

RAINDROPS.

She thought the rain would surely bring
The dear one to her door;
Earth's every little upward thing
A cap of rainbows wore.

She knew he loved their peaceful sound,
And blessed the gleaming gems,
Or laughed to think his forehead crowned
With such cool diadems.

Upon the path she heard them beat,
And whispered low his name;
Sometimes she took them for his feet,
His feet that never came.

She heard them falling in the rills,
And wept for what might be,
Nor caught the music on the hills
Of higher destiny.
—Agnes Lee, in New Lippincott.

THE PARACHUTE JUMPER.

By Raymond Z. Penney.

CIRCUMSTANCES combined to make the waiting room at the old Inoo railway station a great place for story-telling in winter. Inoo was, for one thing, a noted rendezvous for commercial travelers, who took trains there for their drumming tours in the extensive Powder Woods district; and for another, the big base burner that stood in the middle of the combined waiting and sitting room was surrounded by a wide nickel railing, which invited the heels of talkers and listeners.

One evening my own chair was back tilted there, when a handsome, careless looking young man came in, limping badly, although obviously in no pain, and sat down silently, but with a friendly glance about him, between myself and Old Hernly, who travels for Carratraca Water, and is everywhere known as the Interrogation Mark.

"What's your line?" said Hernly to the young man.

"Aeronaut, or used to be. Gone out of the business now."

"Why?"

"Got hurt."

"How?"

"That's quite a story."

Of course Hernly made him tell it, and it ran thus:

When I said I was an aeronaut, I should have said a parachute jumper. It is a dangerous trade, but a fellow can make a good deal of money by it in a few years if he doesn't have the bad luck to get smashed by a fall. The average life of a parachute jumper, after he goes into the trade, is two years. They generally get killed by some sort of carelessness of their own, usually some neglect to see that the parachute will open all right, but I followed the trade for five years without accident.

I was always careful to examine all the fixings of the bag and the umbrella. Let it in spite of my care I showed more and more reckless without fully seeing it. I could not bear to disappoint the people, and took too many chances in the way of weather, but everything went till last September. I engaged with the managers of the Chipathee Annual Fair to make the ascent every day while the show was going on.

While I was in the air the first time I noticed something I didn't like, and that was the spread of the forest south of the town, which extended, with mighty few clearings, as far as I could see. A large forest is one of our worst enemies, for in descending, if the wind lands the parachute in a grove, it is sure to catch on the tops of the trees, and the poor aeronaut, coming to such a sudden stop, often loses his seat, and gets caught on a limb, or goes crashing to the ground. If by chance he escapes getting his neck broken, his balloon and parachute still remain outspread on the highest branches of the trees, and to get them down without tearing takes time and labor.

For three days I made good trips, for the wind continued to blow from the south, thus carrying me away from the woods. Friday morning I stood on the fair grounds, congratulating myself on the fine weather I had had so far, and hoping it might remain calm till Saturday night—Saturday afternoon was to be my last ascension at this place, but now the air had an unseasonable and suspicious heat and calm. I was to go up at 4 o'clock, and at 3 it was pretty clear that a thunderstorm was near; indeed, it seemed so near that I then hoped it would come and go before ascension time.

The air, however, remained in the same still, brooding, electrical condition, and at 3.55 o'clock, when 15,000 or 20,000 people were expecting me to go up, the storm seemed near. If it should not come, the people would think me a rank coward in case I did not go up, and the fair managers might hold back my money; and above all, my reputation as a man who could be depended on to ascend as advertised would suffer.

It wanted three minutes to 4, the advertised hour, when I gave my assistant the word to let go the guys, and in the next instant the earth and the crowd of people began to sink. Up I went! The air was so still and calm I seemed to be floating away. It is a delightful sensation, and I had learned to love my balloon and her easy, bird-like flight.

I rose rapidly, and after gazing down at the old earth awhile, took off my cap and waved it. Then I performed a few simple feats on the tra-

peze bar, when the balloon shot up into a slight current of cool air. At the same moment I noticed a movement in the lowering but vague cloud to the north, and was struck with fear that the storm was about to burst forth.

I almost concluded to drop then and there, but I was not more than 500 feet from the earth, and the very same fear of being taken for a coward which had sent me up now kept me ascending. At the same time the cool draft of air was carrying me toward the forest at no great speed.

But in a few more seconds of ascent I was out of that cool space and going up through air which had not yet begun to share in any degree the southward motion of the advancing storm. Up I went till I had probably reached 1500 feet of altitude, my usual ascent. Then the growing cloud in the north lifted with wonderful speed till it spread over the sky above me, and bright lightning zigzagged down from the zenith in two divergent streaks. In the shattering thunder that followed I pulled the cord of the parachute and dropped.

