

THE ANSONIAN.

FEARLESSLY THE RIGHT DEFEND—IMPARTIALLY THE WRONG CONDEMN.

VOLUME I.

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The Perils of Ballooning.

The Machinery which Durant Used—Believed now to be Seen.

In a store in Jersey City, says the N. Y. Sun, may be seen the flag, baskets, and apparatus pertaining to the first balloon in which an ascension was ever made by an American. The car is a small square wicker basket, with scant space for two persons; and appended thereto is a card, bearing underneath a photograph of the ascendant seated in the car, the following words:

Thanks to omnipresent, omnipotent Omnipotence, this flag and car, with its living freight, ascended five miles above the city of New York on May 29, 1833, and in a voyage from Baltimore landed on the deck of the steamer Independence, in Chesapeake Bay, Oct. 11, 1833. Also made a perilous descent into the Atlantic Ocean July 31, 1834; and on the twelfth aerial voyage, favored by opposite winds at different altitudes, sailed twice over Boston city and harbor, Sept. 13, 1834.

Charles F. Durant, the first American aeronaut, died in March, 1873, in Jersey City, to whose old residents he was well known for his eccentricities and originality, and for the pertinacity with which he followed his hobbies. Mr. Garretson, the possessor of these relics of the first American air ship, was his nephew, and recites with pride the story of Mr. Durant's early triumphs. The following is from Mr. Garretson's own lips:

"Mr. Durant's father was an oysterman on the Jersey beach. He lived in a house corner of Warren street and Newark avenue, where the hat stores is. That is where the boats used to land" (now four blocks up from the river side), "and the British officers were quartered there in the Revolutionary War. When Mr. Durant was a young man of eighteen a Frenchman named Robinson was around here, and wanted to take him to Paris with him. The old man wouldn't consent at first, but was persuaded by old Sheriff Jaquins to let the boy go.

"When Mr. Durant came back he went to work at once building his balloon. He put 500 yards of white silk in it. He wouldn't allow the women to stick in it to sew it. (You know they used to pin their sewing to their knee this way). He took it to Robert Fulton's foundry at North Point, and used the blacksmith's bellows to inflate it. I was a little fellow, and I remember they chuckled me inside of it. He sent me to fill his shot bags with dry sand right where Gregory's house stands. Then he made his ascension from Castle Garden.

"Johnson Durant, his brother, who lives in Jersey City, and James Narine, his brother-in-law, who still resides in Philadelphia, but who used to print the Sunday Morning News, at the corner of Wall and Pearl streets—they held the strings for him. Gen. Jackson and Black Hawk were here at the time. Castle Garden then stood out in the river, and there was a bridge from the bar to the fort. There was such a crowd of people that the bridge broke down. Black Hawk stayed out in a boat. He was afraid to come ashore among so many white folks. That is the time Durant went up five miles above the city of New York. He went up alone. No money would induce him to allow any one to go with him. He said he would risk his own life, but wouldn't be responsible for anybody else's. He was offered large sums of money for the privilege. In one of his ascensions that I saw from Castle Garden he went out of sight in four seconds. The clouds were very low, and it was blowing a gale; but he was advertised to go, and he was bound to go. In another ascension from Castle Garden he was blown over to Governor's Island. The soldiers caught his drag rope. He got a drink of water from them, and they towed him in a boat back to Castle Garden, he in the air. He then ascended again, and came over to Jersey City to what they called Drayton's Dock, now the China wharf. Then he ascended again, and came down in a clover field in Hackensack. The negroes were at work there, and they ran to the house and halloed: 'Oh, mas'! de debil's comin'!" Mr. Durant called them back, and they assisted him in getting his balloon secured. I think that was in 1833. At all events it was before the big fire. He kept up his experiments until he got married. He never went up after he got married. That was part of his contract."

Homestead and Pre-emption Laws.

