

PRESENCE OF MIND.

HOW AN AERONAUT SAVED HIMSELF IN THE OPEN AIR.

A Long Piece of Rope and a Neat Calculation Preserved the Life of Professor Hiram Wind—But For This the Reporter Couldn't Tell This Interesting Yarn.

Wind was his name. Hiram Wind, but he told The Sun reporter that they called him Hi for short.

"For a long time," said he, with a half knavish smile, "I didn't like the abbreviation, but when I was 25 and took to ballooning as a business it kind of sorter seemed as if Providence meant that I should have had that name and no other. Professor Hiram Wind," he added with pride, "is a name that is bound to soar through the loftiest realms of space."

"Did you never have an accident?" inquired the reporter.

"Several, but they have never been the fault of the wind."

The professor began to show signs of succumbing to the pump.

"Of course," he admitted hesitatingly, "a man can't walk the earth every day without bumping up against something out of the ordinary occasionally, and the air is no exception. I've had experiences that you might call narrow escapes—that is you might, and then again you mightn't. It would depend on how you looked at things. Some call 'em narrow and some don't. I don't myself."

It was plain that the professor understood that a good thing was a good thing when he saw it.

"Suppose you narrate one for my sake," suggested the reporter, "and let me add my testimony to that of your other admirers."

"Thanks. I don't care if I do," said the professor, and there was that in the tone which recalled the reporter to man's highest duty to his fellow man. After which, sitting at a small table, the professor continued: "I was out in Indiana about four years ago. Indiana is a great state in the season, and I had made an ascent for the benefit of a Sunday school picnic to kind of offset going up on the Sunday before for a larger beer sociable function. Mighty particular picnics these Sunday school people are, and everything was lovely. My balloon was a gas balloon, and she fairly kicked up her heels while I had her tethered, and when she got away she seemed like she was heading right for infinity and was going the limit or bust a hamstring."

"I guess she must have gone up a mile and a half or two miles when I felt something give way, and in a minute or two she began to go back the other way—not fast, you understand, but slow and sure, and in a way to make you feel mighty uncomfortable. I couldn't tell what the matter was, and after letting her drop to within about half a mile of bottom I tossed out a little of my ballast. I was short on parachutes that day, too, as mine was out of whack. And being careless, I thought I'd take my chances. About this time I began to wish I hadn't, but I didn't say a word for obvious reasons. When I let the ballast out, the balloon responded only a little, and the way she did it convinced me that something serious was the matter. By this time I had to throw out some more ballast, and it wasn't a minute till there wasn't anything left in the basket besides myself and about 1,000 feet of rope with a grapple on the end of it."

"The balloon had begun to sink again, and rapidly. And you may guess that this was a time for a man to do some pretty active thinking if he expected any good results from it, and you may be assured I was calculating. Every instant now the balloon was gathering velocity, the last movement downward having begun at a point about a quarter of a mile from the ground, and I knew that in a few seconds I was going to be a shapeless mass that couldn't even be photographed for a newspaper unless something happened. There was only one thing to do, and that was to relieve the balloon of its weight and send it back up again. The rope and I were heavy enough to lessen the weight considerably if we should get out, and I proposed to do a great act. Getting a good hold on my clasp knife, I waited for the now whizzing earthward balloon to get within about 1,000 feet of the ground. Then, with the rope tied around my waist and the other end fast to the balloon, I jumped out feet foremost straight for the earth. I knew that if the balloon remained stationary I would just about reach the ground at the end of the rope, but I figured on a good deal of reaction. In fact, I calculated the rise of the balloon would about meet the fall of myself at such a point as to make my fall comparatively light, and then, when she began to sink again, I would be so near the earth that before she got to going at breakneck speed I would be close enough to cut loose and let myself down easy. As it turned out, I might have had a leg broken or been shaken up pretty badly, but luck was with me. When I cut loose, I dropped about 25 feet and lit square on top of a big straw stack where some men were thrashing. As for the balloon, she was so nearly exhausted and was coming down so fast that the loss of my weight only gave her strength enough to go a couple of hundred yards across the field and drop into a pond. So you see," concluded Professor Wind, "that a little presence of mind is valuable even to take up in a balloon with a man, for if I had not had it and had not used it at the end of that piece of rope I would not now be here telling this story to you. Of course it was not as serious a mishap as I have experienced on other occasions, but still it is interesting. What do you think of it?"