I was not frightened much. I thought it likely I still had time to float down before the coming of the tornado, although I thought it must be blowing hard overhead. The storm was, as it were, a vast advancing hand, half-open, the palm down and the fingers thrust out above me. The palm or wrist, I thought, would not reach me in air.

As the parachute opened out and my speed slackened I began, as usual, to look out and up for the danger that threatens a parachute at every descent.

After the parachute is cut loose the balloon, if unweighted, will float for miles out across the country before finally overturning and tumbling back to the earth. When it has reached the ground, some one must take a trip to bring it in with team and wagon. This means a loss of time and money, to avoid which a heavy weight is attached to the top of the balloon, and this causes it to turn over soon after it is free.

Now a balloon with this weight attached to it is a pretty heavy thing, and if, in falling, it happens to miss the parachute, all right! But if it happens to crash down into the slow-falling umbrella, it is all over. Nothing but a miracle can save the men.

After I had parted company with the balloon it hovered above me for a little time, as if striving to regain its balance, then it suddenly turned over. Immediately the gas escaped out of the hole at the top of the inverted balloon, and it began to descend. Slowly it came at first, then faster and faster as it grew more empty.

I sat in the trapeze watching it so intently that I forgot about the cyclonic wind which was threatening me. Down came the balloon in a zig-zag line. Would it strike me? For a few seconds I could not tell. Then it passed about twenty feet to the right of me, wriggling and flapping, and at that very moment the lightning flashed terribly again, and such a rattling and rending thunder sound as followed I never heard since nor before. At that time I must have been 800 or 900 feet above the ground.

Down, down I went! The earth seemed to be rushing up toward me—the little silver streams of water, the houses, barns, trees and ponds. The only thing that was lessening in apparent size was the balloon, which rushed down almost directly beneath and away from me, until suddenly it began to behave strangely. Turning and twisting, it lay almost horizontal for a moment, then belled out and flew southward.

The tornado had struck it. In an instant I understood this. The gale was below me, whether above me or not. In a very few moments it must strike the parachute, and I felt that I was little better than a dead man.

Lightning streaked the hidden sky again, and thunder rattled as if the bolt had fallen near, and while I was swinging myself up and putting my feet on the trapeze bar, I grasped with my hands the iron hoop where ropes are joined together at the bottom of the parachute, and prepared to do my best to keep right side up. With a cool head and steady nerve, an aeronaut can often save his life by quickly and carefully working the ropes.

Puff! and off went my light silk cap. The next instant the wind had seized me. It came with rain. It struck the parachute with such force that it nearly sent it over. Flying along toward the south, I grasped the rope on the opposite side from which the para-

chute was tipping, and put all my weight on it. With a lurch she nearly righted, but only for an instant, and then went over again, this time going farther than before. Still I hung on for dear life, hoping that my weight would straighten us up in a lull, but the next instant the wind, striking the canvas on the under side, sent us over.

Just how it happened, or what my position was, I never knew, for I was in a confusion of ropes and ribs and linen in an instant. My fright must have crazed me for a few minutes, although I still clung to the ropes.

The first thing I can recall after that was the sense that the wind had blown the parachute nearly inside out, and the sharp strain had snapped two or three of the cords. So that now we were a confused mass of canvas, rain, ropes and man, all flying on a tornado at a terrible rate, and I gasping for breath; and always the earth was coming nearer.

I imagined I saw my body after it should strike the ground or mud, a shapeless thing of flesh and bones. The thought sickened me, and I closed my eyes to shut out the sight of the dim earth.

It is amazing how rapidly a man's brain will think in such moments. No sooner had I closed my eyes than I saw the old homestead in Ohio, looking exactly as it did the night I left it, ten years ago. I saw a boy of sixteen cautiously crawling out of a second-story window on to the porch. On reaching the edge he easily slid down one of the corner posts and landed on the ground. Here, slipping into his shoes, he gave one last look at the house and stole out into the shadows and darkness. Just what the next scene would be I cannot say, for I was suddenly twisted in such a way that nearly all my weight came on one rope, which instantly snapped and let one of my feet loose.

This roused me. I seemed to go down and onward faster than before, if such a thing were possible. I looked down and saw the ground not seventy-five feet below me. The parachute was flying over it at great speed. Suddenly the ground seemed to rise up, for the woods had come underneath me. Two or three seconds more and my brains would be dashed out on some limb of some neighboring tree.

I jerked my other foot loose, so I could go down feet first; then shut my eyes as I breathed a silent prayer, just as blinding flashes lightened above me. The next moment, amid the thunder and a great, fresh gust of rain, something seemed to reach up at me. There was a crash as I met it and then I became senseless.

