



IGLES VERNE'S TOMBSOME AT AMIENS
PORTRAYING HIS IMMORTALITY

AMAZING STORIES

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Our Cover

This month depicts a scene from the story entitled, "The Octopus Cycle," by Irvin Lester and Fletcher Pratt, in which the small group of natives, headed by the American scientist and a Frenchman, are fleeing from the scene of battle against a highly organized army of enormous animals of the mollusk order. Several of the natives are caught up in the tentacles of the octopuses, only to vanish almost instantly.

In Our Next Issue:

THE GOLDEN GIRL OF MUNAN, by Harf Vincent. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Hatred, or a lust for revenge, also enables a person to perform wonders. What a very few scientists, excited with a small group of radicals, finally invent on a small island off in the uncharted seas, is graphically told by our new author, who not only has a vivid imagination, but, being an engineer of high standing, has an adequate amount of scientific knowledge from which to draw.

BARON MÜNCHHAUSEN'S SCIENTIFIC ADVENTURES, by Hugo Gernsback. Mars, according to most scientists, is an almost inexhaustible source of interest, and our friend, the Baron, being avid for interesting information and experiences, and having a knack for learning everything worth while knowing, continues, in his own manner, to tell us about the cities of Mars and how the planets look, as seen through the powerful Martian telescopes. He also advances an entirely new theory as to how the Martians might make life bearable on their desert planet.

THE BLUE DIMENSION, by Francis Flagg. Of course, you will remember Mr. Flagg's past stories, "The Master Ants" and "The Machine Man of Ardatbia." In "The Blue Dimension," he has produced a real thriller. Here he takes us to another planet; a different world, and it is a most convincing story, too. Don't miss it, by any means.

THE INVISIBLE MAN, by H. G. Wells. While there have been many battles fought in our Discussions Department as to certain "Weird" stories, the editor makes the prediction that "The Invisible Man" will be acclaimed by all of the readers of **AMAZING STORIES**. "The Invisible Man" no doubt is a scientific story, plus. It is one of those stories that is well nigh perfect. Of all the "invisible" type of stories ever written, anywhere, we unhesitatingly say this is the best and by far the most scientific.

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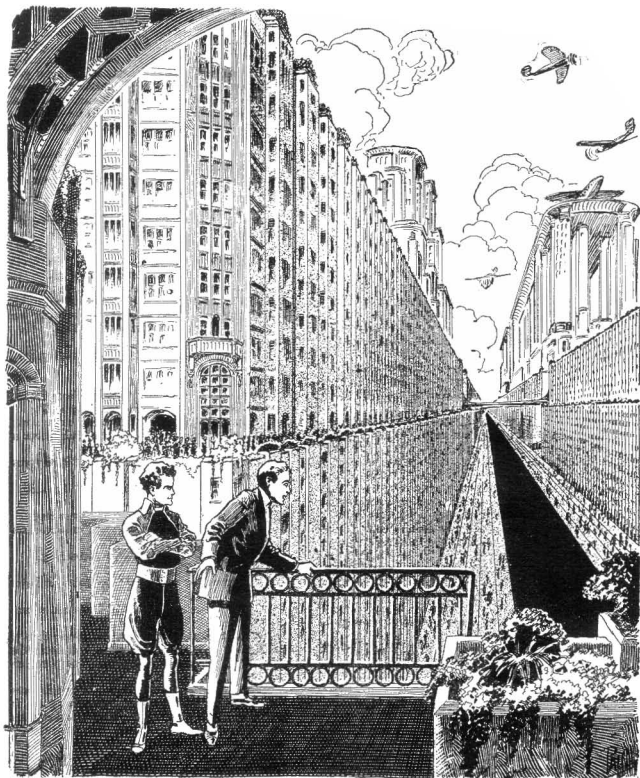
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A VISITOR FROM THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

by *Harold Donitz*



He looked downward. At the street level, the width of two hundred feet had been divided into a central band of one hundred feet and two outside bands of fifty feet each. The central portion was merely a great promenade, paved with the universal black substance that seemed to absorb the sunlight. The flanking bands consisted of five endless moving platforms, each ten feet in width. The speed of these platforms increased with their distance from the promenade.

MARKHAM slept. What could be more commonplace than this nightly respite from worried and worrying consciousness, during which the nerves and constitution and muscles, exhausted by the work of the day are permitted to generate new power and vigor for the work of the day to come?

And yet it is the very nature of this particular sleep, that troubles Markham, and will continue to trouble him for the rest of his life. He is as visionary as ever, but due to the sleep, or perhaps to the disillusionment which followed it, he no longer bores everyone by trying to put his visions into practice, or by explaining how they could be so put. Very seldom now does he allow his dreams to come to the surface, but when he does nobody can deny that he cuts a truly admirable figure.

