr. Parpan called to them, patting the empty space beside him. 'Everybody can sit here.' The two boys smilingly joined him.

Guggenberger's eyes were following Van der Meulen who was walking round the wind-sock, past the met. office, towards the exit. 'Stay here! Stay here! Van der Meulen,' he called. 'A deck-chair for Van der Meulen!'

The Dutch boy halted, almost guiltily, and walked hesitatingly back towards the group. Frau Rasch put a deck-chair between Dr. Hurtiger and the bench.

'*O, ich danke!*' Van der Meulen thanked her in his broad, rather gurgling German. He sat down smiling a little sheepishly, his hands clutching his knees.

''Lean back and look up into the sky, that's where they are flying, not here on the ground.' The Chief pointed upwards towards the circling gliders. 'When the ''Meise'' is in order, you do want to fly again, don't you?'

Van der Meulen did not answer. Obediently he lay back and fixed his eyes on the sky, but his hands clutched tightly

at the arms of his deck-chair. Did the Chief guess, he wondered? Was there really anything wrong with the 'Meise'?

'Did you have bad luck?' Dr. Hurtiger asked. Van der Meulen nodded. 'Not a crash, I hope!' The doctor always wanted to know everything.

'No. They grounded my "Meise", the stabilizer was supposed to be faulty.'

'Tt! Tt! What a pity! I hope the damage has been repaired.'

Van der Meulen shrugged his shoulders.

'The day after to-morrow perhaps, or the day after the day *after* to-morrow! Who knows? It depends on the Air Ministry; you see, even after it has been repaired, they have to O.K. it.'

'I can pull a few strings at the Air Ministry,' Guggenberger interposed. "I'll ring them. We can have all this fixed in no time if we try.' He looked intently at Van der Meulen, who studiously avoided his glance. There were the others, happily gliding above him. None of them feared the mountains, why, *why* should he be cursed with this terror of them, why should his courage be sapped? He hated them, hated them as he'd never hated anything before. Jürgen and Tingren, sitting by him, noticed his set expression: Jürgen wondered why he didn't look after his 'Meise' himself; Tingren was thinking that if by any chance the same misfortune had befallen Svea, she would somehow have managed to get up into the air.

Van der Meulen picked out Huxton's 'Gull' over the Schafberg. He followed with his eyes the beautiful geometrical curve of his course. High over the Albris, just under a fluffy cumulous cloud, he recognized the clear outline of Turli's 'Moswey' silhouetted against the ice-blue sky.

Suddenly their respective thoughts were interrupted by the loud ringing of the telephone bell in Flying Control. In a few seconds Schübiger's voice could be heard talking excitedly. 'What?' he was saying, 'but that is? That is! What? Chrast-a-mora, you said?' With one accord all heads turned towards the Control-Room window. A door slammed, steps clattered across the bar. Frau Rasch shrieked, 'What's the matter with you, Schübiger? What's happened?' Schübiger stormed out of the door, passed the group without a word, ran along his runway, his eyes searching the skies over Chrast-a-mora. The Chief, Dr. Hurtiger, and Dr. Parpan did not take much notice; they didn't always take the little man seriously; he was well known for his excitability. However, when Schübiger did not return, the Chief rose and called out, 'What's the matter?'

Schübiger pointed upwards to Chrast-a-mora, 'Look for yourself!' he screamed. The Chief joined him on the runway. 'That is unheard of,' Schübiger continued, 'it's absolutely against all the rules. We won't stand for it.' The others had followed the Chief, all except Van der Meulen, who remained sitting in his deck-chair.

Within a few seconds the Chief had grasped the situation. Two 'Weihen' were flying about 3,000 feet above the mountain plateau. Seen from below, they might have been glued together. An 'Air 100' hovered a few hundred feet below.

'Just watch what the 'Weihe' is up to *now!*' shouted Schübiger, his anger increasing every minute. The onlookers saw that one of the 'Weihen' had dived down, gathered speed, and then shot straight up into the air again, hanging vertically, and almost motionless, like a cross in the sky. Suddenly its left wing dipped and it shot down towards the

second 'Weihe', streaked past it and returned again to its normal flying position. The second 'Weihe', afraid of being jammed, banked slightly to the right to escape from the danger zone. Both gliders had by then lost height, and were now below the 'Air 100'.

'That's the second time they've done that!' spluttered Schübiger. 'That's what comes of being in love while you're in the air! That fool Toto is simply showing off in front of Svea.' Guggenberger laughed, which increased Schübiger's fury. 'It's against all flying regulations, and, what is more, that half-wit is forcing Lindquist to lose height. All you can do is to laugh! I don't understand you!'

'Don't worry, I shan't be laughing by the time young Toto lands!'

In his excitement, Tingren had gripped Jürgen's hand. He stared into the sky, his face drawn; he longed to curse Toto out loud, to shout to him to stop his maniacal behaviour, but all he could manage was a funny little high pitched scream. Covered with shame he turned and ran as if the devil were at his heels towards the hangars. He slipped into the cockpit of the Dutch boy's "Meise', pulled down the perspex hood, and in the silence and privacy wept tears of rage and disappointment at the loss of Svea's chances.

Jürgen longed to run after him, but he was held back by Dr. Hurtiger. 'Leave him alone,' he advised, 'have a word with him later on, he'll be better by then.' Reluctantly Jürgen turned his eyes to the sky, where the situation was now back to normal. The two 'Weihen' were gliding happily side by side, and looked as if, with the 'Air 100', they were endeavouring to achieve greater height.

'Schübiger! Schübiger! Telephone!' Rasch hung out of Flying Control, hurrying him on.

'I am coming, I am coming,' panted Schübiger, putting on an extra spurt which would have done credit to a sprinter, and vanishing in at the door.

Dr. Parpan did not only draw isobars and collect information about high and low pressures. One of his chief talents as a meteorologist was his ability to smell out the changes in the air. Just then he was standing in front of his office, his nose lifted like that of a bloodhound on the scent. Not only his nose but his ears were also on the alert; he was listening intently; he missed the familiar drumming of the wire-stays on the wind-sock—the slightest breeze would keep them moving. There was definitely a change in the air; he felt it, he heard it, and he smelt it.

'Guggenberger!' Dr. Parpan slapped his Chief on the back, 'the fun up there won't last much longer.'

Guggenberger paid him scant attention; he was listening to Schübiger's voice shouting into the telephone again. 'What? Bernina Hüser did you say? . . . No crash? . . . No damage? Incredible! What did you say? . . . They speak Spanish? . . . Yes, that's right, a two-seater. Hold on just a minute! What? Yes, fetch the pilot to the 'phone; hold on a minute, please!' Schübiger leant excitedly out of the window. 'Dr. Hurtiger! Dr. Fonvalle! Come inside, please! You can speak Spanish, can't you?'

Dr. Hurtiger carried on the conversation, and Schübiger explained to the others that the Spaniards had landed on a small meadow without doing any damage to their 'Kranich'.

'That is a real feat!' he beamed. 'Without damage! That ought to merit a special prize. They must have gone right through the Hochtat, by the Bernina Stream, and the road over the funicular, on to the little meadow which must have

been covered in rubble and boulders. I'd like to see anybody else trying that!'

Guggenberger was equally enthusiastic about the Spaniards' achievement.

Dr. Hurtiger came to the window, 'Los Hermanos would like some transport. They say that they were just behind the Isola Pers when they dropped suddenly like a miner's cage descending. They were completely helpless, but their landing was smooth and the "Kranich' unharmed. That's almost a miracle!'

Jürgen, who was watching Turli's 'Moswey' and a 'Meise' still flying at a great height, asked, 'Why did they have to land there? What happened?'

'They got into an inversion,' explained Dr. Parpan. The word conveyed nothing to Jürgen, but he was not going to admit it. Instead he remarked:

'What rotten luck!' He would find out sooner or later what an inversion was. The Chief gave instructions to the Spaniards' crew. They were to tow the trailer by Jeep, and race over to the meadow. 'Van der Meulen can drive with you,' he said. 'Van der Meulen! Van der Meulen! Where are you?' There was no answer. The Dutch boy's chair was empty. Guggenberger shrugged his shoulders. It was a pity; he thought the boy would have enjoyed the drive.

' Can I go?' Jürgen longed to take his place, to get the inside story of the Spaniards' adventure, but the Chief told him to wait for Turli. Somewhat disconsolately he watched the jeep and trailer roar off into the distance.

INTERMEZZO

TOTO strode up the steps of the Hotel des Alpes, and banged his bedroom door with such force that the porter jumped out of his little cubicle like a jack-in-the-box.

'These Italians!' he muttered to himself. 'Uncontrolled as wild animals.' The bang was followed by the sound of breaking glass. 'Oh my God!' he thought. 'That's eighty centimes down the drain.' He climbed wearily to the first floor, tiptoed to Toto's door and listened. He could hear heavy steps, and a great deal of puffing and blowing followed by a stream of Italian curses. He bent down and peered through the keyhole.

The tablecloth was on the floor, broken glass—not a wine-glass, but a vase worth two francs forty at least—lay shattered near by. Toto was walking feverishly up and down gesticulating with his hands and repeating over and over again '*Idiota! Idiota!*' Suddenly he made for the window. Was he going to throw himself out? No! He merely leant over the sill and screamed something in Italian which the porter could not catch. The boy then flung himself into a chair and proceeded to tear his hair; the sight fascinated the porter who had only read of such behaviour in novels.

'*Abh! Mio! Mio! Abh!*' These exclamations were followed by more curses. Then Toto lifted his ruffled head from his hands and sat just staring gloomily into space.

The porter had seen enough. Shaking his head at the stupidity of the modern generation, he plodded downstairs again. He wondered if Herr Rotlisbühl would put an extra two francs forty on the Italian boy's bill. He was in the

midst of sorting out some postcards of the hotel, when Turli Obstalden came slowly through the revolving doors.

'How are you, Herr Obstalden?' Turli was an old customer and a well-known pilot in Samedan. 'How did you get on? What height did you make?' His interested questions were cut short by Turli.

'Have you got a telegraph form?' he asked curtly.

'Of course!' The porter handed a form to Turli and fished in his waistcoat pocket for a pencil.

'Thank you.' Turli rested his elbows on the edge of the little cubicle, sucked his pencil and thought. Presently he began to write, and the porter—with the curiosity of his profession tried to read the message upside down. But Turli carefully shielded what he was writing with his elbow until he had signed it. Then he straightened up and handed it over to the porter. 'Please send this off at once.' Without another word he turned and walked up the stairs.

The Porter read: 'Kurt Obstalden. Hotel Suisse. Lisbon. Altitude flight Pyrrhonen (Finland) First. Myself second.

Turli'

TOTO'S LANDING

JÜRGEN did not accompany Turli to the hotel. Turli had obviously not wanted his company, and anyway he preferred the freshness of the field to the stifling atmosphere of the hotel with its old-fashioned easy-chairs and suffocating smell of floor polish.

Jürgen thought back to the events of that unforgettable day. From the moment that the message had come through about the Spaniards' miraculous escape, things had continued to happen. He intended to write a full description in his letter home of all he had seen and heard. By the time the gliders started to land, the wind-sock was hanging like a deflated balloon against its iron pole, and the sky was covered with a film of stratocirrus cloud. Van der Meulen had still not put in an appearance. Jürgen felt vaguely worried about him. Perhaps he had merely gone off because he could not bear listening to the endless conversation about flying. He could sympathize with him if that was the reason. He, too, had felt somewhat out of things at times, but he had contented himself with watching and listening. Tingren eventually left the hangar and joined him on the runway. Jürgen kept him close to his side. With them were Guggenberger, Schübiger, Dr. Parpan and Dr. Hurtiger.

Huxton's 'Gull' was the first to land. With extended flaps he swept majestically and accurately on to the runway. His crew were ready to help him out, and with his charts under his arm he walked straight over to the Chief, who shook him warmly by the hand. 'Nothing to boast of,' was all he said.

It was easy to see from his graceful and gentle landing that

Coquelle loved his 'Air 100'. Parraud and Ranondel were on the spot, and the Chief helped him out. Jürgen did not understand a great deal of what passed between them, but he guessed by Coquelle's dramatic gesticulations and excited face, that he was giving the Chief his version of the occurrence over Chrast-a-mora. The expression on his face was one of mingled contempt and anger.

Jürgen noticed that while Svea was landing Toto kept circling above her. Perhaps his conscience was pricking him, or perhaps he was trying to find out how the land lay. There was a rush towards Svea's 'Weihe' as soon as it came to a standstill. Tingren naturally got there first. He overwhelmed her with a rush of words which no one could understand, but the gist of which was obvious by the way in which he frequently shook his fist in Toto's direction. Svea only laughed, pressed his arm gently and patted his tousled blond hair. She then pulled off her cap and let her own jet black hair fall freely about her shoulders. Jürgen saw Coquelle approach her and shake her by the hand.

'You had every chance of winning,' he said, 'but Toto spoilt it all.'

Svea looked into his eyes with a friendly smile. 'You could have taken your chance then; why didn't you?' she asked.

'I didn't want to do that. It wouldn't have been fair when things were so unlucky for you.'

'That was stupid of you.' Svea put her arm across the French boy's shoulder. 'I just thought you couldn't make it.'

'Oh, I could have——' he broke off, wishing perhaps that he had not started to answer. He had not intended to sound like a martyr, but Svea did not notice his confusion. He re-

mained standing rather lost and perplexed, with Jürgen beside him looking up at him with admiring eyes. Coquelle to cover his embarrassment, remarked lightly: 'These girls are always over-sensitive.'

'What?' Jürgen did not understand.

'These girls'. Coquelle repeated slowly, 'are always over-sensitive.'

'Yes, indeed!' Jürgen nodded wisely, but he still found no connection between Coquelle's remark and the events that had just taken place. He added a little hesitatingly, 'But they are very pretty.'

'Of course,' Coquelle replied briefly. Jürgen looked at Svea as she stood talking with the Chief. He understood why Coquelle found her so enchanting, even if he did not understand all that the French boy said. Jürgen turned his attention to their conversation. Schübiger and the Chief were talking volubly. Schübiger's voice was especially shrill.

'This idiot!' he screamed. 'This imbecile, endangering the the lives of other competitors! We must disqualify him. He has ignored all the rules, he has spoilt Svea's chances. This idiot, this imbecile!'

And whilst they were standing around listening to this tirade, Toto landed.

They had all forgotten that he was still in the air, when he suddenly came shooting out of the sky towards them. He had only just avoided hitting the group that was still surrounding Svea. With queer zig-zag movements he had quickly lost height and had landed finally on the concrete right in front of the hangars, far away from the official landing ground. The cockpit flew open, and Toto ran laughingly towards them.

'That's the way to avoid getting bored in the air,' he crowed with pride, waiting obviously for a burst of applause from the onlookers. Toto neared the group without sensing their disgust—it reminded Jürgen of a lamb trotting innocently towards the slaughter-house. It was a moment which Jürgen felt he would never forget. He could still hear Schübiger's hysterical voice rising higher and higher:

'Idiot, imbecile, half-wit. . . .' He was sure that it would all end in a very nasty fight.

Perhaps it was Dr. Hurtiger's effort to preserve European unity, or perhaps it was Svea's sense of humour that saved the situation. Whatever the reason was, suddenly there was a silence. It seemed to Jürgen as if the whole Oberengadine held its breath. It was Guggenberger who broke the silence.

'Ciriello!' he thundered. 'You have broken every flying rule in existence. You have endangered your companions, and your landing was in disgracefully bad taste.'

'But I am competent—yes? I am capable——'

'You did not give us the pleasure of witnessing what you are capable of.' The Chief's tone was icily sarcastic.

'I don't understand? Please? I stall, I turn, I slide on to the ground, please? Is that not showing capability?'

'Nobody has asked you to show that sort of thing.'

'I show what I like. Yes?'

'We were expecting you to show us a little height!'

Toto's expression was one of infinite boredom.

'Always round and round! Higher and higher, without any fun! That sort of stuff is not for me!'

'You ought to have taken that into consideration before you entered for the competition. You knew the conditions. Did they mention any of the things you have been up to to-day?'

'Conditions, conditions! Nobody can make me——'

'When you agreed to enter for the competition, you also agreed to abide by the *rules* of the competition.'

'But I only wanted to amuse Svea. She was looking bored, and I thought I might let her win.'

'All you succeeded in doing was to prevent her from winning, and you also ran her into considerable danger.'

'Oh! My deepest apologies, Svea'—Toto flashed her his most charming smile. 'That I can assure you, was never my intention.' With the same brilliant smile he turned to the Chief: 'There now, are you satisfied? Is that what you want me to say?'

'No, my boy! You can't get away with a mere apology. I forbid you to enter for the endurance test, and I consider this a mild punishment.' The Chief turned away as if to close the discussion. Toto gasped. He was speechless with rage and humiliation. He clenched his hands together in fury, then shook his fist at the sky, crying:

'Oh Mio! Oh Mio!' again and again.

Huxton was profoundly embarrassed by the Italian boy's lack of self-control. To him, self-control was the epitome of civilized behaviour. Toto continued to bemoan his fate for a few seconds, then suddenly rounded on Svea.

'Svea, what have you got to say about all this?' he asked.

Coquelle promptly stepped between them, looking like a young avenging angel, his arm upraised to keep Toto at bay.

'Cocks! Brainless little fighting-cocks!' Huxton thought to himself and was glad when Guggenberger addressed Toto.

'You'd better go back to your hotel now,' was all he said.

Toto, unable to utter another word, backed slowly past Flying Control, turned and walked a little faster when he

reached the barracks, and was running by the time he got to the exit. There he stopped and shouted, 'I shall pack my things'. Then he rushed on down the road to Samedan.

Even Schübiger, whose job it was to keep a constant lookout, failed to notice Turli's landing. Everyone had been too taken up with Toto. The first Jürgen knew about it was hearing Turli's angry voice behind him.

'Where are your eyes, Jürgen? Or are you already bored with flying?' He turned and spoke crossly to Schübiger. 'Has Pyrrhonen landed yet?'

Schübiger was overcome at having failed in his duties. 'For God's sake, Obstalden,' he cried, 'it's all the fault of this damned Ciriello! Give me your graph quickly!' He glanced over it while the Chief and other pilots surrounded Turli.

'Where is Pyrrhonen?' Turli repeated his question.

'He has not landed yet! Your maximum height was 15,730 feet, the highest so far. Congratulations!' Schübiger shook him warmly by the hand, but Turli was still scanning the horizon with a worried expression. How had it been possible for Pyrrhonen to gain so much height? The last he had seen of him was when he, Turli, had been over the Piz Languard, and had been suddenly sucked up into the clouds. Pyrrhonen had then been far below him obviously looking for an upwind.

Huxton, Coquelle and Svea were all convinced that Turli had won. No one, they told him, knew the local conditions as he did; but Turli only smiled faintly, wondering still what had become of the Finn.

Jürgen had gone off quietly to the 'Moswey'. He was feeling ashamed of himself. How could he have forgotten about Turli? It was all Toto's fault. He was just lifting the wing-

tip off the grass when Turli came racing over to him, pointing excitedly in the direction of the Bevers.

'Pyrrhonen! Pyrrhonen!' he shouted. 'Get the "Moswey" out of the light.'

Pyrrhonen's graph showed 16,200 feet, and Turli was the first to congratulate him, but when they were joined by the others, wildly excited, and cheering madly, Turli slipped quietly away. As he saw the Finn lifted high on the shoulders of the other pilots, he remembered his own words. 'It's the flying that counts, not whether you cut somebody out or not.' How easily those words had slipped off his tongue. Damn it all, one could only say a thing like that if one was absolutely sure of oneself. Of course the whole object of the competition was to cut out the next man, and he smiled wryly to himself at the thought that he had been the one to be cut out. 'I simply want to fly better than the others,' that other glib phrase came back to him. Well, he had not flown better, otherwise Pyrrhonen would not have beaten him. 'Pull yourself together, Turli,' he said sternly. It was useless to pretend that he felt happy about Pyrrhonen's victory, but he knew that he had to face up to the fact. He needed to recognize it in some concrete way. So he went to the hotel and wrote clearly in large capital letters in a telegram to his father: 'PYRRHONEN FIRST: MYSELF SECOND.' That was that!

TWO EXTRACTS

PYRRHONEN wrote in his log: Reached 10,000 feet easily with the help of up-currents from the Muottas. Watched Obstalden circling between Albris and Piz Languard looking for contact with a cloud. Saw him suddenly swallowed up by one and lost sight of him from then on. Had a choice of several strong air currents, between Piz Muraigl and Piz Kesch, but they always seemed to be on the point of dissolving. Felt that the weather was going to change. High cirrus clouds had arrived and the wind had dropped. There was not a moment to lose—I had to try and copy Obstalden.

Promising cumulus stood between Bevers and Zuoz, not far from Kesch. Circling in an up-current, I gained another 900 feet. Made my way to broad base of cloud. Was immediately lifted at 30 feet per second. Rough going and poor visibility. Slight icing on the leading edge and cockpit threatened performance and sight. At 16,200 uplift suddenly ceased. No suitable cloud near to lift me higher. Lost height rapidly. Landed at 14.30 hours. Duration of flight—three and a half hours. Only on reaching 15,500 feet did I use oxygen.

Svea wrote to Per Nordstrom in Eskjö:

Samedan, 9 July.

Dearest,

What did I write about last time? Oh, I know! I told you about the difficulties of being a girl, on the ground and in the air. I was proved right, unfortunately. I coped with the mountains quite easily, but not with the boys.

It's the strangest competition I've ever had anything to do with, and it seems stranger than ever when one realizes that the whole thing is in aid of European Unity! I stood a reasonably good chance of winning the altitude test, until the 'dear boys' took a hand in it. It was really infuriating trying to manœuvre thousands of feet up, caught at the same time in the cross-fire of two would-be heroes. It happened like this: Coquelle and Toto Ciriello stuck to me like limpets when I flew to the Chrast-a-Mora to find the necessary up-currents. Somehow Toto managed to gain a little more height than I (that boy certainly can fly!) while Coquelle was still circling below me.

Suddenly Toto—in a moment of mental aberration—decided to honour me with a special performance of acrobatics. He pulled his glider up almost vertically in front of me, as if he were standing to attention, then dived straight at me with such speed that I had to bank to port to avoid a collision, and of course in so doing I lost a great deal of height. He pretended afterwards that he was 'allowing me to win'! Coquelle, who was higher than me, instead of taking the chance of gaining on me courteously let me manœuvre past him.

Are they really trying to be chivalrous? Or are they fools? I would say they were the latter if they weren't so nice. But where does the question of sport come into it?

Poor Tingren nearly killed Toto when he eventually landed and the Chief disqualified him from the endurance test. Which of course spoils any chance he might have of getting into the finals. Toto behaved like a lunatic, and went off screaming 'I shall pack at once, I shall pack at once!' The porter at the Hotel des Alpes told me this evening that he really is packing and has already made enquiries about

trains. I think I must try and stop him. I'll have a talk with the Chief.

Coquelle is really rather sweet and follows me about like a dog. He seems to have forgotten that he is a record-holder, and has apparently lost all his ambition about winning this competition. I wonder what has caused this sudden change of heart. Can it be me? I can only quote Toto. '*Oh Mio! Oh Mio!*' It's funny, but I feel a certain responsibility for these young men although I know really that what they do is no concern of mine, but I can't help liking them both.

Yours Svea.

P.S. There is a search party out for Van der Meulen. The Chief had grounded his 'Meise' because of some technical fault, and he vanished while everybody was staring into the sky admiring Toto's performance, but nobody seems to know why. Was it jealousy? Was it anger? Whatever the reason, it's made everybody—especially the Chief—feel very much on edge. What is going to happen next?

Yours S.

P.P.S. By the way, Pyrrhonen was first in the altitude flight. Obstalden was second. Does that surprise you? How is my beloved Sweden?

P.P.P.S. I'm sorry, just one more thing. To-morrow is the endurance test. If the maloja is with us again it will simply be a question of whose cockpit is the softest! One could stay in the air a whole lifetime if, etc., etc.

VAN DER MEULEN

THE Dutch boy left the airfield because he could not sort out his feelings. He had a strong desire to get away from it all. Never in his whole life had he felt so unsure of himself or so depressed. He was certain that he would never be able to master his fear of the mountains. He had realized that on the very first training flight. He hated himself as much as he hated the others for not being afraid of them. But what he could not bear was his knowledge that the Chief had guessed what was wrong, and seemed to be continually hinting that he should pull himself together. But against the power of those mountains he had found himself to be helpless.

It was different in Holland; there the earth stretched gently as far as the eye could see. Canals divided it tidily into neat geometric patterns, and in the spring the fields of bright flowers, arranged like the colours in a child's paintbox, soothed and reassured. Whenever he flew he felt that the country below him was open and inviting. Every field, every meadow, and most of all the flat, wide, golden beaches were asking to be used as landing grounds. Holland spelt peace and security to him.

But Switzerland—on picture postcards a beautiful country —was in reality horrifying! The mountains reached out and threatened, pointed upwards with icy claws, sickening him with their atmosphere of impending disaster.

He wanted desperately to conquer this dread, to get to know and try to understand these mountains. So he rushed away from the airfield towards Pontresina. After thirty

minutes of fast walking he reached the Muottas Funicular. He went straight to the ticket office.

