

Another Flying Machine.

On September 30 some flying machine experiments took place at Stanford Hall, Lutterworth, the seat of Earl Braye. The performer was Lieutenant Philcher, R.N., who had on previous occasions this summer made similar ascents at the same place, and with much success. The weather was stormy, a strong wind blowing from S.S.W. The flying machine used was a canvas spread frame, in imitation of the outstretched wings and tail of a bird, within the framework of which the operator took his stand. The machine operated as a gigantic kite, resistance to the wind for elevation being obtained by attachment to a long cord, worked by a couple of horses. There had been sundry showers during the fore and after noons, and the performer expressed his doubts whether his machine would soar well on account of the saturation of the canvas wings. About 4 p.m. the first attempt to soar was made. The machine attained some 30 feet in height, when the cord snapped, and Lieutenant Philcher alighted gradually and safely on his feet, the extended wings easing the descent. A second ascent was presently made, and the machine appeared to sail well, and to soar to about 50 feet elevation, when suddenly it turned unexpectedly over, and came down heavily in the park, with a crash that could be heard some hundreds of yards. Lieutenant Philcher lay motionless to the horror of the spectators, and when he was reached by his friends he was found to be moaning in a state of collapse. He was carried into Stanford Hall. It was presently discovered that the courageous aeronaut had sustained a compound fracture of the thigh, and, to say the least, a severe shaking all round in addition. It was hoped that there was no injury to the skull or spine, but whether any internal injury to the organs had occurred was not known. There were various other flying appliances on view in the park, among them the frame of one which Lieutenant Philcher designed to propel with a "motor," but in view of the unfavorable state of the weather the canvas of this was not spread. The apparent cause of the aeronaut's fall was the sudden fracture, while aloft, of a bamboo stick which "spread" the tail, on which the machine depends for balance. The saturation of the canvas caused the webbing to contract, until the slight bamboo spreader could no longer sustain the strain upon it. But for this failure of the tail, there seemed at the moment every prospect of a really successful "flight" being attained. Lieutenant Philcher died on the following day from his injuries.