

Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., Sept. 3, 1897.

In a Runaway Balloon.

General Fitz-John Porter's Sudden Flight into Space.

"It always seems to me that Andrew's Arctic balloon voyage hadn't even one chance in a thousand of escaping disaster," said General Fitzporter to a New York Sun reporter. "Thirty-five years ago I developed the use of captive balloons for war purposes, and have since been a close observer of experiments in aerostatics. The science has not yet reached a point to warrant the hope that balloons may be controlled in navigating space around the North Pole. Evils lurk above, below and all around.

"My experience with a runaway balloon at Yorktown has in a lesson to aeronauts who ascend upon the borders of dangerous territory. At Yorktown we were in close contact with the enemy. My runaway balloon carried me to the rear of our own army where I would have been in no danger beyond that which confronts any amateur who attempts to make a descent. Carried in a contrary direction, I was in danger of falling into the enemy's lines, and perhaps my descent might have been hastened and made fatal by the shots of reckless fellows who would consider the aerial voyager fair game.

"My balloon had inflated the confederates for many days. They saw that I was doing some very valuable spy work, and tried in every way to bring it down. I was wholly unprepared for a flight into space, and it was a wonder that, under the circumstances, I gained control of myself and of the machine, and made the ascent a valuable one from a military point of view.

The accident to my safety ropes was an extraordinary one. In fact, that part of the affair was no accident at all: it was the result of a plot. The accident lay in the fact that I came near being the victim of the plot, instead of a member of the balloon corps.

"I made the ascent just at the time by special direction of General McClellan, who wished me to take some observations of affairs inside the confederate lines, with a view to wholly unexpected by the balloon corps. It seems that a certain member of the corps was a spy, and that he applied acid which cut the strands almost in two. The moment the balloon ascended far enough to strain the remaining strands they parted, and the airship with its occupant, who happened to be myself, leaped into space.

"With every confidence in the balloon corps, I entered the basket hastily, not noticing that there was only one safety rope, and ordered the men to cast off. I had my field glass out and was sweeping the field with it, unconscious of what was taking place with the balloon until I felt myself flying upward far beyond the usual limit. A glancing look at the ropes in the basket was running away. At first I was uncertain what to do, because it was a new situation to me. As a rule Professor Lowe, the chief aeronaut, had accompanied me, and I had left the management of the balloon to others.

"Supposing one of the small ropes dangling in the basket to be a valve rope, I attempted to pull it and let myself down. It did not work. Seeing another rope dangling in the rigging, I climbed out of the basket and grabbed that with better success. I noticed that I was ascending through a stratum of escaping gas.

"I knew that I was in a runaway balloon and determined to carry out the object of the ascension. I had my glass with me and swept the whole field around Yorktown, down toward Fort Monroe, and Norfolk. I saw the fleets in the harbor. I saw the camps of the army along the James river and around Richmond. I saw the flying saucers. Beneath me was Yorktown, and the horses in the streets appeared to be ants, while columns of soldiers were moving masses of little specks.

"My second startling sensation was when I found that by letting out some more of the gas I could rise in a contrary air which swept me over the enemy's camps. That meant capture, the loss of the balloon and the failure of the expedition. For the moment I was unconscious of everything except that I wished to get the balloon again under control and back into the current of air which I passed through further down than I was flying in a contrary direction. One thing I did not do and that was that the confederate soldiers were running out of their camps and cheering in the expectation, probably, that I would descend among them.

"Confederates have since told me that they were highly excited over my strange actions of the balloon. It had been their custom whenever I ascended the length of the safety ropes to try their small arms on shooting at it, and they even at times tried rifle cannon, when it ascended slowly. But on this occasion its appearance was completely overcast. They saw that it had mounted high above their heads. They made no attempt to shoot at it.

"The current I was in was rapidly bearing me west, far into the enemy's territory and I pulled the valve until the balloon sank into a stratum of air moving directly east. I pulled with all my strength and felt the balloon sinking rapidly. As the gas left the silk bag the latter fell over and formed a sort of parachute, with the air beneath it. This caused the whole machine to sway and made me very dizzy and uncomfortable. As soon as I found my course changed to the east, I took my glass and examined the camp where I thought I would fall. I saw the stars and stripes here and that reassured me. I then gave all my attention to personal safety.

