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ADRIFT IN MIDAIR.

It was near midnight and the gates of the exposition would soon be closed. In the various pavilions, with their multitudinous attractions, the orchestras were attacking the "God save the Queen" of an altogether conventional loyalty without which no English ceremony ends. And as, with the aim of getting nearer to the Macquarie fort, where I thought more easily to regain my vessel in the roadstead, I had made the tour of the galleries. I found myself unexpectedly before the circular grating of the captive balloon.

Flaming, but beneath the force of the breeze which had arisen in the evening quivering greatly, a line of gas permitted me to set to read upon the triumphal panel of the monumental gate: "Government of New South Wales, Australian and universal exposition of Sydney. Captive balloon, after the model of the Paris exposition. Visitors ascend 400 yards!"

One hundred yards more than at the Place du Carrousel! I felt myself led into temptation.

With my hand directed mechanically toward my vest pocket I had approached still nearer. It was the ticket seller for the aerial voyage who decided me by this apostrophe: "Make haste, gentlemen; it is the last ascension of the evening!"

Resolutely I threw him the half pound as the price of the passage, and introduced myself into the ring encumbered with chairs. A loose footbridge formed the communication between the platform and the car suspended over a ditch. I passed across it amid the resounding accents of the brasses of a flourish, and scarcely was I installed in the huge osier basket when the footbridge was withdrawn and its door of the car, which was padded on the inside was closed again. The enormous cable which alone was to bind us to the earth began to unroll very rapidly upon the command of the captain.

It was my first aerostatic debut, and as I ascended on board the Condor of the Andes, I did not fail to experience a certain apprehension, altogether nervous, a sort of involuntary fright, which by reasoning and force of will I was able to control. I had at first a great sensation of emptiness; my respiration seemed cut off, and as I know that I was susceptible to vertigo I only ventured with precaution to look without over the elbow rest of the car.

Wholly contrary to my expectations I found myself instantly at ease. The side of the osier basket, mounting as high as my breast, seemed to me sufficient protection against my ambition, and, completely reassured, I realized that I was restored to myself.

From that time I looked toward the earth, from which the balloon was moving away with a rapidity which I judged to be giddy, although it was methodically regulated by the number of turns of the gigantic hobbin of the windless. In the depths of the night below me I sought to distinguish the different streets of the city over which we were hovering; and the greater of less intensity of the lights served me as an indicating mark. I made out with exactitude the park of the exposition, the palace of the governor, Lord Loftus, with its double range of candelabra, then George and King streets, then Circular quay.

"Honored monsieur said the captain addressing me, whom, on seeing me step into the car, he had immediately recognized from my uniform as an officer of the French cruiser, "do you seed own there in the midst of the roadstead the position lights of your ship?"

"Yes, yes! I see it captain; monsieur's French man-of-war?"

Getting ahead of mine this reply was thrown by the very fresh voice of a slight and slender woman, who was touching me with her skirt, and whom I had not yet noticed. But I could not judge of the features of the unknown; the balloon which cast a shade over us and seemed like an immense sinister mass of vellum above our heads prevented me from doing so. Nevertheless from the mere sound of her voice I divined that she was quite young; her diction and accent undeniably proclaimed that she was of good family and a lady.

I then had the curiosity to ascertain how many travelling companions were with me. I walked through the circular gallery which below the hope of the netting the car formed around a large empty space, but I found no other traveller. And not without stumbling awkwardly over the bags of ballast of the Condor of the Andes, I speedily returned to the point of departure.

We were still ascending.

"Three hundred and ten yards!" said the captain, sententiously, pointing out to me the registering barometer fastened close to a small lantern to one of one of the ropes.

The breeze had grown strong; two to three times the enormous balloon of varnished taffeta which was bearing us away essayed wildly and gave a furious shock to the car;

"The cable can resist a traction of

100,000 tons," said the captain.

"It is truly magnificent!" tranquilly uttered the exceedingly calm voice of the lady passenger.

I was forced to admit to myself that blood did not circulate so coldly. The excitement made it even rush back to my heart. But I stiffened myself energetically and leaned over the interior void to thoroughly assure myself that we had resumed the straight line.

"Three hundred and sixty yards!" announced the aeronaut.

