NAPOLEON'S STAR.

BY C. C. HAHN.

[Napoleon called himself "the child of destiny," and said that he always saw a star before him which led him forward over the battlefield, to victory.]

A star before me shining bright
Leads me along.
In daytime as in darkest night,
The steady rays of crimson light
Before me shine,
And where it leads, there I follow,
Follow to success.

It leads me to the battlefield,
And in the fray
Shines clear and bright before my eyes,
And from the field I homeward march
A conqueror,
And where it leads, there I follow,
Follow to success.

It may be kings are in my way,
It matters not,
Thrones easily are overthrown
And kingdoms fall in dust whene'er
My star leads on,
And where it leads, there I follow,
Follow to success.

CHICAGO, Ill.

A DARING AERONAUT.

The Thrilling and Perilous Exploits of Thomas S. Baldwin, of Quincy, Ill.

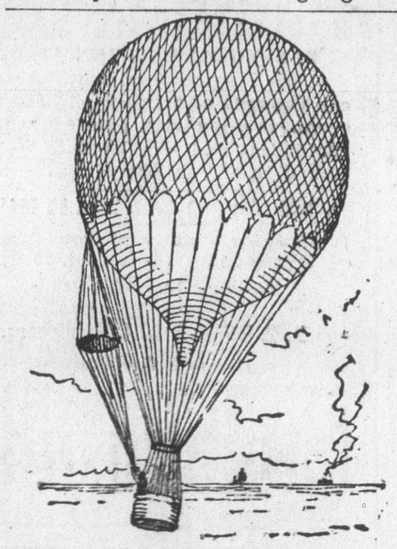
Leaping from a Balloon and Falling Thousands of Feet to the Earth.

A novelty has been supplied to the lovers of excitement. Whether it falls under the head of aeronautics, gymnastics, or simply daring, does not seem easy to determine. It certainly involves all three, although the man who supplies the novelty is as cool as if he were folding a napkin.

Perhaps an explanation of the feat may enable the reader to appreciate better how it should be determined. A young fellow twenty-seven years of age ascends by means of a balloon, sometimes as high as five thousand feet, throws himself over from the basket and drops to the ground. Happily, he is assisted by a parachute, or else he would not have dropped but once, and that once would have been too often.

Thomas S. Baldwin, of Quincy, Ill., is the name of the young man. He traveled for several years with a circus as a professional gymnast, then took to tight-rope walking, and finally to ballooning. His first jump from a balloon was made in January of this year at San Francisco. He jumped from a height of one thousand feet. This was enough to thrill twenty-five thousand people; but it was only the modest beginning. At Syracuse September last he had attained an elevation of five thousand feet before he switched off on the parachute route.

Mr. Baldwin remained in New York a few days after this before going West.



IN MID AIR.

What he has to say about this feat which he so successfully practices, may prove of interest to the very large number who will never know from experience what such a journey means.

"What led you into this hazardous kind of feat?" was quite a natural question to begin with.

"Well, I am fond of things that are daring. I have been a gymnast performer for some time, and also a tight-rope walker. I was very much interested in ballooning, and accounts which I read of several descents from them by means of parachutes took my fancy. A Frenchman did it all right, but an Englishman tried it and came to grief. He was killed. The parachute collapsed. I gave the matter a good deal of thought, trying to work out the thing. Then I practiced before attempting the very high jump. There is scientific pr nciple enough in the feat to see what the effect ought to be of such an experiment. But there is enough uncertainty about it to make it a little dangerous. There is always the possibility of the parachutes collapsing, and if it does that at any height, why, it would be a miracle if a fellow escaped death. He would get crushed to pieces when he struck the ground."

"What sort of a parachute do you use?"

"I have used several kinds. I have them made of Wamsutta muslin, and without any ribs. Sometimes they have seven or eight ribs. It is about sixteen or eighteen feet in diameter. The cords which are attached to it come down and fasten to an iron ring. The ring is what I hold on to when I drop."

