

BALLOONS IN THE NAVY.

How They May Be Used for the Purpose of Spying on the Enemy—Great Aid to the Admirals of Fleets.

Balloons are going to play an important part in the work of our navy around Cuba, and each day of delayed action will make them more useful in observing the Spaniards' strengthened lines of defense.

The tortuous waterways and the generally land-locked nature of the bays, their narrow fortified entrances, and the excellent retreats the wide reaches of water offer to their ships make it imperative that we have some fairly safe and reliable means of making reconnaissances of the Spaniards' positions. The fighting tops, yes, even the masts, are of little avail for observation at the distances imposed by the watchful batteries of the enemy, and the captive balloon alone solves the difficulty. This is especially so where high promontories like those of Santiago de Cuba and San Juan completely shut out the harbor from view and make hitting a fleet therein mere guesswork. Recent experiments in Germany, France and Russia have emphasized the importance of the captive balloon in widening a fleet's powers of observation, just in the same way that the captive balloon will serve the army; and the patient trials and study of the Germans have evolved a curious aerostat that by virtue of its shape and peculiar properties is especially well adapted to the greater range of observation, and it is quite safe to say our own balloons will embody the general features of the German design.

The balloons will really be three balloons acting in concert. The first and largest is like an immense sausage, and bears the main burden of the load-car. The second is somewhat similar in shape, but hugs the lower end of the big balloon like a creeping caterpillar. This second and smaller balloon acts principally in the capacity of a rudder, and aids materially in holding the balloon in a peculiar position, while the third and small spherical balloon trails along independently behind at some distance and serves in the same steadying capacity that a kite's tail does. In action, this triple balloon floats with great steadiness or immobility when not, under way—something impossible in the pear-shaped affair familiar to all of us.

The observation car is pendant from the main balloon, which poises in the air at an angle of about 45 degrees, practically like the position of the kite common to every school boy, and it is just in that way that the force of the wind is utilized to increase the balloon's buoyancy and to subserve also to that peculiarly marked steadiness or directness of flight.

Made up, as it is, in three separate parts, it is less liable to total and instant collapse in case of puncture, and it is even possible to secure a wider margin of safety by subdividing the interiors by thin membranous walls and fitting them with little valves somewhat like those now used on a bicycle tire, which would enable the balloon to be filled, but which at the same time would shut off automatically an injured compartment by virtue of the unimpaired force of the neighboring good ones. A happy chance shot that might damage one or even two of the compartments would only cause the balloon to sink slowly like an exhausted bird, and would either enable the aeronauts to prepare for a jump in safety or permit the balloon to be drawn beyond the reach of further attack before touching the water. These balloons are built up in sections out of a wonderfully light, but very tough fabric of silk—a strip a yard long being equal to bearing a burden of half a ton; and a balloon capable of missing a party of four persons will scarcely weigh more than a good-sized boy of 10.

The especial advantages of the balloon for naval work were discovered so recently as 1894. In that year the Russian monitor *Rusalka* foundered with all hands in the Gulf of Finland. An expedition, under Colonel Nicolas d'Orloff, undertook to discover the location of the lost vessel by using a captive balloon for the purposes of submarine observation, and while he was unable to find the craft, still the results of his search were fruitful in valuable information for future naval purposes. The balloon, which was held captive by a large naval transport fitted up for the service, ascended to altitudes varying from 650 to something just over 1,400 feet. Two observers, who were relieved every three hours, were constantly in the car, and it was found that the naked eye was better adapted to discerning objects at the bottom of the sea than were the aids of telescopes or glasses. With a favorable light rocks and sandbanks were clearly defined at depths of from 19 to 23 feet. Large, light sandbanks—such as prevail about Cuba—could be seen more or less distinctly, depending upon the color of the water, at a depth of even 49 feet, but it was not possible to distinguish the details of objects so deeply submerged. The view from the car reached to a distance of quite 45 miles, and it was possible to hear the sound of distant cannonading which was inaudible to persons on land. Objects on the surface of the water were more easily detected than they could have been on land, and the character of distant craft, whether mercantile or naval, was easily discoverable; and,

finally, it was found that the steadier nature of their currents over the water made certain delicate observations possible where the broken currents over the land would have made them prohibitive.