"Um—er," hesitated the reporter, "have you got a piece of that rope I could look at?"—New York Sun.

CORDOVA AT MIDNIGHT.

Gayety in the Spanish City Is Then at Its Greatest Height.

In the evening, after dinner, about 8 o'clock, we drew chairs out upon our little balcony above the Paseo. Listless groups had gathered about its cafes. Two gypsy children, as black as negroes, in their scant white shirts, with persistent hands and voices were carrying on Spain's one flourishing business, but it was not a stimulating sight, and, tired out with the day's journey, we went at once to bed. It must have been two or three hours later when we were awakened by a loud crash of cymbals and blast of trumpets. Our first thought was that soldiers were marching through the town, and we hurried to the window to see. Below a great mass of people were seated under the palms. Open carriages were passing up and down on each side, and men on horseback. Very smart nurses, with great bows of ribbon on their heads, had brought wide awake babies out for an airing. Great trucks and vans of merchandise rumbled by. Workmen were about. Half way down the Paseo a band had just begun to play. The cafes were ablaze with light, their tables crowded to overflowing. Cordova at midnight had come to life.

The air was hot and close, used up by that vast multitude, and the dust, stirred by their ceaseless march, choked us where we stood. It was hopeless to try to sleep again, and we waited by the window. Of a sudden a bell sounded loud above the voices of the crowd. At once the band was hushed, carriages were stopped, the people on the chairs under the palms were on their feet, and not a man but stood, hat in hand. We looked to the end of the Paseo, for everybody was looking that way. From out the doors of the Moorish minaret crowned church came a procession of men in white surplices, with flickering candles and tall lanterns, and a priest carrying the sacrament, under its golden veil, to the dying. Men who a moment before had been drinking fell upon their knees, and we could hear nothing but the tinkling bell and the murmur of a low chant, as the priest walked slowly on between the rows of kneeling people, praying there in the starlight under the palms. And so in Spain today, as yesterday, does life in a moment change from fooling to prayer, as the shadow of death passes by, only to return to its folly as readily when the shadow has passed. Once the priest had gone back to the church, and the doors were shut, the music, louder than ever, went on where it had left off, carriages rolled on, and horsemen pranced after them.

There was no sleeping any more. We dressed and packed our bags, and when in the first dawn the band went away and the last few stragglers were going home and a few peasants were coming in with their donkeys and cafes were being shut we took our places in the hotel coach and drove off to the station in time to catch the express from Madrid to Seville.—Elizabeth R. Pennell in Century.

NEW HAND UNDERSTOOD.

A Woman's Testimony as to the Value of a Knowledge of German.

It was just a little informal gathering of women, and as they sipped tea with their hats on and gossiped about church sociables and of the preponderance of girls among the babies that had recently arrived, one of them let fall a German expression.

"Oh, dear me! Do you speak German?" asked the tall woman from down east, who plumes herself upon having married a German broker and thinks she speaks German herself.

"How delightful!"

"Certainly," said the stout woman who was addressed. "I should think I ought to. I lived in Germany for ten years before I was married. It is a very useful thing too. My husband does not speak German, but I remember one instance when the knowledge of just one little German word was of great help to him. You see, I always made it a practice to begin teaching German to my children when they were babies, and just teaching them one word at a time and saying that one word whenever it was appropriate until it was indelibly fixed in their memory. Now, when my last baby was beginning to walk, I wanted to teach her that the fire was hot, and so whenever she went near it I would pull her away and point to the stove and say, 'Heiss!' I said it a great many times, and by and by she learned that 'heiss' meant hot. Now, one day my husband was breaking in a new man at his factory, and he wanted to warn him about some dangerous place. The man was a German, and my husband was at a loss as to how to make him understand until, all of a sudden, he remembered having heard me instructing the baby. So he pointed to the place and called to the man, 'Heiss!' 'Heiss!' The man's face lit up, and he turned to my husband and exclaimed: "'I understand you perfectly.'"—New York Sun.