When I regained consciousness the sky was blue above me and the sun was nearing the horizon in mists of great glory. Looking about me I found I was lying on or in the balloon, which had been blown against the top of a large, spreading oak in such a way that the bag completely covered the higher branches. On this huge canopy I had been flung down, falling into a sort of hollow between two branches, or more likely been shaken into that hollow by the gale as it battled with the outspread balloon, which was much torn in places, and would probably have been blown away in shreds had the tornado not passed so quickly. It lasted not twelve minutes, as I afterward learned. Possibly I might have dropped right through the stuff, but for the fact that the oak was greatly overgrown with a huge grapevine.

As soon as I tried to clamber out of that hollow I found my right leg was broken, both bones, right here below the knee; my left ankle badly sprained, my right side severely bruised, and every bone in my body aching from the great jar I had undergone.

For nearly half an hour I lay outstretched on my ainy bed, my hands still entangled among the ropes, nearer dead than alive; then I heard a voice shout, "Here is B. right over this big oak!" and I knew a search party had found the balloon. I shouted then. They were greatly amazed to find me, as well as my apparatus there. How did they get me down?

But before he had fairly begun to explain the process the expected train whistled, the group broke up, and that was the last I heard or saw of the young parachute jumper. — Youth's Companion.

A Hint Worth Taking.

A touch of Venetian coloring has been brought to Sheephead Bay by one of the summer residents. There horseboats have recently been anchored in the middle of the bay. In order to reach the shore the owners of the craft have small cat-rigged boats as tenders. One of these owners, evidently a lover of the picturesque, has fitted his catboat with a sail of deep Pompeian red, and as the little craft dodges in and out among the white sails of larger yachts she lends a strikingly attractive bit of color to the scene. If yachtsmen would only adopt the suggestion of this houseboat owner another Mediterranean made glorious with the color of painted sails might grow up within a trolley ride from Manhattan. — New York Times.

A law has been passed by the Kansas Legislature forbidding the requirement of study at home for children in certain grades.

HORTICULTURE

Preparing the Lawn.

To get a good lawn there should be no trees or shrubbery to draw upon the land. The fall is the best time to get ready for the lawn. Plow the ground now and apply lime. In September work the land well and apply 100 pounds each per acre of superphosphate and sulphate of potash, harrowing it in. After the first rain sow blue grass and white cloverseed, using plenty of seed, and brush the land over or roll it with a roller. The grass will make considerable growth before winter. Early in the spring apply 100 pounds nitrate of soda per acre.

Grazing Animals in the Orchard.

It is usually found difficult to tether an animal out to grass in a field or orchard without endangering the safety of the animal. An excellent plan is shown in the cut. Stretch a stout wire from tree to tree, or from tree to post, or post to post. On this place



FOR A GRAZING CALF OR HORSE.

a ring with rope and hitching-trap attached. The ring can be stopped, as shown, at a suitable distance from the trees or posts. A calf cannot get "tangled up" with such a device as this, and is, moreover, given a much longer range for feeding.

Where farm dogs must be kept tied up when not on "guard duty" this plan of fastening them will afford needed exercise. Whatever the device that is used for tethering animals, it is important that the chain or rope should have a swivel arrangement to prevent it from becoming twisted with the turns the animal is sure to make. — New York Tribune.

When and How to Thin Fruit.

The Kansas station claims that the work of thinning fruits should be done early when the little fruits are from one-half to three-fourths of an inch in diameter, before the pits have begun to harden, and before there has been an exhaustive strain on the tree. By relieving the tree of all extra effort at this time it can put its energy into developing the remaining fruits. The thinning should be done by hand so that a systematic selection of fruits to remain may be made. A large amount of good judgment is necessary to thin fruits so as to balance up the crop on a tree.

With peaches the aim should be to leave the fruits at least six inches apart. However, the size and strength of the limbs will determine this to some extent; slender limbs eighteen inches long can probably support only one fruit. In thinning plums the distance apart to leave the fruits cannot be so definitely stated because they are produced in clusters. The clusters should be broken up so that only two or three fruits remain, the idea being not to have the fruits touch when ripe. Apricots may be left about three times as thick as peaches, that is, so as to be two inches apart when ripe. With apples and pears the clusters should be thinned down to one or two of the best fruits.

Fancy Strawberries.

If a poor man is industrious and willing to work, let him move on to a small piece of ground where there is a comfortable house for his family, and go to raising fancy strawberries, and he will be more independent and make a better living than in town, says a writer in Gardening in connection with the following items:

A glossy appearance goes a long way in attracting the attention of passersby to a fancy grade of strawberries, and the merchant who handles them can always get from two to three cents more per quart.