"How is the parachute arranged in the balloon?"

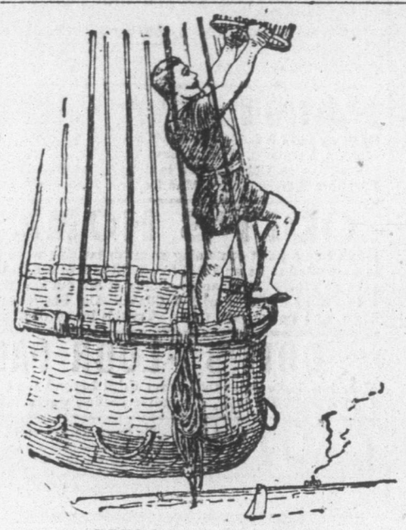
"It is fastened by the top to the side of the balloon so that the ring hangs somewhat below the top of the car. It is tied so that the weight of my body when it bears on the fastenings breaks them loose, and the parachute is free of the balloon. That I have to let go, and two or three times I have nearly lost it, and the poor old thing shows the wounds it has received where it is patched up. But it is a trusty old ship, though I mean to get a new one for next season."

"Well, tell me just how you make your arrangements."

"I get a good hold of the iron ring. That is pretty important, you can bet. It isn't easy to make any change on the way down, and if you let go, why, then you won't make any more jumps, that is all. But I am not afraid of losing my hold because I have not good enough grip. My hands are pretty strong, and I can hold on well enough. The dangerous part of this holding on is that my arms get strained so through the wrenching they get from the swaying motion, the oscillations, that sometimes the strain is very great and they become completely exhausted. After I have gripped on to the ring, I get carefully over the rim of the basket, and then drop. There is no need to spring out. It is not so good, because the straighter down one goes the easier it is for the parachute to fill out and be sustained by the air."

"What are your sensations on the way down?"

"The first hundred feet are the worst. The parachute does not fill at once, and so it is like falling sheer through that much space. And that is another reason why the drop has to be made a little carefully; otherwise I might get turned over, and though, of course, if I hold on, 'twill come all right, but the wrench on my arms would be violent, and the thing would shake more. It shakes quite enough now, I assure you, although I have improved a little on it in that respect. You can fancy what a fall of a hundred feet might be, though it is pretty hard to imagine it if you have never been through the thing. The sensation is not altogether pleasant. It is a giddy sinking through the air. The condensation of the atmosphere under the parachute, which is shaped like an umbrella, to catch the air more readily, brings me up suddenly. It is almost like a jerk, and to people looking at me I seem to stop for a moment. After that the descent is more gradual, though it is quite fast enough for ordinary purposes. The rate of descent is about 1,200 feet a minute. I have given the point of resistance which the parachute offers with a certain weight and when it is of a certain diameter a good deal of study. The sensation is pleasant enough in summer. Floating down through the air in that way is cool. It is something like coming down a rapidly running elevator. But your legs are free, and you feel your body with nothing around it.

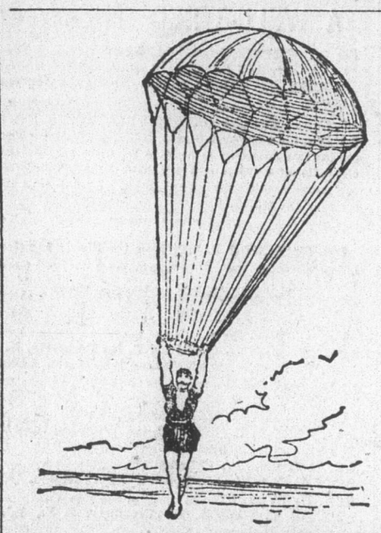


PREPARING TO JUMP.

"The oscillations begin, however, and I am swayed from side to side like a pendulum. Sometimes I have been swung out at an angle of fifty or sixty degrees. The top part of the parachute, the umbrella part, does not sway in this manner. If it fills out all right there is nothing to fear there. But sometimes it does not, and then matters are ticklish."

