

BALLOONING.

Detached Ascension of Prof. Lowe's War Balloon—Three Voyageurs to the Clouds—Beautiful Start of the Aerial Ship.

Balloonning is a luxury few care to enjoy, and not many can afford. It costs a pile of greenbacks to go up in a balloon, and it requires great nerve and a love of danger to determine any one to venture in the slight and crazy-looking craft that is generally used to go sailing among the clouds. One need not say that those who go up in a balloon are as crazy as the machine that carries them, for usually those who do go up are anything but madmen. It is true that we have read in our time thrilling tales of the maniac aeronaut, who sought to gain a higher altitude by throwing overboard his no less maddened companion, but no one believes such romantic and terrific accounts now-a-days.

For some days past the good people of New-York have had daily view of a mammoth balloon, floating over the city like a large bird of prey, securely tied, however, to mother earth by a stout rope some 3,000 yards in length. Nearly everybody knows that this aerial monster was the war balloon of Prof. Lowe, and very many of our curious citizens have daily gone up with him and taken a bird's-eye view of the city. By moonlight, by daylight, by gaslight, and we were very near saying by no-light at all, New-Yorkers have viewed the fair isle of Manhattan from the wicker car of the balloon. They have seen the country laid out at their feet like a school map, the rivers, bays, harbors and the open sea. They have looked down at the streets of the city, with their ever-moving life and throbb, and have gathered in at a single glance the neighboring cities and towns. Such as ventured to mount the air drank in with eager eyes the beauties and the glories of the panoramic scene spread out before their wondering gaze; meanwhile, those below looked up and envied them their enjoyment.

Yesterday, however, a different sort of ballooning was attempted, and very successfully, too. It was real ballooning this time, and no mistake. No cords tied the machine to *terra firma*, but the ship was really to take an air flight to the skies, unimpeded by weight but its own specific gravity. The voyage of the aeronauts was quite a success, so far as could be seen from Fifty-ninth-street, but it remains for time to test how the expedition ended.

It appears that three gentlemen who have been ambiguously termed "scientific men," made all necessary arrangements with Prof. Lowe for a detached ascension in his balloon, and yesterday afternoon was fixed for the attempt. At 3 o'clock a large crowd collected at the corner of Sixth-avenue and Fifty-ninth-street, (outside the balloon amphitheatre, as it is called,) and a considerably smaller one inside. The object both crowds had in view was to see the balloon ascend with its living freight, and the result proved that the view either had was a very brief one.

Going inside the amphitheatre the visitor found himself in view of one of those subterranean squares so common in the vicinity of Central Park. Round the sides of the square were stands for the accommodation of spectators. Below, at the bottom of the inclosure, was a large platform, on which was swinging to and fro the balloon, seemingly eager to be off on its cloudy journey.

When we gained the platform, the huge proportions of the air-ship were fully visible, and it seemed difficult to keep the machine secure, notwithstanding numerous ropes were employed for that purpose. On the platform were the amateur aeronauts and the veteran balloonist, Prof. Lowe, surrounded by his numerous corps of assistants. The car was filled with great bags of sand, and near the car stood two baskets filled with sundry tempting looking bottles and packages, suggestive of the good things of this earth. Lying near these baskets were several bundles of the Professor's handbills, who intended being his own distributor while in the air.

Among the group collected together on the platform, the most prominent were the three venturesome gentlemen who were about to make the experiment. Everybody gazed at them as though they were something different from the common race of men, as indeed they were in being able to secure the luxury of such a voyage. To tell the truth, they did not seem very courageous, and viewed the hurrying, yet quiet, preparations for their departure with something of the air of men going to be hanged instead of being sent flying to the clouds like a thing of air. One of these "scientific gentlemen" was slight and tall, another was slight and short (peculiarities being both essential to a balloon excursion, as the result proved,) while the third was neither short nor tall, but rather stout in build. If corpulency is any indication of "scientific" attainments, this gentleman was decidedly the best of the three, but he didn't go up in the balloon for all that.

As the watch told the half hour after three, the preparations took a definite shape, for the pilot balloon was inflated and cut adrift. Its course was to the Northwest and advantage taken accordingly. The bags of sand were lifted out of the car, the Professor got in, and then his companions entered the frail basket. But stop, only two got in with the Professor, our stout friend being too heavy for the capacity of the balloon, so he at once relapsed to the standing of other outsiders. When the three balloonists were all in, the baskets of provisions were handed up, and the bills placed beside the Professor.

Then came the eventful moment—the cutting of the single cord that held three mortal men to earth. The flags flying from the car were shook out, the word given for all below to stand clear, and the keen knife was pressed by the tall and slender "scientific gentleman" against the cord, and so the balloon stood clear. For a second the beautiful craft hung poised and motionless, then came a steady upward movement as she slowly gained headway; then as the globe of the balloon caught the breeze she darted up into open space amid the cheers of the assembled spectators. Waving their hats to their friends below the voyageurs swiftly rose upon the evening breeze and in the short space of a minute and a half the balloon was out of sight. So quick, indeed, did she disappear, that many looked all round the sky in search of her.

The ascension was one of the finest ever witnessed, the balloon rising gracefully and equably, with scarcely a ripple upon her silken sides. It is understood that the New-York Press will be advised, by telegraph, of the descent of the balloon, when the voyage comes to an end, or soon as practicable.