To begin with, Markham is somewhat of an architect, considerable of an architect, if we are to judge by his success. He specializes in the hollow square and cooperative types of large apartment houses, but at the same time, if some wealthy faddist or *nouveau riche* desires a residence of radical design, embodying all known mechanical conveniences, and many that are not known as yet, he comes to Markham. The worst of it is that his friends and fellow architects seem to imagine that it is not latent genius that is responsible for his successes, but rather superior practical ability; that he got this ability by industrious application, and all that sort of thing, at school. Markham must realize how futile it would be to attempt to assail this conspiracy of thought, and his present policy of reticence is perhaps the best he could observe under the circumstances.

The day in particular had been a trying one for him, and had held what, he maintains, was a peculiar series of coincidences. First of all, he had spent the whole morning in preparing his entry in the \$10,000 "City Beautiful" contest that was being conducted jointly by several newspapers, two magazines, and a department store. The contest was to determine the best plan for an ideal city on the site of New York. Nothing, of course, could be done about removing the one that was already there, but a comparison of the actual city with the ideal one would arouse considerable interest and bring much publicity to all parties concerned. Furthermore, there were vague rumors that the Board of Estimate and Apportionment had more than a passing interest in the matter, and that if the winning plan appealed to it, it might take primary steps toward moulding little old New York into the ideal city.

At any rate, Markham had reacted to the contest

as a cat reacts to the smell of fish. He had set his fertile brain to work, and finally had evolved what he considered the ideal plan. But at the same time, as he later revealed, there was an undercurrent of suspicion that told him that this was not at all his ideal plan; that it was merely the best his brain could do under pressure; that at any time of the day or night there might leap to his cerebellum, when he least expected it, a vision of the ideal city, and that this city would be a thousandfold better than the one he had produced.

So he pigeon-holed the plan and drawings, expressing the fervent hope that the vision of the ideal might occur to him before the day, two weeks away, when the plans would have to be submitted.

He had intended to spend the afternoon of that day at a library, examining certain scientific and technical magazines, as well as catalogues, for new household devices and labor saving machinery which he would be able to incorporate into his future houses. He found several interesting ideas, but was soon bored and strolled into a cinema house. It was just his fortune to witness some fantasy that attempted to portray the city of the future. He could not help smiling, as he walked out of the theater and whenever he thought of the coincidence during supper. In the evening, he planted himself in the most comfortable armchair in his study, and, fortified by his pipe, prepared to enjoy an hour or two of reading. Not until he had opened the book did he notice that it was a pseudo-scientific novel by Verne, or Wells, or one of that class. And then he threw his head back and indulged in a long, hearty laugh.

His burst of mirth over, Markham felt that in view of the nature of his activities that day, he would rather not read that type of book, lest he develop what he feared most, a "one-track" mind. He was tired, however, and very comfortable, and the smoke of his pipe was beginning to form fascinating spirals in the air. The reader may recall a time when he was in a similar situation. Nevertheless, he finally persuaded himself that the book was no worse, or less desirable at that moment, than any other book. So he commenced to read.

We are to assume that at some point in his reading the print on the pages before him seemed to jumble together into a heap, and the pipe somehow slipped through his lips, and his eyelids acquired the weight of lead. His sense of time, his consciousness, everything, became hazy. He sensed that he was falling asleep. But he was not aware of any subsequent blankness. He seemed to regain full consciousness almost immediately.

HE was in a queer little room. It seemed to be an eight-foot cube, the hollow interior of the building block of some Brobdignagian infant. But while it was indeed eight feet in all three dimensions, it could hardly be called a cube, for the walls melted into one another and into the floor and ceiling in smooth curves that appealed to Markham's architectural nature. There was not an angle in the place. Against one wall was a neat little metal cot

with a peculiar mattress which, he found by testing, was simply an inflated rubber pad tucked inside of an immaculate white sheet. That was the sum total of bed clothing. He was quick to surmise that as there were no coverings, warmth must be supplied in some other manner. He looked about him again, and was amazed to find that there were no heating device and no windows. With a scientific eye, he looked toward the bottom of the walls, and as he expected, he found, about eight inches above the level of the floor, a tiny row of holes extending all

ANY new thought that comes along that shows us what will happen hundreds of years hence, is always greeted with acclaim by the true scientific fan. Our new author presents us with such a situation in a novel dress, and at the same time, you will find that there is plenty of new scientific in this interesting story.

around the room. Putting his hand to one, he felt a stream of warm, fresh air pouring silently and steadily into the room. He saw another row of holes an equal distance from the ceiling, and knew these to be for the exit of the exhausted and overheated air that rose to the top of the room. He also saw a hemisphere of frosted glass that looked as if it had been cemented into the ceiling, from which soft light streamed outward and downward.

