

ing the tin sheathing, and swinging, his feet as carelessly and unconcernedly as if it were no more than twelve feet from the ground.

"A thousand dollars wouldn't hire me to sit up there like that," thought Sidney. "It makes me dizzy and faint just to look at him."

The boy removed his eyes from the man on the steeple, and fixed them upon his kite, which was doing its best to break away from the restraining string and plunge into a white cloud that hung high above it. When he glanced again at the steeple, he saw something that whitened his cheek and made his heart give a great, choking leap into his throat.

In that brief interval of time while Sidney's eyes had been withdrawn, the frail scaffolding on which the steeplejack was sitting somehow collapsed, and the man was now hanging suspended by the safety-rope, which was looped around the neck of the steeple above him. The rope was attached to a belt buckled around his waist; and the belt, drawing up under the armpits, held him close against the steeple, so that he could not look down, or in any direction except over his shoulder. He had managed to draw his handkerchief from his hip-pocket, and was fluttering it as a signal of distress.

The man's terrible predicament soon attracted attention, and Sidney saw people streaming from all directions toward the church in the square. His first impulse was to let his kite go, and run with the crowd. Then the thought came to him, "Possibly the kite might be of some use, if I could get it over there. I could send a message up the string anyway, if they wanted to let word to the man."

The kite was tugging hard in a southeasterly direction, toward the steeple, and fortunately the broad mall across the common led in the same direction. Sidney with some difficulty got his kite-string safely into the mall, and began carrying it toward the steeple. People running to the scene saw what he was trying to do, and gave him a clear path. In less than five minutes he was out in the square, and his kite-string was streaming up across the southern face of the steeple. The crowd saw the kite and the swaying string, and cheered. As yet nothing else, apparently, was being done to save the life of the helplessly swinging man up there in mid-air. But of what use could a mere kite-string be, in the hands of an excited boy?

Someone suddenly touched Sidney on the shoulder. It was a man, carrying a bit of stout cord in his hand. "Bring your kite-string across him, if you can," said the man, "so it'll touch him and he can get hold of it. That's right. Now bear away to the left—a little more—hold on! It's rubbing against him. Tom! Tom! Get hold of it!"

The man's stentorian shout rang above the murmurs of the breathless crowd, and the steeplejack heard. He put out one hand behind him and caught hold of the tugging string. The man with the cord cut the kite-string below Sidney's hands and tied his cord to the dangling end. "Now let the cord run up to him," he said, "while I run for a rope. Tom! We're sending you up a cord."

The large kite, tugging skyward out beyond the steeple, quickly carried up the cord that was attached to the kite-string. The steeple-jack let the string run through his hand. He knew just what was being done, for he had seen the soaring, tugging kite far up in the blue sky. When the large cord reached him he lifted it to his teeth, bit off the kite-string and let the kite go drifting and pitching down over the city roofs. Sidney finally saw it plunge and disappear. Its work was done, and done better than any other mechanical agency could have done it.

In less than three minutes the man who knew what to do was back with a coil of rope from a nearby hardware store. He cut the cord from the ball, tied rope to the free end, and called to the man on the steeple

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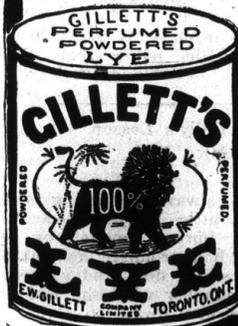
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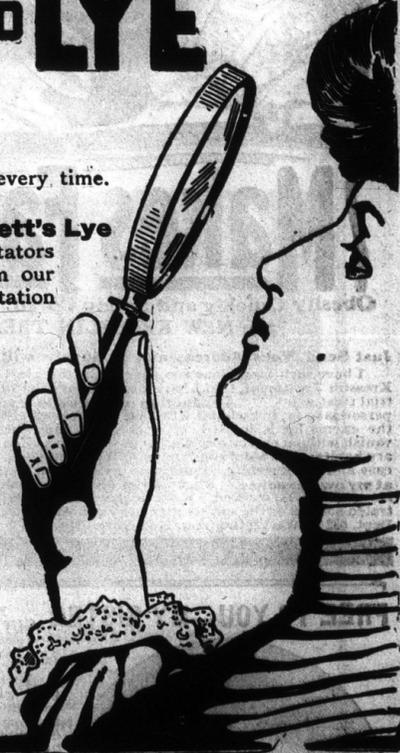
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