

An account of the first aërial voyage in England : in a series of letters to his guardian, Chevalier Gherardo Compagni, written under the impressions of the various events that affected the undertaking / by Vincent Lunardi.

Contributors

Lunardi, Vincent, 1759-1806.

Publication/Creation

London : Printed for the author, and sold at the Pantheon, also by the publisher J. Bell ... and at Mr. Molini's Woodstock-Street, 1784.

Persistent URL

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AN
ACCOUNT

OF THE

First Aërial Voyage in England.

Leonard

A. C. G. O. U. N. T.

First Actual Voyage in England.

Wm. G. G. G.

A N
A C C O U N T

O F T H E

First Aërial Voyage in England,

In a SERIES of LETTERS
to his GUARDIAN,

Chevalier Gherardo Compagni,

Written under the Impressions of the various Events
that affected the Undertaking,

By VINCENT LUNARDI, Esq.
Secretary to the Neapolitan Ambassador.

A non esse, nec fuisse, non datur argumentum ad non posse.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the AUTHOR: and sold at the PANTHEON; also
by the Publisher, J. BELL, at the BRITISH LIBRARY, Strand;
and at Mr. MOLINI's, Woodstock-Street.

M,DCC,LXXXIV.

Entered at Stationers' Hall:

AY

ACCOUNT

OF THE

First Aerial Voyage in England

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS

TO AN OVERSEER

OF THE GREAT BRITISH AIR FORCE

WRITTEN UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE VARIOUS EXPERTS
IN THE SUBJECT OF AERONAUTICS

BY FRANCIS LUNARDI, ESQ.

OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE


AND THE ROYAL NAVAL AIR SERVICE

LONDON

Printed by the Author, and sold at the Publisher's, 210
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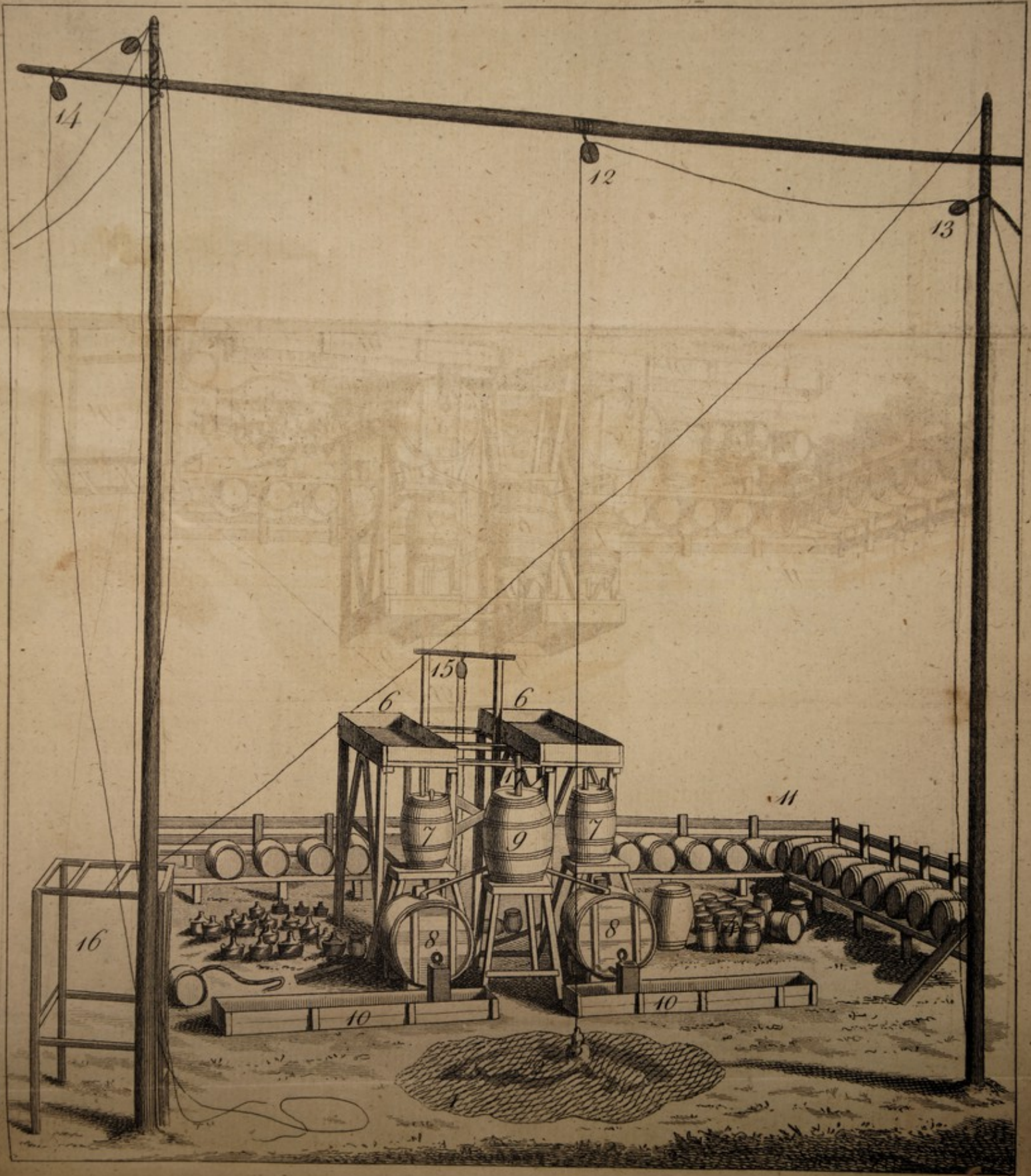
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The **ENGLISH BALLOON** and Appendages
*in which .M^r. LUNARDI ascended into
the Atmosphere, from the Artillery Ground,
Sept. 15 1784.*





Apparatus for filling M.^r Lunardi's Balloon.



A N A C C O U N T
O F T H E
F I R S T A Æ R I A L V O Y A G E
in *E N G L A N D*.

L E T T E R I.

MY HONOURED FRIEND, *London, July 15, 1784.*

THE innumerable instances of kindness I have received from you, and the respectful affection it has impressed on my mind, have insensibly led me into the habit of giving all my interesting thoughts and actions, some reference to you, and making your opinion and satisfaction necessary to my happiness.

You are well apprized of the general effect which the attempts to perform Aërial Voyages in France, have had in Europe ; but you may not know, that the Philosophers in England have attended to them with a silence, and apparent indifference, not easily to be accounted for.

These two nations emulate each other in all circumstances. And the progress and advantage of manufactures are not watched on either side with greater anxiety and jealousy, than a discovery in science, or an improvement in fine arts. This has the happiest effect, as it is accompanied with a liberality and candour that do honour to human nature.

The first rumours of Aërial Voyages were so swollen by the breath of fame, and the imaginary advantages to attend them, so rapidly and plausibly multiplied, that the genius of English philosophy, which, since the days of Newton, has born the palm of science, clouded her brows with a kind of fullness, and perhaps feared for a moment, the ascendancy of her sister.

The glory of a discovery is indivisible as the atoms of Epicurus; and in respect to aërostation, it remains, and must remain with France. It is supposed, and I speak it on better authority than rumour, that some of the most attentive and penetrating observers in England, meditate such improvements of Aërostatic Balloons, and such modes of applying them to use, as may give them an equal claim to glory with their philosophical rivals in France. But this has not hitherto been attended with any remarkable effects.

You will possibly wonder, that in such circumstances, at my age, with the numerous engagements and occupations of my office, not yet distinguished in the records of science, and but little known in a country so enlightened as England, I should have the ambition to be the first man who visited its atmosphere.

I have already acquainted you with the project of our friend Zambecari, and the reasons of its failure. Little
disappointments

disappointments and errors are often the means of instruction. I proceeded in a different method, and conceived the design of interesting generosity and humanity, in the patronage of an experiment of some hazard, particularly in the hands of a foreigner.

At the distance of two miles from this metropolis, stands a monument of liberal and prudent charity, first suggested (as it is said) to Charles II. by a licentious woman. It is the hospital of military invalids at Chelsea; an object of national attention; and managed with a respect to the intentions of the successive Princes who have patronized it, and to the health and comfort of the meritorious veterans who inhabit it, which are not common in national institutions.

This building consists of three sides of a spacious quadrangle: a garden sloping before it to the shore of the Thames; the vale extensive and fertile, and bounded by hills gently rising, highly cultivated, and beautifully marked with villas, churches and villages, all indicating the opulence and felicity of the inhabitants.

This I have fixed upon, in my mind, as a picturesque and propitious spot; and I wish, as it were from the altar of humanity, to ascend the skies.

I have, therefore, addressed the following request to Sir George Howard, governor of the hospital.

“ Mr. LUNARDI has the honour to acquaint Sir
 “ George Howard, that he intends to construct an Air
 “ Balloon, in which he will ascend for the purpose of
 “ making some interesting experiments. But previous to
 “ his engaging in so expensive an undertaking, he wishes
 “ to be assured of a place for launching it, to which none

“ but subscribers can be admitted. If Sir George How-
 “ ard will indulge him with his permission to launch it
 “ from Chelsea gardens, Mr. Lunardi purpofes to devote
 “ whatever may exceed the expence of the undertaking to
 “ be divided among the Invalids of the hospital. Mr.
 “ Lunardi requests the favour of an answer from Sir
 “ George Howard.”

The King of England is diftinguifhed for an attention to the minuteft variations in the ftate of fcience or the arts, as he is for an unblemifhed character, and the moft fcrupulous practice of all moral and religious obligations. The innumerable concerns of an empire, to which extent and unweildinefs alone have been an inconvenience, do not prevent his perfonal notice of any remarkable character, or his correct examination of any fcientific event.

He has had the condefcenfion to attend to the firft probable intimations of a fuccefsful experiment with Balloons, and the governor, with his Majefty’s approbation, has granted my request.

I know your friendly and parental bofom will have fome emotions at the opening of a defign, by a youth whom you have fo long cherifhed and loved, which leads to glory, through fome uncertainty and fome danger. But my refolution is taken, and you know, within the bounds of life, nothing can fhake it.

When I write to you, though at fuch a diftance, I difcharge a duty: It feems to have the effect of my ufual methods of confulting you. I obtain my own approbation, and collect firmnefs and refolution, where perhaps I had my difficulties and doubts, and I take you
 with

with me in every thing I do. This habit is favourable to my slumbers, which I find to be a little interrupted by the magnitude of my design. I will therefore avail myself of its influence.

Good night, my dearest and best friend, communicate my intelligence to my sisters, &c. and believe me to remain,

Your obliged and affectionate,

VINCENT LUNARDI.