Backed by the reflecting bottom sand about the Cuban ports, explosive mines in the shallower water will stand out strongly silhouetted, as would also other obstructions opposed to our ships' approach—something that could not be detected with safety in any other way. This seems a strange power of the air, but it is only because the eye is carried above the highest angle of the sun's reflected light, and the water becomes as a sheet of glass faced squarely with the light behind one's head.

With a modern equipment of long-distance or telescopic photography it is possible, from a base so steady as one of these balloons, to take pictures of the enemy's coast, forts, hidden batteries and the locations of his vessels and his vulnerable positions. This is not speculation, but an accomplished fact.

Now let us see how the work will be done, in all probability. One of the auxiliary vessels will be assigned each fleet to serve as a balloon depot ship, and a good wide stretch of deck will be set apart for the stowage of the balloon, its inflating and for its ascension and subsequent return. The hydrogen gas will be made either down below and supplied by pipe to the balloon on deck, or stored, under great pressure, in stout steel cylinders, which

can be carried where most convenient and fed directly into the great folds of the "aerostat." When all is ready, the observing officers step into the car, a fine steel rope, under mechanical control, is let out, and the balloon rises like a great kite high into the air. The ship gets under way, and, with the balloon appearing scarcely larger than a good-sized orange, starts in toward the coast on its mission of observation and detection. Telephonic communication is kept up with the occupants in the car, and the direction and the speed of the craft are at once responsive to the guidance of the watchers in that tiny car a quarter of a mile above. When they have completed their reconnaissance the winding machine is started, and they are quickly and easily drawn down, while a little skillful maneuvering lands them on deck and the nimble seamen soon have the balloon snugly anchored and covered against mishap. The work can be carried on night or day and with wider applications than possible to a fixed military base, and its use on board a naval craft as an auxiliary to operations of the army would be of inestimable value.

The illustration depicts the balloon moored to a speeding torpedo boat and the result, perhaps, of a very good night's work in our behalf. The balloon has ascended from the depot ship as usual, but when at the desired height was fastened to the light-draught and fleetest torpedo boat. This boat has crept in to the neighboring coast under cover of darkness and sought the temporary shelter of some jutting arm of the land. As the first mists of the early morning rise, the balloon, like a poisoning eagle, soars high above the enemy's defenses, but not so far as to be beyond the piercing reach of its telescopic eyes. There, practically safe from harm's reach, it absorbs so much that is vital to the enemy's welfare, and at the first shot of alarm the boat darts out from cover, and before either boat or balloon can be caught in range they are hastening away to the offing with a wealth of information and such detection as it is impos-

sible for the foe to guard against before an assault be made.

Blanco also has balloons, but they are hampered by the fixed base essential to military operations and the shifting courses of the land breezes, but we shall have a system of espionage second to none—not even his coast-wise telegraph; and whether it be for the massing of troops, the successful bombardment by only one small gunboat, or the grand, concerted action of an entire fleet, we shall have the amplest means of information with the least exposure of life.

We shall watch our enemy even while he sleeps, and the first thing he shall see as he looks up from the land still clothed in the gray of dawn, will be our guardian high above and touched by the first glint of the coming day—an omen of heaven's guidance and a promise of golden victory.

ROBERT G. SKERRETT.

KEENE'S "RICHARD."

The Actor's Fight on the Floor That Represented the Bosworth Field.

"Thomas W. Keene was the only Richard who ever finished a fight on Bosworth Field to the satisfaction of the gallery," said a Western man in speaking of the tragedian, whose death on Staten Island has occurred recently. "In his later years Mr. Keene quit this, but when he first went out as a tragedian under the management of Mr. W. R. Hayden, he got down on the floor of the stage in his encounter and fairly dragged himself across the 'field,' knocking things right and left, while the gallery caused the roof of the house to sag. When Keene secured Hayden for his manager it was understood that Hayden was to bill the show and manage it as he pleased. There was never anything in the line of gorgeous lithographing that surpassed Hayden's posters during the first two seasons in the West. The Bosworth Field scene took up nine-tenths of the big sheets, and if there was any color overlooked I never heard of it. I was in a town where Hayden had billed his attraction along with the Barnum-Bailey show, and I declare on my honor that the stand put up by Billy Hayden drew the crowd. I have been told that the rolling around on the floor business in the Bosworth Field scene was Hayden's conception of the fight and that poor Keene was forced to soil his kingly attire every night under protest. At the expiration of the contract it was renewed with the proviso that there was to be no fighting on the floor."—Ex.

