

In the archives of the American Antiquarian Society at Worcester, Massachusetts, is a carefully preserved copy of the New York *Sun* for 13 April 1844. This single sheet, twenty-four by nineteen inches, seven columns in width, with printing on one side only, bears the heading THE EXTRA SUN. The only known one in existence, it is all there is to remind us of a story that once electrified New York. Picture if you will newsboys hawking the April 13th edition with astonishing cries, "Extra! Extra! Balloon crosses Atlantic! Read all about it!"

New Yorkers, scarcely believing their ears, hastily paid their coppers to read the most sensational news of the century. In the past decade there had been a mounting interest in balloons, and the Americans had followed with avid curiosity the several long distant European flights. The crossing of the Atlantic Ocean by balloon had become a serious dream. Thus it is little wonder that sales of the New York *Sun* were brisk that Saturday morning. How the readers' eyes must have popped wide when they caught at first glance —

Sun Office
April 13. 10 o'clock A. M.

ASTOUNDING NEWS!

BY EXPRESS VIA NORFOLK!

THE
ATLANTIC CROSSED

THREE DAYS!

SIGNAL TRIUMPH
OF

MR. MONCK MASON'S
FLYING

MACHINE !!!

Arrival at Sullivan's Island,
near Charleston, S. C., of
Mr. Mason, Mr Robert Hol-
land, Mr Henson, Mr. Har-
rison Ainsworth, and four
others, in the

STEERING BALLOON

"VICTOR BA,"

AFTER A PASSAGE OF

SEVENTY-FIVE HOURS
FROM LAND TO LAND.

FULL PARTICULARS
OF THE

VOYAGE !!!

Below the blatant headlines the reader learned the details of the crossing, told in nearly five columns. There was even a woodcut of the steering balloon VICTORIA. Written with inspired fervor, the story of the extraordinary 3,000 mile air voyage, tells of the start from London on the 6th of April for what was intended to be a casual

cross-Channel flight to Paris. Aeronaut Monck Mason, the noted balloonist of his day, was in charge of the VICTORIA. His companions, with the exception of two nameless sailors, were also well-known aeronauts; eight passengers in all.

A journal, literary in tone, was kept, and it is this published record in the *Sun* that disclosed why there was a change in the flight plan.

" . . . At half-past eleven still proceeding nearly south, we obtained our first view of the Bristol Channel; and, in fifteen minutes afterward, the line of breakers on the coast appeared immediately beneath us, and we were fairly out at sea . . . We were now anxious to test the efficiency of the rudder and screw, and we put them both into requisition forthwith, for the purpose of altering our direction more to the eastward, and in a line for Paris. By means of the rudder we instantly effected the necessary change of direction, and our course was brought nearly at right angles to that of the wind; when we set in motion the spring of the screw, and were rejoiced to find it propel as readily as desired . . . Hardly, however, had we done with our rejoicings, when an unforeseen accident occurred which discourages us in no little degree. The steel rod connecting the spring with the propeller was suddenly jerked out of place . . . and in an instant hung dangling out of reach, from the pivot of the axis of the screw. While we were endeavoring to regain it, our attention being completely absorbed, we became involved in a strong current of wind from the east, which bore us, with rapidly increasing force, toward the Atlantic. We soon found ourselves driving out to sea at the rate of not less, certainly, than fifty or sixty miles an hour, so that we came up with Cape Clear, at some forty miles to our north, before we secured the rod, and had time to think what we were about. It was now that Mr. Ainsworth made an extraordinary but, to my fancy, a by no means unreasonable or chimerical proposition, in which he was instantly seconded by Mr. Hollond — viz.: that we should take advantage of the strong gale which bore us on, and in place of beating back to Paris, make an attempt to reach the coast of North America. After slight reflection I gave a willing assent to this bold proposition.. "

Continuing in the same distinctive literary style, that sets the writing apart from the usual terse comments entered in logs, the events of the voyage unfold. Throughout the night and into the morning of the 7th they were carried westward in a violent hurricane. " . . . the ocean writhes and is tortured uncomplainingly. The mountainous surges suggest the idea of innumerable dumb gigantic fiends struggling in impotent agony." When the hurrican abates, the balloon, "ascended to an elevation of nearly 25,000 feet." This is the highest man has ever reached, and the aeronatus discover that, "the sky appears nearly black, and the stars are distinctly visible." Continuing at that great height, they encounter ice, but this is eventually melted by the sun. They get cold, "but the ample space in the car enabled us to lie down, and by means of cloaks and a few blankets, we did sufficiently well." During the next day, the 8th, at the same high altitude, they sight sailing ships, and pass over at "a rapid pace."

"Tuesday, the 9th. One P.M. We are in full view of the low coast of South Carolina.

"Precisely at two o'clock, in the vicinity of Fort Moultrie, the VICTORIA was beached on the hard tide-water sands. "The balloon was exhausted and secured without trouble, and when the MS, from which this narrative is compiled, was dispatched to Charleston, the party was still at Fort Moultrie. "