"How do you land—lightly, or is it hard to escape getting bruised?"

"Generally, I have landed without doing myself any harm. When I see I am within six or seven feet of the ground I drop. I can land pretty well on my toes, and if I feel a momentum which would be likely to throw me violently down, I try to fall on my right side, and sometimes I turn three or four somersaults. This breaks the

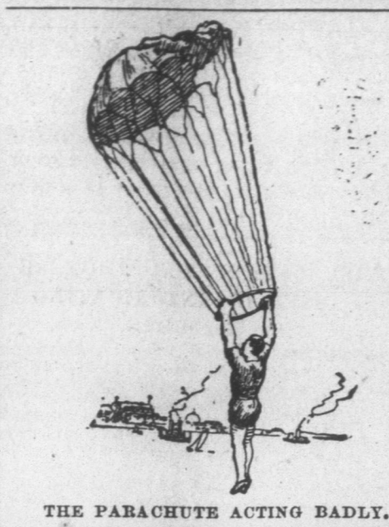


ON THE WAY DOWN.

force. Of course, I can exercise no control over myself while I am in the air. I have to land wherever chance brings me. If it is a good height from which I drop, and there is a strong wind, I can easily come down at a place a mile or more from the place on the earth underneath the spot I jumped from. I am carried by the wind so that I do not feel it blowing on me very much. When I make an ascension near the water, like that at Rockaway Beach this summer, I take up a life preserver with me, so if I fall into the water at too great a distance from the shore to swim, I need not drown."

"Do you feel any nervousness or fear in undertaking the feat?"

"I always know that there is danger

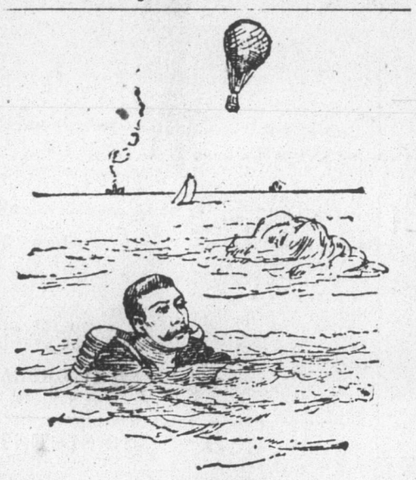


THE PARACHUTE ACTING BADLY.

in it. I couldn't know as much about the subject as I do and be ignorant of that. But I do not feel much trepidation in undertaking it. The chances are that everything will come out all right, as they have done in all my descents. Then there is an excitement about it. It is a funny thing, though, to be performing a feat for an audience so far below you that you cannot see anything but a dark spot on the earth. When you get up so very high in a balloon I do not think that a person is as inclined to feel dizzy as at a much less height from which he can compare the relative altitudes. But I am not subject to dizziness. It doesn't go well with balloonists, and, besides, my training as a circus man has got me pretty accustomed to things which call for coolness. I do not lose my head, and do everything as coolly as if I were on the ground. The strain on the arms is usually the only thing that bothers me. I must get that stopped, if I can, or else I may have to drop the business. Once I went up in a balloon without any car attached. There was only a ring where I held myself."

"What is the greatest height from which you have jumped?"

"I have jumped from five thousand feet. I think, however, that a parachute could be made so that a descent from a much higher altitude would be possible. Whether a man can be invented to stand the strain on his arms for the length of time which would be required to descend in, I do not know. You must remember that you can't stop to rest yourself any on the way down. You're there on the end of the parachute, and you feel you've got to stay there till your feet strike the earth. I came down into a tree once, but I didn't hurt myself. I have been carried along on the ground with my parachute for twenty feet."



A WET LANDING.

"Are there any other balloonists who perform this feat?"

"I do not know of any living aeronaut who has attempted it. I dare say there will be others who may imitate my example. It is something that can be done by most anybody who wants to try it, and I dare say it could be done often enough to make a good many willing to try it. Most of the balloon gymnasts, however, have a trapeze fastened to a captive balloon, and when they are up about a thousand feet they perform feats on that."