Well Used Sword.

Capt. Weaver, who is going into the war as captain of an Arkansas company, wears a sword which has done duty in three wars. His great-grandfather carried it in the Revolutionary war, his grandfather in the war of 1812, and uncle in the war between the states, and now he expects if he gets a chance to slash some Spaniards with it.

What We'd Like to Know.

First Society Beauty—I see, dear, that it has been fashionable in Paris to be photographed in one's corset. Second Society Beauty—Dear me! what on earth do they want to put them on for?

PATHETIC WAR SONG.

"SOMEBODY'S DARLING" AND ITS HISTORY.

Written by an Army Nurse Who Learned the Life Story of a Youth Who Died as a Result of the Night Attack of Cedar Creek.

War songs have become popular of late and some of the verses that were popular when some of us were young are being printed and sung again. Many readers will be glad to once more peruse the lines in "Somebody's Darling." This is one of the most pathetic pieces that grew out of the civil war. Here it is in part:

Into a ward of the whitewash'd halls,
Where the dead and the dying lay,
Wounded by bayonets, shells and balls,
Somebody's darling was borne one day—
Somebody's darling, so young and so brave.

Wearing yet on his pale, sweet face;
Soon to be hid by the dust of the grave
The lingering light of his boyhood's grace.

Matted and damp are the curls of gold,
Kissing the snow of that fair young brow,
Pale are the lips of delicate mould—
Somebody's darling is dying now.

Back from his beautiful blue-veined brow
Brush all the wandering waves of gold,
Cross his hands on his bosom now,
Somebody's darling is still and cold.

Kiss him once for somebody's sake,
And murmur a prayer soft and low,
One bright curl from its fair mates take,
They were somebody's pride, you know;
Somebody's hand had rested there:

Was it a mother's, soft and white?
And have the lips of a sister fair
Been baptized in the waves of light?

God knows best; he has somebody's love,
Somebody's heart enshrined him there;
Somebody's wailed his name above,
Night and morn on the wings of prayer.

Somebody wept when he march'd away,
Looking so handsome, brave and grand;
Somebody's kiss on his forehead lay,
Somebody clung to his parting hand.

Somebody's waiting and watching for him,
Yearning to hold him again to their heart;

And there he lies with his blue eyes dim,
And the smiling, childlike lips apart,
Tenderly bury the fair young dead,
Pausing to drop on his grave a tear;
Carve on the wooden slab at his head:
"Somebody's darling slumbers here."

More pathetic still is the story that the lines fail to unfold. The poem was written by Sister Lacoste, a member of one of the sisterhoods that did service during the conflict between north and south. Coming into the "dead room" of the hospital she saw the corpse of a young man who had been fatally wounded at the battle of Cedar Creek. He proved to be Patrick Feeney, a young Michigan boy, who enlisted at Detroit. In some way his mother learned of his enlistment and she hastened to that city from the interior of the state to save him. She was too late, however, for her son was already in a suit of army blue and ready to march. His mother saw the general in command and asked him if she could see her darling boy. "He is my only one and so precious to us all," she cried. Then she shrieked with grief and fainted away. While in this condition her son was brought in. She stared at him in a vacant way for a few seconds and then a look of admiration came to her eyes. The sight of her brave boy in his new suit of blue touched her pride. She was the mother of one willing to sacrifice his life while fighting for his country. She embraced him and said: "Heaven has blessed me with such a son. I came to take you away, but now I wouldn't if I could. If you come back alive I'll thank God, but if you are killed it will be a joy to me to know that you died a good soldier."

