

AN ADVENTURE IN THE UPPER SEA.

By Jack London, Author of "The Son of the Wolf," Etc.

I am a retired captain of the upper sea. That is to say, when I was a younger man (which is not so long) I was an aeronaut and navigated that aerial ocean which is all around about and above us. Naturally it is a hazardous profession, and naturally I have had many thrilling experiences, the most thrilling, or at least the most nerve racking, being the one I am about to relate.

It happened before I went in for hydrogen gas balloons, all of varnished silk, doubled and lined, and all that, and fit for voyages of days instead of mere hours. The "Little Nassau" (named after the "Great Nassau" of many years back, was the balloon I was making ascents in at the time. It was a fair-sized hot air affair, of single thickness, good for an hour's flight or so and capable of attaining an altitude of a mile or more. I answered my purpose, for my act at the time was making half-mile parachute jumps at recreation parks and country fairs. I was in Oakland, a California town, filling a summer's engagement with a street railway company. The company owned a large park outside the city, and of course it was to its interest to provide attractions which would send the townspeople over its line when they went out to get a whiff of country air. My contract called for two ascensions weekly, and my act was an especially tickling feature, for it was on my days that the largest crowds were drawn.

Before you can understand what happened, I must first explain a bit about the nature of the hot air balloon which is used for parachute jumping. If you have ever witnessed such a jump, you will remember that directly the parachute was cut loose the balloon turned upside down, emptied itself of its smoke and heated air, flattened out and fell straight down, beating the parachute to the ground. Thus there is no chasing a big deserted bag for miles and miles across the country, and much time, as well as trouble, is thereby saved. This maneuver is accomplished by attaching a weight, at the end of a long rope, to the top of the balloon. The aeronaut, with his parachute and trapeze, hangs to the bottom of the balloon, and weighing more, keeps it right side down. But when he lets go, the weight attached to the top immediately drags the top down, and the bottom, which is the open mouth, goes up, the heated air pouring out. The weight used for this purpose on the "Little Nassau" was a bag of sand.

But to return. On the particular day I have in mind there was an unusually large crowd in attendance, and the police had their hands full keeping the people back. There was much pushing and shoving, and the ropes were bulging with the pressure of men, women and children. As I came down from the dressing room I noticed two girls outside the ropes, about 14 and 16, and inside the rope a youngster of 8 or 9. They were holding him by the hands, and he was struggling, excitedly and half in laughter, to get away from them. I thought nothing of it at the time—just a bit of childish play, no more; and it was only in the light of after events that the scene was impressed vividly upon me.

"Keep them cleared out, George!" I called to my assistant. "We don't want any accidents."

"Ay," he answered, "that I will, Charley."

George Cuppy had helped me in no end of ascents, and because of his coolness, judgment and absolute reliability, I had come to trust my life in his hands with the utmost confidence. His business it was to overlook the inflating of the balloon and to see that everything about the parachute was in perfect working order. The "Little Nassau" was already filled and straining at the guys. The parachute lay flat along the ground and beyond it the trapeze. I tossed aside my overcoat, took my position, and gave the signal to let go. As you know, the first rush upward from the earth is very sudden, and this time the balloon, when it first caught the wind, heeled violently over and was longer than usual in righting. I looked down at the old familiar sight of the world rushing away from me. And there were the thousands of people, every face silently upturned. And the silence startled me, for, as crowds went this was the time for them to catch their first breath and send up a roar of applause. But there was no hand clapping, whistling, cheering—only silence. And instead, clear as a bell and distinct, without the slightest shake or quaver, came George's voice through the megaphone:

"Ride her down, Charley! Ride the balloon down!"

What had happened? I waved my hand to show that I had heard, and began to think. Had something gone wrong with the parachute? Why should I ride the balloon down instead of making the jump, which thousands were waiting to see? What was the matter? And as I puzzled, I received another start. The earth was a thousand feet beneath, and yet I heard a child crying softly, and seemingly very close at hand. And though the "Little Nassau" was shooting skyward like a rocket, the crying did not grow fainter and fainter and die away. I confess I was almost on the edge of a funk, when, unconsciously following up the noise with my eyes I looked down and saw a boy astride the

sandbag which was to bring the "Little Nassau" to earth. And it was the same little boy I had seen struggling with the two girls—his sisters, as I afterward learned.

