

**A GOOD-NIGHT CARESS.**

A little shining ring lies in my hand,  
Not gold, nor studded with gems, but just  
instead.  
A precious ring of sunny yellow hair  
Cut from my darling's head.  
What art thou like, without thy frame of light,  
The aureole that made thy little face  
Like to the cherub's face which in Heaven  
Are found in fairest place?  
How many times I've stooped to kiss and bless  
The fairest little head in all my world!  
To-night I bow my own with silent tears,  
And kiss one little curl.  
Robbed of thy crown, thou'rt still my little  
king.  
To whom I bend in worship, praying yet  
That the most kindly Giver I may not  
In love for thee forget.  
What thou hast been to me, my little lad,  
Of sunshine and of bloom in darkest days,  
Only the Father knows, who plants some  
flower  
Along life's roughest ways.  
Out of my arms, far out beyond my reach,  
The swift years bear thee, but my yearning  
heart  
Can never make of life a blessed thing  
From thee, dear boy, apart.  
Till life's last day, thy tender, winsome face,  
Set with the blue and shine of heavenly  
smiles,  
And sweet with childish graces, will remain  
Pictured before my eyes.  
God keep thee, bless thee, love thee, little lad!  
I cannot fold thee always, safe from harm:  
Give him, dear Shepherd, through life's weary  
years,  
The shelter of Thine arm.  
Sharp griefs will come, and tears, unlike to  
these  
That make thy sweet eyes lovelier as they  
fall,  
Will dim thy sight and furrow thy fair cheek:  
Such tears must come to all.  
But thou, my lad, be victor over all  
Life's sharp temptations and its bitterest  
pains:  
And bravely learn that earthly loss may mean  
To thee Heaven's highest gain.  
Again, God bless thee, oh, my little lad!  
I bend once more to kiss this shining tress,  
And give my love, unmeasured and untold,  
With this good-night caress.  
—Youth's Companion.

**KULPARKER'S BALLOON.**

BY LUKE SHARP.

Some time in his life every man invents a flying machine, and it is well if he gets safely through this mania while he is yet a boy. If the fever takes him later in life he is certain to lose money and reasonably sure of breaking his neck. It is said that there is no law to prevent a man making a fool of himself, but in this case there is, and it is the law of gravity, which was passed previous to the time this country took to making statutes, and it has never been interfered with by legislative amendments, nor has it been overturned by the action of a higher court, except, perhaps, in the case of Elijah.

Most men who go in for ballooning take a tumble before they get through with it, but Kulparker came to disaster through remaining on the ground, which was a unique experience in the aerial business. I met Kulparker at a health resort. He was there, he said, for his nerves. His nerves had gone back on him. He read to me an article from Smiley's Microscopical Journal, which article said that if you killed a bundle of nerves and then got them to die, you could see them through any well-regulated microscope. It was evident that Kulparker was now as much interested in the subject of nerves as he had formerly been in balloons.

"My nerves went wrong a few weeks ago," he told me, "and by the irony of fate the doctor informed me that I should go to Malaga in Spain and that place would put me all right."  
"Why the irony of fate?" I asked; "and why didn't you go to Malaga instead of coming to this place?"  
He sighed and said it was all on account of the Kulparker automatic balloon. When he said this I was in the unenviable position of the questioner who wanted to know how the other man lost his leg, and was informed that it had been bitten off. I naturally wanted to hear about the balloon, and Kulparker was good enough to oblige me, the account he gave being at once an explanation of how he lost his nerve and why he dared not go to Malaga.

Some men invent flying machines merely because they want to fly; others, however, have humanitarian objects in view, desiring to confer great benefits upon their fellow beings. Kulparker belonged to the latter class. He not only wanted to bestow lasting benefits, but also dynamite, upon his fellow creatures. It would be a little rough on humanity at the beginning—even Kulparker admitted this—but, as it would ultimately abolish war, he thought the experiment worth trying as long as the dynamite did not fall on his own head. Inventors are somewhat prone, while benefiting the species, to take good care that they do not themselves come in for any of the disadvantages. Such was Kulparker's intention, but it missed fire.

The Kulparker automatic was very much like other balloons except that it had a propeller attached which was worked by compressed air. The compressed air scheme was very ingenious, if I understand it aright. If what Kulparker says is true you can, with proper machinery, compress something like a continent of air into the size of a drop of water. This drop you can put into a strong but light aluminum boiler, if I may call it so, and the drop expands into a workable compressed air that will run a motor. If, therefore, you have a bottle full of drops of compressed air, and an automatic arrangement that will allow a drop to escape into the boiler as needed, you have at your disposal a tremendous amount of energy stored in small compass and of comparatively no weight at all, which is very desirable when you are dealing with a balloon. The motor worked the fan which sent the balloon in any given direction.