"At first I thought I was about to be caught in a tall tree, but I escaped that and then floated over long lines of stacked bayonets. I did not relish being impaled upon them, and gave the valve another pull, bringing the balloon down upon a tent. I was in the camp of the Seventy-second Pennsylvania, Baxter's Zouaves. The men had been excited spectators of the flight of the balloon, but they all stopped when they saw that it was descending. I wore no insignia of rank. I did not undress them. They told me that when the balloon was seen making in the direction of the confederate camps a body of our cavalry had taken the field and ridden out with the intention of changing into the enemy's lines to recover the runaway.

"I had landed more than a mile from headquarters, and after giving directions for packing and shipping the balloon, I hor-

rowed a horse and rode to General McClellan's headquarters. The general was astonished to see me safe and sound. He said that when he saw the balloon speeding through the air toward Dixie, he had begun to speculate upon whom he should appoint in my place as director of the siege of Yorktown, for my troops were already in close contact with the enemy, and engaged in very difficult operations under my personal direction.

"The extent of my flight in that runaway I have never been able to determine. I circled around, above our camps, over Yorktown, and the confederate camps, moving back and forth some distance. At the time I estimated I was 1,500 feet above the ground at the highest point. I may have been further than that. I know the entire peninsula from seventy to eighty miles in length and thirty to forty in breadth, appeared to be no larger than a man's hand. Our own camp some miles in extent, and holding from 70,000 to 80,000 boys in blue, seemed no larger than a ten-cent piece."

Where Gold is Sought.

A Land Whose Mineral Wealth is Practically Unclaimed.—Superstition and Laziness.—Mexico Might Become the Treasure House of the World Did Her People but Have Due Ambition.

For over 350 years the Indians of Mexico have been bringing in washed gold to sell and pay their tribute to the government, but no great amount of interest has ever been taken in the matter. Excitement or interest is hard to raise among Mexicans. The half-breed descendants of the Spanish conquerors follow in the steps of their grandfathers and are without ambition or idea of advancement.

Gold, either free or in connection with other minerals, is to be found in most of the states of Mexico, but in the main Sierra Madre there is a well-defined gold-bearing zone. This strip of territory is but sparsely inhabited and but little known, the main population of Mexico being confined to the arid and barren tablelands, where silver, copper and lead are the principal minerals. The best agricultural and mineral lands of Mexico—the first in Vera Cruz and Tabasco; the second along the western slopes of the Sierra Madre—have never been developed nor occupied.

Some remarkably rich gold mines have recently been opened at the northern end of this formation, in the state of Sonora, east from Hermosillo, in the Minas Prietas district. A short time ago an enterprising prospector, Mr. Faulkner, made some rich washings of gold from some of the headwaters of the Yaqui river, and some little local interest was excited. About the same time a party of engineers returning from western Durango reported the finding of a hill of gold one or two miles long, and specimens picked up at the surface were assayed at from \$3 to \$15 to the ton.

In the state of Sinaloa there are gold placers, as there are, too, in the state of Jalisco, and this formation extends south through Michoacan into Guerrero.

In Guerrero the mountains spread out into a mass of broken ridges, mostly heavily timbered, and gold is found in all the streams running out of this broken country. This mountain country is practically unknown and unexplored. The Indians from time immemorial have had the tradition that these mountains are enriched (enriched) and you cannot prevail upon one of them to enter the mountains. The Indian name for gold means food of the gods, and they believe it comes down from heaven in the lightning. It would be time lost to endeavor to convince them that it is washed out of the rocks and is in the mountains. Their clinging argument is: "When the lightning comes down from heaven you can see the yellow gold." This, to their minds, settles the question.

There are Indian towns near Teloloapan whose inhabitants live from the gold washed out of the streams, and have done so for hundreds of years; but none have ever dared to venture back into the mountains. Had Mexico been in the hands of Anglo-Saxons her agricultural resources, instead of being only 3 per cent. developed, would have been to-day controlling the markets of the world in sugar, cotton, coffee and other products, and her mineral resources, instead of being but 10 per cent. developed, would have produced more gold than all the rest of the world.

