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IN ADVANCE

THE BALLOON AND THE AERONAUTS.

We have already laid before our readers a detailed description of the great ship to be employed in the coming



JOHN WISE.

transatlantic voyage. We now present an illustration which will convey a general idea of the appearance of the main balloon accompanied in its flight by the two smaller attendants with which, at first, it was proposed to provide it. This idea has, however, recently been abandoned, and it is now intended, if any additional balloons at all are taken, to carry but one, and that only of some ten or twelve feet in diameter. This will be used as a pilot, that is, connected to a long rope and let fly upwards, in order to indicate the different currents above the main balloon, so that, if at a higher elevation it be found that a quicker speed can be gained or a more favorable direction assumed, ballast will be thrown out and the ascent once made. The project of having three balloons was to utilize all in jointly supporting the car and boats until a considerable quantity of gas from the largest one had exuded. Then the smaller vessels were to be hauled down below the neck of the main balloon and connected with the latter by hose provided for the purpose, so that the gas would rise therein.

We add portraits of Messrs. Wise and Donaldson, the aeronauts, to whom the important enterprise is confided. Mr. Wise is a veteran balloonist of some thirty-five years' experience, and has probably made as many, if not more, ascents than any man living. He is a firm believer in the theory of an eastward current, and, in making the present voyage, carries out a desire which has been the cardinal object of his life. Mr. Wise is an able

writer and the author of a work on aeronautics, which has gained for him considerable reputation. In conversation with us quite recently, he unfolded his various plans, giving us many details to which we shall hereafter allude; and he also mentioned the important part which aerial navigation might play in making geological, geographical, or archaeological researches. As an instance of the latter, he stated that, in an ascent over Chillicothe, he was astonished to notice, on the fields before him, ridges which appeared to be fortifications, clearly marked, and which were entirely invisible to persons on the ground. Further and closer examination proved the elevations to be mounds made in queer shapes, some being built in bastions and others to represent the upper portion of a gigantic human body stretched out, proving that they were the work of prehistoric races. At another time, in passing over the Eastern States, Mr. Wise recognized a depression strongly resembling the crater of an extinct volcano. On mentioning the fact to local geologists, he found that the rocks in the neighborhood added their evidence to the fact, and that his observation proved a means of reconciling otherwise problematical appearances.

Mr. Washington H. Donaldson, the coadjutor of Mr. Wise, is the practical man of the enterprise, and to his ingenuity are due the many novel arrangements comprising the apparatus. He is comparatively young, and has been in the profession for about two years, during which period he has made forty-one ascents.

Mr. Donaldson is an intrepid and fearless aeronaut, and the hero of innumerable romantic aerial adventures. Recently, he tells us, he has been doing "trapeze business," because ordinary ascents of a balloon, with the operator standing in a basket, failed to afford a sufficiently startling sensation. Trapeze business is executing gymnastics of appalling description on a slender bar, suspended several feet below the bottom of a car, while the balloon is several thousand feet in the air. Mr. Donaldson has a fund of anecdote of his hairbreadth escapes, which might form the basis of a score of lectures or novels. At one time his bal-

loon burst while he was 3,000 feet high, and down he came. Luckily the empty sack formed a parachute, so that his descent, although rapid, was sufficiently broken to land him in