He began to think about getting out, and looked for a door. There it was, entirely of metal and without panels. Its bottom formed the only break in the curve of the floor into the wall, but even so, wherever corners occurred, they had been beautifully rounded off. He approached. There were no visible hinges and no handle. Only a thin stream of light along the top, bottom, and left side told that it was a door at all. He pushed against it and it yielded. In a moment he had passed through, and it swung quickly back to its original position.

Markham glanced rapidly about and took in the features of the room he now found himself in. It was considerably larger than the chamber he had just left, and there was the same lack of right-angled corners. Up above were hemispherical illuminators, but these were not lit. Great floods of sunlight were pouring into the room through a single glass pane that formed almost the entire wall on his left. It took Markham little time to see that the glass was quartz, giving free access to the all-important ultra-violet rays. The wall opposite him, as well as the one through which he had come, held several of the queer hingeless, knobless doors. To his right—

Funny that he had not noticed him before. There, behind a long, narrow flat-topped desk sat a man, regarding him interestedly with sympathetic blue eyes. He was leaning on the desk with both elbows, a pen in his right hand. On his left was a file tray, on his right several rows of buttons and electric bulbs. But it was the clothing of the man behind the desk that first made Markham doubt that this experience was anything more than a casual dream of a super-modern hotel.

There were two visible garments. The inner was almost skintight, and apparently combined warmth with freedom of motion. The outer was a sort of loose cloak, that combined dignity with modesty. Both were dark blue in color, with a thin yellow braid running along the edges. The man's feet were visible beneath the desk, and at sight of them, Markham was compelled to display astonishment. They were encased in high-arched, open sandals, and the feet were not the corned, bunioned products of our civilization, but a shapely pair that could have served as models for the feet of a sculptured Apollo. Yet their possessor was apparently well past middle age.

There was silence for several minutes. The man at the desk, doubtlessly some sort of official, was unperturbed and seemed to have the situation well in hand, while Markham was so utterly astounded that he could not think of what to say or to ask first. At last the official dropped his gaze and pushed one of the buttons to his right on the desk. The bulb beside it flashed, and he picked up from its metal holder a black, round object that looked like an earphone. He put this to his ear and listened for a moment, then applied it to his lips. "A guide," he said. That was all, and he replaced the tiny

phone in its holder. There was a click and the light in the bulb disappeared. The man resumed his writing as if Markham no longer existed.

Behind the official and to his left was a double door. Through this, a moment later, came a handsome young man, clad exactly like the official, but with a blue braid instead of the yellow. The older man looked up at him and smiled.

"You again, John?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply. "But I don't mind. It's interesting work."

The official resumed his writing and the young man turned to Markham. "Could you come with me, sir?"

Markham followed him out through the double door, and found himself in an immense corridor that was all of thirty feet in width. About one hundred feet to their left, the passage ended in a right angled turn, but on the right it extended for almost as far as the eye could see. It was well lit by those frosted glass illuminators. The side from which they had emerged was lined with double doors, but on the opposite side, Markham was surprised to see the glass display-windows of shops, a long row of them. As they walked silently along, they passed many people who were clad in garments similar to those of the official and of the guide, but an undecorated black in color. These evinced only a slight interest in the unusual clothing of the stranger. The latter, fascinated by the novel advertisements and the size of the shops (each one was three times as large as the average store he had known), noted that no two were alike as to product. One displayed canned, boxed, and bottled food exclusively, another fresh groceries and vegetables, a third stationery supplies, and so on. Markham wondered if the business world had finally reached a millennium and eliminated competition.

They passed through a single door, different in color from the others, ascended a short flight of steps, and emerged through another door upon a beautiful terrace, formed by a set-back in the building. The set-back was evenly fifty feet wide. The innermost ten feet formed a walk. The pavement, Markham noticed, was the same as that of the interior, a black substance that must have been poured out in a liquid state, and seemed to yield to the step. The outer forty feet of the set-back was a beautiful belt of grass, flower beds, and small shrubbery.

The guide reduced the pace to that of a stroll. "By your clothing I judge you to be of the early twentieth century," he ventured.

"The succession of wonders and novelties had beaten upon Markham with the remorseless precision of a trip hammer. Now he sensed a momentary let-up, and a flood of questions occurred to him.

"I am, as you put it," he replied to the guide, "of the early twentieth century. But where, or when, am I now, and how did I get here?"

"This is New York, in the late part of the twenty-first century. You are what, is known here, as a 'visitor'."

