
“WE”



By

CHARLES A. LINDBERGH

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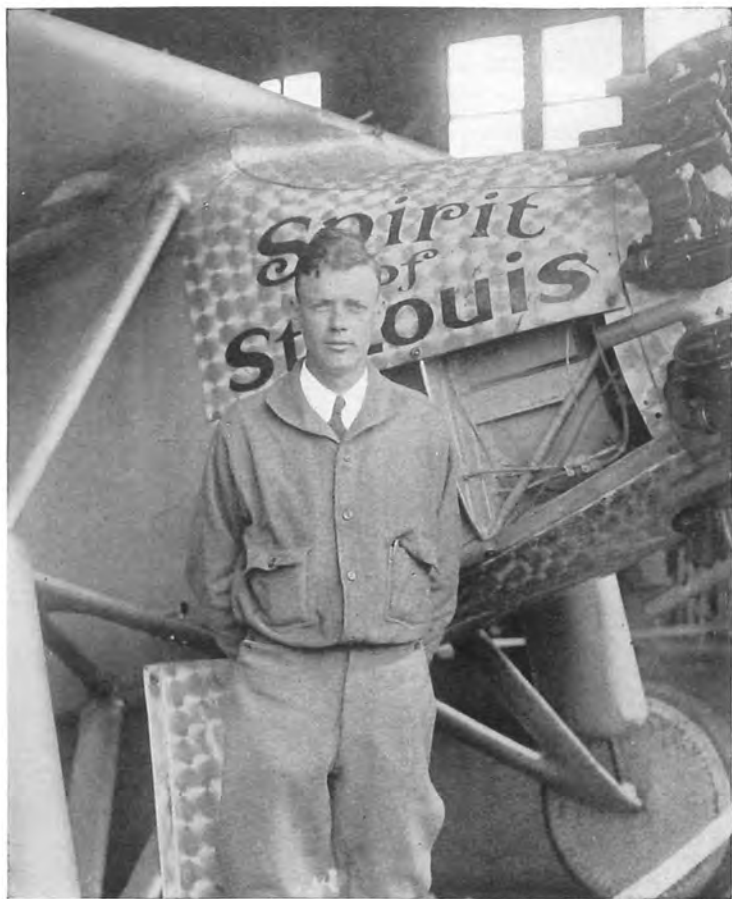
THE FAMOUS FLIER'S OWN STORY OF HIS LIFE
AND HIS TRANSATLANTIC FLIGHT, TOGETHER
WITH HIS VIEWS ON THE FUTURE OF AVIATION

WITH A FOREWORD BY
MYRON T. HERRICK
U. S. AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE



FULLY ILLUSTRATED

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"WE"

DEDICATED TO
MY MOTHER
AND TO THE MEN WHOSE CONFIDENCE AND
FORESIGHT MADE POSSIBLE THE FLIGHT OF THE
"SPIRIT OF ST. LOUIS"

MR. HARRY H. KNIGHT
MAJOR WILLIAM B. ROBERTSON
MAJOR ALBERT BOND LAMBERT
MR. J. D. WOOSTER LAMBERT
MR. HAROLD M. BIXBY
MR. EARL C. THOMPSON
MR. HARRY F. KNIGHT
MR. E. LANSING RAY

FOREWORD

WHEN Joan of Arc crowned her King at Rheims she became immortal.

When Lafayette risked his all to help the struggling Americans he wrote his memory forever across a mighty continent. Shepherd boy David in five minutes achieved with his sling a place in history which has defied all time.

These three shining names represent the triumph of the idealism of youth, and we would not speak of them with such reverence to-day had their motives been less pure or had they ever for an instant thought of themselves or their place in history.

So it was with Lindbergh, and all the praise awarded him, judged by the rigid standards of history and precedent, he has merited. He was the instrument of a great ideal and one need not

be fanatically religious to see in his success the guiding hand of providence.

For he was needed and he came at the moment which seemed exactly preordained. He was needed by France and needed by America, and had his arrival been merely the triumph of a great adventure the influence of his act would have gone no further than have other great sporting and commercial achievements.

There have been moments here in France when all that my eye could reach or my intelligence fathom appeared dark and foreboding and yet, in spite of all, my soul would be warmed as by invisible sunshine. At such times when all human efforts had apparently failed, suddenly the affairs of nations seemed to be taken from out of the hands of men and directed by an unseen power on high.