Scarcely had he spoken when the balloon stopped for a second as if it had struck against some very soft and elastic invisible buffer. Then with a bound, it shot again into space with an impetuosity wholly new and after a shock attended with vibrations so violent that we all fell on the bags of sand.

Both the female passenger and I began to ask questions.

"What does this mean? What is it?—What has happened?"

The captain who was the first to recover his feet, leaned over the void.

"The cable is broken," said he. "We are loose!"

Secretly frightened, but unwilling to let it be seen, I said:

"This is a captive balloon; will it be strong enough to prevent us to land in safety?"

"There are only three of us and the balloon was inflated for thirty. That's the medium number of passengers. You will have the annoyance of passing two or three hours more than you calculated in my company and doubtless the inconvenience of not getting back to Sydney until to-morrow morning."

"In that case," I replied, "I am doubly delighted at the accident; the ascension had grown exciting, and we could not desire a more courteous pilot than yourself. Is it not so, madam?"

"Miss if you please," rectified the very slight and slender lady, "Miss Arabella Lipton, at your service." And she added: "But I shall miss my last car for Woolloomooloo!"

From new vibrations the captain conjectured that we were carrying suspended below us nearly the whole of the broken cable. Its weight visibly impeded the ascent of the Condor of the Andes. And there was reason to fear that on the descent it would occasion very grave damages.

The aeronaut was, fortunately, prompt in decision. Like a true captain he armed himself with his penknife, and hoisting himself over the interior abysses of the osier basket, strove to saw away the thick rope.

"How high are we?" he asked without interrupting his difficult and perilous task.

"Twelve hundred and twenty-five yards," responded Miss Arabella, getting ahead of me again.

Panting greatly, the aeronaut added addressing himself to me:

"As soon as the cable is detached with a bound we will ascend to two—"

The sentence remained unfinished.

At a slight cry I turned around, ceasing to observe the barometer. Over the gaping void I could no longer see either the man or the cable. In the captain's supreme effort, on drawing the other, both had fallen! Above us, toward the profound night, still stretched the unfathomable space.

I had not much time for pity; the balloon suddenly freed, scaled the accessible with a prodigious bound! And without any idea of aerial navigation, lost in space and darkness, I found myself alone with an ignorant young girl, as unconscious as she of the danger, unable to attempt the slightest manoeuvre.

Mute, but terrified—I divined it without seeing her, for her fingers had plucked their nails into my garments and flesh—Miss Arabella had seized my arm. Suddenly she let go her hold to stoop, and I saw that she was throwing our sand overboard.

I was about to grasp her unceremoniously by the waist—logically convinced that unbalanced we would mount higher yet—when of themselves her arms fell. I realized that she was hurt. A prey also to very painful uneasiness, I cast a glance of anguish at the barometer. The atmospheric pressure had sensibly diminished—we had passed 4000 yards! In the air the oxygen had rarified. I experienced a sensation I had already felt on high summits.

"Miss," called I, striving to raise up the young girl, but it was in vain, for I had no strength. My legs trembled, my head sank upon my shoulders, I no longer felt the existence of my body.

Crawling, I dragged myself to the barometer and saw with terror that the thermometer had gone down to zero—338. That was the equivalent of 6500 yards in height, the altitude of Chimborazo or of the Kouen-Loun chain. By the light of the little lantern I noticed that my hands were growing black and swelling. My pulse counted the improbable number of 130 to 140 beatings. Simultaneously with an insupportable desire to sleep, the forerunner of asphyxia, cadaveric insensibility was gaining possession of me.

I had, however, the will to take the little lantern in my hand, but on stretching up to reach it I found myself enveloped by terrible cold. Ice coated the Condor of the Andes. The mercury of the thermometer had fallen to 24 degrees below zero.

I then clearly comprehended that the end had come, and, without further striving to recover, closed my eyes and gave myself up.

At the horizon, low and distinct,

a brilliant and blue light was appearing.

When I returned to the knowledge of things a magnificent moon was illuminating the night. My eyes, turning mechanically to the rim of the car, distinguished a small silk balloon fastened to a strap. It bore a label: "Oxygen at 75 per cent." And it was salvation! My scientific attainments enabled me to understand this—salvation almost at my hand! A few inhalations of that oxygenated air would restore me with life, with strength.

I seized the little balloon as quickly as was capable of doing, and, carefully unscrewing its stopper, applied it to my mouth to breathe. I afterward thought of Miss Arabella and introduced the slender neck between her lips, which I saw were horribly black and swollen.