'Return?' asked the booking-clerk.

'No! Up only!' Van der Meulen found himself replying without really understanding why.

The little train was already fairly full. As he entered the compartment, the passengers looked at him with curiosity. One of them nodded towards him and whispered something to his companion. Quickly, almost furtively, Van der Meulen removed his silver 'C' from his lapel. He dreaded being involved in any conversation about flying. Rocking gently, the train laboured slowly up and up. Van der Meulen stared fixedly out of the open window and prayed that no one would try to talk to him. Slowly the station, the moss-covered rocks, and the vivid green of the young larch trees disappeared from his sight. When the last withered tree had vanished and only rocks and rubble remained, a wide panorama of mountains and valleys spread out before him, but its beauty entirely escaped the boy. Arriving at the terminus, Van der Meulen ran swiftly up the steps of the Berghotel just as Huxton had done a few days earlier.

The guests on the terrace were staring through binoculars at the sky, watching the gliding with mounting excitement. They were arguing amongst themselves. Some were certain that No. 1 was the highest, while others could swear that No. 7 was the winner. Van der Meulen did not even look. He knew that Obstalden and Pyrrhonen had won. Suddenly a jovial elderly gentleman with apple-red cheeks touched him on the shoulder.

'That's what I like to see,' he said, pointing upwards. 'That's real sport. Brave chaps! I'd be a glider pilot if I had my youth again!'

Van der Meulen turned and fled. He jumped and stumbled up the slope behind the hotel to a large rock which hid him from the chattering guests. There he sat and reviewed his position. What was he doing, he asked himself, alone on this barren mountain—his companions still gliding happily in the air above him? Should he just walk for a little and then return to the airfield? That he knew would be pointless and would get him nowhere. Somehow he needed to get higher, to get right into the heart of his fear—to meet and face these mountains as it were, on their own ground. A dark forgotten valley divided the Muottas Muraigl from the Schafberg. A track ran down from the hotel to its wild musty bed, crossed a stream and from there climbed in sharp hairpin bends to the very summit of the mountain. That was where he had to be, at the summit which lay almost in the clouds.

Carefully testing his foothold, he climbed down into the valley. The darkness of the gorge depressed him; the sea of stones and the bareness of the harsh escarpments were rigid and lifeless. It seemed as if all the rubble of the mountain had been slung into this pit. The shrill scream of the mountain jackdaw and the hollow whistle of the marmot emphasized his acute loneliness.

Only the gurgling and rushing of the crystal stream was alive and friendly. Here, thank God, was something which seemed to breathe amongst the solitude of those decaying rocks. He scooped up the icy water with his hands and drank thirstily.

Refreshed and with renewed courage he started the steep ascent. He found that he could breathe with greater ease than usual, and quickened his step. But soon his heart was pounding in his throat, and he cursed himself for forgetting

that the air high up in the mountains was thinner than that in the valley. He rested for a few moments then forced himself to climb more slowly. He began to adjust himself to that almost indefinable thing the rhythm of the mountains. Yes, mountains have a rhythm, powerful and wary, which cannot be conquered in haste. Only in cautious easy stages can one approach their majesty. Realizing this, Van der Meulen breathed regularly and, for the first time since he left the valley, unconsciously. Almost surreptitiously a feeling of appreciation for this strange country crept into his heart.

He saw that the Schafberg was not a rugged and alarming mountain like the surrounding pizen, but comfortably curved and gentle; its summit about 8,000 feet above sea level. A Swiss flag fluttered cheerfully from the roof of a little inn which had tables and chairs standing on its southern and western sides.

The innkeeper was just being paid by some departing guests who were on their way down to Pontresina by a much more beautiful route than the one which Van der Meulen had taken. He had come up the back stairs as it were. Now he stood shading his eyes and revelling in the vast expanse of snowy peaks, dark woods and deep valleys. But soon the chatter of the guests broke in on this quiet moment of contemplation.

'That's most interesting!' he heard one of them say.

'Are you quite sure that it was our Obstalden?' asked another.

'Yes, No. 1 is Obstalden,' the innkeeper informed them. 'Every child knows his yellow "Moswey". He always comes to me for his portion of up-wind! And if there is sun, I can also supply him with thermal. All free of course.' He laughed delightedly. 'We've got to do our bit for our fliers.'

The guests joined in his laughter although they knew nothing of up-winds and thermal. Then they made their final farewells and started on their downward journey. Van der Meulen stood undecidedly beside a table. The innkeeper bustled forward hopefully. Van der Meulen looked at his watch, three o'clock already. Suddenly he realized that he was very hungry.

'What have you got?'

'Soup, bread, cheese, sausage, coffee, tea, lemonade, beer!' The innkeeper rattled off his menu and smiled proudly. Van der Meulen ordered soup, cheese, and sausage.

The innkeeper vanished into the hut. Van der Meulen sat down on one of the benches. An illustrated *Suisse Sportive* lay on the table. He picked it up and turned over the pages idly, then with a little gasp he read: 'YOUNG GLIDER PILOTS OF EUROPE! RALLY AT SAMEDAN.' Beneath were photographs of the competitors, Obstalden, Huxton, Coquelle, Svea, and —'JOOP VAN DER MEULEN, HOLLAND. The Dutch boy has a good chance. We wish him all the best, and hope that he feels at home with us.' He stared at the picture. So that was Van der Meulen, that tall, slim, relaxed figure, leaning against the wing of his 'Meise'! What would they have said if they could have seen him now? Shivering on the Schafberg, frightened to fly his glider over those treacherous mountains! It was not a pleasant thought.

Glancing uneasily around him, he quickly tore out the offending page, hoping that the innkeeper had not recognized him.

'There!' beamed the innkeeper, as he placed a large plate of sausage and cheese in front of Van der Meulen. 'I hope you will enjoy that!' The boy nodded absent-mindedly. He was feeling depressed and preoccupied again, and barely

tasted his wine or the delicious mountain cheese. The innkeeper shrugged as he left him, wondering what was the matter with this strange young man.

The wind suddenly died down, and it seemed as if the mountains had moved imperceptibly nearer with strangely sharpened outlines. It was very still and warm. 'Thank God!' thought Van der Meulen; 'that ought to stop the endurance test tomorrow. You cannot fly without wind.' The thought that he would have a short reprieve was infinitely comforting. After he had eaten he lay down on the bench in the sun, with his hands behind his head.

The innkeeper trotted out again, 'The foehn is blowing,' he remarked, 'but it won't last long.' Van der Meulen had heard vaguely about that foehn, but wasn't sure what it was.

'That's right,' he agreed.

'There will be wind later on, I should think,' the innkeeper continued. 'This evening—probably to-night, at the latest. I only hope it will blow hard enough, so that the boys can get on with their Endurance Test.'

Van der Meulen remained silent. 'Always this damned flying,' he thought. 'If only the wind would keep away, if *only* the wind would keep away. I want time. Time heals everything.' He closed his eyes, and turned his head away, praying that the innkeeper would stop talking about flying.

'Tired?' the innkeeper asked.

Van der Meulen's voice was irritable—'It's my first time in the mountains.'

'Only arrived to-day?'

'No, yesterday.'

'You shouldn't have climbed as high as this. You've got to get used to the altitude first,' the innkeeper said, but he

was surprised that it should have affected this young fellow so much.

'To-morrow morning I want to climb up there,' said Van der Meulen, and pointed to the two rugged mountain-tops which were closest to the Schafberg.

'You want to climb the Sisters?' The innkeeper was amazed. 'The first or the second one?'

'The second one,' sighed Van der Meulen, not knowing anything about either of them.

'The boy must be mad,' the innkeeper thought. 'Does he honestly think he can climb that bare rock, in grey slacks, town shoes and tweed jacket?'

'Are you an experienced climber?' he asked.

'What do you mean?'

'Do you know anything about climbing?'

'Well, it can't be all that difficult.'

'Was there a lot of sun to-day?' The innkeeper felt seriously worried about the boy.

'All day.'

'You must come into the hut immediately. You have got sunstroke.'

Van der Meulen shrugged. First they disqualified his 'Meise'—now they thought he had sunstroke. Well, let them have their way! He got up and followed the innkeeper into the hut where his host filled two glasses of Enzian, gave one to Van der Meulen and drank some of the other himself. Van der Meulen drank his and shook himself. Brr—that was hot stuff. But he began to think that pretending to have sunstroke was not a bad idea.

'That'll do you good,' remarked the innkeeper. 'Have you a headache?'

'A slight one.'

'Rest here for a while, it'll get better. Perhaps you don't like our mountains very much?'

'I've got to get used to them, that's all. I come from flat country—I am Dutch.'

'Then you ought to know Van der Meulen?'

Van der Meulen was surprised at the sudden stab of fear that he felt at the innkeeper's words, but he pulled himself together. 'No,' he replied coolly, 'who is he?'

'Joop Van der Meulen, the young Dutch glider pilot.'

The innkeeper went outside, picked up the *Suisse Sportive* from the table, searched through it and put it back on the table. 'A pity,' he said, 'I could have shown you. All the boys who are taking part in the gliding competition at Samedan were in it. Obstalden, Coquelle, Huxton, and also Van der Meulen. Some fan must have torn the page out. One can't leave a thing lying around.'

'Not a thing,' agreed Van der Meulen, and hoped that the innkeeper did not notice the relief in his voice.

'Lie down on this bench. It might be the foehn, it does not agree with everyone.'

Obediently the boy lay down. After a moment's thought he asked:

'Can I spend the night here?'

'Is no one expecting you down there?'

The boy shook his head.

'Then you can sleep in the hay-loft.'

Van der Meulen nodded, thinking to himself, 'Perhaps I can persuade him to take me up one of the Sisters. The Schafberg is not high enough, hardly any better than the Muottas.'

In the evening the innkeeper and Van der Meulen sat outside the hut, enjoying the sunset. The innkeeper had agreed

to lend Van der Meulen the necessary kit and guide him up the first of the Sisters. The man who was going to bring the provisions in the morning would look after the hut whilst they were away. The innkeeper was beginning to like the boy, in spite of his sadness. The reason? Perhaps it was because of his obvious interest in the mountains, or perhaps it was his trusting personality which seemed to beg for help and guidance.

The sun had disappeared behind the mountains. The sky changed slowly from pure gold to light red and then to the deepest violet. Cirrus clouds, like feathers, suddenly flamed up momentarily before they melted into the purple shadows. The outlines of the mountains showed up hard and clear.

'This is the hour when mountains glow,' said the innkeeper. 'Just look at the Bernina and the Rosegg.'

The mountain-tops, the snow-fields and the glaciers sparkled suddenly in the waning daylight, as if all these snow-white heads radiated for one unearthly moment the light they had absorbed during the day, before they were finally swallowed up in the darkness. Star after star began to twinkle. Quietly, almost imperceptibly, a slight wind rose. It blew in small warm squalls over the mountains and flowed around the hut where the two sat silently. The flag began to flutter leisurely, and fine white dust stirred from the rocky ground.

'It's good of you to come again, Maloja wind, good of you for the sake of the boys,' the innkeeper murmured almost to himself. Then turning to Van der Meulen, he announced, 'We are off to-morrow morning at six.' He handed the boy some climbing boots and a very old but tough pair of leather shorts, put his hand on the boy's shoulders and wished

him good night. Van der Meulen lay down on the hay; rustled comfortably and had a delicious smell.

'What a good idea it is to stay up here!' he thought. 'The mountains were so beautiful to-night, and to-morrow I shall conquer them. After that I shall want to fly again.'

FROM JÜRGEN'S LETTER TO HIS FATHER

11 July.

. . . at the moment everything is terrifically exciting. Not so much the flying, but everything that goes on all round. Of course, I am only watching and reporting. But that is fun, too. It won't be long before I shall be flying as well as the others, so I am not jealous.

It seems as if I have only just finished the letter describing Toto's landing, and here I am again writing to you. Turli has gone to the airfield to check over his 'Moswey'. It's obvious that he's pretty upset over Pyrrhonen's victory. He's been trying to hide his feelings, but I can't help noticing it. I do feel sorry for him, but he's still got a chance. The first prize for the highest average performance can still be won. Uncle Kurt sent him a telegram from Lisbon: 'Congratulations to the second prize-winner!' What do you think of that?

Now there is an awful fuss going on about Van der Meulen, the Dutchman, who has disappeared. Everybody is looking for him. Did I tell you that they had grounded his 'Meise'? The Chief had given him some trifling excuse for doing so. Van der Meulen must have gone off while we were all watching Toto's tomfoolery.

I was rather surprised, at the time, that the Chief got so het up about it all, but when Van der Meulen hadn't put in an appearance by supper-time at 9 o'clock we all began to get worried. The Chief asked us all if we had seen him, but no one could give a satisfactory answer. The last time I—and most of us—had seen him was sitting in a deck-chair in front

of the airfield restaurant. The Chief asked me to hang around in case he needed me later. He and Schübiger and Dr. Hurtiger sat down and argued as to whether or not they should send out a search party for him. The Chief was for doing so, the other two were against it. However, when the Chief told them that he had very good grounds for his fears, the others did agree to take action. I have no idea what those grounds were. Van der Meulen is a nice chap, quiet, but very friendly and he is supposed to have done pretty well in Holland. I'm certain he went off because he was upset about his 'Meise' and simply couldn't bear to watch the others flying. Well, I was told to go to the Hotel Association and ask them to put through a call to hotels in Zuoz, Pontresina, Celerina, St. Moritz and lots of other places, and this was the message they sent out: 'The Glider Pilot representing Holland at the European Youth Gliding Rally at Samedan, Joop Van der Meulen, is to report immediately to the flight office where he is urgently required.'

Schübiger went off to the police with a photograph of Van der Meulen (from the *Suisse Sportive*). This was to be duplicated and distributed throughout the entire Oberengadine in case the hotel message brought no result. Anybody who had ever set eyes on him was to report immediately. Finally Dr. Hurtiger mobilized a rescue team in case Van der Meulen had lost his way or was injured.

Coquelle joined us later and said, '*Tant de bruit pour une omelette*' (which means as far as I know, 'So much fuss over an omelette'), but I think the Chief is right in doing everything possible. After all, it is his responsibility. Don't you agree? You can imagine how excited we all are. Even Svea came back from the Hotel Bernina to get the latest news. She also wanted to try to persuade the Chief to let Toto enter for the

Endurance Test. She argued that Toto's flying really hadn't upset her at all and that it wouldn't be fair to let him pack up and go home.

Svea is really awfully nice. She is so jolly and friendly to us all. Everybody thinks that Toto is her very special friend. Coquelle is the only one who calls her *Sie*, although she calls him *Du*. He's always frightfully pompous when she is around. Funny, isn't it? And when she talks about Toto he blushes, turns round and leaves. Turli says that it is either love or jealousy. I think that they're one and the same thing.

Well, that's the position up here.

To-morrow is the Endurance Flight. Dr. Parpan says the wind is improving. (It had died right down.) Now it is 11 o'clock and 'Operation Van der Meulen' is in full swing. Turli has just come in. He sends his love. Toto has had his trunk brought up to his room again. I am tired. This is becoming a very rambling letter. I am going to bed. Good night, Dad, love to everybody at home. And many thanks to you again,

Your Jürgen

Dear Uncle Felix,

I am enclosing this note in Jürgen's. He is being most useful and I don't know how I could have managed without him. It's a pity he's not allowed to have a go himself. I am quite sure that with some practice he would do pretty well. I got second prize in the altitude competition. Father sent a telegram congratulating me. But Jürgen has probably told you all about that. Greetings also to auntie.

Yours Turli

AT NIGHT

WHILE Jürgen was writing his letter, Toto was on his way to visit Svea in the Bernina Hotel; Coquelle and Huxton were sitting in their rooms; the Chief had gone to the airfield restaurant and Dr. Fonvalle had gone to bed. Van der Meulen's name was being called all over the district, the police were preparing to distribute his photograph, and the rescue organization was getting its team ready—only Van der Meulen slept dreamlessly in his hay-loft oblivious of the trouble he was causing.

Coquelle was in difficulties. Like Jürgen he was writing a letter. But he did not get further than the beginning—or rather he did not even know how to begin. '*Chère Svea?*' '*Mademoiselle?*' '*Chère Mademoiselle Lindquist?*' just 'Svea?' or '*Ma très chère Svea?*' It was difficult, very difficult. And so he sat undecidedly with a sheet of writing paper in front of him on which he had scribbled all these alternatives. The nicest would, of course, be '*Ma très chère Svea*'. That, he felt, summed everything up, the sincerity of his intentions, the strength of his love, and the divine name itself. Carefully he inserted a '*Mademoiselle*' between the '*chère*' and the 'Svea'. In this way he thought he had the ideal combination.

But what then? It was impossible to express the depth of his feelings in mere words, 'I love you—*je vous aime*'—Childish! She would just laugh when she read it. That kind of thing was all right for poets, but not for ordinary people. How *could* he say what he wanted so desperately to say? She should have known ages ago—perhaps even in the little churchyard when he had been hardly aware of it himself—

but certainly after the altitude flight when he had protected her from that infuriating Toto.

Coquelle sighed when he remembered the beautiful love letters that Abelard and Héloise had written to each other. There was not a hope that he would ever find words to equal theirs. Suddenly he tore the page across and across. He had made up his mind to show her quite differently how he felt about her. He was going to prove his love in the air. He was going to accompany her on her Endurance Test, he was going to be her guide on the Goal Flight. He would give her precedence and sacrifice the glory of France to that of Sweden. A beautiful gesture of a large nation towards a small one.

But suddenly this bright dream was shattered by Toto, who flung open the door and stormed into the room. His hair was ruffled and his eyes were shining. 'Marvellous Svea!' he shouted excitedly. 'To-morrow I will enter for the Endurance Test. Fantastic Svea!'

'You have everybody to thank,' Coquelle replied calmly, 'Huxton, Pyrrhonen, Obstalden and the Spaniards.'

'Oh, no, I only thank Svea. Without her the Chief would not have changed his mind. I raced to Bernina, took Svea in my arms and kissed her on both cheeks.'

'You kissed Svea?' Coquelle asked, as if in a trance. And then pointedly: 'And she didn't mind?'

'She laughed, of course, and gave me a little pat on the cheek.'

Coquelle knew that he would not even have dared to touch her finger-tips.

'And?' he continued, torturing himself.

'And I told her she was marvellous and that I loved her very, very much.'

'Did you really say that?' Coquelle came from behind the table and faced Toto. 'Did you *really* say that?'

'Why not? If it is true?'

'And she?'

'Laughed and said, "Now go to bed—to-morrow is the Endurance Test".'

'Nothing else?' Didn't she say anything about Van der Meulen? Or perhaps something about me?'

'What! Speak of you when I was with her!' Toto giggled mischievously.

Coquelle slowly raised his fists. He breathed deeply and moved towards Toto until he was practically touching him. He was very angry. Toto looked at his clenched fists and smilingly put his hand over them.

'You'll get hiccoughs if you swallow so much air,' he laughed, and while he left one hand on Coquelle's wrist he hit him on the back with the other.

'Better now?' he asked soothingly. 'I feel very good. I feel very happy to-day.' Then he put his hand on Coquelle's shoulder and said: 'You must understand how I feel about lovely, *lovely* Svea.'

Before Coquelle could answer Toto had disappeared again. He heard his footsteps in the passage and the slamming of a door. Should he follow him? No. He sat down gloomily and put his head in his hands.

In the room next door, Huxton was absorbed in a report of the Youth Rally of 1948. Maps, dividers, charts and papers were strewn all round him. He compared heights and distances, and tested results on his slide-rule. The papers were full of figures and equations to check and enable him to study the routes and results of previous competitions. He noted briefly, for instance, why and under what circum-

stances one or other of the competitors had not reached his destination. Huxton decided that Milan should be his destination for the Goal Flight. If wind and weather were favourable and all his calculations proved correct, he should avoid the down draught over Bernina which was the undoing of the Spaniards, and find new and powerful up-winds and thermal near Puschlav which would help him a good way towards Milan.

The Endurance Test to-morrow was going to be easy. He had been on the hotel roof with his anemometer and measured gusts of wind up to 30 feet per second, and an average wind of 20 feet per second. If the wind did not die down and the weather stayed fine the whole thing was only a matter of how long he could sit. Nature had got to be helped along and Huxton had moulded his cockpit seat as closely as possible to his own. The only really worth-while victory was the Goal Flight, and without the most meticulous preparations he would not stand a chance.

Huxton was so steeped in his work that he did not notice Coquelle entering his room until the French boy spoke without any preamble.

'They have given Toto permission to fly again. What do you say to that?'

Huxton scratched his head and replied:

'He hasn't deserved it, but the Chief knows what he is doing.'

'Svea has talked to the Chief,' Coquelle tried to sound matter-of-fact.

'Svea?'

'Yes, Svea.'

'That is awfully nice of her.'

'Do you think so?'

'Very nice indeed, especially as Toto tried to stop her winning.'

'Perhaps she is in love with Toto?'

'Are you out of your mind, old chap? Svea doesn't love any of us. Not a single one of us. Can't you understand that?'

Coquelle looked at Huxton doubtfully.

'Nobody?'

'Not even you,' Huxton said brutally. 'Forget it, my boy, and fly. That's all I can say on the subject.'

'And what do *you* think of Svea?'

'Pretty, jolly, decent . . . wonderful!'

'There you are, then!'

'Don't be silly, one doesn't have to be in love to like someone. That's what you can't get into your stupid head.'

'But Toto kissed her on the cheek.'

'As long as he did not kiss her on the mouth . . .'

'But they are damned near together!'

Huxton jumped up.

'Look here, Coquelle, don't be ridiculous. You're a man with a world record and you're behaving like a schoolboy. Don't make a fool of yourself and all of us.'

He pinched Coquelle's arm playfully.

'Fly, my boy, just fly. That's all Svea wants, and you oughtn't to want more than that either. I'm a sober kind of fellow and I hate anything extraordinary. But when I am flying I know what love and passion are. Only then. Do you get me?'

But Coquelle looked right through Huxton, at something far away in the distance. He moved away from him subconsciously as if to emphasize the huge gulf between them.

'You simply don't understand,' he said.

'No, you are quite right. I don't understand,' was Huxton's answer.

'But the day will come when you *will* learn to understand.'

'I shall never let anybody teach me.'

'As if that were possible,' Coquelle turned to leave.

Huxton got up, walked to the door, and opened it politely.

'Sorry, old boy, but that's all I can do for you.'

Coquelle looked at him and shrugged his shoulders.

'If I only knew whether Toto . . .'

'For God's sake, Coquelle, stop thinking about it.' Huxton spoke in exasperation.

'Thinking about what?'

'You know what as well as I do.'

'But to think that I shall never know.'

Huxton pushed Coquelle out of the door.

'Go to sleep, Coquelle. To-morrow is a busy day. So get off to bed immediately!'

He sat down again in front of his maps and calculations, and for a brief moment thought of the futility of Coquelle's unhappiness. But soon he was engrossed again with the Puschlav and its legendary up-winds.

Coquelle had gone out again to the Hotel Bernina. There he stood watching the lighted windows and wondering which one was Svea's. Perhaps that was hers on the third floor? '*Ma très chère Svea,*' he thought, and looked lovingly up to the window behind which a Mr. Corkindale from Aberdeen was removing his teeth and putting them carefully in a glass of antiseptic. '*Ma très chère Svea!*' Then he turned and went back to bed.

THE ENDURANCE TEST

DURING the morning's briefing the Chief seemed nervous. He played continuously with the wooden hammer, dropped it several times and stuttered in three languages. At last he asked Schübiger to read and explain the rules of the Endurance Test. He lay back in his chair and stared up at the ceiling.

He had no idea where Van der Meulen could be or what might have happened to him. Shortly before the briefing, a man called Culonder appeared, who had seen the photograph of Van der Meulen on a police poster and had recognized it as the young man who had taken the Muottas-Muraigl funicular at 11.20 the previous day.

A telephone call to the relay station had been of no avail. So the Chief had sent Meyer-Affoltern to the mountain rescue station so that the rescue team might set out immediately for the Muottas-Muraigl. The Chief could not imagine what Van der Meulen's intention and purpose had been, but he imagined the Dutch boy hanging desperately on to a cliff protruding thousands of feet above a dark rocky gorge. Whatever had made him ground the 'Meise'!

Toto interrupted his morbid thoughts. He was having a spirited argument with Schübiger.

'Why this stupid Endurance Test—why not an amusing triangle flight as in 1948 at the Olympics?'

He heard Schübiger reply that that kind of competition was too difficult for youths.

'Too difficult! Too difficult! Nothing is too difficult. All child's play.'

The Chief hit the table energetically with his wooden mallet.

'Ciriello, you have every reason to keep your mouth shut. You have to prove first of all that you can do the *simple* things.'

Coquelle smiled blissfully as he heard Toto snubbed in front of Svea.

Then Dr. Parpan gave his weather report. Maloja wind, steadily at twenty to twenty-four feet per second, strengthening slightly towards the afternoon. Weakening towards the evening. Changing cloud, thermal winds during the middle of the day.

The Chief reminded everybody once more that the timing for the Endurance Flight only counted after the competitors had reached a starting line near the relay station of the Muottas-Muraigl. So it was up to everybody to gain height as quickly as possible and reach this spot. Everything else was obvious, however, and anybody getting lower than this starting line during the test must land immediately.

