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SCHOOL CELEBRATION.

LANGLEY DAY, MAY 6.

Day in Celebration of the Invention of Flying.
By Dr. F. H. Hayward.

[It was on May 6, 1896, that the practicability of mechanical flight by heavier-than-air machines was proved. This day is kept as Langley Day in America, and is here taken over. For details about Langley see Discourse Notes. The following pictures (among others) should be available: "The Lament for Icarus" (Draper), "Perseus and Andromeda" (Leighton), photograph of the first successful flight (reproduced in Libby's *Introduction to the History of Science*). The chief features of the Celebration will be: Two panegyrics of man's power over nature—one by **Aleister Crowley**, the other a fragment of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*; the passage from *Job* in which the Almighty challenges man to unravel nature's secrets and to imitate nature's marvels; partial replies to this challenge; finally stress on inner moral wisdom as something even finer than material achievement. The Discourse will be a history of aerial navigation. D = Director (master or mistress); S = Speaker (master or mistress); M₁, M₂ = two other masters or mistresses.]

Instrumental music, which dies down as the following lines are recited:—

M₁.—In the years of the primal course, in the dawn of terrestrial birth,
Man mastered the mammoth and horse, and man was
the lord of the Earth;
Pause.
He made him a hollow skin from the heart of a holy tree,
He compassed the earth therein; and man was the
lord of the Sea;

Pause.

He controlled the vigour of steam, he harnessed the lightning for hire,
He drove the celestial team, and man was the lord of the Fire;

Pause.

Deep-mouthed from their thrones deep-seated, the choirs of the aeons declare,
The last of the demons defeated, for man is the lord of the Air.

Instrumental music rises into a few bars of loud triumph; then:—

M₂. declaims:—

The lightning is [man's] slave; heaven's utmost deep Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils *me*, I have *none*.

Triumphant music as before.

D.—We this day keep in memory the American scientist Langley, who showed the way to the conquest of the air by the aeroplane.

Curtain is withdrawn, and reveals a reproduction of the Smithsonian tablet showing Langley seated observing the flight of birds and (above them) the aeroplane of which he was prophetically dreaming. This picture may be an exact portrait, or may be generalized to stand for more men than one.

S. *Discourse Notes.*—Yes, look at that man. He is watching the birds, and asking himself how he can make an aeroplane that will fly as well as they do. His name is Langley (1834-1906); he died — years ago. Did I say his name was Langley? His name might be any of these (*produces plainly printed list of pioneers with dates attached*): --Leonardo da Vinci, etc.

For ages men have wished they could fly, and the early history of most nations contains stories of flying men. The Greeks

has the story of Perseus and his flying horse, of Mercury with wings on his feet, of Daedalus and his son Icarus. (*Pictures.*) I wonder whether there was ever a real man Icarus who tried to fly and fell in the water! Certain it is that many men made, in later ages, leaps from high places, hoping that the wings or apparatus they had made would bear them up; when they broke their necks they were generally judged to have been in league with evil spirits. (Simon the Magician at Rome, a Saracen at Constantinople, and English monk Oliver of Malmesbury, Danti at Perugia, etc.)

Some famous believers in flying were Roger Bacon, the persecuted English Franciscan Monk; Leonardo da Vinci, the most versatile man in history; and Francis Bacon.

Balloons, Zeppelins, aeroplanes. (*Discuss.*)

Discourse should close on the note of *humility*. Man has achieved great things, but he has not yet achieved the conquest over himself, over his brutal passions, his selfishness, etc. To be very proud, even of fine things, like scientific inventions, may be a source of peril. We have seen how the Germans, proud of their previous successes in war and peace, lost their heads in 1914. That is what the *Book of Job* says towards the end. A mysterious voice comes out of the whirlwind challenging man's knowledge and power. Well, in these days some of the questions from the whirlwind can be answered rather effectually, but the spirit of them cannot! Man has not yet attained "wisdom in the inward parts."

D. reads *Job, xxxviii, 1-35* (all the best passages; omit passages that weaken the rhetoric). When verse 35, "Canst thou send forth lightnings. . . .," has been read, M₂. bursts in with:—

The lightning is [man's] slave; heaven's utmost deep
Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep

They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on!
The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,

Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils *me*, I have
none.

D. resumes *Job, xxxviii, 36, impressively*:—

Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?
And who hath given understanding to the mind?

Pause. Then resumes the original tone:—

Who can number the clouds. . . .
Doth the eagle mount up at thy command
And make her nest on high?

M₁. *Bursts in with:—*

Deep-mouthed from their thrones deep-seated, the
choirs of the aeons declare,
The last of the demons defeated, for man is the lord of
the Air.

D. *resumes impressively:—*

Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?
Or who hath given understanding to the mind?

Man setteth an end to darkness
And searcheth out to the furthest bound
The stones of thick darkness and of the shadow of
death.

He cutteth out passages among the rocks;
And his eye seeth every precious thing.
He bindeth the streams that they trickle not;
And the thing that is hid bringeth he forth to light.

But where shall wisdom be found?
And where is the place of understanding?

Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom:
And to depart from evil is understanding.

M₁.—Arise, O man, in thy strength, the kingdom is thine to
inherit

Till the high gods witness at length that man is the
lord of his spirit.

M₂.—Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul,
Whose nature is its own divine control.

Where all things flow to all as rivers to the sea

Familiar acts are beautiful through love;

Labour and pain, and grief, in life's green grove

Sport like tame beasts: none knew how gentle they
could be!

[Man's] will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,
A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
So as a tempest-wingéd ship, whose helm
LOVE RULES through waves which dare not over-
whelm,
Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

M₁. *Recites all five stanzas of **Aleister Crowley's** poem. Music as before; this passes into the music of the following hymn:—*

*All sing:—We have not wings, we cannot soar . . .
(Longfellow, No. 87 in *Hymns of Modern Thought*.)*

[We have ventured to reproduce Mr. Crowley's poem without his permission, confident that it would have been granted.—Editors.]