Beresford's Brevity.

Lord Charles Beresford is a man of few words and those very much to the point. Speaking in the house of commons one day in reference to the Arab slave dealers, he said, with great emphasis:

"Mr. Speaker, we ought to catch these men, give 'em a fair trial and then hang 'em."

Receiving an invitation to dinner at Marlborough House one evening, he replied by wire:

"Sorry can't come. Lie follows by post."—San Francisco Argonaut.

The Decline of the Jaw.

And now it is claimed that the jawbones of civilized peoples are gradually becoming attenuated, chiefly owing to the prolonged use of knives and forks. There need be no fear, however, that we will lose the use of the jaws. The habit of chewing gum will soon restore these portions of our anatomy to their pristine strength.

His Quest.

Even the benevolent, unworldly old gentleman who surveyed the occupants of the car now and then over the tops of his gold rimmed glasses recognized the fact that the man who took a seat next to him was not a member of the polite circles of society. He did not avoid him, however, but responded when his companion made some casual remarks about the weather.

"You never pass the time by trying your luck with a pack o' cards now an then, do you?" asked the newcomer, after a quarter of an hour or so had elapsed.

"Never."

"Well, it's a good way to kill time."

"But you run so much risk of meeting professional gamblers."

"Oh, yes. Of course us ordinary gents have to take our chances on little things like that. But I manage to get through a deal or two now an then an not get scared very much, either."

"Do you travel much?"

"I've kep' on the move all my life. I traveled with a circus fur three years an I've been in several other branches of commerce since that took me a good deal away from home. At present I'm sorter toarin' on my own account."

"My friend," said the benevolent gentleman solemnly, "I am sorry to hear you say this. It is an old saying and a true one that a rolling stone gathers no moss."

"Mister," was the reply, delivered with equal solemnity, "I'll let you into a secret. I ain't lookin' for moss. I'm out fur the dust."—Detroit Free Press.

Renan's Penance.

Julien Simon, in one of his reminiscences of Renan, relates that at one time he differed with his professor about the interpretation to be given to a certain passage in Scripture, quoting the Hebrew text as his authority. After he had frankly stated his objection his superior meditated for awhile and then told him mildly, "Abbe, you will repeat, in kneeling position, the seven penitential psalms before the holy sacrament." Relating this incident to Simon, the latter inquired, "And what answer did you make?" "I answered what is customary in such cases to answer, 'I thank you, reverend father.'" "And you did penance?" "I did, and then proceeded again in my investigations, and ever received the same reply. But I could not pass my whole life reading the penitential psalms."

And he did not. He began to consult, instead of the priestly oracle, the oracle of his reason and of his own conscience, and he became the great torchbearer, the biographer of Jesus and the apostles from a rational point of view, unclouded by supernaturalism and miracle worship, and he wrote the "Origin of Christianity," and he threw the wonderful light of his erudition upon the intricate problems of oriental philology and Biblical archaeology and the comparative history of religions and brought sunshine into thousands of minds where superstition and unreason creduity reigned before.—Menorah Monthly.

Bicetre.

The very name of Bicetre—dungeon, madhouse and cloaca of obscene infamy—became of dreadful import; not the Contergerie, the Chatelet, Fort-l'Evêque, Vincennes nor the Bastille itself inspired the common people and the bourgeoisie with such detestation and panic fear. The general imagination, outlying rumor, peopled it with imps, evil geni, sorcerers and shapeless monsters, compounded of men and beasts. Medieval Paris, at a loss for the origins of things, ascribed them to the fairies, the devil or Julius Cæsar.