LETTER

L E T T E R II.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I Know your anxiety to learn the progress of my undertaking.

Neither my fortune nor my œconomy have ever allowed me to be in affluence, I therefore enter on any business requiring expence, with some disadvantage. In Italy I should have sought the patronage and generosity of my Sovereign, or of some liberal and opulent nobleman, to enable me to sustain the expence of my present undertaking. Here wealth is more equally diffused ; and by any contrivance that can gratify the curiosity of the people, sums of money are immediately collected, without the anxiety and mortification of petitioning the great. This has, in some measure, banished patronage from England ; but ingenious men are perhaps the better rewarded, and are not rendered slaves to the purposes and caprices of patrons. Hence are innumerable exhibitions, which are always open in London, and which are means of circulation, convenience, information and utility, almost unknown in every other country.

To proceed in my design, I have been obliged to adopt this custom. You will not be offended that a secretary to an embassy exhibits his Balloon, when you know that the first artists in the nation, under the immediate protection of the King, and incorporated into an academy, exhibit their pictures yearly, and that the price of admission is one shilling. This expedient adds two or three thousand a year to the income of the academy, and is neither an inconvenience or a dishonour, where the diffusion
of

of wealth through the lowest ranks renders the whole nation the general patron of useful designs.

In the centre of London, and in a street called the Strand, because it runs by the edge of the Thames, there is a large room constructed for the exhibition of pictures, by the first society formed in England for the encouragement of painting and sculpture.

Italians viewed this society, and every other of a similar kind, as the Europeans do the establishment of manufactories in America. The English had been accustomed to send their youth to Italy to learn just so much of the fine arts as would enable them to purchase and imitate its productions. At this time there are names in England, which are equal in reputation to any in the world. This, however, is greatly owing to the patronage afforded by his Majesty, who has instituted an academy for sculpture and painting, and who is himself the best judge in his dominions of the productions of his artists.

The Institution of the academy, gradually weakened and destroyed the society, and their room has since been fitted up, for a species of entertainment which no country ever produced but England; that is, a debate on political subjects, continued at random by any man who would pay for his admission, and speak so as to amuse the assembly. In reference to this entertainment, it was called the *Lyceum*; and in that *Lyceum* I exhibit my Balloon.

As the minutest step I take is interesting to you, I shall send you some of my proposals and advertisements just as they appear.

ADVERTISE-

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

I Take the liberty to acquaint that I have undertaken the construction of a Globe of 32 feet in diameter, with which I intend to ascend, as soon as compleated, to make the most interesting experiments, especially that of going many miles before the wind, and keeping the Globe constantly not higher than a gun-shot; previous to my constructing the great Machine for direction.

Being already involved in great expences attending the construction of so large a Globe, made with the best oiled silk—the filling it with inflammable air—the Machinery for the experiments, &c.—am obliged to solicit the assistance of the liberal promoters of ingenuity, in an undertaking of so curious a nature; by the improvements I flatter myself to have invented, I hope to render the discovery of great public utility; and presume to request you will have the goodness to honour me with your support and subscription: as approbation of my scheme may have weight with others, and induce them to conceive the practicability of it.

The gallery, oars, and wings are already made, and to be seen at the *Lyceum, Exeter-Change, Strand*, where the *Balloon* is now constructing, and will be finished in about a fortnight. With which, when compleated, I intend to set off from Chelsea-Hospital Garden, having already obtained his Majesty's patronage, and Sir George Howard's permission.

Subscriptions are taken in at Mr. Debret's, Bookseller, opposite Burlington-House, Piccadilly; Mr. Booker, Stationer, No. 56, New Bond-Street; Mr. Barnes, Engraver, Coventry-

entry-Street, Hay-Market; Mr. Adams, Mathematician to his Majesty, No. 60, Fleet-Street; and at Messrs. Nairne and Blunt, Mathematical and Philosophical Instrument-makers, No. 20, Cornhill, opposite the Royal-Exchange.

Which Mr. LUNARDI will give his Receipt for.

The guinea subscribers will be admitted into *Chelsea-Hospital Garden*, and have a chair near the Globe the day of ascending, and may view the construction at the *Lyceum* four different times.

A half guinea subscriber will likewise be admitted into the Garden on the above day, and also be accommodated with a seat on benches, next to the chairs, and admitted twice to see the construction of the Machine.

The probability that my design would be executed, produced, what hardly any recommendatory letters, or other common means of introduction will do in England, I mean an acquaintance with persons of merit and consequence. England is open to all the world, either in war or peace; and a man of talents whether liberal or mechanic, cannot fail of support and encouragement in proportion to his merit. But it would be wholly useless to bring to London such letters of recommendation as would in any city on the continent enable a man to run through almost all the houses in it. Here the prodigious resort of strangers has nearly destroyed that indiscriminate species of hospitality, which prevails on the continent; and which while it may be agreeable to those who travel to get rid of time, has not sufficient utility to atone for its inconvenience. But

when once a circumstance in the situation or character of a stranger has attracted the notice of an Englishman; and he has declared himself his protector and friend, it is worth a thousand of the civilities of general hospitality: a reliance may be had on its sincerity; and the friendship is permanent in duration, as it is slow in growth.

Sir Joseph Banks is among the first persons who have taken notice of my design; and he has honoured my subscription with his name. The reputation he has acquired as the first botanic collector in the world; as the friend and companion of Captain Cook, in one of his voyages round the globe; as the president of the Royal Society; and the general patron of knowledge and merit, renders any account of him to you unnecessary.

My subscription however comes in but slowly; nor has the Balloon, though larger, constructed of better materials and on better principles than any that has yet appeared in England, excited the curiosity I expected. This is partly owing to some ridiculous exhibitions of the kind which have been had at the same place, and which have diffused a disposition to incredulity and suspicion.

My Balloon is composed of oiled silks, of which 520 yards are inserted in alternate stripes of blue and red, which give it a very lively and pleasing appearance. Its form is spherical. The horizontal dimension of it is 33 feet; its circumference 102. It is kept suspended, and at present is filled with common air only, which I inject with bellows, through tubes of oiled silk that pass through its sides. More than two thirds of the Globe are covered with a strong net, from which depend forty five cords, forming equal sections on its lower part, and uniting at the bottom. These will be fastened to a circular frame,

frame, that forms the upper part of the vehicle in which I mean to perform my Aërial Voyage. It will be furnished likewise with wings and oars; the use of the former is to excite air when the globe is becalmed, and thereby to move it horizontally: they have the form of large rackets, and are covered with a loose flounces of oiled silk. The oars which differ from the wings only in size, will be worked with a vertical Motion, and are intended to effect a depression of the machine; by which I hope to be enabled either to check its ascension, or to descend without the necessity of letting out the inflammable air.

I exhibit these, not only as matters of curiosity to persons who have not seen or understood the French experiments; but to point out to those who have, the peculiar object of my enterprize. For I have the ambition to be the first, not only to visit the English atmosphere, but to ascertain the practicability of rendering the Balloon stationary, or descending at pleasure by means of oars, acting vertically; and superceding the use and necessity of valves. In this only circumstance I aim to deviate into originality, from the splendid and successful track of the French philosophers.

There are two methods of filling a Balloon for ascension; and it is remarkable, that the method first discovered and executed by Messrs. Montgolfier, is the most hazardous and difficult to apply to use. It is effected, as a chimney is heated, by a common fire; and a Balloon of this kind is a moving chimney, closed at the top, made of light materials, and raised by the elasticity which is always given to air by fire.

This requires a constant application of fire to the contents of the Balloon, which is a difficult operation; and

the least error in the application may be the occasion of consuming the apparatus, and endangering the lives of those who trust to it.

I have chosen inflammable rather than elastic air for my guide. It is a substance produced by the action of vitriolic acid on metals or semi-metals, and is similar to that vapour which takes fire in mines, and carries terror and destruction wherever it approaches. This you will say is changing one hazardous instrument for another, but the chances of setting fire to the elastic Balloon, or of not applying the heat so equally as to answer the purposes of ascension, are numerous; those of exploding an inflammable Balloon, arise only from thunder clouds; and if proper attention be paid to the weather, they are not numerous or difficult to be avoided: besides, inflammable air being *seven times* lighter than atmospherical air, and rarified air not more than *three times* lighter, the Machine must of course be proportionably larger in the use of the latter than in that of the former.

My design to use inflammable air, has been the occasion of my acquaintance with Doctor George Fordyce, a physician of eminence, a lecturer in chemistry, and probably the first chemist in the island. I consider this as a very fortunate circumstance; for besides the improvement and satisfaction I derive from his friendship, he has offered in the kindest manner to fill the Balloon, in a method which is an improvement on that of the French philosophers, as he contrives the tubes for conveying the inflammable so as to prevent the admission of any atmospheric air. He is also of opinion, that air produced by the vitriolic acid and zinc alone, is the lightest of any that has been yet used.

But

But, in the leading incidents of this æra of my life, I must reckon among the happiest, my introduction to Mr. Biggin, a young gentleman, distinguished by his birth, education, and fortune; of improved and elegant accomplishments, a strong lover of science, and of a liberal and affectionate heart. This young gentleman, in the first days of our acquaintance, expressed a wish to accompany me in my ascent. And as the regions I intended to visit are unknown, and Mr. Biggin's talents so useful and engaging, I have accepted his offer. The voyage will, by this circumstance, be rendered more interesting, we shall direct our particular attention to different objects; and in any of those incidents which novelty may render astonishing, we shall communicate and multiply our joy, or lessen and remove our apprehensions.

I am, Sir,

with great regard,

your much obliged, and most humble servant,

London, August 2, 1784.

VINCENT LUNARDI.

L E T T E R III.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

THE events of this extraordinary island, are as variable as its climate. You here experience the extremes of elevation and dejection, as you do of heat and cold in a shorter time, and in a greater number of occurrences, than in any country I know in the world. When I wrote you last, every thing relative to my undertaking wore a favourable and pleasing appearance. I am at this moment overwhelmed with anxiety, vexation and despair.

On advertising my intention to go up with my Balloon, it was natural to suppose that any latent ambition of the same kind would shew itself, and perhaps spring forward to seize the applause attending the execution of such an enterprize. I do not say, that this would not have disappointed me; but it would not have left me in any situation of distress like the present.

A Frenchman whose name is Moret; and who may possibly have assisted at some trials at Paris to launch Balloons in the manner of Montgolfier, advertised as it were in competition with me; and fixed on a day for ascending with his Balloon, previous to that, on which I had the permission of Sir George Howard to make my excursion from Chelsea-Hospital.