The Homestead law of the United States provides that the settler may obtain title to 160 acres of land by residing upon and improving the same during a period of five years, only on condition that he pay the several fees, which amount from \$14 to \$20. Within what are called railroad limits, where the alternate sections of Government land are held at \$2.50 an acre, only 80 acres can be homesteaded. Generally the grants to railroads extend 20 miles on each side of the track. There are numerous other provisions, mostly of a minor character, and a pamphlet can be obtained from the Government Land Office at Washington giving full particulars. The Pre-emption law provides that 160 or 80 acres may be entered upon, and improvements be made, and after six months a patent, equivalent to a deed, may be obtained upon the payment of \$1.25 or \$2.50 an acre. So many abuses have arisen and so much fraud and dishonesty have been practiced in obtaining titles under these laws, and so many have failed while honestly attempting to obtain title, that one would almost think the Government had better have held the land at a fixed price and sold to whoever might have wished to buy, for the object of securing land to actual settlers has not been gained, nor have speculators been prevented from settling whatever choice land they might select. The usual course has been for an irresponsible man to make a filing in the District Land Office, paying the fee of \$3, and he may or may not lay a "foundation" of four poles or logs, calling it a "house," or plow a few furrows, and, at the end of six months, swear he has lived on the land this length of time and made genuine improvements, and unless there should be a contest the patent will issue. It is not necessary that he shall do anything, or even see the land, but he must describe its locality, and he can take oath to what he has not done and to what he never intended to do. When the patent is obtained he surrenders it to his employer for \$20 or \$30, giving at the same time a deed, when he is ready under another assumed name to take up more land elsewhere. In this manner large bodies of excellent land are bought and held for town sites, or other speculative purposes. Often the claims are made all at once by roving characters whom nobody knows, and when they are paid for perjuring themselves they depart to distant localities.

In Trouble.—An ex-mayor of Boston

was asked to become a director in a certain corporation; he refused, was elected without his knowledge or consent; never received notice of his election and never met with the directors. Owing to informality in the proceedings of the officers, the directors became personally responsible for the debts of the corporation. The Supreme Court of the State of Massachusetts ruled that he was not provided to be a director. Eventually, upon writ of execution issued upon judgment against the directors, Mr. Wightman was thrust in jail.

A New York lady tried to redeem her poodle from the dog pound with her ring. When this was refused she kissed the animal, wept and departed.

The Shetland Islands.

Dr. Hayes, on his way to Iceland, stopped at the Shetland islands, and in writing of them, says:

There being no trees upon the islands there is nothing for the people to burn but turf, of which there seems to be an inexhaustible supply. The turf beds are illimitable, not being, as in Ireland, confined to the low lands, but extending oftentimes to the summits of the hills. The first turf beds are to be seen about a mile from Lerwick, and thence on the way, for nearly four miles, toward Scalloway, hillside and valley were covered with great stacks of peat, put up to dry, while the road was everywhere lined with women carrying this peat into town. And this, to me, was a most curious spectacle. You observe two industries of the islands at once—the women performing both, and both at once. The Shetlands are famous, as everybody knows, for the fineness of the wool of the sheep, and Shetland shawls are known the world over. Here they are very cheap, and are knit with marvellous skill. But what struck me most, and was not without its comical features, was the sight of caravans of women, each with a basket of turf, holding a bushel, strapped to her back, trudging along the road into town in her bare feet, and every one knitting as she went.

