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MARCONI IN RETROSPECT

The Inventor of Wireless as we know

it, Reviews the Growth

Since his First

Trans-Atlantic

*Transmis-
sion*



UGLIELMO MARCONI, the inventor of wireless, spoke before a microphone in London recently and all America was within sound of his voice. His words crossed the Atlantic on short waves, to be picked up for rebroadcasting by a coast-to-coast network of fifty-nine stations. Marconi came on the air after a brief introduction by an English announcer whose accent gave sufficient clue that America was in tune with London.

The broadcast marked the twenty-eighth anniversary of the first trans-Atlantic signal, the letter "S" flashed across the sea from Poldhu, on the south-west tip of England, to Marconi and his assistants listening-in at the receiving station set up for the occasion in Newfoundland.

"I wonder," said a listener after he had heard Marconi talk, "if twenty-nine years ago Marconi dreamed that some day his voice would cross the sea to be picked up by millions as clear as if he were present in the room with the loudspeaker."

Marconi assured his listeners that he not only dreamed that the human voice would span long distances but that he is still dreaming of more triumphs for wireless, including the transmission of power through the ether. He called radio to-day child's play compared with wireless in 1901, when, with crude, cumbersome and insensitive instruments he picked up the first trans-oceanic wireless signal intercepted by an antenna held aloft by a kite. He used a coherer for a detector. The crystal detector and valve were later achievements.

"FROM the time of my earliest experiments I had always held the belief, almost amounting to an intuition, that radio signals would some day be regularly sent across the greatest distances on earth, and I felt convinced that trans-Atlantic radio telegraphy would be



MARQUIS MARCONI.

feasible," said Marconi. "Very naturally I realised that my first endeavour must be directed to prove that an electric wave could be sent right across the Atlantic and detected at the other side. What was at that time a most powerful wireless station was built at Poldhu, in England, for this purpose and an antenna system was constructed, supported by a ring of twenty wooden masts, each about 200 feet high. In the design and construction of this English station I was assisted by Sir Ambrose Fleming, R. N. Vyvyan and W. S. Entwisle.

"Another similar station was erected at Cape Cod in Massachusetts. By the end of August, 1901, the erection of the masts was nearly completed when a terrific gale swept the English coasts, with the result that the masts were blown down and the whole construction wrecked. I was naturally extremely disappointed at this unforeseen accident and for some days had visions of my test having to be postponed for several months or longer, but eventually decided that it might be possible to make a preliminary trial with a simpler aerial attached to a stay stretched between two masts 170 feet high and consisting of sixty almost vertical wires.

"By the time this aerial was erected another unfortunate accident, also caused by a gale, occurred in America, destroying the antenna system of the Cape Cod station.

"I then decided, notwithstanding this further setback, to carry out experiments in Newfoundland with a seasoned aerial supported by a balloon or kite, as it was clearly impossible at that time of the year, owing to the wintry conditions and to the shortness of the time at our disposal, to erect high masts to support the receiving aerial. On November 26, 1901, I sailed from Liverpool, accompanied by two technical assistants, G. S. Kemp and P. W. Paget.

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