To hasten my own undertaking would have been entering into a ridiculous race with Moret; and if I had been inclined to such a measure, it was probable, that the day
appointed

appointed for me would not have been changed, without a better reason than could have been assigned from the competition. I therefore waited, with as much patience as I could command, the event of Moret's experiment; imagining, however it would fail, from a view of the Balloon; but having no apprehension of such consequences as might involve my disappointment, or my ruin.

On the 11th of August, his advertisements assembled a company of three or four hundred persons in a Garden at Chelsea; and unfortunately for me, at a small distance from the Hospital where I was permitted to exhibit. The gardens and fields around the place were crowded with fifty or sixty thousand people, not so much from Economy, as incredulity and suspicion, of the undertaking. That was greatly owing to his manner of anticipating my design, which threw on him and me, undeservingly, the imputation of imposture.

From one to four o'clock the company waited with patience, the filling and ascension of the Balloon; and when every effort was seen to fail, and the Balloon sunk into the fire which expanded it, the mob rushed in; tore it in a thousand pieces; robbed many of the company; levelled with the ground all the fences of the place and neighbourhood; and spread desolation and terror through the whole district.

I saw into many of the consequences which would affect my own undertaking. Though the people of England are comparatively well informed and enlightened; yet the multitude in all nations is nearly alike. The misfortune of Moret was attributed to imposture; and a suspicion of a similar nature was extended to me. I felt all the immediate

diate inconveniences of guilt ; as you will see by the following copies of letters : though nothing could be farther from my thoughts than any intention to be concerned in an imposition.

Chelsea-Hospital, August 14, 1784.

S I R,

IT having been represented to the governor of this place, that a riot was occasioned by an attempt to raise an Air Balloon in this neighbourhood on Wednesday last ; I have his orders to acquaint you, that it is impossible he can on any consideration, subject this College, to the insults of a mob, and at the same time, he directs me to say how disagreeable it is to him to refuse his consent, but that his determination is unalterably fixed. I have the honour to be

S I R,

Your most obedient,

And most humble servant,

WM. BULKELEY.

On the receipt of this letter I waited on Major Bulkeley and describing the hardship of being involved in the consequences of the faults or misfortunes of another, I prevailed on him to represent my situation to the governor. In consequence of which I received this final resolution of Sir George Howard.

SIR,

S I R,

Chelsea College, August 17th, 1784.

“ I have this moment received a letter from Sir George
 “ Howard, in answer to one I wrote to him on Monday
 “ last, after I had the honour of seeing you, and he de-
 “ fires me to acquaint you, that he must again repeat the
 “ impossibility of his consenting to the exhibition of
 “ your Air Balloon in any place belonging to Chelsea
 “ College; his duty absolutely forbids it, and no confi-
 “ deration shall make him do it after what happened last
 “ week. That he is very sorry you should meet with any
 “ disappointment, but that nothing shall make him do
 “ what he cannot justify, *and that, at all events*, it cannot
 “ take place at Chelsea College, and, therefore, that it
 “ is absolutely necessary you should look out for some
 “ other place, and give notice of it in the public papers.

“ I have the honour to be, Sir,

“ Your most obedient humble servant,

“ W. BULKELEY.”

I am now sunk into the utmost depth of distress. Though I may be said to have no reputation to lose in a kingdom where I am scarcely known, I yet experience the most poignant mortification at seeing my hopes destroyed, and myself, in the slightest degree, suspected of any thing inconsistent with honour, and an ardent love of science.

You will say, it is an imputation on the character of an enlightened kingdom, to pre-judge an experiment which has not been made, especially as I propose to do only what has been proved to be practicable in France. I have already told you that every thing respecting Air

D

Balloons

Balloons has been admitted here with reluctance; the pompous accounts of French voyages are credited, after making large allowances for Gallic vanity; and all hypotheses respecting a certain and useful application of the discovery are considered as romantic visions. This prepossession, however, does not prevent philosophers and men of letters here from discerning the practicability of every thing that has been effected in France. But they are not much more numerous in this than in other nations; they do not always regulate the opinions of the people, and, in this case, they are not very desirous of undeceiving them. The national prejudice of the English against France is suffered to have its full effect, on a subject from which the literati of England expect to derive but little honour; an unsuccessful attempt has been made by a Frenchman; and my name being that of a foreigner, a very excusable ignorance in the people may place me among the adventurers of that nation, which are said to have sometimes distinguished themselves here by ingenious impositions.

I am apprehensive, therefore, I must relinquish my undertaking, after an expence which my circumstances can ill bear, and when the satisfaction and glory of accomplishing it are just within my reach.

Adieu, my dear friend, I regret the necessity of leaving on your mind, the melancholy impressions which this letter must make. You may depend on it I shall conduct myself in every event with a proper recollection of your solicitude and regard for me. For I shall ever remain, most sincerely your's,

London, Aug. 18, 1784.

VINCENT LUNARDI.

LETTER

L E T T E R IV.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I Still have hopes: for what philosophers dare not attempt, the ladies easily accomplish. They can smile into acquiescence that uncouth monster, public prejudice; and they regulate the opinions and manners of a nation at pleasure.

My perseverance, amidst the difficulties and supposed dangers which surround me, in consequence of the failure of Moret, has given me an air of heroism which you know interests the fair sex. The Lyceum therefore is crowded with company, and particularly Ladies, who take for granted I am to ascend; many of them wish I were not engaged to Mr. Biggin, that they might accompany me; and, with that bewitching air of sincerity which is almost peculiar to the women of this country, and which I think more difficult to resist than the coquetry of my own, they express a tender concern for my safety, which fixes my determination: and I will ascend, if I do it from the street.

I have a prospect of being accommodated with an inclosed piece of ground, which is appropriated for the exercise of a body of armed citizens, viz. the Hon. Artillery Company. This corps is composed of all the officers of the six regiments of the London Militia, and other gentlemen to the amount of five hundred. It is a collection or assemblage of officers, all independent, in officers uniforms, who in case of emergency might exercise, in a month, twenty thousand men. His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales is Captain-general, and Sir Watkin Lewis, one of the representatives

in Parliament for the city of London is their colonel. To this gentleman I have made application, and the Rev. Mr. Kirwan, chaplain to the embassy, whose friendship upon this, and every other occasion, I shall ever remember with gratitude, did me the honour to wait upon him, and represented the consequence of my disappointment of Chelsea-garden, and the very great expences I have been at, and that unless the Honourable Artillery Company would take me under their protection, I could get no proper place for the experiment, from the apprehension of riots and disturbances. Sir Watkin heard his representation with candour, and after enquiring into the principles on which my Balloon was constructed, the reasons of the failure of Monsieur De Moret, and attending to every information on the subject which could be given by Doctor Fordyce, Mr. Biggin and me, he promised to lay my application before the Court of Assistants of the Artillery Company. The honourable mention he was pleased to make of me, and of my endeavours to promote science by executing the experiment; the support he gave my application, and the liberality with which he acted, and which distinguish his character, demand my warmest thanks. You would be astonished at the apprehensions and prejudices excited, even in this respectable body, by the failure of De Moret. In vain did Sir Watkin recommend to them to exercise their own judgment; a violent debate took place; and the concession was carried only by his casting vote. I had been led by policy as well as inclination, to connect charity with the other motives, which might induce the English to favour my enterprize. I engaged to give a Hundred Guineas to the family of the late Sir Bernard Turner, as

an

an inducement to the Court of Assistants, to grant me the Artillery Ground to receive my company, and to launch my Machine. Another Court was called, which was necessary to confirm the proceedings of the former; that was numerously attended, and the proposal again carried by the casting vote of Sir Watkin Lewis.

In consequence of this grant from the Honourable the Artillery Company, I published the following advertisement.

GRAND AIR BALLOON,

With which Mr. LUNARDI, and an ENGLISH GENTLEMAN, are to ascend into the Atmosphere.

MR. LUNARDI is extremely happy to have it in his power to inform the public, that in consequence of an application made to the honourable Artillery Company, they have been so kind as to accomodate him with the use of their ground, for the purpose of executing the experiment he has undertaken, with this condition annexed, that he shall pay one hundred guineas to be added to the subscription for the children of the late Sir Bernard Turner: The very laudable and benevolent motive which influenced the honourable company to make this demand, was of itself sufficiently operative on the feelings, to remove every objection on the part of Mr. Lunardi to a proposal that flowed from the impulse of philanthropy and the cause of humanity. Mr. Lunardi wishes to testify his gratitude

titude in the warmest manner to the public, and will feel a pleasure inexpressible in being able, by their means, to contribute to the relief of distreſs, and in particular, that of the family of ſo reſpectable an individual as Sir Bernard Turner. He deſires to return his ſincere thanks to the Honourable Artillery Company, for the great civility he has received from them, and particularly for the favour of reſolving to appear under arms, for the purpoſe of preſerving order and regularity on the day of his Balloon being launched. He has the higheſt ſenſe of the honour they intend him, and the additional ſatisfaction of acquainting the public, that the three avenues leading to and from the Ground, as well as the outſide of the gates, will be guarded by the ſerjeants of the City Militia and the Peace-Officers, in order to render the acceſs to the Artillery Ground eaſy and convenient to his ſubſcribers, and to all others who may be led to favour him with their preſence on that day, which is determined to be Wednesday the 15th inſtant, between Twelve and One o'clock, if the weather permits.

As Mr. Lunardi is deſirous to prevent confuſion, he has determined that no money ſhall be taken at the gates of the Artillery Ground, or any perſon admitted without tickets which are now iſſuing at the office adjoining to the *Lyceum* at one guinea, half a guinea, and five ſhillings,

Tickets, which have already been delivered for Chelſea Hoſpital Garden, will admit the bearers into the Artillery Ground.

At this time upwards of twenty thousand persons had attended the exhibition of the Balloon and apparatus at the Lyceum; and I had no doubt the proprietor of the room, who had received the money, and who had made such a bargain that the pecuniary advantage was to be his, and the hazard and loss to be mine, would immediately enable me to fulfill my agreement with the Artillery Company, and remove the Balloon and apparatus to the ground. But I was mistaken. There are men like sharks, who, by devouring, seem only to be rendered insatiable; and those men are not peculiar to the Jewish nation.

If there were not a probability that these letters may appear in England, I would lay open the whole of this transaction, and the character of the man with whom I unfortunately became connected. But though the English boast of the liberty of the press, they enjoy it with such exceptions, as are difficult to be understood by a stranger. Indeed it is not understood by themselves, for they are ever debating the subject. One of the exceptions to the liberty of writing and speaking, and which nearly annihilates it, is, that *truth* constitutes, or is at least an aggravation of a libel. Satirists therefore in this country, are strictly confined to *falsehood*; and in this, it is very possible they may yield obedience to a learned judge's opinion of the law. It is possible, however, that this celebrated lawyer, being at the head of the King's Bench, may only aim to wrest from the press the adjudication and punishment of every species of delinquency; and that he considers reciprocal defamation and injury in the public papers, like duelling, an appeal from the laws to the passions of individuals. Be this as it may, I shall err on the best side, if I err at all, by avoiding expressions of resentment against a
character

character too insignificant for public notice, and too fixed in its habits to be amended by reprehension. It will be sufficient to say, that he attempted to take cruel advantages of my situation, and proposed such conditions of assistance as I must have been insane to accept.