So much for the motive power. The arrangement consisted of a tube through which was dropped at satisfactory intervals regulated by a clock-work mech-

anism, a dynamite cartridge which exploded when it hit the earth. The balloon, when fully loaded, contained fifty dynamite cartridges, and Kulparker's idea was that the balloon could be sent in any direction high above an army, dropping dynamite down upon the troops from its elevation above rifle shot, thus bringing discomfort, confusion, and perhaps annihilation, upon the enemy. Kulparker believed that the moment his balloon got a fair windings upon any warlike body of men, no country would, after the trial, open hostilities against any other nation. Thus war, and also the first army on which the balloon opened out, would be blotted from the face of the earth.

After much experimenting, Kulparker at last had a successful trial of his automatic balloon in the open country some distance west of New York. He used wooden plugs instead of dynamite cartridges, and they came down all right at the proper intervals, although they nearly sacrificed several industrious farmers who did not know what struck them, and who vainly searched for the mischievous boys whom the indignant agriculturist thought were throwing the blocks of wood.

Unfortunately, at the time the automatic balloon was completed there was no really first-class war going on, and Kulparker knew of no people, tired of life, who wished to have the balloon tried upon them. The China-Japan struggle had been brought to a close without the aid of the automatic, and Europe was in a state of profound peace. However, it is hard to discourage a real inventor, so Kulparker took a glance over the universe, and realized that although it was but a one-horse affair at the best, the Cuban rebellion offered him the only chance of a satisfactory test for the balloon. His sympathies were with the rebels, as all our sympathies are, and so he opened communications with the Cuban revolt committee in New York. He saw there a most polished gentleman, Maj. Kotanzen, who listened with interest to what Kulparker had to say. The inventor wanted twenty thousand dollars for his patent and the sample balloon. Maj. Kotanzen said he would gladly pay double, provided the balloon did all that was claimed for it. If, therefore, Mr. Kulparker would go to Cuba with his balloon and wipe out a Spanish corps or two the money would be promptly paid to him, and they would finish up the rebellion in brilliant style with the patent automatic.

Kulparker demurred at this. He had no desire to visit Cuba at that moment. There was danger of being captured by a Spanish cruiser before they reached the land, and in that case, with the balloon and dynamite in his possession, Kulparker did not rightly see what excuse he could make to the Spanish government.

The major blandly pointed out that the Spanish cruisers occupied themselves with capturing innocent merchant vessels of numerous neutral nations, thus keeping the government at Madrid busy apolojizing, but that they had never hit upon a real filibustering schooner, and that the rebels up to date had had no trouble in landing all the munitions of war they wanted. If the revolt committee sent over the balloon without anyone to work it who understood its habits and customs, the trial would doubtless be a failure, and so no good would accrue to anybody, while the Spanish troops, who sadly needed amusements on the desolate plains, would be deprived of the fireworks displayed which would bring so much excitement into their camp, and, by blowing them up with dynamite, prevent their dying of ennui or fever. The committee were willing to pay Kulparker's expenses to Cuba and back, and, in the event of success, to give him, in cash, double what he asked, which offer, the major politely insisted, was all that any reasonable man could ask.

If wars had been plentiful, it is doubtful that Kulparker would have gone to Cuba, but, as every one knows, they were deplorably scarce, so it was that, or nothing.

Kulparker was put aboard a lugger from a deserted sand dune in Florida, together with his balloon and about one thousand rounds of dynamite cartridges. It was an anxious voyage, he knowing that there was such a quantity of sensitive explosive stuff in the hold, but the major proved to have been right about what he said of the vigilance of the Spanish cruisers. The lugger landed without molestation in a little cove on the island, and scouts were sent out to find the whereabouts of the rebel army, or some part of it. At last the deadly apparatus was loaded on mules, and thus they made for the hills, where information had been received that Gen. Carambo and his men were stationed. Carambo was not in good humor when the outfit arrived. He had just had a brush with the Spaniards, who were encamped in the valley, and, although both sides had telegraphed to the world at large that each had achieved a great victory, Gen. Carambo did not appear satisfied with the result and had taken to the hills, while the Spaniards were busy contracting yellow fever in the valley.

When Gen. Carambo found that the committee had sent him a new-fangled balloon and a tenderfoot to work it, when what he wanted was something to drink, he made no attempt to conceal his anger. He wanted gunpowder, not dynamite; in fact, he had never heard of dynamite before.

It did not need Carambo's anger to frighten Kulparker. He was already nearly scared to death at the company he found himself in. They seemed to him a ragged, unkempt assortment of colored brigands; even the general himself had no boots on, and the villainous-looking grins with which they were armed, added to their terrifying appearance.

