

flying straight out to the enemy with the after glow of sunset at his back would be courting calamity. Silhouetted against the evening sky, he would be a fair mark for the riflemen of "Madame."

"If monsieur will hang out the bomb?" he suggested as the plane cleared the outlying pickets—tiny black dots moving slowly below. Le Brun opened the box, lifted the little black orange carefully, clipped the trailing line to the staple and lowered it through the bottomless floor of the car.

SLOWLY, slowly, he lowered it, and as slowly Pelletier brought the planes a fraction higher to compensate the disturbed balance.

Le Brun watched the operation with professional interest. He was impressed. He said as much with characteristic generosity.

"I had no idea that a monoplane—" he said, "yet, if you will pardon me, my friend, I should have thought that your great ingenuity would be better employed on a machine of a more—?"

"M. Le Brun," said Pelletier, "I am overwhelmed by your praise and appalled by your judgment."

The tiny barometer before Le Brun showed 500 metres, and Pelletier chuckled ruefully.

"This is nearly a record, mon ami," he said, "but there is no prix d'altitude for our little 'Mignonette.'"

"It is very cold," grumbled Le Brun, evading responsive praise.

Pelletier brought the plane slowly round to the east; all the time he had been watching the faint outlines of the big dirigible and judged it to be three miles away, and flying at 300 metres, its favorite height.

It was moving slowly northward at right angles to him, and judging that he had crossed its track, he turned southward, so that it would pass him on his right.

He was, he knew, well out of sight, for the monoplane, with its flat surfaces offered no bulk, and besides, darkness had fallen on the world, save for the pearl-grey glow in the west.

"We are much higher than she," he said. "I hope she is moving."

His only danger lay in the dirigible remaining stationary. For then, with her engines stopped, the whirring of his propeller would be plainly audible. Nearer and nearer the 'Mignonette' crept,

and the progress seemed slow, though she was moving at thirty miles an hour, and through his night glasses Le Brun watched.

"She's moving," he said, "and if I'm any judge of perspective, we're about 100 metres too high."

Her "deck" was visible now, but it was too dark to see the figures of her crew. Pelletier put his helm over to starboard, and brought the "Mignonette" directly in the track of the balloon, then—

"She's higher than I thought," said Le Brun quickly. "Look! There goes her searchlight—she wouldn't dare use that under 400 metres."

From the deck shot a long white beam that moved downward. Le Brun saw a little round patch of the green earth appear at the end of the ray, saw the glitter of a thread of river and a grain of humanity on a white road.

"One of our cavalry outposts," he said; "so long as they keep the light down, we are safe."

He glued his glasses to his eyes, and watched in silence.

Nearer and nearer swept the little destroyer of the air.

"They've stopped!" whispered Le Brun fiercely, "plane, plane for God's sake! . . ."

PELLETIER'S hands went out to shut off the engine. He could plane down to his victim without risk, but he was too late.

The white beam jerked up from its survey of the world below, and began searching the heavens. Left and right, up and down it waved with fierce energy.

"Now!" said Pelletier between his teeth and dipped his planes. Gathering speed as it slipped down the velvet path of air, the "Mignonette" came hurtling through space. Two hundred metres, a hundred—then the search light found her, and the white light glared in Pelletier's face. But he was prepared. Swiftly he adjusted the smoked glasses that were on his forehead.

"Zip—zip—zizz!"

"Air guns," muttered Le Brun. "I thought the devils wouldn't risk the rifle at this altitude."

He steadied the swaying bomb that hung between his knees, drew it gently up until it was flush with his forehead.

Then the light went out, they were in the upward cash shadow of the balloon.

"Wait, wait!" screamed Pelletier over his shoulder, "we have overshot them."

"A bi-plane," muttered Le Brun, "would not have overshot them."

The mono' tilted alarmingly as it swung round again, the searchlight was thrusting into the darkness in a vain search. . . It found the monoplane for the second time as it came flying backward to the attack.

"Zip—zip!"

Le Brun felt something slap the side of his head, and shook it like a dog. He felt something warm on his face.

"Now!" yelled Pelletier and Le Brun slipped a catch and dropped the bomb.

"Zip! Zip!"

The searchlight was on them, but the "Mignonette" was flying at hurricane speed to safety.

Away, away she flew, lower and lower until, looking backward, Le Brun saw the big body of the dirigible was above him, and two hundred metres in rear.

"We've failed!" he whispered and cursed—mainly he cursed human stupidity that put its faith in a boat with wings.

"If it struck the bag it will hold," Pelletier shouted; "we've got about ten more seconds to get out of hell!"

They were out of danger now, for the searchlight had gone out, but there was the risk of wind from the explosion. . . .

"Crash!"

The very heavens seemed to burst into flame and fall, a mighty wind swept the monoplane over to its side, lifted it and threw it through space.

"Hold on!" yelled Pelletier. . . .

* * * * *

HALF an hour later he planed down before the general's tent, a white-faced, dishevelled youth, with lines about his eyes.

"Finished," he said sleepily, and tumbled out of his seat like a log. Le Brun descended slowly after him. He seemed to be considering something, then as Pelletier turned to direct the soldiers who were handling the airship, he said:

"Monsieur, it is due to you to say that nothing but a monoplane could have turned two somersaults in the air, and righted itself at the end. I would add," he said, sleepily reflective, "that the bi-plane would not have turned the somersault, but that is beside the point."