"Do you think there is any practical value in a feat of this kind?"

"Well, it is always a valuable thing to do something new and show what a man can do. I don't suppose it does any good. Of course ballooning can be of use. They found that out in Paris when they used to send them out during the commune. And they are useful in time of war to reconnoiter the enemy's position. But I like it well enough, and people like to see it, too. There is always more interest in anything that looks dangerous."

"Do you intend to jump in this way next year?"

"Oh, I think it very likely that I may. There may be somebody else in the field next year, and then jumping matches could be arranged to see who would spring from the greatest elevation. It wouldn't take much more courage to go up a few thousand feet more and spring off. When you are up so high as that the earth looks pretty small. I came down through a cloud once. It was below me as far as it was above the spectators on the ground beneath."

Professor Baldwin, for he deserves the title of professor of aeronauties, has received two handsome gold medals for his feats. One is from his fellow-townsmen of Quincy, which shows that it is an appreciative city; another was the offering of the Knights of Pythias. Both were commemorative of his marvelous leaps.

ONE form of the yellow fever is the great desire for gold.

WASHINGTON.

An Interesting Grist of News from the Capital of the Nation.

Many New Faces in the House, Which Necessitates Numerous Changes in Committees.

Prospective Tariff Legislation — Operations of the Mints—Postal Statistics.

[SPECIAL CORRESPOFDENCE]

Secretary Fairchild is spending much of his time in studying tables of imports and customs duties and conferring with the President and Mr. Carlisle, with a view to agreeing on the items where the revenue ought to be reduced. This bill, which will express the wishes of the administration, will probably provide for taking off the present tax on cigars, cigarettes, cheroots, and snuff, one-quarter of the sugar duty, all of the wool, lumber, and salt duties, and then making reductions on a considerable number of other items. This follows the general line of the Morrison bill of the last Congress, though that bill did not take off the whole wool duty. Still there are members of Congress so sanguine that they think a bill reducing the tariff can be formed that will have Mr. Randall's support.

The bill that the administration will favor will propose to take off only a quarter of the sugar duties, and a little more than half the tobacco tax. But before it gets through the House it will abolish all the tobacco tax and probably take off one-half of the sugar tax. This course will leave a smaller amount to be taken off the protective portions of the tariff. The repeal of the special tobacco taxes and the taxes on smoking and chewing tobacco would, on the basis of last year's figures, cut off about $14,000,000 of revenue. One-quarter of the sugar duties would be about $12,000,000. Here is $26,000,000. Putting wool on the free list would cut off $5,000,000 more. Lumber would dispose of $1,000,000, and salt of less than $1,000,000. This is about $33,000,000 in all, and $37,000,000 would have to be taken off the rest of the tariff list. But taking off all the tobacco taxes and one-half the sugar duties would reduce the revenues $55,000,000, and leave only $15,000,000 to be taken off wool, lumber, salt, and all other articles in the tariff list, assuming that $70,000,000 is about the desired reduction of the revenue. The Senate will probably demand that the reductions be confined to sugar and tobacco, or that there be no reductions at all. The total sugar and tobacco taxes amount to $80,000,000, and the Republicans would probably consent to the entire repeal of the sugar and tobacco taxes, and would probably prevent any legislation materially affecting the protective portions of the tariff, though the Senate may consent to free lumber and salt and carpet wool.

PRECIOUS METALS.

Operations of the United States Mints During the Past Year.

The Director of the Mint, in his annual report of the operations of the mints and assay offices for the fiscal year 1887, states that the value of the gold and silver received at the mints and assay offices during the year was greater than in any previous year since 1881. The value of the gold deposited was $88,223,072. In addition there were redeposits of the value of $15,193,706. The value of the silver deposited and purchased was $47,756,918. In addition there were redeposits of silver amounting to $462,113.