What to do in these circumstances I was at a loss to imagine. Fatigue, agitation of mind, and that kind of shame which attends a breach of promise, however involuntary, induced me to send an apology to the committee of the Artillery Company, instead of waiting on them myself. Conceiving this an attempt to deceive them, they rescinded their former resolution respecting the appearance of the men under arms, and ordered the materials for fixing and preparing the balloon which had been sent, to be thrown out; unless I paid the hundred guineas the next morning, and found securities in five hundred pounds to indemnify the Artillery Company for any injury that might be done to the premises.

Difficulties generate difficulties. The man at the Lyceum, apprized of the resolutions of the Artillery Company, locked up my Balloon and apparatus, and declared they should never be removed until I consigned to him a moiety of all the possible advantages which my present and *future* enterprizes of a similar kind might produce.—Moderate oppression might have ruined me. Enormous injustice rouses and interests the generous and humane. My case was soon known; I was enabled to send the money; Sir Watkin Lewis and Mr. Kirwan were kind enough to become securities to the Artillery Company. The magistrates of the police took me under their protection; warranted me in forcibly wresting my Balloon out of the Lyceum, and also protected me in conveying it

it to the Artillery Ground on Tuesday, the 14th, under a guard, which was ordered by Sir Sampson Wright and William Addington, Esq. in a manner that did honour to their personal as well as official characters.

Behold me—I was going to say—but I should be extremely sorry you were to see me, exhausted with fatigue, anxiety and distress, at the eve of an undertaking that requires my being collected, cool, and easy in mind. The difficulties thrown in my way, have postponed all my preparations; and indisposed and exhausted as I am, I cannot avoid paying such attention to the operations of this night, as will allow me but little sleep. Doctor Fordyce is applying his ingenious apparatus to fill the Balloon. The process is admirable though slow; but, I hope by attending to it all night, I shall keep my appointment with the public to-morrow.

Adieu, my honoured and respectable friend; my health and spirits are injured by a series of unfortunate and cruel incidents; but if I succeed I shall be abundantly rewarded.

I am sincerely and affectionately your's,

London, Sept. 14, 1784. VINCENT LUNARDI.

L E T T E R V.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

London, *Wednesday*, 15.

THE auspicious morning is arrived; and I will write the occurrences of it as they arise, lest any of those *supposed impossibilities* over-take me, which have lately haunted my designs. I have no apprehension, but of the populace; which is here, as it is every where, an impetuous, impatient and cruel tyrant. A disappointment is an offence, whatever be the occasion; and offenders, in every degree, are punished with the same species of injustice. The practicability of the experiment, though perfectly known to philosophers and men of letters, is not believed by the populace; and I have their prejudices to remove at the risque of that resentment and violence, which Sir George Howard did not chuse to encounter, even at the head of the veterans of the British army; which have made the Artillery Company doubt, hesitate, resolve and re-resolve; and which will prevent those who would wish to encourage me from entering the ground.

Twelve o'Clock.

The view from the upper-appartments of the Artillery House, into which I sometimes retire, is striking and extraordinary; and serves to animate my imagination, for scenes more extensive and picturesque which I shall soon survey.

The fear of the populace, in case of a disappointment, has, as I expected, prevented my having much company in the Artillery Ground. But the windows and roofs of the
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furrounding houses; scaffoldings of various forms and contrivances, are crouded with well-dressed people; and form a singular, and to me very interesting spectacle. They have viewed for hours with fixed and silent attention, the bustle around the apparatus and the gradual expansion of the Balloon. On my left, in a square, or rather parallelogram, the largest I know in Europe, a part of the populace of this immense place, is collected into one compressed and impenetrable mass. The whole would suggest to a tyrant the idea of a pavement of human heads; but I conceive the risque of going up in my Balloon trifling, compared with that of attempting to walk on the living surface I now contemplate. One hundred and fifty thousand countenances have all one direction; but I have reason to be anxious not to disappoint such a multitude, every one of which has been wedged in a painful situation the whole morning. You will think me whimsical, perhaps, in fixing my imagination, at this time, on a public institution of any kind. The principal area which contains the populace, is bounded by an extensive and noble building, devoted to the most compassionate and affecting of all the offices of benevolence. It is a retreat for the insane, who are not judged incurable; and it is called Bedlam. The arrangement, extent and wholesomeness of the apartments, the assiduity and care of the governors, physicians and apothecaries, and the unabating liberality with which it is supported, render it an object of universal respect. The figures of frenzy and melancholy at its gate are celebrated throughout Europe, and are deemed barely inferior to the admired productions of Greek sculpture. Which of these allegorical beings the people have assigned as my patron, I have not learned. I

suppose they may be divided ; but they agree in the propriety of making my attempt near Bedlam, as the event, in their opinion, will render it necessary to convey me there. How happy should I be, if some kind spirit would instruct me, to emulate Astolpho* on his flying horse, and to explore those regions where the straying wits of mortals betake themselves ! But this is not a time for even benevolent reveries, and I indulge them in any degree, to repel unwelcome apprehensions.

Half after One.

The time fixed for my departure is elapsed ; but the Balloon is not sufficiently filled for the purpose. The populace have given some intimations of impatience ; and I may yet be pre-judged before I make my attempt. The presence of the Prince of Wales ; and the obvious satisfaction with which he views the progress of the preparations may remove the suspicion of deceit, and restrain the impetuosity of the people. The condescending affability of the Prince, and the interest he deigns to express, by repeated wishes for the safety of Mr. Biggin and me, are pleasing alleviations of my present anxiety. His Royal Highness remains near the Apparatus, without going to the company in the house. Those who attend him, pay their court, and I dare say, express their real sentiments by anxieties for his safety. They apprehend dangers from the apparatus and from tumults—his Royal Highness apprehends none, for he is really better informed,

* Vide *Ariosto's Orlando Furioso*, where the English Knight is said to have mounted to the moon, to bring back the wits of *Orlando*—Query, Are not the fables of flying horses, dragons, &c. presumptions that the principle of Air Balloons is not a modern discovery ?

asks questions with more judgment, and directs his curiosity in a better manner than is usual to persons of his high rank and his early years. He seems, now and then to express his wishes for our safety, as if not destitute of doubt. Indeed the whole company view us with a kind of regret, as devoted persons, whose return is at least problematical. This is pleasing to us, only as it is a proof of polite humanity. We are not under the slightest apprehensions of danger, when once committed to the Balloon. I must own, the concern betrayed by the looks of my friends, though I know it to be without reason, has a considerable effect on me. Prince Caramanico, my kind patron and benefactor, is evidently under some apprehension; and I shall remember my whole life this unequivocal proof of his friendship. As those who interest themselves in my fate, bid me adieu, in the most expressive, though silent manner, I thus take my leave of you. Whatever becomes of me, I know this testimony of my respectful regard will be affectionately received by you. Adieu, my honoured friend. I will conclude my letter on my return.

Friday Evening, 24th September.

I was this morning to have been presented to the King, but the anxiety and fatigue I had endured, exhausted my strength and spirits, in such a manner, as to occasion a violent fit of sickness, which confined me to my bed, and deprived me of the honour and satisfaction I had promised myself on the occasion.

This is the first moment since my excursion, I have been able to take up my pen with the probability of giving you an account of it; and I am determined the post shall not go out this evening without it.

A little before two o'clock on Wednesday, Mr. Biggin and myself were prepared for our expedition. His attention was allotted to the philosophical experiments and observations, mine to the conduct of the Machine, and the use of the vertical oars, in depressing the Balloon at pleasure.

The impatience of the multitude made it unadvisable to proceed in filling the Balloon, so as to give it the force it was intended to have. On ballancing that force with weights, it was supposed incapable of taking us up. When the gallery was annexed, and Mr. Biggin and I got into it, the matter was beyond doubt; and whether Mr. Biggin felt the most regret in relinquishing his design, or I in being deprived of his company, it may be difficult to determine. But we were before a Tribunal, where an instantaneous decision was necessary; for hesitation and delay, would have been construed into guilt; and the displeasure impending over us would have been fatal, if in one moment he had not had the heroism to relinquish, and I the resolution to go alone.

This event agitated my mind greatly; a smaller gallery was substituted; and the whole undertaking being devolved on me, I was preparing accordingly, when a servant brought me word, that an accident had befallen the Balloon, which would prevent my intended voyage. I hastened down, almost deprived of my senses; and though I was instantly convinced, that the injury was trifling, I could not recover the shock in time, to recollect that I should supply myself with those instruments for observation which had been appointed to Mr. Biggin. I threw myself into the gallery, determined to hazard no further accidents that might consign me and the Balloon to the
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fury of the populace, which I saw was on the point of bursting. An affecting, because unpremeditated testimony of approbation and interest in my fate, was here given. The Prince of Wales, and the whole surrounding assembly, almost at one instant, took off their hats, hailed my resolution, and expressed the kindest and most cordial wishes for my safety and success.

At five minutes after two, the last gun was fired, the cords divided, and the Balloon rose, the company returning my signals of adieu with the most unfeigned acclamations and applauses. The effect was, that of a miracle, on the multitudes which surrounded the place; and they passed from incredulity and menace, into the most extravagant expressions of approbation and joy.

At the height of twenty yards, the Balloon was a little depressed by the wind, which had a fine effect; it held me over the ground for a few seconds, and seemed to pause majestically before its departure.

On discharging a part of the ballast, it ascended to the height of two hundred yards. As a multitude lay before me of a hundred and fifty thousand people, who had not seen my ascent from the ground, I had recourse to every stratagem to let them know I was in the gallery, and they literally rent the air with their acclamations and applause. In these stratagems I devoted my flag, and worked with my oars, one of which was immediately broken, and fell from me. A pidgeon too escaped, which, with a dog, and cat, were the only companions of my excursion.

When the thermometer had fallen from 68° to 61° I perceived a great difference in the temperature of the air. I became very cold, and found it necessary to take a few glasses of wine. I likewise eat the leg of a chicken, but
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my bread and other provisions had been rendered useless, by being mixed with the sand, which I carried as ballast.