"Undoubtedly," said Markham, with a slight attempt at sarcasm. "I could hardly call myself a native of this place, even if I *was* born on Manhattan."

The guide laughed, good naturedly. "What I meant," he explained, seriously, "is that you are of an entirely different period of time, or rather, of

history, for we are coming to doubt more and more that there is such a thing as time. How you were brought here—well, the advanced psychologists and hypnotists of our colleges have been very successful in their recent experiments. They think nothing of yanking out of the so-called past some person whose consciousness is *en rapport* with their united concentrations. Of late they do it not through any scientific interest but just for the practice, as a prank you might say; your case for instance."

This thought set Markham's brain reeling. There was something in the guide's tone that discouraged him from pursuing the matter. He dared not try to pursue it; he felt that he would go insane if he did. He thought of the situation of a psychologist who is anxious to know the mental reactions of a man falling from a cliff and yet does not care to make the experiment personally.

It was all too bizarre. He must not question anything; he must take everything for granted. He turned to the guide. "What is your name," he asked. "It will be more convenient to know."

"My name is John Warren, 12-C-6."

Markham was aghast. "What!" he exclaimed, "has mankind come to the number and filing-case stage so soon?"

"Not at all," was the laughing reply. "That is simply for purposes of mail and communication. The 12 means that my building is in the twelfth row from the south; the C means that it is the third row from the west; the 6 means that out of all the families named Warren in building 12-C, mine is considered Number 6."

"You spoke," said Markham, "or 'all the families named Warren,' and you have given a peculiar significance to the word 'building.' Is it that families of similar names are confined to separate houses?"

"Why, no. There are upwards of ten thousand people to a building, you know, and there are bound to be several families of the same. . . ."

"Upwards of ten thousand people! What kind of buildings have you here?"

Warren smiled indulgently. "That will come later," he said.

All this time they had been following the same path. Now a low murmur seemed to be flowing up over the set-back from below. They neared a spot where a tiny walk led to a sort of fenced platform that overhung the edge of the flowery terrace. This they entered, and the guide invited Markham to look over the edge.

Wonders and wonders! It took the man from the twentieth century several minutes to grasp all that he saw.

Two hundred feet away was another building, a gigantic affair a quarter of a mile in length. There was a set-back on the same level as the one on which were Markham and his guide, and the former quickly assumed that the two structures were identical. The set-backs were above the fifteenth stories, and the buildings towered up for another ten stories. Twenty-five altogether. Not so much, Markham thought. Visionaries of his time had predicted edifices of a hundred stories and more; but these seemed to go in more for length, and perhaps for width.

He looked downward. At the street level the width of two hundred feet had been divided into a central band of one hundred feet and two outside

bands of fifty feet each. The central portion was merely a great promenade, paved with the universal black substance that seemed to absorb the sunlight, rather than to reflect it back into the eyes. At intervals there were gigantic kiosks, leading probably to the buildings on either side. The flanking bands consisted of five endless moving platforms, each ten feet in width. The speed of these platforms increased with their distance from the promenade, so that the two outer ones moved at approximately twenty-five miles an hour. There were collapsible metal benches on the bands, while passage from one to another was facilitated by means of occasional hand-rails.

The scene was strangely familiar. The solution leaped to Markham's brain all at once.

"Why!" he cried, "such a street as this was described by a writer of my time!"*

"Then he was a prophet," said Warren, calmly. "It is not so easy to prophesy the inevitable."

"But," Markham continued, not having caught the guide's last remark, "he mentioned, I believe, streets a hundred yards in width and ten moving platforms in each direction, while you have here only five. Nevertheless the coincidence is. . . ."

"We have such a street. It is called the Fifth Way, and was once known as Fifth Avenue. There are ten platforms in each direction, and the fastest move at a speed of nearly fifty miles an hour. But that is in the exact center of the island, and the outer platforms are used only by people desiring to travel from one end of the island to the other very quickly. As a man's residence, place of business, and recreation centers are all in the same building in most cases, there is very little cause for traffic between buildings. Two platforms for each direction, in fact, would be sufficient to handle the traffic, were it not that the more platforms there are the higher the speed that can be attained. Cross-town ways move at a lower level."

Fascinating as was the sight of the moving platforms and the hurrying, black-clad people, who seemed quite adroit at slipping from one band to another that moved about five miles an hour faster, Markham felt that he was delaying the "sight-seeing tour," for that was what he sensed their present walk to be. They regained the promenade and after a short distance, the guide led the way back inside. They came to a place in the huge corridor, near a corner of the building, where a peculiar track paralleled one wall. It was set deep into the floor, and was about two feet wide. Near the end of the track were half a dozen little trucks, their square platforms level with the floor. Each platform had at its sides two frail-looking metal railings.

