

The Herald.

WEDNESDAY MARCH 18, 1896

An Aerial Torpedo.

An electrical engineer in Des Moines, Iowa, H. G. Rich, has invented a torpedo to be dropped from the air over a city or a body of troops at rest, in time of war. Mr. Rich would attach this fearful object to a balloon, capable of sustaining a weight of thirty or forty pounds. Dynamite or some other high explosive would be placed in a basket and suspended to the aerial messenger. By means of an electrical mechanism, set so as to operate at an hour and minute previously determined upon, the gas in the balloon would be ignited, the carrier destroyed and the torpedo liberated. As the mischief-making mass would fall from an elevation of 500 or 1,000 feet, it is thought that a terrific explosion would ensue when it struck the earth or any other hard surface, like a wall, pavement or roof. Mr. Rich says: "The aerial torpedo complete is small and compact, and a large number can be carried by a few men or a pack animal. The gas to inflate the balloon is transported in light metal cylinders, and, the gas being compressed therein, enough can be taken along to inflate a large number of balloons at once. To use the aerial torpedo effectively all that is necessary is to approach as near as possible the locality on which the torpedo is desired to take effect, and ascertain the direction of the lower air current and the velocity same per hour. Also ascertain the length of time it would take for the air current to carry the torpedo over the objective point, and set the electrical device at the hour or minute thus ascertained. Inflate the balloon part and place the torpedo in line with the air current, which will convey it to the point desired."

How much practice would be required in order to be able to steer such a craft in the right direction and to make it drop its burden at just the right moment, is not easily estimated in advance; but it is probable that work of this sort would be entrusted only to experts who had previously been drilled with blank cartridges. Another question which would need to be settled by experiment is whether or not the dynamite would be prematurely exploded in the air by the explosion of the balloon. On the other hand some uncertainty attaches to the matter of securing explosion even when the earth is reached by the torpedo, unless the latter is provided with a percussion cap. And if these hostile proceedings were discovered in time it would be interesting to watch the effect of a well aimed rifle ball on the balloon before it reached its proposed destination.

The Iowa man's scheme is ingenious, but let us hope that the modern tendency toward the arbitration of domestic and international disputes will make it unnecessary to resort to such destructive agencies.

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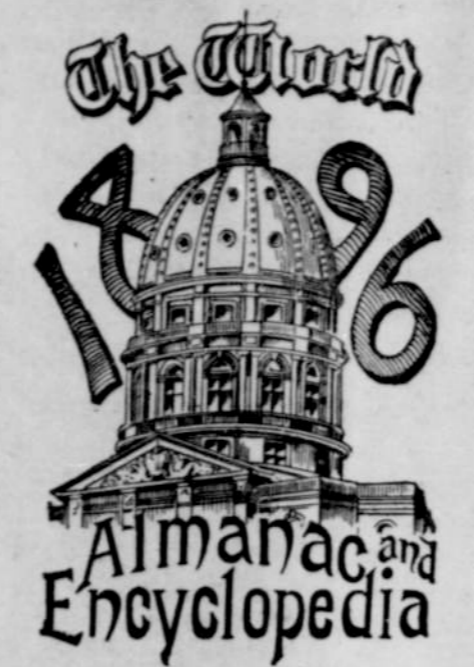
4th PRIZE CONTEST

1st Prize. Kimball Piano, "Style 3."	\$ 600 00
2d Prize. Bicycle, for man or woman	75 00
3d Prize. Cash	50 00
10 Cash Prizes, each \$25	250 00
10 Cash Prizes, each \$10	100 00
60 Cash Prizes, each \$2	120 00
83 Prizes	\$1,195 00

The first prize will be given to the person who constructs the longest sentence in good English containing no letter of the alphabet more than three times. It is not necessary to use every letter of the alphabet. The other prizes will go in regular order to those competitors whose sentences are next in length. Every competitor whose sentence reaches forty-two letters will receive a paper covered volume containing twelve of Wilkie Collins' novels whether he wins a prize or not. This contest closes April 15, 1896. The prize winners will be announced one week later and the winning sentences published. In case two or more prize-winning sentences are of the same length preference will be given to the best one. Each competitor must construct his own sentence, and no person will be allowed to enter this contest more than once. Sentences cannot be corrected or substituted after they are received. Residents of Omaha are not permitted to compete, directly or indirectly.

RULES FOR THE SENTENCE—(No Others Furnished.)
The length of a sentence is to be measured by the number of letters it contains, but no letter can be used or counted more than three times. No word except "a" or "I" can be used more than once. The sentence must consist of complete words. Signs, figures, abbreviations or contractions, etc., must not be used. The pronoun "I" and the article "a" will be accepted as complete words. Proper nouns cannot be used. Each contestant must indicate by figures at the end of his sentence how many letters it contains.
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