SELECT MISCELLANY.

ADVENTURES IN AEROSTATION.

By a Practical Aeronaut.

[Written for the Pittsburgh Commercial.]

The periodical spurts of enthusiasm which have come to life in America within a few years, upon the subject of aerostation, have not resulted in the least advancement in adapting it to practical uses. Not until the late use of balloons by the French has there been any successful attempt made in Europe to show the extent to which the science of aerostation can be practiced. What the "mother of invention" may next do for it, can only be predicted, as indeed, there has been no essential improvement in the construction of balloons since their discovery. Yet the writer is firm in the faith that before the close of the present century the science will be thoroughly established as a tangible, practical fact. In the course of these papers some allusions may be made to this point with a view of developing it, but for the present, it is only intended to write what we know about ballooning from positive experience, embracing more adventure than science, and more simple, truthful narrative than eloquence.

My first essay in the aeronautic line transpired when I was a boy, and caused me to be regarded with great honor by my playmates, and contributed to my back sundry stripes from a birch in parental hand. The feat consisted in a leap into the air from the top of a three story building with an open umbrella in each hand. A sudden gyration of my body, with right side nethermost, apprised me of the fact that the umbrella in the right hand had collapsed and I alighted upon the earth with my heels up, the sudden concussion so jarring my bones that liniments were at a premium in a neighboring apothecary shop for some days.

But my ambition to fly was not in the least cooled by this mishap. My most delightful dreams were those of flying, and a desire to move zenithward continued to haunt me. Accordingly I made my first successful attempt in Louisville some years after, under the most perplexing and laborious circumstances. I found myself in that city with a patent, but without any money or credit. The patent was one which I controlled in several southwestern States, and I expected to realize largely from it, but after I had expended much time labor and money, I found it was not a good season for patent pumps.—There had been, and continued to be, *too much rain.*

While debating whether it was best to return to an unfailing business of which, I was master, I learned that Eugene Goddard had left a large, fine, new balloon in New Albany, and that the property was in the hands of a concern who had advanced money on it.

"Ah!" mentally ejaculated I, "here is just the thing for me, with which to blaze before the world like a stray comet!" And, in twenty minutes, I was on the horse cars of the Portland railroad bound for New Albany. I found the balloon snugly stowed away in a loft, with all the paraphernalia and auxiliaries of a first-class equipment. With a business and professional air, I had the apparatus taken out and spread upon an adjoining common for examination. I found everything complete and in order, as near as I could judge from my limited knowledge of the matter. Within two hours an agreement was made with the holders of the apparatus and me in exchange for about one thousand dollars' worth of pumps—from a conclusion on their part, no doubt, that they could realize more out of old iron than from varnished linnen—and in another hour my treasure was loaded into package wagon's and on the road to Louisville.

Now for work. It was Monday afternoon and I determined to make an ascent on Friday afternoon following. What with the advertising, the music, the preparation of exhibition ground, the erection of seats, a supply of gas, and a host of minor details, could keep me more busily employed for a few days. Accordingly, as soon as a suitable location could be found, and the gas company consulted, I hastened to a printer to order posters and dodgers, and to have an announcement in all the papers of the city. On the subsequent morning I found my name ornamenting many dead walls and my intended exploit very generally noticed by the press. Three days of hard work had passed. The sale of tickets mingled with other work, supplied funds to handle the aerostatic machine and cover it with an additional coat of varnish, and to settle the larger proportion of the advance bills except that of the gas. Here I was stranded upon the shoals of impecuniosity. Not a foot of gas could be had until the bill for the whole was paid. I wanted to commence the inflation at five o'clock on Friday morning—early, to provide against accident or contingency. So the affair must be settled on Thursday.—After falling in several attempts with prominent parties, some of whom had scruples about furnishing materials for breaking my neck, and others not being regarded as responsible at the gas office, I requested Mr. Steadman of the Louisville Hotel, to give me an order for the gas and charge it in my bill.

"When can you settle the bill?" queried the old gentleman.

"Send one of your clerks up to the ground to-morrow to substract the amount from the receipts," was my reply.

"Suppose the attendance is a failure?"

"Which is not probable, sir."

"Suppose the weather is against you."

"I take more chances than you do, in that, sir."