Of hundreds that I saw of these turf carriers, there was but a single man, and he was very old. In all probability the men were fishing or idling, these being the principal occupations of the men of Shetland everywhere. I saw only three turf-carts, on the whole journey, and were it not for the sturdy women I do not know how the 5,000 people of Lerwick would ever keep themselves warm. A few of the wealthier classes burn coal, but the common fuel is turf, and practically all of it is brought into town on the backs of women. In fact in these northern countries the women do their full share of outdoor work along with the men, sometimes, but more commonly with the boys. In the Orkneys, where the land is productive, gangs of them go about from farm to farm and from field to field, usually under the charge of a man, to sow, hoe and mow, at sixteen pence a day, and although I can but think such occupation most demoralizing, yet the groups of women, with their variously colored dresses, make even a potato patch look picturesque. What a beautiful exemplification all this is of the practical application of woman's rights. Every field is open to her here, and while at home an advocate of woman's rights would hardly venture to desire for any one of the sex the position of a field hand, here it is not only an unquestioned right, but a duty, to dig and carry burdens for sixteen pence a day.

A Lonesome Court.

A letter from Mackinaw, Mich., says: "There is a court house here for Mackinaw county. Strolling around, I found the clerk of the court sitting in his shirt sleeves on the porch of a billiard saloon adjoining the court house. I introduced myself to him, and learned that at the last spring term there was no case on the docket, and none had been commenced for the next term. No criminal case had been tried for the last seventeen years. A friend told me that the term before the last there was one case on the docket. It was one which created intense excitement among this quiet population, consisting, with the exception of the officers of the post, and some highly respectable and cultivated Americans, who do the shipping business of the place and have nice residences and appear to be wealthy, principally of Canadian French, Indians, and fishermen of all nations. It was a suit to recover back money lost on an election for the Circuit Clerk. It went off on demurrer, however, and the fees in that case for the clerk could not have exceeded twelve shillings of their reckoning. To me the most astounding feature of the case was that two men could be found to run for such a lucrative office, that cannot be worth more than from five to ten dollars a year. The Judge has usually come in a sailing boat from somewhere to open court and adjourn it the same day."

The Mystery of Hair Snakes.

The common belief is that these creatures are a transformation of a horse hair that has remained for some time in the water. "When a walking stick," says Dr. Slack, "becomes a snake, a horse hair will become a worm. As the former miracle has not taken place since the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, it is safe to conclude that the latter transformation has not recently been made. A dry hair placed in water will absorb the moisture, and from the unequal expansion of the exterior and interior layers will become contorted; so, too, would a piece of two-inch rope, yet we have never heard of the latter having been accused of possessing vitality. The hair snake is a living creature, endowed with organs of locomotion and respiration, and capable of propagating its species. Scientifically, it is known as 'Gordius aquaticus,' the generic name being derived from the Gordian knot, in allusion to the tangled appearance often presented by a multitude of these animals. The specific name 'aquaticus' is not so appropriate, for they thrive out of water." Dr. Slack has taken Gordii six inches in length from the body of a grasshopper. They have also been found in the stomachs of insectivorous birds.

Pottery of the Mound-Builders.

The so-called pottery of the Mound-Builders, said Prof. Cox in the American Science Congress, resembles in many respects that made by the Aztecs or Toltecs of South America and Mexico, and furnishes another link in the chain of evidence which serves to trace these remarkable people to a common origin.

The pottery from the mounds of Indiana is represented by a great variety of vessels, fashioned after quaint designs and adapted to multitudinous uses. Jugs with long necks and necks terminated by figures made to represent the heads of men, quadrupeds, and birds; pots with ears and shaped like the ordinary cast iron dinner-pot of to-day; drinking cups; basins of great size, used for making salt by solar evaporation; smoking pipes, etc., etc.

A great many whole vessels and fragments of this ware have been examined by me from all parts of the Western States, and I have been unable to find any evidence of its having been hardened by fire, nor do I believe that it was sun-baked. It is composed of a mixture of river mud and, more generally, pulverized fresh water shells, united in such proportions as to make a cement that hardens in the air, or, when exposed to moisture, like the concrete of the ancient Romans, and may, consequently, be classed as artificial stone. In chemical composition it agrees very closely with the concrete made of ordinary cement stones.

