

# BALLOON VOYAGE TO THE CONTINENT. LATEST ACCOUNT FROM DOVER.

The public anxiety has been for some time excited by a report that it was the intention of three gentlemen to make the hazardous experiment of crossing the British Channel in a balloon, and that they resolved to increase the risk to the greatest possible extent by ascending, not from the coast, but from the metropolis itself. The report appears to have been well founded, and, after several attempts on preceding days, which had been abandoned in consequence of the unfavourable weather, the impatience of the travellers could no longer be delayed, and they absolutely took their departure yesterday from Vauxhall Gardens. The ascent was intended to be a private and not a public one, so far as the admission to the gardens or giving notice in the newspapers; but the secret was communicated to a few, and those persons, with their friends, eagerly embraced the opportunity of witnessing so remarkable an event. Mr. Holland, Mr. Monck Mason, and Mr. Green have the honour and the risk of departing on this voyage of discovery. They proposed, by regulating the ascent, to seek for such a stream of air as would take them, if possible, towards Paris, and if that should not be practicable they would be guided by the current which might lead towards the Belgian capital. They do not appear to calculate on any wind prevailing but that from west-north-west, or south-west, which would enable them to fulfil their design, and they boldly encounter all the hazard of being blown down Channel by an adverse breeze on the one side, or to the North Sea on the other. The possibility of being driven to St. Sebastian, or of relieving the siege of Bilboa, seems not to have entered into their contemplation; nor the still more remote, and we hope impossible, event of their being carried out to sea and never heard of more. They determined, in case they could not make the opposite coast, whether French or Belgian, to remain up in the air all night, and they took care to be provided with warm clothing and provision for such an unpleasant alternative.

The mind shudders at contemplating these bold personages floating in the midst of darkness, uncertain of their course, and not knowing whether the morning's light would present to them a place of landing, or the dreary waste of waters on which they could find no rest. What their feelings may be we cannot pretend to guess at; but they have made up their minds to all the risk of so extraordinary an undertaking, and two of them have a certainty that what is possible to be achieved by skill and determination will be done by Mr. Green, to whose professional ability they have committed their safety.

At one o'clock yesterday the inflation of the balloon being complete, and the car being provided with scientific apparatus, and such comforts as a provident mind could suggest, the three gentlemen shook hands with their friends, and at a given signal majestically left the earth. The immense machine which held them rose splendidly from the Gardens, hung for a short time in sight of the persons who had collected to witness the daring attempt, and then, feeling the breeze which impelled it, glided away to the eastward, and was gradually lost to the straining eyes of the anxious crowd. The wind was perfectly fair for the French coast, and it is probable that a few hours were sufficient to enable the travellers to cross the Channel, and find themselves in safety over the French land; and there was so much of northing in it as to make it probable that the line of Calais would be that the balloon must take.

## FURTHER PARTICULARS.

Many persons thought the rumour of the balloon starting was without foundation; and, as no newspaper announced such an attempt, it produced no sensation, and nobody gave themselves the trouble to make inquiry. This was exactly what the proprietors of Vauxhall and Mr. Green desired. It was considered desirable to have no mob in the gardens, and that everything should be as quiet and as private as possible, it not being the object of any of the parties concerned to make money by the exhibition. The consequence was, that not a dozen people were in the secret, and, except those employed in the inflation, not a dozen persons were in the gardens. The inflation commenced about seven in the morning, and by one everything was in readiness. The balloon was inflated almost to its utmost dimensions, and appeared capable of sustaining an aerial flight for many hours, or even days. In the car were upwards of a ton of ballast, several gallons of brandy and wine, a large supply of coffee, cold fowls, ham, &c., an apparatus with unslaked lime for heating the coffee, and, all appliances to insure comfort and prevent starvation and cold. There were also a supply of blue lights, stars, and other fireworks, to be let down at night, if the voyage were not accomplished before dark, in order to enable the aeronauts to reconnoitre the country from their elevation, and choose the point of their descent, and a number of parachutes, to which letters were fastened, to be dropped at intervals on the shores of the continent, for the purpose of apprising the public of their transit, arrival, and safety—in a word, a more complete equipment cannot be conceived; and it was highly entertaining to see the preparations of the passengers, and the good humour and confidence with which they shook hands with their friends, and took their seats. They were, moreover, furnished with passports from the French and Dutch embassies, and with a letter for the King of Holland from his representative in this country.

The wind, however, by three o'clock veered more to the north, which would, of course, blow the balloon further to the southward of the French coast, and perhaps carry them across somewhere between Calais and Boulogne, and it is also probable that on their coming over the Channel a current of air would take them in a direction from north to south, instead of from east to west.

Mr. Gye is already on the continent to receive the intrepid voyagers, and Mr. F. Gye, with Mr. Hughes, jun., started last night for Paris to welcome their arrival and to arrange preparations for an ascent from that metropolis.

Our neighbours, the French, made an effort not long since to start a sort of aerial diligence, capable of conveying passengers from Paris to London; but the aerial ship which they constructed to stand a voyage through the air proved a failure, and down it came, placing the necks of several Parisians in danger. Green, without altering the shape of his aerostatic globe, undertook the expedition, furnished with all the stores and apparatus necessary for his voyage. Several distinguished ladies and persons who admire ballooning were upon the ground. The ascent was slow and majestic. The object of the aeronauts was to keep as near the earth as possible, in order to take the advantage of a strong current of wind from the westward, which carried them with rapidity away due east. They continued a short distance from the earth, driving away almost horizontally until they were lost in the distance. The ascending power certainly increased, but in a ratio slower than usual. The distance from London to Paris is 266 miles, and by driving through the air S.W. to S.S.W., there was every chance of alighting at the Palais Royal or the Tuileries, no doubt to the great astonishment of Louis Philip, who may probably suspect the travellers to be agents of Louis Bonaparte, coming to act as *espions*. Wagers were also laid that the party would not reach Calais, which is 151 miles from Paris, and about 93 from London. Upon the whole this may be considered a bold attempt to navigate through the trackless air; and whether the aeronauts succeed or not, praise is due for their manly courage and daring intrepidity.

Whatever may be the result of this experiment, we regret that it was not put off till the ensuing spring or the early part of the summer, when a longer day and more favourable weather would diminish essentially the risks. It is also to be regretted that the travellers did not start soon after daybreak, instead of waiting till one in the afternoon, with only four or five hours' of light before them. These gentlemen have a right to sport with their own lives, but the feeling of the public must be considered, and we know of nothing more calculated to excite a painful sensation in the mind than the idea of three bold hearts encountering such extraordinary risk for the gratification solely of their curiosity—uncertain whether they are to share the fate of those mortals who have already forfeited their lives for such temerity, by being dashed to pieces on the land, or be carried by a change of wind far into the wide sea, where all traces of them would be lost.