The general opinion was that this Endurance Test was going to be as easy as it would be dull. It would last from seven to eight hours and everybody took barley sugar, chocolate, and fruit cake along. Toto even took a small flask of brandy. The starting order was Huxton, Pyrrhonen, Los Passos, Ciriello, Lindquist, Coquelle, Obstalden.

Coquelle fussed round Svea. As Toto was starting off before them he had her all to himself. He helped to fix her webbing, gave her good advice, and whispered in her ear that he was going to stay near her during the flight. Svea gave him rather a startled look.

'Not too near, please,' she said just before her take-off.

Very soon the relay-station reported the first gliders

across the starting line. Pyrrhonen was before Huxton. Obstalden followed, then Lindquist, closely trailed by Coquelle. Toto Ciriello and the Spaniards were taking their time. Toto could not be bothered to think about time. He made a little digression into the Rosegg valley and almost 'drowned'. He found an up-current over Pontresina just in time. It was most exciting and he did not regret the delay for a moment.

Just after the last plane had taken off, the leader of the rescue team rang down from the relay-station. He was going into the valley behind the Schafberg to scan the vertical sides of the Sisters and the steep slopes of the Piz Muraigl.

Jürgen, who had been proudly watching Turli's rapid ascent, had been appointed the Chief's adjutant. And now he sat next to him on the bench—just like yesterday morning. Only this time the Chief was not looking up into the sky but sitting with his head resting on his hand, staring thoughtfully at the ground.

Van der Meulen and the innkeeper, tied together securely with a rope, started the last lap of the steep climb to the summit of the Sisters. Now after having overcome the first fears and technical difficulties of climbing, Van der Meulen felt happy and contented. The innkeeper taught him the rudiments of climbing—footwork, grasp, the manipulation of the rope, etc., and he was pleased with his protégé.

'Very good,' was his comment when they eventually reached the top. 'It was not a difficult climb, but for a beginner most creditable.'

He gave Van der Meulen's back a fatherly pat and smiled. And whilst he got bread and a thermos flask out of his rucksack, Van der Meulen looked about. Suddenly he realized that the jagged rocks, the dark mysterious valleys, the daz-

zling glaciers and the steep slopes did not spell fear and frustration to him any longer. He was happy—for the first time in his life—among mountains.

Without speaking, the innkeeper filled the cup with hot coffee and handed it to him with a sandwich.

There was a strong and even wind, and just above their heads two mountain jackdaws sailed screaming into the blue and cloudless sky.

'They will be here soon,' Van der Meulen thought, reminded of the gliders. Searching the horizon he saw the station and mountain hotel shrunk to the size of black dice, and the funicular looking like a thin straight line. Over the saddle behind the hotel he saw a tiny something, rather like a cross chasing its own shadow over the mountains.

'The first one!' he shouted excitedly. 'There's the first one.'

It was impossible to recognize Huxton's 'Gull' from that distance, but another plane appeared and as soon as Van der Meulen noticed the strange kink in the wing profile he knew it to be Turli's 'Moswey'. She made straight for the north slope of the Muottas, where she gained height rapidly and flew via the Schafberg to the Sisters where an up-current took her even higher and then—rushing and whistling in steady flight she passed the two on the mountain peak. Van der Meulen watched Obstalden sitting perfectly still and completely at ease. The beautiful silhouette got smaller and smaller as the glider disappeared towards the Chrast-a-mora. A great longing and an almost uncontrollable restlessness overcame the Dutch boy. He desperately wanted to fly. The rushing and whistling echoed in his ears and the picture of Obstalden sitting so self-confidently filled his mind's eye. The wonderful feeling of soaring, the consciousness of being

carried by a stream of air, the silence, the peace and the closeness to nature overwhelmed him with a yearning to be up there with them all.

'I am sure you want to hurry down,' he said to the innkeeper, 'there will be plenty of guests to-day.'

The innkeeper packed up the thermos flask and got up. Meanwhile Van der Meulen had picked out Huxton and Pyrrhonen's 'Weihe' flying quietly over their heads. The Spaniard's heavy 'Kranich' made steady but slow progress hundreds of feet below the others. But suddenly the rushing and whistling became even more apparent. He turned round and looked up. It was Svea's 'Weihe', shooting towards him at great speed. She pulled up only just in time and banked steeply over the two mountain peaks.

'Hm!' said the innkeeper, 'he seems very curious about us.'

Van der Meulen had recognized Svea, not only by the Swedish cross but also by her white cap. He felt her eyes boring through him, and quickly turned away. But, before he had time to think, he heard her voice shouting: 'Joop, Joop, Joop.' It sounded like the cry of a mountain jackdaw.

'That was the Swedish girl Lindquist,' the innkeeper remarked. 'Did you understand what she called?'

Van der Meulen blushed to the roots of his hair and shrugged his shoulders: 'Some word with an "o" in it,' he muttered, and quickly began the steep descent.

On the airfield everybody was very surprised to see Svea coming in to land after only two and a half hours. She came down at high speed, banking steeply towards the landing approach, lowered her flaps and shot on to the runway. She pulled up just short of the hangars. Tingren and Jürgen were the first to reach her 'Weihe'. But Svea had already opened the hood and loosened the webbing. They helped her

out of the seat. And before they had a chance to question her, she was already running towards the Chief.

'I have seen Van der Meulen,' she called long before she reached him. Schübiger, Dr. Hurtiger, Dr. Parpan, Mr. and Mrs. Rasch and some onlookers surrounded them, hungry for news and sensation.

'He is sitting on the first summit of the Sisters,' she panted.

The Chief told her to take it easy and report accurately and precisely what had taken place.

Svea laughed at him and began:

'Well. At 7.55 precisely I sat in my Weihe. Tingren and Coquelle adjusted my safety harness. I tested the rudder, elevator and ailerons. At 8.03 o'clock the tow rope was fastened.'

'Go on, skip the details, only the essentials, please,' the Chief was impatient.

Svea thought for a moment:

'The essential part began when I realized that Obstalden, who had started two places behind me, had gained more height on the slopes of the Schafberg, the Sisters and the Piz Muraigl, than I had in the narrower district of the Muottas. Without much hesitation I followed his example and—really—I gained height at 16 feet per second. While I was admiring Obstalden's 'Moswey' in front of me I suddenly noticed two very little figures right at the top of one of the Sisters.'

Svea demonstrated with her thumb and first finger how small they had appeared.

'I don't really know why,' she continued, 'but I wanted to look at them more closely. The noise of my 'Weihe' when I shot towards them made them look up and I banked beauti-

fully—like this.' Svea lifted her arms as high as her shoulders, bent her body sideways, so that one hand almost touched the ground and the other pointed straight into the air, whilst she turned on her own axis.

'Then I could have dropped dead on the spot. I recognized one of the two. It was Van der Meulen, there was not the slightest doubt. I opened my little cockpit window and screamed down to him as loudly as I could: 'Joop, Joop, Joop.' He turned away as if he didn't want to be recognized. It is extraordinary—rumours are spreading like wild-fire throughout the Oberengadine, rumours of political complications, of serious accidents, and the whole country-side is searching for the young Dutch pilot, and I go and find him on top of a mountain as happy as a sandboy. Of course, I thought of you immediately, Chief. I saw how worried and nervous you were this morning. So I said to myself, "I have got to let him know. I put my nose down, gathered speed and . . . and . . . well, here I am!'

'Well done,' the Chief replied. 'Well done. It was very considerate of you, Svea. But I am awfully sorry that you had to interrupt your flight. You have taken a great worry off my mind, but you have spoilt your chances of winning. It's bad luck for you, but lucky for me that I have such a friend amongst my pilots!'

He shook her warmly by the hand with a slightly embarrassed smile. Suddenly Svea realized for the first time that she had forfeited her chance of success in the contest.

'Yes, these *damned* pilots of yours!' she said, with such emphasis that everybody laughed.

So Van der Meulen was alive. Nothing whatever had happened to him. He had only wanted to get away from it all and sneaked off into the mountains. The Chief boiled


ARSENAL
AIR-100
N° 1
F-BFAH

over with rage. Gone was his sympathy and understanding, gone was his anxiety—all that was left was fury.

What a waste of energy! What a waste of money! A whole valley had been set in motion just because Mr. Van der Meulen did not feel disposed to fly, because he preferred to go mountaineering without deeming it necessary to inform anyone of his whereabouts! 'You just wait until I have finished with you!' the Chief muttered below his breath.

He rang the relay-station, hoping to forestall the rescue team, but without success. He informed the police and the Hotel Association. His explanations were abrupt almost to the point of rudeness. All his thoughts were concentrated on making Van der Meulen pay for having held the flying profession up to shame and ridicule.

While the Chief was telephoning, Toto landed for once in a way quite unobtrusively. With every sign of being in great pain, he dragged himself out of his glider. Within seconds Schübiger was by his side to lend him a helping hand. Limping, and leaning heavily on Schübiger's shoulder, Toto made his way to the control room.

'Cramp in the left thigh,' he called out long before reaching the Chief. Schübiger lowered him carefully on to the bench, keeping his leg up. He fetched a first-aid man who massaged the limb, causing the Italian to pull excruciatingly ugly faces.

The Chief watched him with a disgruntled air. Toto annoyed him.

'I don't believe there is anything wrong with your leg. I don't believe a word you are saying,' he shouted at last.

Toto tried a winning smile, but the Chief ignored it.

'What kind of pilots are you? Any kind of excuse is good enough for you to stay on the ground. I am disgusted.'

'Did Svea also have cramp then?' Toto asked unconcernedly.

'No, of course not. You can take her as an example.'

'Certainly! I'll take it at once. My cramp is better,' he called out delightedly, hobbled round in front of Schübiger and the Chief, and remembering to limp slightly, joined Svea. She was still standing by her 'Weihe', looking away from the others, and only noticed Toto when he addressed her.

'It was dull up there. Always here and there, and there and here, and all by myself. Nothing exciting—always the same. Then I see you shooting past me and landing. I think to myself 'sensible Svea!' and wonder what to do. Then I think perhaps I'll get cramp and have to land. Now we are happy, you and I. Let's go to Frizzoni's in Celerina and drink chocolate.'

Svea did not look at him. She had been ready to forgive him for spoiling the altitude flight, and Van der Meulen for messing up the Endurance Test. But it had been hard for her who knew only two passions in life, flying and Per. Toto's stupid babble infuriated her. She turned round slowly and deliberately—looked at him for a second or two—reached out and slapped his face with all her might, so that the sound echoed from one end of the field to the other. She did not really know how it happened—it came over her so very slowly and yet there was nothing she could do about it, it was simply inevitable. From the direction of the control-room, she heard Tingren shout: 'Bravo.'

Rubbing his cheek Toto looked at her dumbfounded.

'Is that your good example?' he asked.

'Yes, that is my very *best* example,' she screamed at him, fully aware of the hysterical note in her voice.

'Rather a horrid example,' Toto said quietly, almost to himself as he walked off towards the control-room. She wanted to run after him to apologize, but Tingren waved her back and she was unable to make herself do it.

'Wonderful girl,' the Chief remarked to Schübiger as he watched the little scene, 'but we haven't seen or heard anything, you understand?'

Coquelle had trailed Svea right from the start, jostled with her for altitude on the slopes of the Muottas and then followed her into the valley of Pontresina. She outflew him, especially over the Albris, her 'Weihe' gaining height with far greater ease than his 'Air 100'. Fully occupied in search of up-currents he finally lost sight of her.

At last when he had gained sufficient height to glide peacefully over the Sisters and the Schafberg he flew towards Bevers and Chrast-a-mora, trying once again to find her. All he found was Obstalden, Pyrrhonen and Huxton. Svea had vanished.

Setting his course back towards Samedan he was aware of thermal conditions. He began to circle over the area and gained height steadily. Looking down he saw the airfield, and, just beside the landing strip, two planes side by side. They looked minute and were hardly recognizable. But in his eyes they were magnified into the gigantic shapes of Toto's and Svea's 'Weihen'. The discovery gave him such a shock that he felt quite giddy. Only when his machine began to hum angrily did he realize that he was diving down dangerously fast. He pulled up to a more normal position, raced desperately towards the Chrast-a-mora, banked away from its rugged ridge and returned full of bitterness to circle in the thermal over the Samedan airfield. His wing-tip pointed like an arrow to the ground, and his eyes fastened

themselves on to the two gliders like leeches to their victim.

He felt like screaming with rage and disappointment, like diving down there between the two of them, and beating up Toto. But he knew that Svea would only laugh. So he kept on circling higher and higher, further and further away. But like everything in this mortal world even the best thermal-pillar must come to an end. Coquelle had to stop circling and bring his machine back to a horizontal position which blotted out his view of the two gliders on the field.

Lost and forlorn he found himself in the vast empty space. None of the other competitors were in sight. He felt like staying up there for ever, never to return to the sordidness and shame of the earth. However, his 'Air' followed the laws of gravity. Since thermal and up-current were missing, she glided down in a steady flight. Coquelle tried desperately to make contact with a cloud. He longed to leave the Engadine—to get away from the depressing valley.

But not one of the passing clouds was large enough to suck him up, to tear him away. And so he slowly sank back into the area of up-currents and was forced to return to the old course.

What was he to do? What was going to happen when he landed? To what kind of world would he return?

He decided to stay up until the last breath of air had gone, the later the better, the darker the better.

Who knew? He might have an accident—perhaps fly into a high-tension cable? Catch fire, and like a cross of flame fall to the ground. Thus he dreamt and flew, and flew and dreamt, his dreams becoming more lurid as his jealousy increased.

He met Obstalden again and the two Spaniards waved to him as they flew past him, hugging the slopes of the Muottas. Pyrrhonen, secretive as usual, seemed to keep to his own

course. He did not notice that the Finn was actually behind him and following him patiently.

They are all decent chaps, he thought. Not like Toto, who forgot his fatherland, Europe and even glory, all because of a silly little girl. And Svea? She could not be much better than he, chasing him down and forgetting her duty as a pilot. But what were they up to now?

The 'Weihen' were not visible any longer. They must have put them together into the hangar. Could anything be more symbolic! Obviously Toto and Svea were sitting in a cosy little café drinking chocolate—or they were walking to the little church of St. Gian, where he had seen her for the first time and behaved so idiotically.

The thought that this clown might win Svea with his ridiculous behaviour hurt him terribly. But he was determined to make Svea fear for him, pray for him. She was going to realize that his life was in her hands and that he faced the dangers of flying in the darkness to prove to her the depth and sincerity of his love.

These dramatic thoughts made him feel better. Only the pangs of hunger brought him back to reality. It was past lunch-time—he had been flying for well over five hours. He ate a little chocolate and fruit cake. Then he yawned. His legs had pins and needles. His bottom ached and itched. He longed to stretch and scratch. But that was impossible. How much longer was it until sundown?

He wondered if Obstalden was suffering. He was sure Huxton was all right. He had provided against all that with his dividers, slide-rules and all the other paraphernalia that covered his table. Pyrrhonen, too, was unlikely to have an itch. He somehow seemed above such a common ailment. But he was sure that the two Spaniards would be at least as

uncomfortable as he was. Perhaps they could scratch each other. The 'Kranich' was such a roomy glider! To hell with the constructor of the 'Air'! He had designed her to fit him like a rubber glove—not an inch to spare anywhere.

The sun grew less penetrating about four o'clock in the afternoon. It got cool in the cockpit. The wind had become erratic, it was very bumpy as sudden squalls shook the glider. There was plenty to do then. The Maloja wind was coming up, a long thin chain of cloud like a snake. It foretold a change in the weather. Slowly the light faded into a grey softness, and the mountains looked like old men with wrinkled faces. The up-currents, too, had weakened. Everybody was flying in the same small area, and even Huxton had joined the others although it looked as if he was fighting for altitude. Skill was the trump card again, and every ounce of concentration and knowledge had to be applied. Coquelle forgot his narrow cockpit, his itching bottom, and for the time being even Toto and Svea.

At six o'clock Huxton landed. At least that was one less in the air, he thought. But as he saw the Gull lying peacefully and still near the hangar he remembered for a moment Toto and Svea; then almost immediately the shaking of his 'Air 100' forced him to concentrate only on gliding. He had to be accurate, to gain height, to find up-currents and take advantage of them. Every inch counted. The Spaniards were already far below him. Even Pyrrhonen had dropped slightly. But he met Obstalden flying regularly to and fro between the slopes of the Muottas and the Chrast-a-mora, and he waved cheerily to him. At 7 p.m. the Spaniards landed in the grey dusk of the late afternoon.

The light had got worse. The outlines of the mountains began to flow into each other. Slowly the clouds gathered

round the summits whose snowy slopes had become dull and milky. Coquelle lost height, just as Obstalden and Pyrrhonen had done. He seemed to be lying on top of the clouds which were closing in all round him. The wind had dropped again, and that meant flying closer and closer to the slopes in order to make use of every bit of up-current. Pyrrhonen had now got below the starting line and was forced therefore to give up.

He felt uncomfortable and mysterious in the twilight. Distances became deceptive and the mountains suddenly loomed out of the grey darkness, vast and threatening, only to disappear as soon as Coquelle banked to avoid them. The squalls which still whipped his machine from time to time seemed more erratic and more forceful, and his flight became uneasy. He cursed. It was getting so dark that he was unable to see the instruments any longer. He seemed to be losing all sense of balance, and fighting a battle with himself and the fluid threatening world around him. A green flare shot up from the field and looking down he saw Obstalden's 'Moswey' coming in to land. So Turli had given up the fight. The signal was obviously for him, requesting him to land. He had been up for eleven hours.

If he landed then they would probably lift him on their shoulders and carry him in triumph over to the buildings, but he continued on his course although he felt utterly weary and his eyes were beginning to smart. A second green flare rose from the field. He heard the signal of a hooter. They were getting impatient down there.

He crossed again to the Chrast-a-mora, a mysterious urge driving him on, directing his will, forcing him to continue flying. He was wondering how long he could keep it up when suddenly out of the darkness the mountain rose like a

gigantic wall, shapeless and endless, blotting out everything round it. He banked so steeply and suddenly that he lost all speed and for a moment hung motionless in the air wavering sluggishly and dropping like a dead leaf towards the blurred shape of the ground. He gripped the stick tightly in the vain hope that it could give him a secure hold and stop him from sinking into the soft, porridge-like depths beneath him. Cold sweat was on his brow, his stomach lurched and his knees turned to water. Thoughts and pictures raced in crazy sequences through his mind. A frightening, threatening, hopeless feeling flooded over him in which everything lost shape, hold and security.

'Get up speed—get up speed!' The only effective rule in a desperate situation, the most important thing in flying, which had been repeated to him a hundred times by those who had made him a pilot.

Coquelle pressed the stick forward to its limit. Another sickening spin and the glider began to steady herself. As if in a vertical dive, she stood on her head and shot down. Thank God! Speed! Speed! Carefully he pulled the stick back. The air flowed round him again and the wings, rudder and plane responded once more to their controls. Slowly she righted herself. Coquelle's heart was beating fast and erratically—his mouth was dry and his hands were moist and cold. He breathed deeply with relief. Then the third green flare swished past him.

'I am coming, I am coming,' he called. He had lost almost 600 feet and now raced in a half dive towards the airfield. Only when he let down the flaps and was over the flying approach did he relax.

He had won! In a second or two he would touch the ground, they would lift him out of his 'Air' on to their

shoulders as they had lifted Pyrrhonen the day before. He saw Svea watching his approach and in a flash noticed that Toto was not with her. As his glider came to a standstill Coquelle felt supremely happy and full of joy. Only in the furthest recesses of his mind lingered the feeling of having awakened from a nightmare.

THE RETURN

VAN DER MEULEN climbed down into the valley as happy and as carefree as a child, after having said good-bye to the innkeeper. Stimulated by his experiences, everything appeared to him in rosy colours. The mountains had been conquered and the fear overcome, so he walked light-heartedly along the wooden path leading to the airfield. The Chief was going to be glad to see him again and to hear him say, 'Now I want to fly!' But the first person he met was Svea.

'Landed already?' he asked pleasantly, and was surprised at her angry tone as she repeated his words.

'Landed already! Landed already! Yes, because of you, you fool!'

'Because of me? But why because of me?'

Svea lost all self-control. Furiously she screamed in a mixture of at least four languages. He understood little of the hate that was directed against him, but had no doubt that he was being held responsible for something or other.

'I am sorry, I am sorry,' he assured her from time to time, quite unable to pacify her. He could not help smiling a little because Svea looked so funny and because he was in a mood to smile.

'And you dare to laugh at me,' she stamped her foot and looked at him with hate.

'You won't be laughing for long.' She pointed to the sky.

'There, there and *there!* Do you see? All of them are still up there. Only I—I sit down here—because I had the misfortune to discover you—you, you—coward!!'

'SVEA!!!'

But Svea had already turned and walked away towards the buildings. Never again was he going to be a coward. He was going to show them all. Then, watching Svea with her head bent low striding away from him, he began to realize that she had sacrificed all chances of victory for him alone. His self-confidence ebbed and a feeling of guilt took its place.

'Van der Meulen, Van der Meulen!'

The Chief was calling him from the window of Flying Control. He did not look exactly pleased. In fact he looked as if he were going to burst with rage at any moment. When Van der Meulen joined him he was standing by the map-table. He looked at him without speaking until the door was closed. Van der Meulen waited and there followed a depressing silence. Then the Chief drew in his breath and spoke sternly:

'What did you think you were doing? '

Not a word of welcome, not a sign of pleasure, only this one question repeated a second time.

'What did you think you were doing?'

This hurt him unbelievably. It renewed the shame and the fear, forced him to stiffen up rigidly in defiance. He looked up at the Chief and remained silent.

'Or did you not think at all?'

Van der Meulen hated the Chief. He would never have thought him capable of such bitterness and lack of understanding.

'Well?'

Guggenberger was relentless in his questioning, but Van der Meulen did not intend to answer.

'Well?'

He loathed this patronizing 'Well?'. He felt the only way

to counter it was to be rude. This one word was like a red rag to a bull, and he lowered his head like that animal and repeated it in the Chief's tone.

'Well—now I want to fly again.'

He straightened up and looked at Guggenberger.

'Van der Meulen wants to fly again! How very interesting! Yesterday he preferred to take a walk in the mountains but to-day he prefers to fly. And I am supposed to run to the hangar, bend over the 'Meise', utter a magic spell and declare her airworthy because his lordship deigns to fly again.'

'You should be glad that I want to fly again,' Van der Meulen answered.

'Really! Now I am supposed to be deliriously happy because you have made such a fool of me. You tell me, I suppose, that I shouldn't have worried about you—I should have known perhaps that there are young people who think they have no need to observe the elementary rules of the mountains.'

The Chief took a deep breath and shouted at him:

'In the mountains one says where one is intending to go!'

'I did not know that.'

'One shouldn't do things unless one knows how to!'

The Chief stepped right in front of Van der Meulen.

'Do you know what it costs to muster a rescue team? Do you know what it *costs* to print and distribute posters in search of someone? And what it costs to have a person's name paged in every hotel in the Oberengadine?'

'No.' Van der Meulen was completely dumbfounded.

'What is your father?'

'He runs the restaurant on the Schiphol Aerodrome,' he said.

'Pretty lucrative business, eh?'

Van der Meulen remained silent and only shrugged his shoulders.

'I shall have to send him the bill. It will come to several hundred francs at least. I shall have to head the bill "Cost of Unnecessary Search for Your Son'. Then I shall have to detail all items separately. Agreed?'

Van der Meulen did not reply.

He was very fond of his father, but he knew that he would never foot the bill. He simply would not be able to understand his behaviour.

'You are not going to send the bill to my father.' Van der Meulen spoke quietly but obstinately.

'Who, then, is going to pay for it?'

Van der Meulen scuffed the floor with the tip of his shoe.

'It's not a matter of money, but an entirely different problem.'

'How very interesting; but may I ask what the problem is?'

The Chief looked at him. He knew full well what the problem was. Had the boy shown the slightest sign of confidence in him he would have flown him into the mountains himself and made him feel at home amongst the summits and pizen. Nobody would ever have known about his fears; the whole thing could have been straightened out long before anyone had noticed anything, but now the whole of the Engadine knew about it and all sorts of fantastic rumours were being spread abroad. The Chief was not yet ready to swallow his anger and disappointment.

'Would you please be so kind as to tell me what the problem is?'

The Chief repeated his question with the same infuriating sarcasm in his tone.

'I don't feel it would help to explain. I don't want to

talk about it any more.' His face was very red as he stared defiantly into the Chief's eyes.

'So you simply don't want to talk. May I take the liberty of asking what you *do* intend to do?'

'Fly!' Van der Meulen almost shouted the word.

Suddenly the conversation was interrupted by Schübiger who rushed in, out of breath and holding a Verey pistol in his right hand.

'Obstalden has landed,' he reported excitedly. 'Only Coquelle is still messing about in the air. I have already given him two greens but he hasn't taken any notice and now the light is going. I'd rather look after a waggon-load of monkeys than this crowd. No common sense! Not a spark! When anything happens, it's my fault, of course!'

'All right, give him another green,' the Chief said, looking out of the window.

'*You* never get worked up,' Schübiger murmured.

'There is plenty of time for that.'