There he was, astride the sandbag and holding on to the rope for dear life. A puff of wind heeled the balloon slightly and he swung out into space for 10 or a dozen feet, and back again, fetching up against the tight canvas with a thud which even shook me, 30 feet or more beneath. I thought to see him dashed loose, but he clung on and whimpered. They told me afterward, how, at the moment they were casting off the balloon, the little fellow had torn away from his sisters, ducked under the rope, and deliberately jumped astride the sandbag. It has always been a wonder to me that he was not jerked off in the first rush.

Well, I felt sick all over as I looked at him there, and I understood why the balloon had taken longer to right itself, and why George had called off to me to ride her down. Should I cut loose with the parachute bag would at once turn upside down, empty itself, and begin its swift descent. The only hope lay in my riding her down and in the boy holding on. There was no possible way for me to reach him. No man could climb the slim, closed parachute; and even if a man could, and make the mouth of the balloon, what could he do? Straight out, and 15 feet away, trailed the boy on his ticklish perch, and those 15 feet were empty space.

I thought far more quickly than it takes to tell all this, and realized on the instant that the boy's attention must be called away from his terrible danger. Exercising all the self-control I possessed, and striving to make myself seem very calm, I said cheerily:

"Hello, up there, who are you?" He looked down at me, choking back his tears and brightening up, but just as the balloon ran into a cross-current, turned half around and lay over. This set him swinging back and forth, and he fetched the canvas another bump. Then he began to cry again.

"Isn't it great?" I asked heartily, as though it was the most enjoyable thing in the world; and, without waiting for him to answer, "What's your name?" "Tommy Dermott," he answered. "Glad to make your acquaintance, Tommy Dermott." I went on. "But I'd like to know who said you could ride up with me?"

He laughed and said he just thought he'd ride up for the fun of it. And so we went on, I sick with fear for him, and engulging my brains to keep up the conversation. I knew that it was all I could do, and that his life depended upon my ability to keep his mind off his danger. I pointed out to him the great panorama spreading away to the horizon and 4000 feet beneath us. There lay San Francisco bay like a great placid lake, the haze of smoke over the city, the Golden Gate, the ocean fog-rim beyond, and Mt. Tamalpais over all, clear-cut and sharp against the sky. Directly below us I could see a buggy, apparently crawling, but I know from experience that the men in it were lashing the horses on our trail.

But he grew tired of looking around, and I could see he was beginning to get frightened.

"How would you like to go in for the business?" I asked.

He cheered up at once, and asked, "Do you get good pay?"

But the "Little Nassau" beginning to cool, had started on its long descent, and ran into counter currents which bobbed it roughly about. This swung the boy around pretty lively, smashing him into the bag quite severely. His lip began to tremble at this, and he was crying again. I tried to joke and laugh, but it was no use. His pluck was oozing out, and at any moment I was prepared to see him go shooting past me.

I was in despair. Then, suddenly, I remembered how one fright could destroy another fright, and I frowned up at him and shouted sternly:

"You just hold on to that rope! If you don't I'll thrash you within an inch of your life when I get you down on the ground! Understand?"

"Ye-ye-yes, sir," he whimpered, and I saw that the thing had worked. I was nearer to him than the earth, and he was more afraid of me than of falling.

"Why, you've got a snap up there on that soft bag," I rattled on.

"Yes," I assured him, "this bar down here is hard and narrow, and it hurts to sit on it."

Then a thought struck him, and he forgot all about his aching fingers.

"When are you going to jump?" he asked. "That's what I came up to see. I was sorry to disappoint him, but I wasn't going to make any jump.

But he objected to that. "It said so in the papers," he said.

"I don't care," I answered. "I'm feeling sort of lazy today, and I'm just going to ride down the balloon. It's my balloon, and I guess I can do as I please about it. And, anyway, we're almost down now."

And we were, too, and sinking fast. And right there and then that youngster began to argue with me as to whether it was right for me to disappear the people, and to urge their claims upon me. And it was with a happy heart that I held up my end of it, justifying myself in a thousand different ways. Ill we shot over a

grove of eucalyptus trees and dipped to meet the earth.