These facts lead to the conclusion that the art of manufacturing concrete or artificial stone did not originate solely with the ancient Romans, but that it was alike understood by the earliest aborigines of America. Though it is my opinion that the so-called pottery of the Mound-Builders was fashioned by hand without the use of a lathe, yet I am convinced that the ancient pottery of Peru and other South American States was largely made of pieces formed by pressing the cement into molds, and these pieces were subsequently united together to form the entire vessel. The lines of union are usually covered by a band or some grotesque raised ornaments which cover the surfaces of jugs, vases, etc., could only have been formed in this way. I do not, however, find any pottery of the Mound-Builders that would lead to the belief that his skill went so far as to enable him to mold it in parts or to fashion it in any other way than by the hands.

Morning Concerts.

"One of the features of Saratoga this year, writes a correspondent, is the morning concert on the balcony of 'The States.' This concert draws all Saratoga. The other hotels are deserted from half-past ten to twelve, while 'The States' parlors and balconies are happy with wit and gay with beauty. On this occasion the hotel is filled to its utmost capacity with ladies in rich morning costumes and gentlemen in morning suits.

Some of the aristocratic guests of the hotel have been making complaints about so many villagers and so many 'vulgar people' coming to their concerts from other hotels. Ladies and gentlemen whose ancestors were poor and who keep boarding-houses in New York are the loudest in condemning the poor villagers.

Mr. de Smith, who has been making some complaint, brought up some ladies from the Clarendon to attend the concert. "Now you must expect to meet some villagers, but don't be afraid, you won't have to speak to them," said Mr. de Smith as they walked out on the balcony. "Yes, there they are," whispered Miss Knickerbocker, looking contemptuously down at a lady and two daughters, "what common looking people they are, too! Dear me! what are these creatures permitted to come in here and mix with the guests?"

"B—because, Miss Knickerbocker—aw, ah! do you mean those three ladies sitting right over there?" pointing them out to be sure.

"Yes, those common looking things by the middle window, Mr. de Smith." "Yes, ahem!—that's my w—w—wife and two d—d—daughters," stammered the suffering Mr. de Smith.

The Cream.

We had been without a pastor for some months (writes a friend in Massachusetts), and had the pulpit supplied by such ministers as we could get, especially those who, we thought, might satisfy our people, and finally succeeded in procuring one.

While visiting the Sunday-school, a few Sabbaths since, he stopped to talk with a class of elderly ladies. After the usual salutations, one of the ladies said:

"Well, I am glad we've got somebody; we've been having everybody."

"Yes," said the pastor, "I suppose you have had the cream of the ministers among your supplies."

"Well," said the lady, "I am farmer's wife enough to know, if you want good cream, you must let the milk set still, and not keep a-stirring it up all the time."

Girl Questions.

Questions: I wish to become a good talker. When in company, especially with gentlemen, I am very reserved and taciturn. I know my weakness and almost tremble at the thought of going into society or among strangers. What shall I do to accomplish my desire?

Answer: Behind this carefully written note, in which there is not a dot wrong, we can see the precise and pains-taking young girl who, most of all things, likes to be correct in all she does. She is so afraid that what she says will not be just right that she says nothing, and she is so anxious to say nothing that her own silence increases her embarrassment. And yet she is worth a dozen of the thoughtless railbrains whom she envies. We cannot tell her how to become a talker. She will always be more correct than fluent. But we can give her a suggestion or two. 1. Go into company and keep on going into company. It will not seem so dreadful when you come to know how many mistakes other people make. Charlotte Bronte's "professor" lost his fear of the girls he had to teach when once he heard them giggle. Do not fear mistakes. Make up your mind sensibly that no one learns to do anything except through the school of imperfect efforts. Be willing to do poorly on the way to doing better and then well. 2. Cultivate the habit of thinking much about a subject, and as little as possible about your manner of expressing your ideas. If you watch your words others are apt to observe them; if you give your whole attention to the matter of what you say, so will they. 3. Remember that after all a silent and reticent woman is not a disagreeable object. Good listeners are scarcer than good talkers. If you succeed in becoming an appreciative listener you will fill the best place in a conversation. In talking it is more blessed to receive than to give. By so doing you get instruction and give your companions the pleasure of giving it.—Christian Union.