When the thermometer was at fifty, the effect of the atmosphere, and the combination of circumstances around, produced a calm delight, which is inexpressible, and which no situation on earth could give. The stillness, extent, and magnificence of the scene, rendered it highly awful. My horizon seemed a perfect circle; the terminating line several hundred miles in circumference. This I conjectured from the view of London; the extreme points of which, formed an angle of only a few degrees. It was so reduced on the great scale before me, that I can find no simile to convey an idea of it. I could distinguish Saint Paul's, and other churches, from the houses. I saw the streets as lines, all animated with beings, whom I knew to be men and women, but which I should otherwise have had a difficulty in describing. It was an enormous beehive, but the industry of it was suspended. All the moving mass seemed to have no object but myself, and the transition from the suspicion, and perhaps contempt of the preceding hour, to the affectionate transport, admiration and glory of the present moment, was not without its effect on my mind. I recollected the puns* on my name, and was glad to find myself calm. I had soared from the apprehensions and anxieties of the Artillery Ground, and felt as if I had left behind me all the cares and passions that molest mankind.

Indeed, the whole scene before me filled the mind with a sublime pleasure, of which I never had a conception.

* In some of the papers, witticisms appeared on the affinity of, Lunatic & Lunardi.

The critics *imagine*, for they seldom speak from experience, that terror is an ingredient in every sublime sensation. It was not possible for me to be on earth, in a situation so free from apprehension. I had not the slightest sense of motion from the Machine, I knew not whether it went swiftly or slowly, whether it ascended or descended, whether it was agitated or tranquil, but by the appearance or disappearance of objects on the earth. I moved to different parts of the gallery, I adjusted the furniture, and apparatus. I uncorked my bottle, eat, drank, and wrote, just as in my study. The height had not the effect, which a much lesser degree of it has near the earth, that of producing giddiness. The broom-sticks of the witches, Ariostos's flying-horse, and even Milton's sun-beam, conveying the angel to the earth, have all an idea of effort, difficulty, and restraint, which do not affect a voyage in the Balloon.

Thus tranquil, and thus situated, how shall I describe to you a view, such as the antients supposed Jupiter to have of the earth, and to copy which there are no terms in any language. The gradual diminution of objects, and the masses of light and shade are intelligible in oblique and common prospects. But here every thing wore a new appearance, and had a new effect. The face of the country had a mild and permanent verdure, to which Italy is a stranger. The variety of cultivation, and the accuracy with which property is divided, give the idea ever present to a stranger in England, of good civil laws and an equitable administration: the rivers meandering; the sea glistering with the rays of the sun; the immense district beneath me spotted with cities, towns, villages and houses, pouring

out their inhabitants to hail my appearance : you will allow me some merit at not having been exceedingly intoxicated with my situation.

To prolong the enjoyment of it, and to try the effect of my only oar, I kept myself in the same parallel respecting the earth, for nearly half an hour. But the exercise having fatigued, and the experiment having satisfied me, I laid aside my oar, and again had recourse to my bottle ; this I emptied to the health of my friends and benefactors in the lower world. All my affections were alive, in a manner not easily to be conceived, and you may be assured that the sentiment which seemed to me most congenial to that happy situation was gratitude and friendship. I will not refer to any softer passion. I sat down and wrote four pages of desultory observations, and pinning them to a napkin, committed them to the mild winds of the region, to be conveyed to my honoured friend and patron, Prince Caramanico.

During this business I had ascended rapidly ; for, on hearing the report of a gun, fired in the Artillery Ground, I was induced to examine the thermometer, and found it had fallen to 32° . The Balloon was so much inflated as to assume the form of an oblong spheroid, the shortest diameter of which was in a line with me, though I had ascended with it in the shape of an inverted cone, and wanting nearly one third of its full compliment of air. Having no valve, I could only open the neck of the Balloon ; thinking it barely possible that the strong rarefaction might force out some of the inflammable air. The condensed vapour around its neck was frozen, though I found no inconvenience

nience from the cold. The earth, at this point, appeared like a boundless plain, whose surface had variegated shades, but on which no object could be accurately distinguished.

I then had recourse to the utmost use of my single oar; by hard and persevering labour I brought myself within three hundred yards of the earth, and moving horizontally, spoke through my trumpet to some country people, from whom I heard a confused noise in reply.

At half after three o'clock, I descended in a corn field, on the common of South Mimms, where I landed the cat *. The poor animal had been sensibly affected by the cold, during the greatest part of the voyage. Here I might have terminated my excursion with satisfaction and honour to myself; for though I was not destitute of ambition, to be the first to ascend the English atmosphere, my great object was to ascertain the effect of oars, acting vertically on the air. I had lost one of my oars, but by the use of the other I had brought myself down, and was perfectly convinced my invention would answer. This, though a single, was an important object, and my satisfaction was very great in having proved its utility. The fatigues and anxiety I have endured, might have induced me to be content with what I had done, and the people about me were very ready to assist at my disembarkation; but my affections were afloat, and in unison with the whole country, whose transport and admiration seemed

* *Attestations of particular circumstances in this letter have been received since it was written, which the reader may see annexed, in the manner of an Appendix.*

boundless. I bid them therefore keep clear, and I would gratify them by ascending directly in their view.

My general course to this place, was something more than one point to the westward of the north. A gentleman on horseback approached me, but I could not speak to him, being intent on my re-ascension, which I effected, after moving horizontally about forty yards. As I ascended, one of the ballustrades of the gallery gave way; but the circumstance excited no apprehension of danger. I threw out the remainder of my ballast and provisions, and again resumed my pen. My ascension was so rapid, that before I had written half a page, the thermometer had fallen to 29° . The drops of water that adhered to the neck of the balloon were become like chrystals. At this point of elevation, which was the highest I attained, I finished my letter, and fastening it with a cork-screw to my handkerchief, threw it down. I likewise threw down the plates, knives and forks, the little sand that remained, and an empty bottle, which took some time in disappearing. I now wrote the last of my dispatches from the clouds, which I fixed to a leathern belt, and sent towards the earth. It was visible to me on its passage, for several minutes, but I was myself insensible of motion from the Machine itself, during the whole voyage. The earth appeared as before, like an extensive plain, with the same variagated surface; but the objects rather less distinguishable. The clouds to the eastward rolled beneath me, in masses immensely larger than the waves of the ocean. I therefore did not mistake them for the sea. Contrasted with the effects of the sun on the earth and water beneath, they gave a grandeur to the whole scene which no fancy can describe. I again be
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took myself to my oar, in order to descend; and by the hard labour of fifteen or twenty minutes I accomplished my design, when my strength was nearly exhausted. My principal care was to avoid a violent concussion at landing, and in this my good fortune was my friend.

At twenty minutes past four I descended in a spacious meadow, in the parish of Stondon, near Ware, in Hertfordshire. Some labourers were at work in it. I requested their assistance; they exclaimed, they would have nothing to do with one who came in the Devil's house, or on the Devil's horse (I could not distinguish which of the phrases they used) and no intreaties could prevail on them to approach me. I at last owed my deliverance to the spirit and generosity of a female. A young woman, who was likewise in the field, took hold of a cord which I had thrown out, and calling to the men, they yielded that assistance to her request which they had refused to mine. A croud of people from the neighbourhood soon assembled, who very obligingly assisted me to disembark. General Smith was the first gentleman who overtook me—I am much indebted to his politeness—he kindly assisted in securing the Balloon, having followed me on horseback from London, as did several other gentlemen, amongst whom were Mr. Crane, Capt. Connor, and Mr. Wright. The inflammable air was let out by an incision, and produced a most offensive stench, which is said to have affected the atmosphere of the neighbourhood. The apparatus was committed to the care of Mr. Hollingsworth, who obligingly offered his service. I then proceeded with General Smith, and several other gentlemen to the Bull Inn at Ware. On my arrival, I had the honour to be introduced to William Baker, Esq. Member for Hertford in the last parliament.

parliament. This gentleman conducted me to his seat at Bayford Bury, and entertained me with a kind of hospitality and politeness, which I shall ever remember with gratitude, and which has impressed on my mind a proper idea of that frank liberality and sincere beneficence, which are the characteristics of English Gentlemen.

The general course of the second part of my voyage, by which I was led into Hertfordshire, was three points to the eastward of the north from the Artillery Ground, and about four points to the eastward of the north from the place where I first descended.

This is the general account of my excursion. I shall take a few days to recover my strength, and whatever particulars occur to me I shall send you.

I am, with great regard,

Your much obliged,

And humble servant,

London, Sept. 24, 1784. VINCENT LUNARDI

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I Should, at this time, have as much difficulty in describing the effect of my success, on the whole English nation, as I had in conveying to you an idea of the apprehension and distress I felt, lest any untoward circumstances should prevent or defeat my undertaking.

The interest which the spectators took in my voyage was so great, that the things I threw down were divided and preserved, as our people would relicks of the most celebrated saints. And a gentlewoman, mistaking the oar for my person, was so affected with my supposed destruction, that she died in a few days. This circumstance being mentioned on Saturday, when I had the honour of dining with the Judges, Lord Mayor, Recorder and Sheriffs of London, I was very politely requested by one of the Judges, not to be concerned at the involuntary loss I had occasioned; that I had certainly saved the life of a young man who might possibly be reformed, and be to the public a compensation for the death of the lady. For the jury was deliberating on the fate of a criminal whom after the utmost allowance for some favourable circumstances, they must have condemned, when the Balloon appeared, and a general inattention and confusion ensued. The jury was perplexed with considerations on the case, which their curiosity would not suffer them to weigh, and being under a necessity to determine before they departed, they took the favourable side, and acquitted the criminal immediately: on which the court was adjourned to indulge itself in observing so novel a spectacle.

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I mention these things as they may prepare you for the reception I was honoured with on my return to London. No voyager from the most interesting and extensive discoveries ; no conqueror from the most important victories, was ever enquired for with more solicitude, or welcomed with greater joy. The house of Prince Caramanico, had been besieged by multitudes early and late to have some account of my safety, or to applaud my return.

You may suppose when I came to town, I hastened to Prince Caramanico, who received me with every mark of affection and condescending friendship.

Here circumstances of gratulation and joy crowded on me every hour. I was flattered by learning that while I hovered over London, his Majesty was in conference with his principal ministers. On being informed that I was passing, the King said, ' We may resume our deliberations on the subject before us at pleasure, but we may never see poor Lunardi again.' The conference broke up, and his Majesty attended by Mr. Pitt and other great officers of state, viewed me through telescopes while I remained in their horizon.