Greedy, as she returned to life, I took it from her again, and then ensued between us a strange struggle of ferocious, famished creatures.

Very far below us vast undulations shone, which at that height, I judge to be the Blue Mountains. We therefore had been carried about 50 miles to the west of Sydney.

Cool now and completely restored, I was considering the quickest way in which to end our adventure. The more so, as saved from asphyxia and strengthened, Miss Lipton kept shouting in my ears in a deafening tone: "I want to descend, Monsieur Frenchman! I repeat to you that I want to descend!"

Parbleu! I also wanted to descend, but I could not in reason burst our balloon under pretext of showing myself gallant toward her.

Without losing time in answering her I strove to manoeuvre the ropes, I pulled them one after the other, hoping thus to discover that which communicated with the escape valve. And I evidently succeeded, for Miss Arabella exclaimed, clapping her hands:

"We are descending, monsieur, the balloon is descending!"

We were really descending, as could be told by the strong shocks of the car, and again I pulled at the rope, but much more delicately, in order to avoid a too sudden reaction.

"What a gentleman you are," enthusiastically exclaimed Miss Arabella. "What you are doing for me is so kind! But to think of our having been together all this time without having been introduced!"

And later, when the anchor, which I had finally succeeded in casting overboard, caught in a vineyard in the environs of Tonggabee, she threw her arms around my neck and said to me between two kisses: "Monsieur, since I owe you my life, the introduction can be considered as made!"

I have often seen Arabella since then. Indeed, I see her almost constantly, for she is now my wife, and I must admit that I love her dearly.—San Francisco Call.

WINTER FOOD OF CATTLE.

Advantages of Mixing Cobmeal With Cornmeal.

Whether corn cobs should be ground and fed with ground corn is a matter that has called out much discussion. Certainly, if the farmer can grind the whole ear, and feed it to his stock, he will effect quite a saving, and as corn mills are now adapted for that purpose the grinding may be but a small item compared with the advantages secured. As the cob differs in composition from the grain, it is claimed that a pound of cob meal, fed with the meal from the grain taken from the cob, is more valuable as food than the meal alone. It is admitted, however, that the feeding value of cobs alone is less than that of wheat straw. The superior effects of the mixture of cobmeal and cornmeal are due somewhat to the fact that the particles of cob keep the particles of cornmeal apart, and thus facilitate digestion.

COMPOSITION OF CORN COBS.

Professor H. B. Armsby, of the Pennsylvania Experiment Station, gives this subject his attention in a letter to The Pittsburg Stockman, and he has for several years worked at experiments with corn and corn cobs. After repeated analyses he finds the cob to consist of 10.68 per cent. of water, 1.41 per cent. of ash (mineral matter), 2.37 per cent. of protein (nitrogenous matter), 0.52 per cent. of fat, 30.13 per cent. of fibre and 54.89 per cent. of nitrogen free extract (equivalent to the same amount of starch). The nitrogen free extract, while serving to create fat, heat and force, does not build up the tissues, that service being performed by the protein. Cornmeal contains 15 per cent. of water, 1.4 per cent. of ash, 9.2 per cent. of protein, 1.9 per cent. of crude fibre, 68 per cent. of nitrogen free extract, and 3.8 per cent. of fat. The crude fibre is believed to undergo a sort of fermentation in the digestive canal, and its actual feeding value is unknown.

COMPOSITION OF CORN AND COBS.

Corn and cob meal, mixed, contains 10.7 per cent. of water, 1.5 per cent. of ash, 8.5 per cent. of protein, 6.6 per cent. of crude fibre, 61.8 per cent. of nitrogen free extract and 3.5 per cent. of fat, according to the experiments and reports by the Department of Agriculture. The real value of this composition, however, depends on the cost of the labor of grinding. On some farms it will pay to use the mixture of corn and cobs, as the facilities for grinding are ample, and during the winter employment can be afforded some who are otherwise idle. Cobs are rich in potash, and grinding them so as to permit of their use by animals enables the farmer not only to procure whatever nutrition they may contain, but also conveys them into the manure heap, where they will return more to the soil than if reduced to ashes. Farmers who have ground corn and cobs report favorably of the mixture, and the practice of grinding the whole ear prevails largely in some sections.

TALKS WITH FARMERS.