"Hold on tight!" I shouted, swinging down from the trapeze by my hands in order to make a landing on my feet.

W skimmed past a barn, missed a mesh of clothesline, frightened the barnyard chickens into a panic, and rose up again clear over a haystack—all this almost quicker than it takes to tell. Then we came down in an orchard, and when my feet touched the ground I fetched up the balloon by a couple of turns of the trapeze around an apple tree.

I have had my balloon catch fire in mid air. I have hung on the cornice of a 10-story house, I have dropped like a bullet for 600 feet when a parachute was slow in opening; but never have I felt so weak and faint and sick as when I staggered toward the unscratched boy and gripped him by the arm.

"Tommy Dermott," I said when I had got my nerves back somewhat. "Tommy Dermott, I'm going to lay you across my knee and give you the greatest thrashing a boy ever got in the world's history."

"No you don't," he answered, squirming around. "You said you wouldn't if I held on tight."

"That's all right," I said, "but I'm going to, just the same. The fellows who go up in balloons are bad, unprincipled men, and I'm going to give you a lesson right now to make you stay away from them, and from balloons, too."

And then I gave it to him, and if it wasn't the greatest thrashing in the world, it was the greatest he ever got. But it took all the grit out of me, left me nerve broken, that experience. I canceled the engagement with the street railway company, and later on was in for gas. Gas is much the safer, anyway.—New York Independent.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

In Siberia a winter rainbow sometimes lasts almost all day. It is caused by fine particles of snow suspended in the air.

Unique properties are possessed by the River Tinto, in Spain. It petrifies the sand of its bed, and if a stone falls in the stream and alights upon another, in a few minutes they unite and become one stone. Fish cannot live in its waters.

In the city of Heidelberg, Germany, there is a building called the Church of the Holy Ghost, which is unique in its way, being the only church in the world in which the Protestant and Catholic services are held at the same time, a partition wall through the centre separating the two congregations.

The members of the United Methodist Free Church, Overton, near Wrexham, England, have hit upon a unique idea of raising the wind. It was decided to have an egg service, and members of the congregation were invited to bring eggs. Over 1000 which were placed in and around the pulpit, were brought and readily sold.

In the centre of a field at Waverhill, Suffolk, England, is a large flat stone covering the grave of a mare which died in 1852, inscribed as follows: "Polka. She never made a false step. Ecclesiastes 3, 19th verse." A reference to chapter and verse shows the following: "For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other." This is probably the only instance of a text from the Scriptures appearing on a memorial stone to an animal.

The monks of the Hospital of St. Jean de Dieu, Ghent, in their spare moments have decorated the walls of the hospital with exquisite pictures formed entirely of stamps. In these pictures are forests and streams, palaces and cottages; birds of gorgeous plumage perch on branches, gaily-colored butterflies flit about, snakes and lizards glide, and animals of all kinds figure in the landscapes. The monks have already used no fewer than 10,000,000 stamps in this unique form of art.

"Tonsorialists," Attention!

Some inventive genius has found a new use for cool air, and the patrons of a down-town barber shop are enjoying the fruits of his discovery. The invention is nothing less than the supplying of cool air to those who are in the barber's chair, and during the heated summer months barbers' chairs will probably become well-patronized resorts. The air is compressed into a little tank by a small pump that is run by a hydrant stream. From the tank a pipe runs along the shelf on which is kept the supply of tonsorial necessities. In front of each chair a tap is made, and from this runs a flexible tube to which is attached a small nozzle that is controlled by a pressure of the fingers and closes automatically when the pressure is released. When you are warm go to the barber shop and you can keep yourself cool while being shaved. Incidentally bottles, with receptacles to fit the end of the nozzle, in which is kept the bay rum, witch hazel, and other tonics, are used, the air taking the place of the old bulb arrangement to spray the tonic. In the barber shop mentioned the air is pumped from the ice house, and is a mighty refreshing.—Pittsburg Times.

The Truth of It.

Knicker—Jones is a charitable fellow. He has endowed beds in three hospitals.