Gen. Carambo curtly ordered him to get his bag of tricks in working order and let him see what there was in it, warning him at the same time if there was any skulduggery about it Kulparker would be instantly shot, and the general would do himself the happiness of apologizing to the United States for the action later on. With trembling hands Kulparker got his gas machine in operation and inflated the balloon, while the rebels looked on with scarcely-disguised contempt. At last the balloon arose with the fan whirling and moved against a light zephyr toward the Spanish camp. Its unfortunate inventor watched it with intense interest, for he felt that his life depended upon its actions.

"How soon will it begin to shoot?" asked Gen. Carambo.  
"It ought to begin in about ten minutes," said Kulparker, looking at his watch.  
"Very well. If it doesn't commence then, we will," replied the general, emphatically. "We are not here to be trifled with."  
To inspire confidence in the inventor's mind the rebel general ordered a file of his ruffians to cover Kulparker with their guns and to fire when he gave the order. Much as the unlucky scientist wished for an adequate test for his balloon, he did not yearn for it under these conditions, and it is probably the only case on record where a man on the solid earth was in more danger than if he had been up in the flying machine. Kulparker watched his invention with much anxiety, and it soon became evident that it was attracting attention from the Spaniards underneath. Puffs of smoke were seen in the valley below. They were firing at it.

All at once Kulparker saw something drop from the balloon. It could not be a cartridge, for the balloon was not due to begin firing; besides, he could not have seen a cartridge drop at that distance. It came fluttering down very slowly and once as it overturned in the air he realized that it was the fan which propelled the automatic. A rifle bullet had doubtless deranged the machinery and the fan had whirled itself off. The balloon hung motionless in midair for a moment, then slowly the light wind began to drive it back over the rebel camp. Kulparker's hair began to bristle with the horror of the situation. He was between two fires, for if the balloon began to drop dynamite he would run an excellent chance of being blown to pieces, while the moment Carambo noticed that it was returning, the suspicious wretch would see a plot in the whole scheme, and would order his prisoner shot.

Gen. Carambo had taken Kulparker's watch on the plea that he had none and wished to time the firing. The inventor did not expect to have his watch returned, and subsequent events justified this suspicion, but he now looked anxiously at the general, who was busy studying the face of the watch, wondering what would happen when he turned his gaze upwards and saw the balloon returning.

The automatic opened the ball by going into business on its own account. A shell dropped from it struck about half a mile down the hill. The explosion was terrific and startled the whole camp. Carambo slipped the watch in his pocket with an oath and it was only a few minutes before he took in the situation. The second shell dropped perceptibly nearer and rent the rock some distance below them.  
"It is a plot," yelled the general. "It is a minion of the Spaniards, as I thought from the first. Shoot the low scoundrel! Attention! Fire!"  
The balloon answered his command, but not the soldiers. They, frozen with terror, were watching the approach of the aerial monster, which was steadily dropping bombs and raising consecutive earthquakes, with the accurate mathematical precision of a minute gun.  
"Shoot, do you hear!" shouted Carambo. The men tremulously raised their carbines, but the balloon got its work in first. The dynamite struck within a few hundred yards of where they stood, and the concussion knocked down more of the squad and sent panic and flying rock amongst the rest. Carambo was stunned by a stone. Kulparker had flung himself face down on the ground and spent an eternity of wild suspense wondering whether he would be struck first by the bullets of the brigands or the dynamite hitting him in the small of the back, for the balloon seemed directly overhead. As he turned over after the crash he rolled down the hill for some distance, and there he flatters himself he lost his senses with the tumble, although I don't think he had any too much sense when he undertook to invent such an idiotic contrivance as the automatic balloon. The balloon floated gently over the ocean, and it is to be hoped in the interest of the mercantile commerce of the world that the dynamite bombs are all spent. There are dangers enough at sea as it is, without an irresponsible gas bag dropping shell unexpectedly on a vessel's deck from an altitude of half a mile.

Kulparker managed to work his way back to the coast, where he got into his lugger again, and the crew, not knowing what had happened, indeed him according to instructions on the Florida sands once more.

The Spanish government has made a requisition for the body of Kulparker, whether the body is dead or alive. The United States began searching for him and so he thought it best to take a trip to Europe and wait till his balloon rolls by.

Thus it comes about that Kulparker's nerves have all gone wrong, and that he dare not go to Malaga, in Spain, to have them put right again.—Detroit Free Press.

—They have a good joke just at present on a well-known lawyer who is noted for his absent-mindedness. He went up his own stairs the other day, and seeing a notice on his own door "Back at five," sat down to wait for himself.—Harper's Round Table.

—They that on glorious ancestors, enlarge produce their debt, instead of their discharge.—Young.

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