Bran as Food—Good Stock and Plenty of it.

Wheat bran as a fertilizer can be used for fruit trees or on the other crops, but it is cheaper to first use it as food. A ton of wheat bran contains about 170 pounds of phosphoric acid, estimated as phosphate of lime, 32 pounds of potash, and 57 pounds of nitrogen. The estimates vary, however, according to the quality of the bran and the process of converting wheat into flour.

Advice to care for the cattle is usually heeded, but the savings in feeding the cattle may be lost in the manure. It is as detrimental to the farmer to expose his manure to heavy rains as to fail to shelter his cattle. When the manure is so situated as to receive the drippings of the barn the injury is increased, as the little black rivulets that flow away must find an outlet somewhere, and they soon make channels which permit the easier flow the succeeding rains the result being that the soluble portions of the manure are wasted and less fertility remains for the farm.

If there is any surplus of food procure more stock. If an animal that is fatted for market pays only for the food and labor the profit will be in the manure. Farmers often make a profit when they really believe they have only secured expenses. The riches of the farm are in the manure, and any farmer who makes manure a speciality will find his crops larger every year.

In those sections where there is no creamery the farmers can utilize their winter evenings in discussing the advantages (or disadvantages) of a creamery.

Good stock is the most economical. It may cost just as much to feed a cow that produced 100 pounds of butter a year as to keep one that produces 400 pounds. There is also a saving of labor and shelter, and the capital required for the purpose of dairying will be fully as large when the herd is a poor one as when the best cows are used.

Milk, butter and eggs are articles that bring in something every day. One does not have to give credit or wait for a rise in the market. The returns are cash, and help to bridge over the time from one harvest to the next.

The farmer cannot do without the middleman. But for the middleman he would be compelled to take frequent journeys to market, and the expenses would be greater. The middleman performs many services that would be costly to the farmer, and he is also a consumer of the farmer's products. Business ramifies in all directions and it is the employment provided in each class that gives the purchasing power, and facilitates the handling and sale of produce.

Home industry can be best taught on the farm. The farmer buys a large number of articles that he could produce. He grows the cheapest crops, overlooking the fact that it is the labor that sells. The more costly the product the larger the profit in proportion to the expense incurred, as such articles are not as plentiful, while the cheaper crops require more land for their production and are sooner affected by changes in prices.

Sunny Days of Boyhood.

One of the happiest remembrance of the Southern gentlemen is of the sunny days of boyhood when he crawled under the bed and slept with the big water-melons.—Galveston News.

JEWELRY

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Lindsay, Jan. 3rd, 1894.—1-f.

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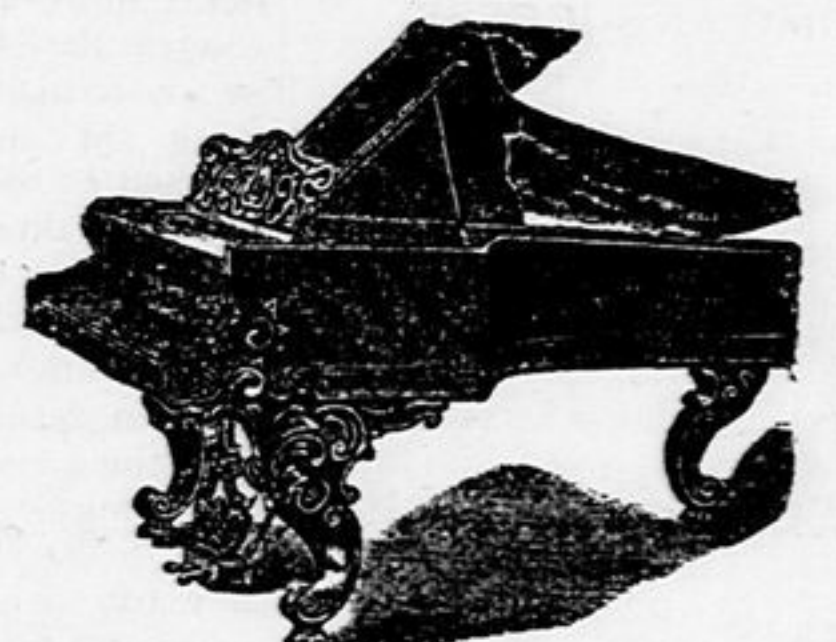
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