Schübiger disappeared. The Chief turned to Van der Meulen once again and saw everything looking somehow softer and more distant in the dusk.

'Shall I switch the lights on?' Van der Meulen asked.

'No, I am quite happy not to see you too clearly.'

The Chief sat on the corner of the table, one foot on the floor, the other swinging slowly to and fro.

'Van der Meulen,' he began, 'climb down from your high horse and be honest, with me and with yourself. Apologize for having acted wrongly and selfishly.'

All sarcasm had gone from his voice. It was severe but not unkind. Van der Meulen looked up.

'I have acted in the way in which I felt I *had* to act,' he said slowly. 'I owed it to myself.'

'I see you don't believe in owing anybody else any consideration, eh?'

'I did not realize that I had been inconsiderate.'

'Perhaps you will realize it after I have finished with you. Do you think it was considerate to go away without a word and leave us to worry about you? Was it considerate to behave in such a way that I was forced to mobilize half the country to search for you? There is no excuse, Van der Meulen, you could not have acted more selfishly.'

He touched his forehead with his hand.

'Why didn't you use your *head?* All you had to do was to come to me and tell me your troubles. I am sure we would have understood one another.'

Laughter and shouting could be heard outside. Somebody knocked at the window. 'Coquelle has landed,' Jürgen called and ran towards the runway.

'You stay here until I return,' the Chief said hurriedly.

Van der Meulen did not go to the window—he did not want to be seen; but from the back of the room he watched Coquelle being lifted on Pyrrhonen's and Obstalden's shoulders, and heard the others cheering and congratulating him.

He felt lonely and ashamed. Now that he wanted to fly again he felt that he did not belong here any longer, and he suddenly realized that he was jealous of Coquelle. It was not petty jealousy but an honest straightforward jealousy of someone who had succeeded where he had failed. His brain worked feverishly: 'I've got to get away . . . I've behaved impossibly . . . I must go home . . . it's pointless to stay here. . . Coward! Coward! that's what they think of me. Svea said so herself.'

Just when he was about to rush out of the room the Chief returned.

'I told you to wait for me!'

He closed the door and Van der Meulen retreated back into the room, calling out in a voice very near to breaking point, 'The whole thing is useless. I want to go home.'

'Do you mean the hotel or Holland?' the Chief asked coolly.

'Home to Schiphol!'

'And what do you want to do there?'

'Nothing, nothing at all. I only want to get *away* from here. There is no reason for me to stay. I am a coward, everybody says it, everybody. Nobody understands . . . nobody understands how the mountains upset me. You least of all. Why, then, should I waste my time in Switzerland? I am going to leave.' Van der Meulen stumbled and stuttered over the last few words, a note of hysteria in his voice.

'You are going to stay right here.'

Van der Meulen turned to the Chief; his tone of command was surprisingly comforting.

'There is no question of your leaving just when it suits you,' the Chief continued. Then in a quiet, understanding voice: 'Who said you were a coward?'

'Svea!'

'Svea?' The Chief was surprised. 'All that I am going to tell you to-night is that I do not believe you are a coward.'

Then he took a deep breath and raised his voice again.

'Why in hell's name didn't you take me into your confidence? That's what I'm here for. I would have shown you far better, and a great deal quicker, that the mountains are your friends. That was the trouble, wasn't it?'

Van der Meulen nodded.

'To-morrow is a Rest Day,' the Chief said. 'I think I can

have your "Meise" O.K'd. I shall ring the Civil Air Ministry as soon as possible. Satisfied?'

Van der Meulen nodded again.

'And now I expect you to wipe that martyred expression off your face . . . you *are* going to fly!'

'That's what I want more than anything.'

'All right, prove it to me and to yourself, that's all I am asking. Now get out. I hope you understand that I can't just let this go.'

The Chief lifted his hand to prevent Van der Meulen from speaking.

'You *are* going to fly again, but your excursion has cost me a great deal of anxiety; about the other costs we'll talk later.'

'And if they ask me why I . . .'

'You simply admit that you were very silly in not saying where you were going. I can't possibly let you get away with it entirely.'

The Chief opened the door and dismissed the boy. Van der Meulen did not know whether he wanted to laugh or to cry, but he felt that a great burden had been lifted off his shoulders.

AN EXTRACT FROM SVEA'S LETTER TO PER

13 July.

. . . in short, I slapped his face. I am still in a frightful rage. And after that, of all people I had to run into—it had to be Van der Meulen. And *he* really finished me. Of all the stupid things to say to me, 'Landed already? Landed already???' I don't know what I yelled at him, I was so furious. I think I was a bit cruel, but I really couldn't have cared less. One of them thinks I landed to drink chocolate with him, and the other that I came down because I wanted to. I am getting utterly fed up with men.

Coquelle did the opposite and forgot to come down. He kept on flying until it was quite dark. I really was frightened about him. He wouldn't come down even when Schübiger fired three greens at him. When he did eventually land, he was screamed at by Schübiger. Another way of honouring the winner!

But, joking apart, I think it is a terrific achievement. I congratulated him really sincerely. But he stood there stiffly (they literally had to lift him out of his glider), looked at me with a suffering and tortured expression and said: 'It's easy for *you* to say that, Svea.' Idiotic, wasn't it? Perhaps all the blood had drained from his brain. It's the kind of thing that's supposed to happen in cases of over-exertion.

You may want to know why the others landed before him: Huxton's specially constructed seat-padding got wrinkled and hurt him so frightfully that he had to give up after eight hours of pure torture. (A victim of his own super-planning.)

The Spaniards are supposed to have quarrelled, and to avoid serious consequences they landed (take this with a pinch of salt, it's only hearsay!). Pyrrhonen, through pure carelessness, found himself below the starting line and had to give up according to rules and regulations. Obstalden's reason was straightforward enough. He simply refused to fly at night, which is understandable. The following question now occurs to me: Is Coquelle merely foolish or is he brave as well?

I'm sorry about this rather muddled letter. I am still furious. It really *isn't* fair. After all, girls are better upholstered than men, and I stood a good chance of winning. Well, there it is. Best love, my dearest, also to Sweden.

Yours Svea.

P.S. To-morrow is a day of rest. I can do with it. Nobody is going to spoil the Goal flight for me. You can be quite sure of that.

LETTER FROM THE PROPRIETOR OF THE CAFÉ FRIZZONI, CELERINA, TO THE COMMITTEE OF 'THE YOUNG GLIDER PILOTS' RALLY'

Gentlemen!

Yesterday at 3 p.m. the young glider pilot, Ciriello, an Italian citizen, ordered a cup of chocolate with whipped cream in our café. He also chose three éclairs filled with whipped cream and three pieces of chocolate cake decorated with whipped cream. These six pieces were taken to his table, which was situated in the middle of the room. Many of our most distinguished guests were present at the time. There were amongst others the Duke of San Martini-Bourbon-Catala, Wolverham Copperbeater, the son of the American tie millionaire and his new bride the Baroness Monteton de Ponteton, National Councillor Hitzschlegel, and Lady Ashton-Tree, the aged mother of Lord Killfoods.

Unprovoked and completely without warning, Ciriello suddenly hit the centre of the cake-laden plate with such force that the plate broke (see enclosed bill). The soft matter enclosed in the cakes (whipped cream and chocolate cream) spurted all over the café. The bill for cleaning our washable wall-paper is also enclosed.

Much larger and hardly assessable is the damage which has been done to our excellent reputation as a quiet, sedate and highly respectable café!

The Duke of Martini-Bourbon, who according to his daily habit was having his afternoon siesta, found a considerable amount of whipped cream lodged in his famous beard, when he was awoken by the noise and general disorder.

The freshly waved and set hair of Baroness Monteton was disarranged in no small way when a portion of the cream fell on to it. But it was Lady Ashton-Tree, who was nearest to Ciriello's table, who suffered the most. She was unable to leave her chair unaided. It was only thanks to the prompt action taken by the National Councillor Hitzschlegel that this incident did not assume even greater proportions. His presence of mind alone prevented Copperbeater's very excited son from laying hands on Ciriello, and Duke San Martini-Bourbon-Catala from calling the local police to arrest the young Italian and thereby creating a scandal which our establishment would never have been able to live down.

Signor Ciriello, however, broke out into such uncontrollable laughter, at what he obviously considered a highly successful joke, that his behaviour contrasted shockingly with the amazement and horror of the guests. When the young culprit was taken to account he stated, to the surprise of all those present, that he had acted out of desperation. He had suffered a heavy blow a few hours earlier and he had not known any other way of relieving his feelings.

National Councillor Hitzschlegel pointed out that a heavy blow resulting in such gay laughter seemed the most incongruous example of cause and effect that he had ever come across. Ciriello, however, explained volubly that his entire family had always relieved the tension of their feelings by uncontrollable laughter.

Under these circumstances we allowed Ciriello to get away with a only a warning. We pacified the guests by informing them that the behaviour of the young pilot was a clear case of youthfulness, and that neither the young man nor the café would by law be held responsible. We would be obliged if you would present the enclosed bill to Signor

Ciriello, and in assuring you of our best service at all times we express the hope of being favoured with your future patronage and orders which will be esteemed and which will receive our most careful attention.

We are your obedient servant,
S. Frizzoni.
(Proprietor, Café Frizzoni,
Celerina-Chresta)

ARCHIE HUXTON TO HIS FATHER

Dear Dad,

Thanks for not coming to visit me here. Nobody knows that you are in St. Moritz. You know that I'd love to see you, but having a famous father has its disadvantages and your visit here might make me conspicuous which I would hate. I'm telling you all this because the Swiss, the Finn, the Spaniards and the Swiss's young cousin, a German, are off to St. Moritz this afternoon to have coffee and cake at Hanselmann's. I wouldn't like having to disown you, if I should run into you. I do hope you understand what I'm trying to say. I have no idea what the other fellows' fathers are, and I don't want to be anything extraordinary.

I haven't been at all successful up to now. The gull has a rather poor gliding angle. I did prepare the Endurance Test as well as anybody, only the upholstery which I had specially constructed wrinkled and pinched me so viciously that I had to give up after eight hours.

The Frenchman finally won the competition, but only by flying after dark. Even the Swiss fellow landed before him. Would you have advised me to fly in the dark?

The Italian is really rather a ridiculous figure. He's fallen in love with the little Swedish girl, and he landed as soon as he saw her land. She only came down because she had discovered the Dutchman who had disappeared the day before. They probably paged him in your hotel. I think that was awfully decent and friendly of her, don't you agree?

The Frenchman also has fallen for the Swedish girl. I have a feeling that he only stayed in the air all that time because

he was upset and jealous. They seem to mix love with flying, and flying with love, with the greatest of ease! He opened his heart to me the other night but I'm afraid I only laughed at him. He is an excellent pilot, and it is fantastic that he should allow a thing of this sort to upset him so dreadfully.

I have chosen Milan for the Goal Flight. A bit risky perhaps, because it will only be possible if the weather is just right for it. As an alternative if I don't get the right wind I've chosen Belpmoos near Berne. I am taking your advice and I've prepared everything meticulously. It's simply got to work this time.

'Europe' doesn't seem to come into it much. Nobody so far has given the impression of flying for 'Europe'. I am wondering what Dr. Hurtiger-Fonvalle is going to say about it in his final speech. I believe that a united Europe could be a possibility, and that once it was formed people could get used to it and couldn't imagine anything else. Just like Switzerland or America. What do you think about it?

Keep your fingers crossed for me, Dad.

Yours,

Archie

THE DAY OF REST

It had rained during the night, and the morning was very still. The sky cleared slowly and reluctantly, allowing thin sun-rays through at odd places, to light up a mountain here or a valley there, and giving a glimmer of hope for a better day. The meadows smelled of herbs; the dew clung to the grass and the flowers slowly uncurled their petals. It was completely still and had an almost festive air. It was, in fact, Sunday morning on the airfield.

The windows of the restaurant were wide open, but there was nobody about. Only from Flying Control did one hear laughter and voices. As a special treat the Chief read the letter from the Café Frizzoni aloud. 'The little devil!' was Schübiger's only comment.

Dr. Parpan smiled but Dr. Hurtiger's opinion was that it was after all a European affair and that that kind of thing was the concern of everybody. But what was to be done with such a boy? Give him a serious talking to? Nobody could do it and keep a straight face. It was simply impossible to take him seriously.

'But whatever you may say or think, he hasn't done any good to the reputation of all those taking part in the Rally.'

'Do you honestly think so?' the Chief looked questioningly at one person after another in the room.

Dr. Parpan shrugged his shoulders, but Dr. Hurtiger jumped up excitedly:

'This lack of discipline must be severely punished.'

'But where does it get us if we keep on punishing people who do something of which we don't approve?' The Chief

spoke soothingly. They soon came to the conclusion that it was impossible and useless to punish Toto. But the Chief had his own ideas as to how to deal with him.

He lifted the notice-board off the wall and pinned the letter to it, and taking a piece of chalk he drew a huge circle round the letter and wrote 'Attention!' above it. Then he took the board and carried it outside.

'Where are you taking it?' Schübiger asked him.

'Outside.' The Chief took a hammer and a big nail and soon the board was fixed under the window of Flying Control.

'Making a fool of him might be a way to educate the young hooligan,' the Chief said grimly.

'But I am not so convinced that it will work with someone as incorrigible as Toto.'

Later, the Chief asked for the sliding doors of the hangar to be opened, and for Van der Meulen's 'Meise' to be brought out.

'Put down "test flight",' he said to Schübiger.

As time meant nothing that day, the pilots strolled leisurely in little groups with their helpers towards the airfield. They were going to fill up the tanks of their jeeps, get their trailers ready and, most important of all, give their kites a thorough check over. Everything had to be perfect for the Goal Flight, one simply could not take chances. When this was done Turli, Jürgen, the Spaniards and Pyrrhonen were going to St. Moritz to have chocolate and lots of cake. Van der Meulen was not going to accompany them as he had to test his 'Meise'.

Yesterday evening during the celebration of Coquelle's victory he had worked everything out. He was fully con-

scious of having gone away without informing anybody, and he deeply regretted the trouble and worry he had caused. He went to see the Chief and apologized.

Now his compulsory holiday was over, his Meise was pronounced all right and all was ready for the test flight. If he passed—and he had to pass—he would at least be able to take part in the Goal Flight. That would put a stop to all the rumours that had arisen out of his trip to the mountains.

But while he was thinking this, Svea appeared on the airfield. She knew more about him than anybody, apart from the Chief, and besides he felt that she mistrusted him. Just when he was beginning to lose confidence again she came up to him, shook him by the hand and after a little hesitation said:

'I am sorry! I was very rude to you, and, of course, I never meant to call you a coward.'

'It was entirely my own fault and I deserved everything I got,' he answered. 'If only I knew what I could do to make up for messing up your Endurance Flight.'

'What's done is done. There is nothing you can do about it now. But whatever happens I shall always remember you whenever I think back on this competition.'

He blushed deeply thinking that she sounded just a little sarcastic. But she did not let go of his hand as she added:

'Don't take it to heart, Joop. I didn't say anything about their being *unpleasant* memories.'

Everybody immediately saw the black notice-board hanging on the wall of Flying Control. They grouped themselves round it. Jürgen was the first one to start laughing, and soon they all joined in one after another depending on the fluency with which they were able to read the letter. The Spaniards

and the Finn had to be helped considerably by Jürgen and Turli. Things like 'being favoured with your future patronage and esteemed orders' were difficult to translate.

Van der Meulen walked over to his 'Meise'. He ran his hand slowly over her smooth, rounded nose, and thought that there was nothing more beautiful in the world than his glider.

The Chief joined him.

'Pity, but there isn't a lot of wind this morning.'

Van der Meulen only nodded. He still felt a little embarrassed in Guggenberger's company.

'It should be good enough for a short flight,' he continued.

'Should be,' Van der Meulen agreed.

'Slept well?'

'Very well.'

'All the better, it will all work out beautifully, I feel sure. There was nothing much wrong with the stabilizer,' he said, testing its strength with both hands. 'Now get ready for a spin, and good luck to you!'

Nobody noticed his arrival, but suddenly Toto was amongst the group in front of the notice-board.

'No flying to-day?' he asked. 'No flying?'

'No,' Jürgen said sternly, 'no flying. To-day is Sunday. You ought to know.'

'I know nothing. I was away. I stayed the night with good friends in St. Moritz.'

'St. Moritz?' Jürgen asked. 'St. Moritz? Then why don't you read this?'

Toto took some time to decipher the letter. Then he turned round with a broad grin on his face.

'Wasn't that wonderful? Wasn't that laughable? I shall never forget how the cream spurted all over the place.'

Pyrrhonen looked down seriously at the happy-go-lucky Italian. 'And the heavy blow you had received?' he asked slowly, carefully choosing each word.

'Have you ever had your face slapped by a girl? No? Never? I have. Unexpectedly—but verry hard.'

He rolled the 'r' to emphasize his statement.

'My face was slapped, and being a gentleman I couldn't return the compliment. So I beat up the whipped cream instead. That's all.'

'And who slapped your face?' Turli asked.

'There is only one girl that doles out compliments of that sort—Svea!'

'Just out of a clear blue sky?'

'What do you mean blue sky? Of course there was blue sky. The sun was shining.'

'No, no, I mean, did she slap your face without reason?'

Toto didn't answer, he only grinned. Then he looked round as if to make sure that no outsider should hear what he was going to say.

'I thought', he said very quietly, 'that Svea landed so that she could drink chocolate with me at Frizzoni. So I landed, too, and asked her. I was wrong. I was very wrong, indeed.' He rubbed his cheek ruefully.

'And you really mean to say that that's why you gave up the Endurance Test?' Turli asked incredulously.

'Had I known what I know now, I would have stayed in the air for days and days. But, friends—what is life? What is life? I would like to see the person who always lands in time?'

'Coquelle,' Jürgen said impudently.

'Pooh! Coquelle is not a human being—he's only a human flier!!' After a little pause he asked: 'When did he actually land?'

'He landed last, and it was already getting dark.'

'That's much too late. What does he get out of it?'

'He has won. He is the victor.'

'Pooh! Victor! So much strength and patience and no brains! What *does* he get out of it? Just to be alone afterwards. I at least have had my face slapped by Svea. He doesn't get anything.' He looked challengingly round. 'Now I'm going to Svea and I shall present her with my left cheek,' he added cheerfully.

'But Svea has not arrived yet,' Turli informed him.

'Oh, I can wait. I shall first go to the Chief. He can have a laugh over the big joke.'

The rushing and whistling of a glider storming up into the sky diverted everybody's attention.

'Van der Meulen,' Jürgen said.

'It's high time,' Turli remarked.

The cable dropped. For a moment the 'Meise' seemed to stand still in the air; then with her nose pointing slightly downwards she curved gracefully into the valley of Pontresina towards the slopes of the Muottas.

'Well done,' Pyrrhonen said.

'Beautiful,' Los Passos thought.

'Thank God!' was the Chief's comment to Schübiger. 'Thank God there is no more cause for us to worry.'

Toto rushed into the control-room.

'Chief,' he called before he reached him. 'Chief! I will report, and you shall laugh. Shall I start?'

The Chief waved him away.

'I don't want to see anything of you to-day. But it is time that I saw something of your flying. So don't come near me again until you have put up a good show at the Goal Flight.' He pointed towards the door and grinned.

Toto found himself outside the room as fast as he had got inside. He saw the others leaving the field and called after them: 'Where are you going to?'

'To Hanselmann's,' Turli called.

'Whipped cream?' Toto asked.

'That's right,' Jürgen shouted back.

'I'm coming with you!' He ran and caught them up.

Coquelle tried to remember: Pyrrhonen sat next to Mrs. Rasch, Huxton between Obstalden and Jürgen, and he was next to Svea. On her other side, lost to the world in general, sat Van der Meulen. And opposite them Dr. Parpan, the Chief, Dr. Hurtiger smoking incessantly, cigarettes, cigars and pipes. The whole room seemed to be enveloped in a thick fog. Toto was not there and nobody had any idea where he was. Not even Svea. He remembered everything vaguely as one remembers a dream on waking. He must have been very tired. He could not even remember Svea very clearly although she was sitting near enough for him to touch her. It was odd, everybody must have asked him lots of questions and he must have answered them, but he could not remember any of them. It seemed as if he were drowning in all those questions and tobacco smoke, and then suddenly the black threatening shapes of the mountains swam in front of his eyes and he woke up holding tightly to the table.

But now he was fresh and fit again. He was happy and satisfied. His victory over fear had become a reality and also the fact that Svea had sat next to him as if it was the most

natural thing in the world. She did not speak about Toto and he did not ask about him. There had been a silent understanding between them.

He went down to breakfast. Next to a little vase of flowers a letter was waiting for him. He tore it open:

Congratulations to the Victor of the Endurance Test
from Gustave Rötlisbühl
Hotel des Alpes, Samedan
'The Family Hotel for the Sportsman'.

He was disappointed, but when Herr Rötlisbühl came over to his table personally and said some friendly words he thanked him sincerely and felt gratified that such attention had been paid to him.

'It must have been very exciting.' Rötlisbühl chatted away and hoped that he had slept well and was now fresh and full of new energy. The other gentlemen had already left for the airfield. Signor Ciriello however had not come home during the night. . . .

'Not come home?' Coquelle crimsoned. Did Herr Rötlisbühl know where he had been to?

No, he did not know. He came back early yesterday afternoon, changed and went away in the direction of the station.

'Alone?'

'Yes, alone.'

'Towards the station?'

'Towards the station.'

Strange! All by himself towards the station.

What had he got up his sleeve now, Coquelle wondered.

Herr Rötlisbühl swayed backwards and forwards on his toes, rubbed his hands together, and lost himself in platitudes. He kept repeating over and over again how Sunday benefited everybody, how he, Coquelle, must be in need of a

day of rest, how tiring it must be to fly and how good it was to relax, etc., etc. But eventually, he bowed slightly, presented his compliments and left the room on tiptoe; however, the parquet floor still squeaked!

Coquelle strolled out through the hotel lobby, trying to decide what action he should take. Should he go first to the Hotel Bernina before he went to the airfield? There was only the merest chance of meeting Svea outside her hotel, but then of course chance always played a very big part in love.

He started out towards the Hotel Bernina, stopped, turned on his heels and walked in the opposite direction.

'Silly,' he said aloud, 'very silly.'

He had definitely and finally decided to go to the airfield. A little further on, just by the turning to the airfield, he saw Svea and Tingren. They were standing in the middle of the road, discussing something very eagerly. Coquelle's heart was beating as if it must burst.

Svea then took Tingren's hand and they parted. Svea took the road to the golf links, Tingren went towards the airfield. Coquelle decided to follow Svea. He wondered where she was going to meet Toto?

But Svea was in no hurry. She felt like taking a pleasant stroll and watching the sunny patches moving over the meadows, and the reflection of clouds and mountains on the moist surface of the asphalt road. Wherever the clouds had parted the sky shone with a warm blue light. It reminded Svea of her beloved Sweden.

She decided to go to the church, to sit below its arched entrance and think a little. She wanted to think about yesterday evening when Coquelle had sat next to her. She had liked him very much then, for the first time. He had been so very quiet, not at all proud and exultant after his victory.

He answered all her questions without embarrassment, in a friendly way, with just a touch of modesty which was most commendable. It seemed as if he was hardly aware that all the excitement and the party were in his honour.

Per, who took flying and winning for granted, was entirely different. He never philosophized, neither was he exaggeratedly modest. He was just easy-going and straightforward. He always seemed to be smiling down at her and she never had to worry about him. 'Little girl,' he used to say, putting his big hands on her shoulders, and then she knew that everything was all right. He was a man of twenty-five years, and compared with him Coquelle was only a boy . . . but there was some quality in the French boy which made her curious about him. She felt sure that he would do great things one day.

Coquelle could think of nothing but of when and where Toto would appear, but there was no sign of him anywhere.

Svea turned into the path leading to the little church. Now at last he knew where they were going to meet. Toto would most likely come from Celerina or perhaps from the Bernina funicular. He left the path and walked across a meadow to a little copse of larch trees which he felt would provide a suitable hiding-place.

Svea sat down under the arch, her chin resting on her cupped hands just as she had sat that other day. That other day? When was that? How long ago? Was it really only six days since he had first seen her?

The sun had broken through the clouds; it had become warm and the crickets had begun their incessant chirping in the grass. Coquelle sat down at the foot of a larch tree. He looked over to the little church, to the chain of mountains,

and high up into his beloved air. And then he heard the quiet whistling of Van der Meulen's 'Meise' banking in steady flight towards the airfield.

When he looked back to Svea he saw that she, too, was watching Van der Meulen. With her hands folded round her knees and her head tilted backwards she followed the 'Meise' with her eyes until the glider had disappeared from view. 'If she looks down now she is going to see me,' he said to himself, but she never looked in his direction and soon rested her chin once more in her hands.

Coquelle waited a little while. Then he took the plunge, crept over the meadow to the lane and strolled as unconcernedly as possible towards the little church.

Svea did not make any attempt to hide her surprise and delight at seeing him.

'Coquelle!' she called out, 'Coquelle!'

'Hallo, Svea,' he called back, and almost started to run but just checked himself in time and only walked a little faster than usual.

He leapt up the steps and stood in front of her, conscious of the fact that his breathing was fast and that there was a warm glow round his heart.