"Well, I believe you are honest, and will do the best you can. I will make the order."

"Many thanks, sir," with sundry mental ejaculations of whoop! Eureka! and the sudden evaporation of depressing anxiety.

No aeronaut ever visited a gas office with more elevated feelings, or gave a more emphatic order for the proper assistance to be furnished at the proper hour, than did I when I deposited Mr. Steadman's order with the cashier of the gas company.

But two questions remained to be decided to complete to my satisfaction all the movements contemplated.—One was, to induce two or three persons to accompany me as passengers at a remunerative price. There were numbers who were satisfied with the terms, but none who could satisfy themselves regarding my experience in the business, as I had purposely evaded all discussion on this point. Another and more serious question was, how to clothe the aerostat in its net before, or during the process of inflation. Before retiring for the night, however, I fixed upon a plan for managing the latter, and resolved to let the former take care of itself.

The morning came, bright and beautiful, the barometer indicating a favorable day. The inflation was successful, and nearly completed long before noon, and the huge toy allowed to rise several hundred feet at the end of a rope where, gently vibrating in the air, its beauty attracted attention and commanded the admiration of thousands of beholders. The ascent was advertised to take place at 2 o'clock. Many people insisted that it should be postponed until 4 when, it was argued, many business men and their families would favor the exhibition with their presence, who could not conveniently attend until that hour—but I would not consent. Meanwhile a brass band was being drawn through the streets proclaiming the event and the hour with music, banners and huge placards.

Soon after 12 o'clock, a throng of people began to push into the enclosure, and a dense mass to congregate on the outside. The balloon was drawn down to the ground and the inflation completed, to give ticket purchasers an opportunity to witness the process. At ten minutes before 2 o'clock the balloon, mathematical instruments, lunchers, &c., were adjusted in the car, and all was ready for a start. Up to this time no one had offered his precious person in the character of a passenger, but as I was examining the valve lines, to see that they were free and available, with a view of starting to the tune of "Hail Columbia," an individual, begrimed with dust, and in a heavy perspiration, forced his way through the crowd and over the curb rope with the exclamation:

"My name is Bob Woodfolk, from Austin, Texas! I have been all over the world! and in New Jersey! and want to go up in this balloon! How much does it cost?"

The price for a passage was named, which he paid, and then clambered through the basket cords and deposited himself upon the sand bags much the same, and with as little concern, as a farmer's boy would fix himself upon a load of wheat.

I regulated the ascensive power, climbed into the hoop, loosed the weights, and we went off like a rocket into the upper air, leaving the music, the waving of handkerchiefs, the shouts of the multitude and the city, far, far beneath us, with the speed of thought.

[As this narrative is written, not to picture the grandest of all sights which ever burst upon the human vision, nor to give expression to the swelling, throbbing, indiscribable emotions which thrill the entire being upon such an occasion, but as a truthful rehearsal of one of many events which has characterized a busy and adventurous life, showing the curious and sometimes wonderful results of tact and reckless courage, I will say nothing about my feelings, at that particular moment, or my gratification at the success of my venture thus far.]

As we passed zenithward, the speed of our machine becoming accelerated by discharge of ballast, and its continual advancement into lighter air, a cloud was noticed above us. Inquired of my companion whether he desired to pass through it or whether we should fall. This was the only cloud we would likely encounter owing to the remarkable clearness of the atmosphere, and my hope was that he would request me not to enter it, as the earth, though almost lost to our view, had not lost its attractions for me; but my passenger responded:

"I am not the captain; you are sailing this ship."