Bocker—That's not philanthropy; it's foresight. He's just bought an automobile.—New York Sun.

BOLD INSURANCE FRAUD

THE EXTRAORDINARY STORY OF A LIFE COMPANY'S AGENT.

A Realistic Death and Burial of a Swindler Who Escaped from the Grave to Collect a Fifty Thousand Dollar Policy—One of the Strangest of Cases.

In 1869 I accepted a position with a life insurance company that was doing a large business throughout the country, writes T. F. McGrew, in the Country Gentleman. The issuing of large policies was seldom heard of at that time, and the collector who was able to secure an application for a large amount was the lion of the hour, and much sought after by other companies.

Lower Broadway was then the centre of attraction, and scarcely an evening passed without a visit to old Niblo's Garden, the corridors of the Astor house, the Metropolitan and St. Nicholas hotels. Here would congregate the young business men from the salesman to the man about town, and often acquaintances would be made during these rounds that threw considerable business my way.

While enjoying myself at Niblo's Garden one evening my attention was attracted to four persons in one of the boxes to the left of the stage. The party consisted of two ladies and two gentlemen, one of the latter about 40 years old, the other a younger man. Their appearance, mirth and apparent enjoyment of the play soon made them the centre of attraction to the audience, as well as to the actors on the stage. When the play was over my curiosity prompted me to watch this party, and as they left, to follow them to their hotel, where I had an opportunity of observing them more closely as they ate a late evening meal—I doing likewise at a nearby table. They all drank wine, the older and fiercelooking man drinking but little.

I dropped in at their hotel the following day, where I witnessed a fine game of billiards between the two men who had occupied the box the night before. Their skillful playing attracted considerable attention, and before the afternoon was gone I know the two men as Mr. Livingstone and his brother-in-law, Mr. White. During the week that followed I met them quite often, and was invited one Saturday night to accompany them to the theatre, where they introduced me to the two ladies before mentioned, as their wives.

This acquaintance became mutually pleasant, especially so between Mr. Livingstone and myself—he being interested in a patent which he was anxious to sell—and I was anxious to assist for the sake of the benefit that might come to me from its sale. We often talked insurance matters together, I having suggested that he might do worse than become an insurance agent.

He replied that there was too much hard work in it to suit him, that he had rather a nice income of his own, but had about concluded to give me an application for a policy, which he finally decided to do, provided he might divide up the yearly payments into two parts, and I to allow him one-half of my commission on his first payment.

You can scarcely judge of my surprise the next day when he requested me to make out an application for a \$50,000 policy. So delighted was I that I requested him to go with me at once to the office of the insurance company for an examination. This examination was most rigid, the company's physician pronouncing Mr. Livingstone to be the most worthy of insurance of any he had examined in several years. In the course of a few days the policy was issued, the money paid to the company in cash, of which I received my part, dividing the same with Mr. Livingstone, who took the policy and left for his home in St. Lawrence county, N. Y.

More than a thousand times did I wonder if the second payment would be made on that policy and I gain my commission. This anxiety proved to be needless, for at the proper time the company notified me that the payment had been made and I received my share of it.

About five months later the company received a telegram from the state of Massachusetts, where Mr. Livingstone had moved, informing them of his death. They immediately requested me to go there and investigate the matter and report to them, as they wished to pay the losses soon as possible if all were right, for the sake of the benefit which was sure to come to them by the payment of so large a policy.

I went to the town in Massachusetts where I saw Mr. Livingstone in his coffin, and I attended his funeral. These facts I telegraphed to the company and they immediately made preparations to pay the loss from the Boston office—where I went with the widow and Mr. and Mrs. White.

The whole matter was given the greatest prominence in the New England papers; and I remained in the New England territory for several weeks helping the local agents, who were glad to divide with me for the good work which I did for them. Before leaving the state I visited the town where Mr. Livingstone died and placed some flowers and a wreath on his grave, and as I turned away I wiped the tears from my eyes—having almost learned to love the man. Within the year that followed I noticed in the papers that three good-sized policies had been paid in different sections of the country, the prompt payment of which had helped to make the insurance business unusually good.

