far, is just about to fight and sweep or be swept, hangs there not in the heavenly vault some prodigy, seen by Austrian eyes and spy glasses: in the similitude of an enormous windbag with netting and an enormous saucer depending from it? A Jove's balance: *yon* poor Austrian scale having kicked itself aloft, out of sight! By heavens, answers the spy glasses, it is a Montgolfier, a balloon, and they are making signals! Austrian cannon battery barks at this Montgolfier; harmless as dogs at the moon: the Montgolfier makes its signals, detects what Austrian ambuscade there may be, and descends at its ease."

The recent application of the balloon to scientific purposes by Mr. Glaisher is of real importance, more importance than the detection of an ambuscade on the Danube or the Potomac. The result of these experiments promises to enlarge our knowledge of the condition of the atmosphere. Ascents are said to be possible to the height of six miles.

Many of these trial trips have been of a highly interesting character, and the accounts given by Mr. Glaisher, and those who have accompanied him, have shewn that the prospect from the car of the balloon is at once singular and beautiful. There, indeed, we have a bird's-eye view of the country, and can trace its green meadows and its yellow uplands; its quiet country places, and its busy populous towns; its bold rocky outlines, and the "sounding sea," as in a map. The air seems to be an excellent conductor of sound, as Mr. Glaisher, at the height of four miles, could distinctly hear dogs barking and music playing.

Whether we shall ever possess so thorough a knowledge of the atmosphere, so perfect an acquaintance with its air currents, as to enable us to render an aerial voyage really as practicable as a voyage by sea, is yet to be seen.

Locomotion both by land and water has made astonishing progress within the last half-century, but nothing has been achieved in air navigation beyond some greater security, and the power of ascending and descending at pleasure. Little has been done to render balloons

available for any practical purposes. The balloon is ungovernable in the air. Year after year contrivances are brought forward which have been shown to be theoretically unsound. The egg-shape, the fish-shape, the fan-shape, the kite-shape, all have been proposed, and all have failed. Complicated machines, with a score of balloons attached, systems of sails, and vanes, and steam-engines fed with liquid fuel! Oblong balloons with winged cars, which cars, instead of governing the balloon, submitted, as the cars are wont to do, to be guided by it; all these schemes have had their little day of popularity, but have died out and been forgotten. We can hardly avoid an expression of regret that so much ingenuity should be unprofitably wasted, but is the thing impossible? Is it beyond the power of man's science? Is it a day dream? A philosophical Will-o'-the-wisp? Or shall we at last see ingenuity triumphant, and sail in the air as we sail on the waters to New York or Australia?

There is one matter in connection with ballooning which we are glad to find is now entirely abandoned. We allude to descents by parachutes. At one time descents made under cover of an umbrella-shaped machine became a mania, and those ingenious, but impracticable men, who would have wasted their lifetime over the attempted discovery of perpetual motion, or the quadrature of the circle in an earlier time, turned their attention to parachute descents, though with what prospect of utility it would be impossible to imagine. Dogs, monkeys, &c., were made the heroes of these experimental trips until Mr. Cocking, who was enthusiastic on the subject, ventured his own neck and broke it. To his credit, however, it should be said that his theory was the best that had been offered, and that had his plans been properly executed, the result would, in all probability, have been very different from what it was.

UB Braunschweig http://www.digibib.tu-bs.de/?perid=00031385&imgid=00000062.jpg