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September 1958

FIRE-BALLOON

Every year in the Tuscan village of San Marcello (Pistoia) takes place a glamorous fire-balloon rising, on occasion of the celebration of the patroness of the Mountain, Saint Celestina.

Such an old custom was originated 130 years ago by the Mongolfier brothers, friends of the first Italian paper-millers (founded in 1822 at San Marcello Lina(Pistoia), and today also the Mongolfiers descendants themselves own a papier-mill).

The big balloon is 14 meters high; 29 meters wide; kg. 100 heavy; and 360 cubic meters bulky. It requires 1000 meters of string, 50 kg. of glue, and 100 kg. of paper specially kneaded and purposely milled every ten years.

Carried on the main square of the country, the balloon is being inflated by air warmed up by means of hung small warmers.

When the balloon thus properly set, rises up, it is surely a happy event, which is marked by the comunal band, whose members blow into brass instruments for a joyful playing, and not for an inflating operation, as one could just erroneously assume.