Warren motioned Markham to the foremost platform, admonishing him to keep a tight grip on the railings. He seemed to doubt the stranger's ability to do this, however, for he took from a nearby rack a leather belt which he fastened around his waist and to both railings. He then mounted the platform behind, using no belt for himself, and indicated to Markham a tiny lever on the under side of the right-hand railing which he was to press.

Markham did so. The platform started slowly forward with a low rumble, and a similar sound from behind apprised him that the guide was fol-

*H. G. Wells, in "When the Sleeper Wakes."

lowing. Suddenly he felt his feet shoot out from under him, and there was a sensation as of being shot from a gun. This lasted an instant and then his position resumed the vertical and his momentum slackened rapidly but without any unpleasant sensations. Looking about him, he found himself in a sort of glass roofed, glass walled shed. The platform was trundling toward the end of the track. He released his belt and dismounted.

"What was that?" he demanded breathlessly of Warren, who had followed immediately.

"A high speed escalator," the guide explained. "The platforms move forward and are caught by hooks in a rapidly revolving belt. At the end of the incline they are released and are slowed down by compressed air pressure. We have climbed ten stories and are now on the roof."

They emerged from the shed and Markham found that it was so. They were on another black-paved promenade. Running to one side he saw, far below, the terrace they had just quitted, and abysmally farther down, the street. He ran to the other side, and was amazed to see, at about the same height as the terrace on the exterior, a park! It was square, conforming to the shape of the building, and something over three hundred yards square in dimension. In the center, an ornate fountain was hurling rainbow-hued water high into the air and catching it again in a marble pool. Tiny paths radiated from the fountain to the sides, and numerous children's playgrounds nestled in the shadows of the ten-story walls. But predominating over the whole pleasant scene was a color little associated with modern cities and not at all associated with visionary cities of the future—the green of well-kept lawns and trees.

And as they moved slowly along, stopping from time to time to watch the playing children and the chatting housewives, Warren explained the construction of the buildings.

They were all alike, square in shape, measuring about a quarter of a mile on each side, and twenty-five stories in height. The upper ten stories were purely residential, the apartments ranging in size from single rooms to large suites. The size of the suites depended strictly on that of the family, and not on its means. The lower fifteen stories were taken up with offices, schools, and shops. On the interior of the square, its surface level with the sixteenth story, was a twenty feet layer of soil, supported on a massive roof of steel and concrete. Below this roof, and down to the street level, were such institutions as did not require the light of day, including gymnasia, auditoria, theaters, and houses of worship. There were three more stories below the street level, one of which was entirely taken up with generators of the electricity used in heating, lighting, and operating all machinery throughout. Each building had its own electrical installation, run on power from a gigantic plant five miles north of Manhattan, which plant, in turn, received its current from Niagara Falls. The other two stories were used for storage and by the distribution system.

"And what is that?" asked Markham.

Warren smiled. The distribution system was now so commonplace that it was hard to believe that there ever was a time when it did not exist. Over across the Hudson was the huge distribution Center, where were received food products from the West and South and clothing and manufactured goods from

the great Factory Cities at Niagara Falls and along the Mississippi. From this center an intricate system of pneumatic tubes spread under the Hudson and into Manhattan, an individual tube for each of the scores of buildings. Through these the food products and clothing and manufactured goods were shot in great containers to the cellar stations, from which they were relayed through a smaller system to the shops.

The noise from the moving ways far below had diminished considerably. The number of people on the promenades, both on the roofs and on the setbacks, had increased as more and more people, their day's work done, were trying to get in a last walk by the rays of the setting sun. The two men came to a corner of the building, where Markham saw that the path on which they moved, was connected to the corresponding paths on the two adjacent buildings by slender bridges of cantilever construction. They proceeded across one of them, the man from the twentieth century conquering by sheer mental effort the dizziness that threatened him.

"I have it!" he exclaimed suddenly. "Something seemed queer, something bothered me when I looked at the streets, and I have just realized what it was. I have not seen any automobiles."

Warren was puzzled for a moment. "Automobiles," he murmured, "automobiles. . . . oh! You mean gasoline surface vehicles!"

"Yes," said Markham. "Where are they?"

"There are none."

"What! You mean to tell me that there are no more automobiles? Why, in my time New York was being carved to suit them. Streets were being widened, sidewalks were being narrowed, residences were being torn down ruthlessly to make streets and cross streets for them. Skyscraping garages in the business districts were being contemplated and built. Nearly every family had an auto, and manufacturers were trying to convince them that they needed two. And now, less than two hundred years later, you say that there are no more automobiles. Impossible!" He almost felt hurt.