'Looking at tombstones again?' she asked him smilingly.

'Perhaps.' He brushed aside her words because he was wondering if he dared sit down beside her.

'Well, what are you waiting for? Do you want to take another walk round the churchyard or do you want to sit beside me?' Her voice was teasing, but her eyes were quite grave.

'If it is not unpleasant for you, Svea,' he answered, and sat down as far away from her as the step would allow.

'Worse things have happened to me,' Svea laughed.

Coquelle gave her a quick glance. He was never sure when she was serious. He longed to talk to her, but he did not know where to begin.

'Your Endurance Test was wonderful.' Her voice seemed to come to him from a great distance.

'Yes,' he answered, 'I never thought it would work out like that.'

'That's exactly what happens to me, I am always much more surprised than anybody else if I win!' Neither of them spoke for some time. 'You know,' Svea said haltingly, 'I *have* been first, several times, in Sweden and Finland.'

'I know,' Coquelle said. 'We have all heard about your victories.'

'Just like your altitude record.'

'It's just luck, really.'

'I am certainly not blessed with it here,' Svea said bitterly. 'You people have messed it up for me every time.'

'Toto!' Coquelle could have bitten his tongue out for mentioning the detested name.

'No, not only him.' The 'him' sounded slightly contemptuous which gave him a ray of hope.

'Who else?' he asked.

'She pointed upwards where only a few minutes ago Van der Meulen had flown back to the airfield.

'Van der Meulen?'

'I had the questionable luck of finding him on top of one of the Sisters. . . . I could have . . .'

'And then?'

'Well. What could I do but land and let the Chief know at once?'

'Oh, Svea! I never knew.'

There was such relief, such honest pleasure in the boy's

voice that she looked at him in surprise and found him grinning broadly.

'Tell me, what is so funny about it?'

'Oh! Nothing. I am of course terribly sorry for *you*.'

She looked at him inquiringly.

'Only for *me?* For whom are you not sorry?'

'Well,' he said, 'for Van der Meulen, of course,' and he looked at her mischievously. Svea shook her black hair.

'Something is rotten in the state of Denmark,' she quoted and pushed her hair back from her face.

'Tell me—honestly—what you are thinking about.?'

'Of you,' he said simply.

'That's no answer.'

Coquelle dropped his eyes. 'Now I have spoilt everything,' he thought.

Svea looked at him, wondering what he had meant.

'The crickets here have much louder chirps than at home,' he changed the subject abruptly. 'I believe they make that by rubbing their wings together.'

'Why are you suddenly talking about crickets?'

'Well, don't you hear them?'

'Of course I hear them, but what have they got to do with my question?'

'I suddenly couldn't hear anything but crickets.' Oh, God! help me not to say the wrong thing. That had sounded conceited and cheeky, whereas in actual fact he was blissfully happy just sitting next to her like this.

'I believe', Svea said, 'that you'd rather listen to the crickets than to me!'

'But I answered your question.'

'And I said that I didn't think it *was* an answer.'

'But, Svea, I must be allowed to be the judge of that.'

'I see. So I am not allowed to know what you really think, is that it?'

Coquelle did not reply. He could not possibly tell her what he was thinking. How could he tell her about his unreasonable hatred of Toto, his wild fury at seeing their gliders close together on the airfield? He could not tell her—no, he could not tell her anything, not even how utterly joyful he felt when he discovered the real truth just now.

The crickets filled the silence once more. Coquelle sat with his finger-tips tapping against each other in increasing discomfort.

Svea sat by him patiently waiting for his answer.

Neither of them spoke, but the tension between them grew until Coquelle could bear it no longer.

'I'm going for a walk after all,' he said curtly, and the strange sound of his voice startled him—it sounded oddly high and shaky. He got up and started to move away.

'But, Gaston . . .'

He stopped dead. 'Gaston', she had called him and it sounded warm and intimate. Slowly he turned to her and saw her eyes, full of kindness, resting on him.

'Come and sit next to me again. You don't really want to see the old tombstones?' She patted the step next to her invitingly. But Coquelle shook his head.

'No, I don't want to, thank you.'

Svea got up and barred the way—she was very near to him and her voice was very soft.

'And I don't want to know what you have been thinking. Come, let's go.'

'Where to?' asked Coquelle.

'Perhaps to the airfield—perhaps to Pontresina—per-

haps——' She shrugged her shoulders: 'You ought to know where you want to go.'

She jumped down the steps and he followed her closely. He longed to put his hands on her slim shoulders, but he had not the courage.

They left the road and crossed the meadow. The crickets hopped about in swarms like locusts and then fell back exhausted, into the long grass. Coquelle was walking by her side.

'Please call me Gaston again,' he begged her after a little time. 'You pronounce it so charmingly.'

'Just so that you can laugh at me?'

'No, really, I don't want to laugh—I only want to hear you say it.'

'Why don't you try and remember the way I said it—Gaston—I'm not a parrot.'

Coquelle tried to take her hand but she withdrew it.

'We don't have to do that, do we?' she said, looking at him with a friendly smile.

'No, of course not—if that's how you want it.'

Oh, if only the meadow could stretch on for ever, if only there was no one in the whole world but Svea and himself. 'Gaston' she had called him, and for the first time in his life he realized how nice his name could sound.

The Chief himself undid Van der Meulen's harness and helped him out of the glider.

'Well?' he asked simply.

Van der Meulen looked at him happily and said:

'Everything was in perfect order.'

'And the mountains?'

'No difficulty.'

'Good.' The Chief walked past the wings to the tail of the glider, fingering the stabiliser with experienced hands.

'In perfect condition,' he said, giving Van der Meulen a little wink.

'This afternoon,' the Chief looked at his watch, 'say at 2.15, I am going for a flip over the Bernina with the Piper. If you feel like it, come with me. Can't do you any harm to look at the mountains from a new angle. What do you say?'

'I'd love to.'

They walked together to the restaurant.

'Would you like to have lunch with me?' the Chief asked.

'I'd like to very much.'

'You haven't really got a chance to win the competition,' he continued, 'but you ought to do well in the Goal Flight—I am sure of it. I would suggest Altenrhein as your destination. Obstalden is going to take the same route. It has definite advantages. It is easy to find, and as long as the weather is fairly reliable flying conditions are particularly good. We'll look at the map together and I can give you some useful tips.'

The table was already laid. The Rasches and Schübiger joined them. Van der Meulen was pleased by the fact that everybody talked shop and took him into the conversation, making him feel that he, too, was an old hand at the game.

After lunch they sat crouched over a large map and studied the entire course. He could almost imagine himself actually flying. The wind was ideal, the sun shone at just the right temperature. In no time he had left the Engadine behind, and found excellent up-winds and thermal conditions and later a perfect cloud base over the Albula. By the time he was near the Lenzerhorn he had reached such tremendous heights that he could only see the Lenzerheide lake as a little blue pin-head. If his calculations were right, this altitude

should be enough to allow him to glide to Altenrhein, his final destination.

'This last bit is easy,' said the Chief. 'All you have to do is follow the Rhine valley, which is so suitable for gliding that even a blind man could find his way. And once in the valley you will see the Bodensee, like a huge silver plate, and just where the Rhine runs into the lake is the airfield. That's where you will land and you can take it from me they will all be glad to see you!'

Van der Meulen got quite excited imagining the flight. He felt sure he was going to find the way all right—he was going to show them that he, too, could fly.

Frau Rasch had put deck-chairs in front of the restaurant and everybody was dozing lazily.

'An aerodrome is at its best when there is no flying going on,' Schübiger said, breaking the silence.

Five minutes later the Chief answered.

'You're right there.'

Dr. Parpan began to snore.

'Everyone has his own up-wind,' Herr Rasch remarked, but nobody was awake and so no one laughed at this little joke but himself.

The lovely summer afternoon enveloped them with its warmth like a soft blanket. The sleepers in the deck-chairs appeared to be smiling like well-fed babies—satisfied and oblivious of the world around them.

The Chief dreamed that he was driving in a luxurious sleigh through beautiful snowy country-side. Hundreds of little bells were fixed to the harness of the spirited horse that whisked him along. Even the end of the whip was adorned with a bell which tinkled merrily as the driver whirled it above his head. It was a joy to listen to their happy sound

as the sleigh bowled along. But suddenly, shattering this delightful accompaniment, the driver (no doubt it was Dr. Hurtiger) began to sing in a rough hoarse voice. (He had never heard Dr. Hurtiger sing before.) Dr. Hurtiger opened his mouth wider and wider so that the Chief could see his uvula, shaped also like a bell, vibrating in a strange rhythm. Slowly the song changed into speech and the words 'telephone—telephone' began to penetrate his consciousness.

Frau Rasch stood in front of him calling his name.

'Who—why—how? What is the matter now with the boys?'

He ran to the telephone followed by Schübiger and Dr. Parpan.

'Hallo!' he called. 'This is Guggenberger. Who am I talking to?'

'Chief, dear old Chief,' a gay voice came over the wires. 'Get into your little car and come quickly. It is very cosy here and we are all friends. So we decided to invite you to come. Please—we beg of you!'

There was a pause. The Chief didn't know whether to be angry or amused. He was still half asleep and couldn't think clearly. Eventually he pulled himself together.

'Sorry, no time, Ciriello. I would have loved to come.'

'Oh sad, verry sad.'

'When the competition is over I'll be glad to come.'

'Who knows what will happen by then. Now is now, it can't be helped! Everybody sends their love! *A revederci*, Chief!'

'Thanks again, old man.' The Chief put down the receiver. 'They're really not bad chaps after all,' he thought, just a little touched, and looked out of the window over the field.

The 'Piper' was just being dragged out of the hangar and the mechanics were about to warm up the engine. The time was twelve minutes past three.

'Schübiger! Go and wake Van der Meulen. I want to take the lad for a spin over the mountains. I really want to get him used to them.'

The Chief climbed into the machine and for a moment let the engine rev up. Bending slightly forward he listened to its sound. He nodded and leant back against the seat, relaxed, listening to the satisfying regular purring of the exhaust.

Van der Meulen climbed nimbly into the seat in front of the Chief, fastened the safety belt and shut the little door with a bang. The Chief taxied the machine to the runway. After he had put her into the wind he opened the throttle wide and the 'Piper' rapidly gained speed. After only a few yards she was off the ground, racing parallel to the runway, past Flying Control and then mounting evenly and smoothly. Soon to those left behind the 'Piper' appeared as a small cross, then a dot which quickly merged into the blue empty sky.

Dr. Parpan wandered over towards his Met. station. The barometer had dropped a little, the air had become increasingly moist, the wind-sock hardly moved, and the anemometer only turned slowly, almost reluctantly.

A telephone conversation with the Met. Observatory at Zürich proved his diagnosis to be correct. There was a disturbance moving in, which would lead not to cloudiness but to an increase in the air circulation and temperature.

Not bad, Dr. Parpan thought. They could be sure of wind, thermal conditions and cloud—either the next day or the day after.

FROM THE *CHUR RECORDER*

14 July.

THE EUROPEAN GLIDER PILOTS' RALLY

TO-MORROW will be the highlight of the gliding competition —the Goal Flight—weather permitting, of course.

This will be the first time that these young glider pilots leave our lovely Engadine and try their wings over the entire country of Switzerland.

The thoughts and wishes of the Swiss people accompany these fine young pilots on their adventurous flight. Let us see which of them has the greatest chance to win the laurel wreath for their respective country.

We are happy to report that our own champion, Turli Obstalden, son of the popular Swiss Air captain and ex-flying champion, has a very good chance. Having gained second place in the Altitude and Endurance Flight he has practically the same number of points as Pyrrhonen. The young Finn won the Altitude flight but came only third in the Endurance Flight. Closely following these two is Gaston Coquelle, whose outstanding record in the Endurance Flight we had the pleasure of reporting yesterday. But in what would ordinarily be his specialty, the Altitude flight, he had bad luck and was placed sixth. Still, gaining first place in the Endurance flight has given him the necessary number of points to make his total victory a definite possibility, should he be successful in the Goal flight.

The following destinations have been chosen for the Goal flight: Altenrhein: Turli Obstalden, Joop Van der Meulen, Haino Pyrrhonen. Belpmoos, Berne: Gaston

Coquelle. Birrfield, Bruck: Svea Lindquist. Kloten, Zürich: Toto Ciriello, Los Passos. Milan: Archibald Huxton, the Englishman (the only one to attempt a flight over the Swiss frontier). In case of unsuitable weather he has chosen Belpmoos, Berne.

Points are assessed as follows:

Reaching the destination, plus the highest average speed, plus the number of miles flown. The Flight begins at a starting line on the Muottas Muraigl.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE GOAL FLIGHT

UNFORTUNATELY, the pilots woke to a still, cloudless day although the temperature was perfect. For ordinary folk there could not have been a lovelier summer's day. But for the pilots pining to start their adventurous Goal flight it could not have been worse.

They did not appreciate the clear blue sky: they loved it when it was packed with up-winds, air currents and thermals, and when from time to time big, fat cumulus clouds hid the sun altogether. They felt bored and disappointed by this perfect day.

They sat or lay about in the sun and stared at the sagging wind-sock or scanned the sky in the hope of finding a little cloud which might grow into a mass of cumulus. They licked their first fingers and held them up longing for a sign that the weather had changed.

But any little clouds that did appear quickly disintegrated into nothing and the wind-sock continued to hang as lifelessly as before.

There was nothing to do but to laze about, doze in the sun and wait!

The hottest place was behind the hangars where the sun beat down on the corrugated iron wall and radiated an intense metallic-smelling heat. Gnats and bumble-bees hummed to and fro, and butterflies hovered over the flowers in the nearby meadow. If one kept quite quiet one could hear the faint murmur of the Inn river, and if one managed to keep one's eyes open one could see Samedan dazzlingly white and clean in the sunshine.

Coquelle and Svea sat here together. He was playing with a piece of grass, and Svea, her head resting against the hot iron wall, was letting the sun burn her face. They were talking about their experiences with thermal currents, and Coquelle was trying to give this ordinary subject a greater significance and importance than it really had. Svea was listening intently. She never actually interrupted him, but from time to time she raised an eyebrow and scratched her head as if she needed to do some serious thinking before she could understand all that he was saying. Coquelle thought that she looked charming and most lovable.

Actually Svea should have written to Per but she simply had not had time. It was the day on which the Goal flight was supposed to take place, and they had all been told to stand by. The sun was burningly hot, which meant that at any time the weather might change—and besides she couldn't possibly have left this nice boy sitting all alone. He was talking so delightfully about thermal conditions in the mountains, and all he was saying was utterly unimportant, but he had a nice voice and managed to make everything he said sound like a compliment.

And so she continued to listen and when he had no more to say they were both silent. Yet the humming of the bees, the vibrating heat reflected from the corrugated-iron, the half-hourly chime of the church bells echoing through the valley, gave the silence meaning, and they felt close to each other, happy and contented.

On the other side of the hangar, stretched out on their backs in the deep grass, lay the café Hanselmann crowd. Van der Meulen had sat down beside them and was telling them about his flight with the Chief. It had been wonderful. They had waved to some climbers tied together with ropes,

who were on the Palü, and had watched another group tackling the most tricky part of the notorious north wall of the Bernina. It was fantastic how close the Chief had flown to them; of course, he knew how to fly—as nobody else in Switzerland did—Van der Meulen felt.

Jürgen lay beside them and listened. He felt so pleasantly contented that he couldn't make himself go back to the hotel and write home. And anyhow what was there to say? He felt such an affinity with the others that he was almost ashamed to talk about it. He couldn't put into words what he felt—that nothing kept them apart up there—that there were no boundaries between them—that his being German was of no importance to him any more than it mattered that Svea happened to be Swedish.

There they all lay sunning themselves and understanding each other without the necessity of speech. Perhaps it was because they had a common element—the air! A common home—the earth, and because they shared the same passion —flying. 'And we are friends,' he thought, 'just people, and friends.' He felt as if he had made a great discovery which could solve all the difficulties in the world. Why did so few people know about it?

'But it's lovely all the same,' he said involuntarily, hardly aware that he had spoken aloud.

'Do you really think so? Without any clouds? And with no wind?'

'No, of course that's not what I meant. I meant all of us being friends in spite of being from different countries and all that.'

'But that's obvious, it simply wouldn't work otherwise.' There was a moment of silence until Jürgen spoke again.

'I can't put it into words properly, but I feel that this—


11
F-BFAH
ARSENAL

with the blue sky above us—and all of us friends underneath the same sky is—how it should be always.'

Turli looked at Jürgen suspiciously and said:

'You'd better lie in the shade for a bit, Jürgen.'

His cousin flushed.

'Don't make fun of me. I meant what I said.'

Toto relieved his feelings in an entirely different way. Restless and bored he jumped up:

'Oh! do stop staring up at nothing,' he shouted, and went from one to another pulling them by the shoulder or by the hair until everybody was furious with him.

'Leave us alone—have you gone mad?—you're always so restless—won't you ever grow up, and relax!' Finnish, Spanish, and Dutch curses were flung at him, and nobody had any intention of moving.

'Do you know what I'm going to do now? I shall go to Samedan to Dagvin Erlesstrand.'

'Don't know him. Who the hell is *he?*'

'Didn't you see the poster? He gives tap-dancing lessons in the Hotel Bernina. I must learn. To-day I *must* learn. Hm Tadadam tam, tam! Like this!' He started shuffling about on his feet. 'Glider pilots get a special rate. The more the merrier and the cheaper. You must all come with me.'

'Nothing doing. You're crazy—on a day like this!'

'Ohhh.' Toto looked from one to the other. 'Then I shall go alone.' He jigged off, swaying his body and snapping his fingers. They followed him with their eyes until he was out of sight.

Dr. Parpan and Huxton walked towards the group. Huxton had been with Dr. Parpan discussing his prospective route and the weather conditions all the afternoon. The doc-

tor had been put through a severe cross-examination, question after question had been flung at him. Was there any indication of cold air currents in the Bernina area? Would he advise him to make use of cloud base over the local territory? Was there always a marked difference in the weather over the north and south sides of the Alps? Did the Oberengadine in fact break up the weather? What was it going to be like approaching the lowlands of the River Po? What likelihood was there of thermal winds? What were the chances of running into an inversion over the Bernina pass?

Huxton got as many answers as there had been questions. But to the crucial question, 'Can it be done successfully?' Dr. Parpan could not give a definite answer. The only thing he could say was that in theory and in favourable conditions his plan to cross the Alps and fly to Milan was quite possible. However, it was an established fact that a long distance flight in a northerly direction was more predictable than one across the Alps to the south. But Huxton stuck to his guns—and Milan remained his goal. Then they listened to the latest weather report. Overnight an influx of warmer air was expected. To-morrow there would be squally winds—temperatures would rise sharply and clouds were likely to form. Thunder was expected later on in certain districts.

When Parpan had repeated this to the group lazing in the grass they all sat up. It sounded hopeful to them. Not straightforward weather, but certainly most useful. Weather that would have to be fought and handled sensitively and accurately in order to take full advantage of it, weather that made the pilot depend on a certain amount of luck and a certain amount of risk. Everybody was quiet, thinking of the effect this forecast would have on his particular plan.

One after the other they got up and walked over to the

hangar. Was everything really in order? Had the drivers filled up the transport tanks? Did they all have their maps? The gliders lay huddled peacefully together, wing-tip to wing-tip. Everything was ready and in first-class order.

The Chief came in, too, and had a look round. 'Go home now, eat a good dinner and go to bed early. You've got to be fit for to-morrow. See you here at 7 a.m. Good night to you all.'

The big sliding doors were closed and everybody walked home obediently. There was less chatter than earlier in the day. There was a lot to think about now.

Coquelle and Svea found the door locked. 'Finished for to-day,' called Schübiger. 'See you again to-morrow at seven o'clock.'

'Will you eat with us, Svea?' Coquelle asked.

'I live and eat in the Hotel Bernina.'

'What a pity.' Outside the Hotel des Alpes he took her hand. 'Good-bye, Svea.'

'Good-bye, Coquelle.'

'Why don't you say Gaston?'

'Funny, why are you always so keen on that—Gaston?'

She looked at him and laughed.

'I always have to beg you to do things.'

'Yes, that's the way I like it.' She turned and walked off. Coquelle shook his head. There was something about her which baffled him. But still he was happy—very happy.

'Where is Toto?' he asked during supper.

'In the Bernina learning tap-dancing from Dagvin Erlesstrand—that's what he told us!' The Hanselmann crowd laughed.

Coquelle turned as white as a sheet. Only a half-wit would

believe that Toto was in the Hotel Bernina taking dancing lessons. Somehow he choked down his meal. Before he had swallowed the last bite he asked the porter to connect him with the Bernina Hotel. When they were on the line he asked to talk to Miss Lindquist. No, they were afraid that he couldn't, she had already retired to her room. Before going up she had mentioned that she was going very early to bed. Should they call her? No, it's of no importance, was his answer. Coquelle breathed deeply with relief. Reassured and satisfied he went to bed and slept deeply before the great day.

THE SECOND DAY OF THE GOAL FLIGHT

THE weather forecast had been correct. There was a distinct change in the atmosphere. Lovely fat cumulus clouds were forming everywhere. It was not fresh as it had been yesterday, almost oppressively hot even in the early morning.

Parachutes, barographs and oxygen masks had already been handed out and everyone was busy stowing them away in their usual places. Even Toto had arrived punctually.

There was a feverish sense of the unexpected in the air. It was a strangely adventurous feeling—to be leaving the trusted valley for the first time. Some felt excited, others a little apprehensive. Some talked more, others less, than usual. The light—the mountains, the clouds—the wind, even the Chief, Dr. Hurtiger, Schübiger and Dr. Parpan seemed to have taken on a new and strange significance. The unknown lay ahead, the known behind. Svea pressed Coquelle's hand and murmured: 'All the best.'

'Same to you, Svea.'

They looked at each other and laughed shyly. But Toto interrupted: 'Please, Svea, slap my other cheek! It's lucky!' He turned his cheek towards her. She only patted it. 'Harder, please. I must feel it until I get to Kloten.'

Pyrrhonen stood alone, quietly smoking a cigarette. The Spaniards had already taken up their starting positions. They were waiting patiently for the Piper that was to tow them up. The Kranich was too heavy for the winch.

Van der Meulen was being helped by the Chief. 'Take it easy,' he told him quietly. 'There is nothing strange about the mountains. They are old friends now, aren't they?' He

couldn't help feeling a trace of worry about the Dutch boy. Van der Meulen shook his head:

'Don't worry, Chief.' All the same he felt a little tense. He hadn't had much breakfast and had rushed to the airfield long before the others. He felt that once he was actually sitting in his glider he would lose the sinking feeling in his stomach. Once he was holding the stick in his hand he would be perfectly all right.

Turli and Jürgen pushed their 'Moswey' to the starting-place. She rocked comfortably on the fat rubber tyres of the little transport cart. The brilliant yellow of the glider shone in the sun, and the Swiss cross on the rudder seemed to radiate optimism.

'Father just telephoned,' Turli said.

'What did he want?'

'He sent you his love.'

'Thank you. What else?'

'He wished me luck and told me to be careful. He especially reminded me that I must come down to the cloud base after every cumulus flight and check my position since the cloud might very easily be hiding a mountain. He's been in the racket long enough—he ought to know.'

'Of course he ought. Will he come over to visit us again?'

'Perhaps he'll come to the prize-giving.' And Turli crossed his fingers for luck. There was a pause then Turli said: 'Drive over the Julier and not the Albula when you come to fetch me. Understood?'

'Yes.' Jürgen was looking forward to the drive.

This time Huxton had adjusted his seat cushion so that it could not possibly cause him further suffering. He had folded his map into a roll so that by slowly turning it he

could see the whole route. He wore only tennis shoes and, underneath his overall, light but warm underwear to ensure that the 'Gull' carried no unnecessary weight. His shoes and suit were stowed away in the transport that would fetch him and his 'Gull'. The only food he took was a large chunk of fruit cake and some chocolate digestive biscuits. And then his pipe, tobacco and matches. Useless ballast, he knew, but he would feel lost without them. The prospect of a good flight seemed hopeful. It was going to be tough, but he was determined to do it. It would be thrilling and quite different from all the other flights. His mind filled with these thoughts he strolled after his two helpers who were pushing his 'Gull' to the starting place.

The Chief, Schübiger and Dr. Hurtiger overtook him.

'Well,' the Chief asked, 'still set on Milan?'

'No other place.'

'Then I wish you the very best of luck.'

Once again the gliders lay at the end of the runway according to their starting numbers. Once again the assistants helped the pilots into their narrow seats and fixed their harness tightly. In their imagination the young fliers had already left the ground and had started their long difficult journey.

'Attention!' The Chief had to shout to make himself heard. '*Bon voyage* and good luck. Don't imagine that your flight is a simple affair. At the Olympic competition in 1948 only two out of a great many managed to reach their destination. You know the conditions. Distance means points—go and collect them. Up to now you have proved that you *can* fly, now continue the good work. But one thing I want to beg of you, don't fly into thunder. It isn't that I worry about *you*,

but I would be sorry to see your planes wrecked! Besides you are still inexperienced.' He lifted his wooden mallet: 'Again —*bon voyage*—good luck and good-bye!'