One very hot day on lower Broadway I was astonished to meet a man so strikingly like Livingstone that I fal-

tered for a moment, then passed on with the thought of how foolish to think of such a thing. Between that time and early fall I met this same man several times, and finally I could not resist the temptation of stopping him and saying: "You are so much like a friend of mine that the likeness haunts me. Is your name Livingstone?" "Oh, no," he replied, and remarked that people often resembled each other. I said: "If you had sandy hair and no mustache I could swear you were Livingstone." He replied: "But I have brown hair and a brown mustache." We then passed on.

My feelings compelled me to relate this circumstance to the manager of the company, and he then showed me a letter from the agent in St. Lawrence county, who wrote that he was sure he had seen Livingstone in disguise in his town. The manager requested me to go into St. Lawrence county and investigate, which I did. When I reached the county, the agent pointed out to me my friend of lower Broadway, who I thought had not seen me. I kept my eye upon him for the rest of the day, and had the pleasure of seeing him cross over into Canada, since which time he has not been seen.

Going back to the home company I was requested to go with one of the best detectives that they could employ, to the town where Livingstone had been buried, and investigate the matter. We found the grave of Livingstone in as perfect condition as when I had placed the wreath on it some two years before. Not being satisfied with this we went with a letter to the undertaker—which we claimed to be an order from Mrs. Livingstone to have him exhume the body and move it elsewhere for burial. He went with us to the grave and we saw it opened. The coffin was seemingly intact as when placed there. We then told the undertaker the truth regarding the matter, and he declined to proceed further with the work. We finally induced him to remove the cover from the upper part of the coffin, with the result that the body was not there—the coffin was empty.

If it had not been that both the undertaker and myself were present at the burial, nothing could have convinced us but that an empty coffin had been placed in the ground. The result prompted us to remove the coffin from the grave, and on so doing we found that the bottom of it was gone, and in digging downward we came to the top of a brick sewer which passed beneath the grave. Evidently these parties had calculated well, and were ready in the sewer to commence digging upward as soon as the earth began to fall into the grave from above. Investigation proved that this sewer was being constructed at the very time when Livingstone was buried. His comatose state must have been either aided by the physician or was so perfect as to deceive him, as it did the undertaker. We all remembered that at the time of his burial his wife positively refused to have the body embalmed or put on ice, nor would she allow any one to go where the body was unless the or Mr. White was present, and this hastened the burial.

Later investigation showed that these same parties had collected within the past two years four policies, using much the same methods—none of which were investigated, as the companies considered it wiser to accept their losses and continue in a profitable business undisturbed than to stir up trouble.

Since that time I have investigated and adjusted many claims for insurance companies, and my experience gained in these cases has aided me in preventing the collecting of many unjust claims against the companies; but never in all my 35 years of experience in the insurance business have I met four so expert in fraudulent practices as were the Livingstones and Whites.—T. F. McGrew.

His Accurate Throw.

He had been a brakeman on the G—N— railway, but, owing to injuries received in the service, had been given a less hazardous position as station agent at a small place on the line of the road. His entire wardrobe consisted of one suit of clothes, and he was patiently awaiting the next pay day, to get the wherewithal to purchase another.

The fast mail and express, which was due at midnight, was reported four hours late, so he thought he could get in a pretty fair night's rest by setting his alarm clock about an hour ahead of the time when the train was likely to come, as he needed little time to perform the only duty required of him, viz., to see that the sack of mail was properly hooked to the crane, so that the extending arm of the fast mail car would surely catch it as the train went by.

The alarm clock, of course, upon this occasion, failed to work, and he was awakened by the shrieking of the whistle of the engine as it warned the station of the coming of the train. He jumped for the sack and his trousers. Grabbed both, rushed out on the platform, made an accurate throw, and whiz! away sped the train. He turned to pick up his trousers, when he found he had thrown them upon the crane, and he had gone to sleep of the mail. As to whether or not he dressed in the mail sack—But enough said.—The Drawer, Harper's Magazine.

Amusement.

"You say you are making garden simply for amusement?"

"Yes," answered the patient man.

"But there isn't any amusement in spading and stooping for hours!"

"Yes, there is. It amuses my wife and children immensely."—Washington Star.