"As might have been foreseen," said Warren, calmly, "the whole industry that was growing so abnormally, fell in one crash. Around 1975, a growing shortage of petroleum, that the manufacturers were trying desperately to keep under cover, could no longer be concealed. There were terrible riots and mob scenes in New York, Chicago, Detroit, and in fact all over the globe. In a thousand cities, useless automobiles were piled up in the streets and burnt. The plants of the two greatest manufacturers were mobbed and razed to the ground. For a month the United States suffered a complete chaos. Then things gradually adjusted themselves. New oil fields were subsequently discovered, and an efficient substitute for gasoline was produced synthetically by an experimental chemist, but the gasoline car never regained the pinnacle it had held before the chaos."

"Why not?" asked Markham.

"You have said," began Warren, apparently irrelevantly, "that the plans of whole cities were being changed to suit the convenience of the automobiles; that houses were being torn down, playgrounds bisected by roads, parks destroyed by the fumes of the gasoline and pedestrians crowded to the walls or killed by the score; was it not so?"

"Yes," Markham conceded, but . . ."

"The duration of houses was halved by the constant vibration of passing trucks; the manufacturers, in feverish competition, were making the cars cheaper and cheaper, and more and more defective; forty percent of the men at the wheels were unfit to drive, yet did so, thanks to incompetent laws; the roads were choked with gaudy hire-cars, called, I believe, taxicabs, driven by men who, lured by the profits, had obtained licenses after a minimum number of lessons and no experience whatever; men who after a day's work were mere automatons and incapable of being entrusted with the human lives they were responsible for; was it not so?"

"Yes, yes," agreed Markham. The facts were all undeniable, yet it was the least bit irritating to have them served up to him in this galling-gun fashion. His irritation, unknown to him, was based upon a human and excusable pride in his own times as contrasted with these.

"Well," continued Warren, "the eyes of the people, heretofore blinded to these abortive conditions, were opened to them by the chaos. The automobile no longer had the same significance; no longer seemed so necessary, or rather, so desirable in view of the conditions that accompanied it. The manufacture of the cars declined, ceased to be profitable, and in time stopped altogether. Today we have a form of surface vehicle, used solely for pleasure, one that you would hardly recognize.

"Our 'roads' consist of parallel metal tracks, twenty feet apart, each a foot in width. The vehicles are forty feet in length, fifteen in width, and gyroscopic, balancing on two huge rubber-tired wheels. They are known colloquially as 'capsules,' for the body consists of a capsule-shaped unbreakable quartz glass. It is blown into the standard shape, and holes are pierced for entrance and ventilation. The cars are comfortably furnished and self-operating, for they draw power by roller contacts and trolleys you might call them, from the metal track to which they are held by a sort of electro-magnetism. Automatic safety devices stop the car as soon as it comes within fifty feet of another. Anyone desiring to use one of the capsules goes across the Hudson to the depot and hires one. It bows along over hill and dale, maintaining an even speed of fifty miles an hour."

"Fifty miles an hour!" exclaimed Markham. "Is that considered a proper speed for a pleasure ride?"

"Certainly," said Warren. "It is just the right speed, once all responsibility and care of operation are removed. Besides, you forget that the world advances. One hundred years before your time, twenty miles an hour was considered tempting friction."

"True," Markham acknowledged.

So absorbed had he been in the conversation that he had kept his eyes on the pavement before him for most of the time. They had been strolling northward. Now his eyes, raised for the first time, encountered a vast structure a mile away, that seemed to fill the entire quarter from horizon to zenith.

"The New York Tower," explained Warren. "The only real skyscraper it has been deemed necessary to have. It is not hollow, but a solid structure, having, as you see, pyramidal setbacks. It is not as wide as the other buildings, but together with the great plaza and gardens that surround it, occupies the same space that four of them would occupy. It is

one hundred stories in height, and contains all the executive, legislative, and judicial offices of the municipal and state governments, and also the local branches of the various federal departments. This may seem strange to you, but the duties of government have been considerably changed and reduced. The number of municipal ordinances, for instance, is only about one-third what it was in your time. The cellar of the Tower contains the Post Office, from which letters and packages are distributed by pneumatic tubes and tunnels to the branch Post Offices in each building."

He referred to his wrist-watch, a queer one-handed device. "Ah, yes. In a moment you will see something interesting. Watch the top of the Tower."

Markham watched. Soon he saw a gigantic affair, resembling a net, rise slowly into the air, lifted by four balloons. Taking shape, it resolved into a great square funnel of netted fabric, the open mouth of which was fully five hundred feet above the top of the tower, to which it was connected by a slender net-work chute. The balloons were at the corners.

"Now," said the guide, "look to the west."