'*Aufwiedersehen*, Chief!'—'*a rivederci!*'—'*Hasta la vista!*' Schübiger lifted the starting-flag.

The Tug noisily pulled the 'Kranich', bumping and thumping, into the air. The other gliders followed in quick succession. Soon they were all circling like a swarm of vultures higher and higher in the up-wind of the Muottas Muraigl.

Those left on the field stood and watched. The Dutch helpers were proud when they saw how quickly and confidently Van der Meulen gained height. The Chief, too, was delighted with his protégé.

'He's really got over his fears,' he whispered to Schübiger.

'Yes, it looks like it,' he replied, searching the horizon with his ancient binoculars.

It was well over an hour and a half before Obstalden and the Spaniards disappeared from sight. Toto could not refrain from looping a few loops over the Chrast-a-mora before he, too, disappeared. Soon afterwards, Coquelle, Van der Meulen, and Pyrrhonen were lost to view. Only Huxton still hovered over the valley, climbing higher and higher between the Languard and Albris.

'He is playing safe,' commented Schübiger. 'Thinks he can make Milan in one hop.'

There was nothing now for the assistants to do but await landing reports, they would not be in for several hours. Jürgen and Tingren, followed by the others, went over to Frau Rasch to drink lemonade and other refreshments. It had become very hot. The Chief and Schübiger joined Dr. Parpan and Dr. Hurtiger who, protected by sun-glasses and hand-

kerchiefs on their heads, were being baked in deck-chairs, by the sun.

Towards midday the burning heat changed to an almost unbearable heaviness. The sun seemed to radiate twice its usual heat through the misty clouds; cumulus began to form here and there, with little white clouds breaking off in all directions.

'They seem almost alive,' the Chief remarked.

'Yes, and they're building up to a thunderstorm,' Dr. Parpan prophesied.

'I have had enough.' Dr. Hurtiger got up, wiped the sweat from his brow and disappeared into the restaurant.

'Order lunch, will you?' the Chief called after him. He got up, took Schübiger's binoculars and scanned the horizon. 'Huxton is still there,' he said. 'That "Gull" of his isn't easy to manage, but he's tough and for that alone he deserves to get a prize.'

'I agree. There's none of Ciriello's fecklessness about him.'

'Come and have your food.' The Chief hurried Schübiger along. He would have liked to defend Toto, he was very fond of him, but what was the use of arguing, particularly as Schübiger was right in his opinion.

Huxton battled with his 'Gull' and the weather. Heat-squalls pummelled him like the fists of an unseen boxer; uppercuts, lefts and rights to the stomach spun him round on his own axis so that he hardly knew where he was. But he would not allow himself to be beaten. His 'Gull' was difficult to manœuvre; she took the sudden gusts of winds heavily and clumsily. She did not ride the weather as easily and lightly as the 'Weihe', the 'Moswey' or the ' Air' of the Frenchman. But on the other hand her construction was solid

exaggeratedly so, with great static reserves. She could stand a great deal, but only at the expense of performance and agility.

With difficulty he had worked himself up to 10,200 feet—approximately the height of the Languard. But that was nothing—nothing like the reserve he knew he needed to soar safely over the Bernina pass. He searched for thermal currents over the rocky Piz Alva, and eventually found a weak thermal bubble which carried him 1,000 feet higher.

He was soaked in sweat trying to maintain the height he had gained, and searching for new lifts. His cockpit was like a hothouse, and he had to work really hard with arms and feet and the elevator; rudder and ailerons were moving continuously. Time and again he was unexpectedly lifted, turned 180 degrees, only to be sucked down in an inversion to the same altitude he had started from. He could have scrapped his plan to fly to Milan and taken the alternative route to Belpmoos, but once his mind was made up there was no turning round for Huxton. This stubborn tenacity and patience were characteristic of him.

A silver veil lay spread over the whole region of the Bernina. The ice crystals of the cirrus clouds caught the rays of the sun and sparkled with all the colours of the rainbow. Towering above this fantastic mosaic of light and shade, loomed layer after layer of dark thunder-clouds. They seemed to have settled there to attain their final shape and form. And whilst they were swelling in size and proportion they rose at great speed. Huxton had no doubt that a first-class thunderstorm was in the making. He knew that if he flew into it he would be gripped by its force and catapulted upwards. From then onwards he would not have to worry about height any more.

Now was the time for him to make the best of his 'Gull'.

The Chief's warning did not really apply to him. It was for the others with their lighter planes. He flew a 'Gull', he had to gain a lot of height—he was bent on reaching Milan and would take advantage of everything that could help him to gain his objective. Things were never as bad as they seemed, and people were always inclined to exaggerate about thunder-storms. Of course, he had heard of cases where kites had disintegrated in these storms, but his 'Gull' was going to do nothing of that sort.

And so he flew straight into the thunder-clouds and found himself lifted at great speed into a milky opaqueness. Then things began to happen. The earlier bumps, the heat-gusts, had only been child's-play compared with the leaping, diving, spinning and violent swerving against which he found himself entirely impotent. He noticed fantastic flying positions on his banking indicator. At one moment he felt his whole weight hanging in the harness so that the blood rushed to his head—the next moment he was being lifted with such force that his stomach dropped and he felt unable to breathe. He lost all sense of balance and direction. He did not know where he was or even whether he was flying upside down.

He was drawn ever deeper into the murky inferno, and could hardly see his instruments. He could not possibly be rising at between 40 to 50 feet/seconds on his back—in circles—at a speed of 180 m.p.h.—that was more than even the 'Gull' could stand!

Didn't he hear a suspicious cracking and tearing in the crossbeam? Didn't she flap her wings like a crow? In spite of all the acrobatics, the altimeter rose rapidly. But he was no longer in control. Wedged in the tiny cockpit and whirling through this terrible grey blanket, he felt completely at the

mercy of the elements. Would he ever see light again—ever see the earth again?

It had become bitterly cold in the cockpit. His sweat-drenched shirt clung to his body like an icy armour. Wearily and ever more wearily he moved the controls. It didn't really matter any more. There was nothing he could do, he was entirely in the power of the storm. He felt unspeakably tired. Was he flying very high?

22,500 feet on the altimeter? That was very high indeed. He tried to check again, but everything looked indistinct and blurred. Did somebody call oxygen? Who kept on calling Oxygen? Stop calling and be quiet! But the call was repeated, again and again. With all his will-power he obeyed, and succeeded in putting on the oxygen mask. Immediately his mind was cleared he realized that he was still in the midst of the storm which was throwing him about at its will. He could feel the 'Gull' reel, jump and spin. Then he saw that the leading edges of his wings were covered in thick ice.

Nothing could be more serious! It meant loss of the last normal flying characteristics, and an almost certain crash. He had to get out of the clouds—down as fast as possible where the air was warm, the ice would melt, and he would again be able to control his 'Gull'. Without having any knowledge of his flying position, he pushed his stick down to force a dive. To his surprise the 'Gull' answered with a sudden and violent sideways jump. She shuddered and screamed as if in agony. Then from out of the darkness she received a more vicious blow than ever before. She rose steeply, and within the same fraction of a second dropped again as if she had bounced off a ceiling. There was a short shrill scream and a tearing noise. Huxton saw the canvas of the right wing torn into shreds and watched, spellbound,

the main plane slowly and deliberately folding upwards as if in slow motion. It detached itself quite silently from the fuselage and disappeared into the dark nothingness! He sat there unable to move. Then a voice from nowhere told him to jump for it, just as it had drawn his attention to the oxygen a little earlier. Huxton threw the perspex hood off, undid his harness as fast as his frozen fingers would permit, and threw himself head first out of the helplessly tumbling and spinning machine. Falling into the darkness his hands groped over his body and touched the lever strapped to his chest. Deliberately, as if he had practised it many times before, he pulled. The parachute fluttered out and Huxton continued to fall. Then he felt a strong, firm jerk—the most heavenly, prayed-for moment imaginable. The parachute had opened and he was drifting downwards, swinging slowly to and fro. Hailstones whipped his face and the frost hurt his whole body. But he did not care, at least he felt he belonged somewhere instead of being helpless as a leaf in the wind. I'll be down in a moment, it can't possibly take much longer, he said to himself as he saw that it was getting lighter and lighter. Suddenly the cloud released him. The white-domed parachute floated above him, and beside him the sun reflected the turbulent woolly fringes of his thunder-cloud. From below, sharp-edged summits, stony gorges, and walls of hard, shiny rock raced towards him. Everything he had ever heard or read about parachute jumps rushed through his head. Whatever had happened or might still happen he must prepare himself to meet the collision with the rocks. Swinging desperately to and fro, he tried to influence the path of the parachute. If he was lucky he might land on one of the little ledges protruding from the cliffs. If he was luckier still he might land on a little patch of grass. But only a vast

barren and rocky summit rushed towards him; its left flank ran into a jagged ridge, and its right dropped vertically on to a large expanse of grey rubble. He was swinging and kicking violently to avoid ridges and summits. He was lucky, the wind was in his favour. With only inches to spare he was swept past the rocky wall, held his breath, tensed his body, and only breathed again when the danger had passed. Then he relaxed his body as much as possible to meet the fall and waited. This last fraction of a second, in which there was nothing more he could do, seemed to him an eternity. When the collision with the ground came, it was even more violent than he had expected, as a gust of wind accelerated his forward speed considerably. Whilst the parachute dragged him over the rubble his right leg got caught between two rocks. Still falling, so it seemed to him afterwards, he heard the crunching noise of his shin bone breaking and a sharp sickening pain rendered him unconscious. He tumbled down a steep rock-strewn gradient, head over heels, and came to rest on a little patch of grass. He rolled on his back, wincing in agony, and set about undoing the parachute that was still trying to drag him on. He succeeded—but felt sick with the pain the effort cost him. Tears of agony were rolling down his face, his heart was beating violently, his throat was dry and he found it difficult to breathe. He bit his lips to stop the tears and groans. He lay still for some time, too exhausted to move or think, for a while he drifted into unconsciousness again. When he had recovered a little he began to take stock of the damage. With the flat of his hand he felt his body tenderly, inch by inch—there were swellings, bruises and cuts, and his fingers felt the stickiness and warmth of blood in several places—on his cheeks, on his thigh and left arm. He dreaded the moment when his hand

would reach his right leg as he knew that something serious had happened there. Just above the knee he felt the torn trouser leg and then the crustiness of drying blood. As he groped lower the blood became thicker and was still warm. Then, with a shock, his fingers touched a sharp, splinter-like object. The stab of pain that shot through his body was more the result of fright than of the actual contact of his hand with the protruding bone. He fainted again, but when he awoke his mind was quite clear.

There was nothing at all he could do now. It was no use losing his nerve. If he just lay still, peacefully, then the pain was bearable. He was aware of the throbbing of the bruises and cuts which had begun to swell all over his body. Carefully avoiding any unnecessary change in his position, he pulled the soft, bulky cloth of the parachute towards him and stuffed it under his head. That made him a little more comfortable and gave him an illusion of lying in a bed.

But the blood dripped from his leg and dyed the thin grass a rusty red. He was slowly getting weaker but his pain had become slightly less. He was no longer able to piece together all that had happened before he came to be in this desperate position.

How quiet everything was around him, how menacingly the summit towered above him—how sharply the thunderclouds were silhouetted against the sky. Fear crept up in him, fear that he might not be found, fear that he might die up there like a wounded chamois. He dug his nails into the earth and screamed again and again. Only the rocks gave back a multiple echo. There couldn't possibly be an answer, as it was late afternoon and everybody had returned to the valleys.

'I never knew it could be so quiet,' he said to himself,

'really very eerie'. Again the pain began to mount, filling his thoughts and consciousness. Tears ran down his cheeks and he was too weak to wipe them away. He was gripped by a violent attack of shivering, and feverish visions confused his mind. He heard voices calling to him; he saw innumerable parachutes drifting on to the wide open plain. He saw his father, in an armoured car driving beneath them. He waved to him happily—but the car turned off and disappeared as noiselessly as it had come. Huxton then felt himself to be in a comfortable bed where he was enjoying himself immensely. He was handed a delicious red drink, cool and refreshing, shining like a ruby with which he quenched his burning thirst again and again. The window of the room he was in was open and the sun shone warmly through large and lovely trees. It was the sick-room of his old school. He must be ill, otherwise he would never have been allowed there. But his disease, whatever it was, must be very slight because he felt so comfortable and so secure with his mother sitting next to him and laying her soft hands gently over his eyes.

'Now you are going to sleep,' she said, in her soft, deep voice, 'now you are going to sleep—sleep—sleep! You are getting very tired, sleep—sleep.' And he felt the firm, warm hand pressing over his eyes and went to sleep.

A LETTER FROM JÜRGEN TO HIS FATHER

Samedan, 15 July.

Dear Dad,

I'm writing in a hurry. I'm still waiting for Turli's landing report. It's going to be frightfully exciting. It's already 6 p.m., and no news. Van der Meulen has already reported from Maienfeld; he came down somewhere near Luziensberg —do you know it? Just about twelve miles from Altenrhein. Where could Turli have flown to? All three of them were heading for Altenrhein which means that he should have arrived there, too, by now. Nothing yet from Svea, Coquelle, Huxton, Toto and Los Passos.

There was a thunderstorm this afternoon. The wind-sock tore and had to be mended.

I would have liked to drive with Van der Meulen's and Pyrrhonen's crews. I really don't know what Turli is up to! But for God's sake don't get excited. If anything had happened to him we should have heard already. The whole thing is very efficiently organized. Perhaps I shall have to drive by night, but I prefer daylight because of the view. I don't feel much like writing, I am not in the writing mood. So that's all for to-day. Love to all of you.

Jürgen

Pyrrhonen rang the Chief from Rüti and reported that conditions in the Rhine valley had been most unfavourable. He had tried everything possible, but with the best intention in the world he could not make the last twelve miles to Altenrhein. He only just made contact with a cloud base

over Luziensteig and then managed to scrape through to Rüti. But from there onwards nothing was of any avail. He thought that Obstalden had realized this in time, had altered his course, and was still flying to gain additional points for distance.

Van der Meulen reported from Maienfeld. He seemed very happy. All had gone well, the flight had been wonderful, but unfortunately he had been unsuccessful in making contact near Luziensteig and so there was nothing for it but to land.

But Maienfeld had welcomed him warmly. His 'Meise' was being guarded by the police. A man called Von Tscharner had taken him to Maienfeld so that he could telephone. Von Tscharner and his wife had provided him with a wonderful meal. Now he was waiting for his crew. Thank God, the Chief thought, I succeeded in making him fly again.

At 7.15 Svea called from Lenzburg—no, unfortunately not from Birrfeld. Only twenty miles short, not much, but she simply could not make it. Conditions over the mountains had been ideal, just as though they had been especially arranged for her convenience. She had found a beautiful cloud over the Piz d'Err and from there onwards had flown from cloud to cloud, only just gaining enough height to reach the next one. She had flown over Arth at a good height —but then things had got more and more difficult. She had had to keep up her height by jumping from one small cloud to another like a squirrel. When she had got too low she went in search of thermal currents and up-winds only to find that there simply were none. So she had to land. Had anybody reached their destination? Any news from Coquelle? Well, of course, Belpmoos was the greatest distance. But he could manage it if anybody could. He really did know how

to fly, didn't he? She's a very nice girl, the Chief thought, putting down the receiver.

This waiting was quite exciting. He wasn't really worried about Obstalden, although, of course, one never knew. It looked as if Pyrrhonen had guessed right and that he was going off on a new route to tot up the distance points. But the Spaniards could easily have reported. They had set themselves a goal like the others, but he had doubts as to whether they would get anywhere near it. And Toto? Either he had forgotten to telephone, or he was up to one of his usual tricks.

The telephone rang again. Schübiger took the call.

'I beg your pardon? Police station Poschiavo? Yes, this is Flying Control Samedan.' Poschiavo? the Chief thought, that was on Huxton's route. He should have passed there around midday—long before the thunderstorm. If he had landed anywhere near there he would have reported long ago.

'What did you say? Between Poschiavo and Alp Grün?' Schübiger danced with excitement from one foot to the other. 'A piece of a wing?'

'What's that?' the Chief asked eagerly.

Schübiger could hardly keep him away from the telephone.

'During the thunderstorm? Really, and the plane? Haven't you found it?—but that is, of course, of course—I'm most grateful. It's most important! Of course we will be there immediately. Please wait for us.'

'Come on, tell me the worst,' the Chief said impatiently. When he heard the news that a piece of a wing had been found he sat down on the corner of the table and gasped: 'For God's sake,' he said, sitting perfectly still and slapping his thigh with a ruler. After some time he said:

'Huxton. That can only be Huxton. No thunder over Poschiavo?' he asked.

'No, but over the Bernina pass.'

The Chief rang Poschiavo again.

'This is Samedan here, Chief Instructor Guggenberger. I am calling about the wing you found. Yes, we are leaving immediately. But I would like to ask you to make every effort to find out if anybody in your district has seen or found a parachute from a crashed glider. I hope I can rely on your doing this immediately.' Then he called the Bernina Hospitz and Alp Grün, but no crash had been observed in either place.

He fetched Dr. Parpan from the restaurant. 'Will you please take any landing reports that may be coming in. Schübiger and I have to go to Poschiavo.' He told Dr. Parpan what he knew, but asked him not to mention a word of it even to Huxton's crew, Crutton and Galloway.

'Where are you off to?' the assistants called after him as he left the airfield with Schübiger by his side.

'Only a quick visit to St. Moritz!'

A great many people had crowded in front of the police station at Poschiavo. The news of the strange discovery had spread like wildfire. The Chief hated the sensation-seeking crowd, and asked a police officer to clear the square.

The piece of wing was propped against the wall. It measured 14 feet in length, and the Chief was in no doubt about its belonging to Huxton's 'Gull'. The verdict was breakage of the main cross-beam due to overstrain.

It seemed pretty obvious that Huxton had ignored his warning, and had flown head on into a thunderstorm to make

use of its fabulous lifting properties. What had happened afterwards he could easily imagine.

The Chief handled the situation quietly and efficiently. He made arrangements for the wing to be collected by the Civil Air Ministry. Until they arrived he asked the police to be responsible for it, and to safeguard it from souvenir-hunters. Any new finds or reports were to be passed on to Samedan.

All further action such as the aerial search of the district, the statement to the press and radio, the report to the Air Ministry, and the communication with Huxton's parents would be undertaken from Samedan.

The Chief asked the police to have a further search, and it was already getting dark when they drove up the windy road to Pontresina. The air was cool and fresh and smelled strongly of pine.

'This could have been a lovely drive if only I wasn't so worried,' the Chief said.

'So your theory is that he jumped?'

'I think he is the type who would have managed to do it. But we'll soon see.'

'Perhaps he'll be already safe and sound in Samedan by the time we get there.'

'That, of course, would be the best thing that could have happened.'

Huxton was not at Samedan, and apart from Dr. Parpan and Dr. Hurtiger, nobody was there. The Chief immediately asked for the landing-reports.

The Spaniards had landed near Näfels. A considerable flight. Obstalden had reported from Rheinfeld just near Basle. So Pyrrhonen had been right.

Coquelle had reached Birrfeld, although he had intended to fly to Belpmoos which lay practically in the opposite direction. However, he had met thunderstorms all along his route and refusing to fly into them had turned round. Finding ideal conditions over the Gotthart he had decided to fly to Birrfeld instead, which he found quite easy to reach.

'Is this true about the thunderstorm?' the Chief asked.

'Partly. There have been several local storms in this area.'

'Didn't he ask about Lindquist?'

'Of course, and I told him that she is in Lenzburg.'

'And Toto?'

'Nothing from Toto, nothing at all.' Then Schübiger continued: 'I'll give my right hand if anything has happened to that cheeky brat.' Schübiger could not forgive his foolery during the altitude flight. 'The scoundrel can do nothing but fool around.'

'Let's hope it's nothing more serious,' the Chief replied curtly. He glanced at the reports again. 'The slide rule's our only guide up to now. There is no doubt it's hellishly hard to reach the right destination.'

But at that moment he did not really care who had the greatest number of points. He couldn't think seriously about anything but Huxton. Where could he possibly be at this very moment? Had he crashed, and was he still wedged in the wreckage of his 'Gull'? Had he been able to jump in time and was he now hanging on some rock amongst those rocky peaks? Mountains were the most sinister things in the world as soon as one ceased to be their master. The Chief kept his pessimistic thoughts to himself.

At five o'clock the next morning, as soon as the first light had broken over the horizon, he was going to take off and

search the entire region—and search and search until he had found him.

The telephone rang. It was the post office at Samedan with a telegram:

Dübendorf—Zürich *15* July, *8* p.m.

Have landed on military airfield Dübendorf-Zürich. Wonderful reception from Swiss Airforce. Have ordered transport from Kloten. All else tomorrow.

Ciriello.

Everybody was relieved, and laughed. Schübiger was triumphant.

'What did I tell you?'

'How are you going to count that, Chief?' Dr. Hurtiger asked curiously.

'Why on earth should I worry about that now?' the Chief said impatiently.

'In any case it is forbidden to land at Dübendorf without previous permission,' Schübiger asserted stubbornly.

The Chief looked round at everybody: 'I would like to telephone now,' he spoke with special emphasis. 'Good night to you all.' They understood that he wanted to be left alone. 'I am going to take off at five in the morning. If I could see you here at that time I would be grateful.'

'Let's hope the mountains don't cloud up,' Dr. Parpan commented.

'Is that what you expect?'

'The weather prospects don't look too good.'

'That would be very sad indeed.'

The three left the Chief. Now at last he could set about organizing the search systematically.

But the moment he was alone there was a timid knock at the door. He opened it angrily. Galloway and Crutten stood

in front of him, turning their hats in their hands. They were terrified that the Chief had forgotten all about them. He asked them to come in.

What was going on? What had happened? Hadn't there been a landing report from Milan? Should they still wait or should they go to bed? They hoped nothing had happened, but if something was wrong they ought to have been told.

The Chief begged to be forgiven, looking into two honest faces—they must forgive him for not informing them earlier. It was probable that something really had gone wrong with Huxton, but he had not wanted to alarm them until he was certain and had had a tangible proof. They longed to know what had happened. The Chief told them all he knew. Tomorrow he was going to search for him in the Piper and take off at 5 a.m.

'It's raining,' Galloway remarked gloomily, and they could hear the patter of the rain through the oppressive silence.

'There is no reason why the weather should not be fine again by the morning.'

'But it is quite as likely that it will continue to rain. You should have told us earlier, Chief!'

'I could not say anything before I was certain myself. In any case there is no reason to fear the worst. If he jumped with his parachute there is a three to one chance that he's all right.'

No one spoke.

'Do you know that Archie's father is in St. Moritz?' Galloway asked after some time.

'No, I had no idea. Which hotel is he staying at?'

'Hotel Calonder.'

'That's most important, thank you very much. I'll telephone him.'

'And what now?' Galloway asked.

'Wait until it's light and I'll take off.'

They both stood and waited undecidedly.

'Huxton's going to get wet, lying in the open all night. And if he is injured he mightn't live through it.'

'Stay here on the airfield and be on call,' the Chief said. 'Lie down on a bench in the restaurant so that you'll be near in case I need you. I am going to sleep in this office.'

The Chief knew very well that he would not need them during the night. But he wanted them to feel that they might be of use. He did not have the heart to send them to bed in their present state.

'Be sure to call us, Chief, if there is any sort of news!' they said before lying down for the night.

FROM GUGGENBERGER'S LOG OF THE GLIDER PILOTS' RALLY

Accident Gull IV. Pilot Archibald Huxton (England)

10.15 p.m. Informed Civil Air Ministry about the found wing.

10.30 p.m. Informed Sir Douglas Huxton, Hotel Calonder, St. Moritz, about possibility of an accident to his son. Sir Douglas inquired into all steps that had been taken to organize the rescue and is taking off with Chief Guggenberger at 5 a.m. to search the area where the wing was found (Plane: Piper)

11.30 p.m. Informed the Press and asked for factual treatment only.

12.30 a.m. Informed radio as above.

1.15 a.m. Telephone call from Ciriello. Return delayed because of back-axle trouble. Repair will not be completed until midday. (That's his story!) Continuous rain.

4.30 a.m. Sir Douglas Huxton arrived. Still raining. Take-off impossible.

7.00 a.m. Radio Berne and Zürich mentioned the possibility of an accident to Huxton in their news.

7.45 a.m. Pyrrhonen returned from Rüti.

8.30 a.m. Van der Meulen returned from Maienfeld. Seems somewhat hysterical. Nice but highly nervous type. Happy not to be responsible for him any more. Rain continues. Impossible to take off.

8.50 a.m. Telephoned the police station Poschiavo. Guides have been out searching since daybreak but none have reported back so far.

9.12 a.m. Los Passos returned from Näfels. Congratulated them on their excellent performance.

10.32 a.m. Telephone call from police station Poschiavo. Sail-plane wreckage found on the glacier between Piz di Verona and Sasso Rosso. No sign of pilot. Barograph safely recovered. Search in this area intensified. A party has been sent out to recover the wreckage.