Writing in 1803, Baron von Humboldt declared that Mexico would become "the future treasure house of the world." His remark was founded on personal observation, but he had not taken into account the lazy race which was to remain the mixture of Spanish and Indian blood. For over 350 years Mexico has been at a standstill. The half-breed Indian, when he can exist upon the crop of two or three acres, will not cultivate more, and stops washing for gold as soon as he has gained enough to last him a year. Had Anglo-Saxons been at work in his stead the result would have been far different.

Hangings by His Neck.

A delicate and extremely rare surgical operation has been performed successfully at San Francisco, upon C. Hoffman, a young German farmer. By it not only his life has been saved, but he is on the speedy way to recovery.

In the latter part of July he sustained a compound fracture of the third cervical vertebra, an injury nearly always fatal, which prevented the moving of his head in any direction. On August 11th he was brought to the hospital, where the arch of the third vertebra and a portion of the second vertebra were removed.

The patient rests upon an inclined plane. The weight of his body sets as a counter extension to the weight applied to an extension apparatus, which is attached to the head, and the patient is virtually suspended by the neck until he shall be restored to health.

What They Receive in One Day.

The London *Figaro* furnishes the following comparative statement of the daily incomes of the rulers of the chief nations of the earth: The income of the Emperor of Russia for one day is about \$25,000; that of the Sultan of Turkey, \$18,000; the German Emperor, \$8,000; the King of Italy, \$6,500; Queen Victoria, \$6,200; President of France, \$5,000, and that of the President of the United States, \$125.

The swaggar jacket for fall's cooler days will be quite a little longer than last season's models; some are from 39 to 40 inches long. It is also announced that all outer garments will be quite elaborately trimmed. Some whippers, too, are heard of the dolman being revived, but these will not become popular, even if fashionable, except with elderly women.

The brain of an ant is larger, in proportion to its size, than that of any other known creature.

A Fading Army.

The muster roll of the Grand Army of the Republic gives renewed evidence of the steady trend toward death in the membership of the organization. The total number of names on the roll as reported at Buffalo is 319,446, a falling off from the number reported in 1896 of 21,154. This is the largest decrease with one exception which the adjutant general of the organization has had to report since the organization was formed. The number and percentage of deaths are also larger than ever reported before.

The membership of the Grand Army increased rapidly for a number of years. In 1876 it had 38,016 names on its muster rolls. The number rose annually by rapid strides until in 1890 the rolls contained 409,489 names. This proved to be high-water mark, as since then there has been a steady decrease in the number, until now there are only 319,446 names on the rolls. This is a decrease of 90,033 in seven years. The number of deaths and the percentage they bear to the membership have also steadily grown. In 1896 there were 3,020 deaths reported, or 0.93 per cent. of the membership. Ten years later, in 1896, the number of deaths was 7,293 or 2.21 per cent. of the membership. This year the number of deaths reported is 7,515 or 2.35 per cent. The number of deaths and the percentage will naturally increase more rapidly as the years go by.

It is easy to see that the Grand Army is passing into the shade and that before many years have passed the survivors will be few and far between. Many, if not most, of those who remain are suffering in the last stages of old age. In the war for the union, or have become incapacitated by age and toil.

With the Veterans.

J. P. S. Gobin Elected Commander-in-Chief of Them Will Meet Next in Cincinnati. For Commander There Was a Stampede on the Second Ballot.

Cincinnati's triumph in securing the national encampment of the G. A. R. for 1898, and Pennsylvania's victory in winning the commander-in-chief of the Grand Army, were the features of the Buffalo encampment. Both battles were hard fought. The struggle was precipitated immediately after the executive session was called to order. The selection of the next place of meeting was first taken up and the rival cities were given a hearing.

On the first ballot Cincinnati received 526 votes and San Francisco 214. The vote had not been announced when Mr. Woodruff withdrew San Francisco and asked that the selection of Cincinnati be made unanimous. This was agreed to by acclamation.

Following the selection of Cincinnati, Archbishop Ireland was called to the stage and made a glowing patriotic speech. He was followed by General Lew Wallace.