A moment had hardly passed when we went through the cloud of fleecy haze like a railway train, causing portions of it to eddy, and open and drift like snow in a windstorm. Meanwhile the gas poured out of the neck of the balloon in a volume as large as the twenty-inch neck-pipe would admit, and I discovered we were climbing higher than might prove pleasant. Five minutes had not elapsed since we left the earth, and at the fearful rate we were moving five minutes more would be apt to furnish us with immediate facilities for death by exploding our balloon, through the rapid expansion of the gas. In a moment I opened the valves, and soon we began to descend. By climbing up, and sliding down, the air in this manner, for some time, alternating the discharge of gas and ballast, I found before we had been in the air half an hour that we had expended all our extra controlling power, by at each operation using too much of it. We had no resource. The machine must now have its own way, and it soon decided to go to the earth. We were falling with very fair velocity, a short distance from Louisville, and as we neared the earth had struck an angle which would carry us directly into a forest. Having no ballast to carry us over the wood, we must discharge gas, fall faster, and strike a clearing beneath us. No time for thought. I opened wide the valves, threw over our anchor, directed Mr. Woodfolk to sit down and hold fast to the side of the car, whilst I stood with feet braced in the bottom and hands clenched to the concentrated hoop above. But before either of us was prepared the anchor had caught, and the balloon was falling at an increased speed in a curved line from the anchorage to the earth, and struck with a concussion that seemed as though the ground had been raised against us by a terrible convulsion. Mr. Woodfolk was dislodged and thrown out of the car with such force as to change ends along the ground like an acrobat turning flip-flaps. My steed was made frantic by the rebound and the relief of the passenger's weight. It had stooped at that station long enough, and breaking its anchor sailed up with redoubled speed. In passing up, as it reached a point at the full extension of the anchor line, the concussion in the air, caused in tearing loose, the anchor, was as strong as that previously caused by striking the earth. The lower pole of the gas-bag elevated itself into the equator, and the car vibrated from side to side in the most perfect trapeze style, while the whole machine seemed to gyrate through the air like a boomerang. The difficulty in holding fast or accommodating one's self to this kind of motion may be imagined, but it cannot be described. And this trial at making a landing had the merit of being done very quickly—so quick, in fact, that an explosion of nitro-glycerine could not have facilitated it much.

Soon the violent motion subsided, and by a much more careful manipulation of the gas than before I effected a very pleasant and gentle landing, in a field near a railway station, a short distance from where my passenger quitted me so unceremoniously but about the worst frightened piece of humanity in those parts, half resolved to relieve the balloon of my weight and let it off into the skies to find its own destruction. But the gathering around me of planters and slaves, who stared with mouths agape and eyes enlarged, relieved my mind of the effect of my calamity, and I was afforded their assistance in packing up the machine.

Before the packing was completed a very dilapidated looking person, with torn garments, a bloody face, one arm in a sling, and without a hat, crawled through a fence near by and came limping forward. I recognized him as my traveling companion of thirty minutes in the air, and accosted him with—

"Hillo, Woodfalk—that you? I thought you had gone back to the city. Why didn't you give me ballast before you let me off so suddenly? I could have made a longer trip if I'd had ballast. How did you get jammed up so?"

He took the cue in an instant, replying—

"I supposed you had ballast enough, confound it; but when I noticed you coming down again I saw the mistake. Then I concluded to follow you, but the horse which I rode got fractious and threw me headlong over the ground, lacerating and bruising me terribly."

Neither of us desired to make a public acknowledgement of the casualty which has known to none but ourselves, and the matter of fact manner in which we covered it, caused the telegrapher at the station to announce in Louisville that the balloon, after landing a passenger, had made a second ascent, came down safely and was being taken back to the city.

The result of all this was, that my own ignorance of the business, the casualties which I could not avoid, made me in Louisville the most skilful, fearless and gallant aeronaut possible, and the newspapers used more exclamation points and superlative eloquence in the description of my work than would have been sufficient to describe a trip to the moon.

But the most satisfactory result was the receipts in cash, which made me for the time a banker in a small way; and the tender of several hundred dollars for a second ascension which was to be given under the patronage of George D. Prentice and John Tompkins, and Drs. Seaton and John Bull and others. This ascent, which I may narrate hereafter, was made within two weeks of the first, amid thunder-showers and a gale, and three passengers carried to Frankfort, a distance of some sixty or more miles, at the rate of a mile per minute, without an accident.

Flowers and Children.