Tears came to the eyes of those near at hand as mother and son parted never to meet again, for a few months later a letter came from Sister Lacoste saying that Patrick Feeney had been wounded unto death, but that he had lived to receive the last sacraments of the church and to send word to his mother that he had been shot during a night attack of the enemy. "Had I been awake they could not have killed me."

It was a month after his death that the poem first appeared in print. I believe that it was first printed in the Southern Churchman of Savannah. Previous to the war Sister Lacoste had been a school teacher.

We are told that Sister Lacoste afterwards married a young lieutenant of the confederacy, with whom she fell in love while nursing at Savannah.

Appearance Were Deceptive.

A servant lass at an inn once made a funny mistake. Opening the door of one of the rooms, she saw, as she thought, the handle of a warming pan sticking out near the foot of the bed. "Bless me," she cried, "that stupid Martha has left the warming pan in the bed; she might have set the place on fire." Taking hold of the handle, she gave it a violent jerk, when up jumped a traveler, shouting lustily, "Halloa, there! leave my wooden leg alone, will you?"—Ex.

War Welcome at Such a Time.

Mrs. Benham—"I see by the paper that a western man has thrown up a good position, sold all his property and gone to Cuba to fight the Spaniards. There's patriotism for you!" Benham—"Probably his wife was housecleaning."

The Mules Will Be Home.

Mule meat is selling for \$1.50 a pound in Havana. Unless the town is taken pretty soon by the Americans it is clear that the most valuable part of the Spanish forces will be lost forever.

Ten Cents Not Enough.

Citizen—"Unless my eyes deceive me, you are the party I gave ten cents to yesterday." Beggar—"I am, sir, did you think a dime would make a new man of me?"

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FROM BUCCANEER TO PIRATE.

The Brethren of the Coast Warred Against Every Nation.

Mr. Frank R. Stockton continues in St. Nicholas his series of narrative sketches of "The Buccaneers of Our Coast." In the May number Mr. Stockton says: The buccaneers had grown to be reckless freebooters. And when they became soldiers and marched in little armies, the patience of the civilized world began to weaken. Panama, for instance, was an important Spanish city; England was at peace with Spain; therefore, when a military force composed mainly of Englishmen, and led by a British subject, captured and sacked Panama, if England should not interfere with her buccaneers she would have a quarrel to settle with Spain. So a new governor was sent to Jamaica with strict orders to put down the buccaneers and to break up their organization, and then it was he set a thief to catch thieves, and empowered the ex-pirate, Morgan, to execute his former comrades. But methods of conciliation, as well as threats of punishment, were used to induce the buccaneers to give up their illegal calling, and liberal offers were made to them to settle in Jamaica and become law-abiding citizens. But these offers did not tempt the Brothers of the Coast; from active pirates to retired pirates was too great a change, and though some of them returned to their original avocations of cattle butchering and beef drying, some, it is said, chose rather to live among the wild Indians and share their independent lives, than to bind themselves to any form of honest industry. The French also had been active in suppressing the operations of their buccaneers, and soon the Brethren of the Coast, considered as an organization for preying upon the commerce and settlers of Spain, might be said to have ceased to exist. But it must not be supposed that because buccaneering had died out that piracy was dead. Driven from Jamaica, from San Domingo, and even from Tortuga, they retained a resting place only at New Providence, an island in the Bahamas, and this they did not maintain very long. Then they spread themselves all over the watery world. They were no longer buccaneers, they were no longer "Brethren" of any sort, they no longer set out merely against Spaniards, but their attacks were made upon people of every nation. They confined themselves to attacks upon peaceful merchant vessels, often robbing them and then scuttling them, delighting with the spectacle of a ship, with all its crew, sinking hopelessly into the sea. The scene of practical operations in America was now very much changed. The successors of the Brothers of the Coast, no longer united by any bonds of fellowship, but each pirate captain acting independently in his own wicked way, were coming up from the West Indies to afflict the more northern sea coast.