From that direction a large stream-lined monoplane was splitting the air in straight, unhalting flight. It flew faster than Markham had ever seen an airplane go before. As it passed above the funnel, it released a large sack, which dropped down through the chute into the building proper. The monoplane kept on toward the east, seeming to descend.

"The Western Mail," said Warren. "At present the flight from San Francisco takes ten hours, but that will be remedied within fifteen years, by which time the Transcontinental Pneumatic will be completed."

"... the flight from San Francisco takes ten hours, but that will be remedied . . ." The phrase rang through Markham's brain, moving him to alternate spells of laughter and wonderment. These people seemed to have the most awful conception of time and speed. He now feared to comment or to express admiration for what Warren regarded as the commonplace, lest he should reveal his "provincialism."

"Look again," cried Warren, "this time to the east."

Far off in the heavens a tiny silver shape, resembling a minnow in a limpid pool, was darting toward them, descending as it came. In a few minutes Markham saw that it was a dirigible, much the same as those of his time, but somewhat larger. The cabin was a long structure that fitted snugly against the gas bag, like a great keel. The advantages of this arrangement over that of the half-dozen separated cabins and engines he was used to, as to decreased wind-resistance and increased ease of operation, were obvious to Markham. He surmised from the size of the cabin that a new lifting compound was employed, and found by asking Warren that it was so.

As it approached, heading apparently for the New York Tower, his attention was attracted to a construction at the northwest corner of the roof of that building. It was a vertical shaft of metal bars, reaching one hundred feet into the air. At its top was a jumble of wheels, gears, and cables. The airship dropped a weighted cable which hooked into the top of this structure, and as it floated past, the cable became taut and the ship was slowly drawn down to the open metal shaft. And then Markham could

hardly suppress a thrill of pride, such as overcame him when he had seen his first house completed; for the top of the shaft fitted neatly into the floor of the airship cabin, and he could see a tiny car run swiftly up the shaft and into the cabin itself. It was all an idea which he had conceived and discussed often with his fellow club members, the device of a mooring mast, which would extend into a hole in an airship, so that an elevator in the shaft would rise level with the cabin floor. But they had laughed at him, and here it was, a wonderful reality. A moment later he saw the car descend, laden with people.

"Tell me," he turned to Warren. "I am eager to know the progress the world has made, especially in sociology and transportation. There was a deal of theorizing in my time, but from what I have seen I imagine that most of it either exaggerated or underestimated the truth. That dirigible, for instance. I imagine it is a transatlantic conveyance—" Warren nodded—"is all oceanic transportation like that?"

"No, indeed," said the guide. "The airships carry only mail, visiting and returning diplomats, and such people as can convince the authorities that their voyage requires all possible haste and are willing to pay the price. The passage from New York to Paris takes something over fifteen hours. Ordinary transoceanic traffic has changed radically. You may have noticed that there is nothing in sight resembling a port, or loading place for ships."

"I have remarked something like that," admitted Markham, "but I had thought it was due to the transcendence of airships."

"There was some little agitation for developing air navigation in your time," Warren went on, "which lasted until well after the Chaos of 1975. But these plans were ultimately shelved for many reasons, one of which was the unexpected development of means of surface transportation. Transatlantic voyagers now travel in gigantic covered sledges which have practically no draft at all, and are driven both by water screws and by air propellers. These ply between the great seaport at the eastern tip of Long Island and a recently developed port on the coast of France, taking no more than thirty hours for the trip. From the seaport, passengers are taken in ten minutes by pneumatic tubes to the Grand Depot, half a mile beneath the New York Tower. Freight boats are modeled more after the so-called ocean greyhounds of your time, but never take more than sixty hours to go to Europe. They also dock at the Eastern Seaport, but the freight is shot by tube to the Distribution Center.

"Inter-urban communication is carried on through the great pneumatic tubes. As I have told you, the Transcontinental Pneumatic is now under construction and will afford transportation between the coasts in from two to three hours."

"But surely the pneumatic tube isn't universal," suggested Markham.

"Certainly not," said Warren, "although in time it probably will be. In outlying sections we have the advanced equivalent of the railroad of your time. It is single railed, like the pleasure vehicles I have described to you, and also like those vehicles, the trains draw their power from the same compound rail they ride on. These rails are so constructed, with bridges, viaducts, and tunnels, that there is a minimum of curves and the altitude does not vary a hundred feet in as many miles. The result is a

smooth speed of one hundred and fifty miles an hour. The Monorails, as they are called, are used throughout Australia, Africa, Asia, and South America, but no longer in Europe, and only in the less settled portions of North America."

They had turned back toward the south. The sun was hovering above the western horizon, a departing watchman taking his last look at a satisfied and satisfactory world. There was a growing chill in the air.