In an article in the May number of *Art Pictorial and Industrial*, the London art journal, on the influence of toys in educating and forming the tastes of children, Mr. Blanchard Jerrold writes most charmingly, and concludes as follows, on the subject of flowers:

I would have flowers crowded in the school-room windows of the very young. I would build broad, open balconies for the baby scholars, where, during every daylight moment of fair weather, they might have fresh air and bits of beauty flowering under their inquiring eyes. I would have the Pomponiere of Brussels copied; making elementary education begin—not when a child has been already erected into a little monster by bad parents and evil surroundings; but in its protected cradle, in the first shaking of its rattle, and the first pointing of its fingers to pictures and plants. We should—or our children would—see the good results of such cradle teaching; of æsthetics thrown into the alphabet, into the toy shop, the playground, and the adornments of the school-room. For the child that is alive to the simplest lessons and beauties of the field, that can delight in striving to imitate—if only with straw or paper—a beautiful form before it, is far on the way to a higher education, even should subsequent events prove untoward in its path, than the creatures of dull, uninformed sight in infancy, who may be kept well at school under good masters. A feeling for the beautiful, a delight in it, which at present is almost unknown in England, is that which we shall strive after, not in art academies, but in infant schools and nurseries. The roughest Dutch doll is the Venus di Medici to the child that nurses it. We give the ugly thing to the child, and so make for ourselves the after difficulty of proving that dolly is ugly. The remark applies to nearly all dolls; certainly to all that are English.

Diseases of the Lungs.

It is more particularly at this season of the year that we suffer most danger of contracting diseases of the lungs, and once contracted there is but one method of ridding the system, and that is by a systematic course of treatment, such as is employed by Dr. Keyser, of No. 167 Liberty Street. There is no knowing whether the hacking cough is merely a severe cold, or an actual lung disease, which, unless stopped, may ultimately prove fatal. *Dr. Keyser's Lung Cure* is a remedy which has been more successful than any other, and, indeed, we know of no other that proposes to do and does what Dr. Keyser's remedy performs. Dr. Keyser claims that consumption is not necessarily the fatal disease it is popularly supposed to be, and that if the cure be taken in time, the ailment is quite manageable and capable of a decided cure. As Dr. Keyser says, he has patients brought to his office whom even he deemed entirely beyond cure, and yet, after a judicious course of treatment they have recovered and regained their former health. Dr Keyser has given the best years of his life to the study of the lungs and of consumption, which makes such terrible ravages. After this protracted course of study, it would be strange if he was not competent to search for evidences of disease and treat it successfully where it does exist. The numerous cases in which this physician has combated consumption and restored health and vigor form a sufficient recommendation for his Lung Cure. If your druggist does not keep it, send five dollars to Dr. Keyser, and he will send four bottles securely boxed, by express, with full directions how to use it.—*Pitts. Dispatch.*

Johnson's Rheumatic Compound.
Sellers' Imperial Cough Syrups.
Lindsay's Improved Blood Searcher.

Rheumatism and Neuralgia.

No medicine ever offered to the public for the cure of Rheumatism and Neuralgia, &c., has gained such a wide spread reputation as JOHNSON'S RHEUMATIC COMPOUND; it is without doubt an invaluable medicine. Testimonials have been received from rich and poor, *learned and unlearned, civilian and soldier*, while physicians recommend it and use it in their practice.

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We beg to call to the minds of our readers that this season of the year, above all others, is the one in which they are liable to COUGHS, COLDS, INFLUENZA, &c., whilst the LITTLE ONES are in constant danger of that most *alarming* and *fatal* of all diseases, CROUP.

It is, therefore, necessary that every family should provide a positive remedy, one that is ready for use at all times.

SELLERS' COUGH SYRUP you will find a sure and speedy remedy for coughs, colds, and all diseases arising from them.

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The blood is the very fountain of life; therefore, if we wish to restore health, we must first purify the blood, and to insure continued health, *keep it pure*. LINDSAY'S BLOOD SEARCHER is the safest and most effectual medicine for obtaining this desired effect, is always safe, and the most delicate can use it.

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CURES DISEASES OF THE
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If you feel dull, drowsy, debilitated, have a sallow color of skin, or yellowish spots or specks before your eyes, frequent headache or dizziness, bad taste in mouth, internal heat or chills alternating with hot flashes, low spirits, and gloomy forebodings, irregular appetite, and tongue coated, you are suffering from **Torpid Liver or Biliousness.** In many cases of "**Liver Complaint**" only part of these symptoms are experienced. As a remedy for all such cases Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery has no equal, as it effects perfect cures, leaving the liver strengthened and healthy. For the cure of **Habitual Constipation** of the bowels, it is a never failing remedy, and those who have used it for this purpose are loud in its praise.

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nov26 7ly-chd jel8

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