10.45 a.m. Conference with Sir Douglas Huxton, Dr. Parpan, Dr. Hurtiger, Schübiger. Without doubt Huxton had flown into a thunderstorm, and his lack of experience resulted in the overstrain of his 'Gull', which broke a wing. Huxton had jumped by parachute. Estimated position of the 'Gull' at the time of the accident: Height *15,000-20,000* feet. Estimated landing position of Huxton: Mountain chain enclosing the Poschiavo valley. Injury not excluded. Telephone Poschiavo for further search of this area. As soon as weather improves the Piper will join the search.

11.03 a.m. Capt. Obstalden called from Zürich and offered to join the search as soon as the weather clears.

11.35 a.m. Schübiger, Galloway and Crutton left in their transport for Poschiavo to collect the wreckage of the 'Gull'. Pyrrhonen, Van der Meulen and the Spaniards wanted to be allowed to drive with them and join one of the search parties. Impossible owing to their lack of experience.

11.40 a.m. Journalists and photographers of several papers have arrived. We are not supplying any details until we have conclusive evidence one way or another. Police Poschiavo inquired if information could be given to the Press. We advised restraint until further news available.

11.45 a.m. Flying School Belpmoos offered to join in search.

12.25 p.m. Coquelle called from Birrfield. As soon as the weather clears he is going to start with flying school's Tug. The flying school offered all planes and pilots available. Svea Lindquist arrived with her transport at Birrfield and took charge of the return trip of their two gliders.

12.45 p.m. Telephone call from Capt. Hunzecker, Dübendorf, military airfield. Will send radio-equipped reconnaissance plane as soon as weather improves. Will take Toto Ciriello along.

3.10 p.m. Holiday guests from St. Moritz, Celerina and Pontresina showing undue interest in gliding, and are standing around the airfield waiting for something to happen.

3.35 p.m. Turli Obstalden accompanied by Jürgen Dülbreck returned from Rheinfeld. Congratulated Obstalden on achieving the greatest distance.

3.45 p.m. Schübiger telephoned from Poschiavo. 'Gull' has been located. There is no doubt that Huxton jumped. His harness was in order. No sign of torn clothes, pieces of cloth or of blood. There were no footprints to be found near the wreckage. Since none of the search parties have yet returned there is still hope.

THE SEARCH

CAPTAIN OBSTALDEN was the first to reach Samedan, at about 5 p.m. The weather was improving. He was welcomed by everybody, and Turli begged him passionately to take them with him on his search for Huxton. He argued that six eyes were better than two. Captain Obstalden consented as long as the Chief had no objections. The Chief gave his permission gladly, which delighted the two boys. The prospect of going on such an important mission with their famous father and uncle filled them with such pride that they almost forgot their deep concern over their unfortunate comrade. Pyrrhonen, Van der Meulen and the Spaniards also longed to be of some help, and jealously watched the lucky pair.

Just half an hour after Obstalden's arrival the reconnaissance plane from Dübendorf landed. A fast, slim, two-engined plane, a giant amongst the little sporting machines and gliders on the airfield. Before the plane even touched the ground Toto could be seen waving frantically. He was the first to jump out of the plane, and with exaggerated movements of his arms directed it to dispersal in front of No. 1 hangar. Then he helped Lieutenant Sturzenegger and the radio operator out of the plane and guided them, affably waving to the left and right, towards the Chief.

'Here I am again,' he called happily, 'and this is Albert Sturzenegger, my pilot, and this is Sergeant Alplanalp, my radio operator. Unfortunately a sad reason for such an ideal flight,' he babbled on. 'Oh, how sad I was to hear the news on the radio, and thanked my lucky stars that I had landed

at Dübendorf and not at Kloten. Almost the same, isn't it, Chief?'

'I don't think so,' the Chief answered.

'But, Chief, I thought Zürich was what counted.'

He looked desperately round to find somebody who might support him. The cold eyes of Sir Douglas rested on Toto.

'Is *this* the little Italian?' he asked the Chief, remembering Archie's last letter.

'Oh, you know me, you have heard about me. I speak English very well, yes?'

'Yes, I've heard about you from my son.'

'Oh, you're Archie's father,' he called out, and walked towards Sir Douglas holding out his hand with a flourish. 'I am the one who asked the Air Force plane to join the search. Isn't that so, Albert?'

'Almost,' Sturzenegger smiled, amused.

'Thanks for the suggestion,' Sir Douglas said. 'Now briefly, Lieutenant Sturzenegger, the weather is improving and soon we will be able to take off.'

'And what about me?' Toto asked.

'We will call you when we are ready to take off.'

Dr. Parpan felt that Sir Douglas was probably irritated by the Italian's endless chatter. He accompanied him to the door and Toto was outside it before he knew what had happened.

'*Abh, Mio Mio!*' He was just about to pronounce one of his terrible curses when the others besieged him, longing to hear about his experiences. They were eager for him to take their minds off Huxton. Toto was pleased: he loved to be admired, and a halo of glory shone round his black, curly head.

In Flying Control they were sticking little flags into the map on the wall to divide the territory to be searched, and

arranging for contacts and the collection of reports by the relay station. At the same time Toto was glorying in his own importance, and reporting to the others.

'Yes, I have had great luck—each piz had its own cloud, and I sprang from one to another like a fox. I have observed and felt the air not only with my instruments, but with my seat, with my nose, with my whole body. I was shaken rather badly, but I liked it as I was going fast and things kept on happening.'

'Near Glärnish I saw Svea far below—I was so very high—over 12,000 feet. And then one single swoop to Zürich—and then the beautiful thermal currents over the big city were wonderful, especially over the railway sidings and the station.' Toto clicked his tongue in appreciation.

'Then I see two airfields—one very large and the other not so very large. At the not so very large, many, many aeroplanes are lined up as if on parade. I think I have a lot of time and must go down a little to investigate. And I circle and circle over the field, and forget to look at the altitude meter. I realize this too late, but I think I can get height over the town very easily. I see little men all wearing the same suits. Oh, military, I think. One can't distinguish one from the other—all make the same movements—all think the same—that is very funny to see. When I have seen enough I want to fly away—but nothing doing, I can't make contact with anything that might take me up. Nothing now can help but the good strong wind-instruments of the military band. So I land on the airfield.'

'And then?' The others, who had been listening with a mixture of respect and amusement, urged him on.

'Yes, and then? A lot of flying soldiers come running towards me—I think *"Verboten"*, *"Verboten"*, *"Verboten"* to

land on military airfields—jump out of my "Weihe", lift arms to surrender, calling "Italiano! Italiano!" I never could tell in Switzerland if that helps or harms, so I try. Two soldiers march left and right of me, and the others follow us and all say, "*Kommandantura*".

'Now I think I am going to be shot because I have seen so many secret planes like jet fighters from close range. But not at all, the commanding officer was wonderful. I told him I came from the Youth meeting at Samedan—for the goal flight, and he almost kissed me.

' "European Glider Pilots' Rally," he called out, and telephoned everybody to come and look at me. It was very friendly, and I told him that I had really wanted to land at Kloten—and because they were all such very good friends I suggested that they should tow me up again and no one should say a word—and I fly over to Kloten. But that almost finished our friendship. "Honesty is the best policy," the commanding officer shouted, so very loudly that I stayed, and they gave me nice food and drink and I sent a telegram. They even telephoned Kloten where my transport was waiting for me and asked them to come and fetch me. Nice people, weren't they?'

'Very nice.'

'And the transport took ages and ages. So they invited me to dinner and we drank Neuenburger wine and they made speeches all about me, and then the commanding officer drank "to brotherhood" with me, and later all the other officers, too, and then we allied Switzerland with Italy. They did not let me go and I simply telephoned: "Axle bent!" and slept in an excellent bed.

'This morning we hear about poor Huxton on the radio. Why did he have to fly to Milan? I was so very sad that I did

not even feel my aching head. I had only one thought: how to help. He is my comrade, my brother. They understood my worry and promised me the reconnaissance plane, with radio. So now I can save Huxton, and I did not land for nothing at Dübendorf, although I really hate the military.'

Schübiger, Galloway and Crutton returned from Poschiavo with the wreckage of the 'Gull'. Toto immediately interrupted his story and helped the others to unload the trailer.

So that was Huxton's beautiful 'Gull'! They stood staring at the entangled beams, struts and stays, at the torn canvas and slack cables. The stick leaned sideways, dead and lifeless, and the right wing was missing. The left wing was buckled into a shapeless mess. Only the rudder was undamaged and the British colours on it shone bright and new.

They looked at the wreckage in silence, glanced surreptitiously at Sir Douglas who, with set face, was inspecting each part carefully. They copied Sir Douglas's self-restraint, played with the controls, lifted parts of the wreckage for closer inspection. Everything smelled of wood, glue and lacquer.

'A fine mess,' Schübiger commented.

'Couldn't be worse,' Jürgen answered thoughtlessly.

'Good thing Huxton jumped for it,' was Turli's opinion.

'Yes, very good.' Everybody assented politely, but wondered secretly if it might not have been better and quicker the other way.

Nobody cared about their own Goal flights any longer, or worried about the number of points they might have gained. They only thought about Huxton and threw shy glances at his father who talked to Galloway and Crutton as if he were trying to comfort *them*.

The weather was clearing. Although fat clouds were still hanging like cotton wool around the summits and flanks of the mountains, they were beginning to move. They rolled and merged into each other, rose into the sky, sank into the valleys, but slowly and reluctantly they cleared little blue patches in the sky.

The Chief ordered his Piper to be warmed up, and Capt. Obstalden and Sturzenegger, followed by Turli, Jürgen, Toto and the radio operator, walked to their machines. As soon as the Press photographers heard the roar of the engines they came rushing out from the restaurant. They tried to photograph everybody and everything, but nobody took any notice, except for Toto, who lent leisurely against the wing of the reconnaissance plane, smiled nonchalantly and let himself be photographed from all angles.

The clouds finally dispersed over the Bernina and it was possible to take off. Once again the pilots revved their engines and then taxied to the end of the runway. The Chief and Sir Douglas were first. Capt. Obstalden, Turli and Jürgen followed. The last one to take off was the reconnaissance plane which, compared with the other two, seemed like a giant as it raced along the runway.

There was only a short time left before the light would fade. Would it be enough to find Huxton? Those left behind discussed anxiously Archie's chances.

FROM JÜRGEN'S LETTER TO HIS FATHER

Samedan, 16 July.
At Night.

. . . and now we sit here and wait. No one has gone to bed—it wouldn't have been any good as it would have been impossible to sleep. You wouldn't be able to sleep either if Mami, Marie, Amelie, or I, were in danger, would you? I enclose a newspaper cutting: 'Son of English General missing in mountains during Glider Rally.' Idiotic headlines. 'Son of General' sounds so silly. It would have sounded much better had they simply called him Archie Huxton. But you must read the clipping or you won't understand my letter. Uncle Kurt was one of the first to offer to help. Only he and a reconnaissance plane which Toto brought from Dübendorf were allowed to take part in the search. Coquelle who arrived from Birrfeld in a tug was too late. Well, Uncle Kurt asked me and Turli to accompany him. Just before we left, the wreckage of Huxton's Gull arrived. It was a very sad sight but it made it quite clear at least that Archie had jumped for it.

The Chief and Sir Douglas had guessed roughly where Archie should have come down. We were to search section by section. You can't imagine what a wonderful pilot Uncle Kurt is. You're aware of it as soon as he gets into the machine. Everything seems so simple. Even flying with him 2 feet from a rocky precipice wouldn't worry me in the least. And the Chief soon showed us that he's not bad either. The reconnaissance plane was too fast for that sort of

job. It couldn't do the detailed work that we wanted. We saw it race over the Paulügle glacier, and later it flew high above us to see what we were up to.

As soon as we had left Berninahäuser behind us, Uncle Kurt began the search. Turli and I were stationed at the windows. One really needed to have eyes like a hawk. After all, Uncle Kurt's plane averages 120 to 140 m.p.h., and even flying at low throttle or gliding he was still shifting at over 60 m.p.h. That doesn't sound much compared with commercial or military planes, but it seemed a terrific speed when one was racing along close to the ground or level with a rock wall. But we got used to it and developed a technique by which we saw, as it were, in advance. The thing was to look at a certain place before one got there and then keep it in view until it had been left behind. That's how we picked out a party climbing the Piz Minor. They looked as if they were searching for Archie. But although we pryed into every hole and corner, we didn't catch a glimpse of him.

Shortly after 8 p.m. we watched the Piper flying east of Poschiavo. We noticed that she was circling between two summits. Uncle Kurt raced towards her at full speed. But careful as he was, and in spite of all his skill, he flew well above the Chief. He banked steeply so that we, too, could look into the gully.

Although it was almost dark, I could see a white patch just next to a vertical drop. I tapped Uncle Kurt on the shoulder and pointed to it. The Piper was still circling over the spot so that we thought that it must have found something interesting. I remembered that Archie was wearing a white overall when he started. So if he was lying on his parachute it might be difficult to distinguish him. In any case we were too high to be able to see clearly.

Then the Piper flew out of the gully and seemed to mount in our direction. Uncle Kurt flew towards her and as we passed it we could see the Chief pointing downwards. Uncle Kurt signalled that he had understood and dived into the gully. He searched every nook and corner, then suddenly I discovered Archie on his parachute. He was lying completely still—but I thought I saw him wave. We couldn't possibly be overheard or overlooked, and in a desperate position like his it was natural that he should give some sign of life. I do want to believe that he did wave—that he is alive. I'm quite sure of it—otherwise I couldn't be writing about him like this.

Then we flew out of the gully. It appeared that the Chief was waiting for us, because he was flying to and fro over the valley. We therefore made a point of crossing his path and when we did Uncle Kurt nodded to him in confirmation. At this moment the reconnaissance plane came rushing towards us, banked steeply over the gully and threw a small parachute down—concentrated food and bandages, as we were told later on.

Then he set his course for Samedan and we followed. We landed at 8.30 p.m. when it was getting pretty dark. We were not sure whether we could feel glad or not.

Immediately after the landing, Archie's father, Uncle Kurt and the Chief locked themselves into Flying Control and no one was allowed to disturb them. We were all very angry because we felt we could have been of use or at least taken part in the rescue expedition. After all, Archie was our friend and this was something which concerned everybody belonging to the Rally. But they didn't want us, because they felt only professional guides should take part in the rescue. It's a pity, because we would have liked to show that

we can do more than just fly, and that the idea of a united Europe can work in practice.

I'm going to stop now. I'll tell you another time about my drive to Rheinfelden. Turli put up a wonderful show although he didn't reach his goal. I only hope that Archie is still alive and all ends well. At the moment we are feeling very depressed. Nothing is worse than sitting around doing nothing.

Love to you all,
Yours,
Jürgen.

Archie was still drifting between consciousness and unconsciousness. Time had lost all meaning for him and dreams and reality had become blurred into one. Feverishly he hovered between life and death.

He would imagine that he was on a beautiful flight over a sea of mountains. He was circling silently, through the light of the warming sun, carried higher and higher by a stream of rising air.

Sometimes he felt himself waking from a deep sleep underneath shady leaves of a palm tree on the border of an oasis. Around him, over the open and endless desert, the sun was beating down mercilessly and making the air shiver. His 'Gull', silhouetted sharply against the horizon lay embedded in the sand. He could easily have gone to her but he felt so cool and comfortable that he shirked the walk across the hot sand. He simply couldn't expose himself to the shimmering heat but preferred to listen to the restful murmur of the little brook, from which a cool breeze ruffled his hair. It was delicious to know that the brook was so near.

A little later he found himself surrounded by towering mountains which made him gasp and reach for air, and the urge to get up and run away became irresistible, but an agonizing pain forced him down again. Instead of just falling back on to the ground he felt himself dropping into an endless abyss. His screams shattered the silence and arrested his fall. Above him the parachute unfolded, in its full whiteness, and he slipped back into the darkness.

Then wave after wave of aeroplanes swooped towards him in ordered formations. The air was filled with the rhythmic humming of their engines. The noise, the speed and the storm whipped up by their propellers produced an incredible inferno. But he was not in the least frightened. He pulled himself up a little and waved to them. He could see that the pilots did not intend him any harm. They came to visit him because he was ill and was unable to fly. He was convinced that he recognized the Frenchman, the Finn, the crazy Italian, the tired Dutchman—all his friends had come along to entertain him and show him that they thought of him wherever he was. He could lie back again in peace and go to sleep.

When he woke he was blinded by a penetrating light which, he thought, was sunlight, but soon it vanished, and slowly he got used to the darkness again. He sat up and saw strange people doing strange things but he could not think who they were. They bent over him and felt his leg and someone held his hand. Was the doctor on his rounds? He could not feel any pain—he was going to tell them that there was nothing wrong with him. But then he realized that he wasn't really lying in his room—that he was out in the open. Then someone else bent over him and his face took on the shape of someone he knew, of someone very dear and

near to him. Yes—it was his father. He could hear his voice but he couldn't understand what he said. When he tried to lift his head nearer to the familiar face he felt a steady hand supporting him.

'Here I am, old boy.' These words were clear to him. So Dad had come after all. Archie shook his head slowly:

'But that wasn't our arrangement,' he whispered.

Then he felt himself being picked up and swaying gently; he was carried away. His father walked beside him.

Nobody was allowed to visit Archie. The nurse withheld all information, and nobody knew anything except that his left leg had a compound fracture. It was also known that the transport down the mountain had been extremely difficult. It had needed all the skill of the professional guides to carry the unconscious boy down to the valley. Now he lay in the local hospital. He was alive. Everybody sighed with relief.

But the chief surgeon of the hospital was not at all satisfied with Archie's condition. He was very weak—his breathing was irregular and he was in a feverish delirium. He had lost a great deal of blood and was suffering from exposure and shock.

The surgeon was unable to perform the necessary operation until Huxton's general state of health had improved. By every means available the doctor tried to instil strength into Huxton's well-trained and muscular body. His life hung in the balance, and only a blood transfusion could save him. The surgeon rang Guggenberger to ask for volunteers amongst the other pilots.

They lay in the sun dozing after a sleepless night, anxious for news. It was already morning when they heard that Archie had been saved and taken to the local hospital. The

tension had relaxed. Everybody felt very tired and somehow disappointed. They wanted to see Archie, shake him by the hand, help him in some way to recover. But all doors were closed to them, and they could not find out how he really was.

The publicity and excitement over the crash of the 'General's son' had overshadowed the competition, and the Press and radio were interested in nothing else. Even the competitors themselves could not work up enough enthusiasm to discuss who had won. They were dejected and bored.

Then the Chief arrived. 'Listen to me, all of you,' he began. 'The hospital has just been on the phone to say that Archie is not doing so well, and that they can't operate at present. He has lost too much blood and is not reacting to treatment. A blood transfusion is necessary; needless to say it must be from the same blood group. Archie's is Group A —but Group zero would do as well. Which of you knows what blood group he belongs to? Which of you would like to be the donor?'

Nobody knew his blood group. Why should they? No one had ever asked them for it. But they all jumped up and surrounded the Chief. Everybody wanted to be tested, everybody wanted to be the donor. Here at last there was something they could do to help. It appealed to their heroic ideals, the thought of giving their blood so that Archie might live.

A chattering mob of excited young people followed the Chief to the hospital. Once more things seemed worth while, and life had some point and purpose.

Their enthusiasm and eagerness to help cheered the surgeon a great deal. He warmed instantly to the girl and the boys who stood in front of him; they were the embodiment of

youth and health; this if any was the blood that would help Huxton back to life and strength.

Svea, Los Passos, Van der Meulen and Coquelle were refused—they were Group B. They reluctantly left the room. Coquelle, whose heroic dream had been shattered, was slightly mollified by the thought that Svea had the same group as himself.

Turli and the Spanish brothers had Group zero. Jürgen, Pyrrhonen and Toto were the only ones who were A. The surgeon stood in front of three begging pairs of eyes.

'I have the most magnificent blood, Doctor,' Toto was boasting, 'so red, so lively, so much. When I have a nose bleed it's almost like a waterfall, and, Doctor! English blood and Italian blood?' Toto clicked his tongue. 'Oh la, la! Not bad at all, Doctor. What do you say?'

The surgeon laughed. He would have liked to use him, but Jürgen's and Pyrrhonen's eyes were equally eloquent, and he felt he could not simply dismiss them without giving them a chance.

'What am I to do? Three is too many. One is quite sufficient,' the surgeon said.

'Draw lots,' Jürgen suggested shyly.

'Good,' the surgeon agreed, 'let's draw lots.'

He took three matches—turned round—broke them into different lengths—turned round again and held his fist towards the three—'the one to pick the longest wins'.

Toto chose first, then Pyrrhonen, then Jürgen. They compared each other's matches. Jürgen had won. Happily he looked up at the surgeon.

'Immediately?' he asked.

'As quickly as possible.'

The surgeon turned to the two who had lost: 'Thank you

very much, you two.' He put his hand on Jürgen's shoulder and went with him to the operating theatre.

The others left the hospital together and strolled back to the airfield.

'Him, of all people,' Toto complained.

'*Him* is my cousin,' Turli scolded him. 'There is nothing at all wrong with him.' This was said with such aggressiveness that everybody was silenced.

As Jürgen lay on the operating table giving new life to his English friend, he felt the same happiness and satisfaction that he had felt when they were all lying in the grass two days ago. A pleasant weakness and drowsiness overcame him. Everything was simple; everything was clear. 'My life is your life,' he thought whilst looking at the restless and unconscious boy who had changed a great deal since the day before yesterday when he had stood by his 'Gull', confident of victory and well prepared for the Goal flight. His fingers picked at the blanket nervously. His cheeks were like those of a circus clown, white except for two livid red spots. The lids of his eyes twitched restlessly and his lips moved as if he were whispering his prayers. His leg, which had not yet been set or even finally bandaged, rested in an open plaster cast.

'He is going to live as I am living—he is going to feel as I am feeling—he is going to fly as we all fly.' Jürgen could feel his thoughts flowing into Archie's mind as his blood flowed into the weakened body. Then the tube was disconnected and Archie was carried out of the room. Contented and tired, Jürgen stayed behind. How good and right it all was, he thought to himself, enjoying the stillness of the white hospital room.

Jürgen only roused himself when Sir Douglas came in. Sir Douglas shook him by the hand and thanked him. He handed him a photograph. It was Archie's picture. Jürgen looked at the bright eyes, the round healthy face and the mop of rough hair. 'Thanks. Douglas Huxton' was scribbled underneath in Sir Douglas's handwriting. Jürgen felt immensely proud of it. 'Many thanks, and I do hope I was of use.'

'So do I,' answered Sir Douglas smilingly, and left the room, stooping slightly as if the last few hours had aged him.

The surgeon helped Jürgen off the high operating table and led him into a small room. A golden yellow omelette and a large glass of milk stood on the table.

'You must drink and eat a lot these next two days—eggs and milk are the best—to make up for the loss of blood. But at your age it won't take long to replenish it!'

Jürgen did feel slightly giddy, but he set to at once and found that it tasted delicious.

'I'll be able to operate on Archie very soon now,' the surgeon continued. 'Many thanks for your help. It may mean everything to Huxton and you will soon be over it.'

He walked to the door where he turned again: 'Lie down and rest. Chief Guggenberger is going to collect you in his car later on.' He waved to Jürgen and was gone.

Jürgen did not feel like lying down, but instead sat down in the deep armchair, took up an old newspaper and read: 'English General's son missing in the mountains during European Sail-plane Rally!'

Jürgen slept soundly. The Chief found him with the newspaper covering his face.

'Hallo,' the Chief called. Jürgen jumped up. 'Here you are at last! You did take a long time, didn't you? I seem to have been waiting here for ages.'

FINALE

THERE was a feverish activity going on in Flying Control. The large table was covered with slips of paper, curves, graphs, charts and dividers. Dr. Parpan was holding the slide-rule. He was in his element. With pencils and notebooks ready, Schübiger, the Chief, Dr. Hurtiger and the gentlemen of the jury stood and watched the mysterious goings-on.

Occasionally they asked leave to check a result, but it was correct every time, so they finally gave up and left all the calculations to Dr. Parpan with his slide-rule.

Everybody waited patiently—this was an incredibly complicated affair. The fairer they tried to be the more complicated the calculations became. Justice was here translated into higher mathematics. In spite of Schübiger's protest, Dübendorf was accepted as being equal to Kloten and, therefore, Toto was awarded the first prize in the Goal Flight. Coquelle was second, having reached a goal—even if it was not the right one. Then it had to be decided whether the thunderstorm which he had described was really of such an extent that it was impossible for him to avoid it on his way to Belpmoos?

The Chief asked Coquelle into the office and questioned him directly:

'I want you to be honest with me. What really made you fly to Birrfeld? The thunderstorm or Svea Lindquist?'

Coquelle blushed. He was very angry with the Chief for bringing his sacred love so callously into the open. But

nothing would make him deny it, so squaring his shoulders he said: 'Both! and, Chief, you specially warned us not to fly into thunderstorms.'

It was finally agreed that Coquelle could not have reached Belpmoos, and that Birrfeld could therefore be recognized as fulfilling the conditions of the Goal Flight. So he was officially awarded the second prize, Obstalden having merely given up his goal because he thought conditions were unsuitable. He had not been compelled to do so. He had decided on covering the longest possible distance in order to collect points, rather than aiming to reach the set goal.

The effort of Pyrrhonen to reach Altenrhein in spite of all difficulties was judged to be more in the spirit of the competition than Turli's distance-flight. The Finn could therefore claim the third prize. Svea, who was forced to land seventeen miles from Birrfeld, was placed fourth.