It was said that the devil blighted in Paris one night and brought in chains to the "plateau de Bicetre" a pauper, a madman and a prisoner, with which three unfortunates he set agoing the prison on the one side and the asylum on the other to minister to the menus plaisirs of the denizens of hell. Such grim renown as this was not easily surpassed, but at the end of Louis XIV's reign the common legend went a step farther and said that the devil had now disowned Bicetre. Rhymes sincere or satirical gave utterance to the terror and abhorrence of the vulgar mind.—Temple Bar.

Hopeless.

The young man who was sitting straight up on his wheel drow alongside a man who was riding with a hump on his back.

"Roads are fine this morning," he observed.

"I've seen better," briefly answered the other.

"Of course. But I mean they are good considering that it rained day before yesterday."

"H'mph!"

"Ever try one of these pneumatic saddles?"

"One of whose pneumatic saddles?"

"Anybody's."

"No."

"What do you think is the proper gear for a 23 pound roadster machine?"

"Haven't any idea."

"That's a mighty fine wheel you're riding, anyhow."

"On the contrary, it's the poorest machine I ever saw. I'm going to trade it off and get a better one."

The young man gave it up and fell back.—Chicago Tribune.

A Mild Request.

Fair patient—Is there no way of telling exactly what is the matter with me? Dr. Emdee—Only a post mortem examination would reveal that.

Fair Patient—Then, for heaven's sake, make one. I don't see why I should be squeamish at such a time as this.—Pick Me Up.

Silk dresses rustle much more loudly in dry weather, because they are almost devoid of moisture and the friction between their folds is considerable and noisy. When rain is impending, the silks absorb a portion of the moisture and become almost silent.

THE LITTLE FRENCH GIRL.

She Is a Miniature Woman and Is Taught All Feminine Arts.

However innocent she may be, a little French girl is much more of a little woman than a child of any other nationality. She does not romp; she is demure and quiet in her games, which are often imitations of a grown person's life. She is trying to learn how to be the mistress of her house by means of her dolls, furniture, kitchen and dishes. Feminine arts are still a part of every well arranged French education. Men really care more for these accomplishments than for others, as they make stay at home wives who look after their households, and as a Frenchwoman's principal aim is to please her future husband every mother prepares her daughter for this end. This is why she does not permit too close an intimacy with little boy cousins, because ten years later a jealous husband would take a dislike to these friendly cousins, nor would he like his wife's bosom friends, in whom she confides and who never leave her, any better.

Mothers, therefore, permit few if any intimacies, and these are all winnowed and selected with the greatest care. One advantage of this system is that the name of friend is not carelessly bestowed right and left. It takes time and good reasons for simple acquaintances to rise to that rank. The mother not only wards off little boy cousins and intimate girl friends, but she discourages the little girl in showing off her knowledge out of the classroom, for she is fully aware that nothing could be less attractive in the eyes of the expected lord and master than a bluestocking.

A bright little girl I could name had by chance picked up some astronomical scraps, together with other scientific facts, which allowed her to shine now and then. One evening, while playing in the garden, she heard a friend of her father's exclaim, "What a dazzling star!" "That is not a star, sir," she said; "it is a planet." Her mother was in despair, for she would rather a hundred times have found her ignorant than have seen her "show off," or capable of committing the enormity of contradicting an older person. "I hope," she said jestingly, as a sort of excuse, "that when she is 18 the poor little thing will have forgotten a great part of what she knows today!"—Th. Bentzon in Century.

His Preference.

She blushed prettily as she told the sister of her best young man that she thought she would buy a birthday present for him.

"You know him better than I do," she said, "so I have come to you for advice."

"Yes?" said the sister inquiringly.

"Oh, yes, indeed. What would you advise me to get?"

"Oh, I don't know," replied the sister carelessly. "I could only advise you in general terms. From what I know of him, however, he will appreciate something that can be easily pawned better than something that cannot."—Chicago Post.

A Short Cut to Health.

To try to cure constipation by taking pills is like going round in a circle. You will never reach the point sought, but only get back to the starting point. A perfect natural laxative is Bacon's Celery King, the celebrated remedy for all nerve, blood, stomach, liver and kidney diseases. It regulates the bowels. Reynolds Drug Store will give you a sample package free. Large sizes 25 cents and 50 cents.

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