I had received insults which I thought cruel by persons whose houses over-looked the ground, who erected scaffolds and let out their rooms, so as to deprive me of a chance of having my expences defrayed. I was no sooner returned, but some of these people hastened to atone for their mis-apprehensions of me. They had considered and treated me as an impostor. My ascension, as a charm, dissipated their ill opinion, and gave them an enthusiasm in my favour. I am offered the houses and scaffoldings for my own use, if I chuse to exhibit again. These things

things shew the importance of success in all undertakings which are not thoroughly understood by the multitude. I am introduced, not only into private families, but into public institutions with the most advantageous and flattering distinctions. The civilities of the Lord Mayor, the Judges, and other Magistrates, led me into the Courts of Law, and though I had made them objects of curiosity, I had never attended trials in circumstances so favourable to information. Every precaution which the wisdom of man can devise, seems to be taken here, to administer equal Justice between all contending parties. The Judges are appointed by the King, but rendered independent by an ample provision for their support, and by the tenure of their places, for life. But the peculiar happiness of English jurisprudence, is the appointment of juries from the neighbourhood of every offender to adjudge his particular case. The hint is taken from the appointment of judges in the courts of the Prætors, in the Roman republic: but those judges were chosen wholly from the citizens of Rome. In England every dispute is decided by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who are obliged to attend the parties to the assizes, because they alone are capable of determining the nature of their actions, from a knowledge of their circumstances and characters. It is extraordinary, that Rome, who gave the first hints of this admirable mode of trial, should be insensible to its advantages, and perhaps ignorant of its existence.

My fame has not been sparingly diffused by the newspapers, which in England are the barometers of public opinion; often erroneous, as other instruments are, in their particular informations, but yielding the best that can be

obtained. You will imagine the importance of these vehicles of knowledge, when you learn, that in London alone, there are printed no less than a hundred and sixty thousand papers weekly, which by a stamp on each paper, and a duty on advertisements, bring into the treasury of the nation upwards of eighty thousand pounds a year. They are to the English constitution, what the censors were to that of ancient Rome. Ministers of state are checked and kept in awe by them; and they freely, and often judiciously, expose the pretensions of those who would harass government, meerly to be taken into its service. But the principal reason of their extensive circulation is, the information and entertainment they afford an opulent people, who have leisure and inclination to interest themselves in all public occurrences. On this account, the conductors of news-papers seize every opportunity of conveying the earliest information of all the events that take place in the kingdom, and though they must be often mistaken, yet the dexterity with which they trace all sources of Intelligence is such, that they are generally right.

I have reason to thank the managers of all the papers, for their candour and partiality to me. I send you an account from one of them, written and published within a few hours after my descent, founded only on immediate observation and conjecture. You will, thereby, form your opinion, of the attention and industry employed in these prints, on all similar, and indeed on all interesting occasions, and you may amuse yourself by comparing their conjectures with facts.

M O R N I N G P O S T,

Thursday, September 16th, 1784.

LUNARDI'S AËRIAL EXCURSION.

To combat the prejudices of a nation, and the incredulity of mankind, especially when deterred by examples of resentment in consequence of deception or misfortune; when awed by the danger incurred in experiment, and the uncertainty of success in the project, must certainly require the greatest effort of human resolution. Whilst we are recollecting the occasion, which collected one-tenth of the inhabitants of the metropolis within the optical powers of an individual, we cannot help indulging ourselves in these eccentric reflections. The aërial voyage which has long been proposed by Mr. Lunardi, was appointed for yesterday, and perhaps the English nation never witnessed upon any occasion whatever, such a number of persons collected together, and so *loftily* displayed as were to be seen in the environs of Moorfields; not a plain, or an eminence, a window or a roof, a chimney or a steeple, within the view of Bedlam, but were prodigiously thronged—About half past one o'clock, the Prince of Wales arrived in the Artillery Ground, and after receiving the salutations of the Gentlemen of the Artillery, though not *à la militaire* but *en obeissance cap-à-pée*, his Royal Highness having expressed a wish to dispense with military attentions; he viewed the apparatus of the Balloon and retired to the Armory House, which was occupied by persons who had liberally paid the adventurer for their

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admission;

admission; we were sorry indeed to observe that such general advantages had been taken by the neighbourhood, of farming their windows, and for benefits which were due only to the novelty and spirit of the enterprize. About a quarter before two o'clock the Balloon was sufficiently filled and closed, and the gallery and other apparatus prepared to be suspended; but on Mr. Lunardi, and his intended companion, whom we understand to be Mr. Biggin, a young gentleman of fortune and enterprize, having taken their situations, and finding that the Machine was unequal to their weight, it was determined that Mr. Lunardi should ascend alone. A cannon having been fired as a preparatory signal, Mr. Lunardi having embraced his friends, and all matters being adjusted, a second cannon was fired as the signal of ascension. Insensible must that heart be which did not feel itself anxious and interested at that moment for the fate of him, who intrepidly stepped into his seat, and, Phæton-like, seized the reins which were to guide the Chariot of the Sun. About five minutes after two o'clock, the Machine was launched; and as if dreading the course it had to run, and unwilling to proceed, after having mounted about twelve yards, it reclined to its native earth; but roused by ambition, and the spirit of philosophical researches, Mr. Lunardi rebuked its fear, and gave its swiftness to its airy flight. He took his seat in the gallery with great composure and confidence on the Balloon's being launched; but finding himself too equally poized, he readily discharged part of his ballast, which consisted of small bags of white dry sand, and by that means relieved his weight, and caused a regular and most beautiful ascension. After he had cleared the buildings, subject to the direction of
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the easterly wind, he saluted the populace with great elegance and gallantry, by waving a blue flag, which he had taken for that purpose, and seemingly bidding them a friendly adieu. The gallery was formed of an upright four-feet square, and netted with a strong cord, about breast high, but quite open at the top. After this salutation, for the space of five minutes he dropt his flag with an air of security, and having seated himself, took to his oars; but as we since learn, finding they compressed the wind too much, he disengaged one, which was taken up about Smithfield; at that time his friends were alarmed for the consequence. Steering at this moment due west, he suddenly tacked towards the north, and with little variations, according to the altitude he obtained, till he seemed by degrees to establish that direction, his progress seemed exceedingly elevated and swift, although the Balloon appeared under masterly management; we viewed this object, nevertheless, distinctly for one hour and twenty minutes, with a mixture of anxiety and delight, not unallayed, however, by a friendly dread for the ultimate effect, until we were this moment relieved by the following intelligence from very good authority, viz. That Mr. Lunardi lowered himself towards the earth near Barnet, but not approving the situation, and finding he had the command of his machine, he discharged a part of his ballast, and pursued his course until he arrived over Collier's-hill, five miles beyond Ware in Hertfordshire, at twenty-five minutes past four o'clock; there he alighted, and was received by the neighbourhood with testimonies of admiration; he afterwards returned to town, where no doubt, his friends, and every true lover of courage and merit will receive him with friendship and respect. His companions in this adventurous

trous voyage were a dog and cat, the latter was destroyed, and the dog was almost spent by the severity of climates thro' which they passed. Mr. Lunardi himself was, of course, affected by the change of elements, as may be readily conceived by those who are told, that Icicles were hanging on his cloaths.

Such were the incidents of yesterday, and we heartily wish that the effects may be valuable to the projector; every Englishman should feel an emulation to reward him; for uncertain as the good to be derived from such an excursion may be thought, yet it becomes the nobleness of our nature to encourage them. Discoveries beyond the reach of human comprehension at present, may by perseverance be accomplished. Emulation and industry are a debt which is due to posterity, and he who shrinks from innovation is not his country's friend. Encouragement is the spur to emulation, and emulation the parent frequently of excellence; let Mr. Lunardi therefore be rescued by a generous public out of the hands of a Villain, who has emphatically been described, as being industrious only in matters wherein honest men would be ashamed, but to whom Mr. Lunardi has been a dupe in this undertaking, and injured instead of being benefited by the danger he has encountered.

On the Sunday immediately after my return, I had the honor of waiting on Sir James Wright, who had been politely solicitous to give me testimonies of his approbation. He had the goodness to represent to his Majesty that I wished to lay an account of my voyage at his Majesty's feet; who appointed Friday for my attendance at St. James's.

On

On Wednesday Sir James Wright took me to court. The drawing-room was very crouded, it being the Anniversary of the King's Coronation. I was surrounded with the ministers of state, and the nobility, when the Prince of Wales entered the drawing-room, my person was pointed out to him by one of the secretaries of state, on which he said in the lively and familiar manner which is peculiar to him, 'O Mr. Lunardi, I am very glad to see you alive.' As a proof of the attention of this amiable prince, I must let you know he did me the honour to send his Equerry to say, he observed at my ascension, I had not a watch describing seconds of time, as I was under a necessity of borrowing one from Mr. Aubert, who has since honoured me with his friendly attention, and that his Royal Highness had ordered his watch-maker to take my directions for such a one as might be useful to me another time. On mentioning this circumstance to Prince Caramanico, he immediately said, I might want such a watch before that which was ordered by the Prince of Wales could be ready; and taking out his own, presented it to me in the kindest manner imaginable.

The rumour that I had sunk a considerable sum of money by the adventure was soon circulated, and subscriptions have been opened in several parts of London for my advantage, but with what effect I must not yet presume to judge.

But you will wonder, perhaps, that I should think it necessary on this occasion to become an author. Spurious accounts, and misrepresentations of my excursion, have been published by booksellers of some consideration here. They have been reprehended freely and perhaps severely by my publisher; who is very warm and zealous for my interest; and who suggested to me the plan of revising and publishing my letters to you, as necessary to the reputation of my undertaking;

dertaking; and likely to be conducive to my advantage. He is a man of spirit and judgment in his profession, whose name is already familiar to you and all the world, by his compleat and beautiful edition of the English poets. I have yielded to his advice, and entertain the fullest confidence that under his direction—my enterprize will not be dishonoured. He is now soliciting the attention of the public towards a new edition of Shakspeare's works, which, by the elegance of the specimen he has produced, promises to render an author, whose genius is here deemed only short of inspiration, celebrated in all parts of the world, not exempting those where his native language is not understood. Permit me, as a mark of gratitude, to recommend that work, in its infant state, to your protection and encouragement. I have taken the liberty of entering your name as a subscriber, and hope soon to have the pleasure of adding many more by your means.

Most of my time is now taken up with the exhibition of the Balloon, and indeed of myself, for the principal curiosity is to see me, at the Pantheon, which is one of the largest and most splendid rooms in Europe. It is difficult to imagine any thing more pleasing than the solicitude which multitudes of beautiful women express concerning dangers that are past, and the heroism of others who wish to accompany me in my second tour. I receive the compliments and congratulations of two or three thousand persons in a day. You must not wonder if I conceive an opinion of my own consequence and become vain. I have been made an honorary member of the Artillery Company, in whose uniform I accompanied Sir James Wright this morning, to lay before his Majesty a short account of my Excursion.