Clean and attractive boxes are necessary to make even a fancy strawberry look well on the market. While box material is so cheap it would be mistaken economy to use any but new boxes.

When growing fancy strawberries on poor soil, I prefer barnyard manure to any other material or a winter mulch, as it contains numerous fertilizing elements to be washed into the soil.

The grower of fancy strawberries receives more profit from one-third of an acre of land than the person who grows a common grade receives from a whole acre.

The careless person cannot grow fancy strawberries, because he never gives them the right kind of attention at the proper time.

If the right conditions are provided, one person can grow as many fancy strawberries as another.

Sheep growers find that the finer the wool the easier is the skin for tanning purpose.

WHITTLING SI.

Si Bartholomew—he can whittle anything, you bet! He's about the smartest man that I guess I ever met. Onct he whittled me a boat, An' sailed it in the drain, An' there wasn't room to float, So I'm waitin' for a rain.

Si's knife's never dull a bit: My, you ought to see him! For he mixes in some spit— You, sir!—on the whettin'! An' the other day he said, "Sakes alive! You'll cut your leg Clean off, right above your ear!"

An's he's made a bully bow, An' some arrers, an' a gun, An' a windmill that'll go, If you hold it out an' run; An' a dagger an' a sword, An' a teeny drinkin'-cup— He jes takes a common board, An' he whittles it smack up!

He sits 'roun' all day, Si does, Whittlin' shavin's in his lap. Pa, he says there never was Such a lazy, shifless chap, An' he doesn't earn his keep— But I think he does, you see, 'Cause he has to work a heap Makin' handy things for me. —Edwin L. Sabin, in New Lippincott.

FACEIOUS VEIN

"I saw a girl with four sets of teeth in her head yesterday." "No!" "She wore side combs." —Philadelphia Bulletin.

Mathilde—"Mr. Hungerford is a man who thoroughly believes in himself. Elaine—"How very gullible he must be." —Town and Country.

A very even temper My wife possesses. I'm Quite certain naught can change her. She's cranky all the time. —Philadelphia Record.

He—"One cannot always tell what a girl means what she says." She—"And one cannot always tell what a man cares whether she means what she says." —Puck.

"What a debt we owe to modern science," he said as he put down his paper. "Good heavens!" she exclaimed, "haven't you paid that doctor's bill yet?" —Chicago Post.

If every man fulfilled his plan To work extreme distress, For he would doom posterity To utter idleness. —Washington Star.

Housekeeper—"You needn't ask me for any cold victuals, for I have none." Weary Willie—"All right, ma'am—a couple o' soft boiled eggs, a broiled steak and a cup o' coffee do." —Philadelphia Record.

Poetic Bridegroom—"I could sit here forever, gazing into your eyes as I listen to the wash of the ocean." Practical Bride—"Oh, that reminds me, darling; we have not paid our laundry bill yet." —Brooklyn Life.

Wife—"I somehow just feel in my bones that we will go to Europe this summer." Husband—"In which hotel do you feel it most?" Wife—"Well, don't exactly know, but I guess at my wish bone." —Boston Traveller.

He—"Do you believe in love in a cottage?" She—"No, indeed, I don't." He—"How about love in a palace?" She—"Oh, George, this is too sudden." He—"Well, it won't be if we've got to wait till I earn the palace." —The Smart Set.

Mrs. Newbride—"How much do your spring chickens?" Poultryman—"Dollar a pair, ma'am." Mrs. Newbride—"Well—er—I've got to be very economical, so just give me the very smallest pair you have." —Philadelphia Press.

"What is that breed of rabbit that multiplies so rapidly?" inquired the forgetful man. "The Welsh-rabbit," guessed, remarked the dyspeptic. "Of them taken just before bedtime will generate a whole menagerie." —Philadelphia Press.

Vipers in England.

The case of death from the bite of a viper reported from Cumberland is the first for several years. The bite of a viper is always intensely painful, but is much more rarely fatal than most people imagine. This, we believe, is only the seventh case on record in England for the past forty years, and here, as in most other cases, the victim was a child. It should be carefully noted that vipers rarely bite except by way of retaliation. They can be safely observed at close quarters if they are not touched; though the cases of most bites the creature is irritated by accident. — Westminster Gazette.

German Navy's New Fuel.

The imperial German Navy and some German manufacturers are using large quantities of an oily product of German brown coal tar called "masut" for heating and steam-producing purposes. The coast defense vessels of the German Navy are fitted for the use of this oil, and some of the ships and cruisers that are fitted for that they can use coal when necessary.

The advantages of using this oil are said to be a saving of space in heat-producing quarters, the ease of handling, the ability to produce steam in less time, and the fact that it is a by-product of the sugar industry.