Arbitration a la Mode By ADA MIXON

ON the occasion of a call at the government printing office, a visitor was obliged to wait some time in a room where two young women were comparing and proofreading a printed copy of an arbitration treaty with the original document. As the young women read, they also gossiped, when the foreman stepped out of earshot, and this is what the visitor heard:

"The government of the United States of America and the government of His Majesty the King of Spain, signatories"—("my pink dress doesn't fit well.")

"Take it back to the dressmaker."
("But I want to wear it tonight")—"for the pacific settlement of international disputes, concluded at The Hague—"

"How does my hair look today?"
("Perfectly lovely")—"taking into consideration that by Article XIX of that Convention the High Contracting Parties have reserved to themselves the right of—"

"Using hot irons?"
—"Have authorized the undersigned to conclude the following agreement:—"

"Large hats are still in fashion."
("Yes, and shaped like a tub upside down.")
("But I like the Continental shape best")—"relating to the interpretation of treaties existing between the two Contracting Parties and which it may not have been possible to settle by diplomacy."

"I don't know; I haven't a single thing to wear"—("that they do not affect the vital interests, the independence, or the honor of the two Contracting States—"

"What a pity!")—"before appealing to the Permanent Court of Arbitration"—("don't forget your blue dress, my dear.")

"It's soiled across the front breadth"—("and do not concern the interests of third Parties.")

"Article II."—"Dutch collars are going out of style.")

"Yes, and tulle bows are all the go now")—"for the High Contracting Parties, before appealing to the Permanent Court of Arbitration, shall conclude a special Agreement—"

"I had a funny dream last night")—"defining the scope of the powers of the arbitrators and the periods to be fixed—"

"Tell me your dream.")

"I thought I was at a grand ball. I wore my blue dress and you had on your yellow empire. I was just about to enter the ball room all filled with handsome young men in swallow tails when I glanced at my feet. Horrors! They were

bare!")—"

"Defining clearly the matter in dispute and the scope of the powers of the arbitrators and the periods to be fixed for the formation of the Arbitral Tribunal and the several stages of the procedure. It is understood that—"

("Feathers are cheap now.")

("You are mistaken; they are very high.")

("But I saw in today's paper that—")

"Scope of the powers of the arbitrators and the periods to be fixed for the formation—"

("Where?")

"It is understood that on the part of the United States such special agreements will be made by the President of the United States—"

("At Brown and Jones.")

"Article III."—"The feathers there are not cheap at all. I paid there—"

"By and with the advice and consent of the Senate—"

"I would like to have a long plume on my hat")—"subject to the procedure required by her laws. The present Convention is concluded for a period of five years.—"

("I saw a friend of yours yesterday")—"dating from the day of the exchange of the ratifications. Article IV.—"

("I have no friend any more. Who was it?")

"The present Convention shall be ratified by the President of the United States—"

("Harry Granger?")

"Yes, and he asked me")—"with the advice and consent of the Senate thereof"—("if you were still angry with him.")—"The ratifications shall be exchanged at Washington as soon as possible.—"

("Do you still like him?")

"Hush, here comes the foreman")—"done in duplicate in the English and Spanish languages at Washington this 20th day of April, in the year—"

"Oh, good morning! We were so busy we didn't see you come in."

"What industrious girls you are! You'll have to go up on the efficiency list sure," said the foreman, "but please tell me who is the president of this country?"

"Mr. Taft, of course."

"Oh! I thought it was Mr. Harry Granger."

Impossible Architecture

IF a modern architect should announce that he could build a structure larger than the great pyramid, using for material nothing but cobble stones, ranging in size from six inches in diame-

ter to pebbles the size of a marble, and without employing either mortar or cement, and that this structure should withstand winds and storms, summer and winter, for years, we should call him insane, or an idiot. Yet, precisely the same feat is performed every day by ants, using proportionately smaller building stones.

On the sparsely grassed "campos," as the treeless, sandy areas which lie at intervals along both banks of the Amazon river, are called, one often sees grassless mounds of sand, rising from a foot to four feet above the general level of the plain, and from one to twenty-five feet in diameter. Each one of these is the home of a colony of ants, and their population must run into the millions. The builders are a rather small variety, similar in size and general appearance to the little makers of the tiny, volcano-shaped ant hills one sees by the roadside in all countries. The larger ones, however, are less pointed than the smaller nests, resembling an inverted saucer, with a smoothly rounded top.

An examination of one of these smaller hills shows that the bottom is bowl shaped, and extends about twice as far below the general level of the plain, as the mound rises above it, and instead of one entrance, like the small ant hills, there are hundreds, perhaps thousands, scattered about the entire summit. I made many efforts to examine the interior construction of these mounds, but they collapsed under the slightest disturbance. A stone dropped upon one sank into it as it would in mud, and yet they are firm enough to withstand the torrential rains of the wet season for years. Some of these mounds must contain fifty or more cubic yards of sand, and nearly, if not even a greater number of tons weight, and yet they stand unchanged, save to grow in size, for years. No one who is acquainted with their treacherous nature ever crosses one of the larger ones.

Frightened or frolicking young cattle sometimes plunge into one, and are lost, for escape is as difficult as it would be from a quagmire. I was witness to one such tragedy, or rather to its sequel, on a plantation where I was staying. A valuable yearling having been lost in one of these hills, we went to its aid. On our way we cut a pole, armed at one end with a sort of hook, to examine the mound, without climbing upon it. At the first thrust the pole encountered the object of our search. A few dexterous efforts, and the hook brought out all that remained of the poor unfortunate; mostly bones, hoofs, teeth, and just enough of the hide to keep the hair together. All the soft parts had been devoured within two days by that innumerable multitude of mites. In its struggles to get out it had sunk, until covered by nearly a foot of sand. Death must have been caused by suffocation.