The Population of the World.

A report from the Bureau of Statistics, at Washington, just issued, contains an interesting table of the population of the earth. The aggregate population of the earth is given at 1,391,032,000, Asia being the most populous section and containing 798 millions, while Europe has 300 millions, Africa 203 millions, America 84, and Australia and Polynesia 4 millions. In Europe the leading nations are credited with the following numbers: Russia, 71 millions; the German Empire, 41 millions; France 36,000,000; Austria-Hungary, 36,000,000; Great Britain and Ireland, 32 millions; Italy, nearly 27 millions; Spain, 16 millions; and Turkey nearly 16 millions. The other countries do not exceed five millions each. In Asia, China, which is by far the most populous nation of the earth, is credited with 425 millions; Hindoostan, with 240 millions; Japan, 33 millions; the East India Islands, 30 millions; Burmah, Siam, and farther India, nearly 26 millions; Turkey, over 13 millions; and Russia, nearly 11 millions. The Australian population is given at 1,674,500, and the Polynesian Islands at 2,763,500, New Guinea and New Zealand being included in the latter. In Africa the chief divisions are West Soudan and the Central African region, with 89 millions; the Central Soudan region, 39 millions; South Africa, over 20 millions; the Galla country and the region east of the White Nile, 15 millions; Samauli, 8 millions; Egypt, over 8 millions; and Morocco, 6 millions. In America two-thirds of the population are north of the Isthmus, where the United States has nearly 39 millions, Mexico over 9 millions, and the British Provinces 4 millions. The total population of North America is given at nearly 52 millions, and of South America over 25 millions, of which Brazil contains 10 millions. The West India Islands have over 4 millions, and the Central American States not quite 3 millions.

A Portuguese Dead Beat.

At Lisbon it is the custom for farmers who have for sale fields of those large and valuable onions which are exported to foreign countries, to wait upon the merchants or shippers for the purpose of disposing of their crop. One year, when the onions were scarce and the price particularly high, a farmer waited upon a principal merchant, and offered a small field for sale. The merchant, who had often before dealt with the farmer, offered him rather less than he asked, and the farmer went off. Next day came a person who represented himself to be the farmer's son. He brought a letter from the farmer, in which the merchant's offer was not accepted, but met half way. The merchant prepared to pay the usual earnest money, but the son, a stupid country fellow, refused to charge himself with the receipt of any money.

As he was leaving, the merchant perceived a couple of large onions in his hand. "What are those?" he asked. "Never mind what they are," said the countryman, boorishly; "that is my affair." But the merchant, seeing his way to another bargain, finally drew from the man that these particularly fine onions were samples of another much larger field belonging to his father, and that he was about to exhibit them to another dealer. The merchant insisted on being shown this field, and with some trouble persuaded the man to take him to a field five or six times as large as the one already bought, and filled with superlatively fine onions, hesitating on the wall of it while the merchant walked through and examined the crop. "I offer you a hundred pounds," said the merchant, astutely naming half the true price. "No," said the countryman. "I have been losing my time with you; my father said Mr. So-and-so would give me one hundred and fifty pounds, and that I was to have a hundred pounds of it down as earnest."

"Very well. Come to my office. The field is bigger than I thought, and your father and I are old customers. Your father shall have his own price." The countryman put the earnest money in his bag. "Now I shall go to Mr. —, and offer him the first field; you can't want both." "Stop," said the merchant, "a bargain is a bargain; you have already sold it to me." "No, I have not!" cried the farmer's son, losing his temper and shouting at the top of his voice, "you gave me no earnest. I shall go and offer it to Mr. —, and he will take the door." "Come, come, my good fellow," said the merchant, drawing him back into the office, "business is business—an honest man has but one word. Here, take the earnest, make your mark on this receipt and go your way." Grumbling, and half unwilling and complaining of the badness of the bargain, the countryman suffered the coin to be counted into his hand. It was only when the merchant sent laborers to take up his crop and find a rival doing the same thing; it was only when he learnt that the farmer never had a son; it was only when some friend whispered the word "Feijardo" in his ear, that the merchant discovered that he, too, had fallen a victim to the terrible Feijardo.