I was received in the most gracious manner. The King took my account; talked to me about five minutes on the subject of my ascension.

I have

I have led you, my dear friend, through my apprehensions, difficulties and anxieties, to the completion of almost all my wishes respecting the first attempt I made to place myself on the records of fame.

It has been no small assistance to me that I have ever wished not to dishonour your care, advice and friendship; and it heightens every gratification that I can always subjoin,

I am, your sincere and affectionate friend,

VINCENT LUNARDI.

I wrote three letters, while on my excursion in the atmosphere, and I had several inducements to employ myself in that manner. It proved the astonishing evenness and smoothness of the motion; and, by throwing down any information of myself, there was a chance of its falling into the hands of my friends, and relieving their anxiety concerning my safety, and the state of my spirits and mind.

*The following is the substance of my second letter, which was very obligingly conveyed to me by ————— Cas-
major, Esq; who found it, not very far from the mile
stone on Northaw Common, while out a shooting, and I now
insert it in this account as an additional proof of the felicity with
which I performed the whole voyage.*

A D D R E S S E D

To any person or persons who may pick up this letter.

My Dear Friend or Friends.

THE anxiety which my acquaintance shewed at my departure, makes it necessary to assure them, that my situation is, at this moment, the happiest of my life.

H

The

The relief of my mind, and the accomplishment of my purpose, which I now see is practicable in all respects, concur with the temperature of the air, and the magnificence of prospect, to sooth and gratify my mind with the highest delight. The thermometer is at 50° ; and I will keep myself in this station till three o'clock, I shall then ascend higher, to try the effect of a different aërial climate, as well as to put my oar to a fair trial.

I beg the person or persons who may take up this letter, to take notice of the time and place, and to convey either the letter or the contents of it to my kind friend and patron, Prince Caramanico, No. 56, in New Bond Street; to Sir Joseph Banks, Soho-Square, or to Doctor Fordyce, Essex-Street, to whom I have many and great obligations, and who may have the goodness to be concerned, if they should soon learn I am chearful and well.

I am particularly anxious, that the earliest information of me should be given to George Biggin, Esq. Essex-Street, the loss of whose company is the only abatement of my present joy; but I hope for that pleasure another time.

My desire to convey some news of me is from an opinion, that my descent may not be effected immediately, or within the distance of forty or fifty miles. In that case I might not be able to convey them any letter or message in time to save them uneasiness on my account. It is now exactly three o'clock, the air has a mildness and sweetness I never experienced, and the view before me is heavenly. Happy England! I see reasons to hail thy peculiar felicity!

Farewell,

VINCENT LUNARDI.

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

To VINCENT LUNARDI, Esq.

S I R,

I Send you this by my servant, that I may learn from yourself what I am extremely anxious to hear, that your health has not suffered by your late fatigues, that your Balloon arrived in London without injury, and at the same time to acquaint you with the further steps I have taken in your business.

Yesterday morning I made to the very spot where your Balloon in its passage touched the ground, and where your cat was landed, and with the assistance of several people who were witnesses, particularly of a person whom you may recollect to have been near the Balloon at the time on horseback, and of the very girl who picked up the cat, have ascertained the place with a sufficient precision. They pointed out the part also where your grapple dragged, and mentioned some other circumstances, the most of which I propose to collect into a formal deposition, and shall attend them again to-day to obtain their more solemn confirmation of the facts.

Yesterday, at my request, five of the harvest-men, mentioned in the deposition of Elizabeth Brett (which you have with you) attended me here, and have in the same formal mode deposed to the time, manner, and place of your last descent, and to the fact of their coming to the assistance of Elizabeth Brett, as stated by her. This deposition shall accompany the other, which I am to take

to-day, and you will make such use of them as you may find necessary. I cannot, however, avoid saying, that admiration and astonishment seem so thoroughly to have taken possession of all ranks of people instead of that incredulity which your friend, Mr. Sheldon, apprehended, that these supplemental proofs are hardly required. If finally they should, however, be thought requisite, it will give me particular pleasure in having procured them. Whatever you may be advised by your Friends in London to give to the public, will, I have no doubt, be well considered. It cannot be detailed in terms too plain and simple. You must be sensible that the *façon de parler* here and in France are extremely different, and that truth has never received advantage from unnecessary ornament. You will recollect too, that the account will be read by thousands, who were not witnesses of the facts. You will make such use of the subjoined memorandum as you think necessary.

Your general course from the spot of your departure, in the Artillery Ground, to that of your first descent, was something more than one point on the compass to the westward of the north, and the general course of your second voyage was three points on the compass to the eastward of the north from the place of your first departure, or something more than four points on the compass to the eastward of the north from the place of your first descent ; observe, I speak of your *general* course, with a reference to the best maps which I have by me. What deviations or traverses you might make from time to time in both voyages, as you certainly must have made many, you will best judge. As a proof of this, you will recollect that the field in which the last letter with the belt
annexed

annexed was found, lies about one mile and a half to the eastward, being a point to the south of the spot where you finally landed: if, therefore, the belt and letter dropped in any thing like a perpendicular direction, the course you took after the dropping of this letter must have been west with a point to the north. I mention this by the bye for your consideration.

With respect to the identical spots on which you made the two descents you may wish to know the literal fact.

That where you made your first descent, that is, where your gallery came to the ground, and where, or near to which, you put out the cat, is a large ploughed field, belonging to John Hunter, Esq. of Gubbins, in the county of Hertford. The field itself is part of the lately inclosed common of North Mimms, in the manor of the Duke of Leeds. The field is about half a mile to the eastward of the sixteen-mile stone, on the road leading from London to Hatfield, and adjoining to the road leading from the said turnpike-road, to the northward on the left. The particular spot in the field is on the east side, very near to the boundary line between the manors of Northaw and North Mimms. For the present a common hedge-stake only marks the spot, but with your leave and the permission of Mr. Hunter, I propose to erect a stone there, with a suitable inscription to record the fact; as I shall likewise do on the spot of your last descent, if, as I have no doubt, I can obtain permission of the proprietor. It is remarkable that the field where you made your first descent is called *Etna*, from the circumstance which attended the late inclosure, of a large quantity of roots, rubbish, &c. having been collected there, and having continued burning for many days. The common people having
heard

heard of a burning mountain in Italy, gave the field that name. You hardly conceived, when you dropped, that you was so near to any thing that had connexion with Naples.

The place of your final descent is imperfectly described in Elizabeth Brett's deposition, but is in fact as there stated, in the parish of Stondon, about half a mile to the northward of the twenty-four mile stone, on the road that leads from London to Cambridge, through Ware and Puckeredge.

If you wish to have any further conversation with me, on these matters, I can come to London conveniently after Wednesday next, and will attend you with pleasure, if you give me notice.

The inclosed scraps of paper were found in the field where you first descended, near the part where your grapple took up the corn. Whether you threw them from the Balloon you will recollect.

I have no tidings of the two first letters—probably to-day I may hear something of them, as I shall meet many persons assembled from different parts of the country

Adieu,

Most sincerely yours,

W. BAKER.

Bayford, near Hertford, September 18, 1784.

D E P O S I T I O N S.

The voluntary declaration and deposition on oath, of NATHANIEL WHITBREAD of *Swanley Bar*, farmer, in the parish of *North Mimms*, in the County of *Hertford*, Yeoman.

THIS Deponent, on his oath, saith, that being on Wednesday the 15th day of September instant, between the hours of three and four in the afternoon, in a certain field called *Etna*, in the parish of North Mimms aforesaid, he perceived a large Machine sailing in the air, near the place where he was on horseback; that the Machine continuing to approach the earth, the part of it in which this Deponent perceived a gentleman standing, came to the ground, and dragged a short way on the ground in a slanting direction; that the time when the Machine thus touched the earth, was, as near as this Deponent could judge, about a quarter before four in the afternoon. That this Deponent being on horseback, and his horse restive, he could not approach nearer to the Machine than about four poles, but that he could plainly perceive therein a gentleman dressed in light coloured cloaths, holding in his hand a trumpet, which had the appearance of silver or bright Tin. That by this time several harvest men coming up from the other part of the field, to the number of twelve men and thirteen women, this Deponent called to them to endeavour to stop the Machine, which the men attempted, but the gentleman in the Machine desiring them to desist, and the Machine moving with considerable rapidity, and clearing the earth, went off in a North direction, and continued in sight at a very great height for near an hour afterwards. And this Deponent further saith, that the part of the Machine in which the gentleman

tleman stood, did not actually touch the ground for more than half a minute, during which time the gentleman threw out a parcel of what appeared to this deponent as dry sand. That after the Machine had ascended again from the earth, this Deponent perceived a grapple with four hooks, which hung from the bottom of the Machine, dragging along the ground, which carried up with it into the air a small parcel of loose oats, which the women were raking in the field. And this Deponent further on his oath saith, that when the Machine had risen clear from the ground about twenty yards, the gentleman spoke to this deponent and the rest of the people with his trumpet, wishing them good bye, and saying that he should soon go out of sight. And this deponent further on his oath saith, that the Machine in which the gentleman came down to the earth, appeared to consist of two distinct parts connected together by ropes, namely, that in which the gentleman appeared to be, a stage boarded at the bottom, and covered with netting and ropes on the sides, about four feet and a half high, and the other part of the Machine appeared in the shape of an urn, about thirty feet high, and of the same diameter, made of canvass, like oil skin, with green, red, and yellow stripes.

NATHANIEL WHITBREAD.

*Sworn before me this twentieth
day of September, 1784.*

WILLIAM BAKER.

The

The voluntary declaration and depositions on oath, of WILLIAM HARPER, of the Parish of *Hatfield*, in the county of *Hertford*, Labourer, and of MARY BUTTERFIELD, of Parish of *North Mimms*, in the County of *Hertford*, Spinster.