Of the gold deposited, $32,973,027 was of domestic production, $22,571,328 of foreign gold bullion, $9,396,512 of foreign gold coin, $516,984 of United States gold coin, and $2,265,219 of old material. The coinage of the fiscal year was as follows: Gold, 3,724,720 pieces; value $22,395,279. Silver, 44,231,288 pieces; value $34,366,483. Minor coins, 50,166,509 pieces; value $943,650. In addition to the coinage executed during the year, gold and silver bars were manufactured as follows: Gold, $58,188,953; silver, $6,481,611. The silver bullion purchased during the year for the silver-dollar coinage was 29,433,342 standard ounces of the cost of $25,988,620. The average cost was $0.98.1072 per ounce. The average London prices for the year at the average rate of exchange was $0.98.148. The number of silver dollars made was 33,266,831. Ten million nine hundred and one thousand nine hundred and twenty-eight silver dollars were distributed from the mints during the year, and 10,500,000 transferred to the treasury.

The seignorage of the silver dollars coined during the year was $7,923,558, and on the subsidiary silver $31,704. The number of trade dollars redeemed by the Treasury of the United States under provision of the act of March 3, 1887, authorizing their redemption, was 7,689,036. The number imported from the passage of the act to Sept. 4, 1887, was 830,501. The trade dollars redeemed have all been transferred to the mints or the assay office at New York and melted into bars ready for coinage. The loss by abrasion was 40,215.79 standard ounces, equivalent to 45,961 trade dollars. If the trade dollars redeemed are coined into subsidiary silver the profit, exclusive of operative wastage, will be $631,574. If coined into standard silver dollars, $63,004.

The mint at Philadelphia has been taxed to its utmost capacity to execute the large minor coinage demanded of it in addition to the mandatory coinage of silver dollars. Notwithstanding the large number of pieces struck, the demand for minor coins is still far beyond the capacity of the mint to promptly fill the orders.

The expenditures for the service of the mints and assay offices during the year were $1,189,509. The expenses of the acid refineries were $165,837, against an earning of $143,258. The total earnings from all sources amounted to $8,842,819, and the total expenses and losses of all kinds to $1,437,432.

The value of the gold and silver bars issued from the United States Assay Office at New York and the mint at Philadelphia for use in the industrial marts during the year was $8,895,710 gold and $4,471,646 silver.

The Director estimates the stock of coin in the United States to have been on the first day of July, 1887: Gold, $569,008,065; silver, $342,537,916. In addition, there was bullion in the mints as follows: Gold, $85,512,270; silver; $10,455,640.

The Director estimates the stock of gold and silver coin in the United States on Nov. 1, 1887, to have been: Gold, $574,927,873; silver dollars, $277,110,157; subsidiary silver, $75,758,186.

THE HOUSE COMMITTEES.

Changes Wrought in Them by the Last Elections.

The House committees have suffered very unequally in the political contests. Chairman Turner, of Georgia, of the Elections Committee, was re-elected, but only four other members, including two Illinois men, were equally fortunate, and ten do not come back. The Committee on Ways and Means lost its chairman and four other members, but only three members of the Appropriations Committee failed to be re-elected.

In the Judiciary Committee the chairman and five other members dropped out. Mr. Culberson, of Texas, is the senior surviving member, but Mr. Mills, of the same State, is the senior surviving member of the Ways and Means Committee, and Texas will not have both those chairmanships. Pat Collins, of Massachusetts, comes next after Culberson in the Judiciary Committee, and he is one of the strongest men in the House.

The Banking and Currency Committee has lost its chairman and two other members. Candler of Georgia is the senior surviving member, but Georgia will hardly get the chairmanship of the Committee on Elections and that on Banking and Currency.

Bland of Missouri, chairman of the Committee on Coinage, Weights, and Measures, comes back. Only three of his committee have been relegated to private life.

Reagan of Texas, chairman of the Committee on Commerce, is now a Senator, and the senior member is Clardy of Missouri, but Clardy can't expect to get the chairmanship if Bland is to retain his, and the wonderful eagle on the silver dollar would shriek with pain if Bland were assigned to any other field of usefulness. Four other members of the Commerce Committee have been left out.