The Lobster.

Prof. Wheildon, before the American Science Congress, gave an interesting sketch of the lobster. He said: "One of the most interesting peculiarities of the lobster is that of shedding its shell, in common with other crustacea. The statement is made, and generally believed, that the lobster sheds its shell, after reaching a certain age, annually, and some fishermen go so far as to determine the months of the year when this change of shell occurs. There are insurmountable objections to this statement; but as the soft-shelled lobsters have been so generally thrown back into the water, observation has been somewhat limited. We believe we may say that lobsters which have recently shed their shells are to be found not in the spring or summer months alone, but at all seasons of the year. A lobster fisherman at Portland, in February last, informed me that he found 400 soft-shelled lobsters in his last haul, recently brought in. At the time of shedding the shell the animals are much reduced in flesh, but less so than is generally supposed. The new shell of the lobster is at first a mere skin, which has been formed under the shell, and resembles very thin India rubber cloth; like the shell, it becomes red when boiled. Lobsters, it has been said, sometimes make their escape by slipping out of their shell, but this is simply an exaggeration. They have the power of throwing off a claw in case of necessity, but this is never done at the joint, but by breaking the shell at a particular point in the small part of the claw. Some recent measurements show the growth of the lobster. In one case the lobster was one inch and a half longer than the shell just left, and the measurement around the body was three-fourths of an inch longer than the shell. The change of the shell is undoubtedly a necessity of growth dependent upon that, and of course can hardly be considered as an annual or even periodic change without qualification. The process of shedding the shell is generally known, excepting perhaps that relating to the large claws. The body opens in a straight line in the length of the back, while the tail, legs, and claws are drawn out from the shell, leaving it entire, as it has been called, an 'articulated skeleton,' which is thrown off periodically. In eating their shells it is hard to conceive how the lobsters are able to draw the flesh of their large claws out, leaving the shell entire and attached to their body, in which state they are constantly found. The fishermen say the lobsters pine before casting, till the flesh of the large claws is no thicker than the quill of a goose, which enables it to draw its parts through the joints and narrow passage near the brink. This has long been a puzzle to fishermen and naturalists. Another difficulty in the case is the presence of a cartilage in the flesh of the large claw, which does not shrink.

Zouaves.

In my account of the review held by Marshal MacMahon last month, says a correspondent, I remarked on the absence of Zouaves. I was not then aware that there were no longer any in France. Since the war they have returned to their original duties, which were those of colonial troops. The empire imported them into France as it did the Turcos—these Sepoys of Algeria. When those corps were introduced into the imperial guard it became necessary to have reserves to keep up their strength, and so line regiments of Zouaves were brought into French garrisons to serve as a nursery for the Zouaves of the Guard. The late war did a good deal to dissipate the exaggerated prestige of those semi-Oriental troops. As for the Turcos, after Forbach and Worth they were reduced to a handful. Their European drill and discipline made them formidable to the Arabs, and their desperate valor and ferocity rendered them ugly opponents even to regular soldiers. But their value was greatly diminished by the introduction of long range rifles. Excellent skirmishers, their cat-like agility and speed and ferocious onset also made them terrible in a bayonet attack when, regardless of death, they charged home to break a line or square. But when such charges had to be made upon troops carrying rifles that kill at a thousand yards, and fire six times in a minute, the chief utility of the half savage Turco was gone. It is unlikely that either he or the Zouave will again be seen figuring in a European war.