"Tell me of the people," said Markham. "How they live; are they happy? Surely with your advanced machinery, unemployment must present a problem."

"Ah," said Warren, "the solution of that problem is a matter on which we pride ourselves. Let me explain. We assume that two men, working eight hours with hand tools, can complete a piece of work in that time. A machine is invented to do the work of both men in the same time, so that only one is now needed to handle the machine. In your time, one of those men would have handled the machine, and the other would have starved. Today, the men would each work four hours at handling the machine, and both would be happy."

"I see," said Markham. "As the efficiency of your machinery increases you divide the time of labor among the number of workers displaced by the machine. It is wonderful, almost ideal, but it never would have worked in my age. The spare time would have hung heavy on our hands."

"That," explained Warren, "is a matter of evolution. We spend this 'spare time' in reading, in harmless and beneficial amusement, and the pursuit of the arts and sciences. The world has advanced tremendously in that respect."

"Community life has also undergone radical changes. There are today in the United States only fifteen cities, similar in appearance to this, except for differences based on climate, population, and regional architecture. Each city has its standardized buildings and its municipal tower, some follow the pure checkerboard design, like New York, and some are radial, like Washington. Five cities, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, St. Louis, and New Orleans, have a population of over ten million. The others all have over five. There are an additional ten million living in the half-dozen nameless Factory Cities, and twenty-five million more scattered throughout the land. These last are the food makers, the backbone of the country. All the land outside the cities is either national parkland or else under cultivation, except for a few suburbs of a strictly residential character in the neighborhood of the larger cities. The twenty-five million are served by the Monorails and by private airplanes; they are forbidden by the government to organize into communities or mutual benefit associations, so that they regard themselves as a whole and are doubtlessly happier that way."

Somehow they had stopped to lean on the narrow railing of a path that bridged the abyss between two buildings and watch Long Island bathed in the last rays of the sun. Where once had thrived the growing borough of Brooklyn was now a beautiful parkland of close-cropped lawn, reddening trees, and scattered residences and bungalows that stretched away to the east as far as Markham could see. What Warren had said was true; there was not a single building of urban character outside of the island of

Manhattan, although much land had been added to the island itself. There were not even bridges. Brooklyn, Staten Island, New Jersey, the land to the north, all were a little paradise.

"It is wonderful," said Markham.

The sun out of sight, they turned southward once more. "We must get back to 12-C," said Warren. "I shall present you to the Captain of the Welfare Office where you first found yourself." They walked the length of a building and out upon another precarious bridge. Snowflakes began to drift down upon them in increasing numbers. The black pavement absorbed the moist flakes, but in the process there was formed a thin watery surface which the shoes of the man from the twentieth century were not qualified to cope with. A group of people approached them, head down to avoid the north wind, and Markham lurched to one side to prevent their running into him.

His lurch carried him clean through the railing. He heard a cry of dismay from Warren, and then he was hurtling headfirst down the twenty-five story depth. He saw the moving, white-coated ways rushing up to meet him.

* * *

He awoke, with a feeling of stiffness, on the floor before the arm chair in which he last remembered himself. His pet poodle was licking his face, and a steady gust of wind was blowing through the open door. Formerly a student of dream phenomena, Markham recognized the circumstances which had lent such fearsome realism to that last part of his dream. The wind from behind him, as that north wind had been, the white poodle, who, running back

and forth as he had tumbled from the chair, had given the fleeting impression of white moving ways, and the tumble itself. Yes, it had all been a dream, however strange and wonderful.

The reader may be interested in subsequent events.

Inspired by his vision, Markham ran to his desk, withdrew his plan from its pigeonhole, and tore it to bits. He then sat down and worked far into the night on this other plan, which had come to him much as he had expected it to come. He modified it considerably, but the principles remained the same. He suggested the uniformity of buildings, all twenty-five stories in height and a quarter of a mile square, with a set-back at the fifteenth story and a park on the interior. He suggested the two hundred feet streets, but lest he seem too radical, he described them for automobile traffic. Finally, he suggested the great New York Tower, with its government offices, giant Post Offices, and dirigible mooring mast.

The plan that won the contest was a fanciful thing, embodying towering skyscrapers in artistic shapes, no two of which were alike, and the uses of which were not quite clear. What was probably the winning factor was the advanced suggestion of an airplane hangar and landing platform on every roof. Markham's entry was returned courteously, with the criticism that it was a "highly improbable and impractical combination of the too fanciful and the too conservative."

So Markham, to all extents, has abandoned his visions, but as creative architect he has become the most outstanding worker in that gradual scientific and civic evolution which never can be covered at one jump.

THE END