Isaac F. Mack, of Sandusky, O., J. P. S. Gobin, of Lebanon, Pa., who was nominated by Delegate Stewart, of Pennsylvania, and John G. Linehan, of New Hampshire, were the candidates for commander-in-chief. The first ballot resulted: Mack, 253; Linehan, 181; Gobin, 296, no choice. The vote on the ballot was never announced officially, but as cast it stood:

Gobin 358, Mack 259, Linehan 123. Before the result could be announced by the tellers, the ten Missouri voters that had been cast for Mack were withdrawn and ordered changed to Gobin, who had received the other twenty-two of the twenty-two belonging to the state. This gave Gobin 388 votes and enough to elect.

Then the election was made unanimous. —Gettysburg and fall of Vicksburg, the turning points of the war in the East and West, occurred almost simultaneously the first on July 1st, 2nd and 3rd, and the second on July 4th, 1863.

Out of every 1,000 men enlisted during the war an average of 73 men were always on the sick list, and an average of 234 were absent for various reasons, leaving 693 men with the colors.

The first really great battle of the civil war was Shiloh, or Pittsburg Landing, fought on April 6th and 7th, 1862, between Grant and Albert Sidney Johnston the first day and between Grant and Beauregard, after Johnston's death, the second day. The Union losses were 11,393 and the Confederates 10,699.

While Gettysburg was the largest battle, with the heaviest losses, during the entire war, Antietam was the most costly, considering the number of troops actually engaged. In a single day's fighting at Antietam 2,108 Union soldiers were killed and 9,549 wounded.

—Pennsylvania veterans who fought at Lookout Mountain and Chickamauga have a delightful trip in prospect. The State Legislature at its last session appropriated \$20,000 to pay the expenses of all Pennsylvania soldiers who fought under Sherman in his march to the sea, for a trip to Chattanooga on the occasion of the dedication of the Pennsylvania monuments in September.

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Conquered Java.

Ten million People on an Island the Size of New York State.

Eliza Ruhmah Seidmore, author of "Jinricksha Days," writes a paper intitled "Prisoners of State at Boro Boedor," for the September Century. It is an account of the visit of two American ladies to the vast Buddhist ruins in the middle of Java. Miss Seidmore says:

Every five miles there were open red-tiled pavilions built over the highways as refuges for man and beast from the scorching sun of one season and the cloud-burst showers of the rainy half of the year. Twice we found busy passers going on in groves beside these rest-houses—picturesque gatherings of men, women and children, and displays of fowls, fruits, nuts, vegetables, grain, sugar, spices, gums, and flowers, that tempted one to linger and enjoy, and to photograph every foot of the passer's face. The main road was crowded all the way like a city street, and around these passers the highway hummed with voices.

One can believe in the density of the population—twenty-four million people on this island of 49,197 square miles, about the size of the state of New York—when he sees the people trooping along these country roads and he can well understand why every sort of land is cultivated how even in the benevolent land of the banana every one must work or starve. Men and boys toiled to the passer, bent over with the weight of one or two monstrous jackfruits or durians on their backs. A woman with a baby swinging in the *slendang* over her shoulder had tied cackling chickens to the back of her belt, and trudged on comfortably under her umbrella; and a boy slung a brace of ducks from each end of a shoulder pole, and trotted gayly to the passer.

The kampongs or villages, when not hidden in palm and plantain groves behind fancy bamboo fences, were rows of open houses on each side of the highway, and we reviewed native life at leisure while people were changed. The friendly, gentle, little brown people welcomed us with anxious and embarrassed smiles when our curiosity as to sarong-painting, lacemaking, and mat-weaving carried us into the family circle. The dark, round-eyed, star-eyed babies and children showed no fear or shyness, and the tiniest ones—their soft little warm brown bodies bare of ever a garment save the *slendang* in which they cuddled so confidently under the mother's protecting arm—let us lift and carry and play with them at will.

Not Experienced.

"I told her I was afraid to kiss her while she wore the tandem for fear we should both fall off."

"What did she say?"

"She said she hoped I didn't call myself an experienced wheelman."

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CENTRAL RAILROAD OF PENNA.
Condensed Time Table.

READ DOWN	Nov. 16th, 1896.	READ UP.
No. 1	No. 5	No. 3
No. 2	No. 4	No. 2

No.	P. M.	D. M.	P. M.	L. V.	Ar.	P. M.	D. M.	P. M.	L. V.	Ar.		
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