THIS Deponent William Harper, on his oath, saith, that as he was mowing oats in a certain field, called *Etna*, in the Parish of *North Mimms*, in the County of *Hertford*, on Wednesday the 15th of this instant September, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, in company with Thomas Blackwell, Thomas Moore, John Richardson, and several others, he perceived a large Machine hovering in the air, and gradually approaching the ground, near the boundary line of the Manors of *Northaw* and *North Mimms*; that on his approaching the Machine, in company of the persons aforementioned, the Machine which had then passed the said boundary line, touched the earth in the said field, called *Etna*. And this Deponent being then at the distance of four or five poles from the same, plainly perceived a gentleman in the lower part of the said Machine, dressed in light coloured cloaths, and a cocked up hat, who, on the Machine touching the ground, threw out a parcel of dust, or white sand; that immediately the Machine mounted again into the air, and went off in a North direction, that while the Machine continued touching the ground, Mr. Nathaniel Whitbread, who was likewise present on horseback, desired this Deponent, and the rest who were present to stop the said Machine, which some of them, and in particular Thomas Blackwell attempted to do, but the gentleman

desiring them not to stop the Machine, they desisted. And this Deponent Mary Butterfield, on her oath, saith, that she was raking oats in the said field called Etna, on Wednesday the 15th of September, instant, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, in company with Mary Crawley, Sarah Day, and others, and perceived a large Machine hovering over Northaw Common, and approaching the earth in the field where this Deponent was at work, which at length it touched in the said field called Etna, and during the time that it so touched the ground, a kitten which was in the lower part of the said Machine, came out on the field, which this Deponent picked up, and soon afterwards sold to a gentleman who came up to the hedge side, enquiring after the Machine, which he called an Air Balloon. That this Deponent plainly perceived a gentleman in the lower part of the Machine, dressed in light coloured cloaths, who, on the Machine ascending again, spoke through his trumpet, and wished them good bye. And these Deponants, William Harper and Mary Butterfield, severally, on their oaths, say that the Machine which came down to the earth, appeared to consist of two parts connected together, namely that in which the gentleman was, appeared to be a frame-work of wood and netting, from which there stuck out a sort of wing, and the other part of the Machine appeared in the shape of a large pear with the stalk downwards, and appeared to be made of silk or canvas, in stripes of green and red; and this Deponent, Mary Butterfield, further, on her oath, saith, that when the Machine was ascending from the ground, she, this Deponent perceived an anchor or grapple drag along the

the ground, which took with it a small parcel of the oats from the field, where they were raking.

his

WILLIAM X HARPER.

mark.

her

MARY X BUTTERFIELD.

mark.

Sworn before me this 20th day of September, 1784.

The voluntary declaration and deposition on oath of ELIZABETH BRETT, Spinster, servant to Mr. THOMAS READ, farmer, in the parish of Standon, in the county of Herts.

THIS Deponent on her oath saith, that on Wednesday, the 15th day of September, instant, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, she, this Deponent, being then at work in her master's brew-house, heard an uncommon and loud noise, which, on attending to it, she conceived to be the sound of men singing, as they returned from harvest home. That upon going to the door of the house she perceived a strange large body in the air, and on approaching it in a meadow-field near the house, called Long Mead, she perceived a man in it; that the person in the machine, which she knew not what to make of, but which the person in it called an Air Balloon, called to her to take hold of the rope, which she did accordingly; that John Mills and George Phillips, labourers with said Mr. Thomas Read, came up soon after, and being likewise requested to assist in holding the rope, both made

their excuses, one of them, George Phillips, saying he was too short, and John Mills saying that he did not like it; that this deponent continued to hold the rope till some other harvest men of Mr. Benjamin Robinson, of High Cross came up, by whose assistance the machine was held down till the person got out of the machine; and this Deponent, further on her oath saith, that the person now present, and shewn to her by William Baker, Esq the justice of peace before whom this Deposition is taken, as Mr. Vincent Lunardi, and in her presence declares himself to be Mr. Vincent Lunardi, was the person who called to me from the Machine, as above stated, and who descended therefrom in the said field, called Long Meadow.

her

ELIZABETH X BRETT.

mark.

Sworn before me this 16th day of September, 1784, at Barford Bury, in the County of Hertford, aforesaid.

The voluntary declaration and depositions on oath of JONAS LANGTON, JOHN CHIVEN, JAMES CRAMPLAN, EDWARD BENTLEY, WILLIAM WALLER, severally made this 17th day of September, 1784, before WILLIAM BAKER, Esq. one of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the county of *Hertford*.

THE said Deponents, on their oath, severally declare, that on the 15th of this instant, September, between four and five o'clock in the afternoon, being then at work, some of them in the harvest fields, and others in the farm-

farm-yard of Messrs. Benjamin Robinson and James Snow, in the parish of Stondon, in the county of Hertford, they saw a large and uncommon Machine hovering in the air, which they severally followed till it arrived at a certain mead, called Long Mead, in the occupation of Thomas Read, yeoman, of Stondon aforesaid, where the same touched the ground, and on their severally arriving at the same place, they found Elizabeth Brett, Spinster, maid servant with Thomas Read aforesaid, holding a rope which was fixed to the said Machine; that on their severally approaching the said Machine, they perceived a gentleman in one part of it, who desired them to assist Elizabeth Brett the servant, who was then holding the rope, which they did accordingly; that by this assistance the Machine being stopped, the gentleman who was in it came out, and to these Deponents declared, that he had set out from the Artillery Ground in London, a little after two o'clock, in the afternoon of the said day, in the Machine, and had travelled through the air to the place where they found him.

Sworn before me, this 17th day of September, 1784, at Barford Bury, in the county of Hertford.

A Gentleman well known in the Literary World having sent Mr. LUNARDI the following Epistle as a compliment to his Genius and enterprizing Spirit, Mr. LUNARDI's Friends have strongly expressed their wishes to have it annexed to these Letters, and the Author has obligingly given permission to have it printed with them.

A N E P I S T L E
T O
S I G. V I N C E N Z O L U N A R D I.

EXCUSE it, bold Youth, if a stranger should dare
To address thus *Your Highness* as KING of the Air,
For I was a witness, a charmed one, I own,
When you sprung to the skies, and ascended your throne
Amid two hundred thousand good people assembled,
Who felt for your fame, for your safety too trembled;
Whilst you, a true HERO, of nothing afraid
Took leave of the world, and mankind, undismay'd;
Determin'd to bid every danger defiance
For the noblest of conquests, the conquest of SCIENCE.

When you bid us adieu, and first quitted the earth,
To what varied sentiments gave you quick birth?
Each mind was brim full of unnumber'd strange notions,
Each eye all attention, to watch all your motions.

ATTORNEYS were puzzled how now they could sue you,
 UNDERWRITERS what premium they'd now take to *Do you*,
 Whilst the fallow-fac'd JEW of *his Monies* so fond
 Thank'd Moses, he never had *taken your Bond*.

Amid these sensations which mov'd us below
 Through the realms of pure Ether triumphant you go,
 A course which no mortal had here before dar'd;
 For YOU, was the risk, and the glory prepar'd;
 Though depriv'd of that FRIEND who had urg'd the fond claim
 To partake all your dangers, and share in your fame,
 From all human aid though cut off, and alone,
 When mounting thus singly, you still greater shone! —

Ah! tell me LUNARDI,—hereafter you may!
 What new scenes of wonder your flight must display?
 How awful the feel, when through new regions gliding,
 Through currents untry'd, and from cloud to cloud sliding?
 With what new ideas your mind must o'erflow!
 With what new sensations your bosom must glow!—
 How little, how trifling, must then in your eyes
 Have seem'd what *below* we look up to, and prize!
 No more than a molehill, the TOWER's old walls,
 A Hop-pole the MONUMENT,—Bandbox, ST. PAULS.

The vast host of people you quitted so lately,
 Which spread to each present a scene the most stately,
 To one who so distant on all of us gazes
 Must look like a meadow embroider'd with daisies;

Nay,

Nay, e'en this GREAT CITY we all hold so dear
 As a HONEY-COMB only to you would appear,
 All it's SHIPPING mere spots, though its bulwark and pride,
 The BANK and the TREASURY hardly descry'd,
 The abodes of the Great not discern'd e'en with winking,
 And the THAMES but a basin for lap-dogs to drink in.—
 'Tis the points whence we view things which fix, or create
 Our imperfect conceptions of Little, or Great!—

An adventurous stripling, so sweet OVID sings,
 Had the boldness to soar once on two mighty wings,
 Unguided by judgment, and wand'ring too high,
 He met his just fate, and was plung'd from the sky,
 And all that the world from this tale have been able
 To learn, was, it gave false Ambition a fable.—
 But from flights such as yours we've reason to hope
 Philosophy one day may gain wider scope,
 The secrets of nature are slowly reveal'd,
 Though much is discover'd, far more is concealed.—
 A spirit like yours can assist best the cause
 And more clearly illustrate her motions and laws;
 But should not to you the great lot be assigned
 To establish new doctrines of air or of wind,
 Should future Adventurers still further rove,
 And pursuing your course, your discov'ries improve,
 Yet know, GALLANT YOUTH, that to none but to You
 Will in ENGLAND the praise, and the triumph be due,
 In the FIRST bold attempt so intrepid who shone,
 And shew'd by *Example* how much could be done.

Our country will gratefully boast of your name,
 And LUNARDI be plac'd on the bright scroll of fame,
 With the warmest acclaims of the PUBLIC applauded,
 By PHILOSOPHERS lov'd—By the MUSE too recorded!—

Amidst all these honors, a stranger who fir'd
 By what he beheld, what yourself have inspir'd,
 Round your temples while this little tribute he wreaths,
 Thus with zeal his fond wishes prophetick he breathes,
 Long enjoy Th' AERIAL THRONE you now sit on!
 And live, ah! long live,—The COLUMBUS of BRITAIN!

Explanation of the Plate of the Balloon.

- 1 Crown, to which the Rope was fastened
- 2 Net-work
- 3 Ropes, forty-five in Number, a Rope every four Meshes
- 4 } Nooses, through which the Atmospherical Air was con-
- 5 } veyed into the Balloon, when exhibited at the Lyceum
- 6 Wheel, to which all the Ropes were fastened
- 7 Ropes, which fasten the Gallery to the Wheel
- 8 } Oars, by means of which I could keep the Balloon at a
- 9 } certain Level, and descend without loosing Inflammable Air for that Purpose
- 10 Gallery
- 11 Grapple, or Anchor, to secure it when it touched the ground
- 12 English Flag, which I threw down, to assure the incredulous, that there was an Individual in the Gallery
- 13 Cat, Dog, and a Pidgeon

Explanation of the Apparatus.

- 1 Net
- 2 Balloon
- 3 Crown to suspend the Balloon
- 4 Barrels of Zinc
- 5 Oil of Vitriol
- 6 Backs, in which the Water and Oil of Vitriol was mixed
- 7 Recipient of Oil of Vitriol and Water
- 8 Pipes, which contain Zinc, Water, and Oil of Vitriol
- 9 Recipient of the Inflammable Air, full of Soap Lees
- 10 Recipient for the Residuals
- 11 Pipes full of Water
- 12 } Blocks to raise the Balloon
- 13 }
- 14 Blocks to suspend the Stilliards to weigh the Balloon, Gallery, Machinery, &c
- 15 Blocks to raise the Flasks of Vitriol
- 16 A Stage to support the lower Part of the Balloon
- 17 Tube, which conveys the Inflammable Air into the Balloon

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