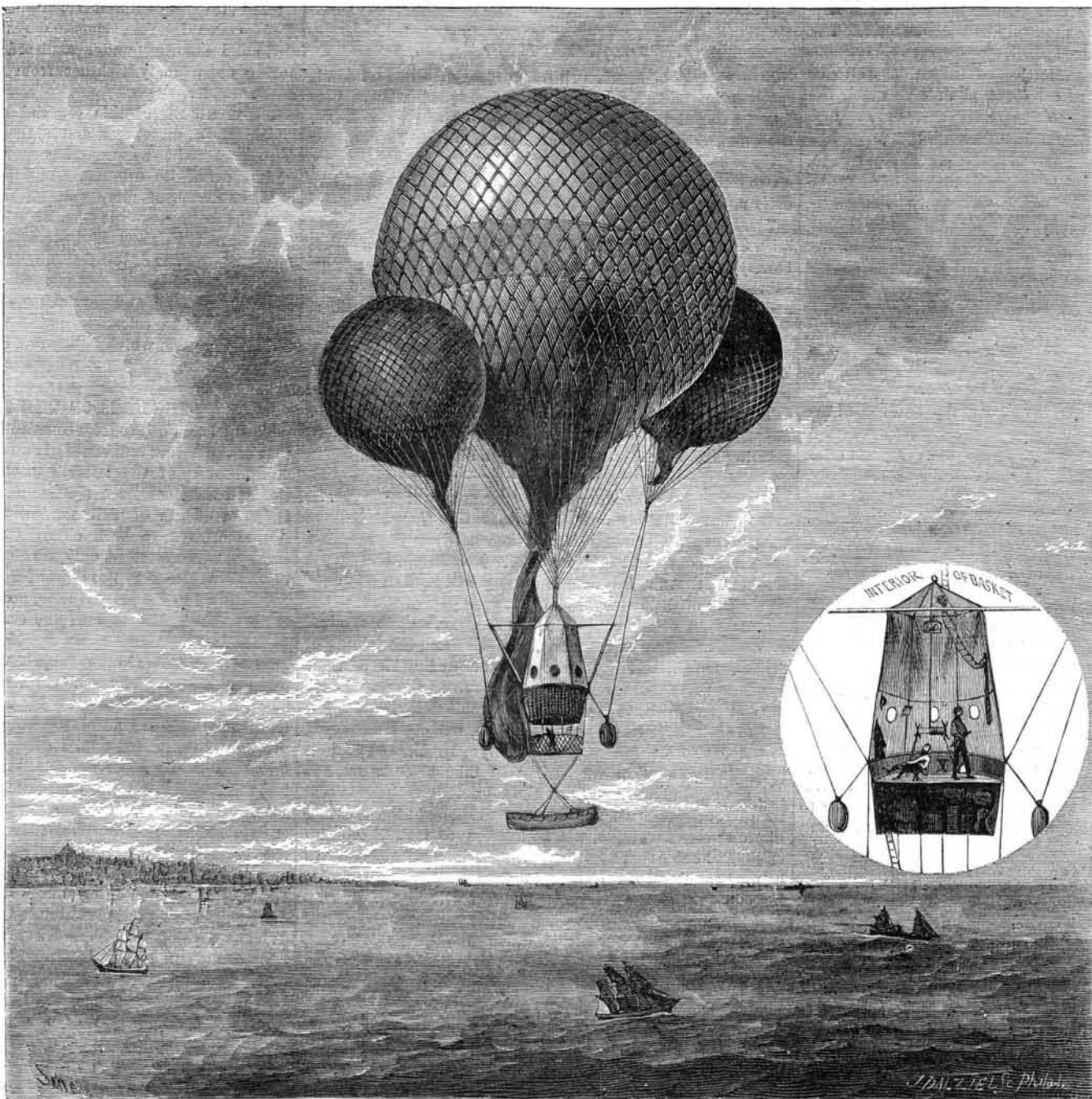
WASHINGTON H. DONALDSON.

a tree with only a few bruises. Another exploit was to ascend and travel for ten miles in a paper balloon.

To Mr. Donaldson the organization of the present enterprise is mainly due. He started the idea, and communicated his views in correspondence to a daily journal in this city. This attracted the notice of Mr. Wise, and the two aeronauts joined forces.

The unsuccessful effort to raise sufficient funds (\$10,000) from the city of Boston is well known; but, nothing daunted, attempts were made to enlist other parties in favor of the scheme. Application was made to the *New York Herald*, but that journal declined, and, finally, the *Graphic* took up the matter, but not until Mr. Donaldson had begun arrangements, which bade fair to be successful, with the town of Allentown, Pa. Mr. Donaldson is, in event of the balloon descending for want of sufficient gas to sustain all the party, to remain by her until the life boat and every available weight is removed. Then, with his ship thus lightened, he will attempt to complete the voyage alone. The ingenious devices for disconnecting the life boat, and how the separation of the party will be effected, will be explained and illustrated in our following number.

The *Graphic* company offer to forward letters by their balloon on this experimental trip, at a charge of \$1 per half ounce above the regular postage. The proceeds are to be divided between the two aeronauts, who will attach to each letter a certificate stating how it was carried.



THE GREAT TRANSATLANTIC BALLOON