The river and harbor bill did not do the committee that fathered it the service that might have been expected. Chairman Willis, of Kentucky, and six other members of the committee are among the missing. The senior survivor is Blanchard, of Louisiana.

Hatch, of Missouri, Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, comes back, but seven other members of the committee are missing.

Perry Belmont, Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, comes back, and is likely to be reappointed, but six other members of the committee do not come back.

Gen. Bragg, of Wisconsin, Chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, has been retired with five other members of the committee. The senior survivor is Gen. Wheeler, of Alabama. There is some question whether the Chairmanship of the Committee on Military Affairs will be given to a Confederate Lieutenant General.

Herbert, of Alabama, Chairman of the Naval Committee, comes back, and only three members of the committee are missing. Blount, of Georgia, Chairman of the Postoffice Committee, comes back, but the next four Democrats on the list and two of the Republicans have retired. The first three members of the Committee on Public Lands have been retried, leaving Martin Foran, of Ohio, the senior member.

Mr. Hill, of Ohio, Chairman of the Committee on Territories, and four other members have fallen by the wayside, and this leaves Mr. Springer, of Illinois, the senior member.

INCREASE OF POSTOFFICES.

Figures from the Report of Assistant Postmaster-General Stevenson.

The annual report of First Assistant Postmaster General Stevenson shows that the number of postoffices established during the last fiscal year was 3,043. The increase in the whole number of postoffices was 1,453 and the whole number in operation June 30, 1887, was 55,157. Appointments of postmasters were made during the year as follows: On resignations and commissions expired, 6,863; on removals and suspensions, 2,384; on death of postmasters, 389; establishment of new offices, 3,043. The following seven States had more than 2,000 offices on June 30: Pennsylvania, 4,114; New York, 3,248; Ohio, 2,834; Virginia, 2,355; Illinois, 2,266; Missouri, 2,117; North Carolina, 2,110.

As a result of the annual adjustment of postmasters' salaries, which took effect July 1, 1887, twenty-two offices of the third class were reduced to the fourth class, and two offices of the fourth class were assigned to the third class, leaving 2,336 presidential offices. Divided into classes the numbers are as follows: First, 82; second, 433; third, 1,819.

The number of money-order offices in operation was 7,745, of which 610 were in Illinois, 348 in Iowa, 520 in New York, 493 in Ohio, 430 in Pennsylvania, 406 in Kansas, 362 in Michigan, 343 in Missouri, and 326 in Indiana. The largest increase in any State during the fiscal year was sixty-four in Kansas.

Among the principal contract articles consumed by the postal service were about 399 tons of wrapping twine, over 193,000,000 facing slips, over 60,000,000 blanks, and nearly 7,000,000 letterheads.

The following recommendations are made: That the deposit of fifty cents for each postoffice-box key be reduced to twenty-five cents; that authority be granted and the necessary appropriation be made for paying the rent of third-class postoffices.

INCREASED BOUNTY CLAIMS.

Nearly Three Times as Many Presented in 1887 as in 1881.

Second Auditor Day, in his annual report in regard to the examination of accounts of disbursements by the army and the Indian Bureau, says the increase in the number of claims for arrears of pay and bounty presented to the Second Auditor's office during the last seven years is sufficiently remarkable to call for special notice, and serves to explain the fact that twenty-two years after the close of the rebellion there are upward of 42,000 claims awaiting adjudication. The figures show that nearly three times as many claims were presented in 1887 as in 1881. The increase is attributable to new legislation and the decisions of the Supreme Court and the Second Comptroller.

The Auditor says in regard to claims for pay and bounty that the time spent in the examination of worthless cases militates against the prompt liquidation of meritorious cases, and he suggests legislation to remedy this matter. He also suggests legislation for the relief of such persons as, under the first interpretation of the act of April 22, 1872, have been refused the bounty granted by that act.