'But,' Dr. Parpan lifted the slide-rule significantly, 'but Obstalden flew the longest distance with the best average speed. Very cleverly he collected points, which he knew were of the greatest importance for his classification over the entire competition. Besides he almost reached Basle. I therefore pronounce', Dr. Parpan worked his slide-rule with lightning speed, 'that taking into account the formulas worked out for the entire competition, Coquelle and Obstalden have gained exactly the same number of points and that Pyrrhonen should be awarded the third prize.'

'Meaning what?' Schübiger asked.

'That we have two winners of the entire competition.'

'But that is impossible.' Hurtiger was quite definite.

The Chief jumped up.

'I suggest that they cut for it,' he shouted.

'But how?'

'Quite simple. Look! I shall judge them on a landing. They shall get up by winch, fly a right hand and the pilot who lands nearest the target will have won. That should liven things up a bit. They all seem half asleep.'

There was unanimous approval.

Coquelle sat down diffidently on the grass next to Svea. She seemed different since she had returned from Birrfeld. She was absent-minded, did not laugh with him any more, and had not once called him 'Gaston'. He simply could not get close to her. She lay in her deck-chair with her arms behind her head and stared at the sky.

She said nothing. She said nothing because she could not get over the fact that Coquelle had reached HER goal and not his own. She did not believe his thunderstorm story for one moment. No, he simply followed her, waited until she had been forced to give up and then exhibited his superior skill and knowledge. She could never have reached Birrfeld even had Coquelle flown to Belpmoos, but at least nobody would have landed at her goal. Most likely the seventeen miles she had lacked would have been judged differently.

She was simply furious! First it was Toto—then that dreary Van der Meulen—and now it was Gaston—her Gaston who had robbed her of success.

When Coquelle had arrived to collect her from Lenzburg she hadn't been a bit pleased to see him. Grinning all over his face, and yet somehow shyly, he had tried to console her. And she had made no effort to see the nicest side of him, but had eyes only for his youthful uncouthness. He just wasn't grown up! Once this idea had become rooted in her mind she could not dislodge it. But it was really only when Coquelle had taken off from Birrfeld—amid the admiration and en-

thusiasm of the flying-school pupils—that disappointment in her own failure had turned to fury against her Coquelle. She would return to Sweden empty-handed, without a single trophy, with not even the smallest prize for her country. What was Per going to think of her? Per who had such a high opinion of her skill as a pilot, Per who was a man, her man—and who alone knew how to make her happy and sure of herself. She suddenly found herself longing for him with all her heart.

'Come and fetch me. It would make me happy. Love, Svea.'

'Unfortunately impossible. Can't take leave. Stop. Per.'

That would be the answer to her call for help! And here was Coquelle trailing about after her like a dog. She was sick and tired of him and the entire set-up at Samedan.

Coquelle felt helpless against her silence. He felt physically sick—as if he were in a strait-jacket. Why didn't she talk to him, why did she only sit and stare into the sky? Then because he couldn't bear the silence any longer he asked her: 'Do you know what the Chief wanted me for?'

Svea only turned to him and shrugged her shoulders.

'He confirmed Birrfeld officially as the goal for my flight.'

Svea grasped the arms of her deck-chair.

'That means that I've still got a chance to be first in the entire competition. Isn't it marvellous?'

'Very nice.'

'Aren't you happy about it?'

'Of course, who wouldn't be happy about it?'

'You're so strange,' Coquelle said in a puzzled tone.

'Do you think so? I think it's tremendously wonderful that you have achieved it. Are you satisfied now?'

'Svea, you are not happy about it.'

'I would have been far happier had you landed at Belpmoos, your own goal.'


551

'Wasn't possible because of the storm.'

'And if you had by-passed it?'

'Who knows where I would have landed? As it was I had a definite goal—Birrfeld and you!'

'I wasn't at Birrfeld.'

'But I thought you would be there. I was almost sure of it. I would have been very glad for you had you been there when I arrived.'

'How very kind of you.' There was sarcasm in her voice which robbed it of any sincerity.

'Svea, what is wrong? I don't understand, you seem so strange.'

'You've said that before.'

What in heaven's name was wrong with her? Where was her jolly way of talking to him? Where was the understanding between them, their close relationship—which had been implicit without ever having been mentioned. He stood in front of Svea and looked straight into her eyes.

'Svea, what on earth have I done to hurt you?'

'What makes you think you have hurt me?'

'I don't know, but there must be some reason for the change in you.'

'I didn't know I'd changed.'

She wished Coquelle wouldn't look at her like a whipped spaniel. Why didn't he simply turn and leave her alone? Per would have done that, she was certain. It infuriated her and made her despise Coquelle. Why am I so cruel?' she asked herself.

'Could you still call me Gaston?'

'Do you think that would help you?'

Why was he being so persistent? Surely he could see that she simply didn't feel like that any more.

'Do you think you could still call me Gaston?' he repeated.

Svea got up without saying a word. Somehow she had to end this futile conversation.

'I would like to know where I stand,' he added meekly, almost in a whisper.

'You know nothing, Coquelle. Nothing at all. And because you are so ignorant you stand there like . . .' She was going to say 'like a fool', but she stopped herself in time.

'Stand there like what, Svea?'

Svea turned to leave him, but he stopped her.

'Why don't you say it. Why don't you?'

'I don't know why I should say anything.'

They stood facing each other and didn't know what else to say.

'Svea, please say something,' he begged.

She made a helpless movement with her hand.

'Coquelle, it's quite likely that my fiancé is coming here to fetch me.' She avoided his eyes.

'You are engaged?'

'Yes, Coquelle.'

'And I—and I—Svea—I thought—I believed you loved me.'

She put her hand on his arm: 'You are very sweet, Gaston, but still very young. I'm afraid I hadn't taken it so seriously.'

He longed for the earth to open suddenly and swallow him up. He covered his face with his hand. Great shudders passed through him. 'Svea' was all he could say, 'Svea'. Then he turned round and ran away. Svea saw him disappear behind the hangars.

Why had she done it? She hadn't enjoyed hurting him, but he had deserved some punishment for his ridiculous flight to Birrfeld.

TARGET LANDING

THE wind blew freshly against the Muottas Muraigl as if there had never been that calm, still day, that heat, thunder and rain. The wire stays of the wind-sock played their tattoo again, and the flags of the European nations fluttered in the wind as if snatching the last chance to justify their existence; just as on the opening day Dr. Hurtiger's bright woollen tie fluttered in the breeze.

Schübiger was delighted with the average results. Dr. Parpan had already locked up his Met. Office and packed away his maps and meteorological instruments, and the Chief's wooden hammer lay, peacefully adorned by a garland of flowers, on the table in Flying Control. This was Svea's idea.

A white finishing-line with little red flags had been stretched behind the hangars. The winch was manned.

For the last time the 'Kites' were lined up for the start, their right wings resting on the ground, their left stretching greedily into the air.

Young people from the village, helpers and a few friends, sat watching in front of the hangars. Sir Douglas stood alone near Flying Control; he had promised Archie to describe it all to him in detail. Archie was going to live. The operation had been successful and now he lay in his bed in the hospital with his leg in plaster of paris, waiting for the results. Pain and worry were things of the past.

The target landing was going to be terrific fun. It was a game which would test the skill of every competitor. Spectators and pilots alike were looking forward to the thrill. Van

der Meulen was one of the gayest amongst those taking part. The target landing was going to be like a dot on the i and would free him of his mountain fear forever. He climbed into his glider, fingering the controls with almost sensual pleasure. Toto talked to Svea.

'Oh, I am going to do it, this childish point-landing. You'll be surprised. Like this.' He put two index fingers together so that they were almost touching. He strutted about with dignified affability, giving a word of advice here, an encouraging remark there, and condescendingly gave Turli a few tips on making victory a certainty. He cheered Svea for a moment and made her forget the picture of Coquelle sitting at the controls, expressionless and silent, his eyes on the ground.

'Wire place of arrival and time. Stop. Will fetch you. Stop. Per.'

She had found this telegram on her breakfast table in the morning. In spite of it—in spite of the fact that she was feeling happy and wasn't angry any longer, she longed to quieten her conscience by seeing Coquelle looking happy as well, but he had avoided her all day and had not taken the slightest notice of her attempts at friendship. The others thought he was behaving rather pompously, sitting there alone in his glider with the look of determination on his face. They came up to him and teased him: 'Ah, look at the great champion, taking it all so seriously, just look at him!'

But Coquelle never moved a muscle.

'Come on—relax, Coquelle, laugh—look at the sun, the wind—look at me and laugh.'

Toto pulled silly grimaces at Coquelle who only bent his head lower; he wasn't going to let Toto's childish behaviour

amuse him—to have his self-imposed isolation broken into by ribald laughter. He had spent the night writing letters to Svea, but none of them could express adequately the suffering she had caused him. He tore all of them up except one which he was carrying in his coat pocket—and which he imagined them finding after it was all over. 'Svea, all happiness. I forgive you! Gaston.'

Complete self-sacrifice was the weapon for unhappy lovers. Svea was never going to be able to tear him out of her cold heart. She was never going to be able to forget him. He was going to see to that. If the Chief would only come and clear him for the take-off, he was going to show them all that he could land right on the target—but not in the way which they imagined. It wouldn't be necessary to ask for volunteers to give their blood. The bells of the entire Engadine would toll and keep on vibrating in the hearts of those who were to blame and would then be mourning him.

Then the Chief returned. He had visited Archie and reassured him that he, the Chief, was not annoyed with him.

This thought had tortured Archie ever since he had regained consciousness. He realized of course that he was partly responsible for the accident. He had ignored the Chief's warning and brought harm to the Rally and to his comrades. He felt he had to get it off his chest and apologize to the Chief. Then Guggenberger had been very kind and had made things easy for him. He had said that to warn someone was not the same thing as to forbid them. All Archie had done was to take the responsibility on himself. He had had very bad luck. If things had gone well he would have been proclaimed the victor and everybody would have congratulated him on his skill and courage.

But the Chief spoke to him as man to man; nobody should deliberately run into danger without experience; and thunder storms always spelled danger.

Then he had shaken Archie by the hand:

'I am very glad that the consequences were not more serious. And what's happened hasn't altered my mind about you. I am still convinced that you have everything that makes a first-rate pilot.' Then he left to go to the target line.

'Listen to me'—he lifted the wooden hammer which he had carefully disentangled from the flowers. 'Listen to me. We are going to measure the distance of the glider's nose from this white band, and the glider that comes to rest nearest to it has won. Except for Obstalden and Coquelle this competition is not going to alter the final results. The *Chur Recorder* is represented to-day by Herr Pfister-Furrer (the Chief indicated a well-preserved, plump man in his early forties) who has been generous enough to offer a special prize —a trip by air to Lisbon and back with two days' stay in Lisbon.' This announcement was greeted by whistles and applause. 'Show him that you are worthy of it, and good luck to you all.'

Pyrrhonen was the first to start. Exultantly he let his 'Meise' swing on the steel cable like a kite, then swooped elegantly down. Svea hardly noticed him, as she was looking over to Coquelle who was the third to take off. To see him sitting there taking no interest in his surroundings, bent over the control stick was a pitiful sight, and Svea felt sorry for him but at the same time his weakness annoyed her. However, he was really rather nice—a little too romantic, but at the same time tough and clever. There was some quality in him which none of the others possessed. She felt she ought to say a few nice words to him before he started.

Otherwise he might not do his best and that would be a waste of his gifts and courage.

She threw off her harness, Tingren helped her out of the cockpit, and she walked over to Coquelle.

'Coquelle,' she spoke gently.

Coquelle roused himself from his misery.

'Svea?' His face mirrored first surprise, then happy adoration. 'Svea?'

'Coquelle, please don't look so unhappy.'

'What?'

'You mustn't look like that. I don't like it at all.'

'Do you expect me to laugh?'

'Of course you ought to laugh. I'll be honest with you, I was simply jealous that you managed to reach Birrfeld instead of me. That was all. So now you know.'

'And your fiancé?'

'I'm afraid you'll have to get used to him.'

'But why didn't you tell me about him before?'

'Were you ever seriously intending to marry me?' Svea laughed.

'No—Yes—No—Not yet—rather—but Svea, that's an unfair question!'

'There, you see, I was under no obligation to tell you.'

'But you knew I loved you.'

'Did I ever try to stop you?'

'But, Svea, you don't love me.'

'You're a nice, sweet boy, Coquelle—and I really like you. Take that with you when you go home. Isn't that enough, Gaston?'

'Not for me, Svea.'

'Some day you will realize that it is enough, Coquelle. You have so much ahead of you. The love which you are

feeling for me to-day will belong to someone else to-morrow.'

'But, Svea!'

'But, Gaston, I almost regret having called you by your Christian name; if I had not you would never have imagined I loved you.'

'How can you possibly say such a thing!'

'Sometimes everything depends on one single word.'

Schübiger came running along: 'Coquelle, you muff, it's your turn now. Don't hold up the entire show. There is plenty of time for flirting afterwards.' Thus were they torn apart.

Turli had just landed, a yard and a half from the white line—an excellent achievement.

Parraud attached the cable. Svea waved to Coquelle. 'All the best, Gaston. I'm keeping my fingers crossed for you.'

The winch started moving and he left Svea, love and desperation behind. Steeply he rushed into the air, disconnected the cable and soared for the last time over the beautiful Engadine. But his thoughts were elsewhere. He opened the little window of his cockpit and let Svea's letter flutter into the wind. Perhaps it would fall at her feet. However, it wasn't so obliging. Far from it. Caught by the upwind of the Muottas, it fluttered ever higher and higher to sink at last with the downwind into a lonely valley. There amongst the barren stones it would be bleached by the sun and forgotten.

Coquelle banked and aimed at the white line. He felt a strange elation—a wonderful feeling of freedom. He heard once more Svea's words—your love will soon belong to another girl.

That was probably true. But she would have to be like

Svea with her black hair and her deep melodious voice—and she must call him 'Gaston' softly just like Svea.

He let his flaps out and dived towards the white line. What had he to lose? A few inches one way or the other couldn't matter. The main thing was to get close to the line —everything else would sort itself out. He hit the ground— his 'Air' skidded a few yards and came to rest. Schübiger and Parpan measured immediately. Coquelle threw back the hood.

'What's the score?' he shouted.

'Two yards,' Schübiger informed him. 'That's not quite good enough for the first prize. Obstalden managed to get half a yard nearer.'

What was half a yard? It was all the same to Coquelle. There was no getting around it, Turli had won the first prize. But he himself had put up a good fight right through the competition and that was the important thing.

As soon as he got out of his glider he ran towards Turli and shook him by both hands. He congratulated him with such sincerity that everybody felt a moment's admiration for him.

Meanwhile, Svea was already approaching the finishing line. She hovered, almost stationary, close to the ground and finally sat down like a tired crow. The 'Weihe' hardly moved and her nose stood exactly over the finishing line. Nobody could do any better!

'Wonderful, Svea! Quite wonderful! You really have deserved it.' The Chief shook her enthusiastically by the hand. That would make up a little for the damage caused by Toto and Van der Meulen, he thought to himself.

Impatiently Toto jumped around his 'Weihe'. To be last was asking too much of his restless nature. But the fact that

he had to watch the others making the most frightful mistakes was simply unbearable. Svea's landing was really nothing. Just child's play for him. And then this chap Van der Meulen. It was laughable how clumsily he flew. He stopped within two yards, which wasn't bad at all, but his approach had been terrible. Worse still were Los Passos who put their 'Kranich' down like a big pancake. It flopped down and sat there as if nothing on earth could move it. One and a half yards short—not bad either—but driving a bus was not the same thing as piloting a glider. At last he could take off. They signalled him to hurry up. Pyrrhonen, a really decent chap, helped him. He did at least know how to fly even if he had landed three yards from the finishing line.

'Hurry—hurry—hurry.' Why was everybody always in such a hurry? The winch had already started and he still hadn't got his hood up. Where the hell was the hood? 'The hood! The hood!' he shouted at Pyrrhonen. The moment Pyrrhonen got the hood into place he was off. Damn it all! He pulled the stick towards his stomach and at the same time kicked the rudder. The 'Weihe' skipped to the left. His hair stood on end—but on the ground they were rolling in the grass with laughter. Toto, as usual, was quite incorrigible. If they hadn't known that he was only playing the fool they might have been really alarmed about him.

Then he straightened himself out, wiped the sweat from his brow and cast off. The altimeter showed 15 feet/second gain—and so he couldn't resist flying towards the Muottas slope to be carried even higher.

'Silly fool!' Schübiger hissed.

What are we going to be treated to now? the Chief wondered, shading his eyes.

Toto soared 5,000 feet over the valley.

'He is going to stay up there for ages—he's going to test our patience' was Dr. Parpan's opinion. But the moment he had said it Toto proved him wrong.

He started with a mere five loops, perfectly executed—then three rolls to the right—three rolls to the left—and then hung perfectly still like a cross in the air.

Svea sighed, remembering those antics at the altitude test. Then Toto dipped his wing and dropped into a dive, straightened out again—climbed vertically into the cross-in-the-sky position, but this time he let himself slide backwards—rolled again and flew a complete circle on his back. It was fascinating, and so arresting that everybody had forgotten the purpose of Toto's flight. But he himself suddenly seemed to remember, and down he came in a vertical dive straight at the spectators. When he was fairly low the dive turned into a spin. Was this just his usual fun and acrobatics or had something gone wrong? Los Passos and Arada gripped each other by the hand; Van der Meulen gazed with wide open mouth; the Chief thought, 'What damned foolery, this is really going too far!' But Toto caught his glider in time, pushed the flaps out and shot straight at the crowd again.

Should they run for it? Should they stay and trust him? They trusted him, and he justified the compliment by taking in the flaps and racing just past their heads. They were certain that he would never make a target-landing out of this. It was impossible at that speed. And they were right. Toto overshot the finishing line and came to rest at the very end of the field.

The hood flew off—Toto jumped out, waving his arms and running crazily towards the hangars. Breathlessly he jumped up and down in front of the Chief.

'Dear Chief—dear Chief, the next finishing line must be

much further away. It was much too near—do you get me?'

'It wasn't the target that was too near. It was you who flew past it!'

'That's one of the mistakes all big people make. Why worry about this ridiculous finishing line? The fun only begins when one is past it.' He put his hand patronizingly on the Chief's shoulder. 'All the same—I showed you how it could be done. Although I say it myself, I flew beautifully. And simply for your entertainment.'

Everybody had grouped themselves round Toto admiringly. Even Schübiger had to admit that it had been a first-class show of acrobatic skill. Toto was in his element—he was being admired—he was the centre of attraction. He was going to make the best of it!

'Attention, attention,' he called out. 'Now we all go to the restaurant and drink to our wonderful Chief! Our Chief. Hurray, hurray, hurray!' The Chief was lifted, with everybody's help, on to his and Turli's shoulders. In the midst of a deafening noise of cheers, laughter and shouts, he swayed towards the restaurant. Svea walked next to Coquelle.

'I'd love to give you my prize,' she whispered to him.

'Are you so keen to get to your fiancé?'

'Don't *you* want to get to Lisbon?'

Coquelle did not come from a wealthy home. His father was a council secretary somewhere near Calais. What chance had he of ever getting to Lisbon?

He imagined France vanishing beneath him as he flew towards the Pyrenees—he saw the sea, a harbour and a town bathed in the southern sun. He saw deep blue sky—palm trees—white streets and picturesque southern people—a colourful life—a new country.

'I do long for Lisbon—I do long for the South. Thank you

very much, Svea, dear. I only hope you will never forget me.'

'I shall try to,' she laughed.

'You know,' she continued, 'we flyers always meet again. Maybe in America, Asia, Australia, or here in Switzerland—the open air is our link, it has no borders and it is our world.'

'Where do you think we are likely to meet again?'

'Perhaps during the next Olympics? Would you like to?'

'And what about your fiancé?'

'You'll have to fight him, no doubt.'

Coquelle pulled a face and kept silent.

'Again that sullen face. A flyer mustn't only be able to get over mountains and seas, but also over a nice fellow like Per. Aren't I right, Gaston?'

So 'Per' was the name of the lucky one, Coquelle thought.

FROM JÜRGEN'S LETTER TO HIS FATHER

Zürich, 20 July.

. . . that's how things happened. They made a lot of fuss about us, and the President of the Swiss aeroclub in person presented the prizes. Svea, who had won the first prize at the target landing (a trip to Lisbon by Swissair), gave it away to Coquelle. Isn't it fantastic? So Coquelle left to-day with Uncle Kurt and will be back in three days' time. Strange that he also flew with Uncle Kurt from Paris the other day. There was a most touching farewell between Coquelle and Svea. I always thought something was going on between those two! Svea is a grand girl—amazingly friendly, in spite of the fact that Toto and Van der Meulen messed up two competitions for her.

And now for the most exciting news: Archie's father has invited me to England. When Archie is well again we two want to go to a gliding camp. Isn't that terrific? I can't tell you how much I'm looking forward to it.

You know, Dad, we all felt quite strange when the whole thing suddenly finished and everybody went off to different corners of Europe. Only then did we realize what good friends we had all become.

Turli is not entirely happy about his first prize. He would have loved to win just one of the competitions. However, the President did say when he presented him with the prize that an overall average was of greater value than a single brilliant performance. His prize was therefore rated as the first of the first—the victor of the entire Rally. We both thought this 'a lot of eyewash', and a brilliant record is always more exciting,

but the President was a nice elderly gentleman and probably looked at it differently. What do you think about it?

In any case much more fuss was made over Coquelle's duration record. But Turli's photograph was on the front page of the *Suisse Sportive* and underneath was written 'Swiss persistence leads to victory'.

Uncle Kurt is naturally very proud of him. Coquelle, Pyrrhonen and Toto shared the second prize. And Toto has got a little bit all to himself. He has won the hearts of everybody. 'The born flyer'—'The Clown of the Air'—'The pilot with the heart of gold', and lots more nonsense like that. Why do people love this foolery more than Turli's persistency?

Dr. Hurtiger's farewell speech was really nice. I tried very hard to understand all he said. He didn't get lost in vague generalities as he did in his opening speech. This time he said that he, too, wanted to become a pilot, and had entered his name for a gliding course at Birrfeld. Only when he knew how to fly could he talk to us as equals, understand us and speak for us. Then he said something about gliding knowing no borders, and about its closeness to nature encouraging a peaceful frame of mind which was universal and not only European. Europe, Asia, and America had their different climates—but the Air was the same everywhere. In it we all breathed, in it we all flew, and in it we were all equal. He said lots of things like this and I thought that everything he said was right. Don't you think so?

It's a little difficult to get used to Zürich again. The things that have happened have been simply too exciting and wonderful. I just can't find words for it, and I'm always frightened of exaggerating, but it was like dreaming of rows of wonderful Sundays and then waking to the grey routine of

weekdays. Everything was wonderful: even the excitement about Archie. I think we were all aware of this spirit of belonging together. How can I express it? Even the word that is the same in most languages—the word 'comradeship'—doesn't really explain what we felt.

And I did not even fly with them. I was only a helper. And yet everybody treated me as an equal, everybody took me for granted. And the Engadine. You are right, Dad, it is the most beautiful valley in the world.

Now I still have another ten days here. And to-morrow I am driving to Birrfeld. Perhaps I can do one of the flights for my silver 'C', the Duration, Distance or Altitude flight. I don't think I'll have time for all three; besides it would be too much to hope that the weather could last. There's a rumour that the Chief is going to be appointed chief instructor at Birrfeld. Wouldn't that be terrific!

In a few days I shall be with you again. But I have a sure feeling that it won't be long before our hills will be free and open again for gliding. And then, Dad, we can fly together, you and I.

Love from Jürgen

THE END

FOR THE ARMCHAIR TRAVELLER

PAUL A. ZAHL **Flamingo Hunt**

Flamingo Hunt is an authentic account of a scientist's adventurous search in remote Bahama island waters for the nesting grounds of the pink Flamingo. Written with warmth and humour, this is more than a book about birds, for it pictures a world of sea, sun, and the exotic life that inhabits this island world. *10s. 6d. net*

CAROLINE GUILD **Rainbow in Tahiti**

There is charm and gaiety in this high-spirited and amusing book, which captures the sunshine of Tahiti, most glamorous of the South Sea Islands, where the Guilds lived for many years. *10s. 6d. net*

J. FRANK DOBIE

'That well-known chronicler of the unfenced world'

The Ben Lilly Legend

Ben Lilly was known as the master sign-reader of the Rockies and was, perhaps, the greatest bear-hunter in history after David Crockett. Frank Dobie here gives stories of Lilly's prowess as a hunter and goodness as a man – the stories which built up the Ben Lilly Legend. *15s. net*

The Voice of the Coyote

In writing of the coyote, wild wolf of the prairie, the author has produced a thoroughly charming nature book that is informative, wholly delightful, and well worth reading. *15s. net*

Tongues of the Monte:

THE MEXICO I LOVE

Two thousand miles by mule, crossing the Sierra Madre, traversing arid mesas and threading passes over mountains to the grey desert Bolsón de Mapiní. In telling of his adventures, Frank Dobie captures the land and its people. *15s. net*

HAMMOND  ***HAMMOND***