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SPORTING BREVITIES.

Lacrosse is a new game in Southern California colleges.

Harvard baseball players have defeated Yale by 10 to 4 at New Haven. Kamara has run the fastest mile of the year, 1:38 3-5, in the Sheepshead Bay, N. Y., Handicap.

Adam B. Gunn, of Buffalo, N. Y., has for the second year won the all around championship of the Amateur Athletic Union.

Henri Maurice Cannon, who years ago was known as a wrestler and strong man, died at San Francisco. He weighed 630 pounds and was a museum freak.

The English lawn tennis team, consisting of the Brothers Doherty and Fynn, are coming to the United States to contest for the American championships.

The University of Toronto and the University of California are said to be contemplating entries in the Inter-collegiate Regatta at Poughkeepsie in future races.

The stewards of the Paris Jockey Club have suspended the license of J. Reiff, the American jockey, for one month, for striking another jockey at the Rouen races.

A dispatch from Fort Erie, Canada, states that Jake Marklein's famous \$10,000 colt, Dr. Walker, was found dead in his stall at a stock farm near the Sheffield race track.

The inter-collegiate cross-country championships next fall will be the largest yet held. Both Harvard and Dartmouth will enter teams, and both are sure to figure in the award of the championships.

Dr. W. G. Grace is trying to introduce an innovation in English cricket, limiting the game to a single day. A trial match was played at Bristol, each side being limited to two hours and ten minutes, the side making the greatest number of runs in that time being the winner.

THE NATIONAL GAME.

White is at present the Phillies winning pitcher.

Outfielder Congalton, of the Chicago Club, has been given notice of his release.

Hillon, of Detroit, is the weakest hitting first baseman in the American League.

St. Louis is trying out an infielder named Allison and an outfielder named Foster.

Bradley leads the American League in home runs, Keister in triples and Lave Cross in doubles.

Although Lunblom has been with Cleveland since the season opened he has not pitched a full game.

Secretary Young has re-scheduled his umpires on account of the inability of Brooklyn to stomach O'Day.

Delahanty is the champion distance hitter of the American League. He leads in extra bases, with 117 to his credit.

Captain Robinson, of the Baltimore Club, says he will wager his year's salary that the Orioles will finish as good as third.

John McGraw, of the Baltimore American League Club, has been engaged to manage the New York nine at a salary of \$10,000 per annum.

Chicago has signed a Cincinnati amateur shortstop named Eddie Glenn; also First Baseman Fred Clark, of the Ogden Club, of the Utah League.

Conroy is the second Pittsburgh player this season who has been suspended for fighting on the field. Clarke, manager and captain, is the other one.

The Boston team has only one man among the first twenty-four batters of the National League, Tenney coming second among the regular players.

Parent, the Boston shortstop, has the lowest fielding average in the American League, .891, while George Davis leads the bunch with .960, a remarkable record for a shortstop.

Slavery Statistics.

The total white population of the South in 1860, according to the census, was 8,099,760, of which 384,864 owned the 3,953,696 slaves in the country, excluding 2 owned in Kansas, 15 in Nebraska, 29 in Utah and 18 in New Jersey. One man alone owned more than 1,000 slaves, and he was a South Carolina. Eighty-eight owners, in nine states, had more than 500 each, and 30 of the 80 were South Carolinians. One-fifth of all the slaveholders—or 77,322—owned but one slave each, and the greatest number of these small holders in one state was in Virginia, which had also the largest proportion of slaves, 480,865.

BUSINESS CARDS.

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Trusts in Japan.

The trust fever has broken out in far-away Japan. Six or seven of the largest silk houses have agreed, after long consideration of the matter, to "pool their interest." That our example has not sooner been followed there is due, no doubt, to the scarcity of factories where capital to any great amount is employed. There are many factories, but they are small, with more skilled individual manufacturers than there is capital. It is said that capital, as we speak of it, is not understood there at all; and yet a few of the more "Westernized" houses have made the break, and it is likely that others will follow.

Nearly 30,000 yards of sausage were devoured in the eleven days of the bock beer season at the Hofbrauhaus in Munich this spring. It made 162,500 usages.