Dr. Johnson was once consulted by an old lady on the degree of wickedness to be attached to her son's robbing an orchard. "Madam," said Johnson, "it all depends upon the weight of the boy. I remember my school fellow, Davy Garrick, who was always a little fellow, robbing a dozen orchards with impunity; but the very first time I climbed up an apple tree (for I always was a heavy boy) the bough broke with me, and it was called a judgment."

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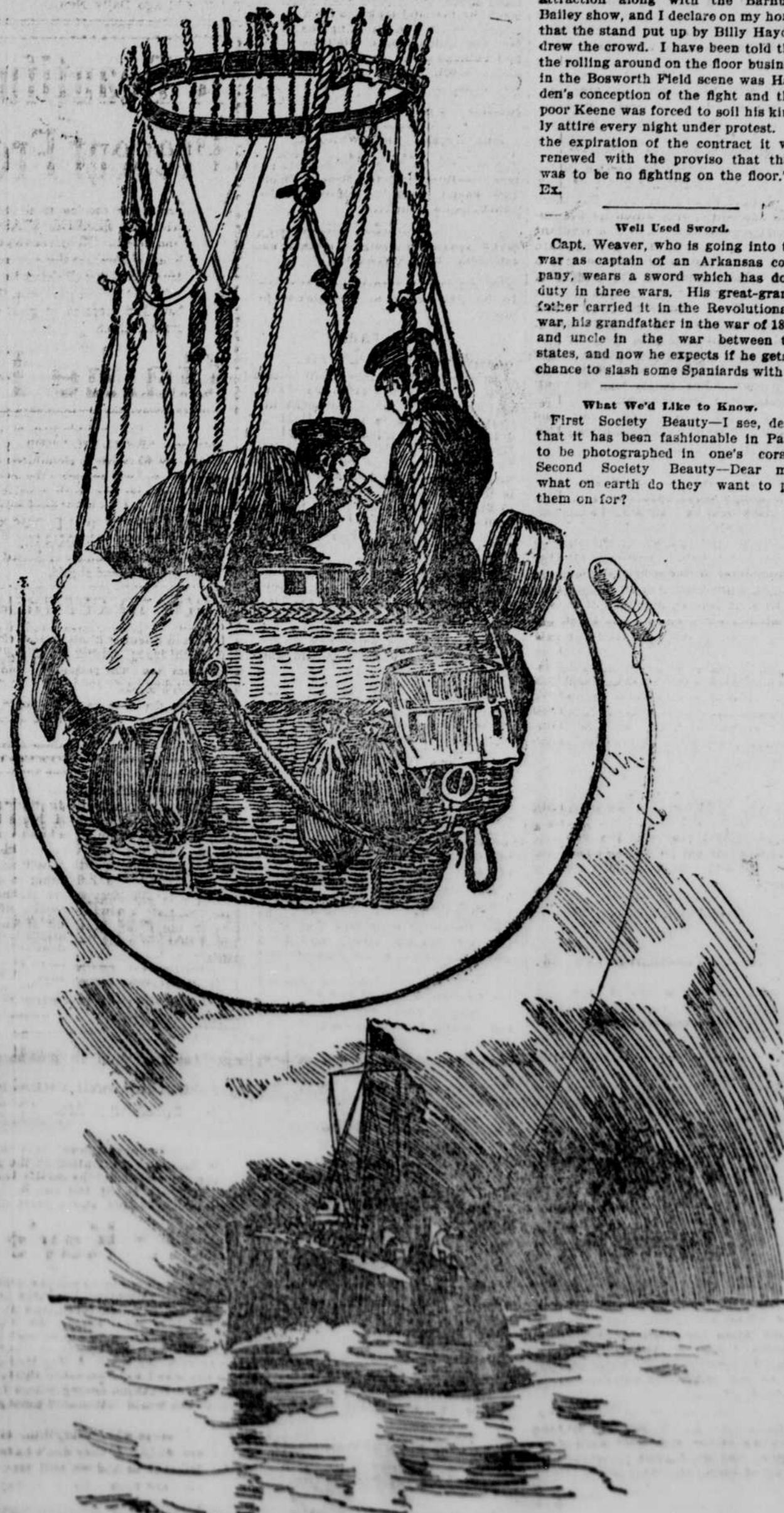
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