Just before the Battle of the Marne I was standing on the Seine embankment.

A great harvest moon was rising over the city near Notre Dame. It seemed to rest on the

corner of a building. The French flag was blowing steadily across its face. In fleeting moments while this spectacle lasted people knelt on the quay in prayer. I inquired the meaning of these prayers. The answer was that there is a prophecy centuries old that the fate of France will finally be settled upon the fields where Attila's horde was halted and driven back and where many battles in defence of France have been won. And pointing up the Seine to the French flag outlined across the moon people cried, "See, see the sign in heaven. It means the victory of French arms. The prophecy of old is come true and France is once again to be saved on those chalky fields."

Now when this boy of ours came unheralded out of the air, and circling the Eiffel tower settled to rest as gently as a bird on the field at Le Bourget, I was seized with the same premonition as those French people on the quay that August night. I felt without knowing why, that his arrival was far more than a fine deed

well accomplished, and there glowed within me the prescience of splendor yet to come. Lo! it did come and has gone on spreading its beneficence upon two sister nations which a now-conquered ocean joins.

For I feel with every fibre of my being that Lindbergh's landing here marks one of the supreme moments in the history of America and France, and the faith we have in the deciding power of spiritual things is strengthened by every circumstance of his journey, by all his acts after landing, and by the electrical thrill which ran like some religious emotion through a whole vast population. "The Spirit of St. Louis" was to the French people another sign come out of the sky—a sign which bore the promise that all would be well between them and us.

What a happy inspiration it was to christen his ship with such a name! It brought as from on high a new spiritual message of peace and good will, and it was more than a coincidence that Lindbergh should drop from his ship his

farewell message to Paris on that spot, in the Place de la Concorde, where once the Spirit of Saint Louis was invoked in tragic circumstances. The priest who stood there beside King Louis the Sixteenth as the guillotine fell, cried defiantly to the assembled mob: "The Spirit of Saint Louis ascends to the skies." With Lindbergh, *out* of the skies, the noble Spirit of Saint Louis came back to France.

France took Charles Lindbergh to her heart because of what he was and because of what she knew he represented. His little ship came to the meeting place of the greatest conference that has ever gathered between two nations, for under the shadow of its wings a hundred and fifty million Frenchmen and Americans have come together in generous accord. No diplomatic bag ever carried so stupendous a document as this all unaccredited messenger bore, and no visiting squadron ever delivered such a letter of thanks as he took up the Potomac in returning. Has any such Ambassador ever been known?

Lindbergh was not commissioned by our government any more than Lafayette was by his; in each case it has been merely left for statesmen to register and approve the vast consequences of their acts. Both arrived at the critical moment and both set in motion those imponderable forces which escape the standards of the politician's mind. Who shall say but that they were God-sent messengers of help, smiling defiance of their faith at an all too skeptical world? What one accomplished has already changed history through a century; what the other has just done the people of America and France will take good care shall not be wasted.

The way Lindbergh bore himself after getting here was but the continuation of his flight. He started with no purpose but to arrive. He remained with no desire but to serve. He sought nothing; he was offered all. No flaw marked any act or word, and he stood forth amidst clamor and crowds the very embodiment of fearless, kindly, cultivated, American youth—unspoiled,

unspoilable. A nation which breeds such boys need never fear for its future. When a contract for one million dollars was sent him through his associates he cabled back to them, "You must remember this expedition was not organized to make money but to advance aviation." There is the measure of his spirit; the key to his intentions.

Flying was his trade, his means of livelihood. But the love of it burned in him with fine passion, and now that his fame will give him a wider scope of usefulness, he has announced that he will devote himself wholeheartedly to the advancement of aeronautics.

His first step in that direction is the publishing of this book, and no one can doubt that its influence will be of enormous value in pushing on man's conquest of the air. It will be idle for me or anyone else to estimate now what these results will be. But America vibrates with glowing pride at the thought that out from our country has come this fresh spirit of the air and

that the whole world hails Lindbergh not only as a brave aviator but as an example of American idealism, character and conduct.

MYRON T. HERRICK.

*United States Embassy
Paris
June Sixteenth, 1927*

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